

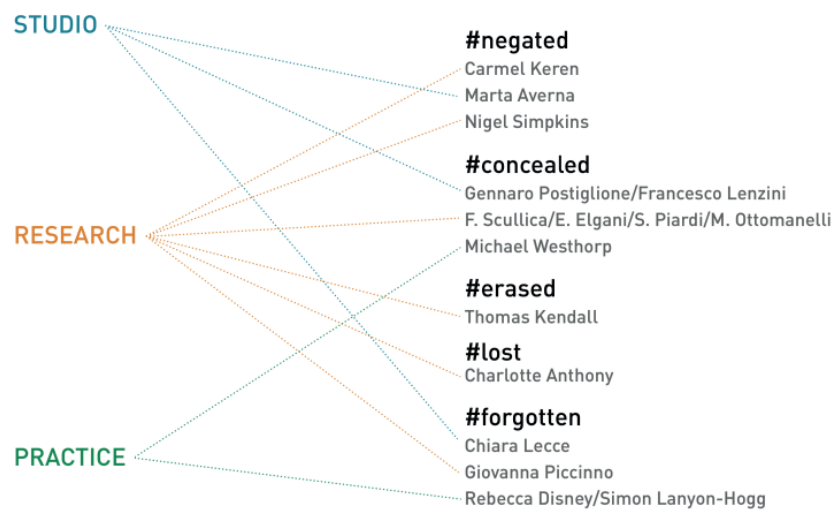
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The Hidden Interior

Introduction

Francesca Murialdo and Naomi House



Interiors – both public and private – can be invisible to the eye, hidden from view for many reasons, either by chance or as a deliberate act of concealment. There are interiors that are lost - invisible because they no longer exist in a physical form; erased, all traces of inhabitation removed; or forgotten, lacking a way of voicing their material and immaterial value. Others are shielded from public view because they are buried beneath the surface, sealed off, or locked in - too sensitive, important or fragile for inhabitation. Further there are also some typologies of building that negate the essence of the interior – that is, the capacity to allow exchange between people and space.

Issue #4 of IE:Studio explores the range of interpretations that emerge from the investigation of these hidden, invisible and erased spaces. Today digital technologies provide us with pseudo surgical tools through which to record, document, extract and reproduce interiors that are threatened, hidden or concealed, but what tactics and tools can we adopt to take apart, read and interpret the multiple layers of memory and matter that are embedded within the fabric of the interior? What happens when we encounter content and data that poses ethical and political questions? And in the uncovering of such interiors are we aestheticising trauma rather than simply unpicking the truth? Can the increased scrutiny of what lies beneath the surface of the interior give spaces their own agency beyond human inhabitation?

This issue offers a diverse collection of essays and studio briefs that question and expose a range of positions in relation to lost and hidden interiors, and what happens when these spaces are restored to the public gaze, literally and/or metaphorically. The eleven papers included here are organised into three sections: Studio, Research and Practice, and have been curated under five headings: #negated, #forgotten, #concealed, #erased and #lost that identify different typologies of the hidden interior as well as varying strategies of engagement. The three different sections - Studio, Research, Practice – provide a useful framework for how Research and Practice in Interiors informs Studio briefs. The wide range of contributors including academics, researchers, students and practitioners together underline the collaborative nature of interiors as a discipline.

Some of the papers document STUDIO briefs and student responses to them. For example Marta Averna's analysis of the Colonie in Northern Italy – a legacy of its Fascist heritage – and the student projects that re-conceive their interiors through a strategy of overwriting the traumatic history of these spaces with the identification of new narratives. Gennaro Postiglione and Francesco Lenzini's essay examines the Atlantic Wall – an example of a fortified coastal structure built to protect the Allies from invasion during the Second World War – questioning the potential for this abandoned set of structures to operate as a device for reconnecting our past, present and future by restoring its hidden spaces to the public gaze. Chiara Lecce's discussion of the Open Neighbourhood offers a strategic methodology for transforming the meanwhile spaces of Milan, in order to catalyse ongoing and sustained development. Here student work is intimately contextualised and catalogued.

Others papers describe academic RESEARCH that inform teaching such as Silvia Piardi, Francesco Scullica, Michele Ottomanelli and Elena Elgani's investigation of the smart factory, considering its relationship to context and to inhabitation, and Nigel Simpkins study of the camera obscura as a device that articulates a relationship to the city that is intimate and hidden. Charlotte Anthony offers her research into the Keskiee Centre in London – a building that no longer exists – establishing a methodology for investigating and documenting interiors that have been erased. And Giovanna Piccinno explores the locus of the 'contemporary nomadic citizen', contemplating the 'dematerialization of physical space' within a network of digital interactions.

Thomas Kendall's paper, 'The Juniper Tree' is experimental, testing the space of the page as the site of erasure and exploring the impact of gaps in the narrative, missing letters, words and paragraphs, as well proposing that text is itself spatial and thus inhabitable. Carmel Keren's essay is also propositional, speculating on the capacity of Google Street View to freeze time and capture lost narratives of inhabitation.

Michael Westhorp's paper offers an insight into PRACTICE by designing a hidden typology – the gay sauna. His project grapples with the question of visibility both in terms of the activity that the sauna accommodates and in the materiality of the interventions made. Rebecca Disney and Simon Lanyon-Hogg explore methods of detection that reveal the long-held secrets that the interior holds on to, and test these strategies to construct a new archive for a 'forgotten and overlooked space.'

The papers here all look to describe buildings and spaces that have disappeared or remain deliberately concealed - a complex interior landscape that is investigated, deciphered and re-presented using an array of methods and tactics. Such investigations are especially relevant to academics and practitioners of the interior as they address the physical and emotional complexity of the environments that frame our lives. Further the disentanglement of the multi-layered realm of the interior offers new visions for its future as an ongoing archive of human experience.

The concealed and revealed interiors of Google Street view #negated RESEARCH

Carmel Keren

*Carmel Keren is a Research Associate at the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art
carmel.keren@network.rca.ac.uk*

Abstract

This paper explores the nature of the hidden interior as revealed through the gaze of Google Street View (GSV). Using fictional writing as an analytical device, it forensically investigates the scenes captured on GSV to uncover clues of hidden narratives and imagined interiors. The paper exposes GSV's ability to alter our perception of hidden interiors as it simultaneously reveals and conceals the nature of those hidden spaces, both physically and metaphorically.

"Space is what arrests our gaze"

By now, we are all familiar with Google Street View (GSV) as a navigational tool, and even as an observational device that offers us a seductive, omnipotent and spectacular view of the world. We exploit GSV as a means of travelling through its countless scenes and spaces across the globe. The tool's navigational design attempts to mimic our natural movement; we move the cursor to "look around" and "step" through spaces, enhancing the illusion of truly experiencing places through our screens. GSV turns us into the ultimate voyeurs: all seeing, yet never seen. Michel De Certeau refers to the exhilaration of viewing a city from above as tapping into our *"lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more."*^[2] To me, the digital gaze created by GSV takes this notion a step further, by evoking the most common of childhood fantasies: to fly, to be invisible, to see through walls, to travel back in time.

GSV allows us to experience and "move" through spaces in the city as though they are frozen in time, revealing peculiar details which often pass us by in the motion of daily life. It turns us from observers to detectives as we search for clues within its scenes that may uncover hidden narratives. Yet GSV also confronts us with new kinds of invisibility, contained within its glitches and indiscernible blurs. Much like our own vision, GSV also has its edges and limitations. Movement through the device is often more mechanical than natural: jolt by jolt we lurch along streets regularly encountering glitches. It is bound by the limitation of the technology used to capture it, and the places those capturing it chose to record – and to hide. In this, the image of the city offered by GSV can conceal as much as it reveals.

Hidden Narratives

The limitations of GSV trace the boundary between what is visible and hidden through this device. We can only see the daytime; the night-time remains hidden from view. The blurs and glitches leave us in suspense about what may be revealed behind them. We can only enter the interiors that Google has captured, and are denied access to those it chose to hide—whether intentionally or through necessity.

What follows is a short story that explores through language the 'edges' and limitations of GSV. The approach to this story is investigative, analytical and at times, fictitious. GSV provides the mise-en-scène to this story, which is based entirely on images captured through it. Language becomes the tool with which to uncover clues in these images that will lead to a narrative. Story-making becomes a device that allows us to challenge our perception of reality as seen through GSV.

GOKYUZU & KERVAN RESTURANT

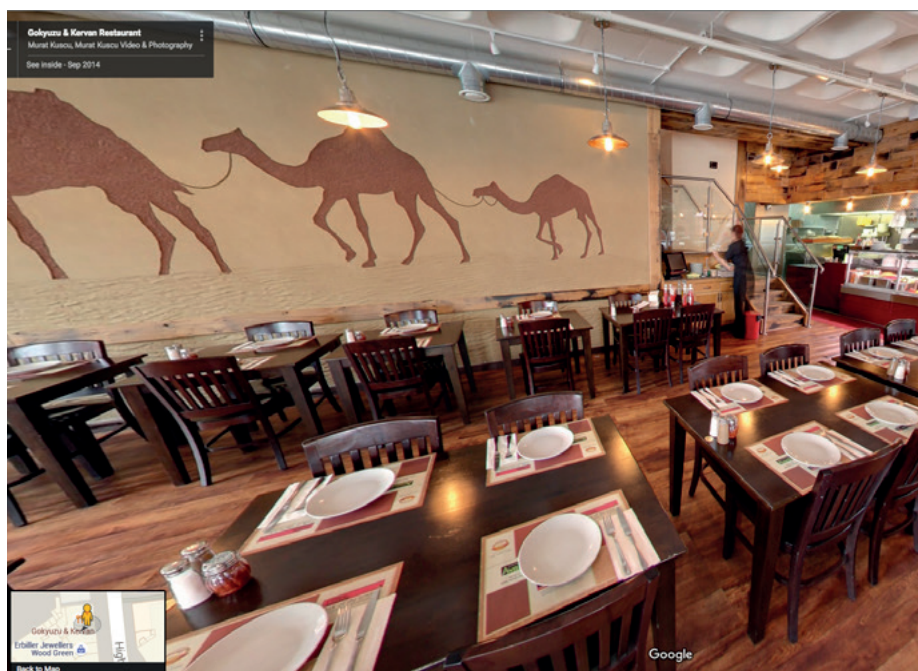


Figure 1: Image captured by Carmel Keren, map data: Google, 2014

The last table was hastily wiped clean.

As she lay out the freshly topped up salt and pepper shakers the only ones watching her were the camels. It doesn't have to be perfect, she reminded herself. Ordinary; not perfect. She mustn't give it away.

Frank was nervously fidgeting with the laminated menu stack when George came out to the front kitchen.

"Turn on the lights, for god's sake!" he bellowed, and without hesitation began preparing the lamb.

Frank flicked the switch, glanced over, and in dismay noticed that George was busy carefully dicing the lamb - using the exact same knife.

She knew better than to say anything, so instead she rushed over and busied herself lifting open the heavy steel shutters.

Continued...



*Figure 2: Image captured by Carmel Keren,
map data: Google, 2014*

The High Road was beginning to fill with fast-paced early morning shoppers, a street cleaner tediously interrupting their strides. Frank gazed blankly at him, transfixed by the motions of his broom, methodically sweeping up the evidence of last night.

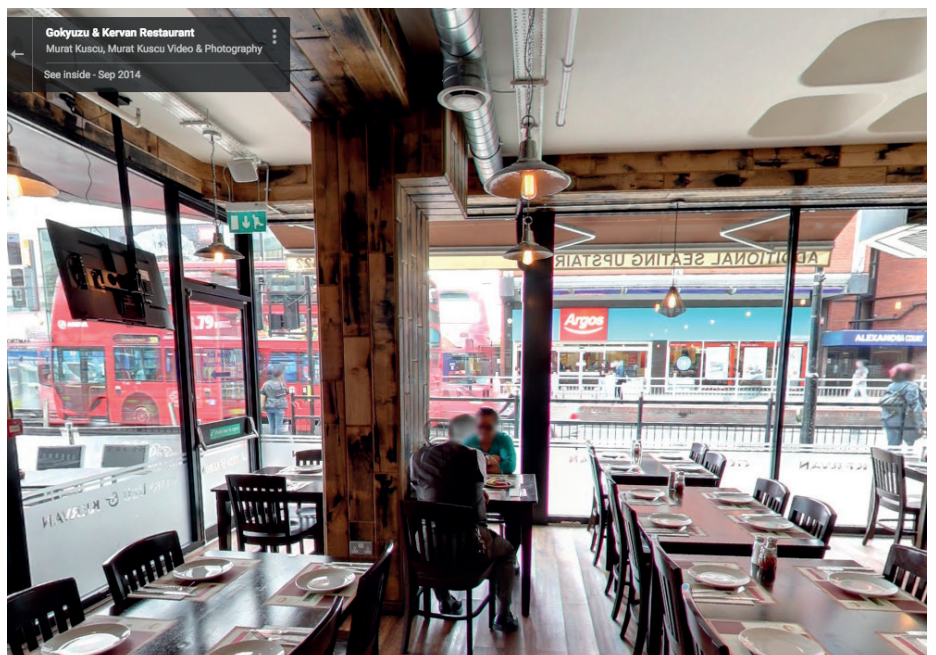


Figure 3: Image captured by Carmel Keren, map data: Google, 2014

A long hour or more may have passed by before the morning's first customers arrived.

A couple.

Mixed mezze platter to share, no drinks.

Their limited exchange seemed stilted, forced. They sat unsmiling. She kept her sunglasses on throughout, despite sitting with her back to the window. As he ate, his head moved with such vigour it became a blur.

The minutes stretched,
the camels walked on.



*Figure 4: Image captured by Carmel Keren,
map data: Google, 2014*

George got on with the prepping, he had to be quick - whilst it had been a quiet morning he knew that the crowds would soon swarm in.

He chopped: cucumbers, cabbage, red onions, parsley, coriander. He sliced lemons.

He speared through tomato after tomato, chili after chili; his skilful hands working fast, leaving his mind free to wander... precisely what he had tried to avoid.

The kitchen boys messing around provided a helpful distraction; they certainly bore the brunt of his temper today.

Yet even so, he couldn't help the thoughts that came into his head as he pierced the taut skin of a chicken's thigh with his sharp metal skewer, pushing it deep through the flesh.

Continued...

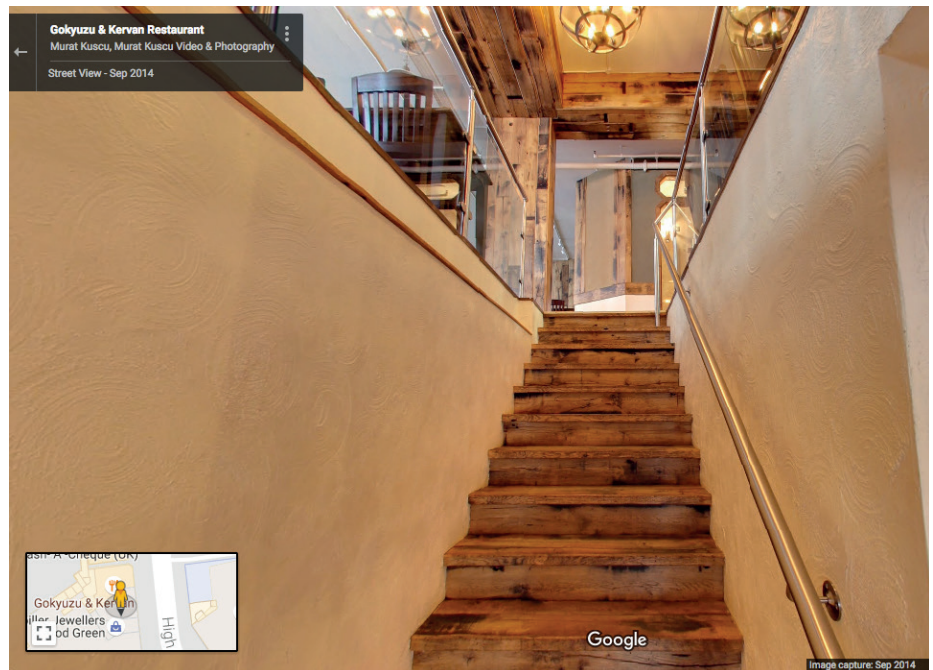


Figure 5: Image captured by Carmel Keren, map data: Google, 2014

A staircase is discovered,
and suddenly,
another room reveals itself.

Tables and chairs in deep mahogany arranged like Tetris blocks,
gleaming; their surface tinted a bright sickly orange by the light
bulbs hung above. A lone camel estranged from his pack is gazing
deeply at a palm tree, his only companion.

A single knife laid out upon the table.
Has it been there all night?

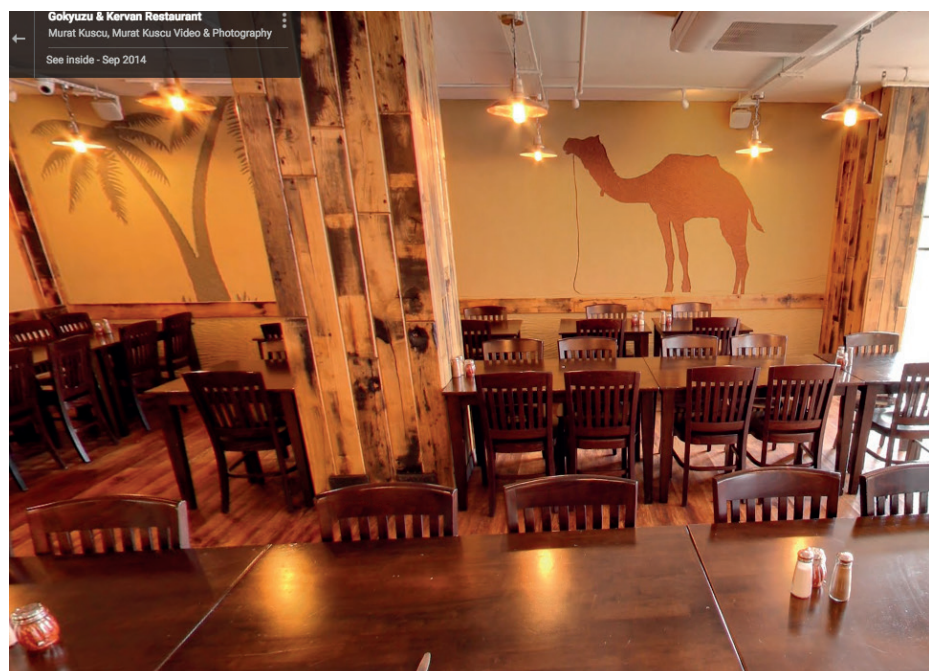


Figure 6: Image captured by Carmel Keren, map data: Google, 2014

Hidden Interiors

“On the screen objects that were a few moments ago sticks of furniture or books of cloakroom tickets are transformed to the point where they take on menacing or enigmatic meaning”^[3]

The story above proposes the notion that the scenes captured on GSV hold the potential to document a crime scene. On the screen, peripheral spaces that we might otherwise overlook in the city are exposed in a way where everything within them gains potential import and significance. A forensic investigation of images captured on GSV reveals hidden dimensions within them, both physical and metaphorical in nature. Physical, in the sense that there are real barriers to our GSV gaze: spaces which we cannot enter, blurs and glitches which we cannot discern. But also metaphorical, as those concealed spaces leave room for the imagined interior to be encountered.

Through GSV we travel back in time, entering spaces that will be inevitably changed or even no longer exist in reality. While we are able to “move” through them digitally, we lose the experience of movement and the passage of time. We become one-sided observers of the scene, with no capacity to influence the environment around us. In this, GSV negates the essence of the interior as it prevents an exchange between it and ourselves. Consequently, we are not capable of truly experiencing the spaces as we would in reality, but in some ways this experience is no less valid and even arguably richer. Through dissecting the scene in suspended animation, we are free to pay attention to detail without the distraction that comes with movement and life. Thus, we gain access to these hidden dimensions which GSV reveals.

As was demonstrated in the story, any sense of movement contained in GSV is captured through its blurs and glitches - the diner whose head becomes a blur as he eats, the ghostly George chopping his vegetables with such vigour that he almost disappears. This creates a curious paradox where the thing that brings GSV most to life – movement - is also what highlights its mechanical nature the most. This resonates with Rosa Menkman’s description: “the glitch is the machine revealing itself”^[4]. The archaic technology used to capture and display the world to us via GSV becomes exposed through a system of glitches, which in turn alter our perception of space.

Conclusion

As Louis Aragon notes, looking at objects on the screen reveals them in an enigmatic dimension. This effect is heightened through GSV as it allows us to “move” through interior spaces that we commonly walk through in daily life via the enigmatic lens of the screen. The uncanny, surreal effect is then further emphasised through a system of glitches which reveal GSV’s archaic technology. GSV thus operates as an omnipotent presence that freezes motion and time, and shapes our experience of the world. We are permitted to explore certain spaces through its lens, and are denied access to others. Yet despite this concealment, GSV captures a moment that may otherwise be overlooked or forgotten. It captures an interior that may otherwise remain hidden. The set of limitations which coalesce in GSV may conceal what we consider to be reality, but also enable a serendipitous encounter with a lost time and a lost space.

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4. Rosa Menkman, *The Glitch Moment(um)* (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011), 30.

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Unveiling. Identity and interiors.
#negated STUDIO

Marta Aversa

*Marta Averna, PhD, is Adjunct Professor in Interior Architecture at Politecnico of Milano
marta.averna@polimi.it*

Abstract

Some buildings are considered without interiors, their majestic and monumental facades concealing their interior spaces and their history inhibiting their adaptation. This paper addresses the *Colonie* – a legacy of Italy's Fascist past – which through a process of survey, the consultation of historical documents, and their reconstruction through drawings and maquettes, highlights unexpected ways of remodelling the *Colonie*'s interiors as inhabitable spaces. The student projects described here testify to the double nature of these places and allow them to be reinvented, overwriting the deeply problematic memories that they transmit, through the identification of new narratives of use and inhabitation.

Totalitarian regimes of the beginning of the last century, tried to control every aspect of human life, using architecture as a tool to communicate new ideas about education, health and family life. In Italy the Fascist Regime developed a special programme focused on children - educated as New Italians devoted to the Nation, they were meant to become masculine soldiers or prolific mothers. During the long summer break from school, a special institution took care of their health and growth. *The Colonie* ^[1] were Summer Camps built throughout Italy, along the seaside, on the slopes of the Alps and the Apennines, and, for daily use, around city centres. These buildings were designed carefully to organise the daily routine of the children that, in groups, never left alone, moved together through the spaces and the different activities.

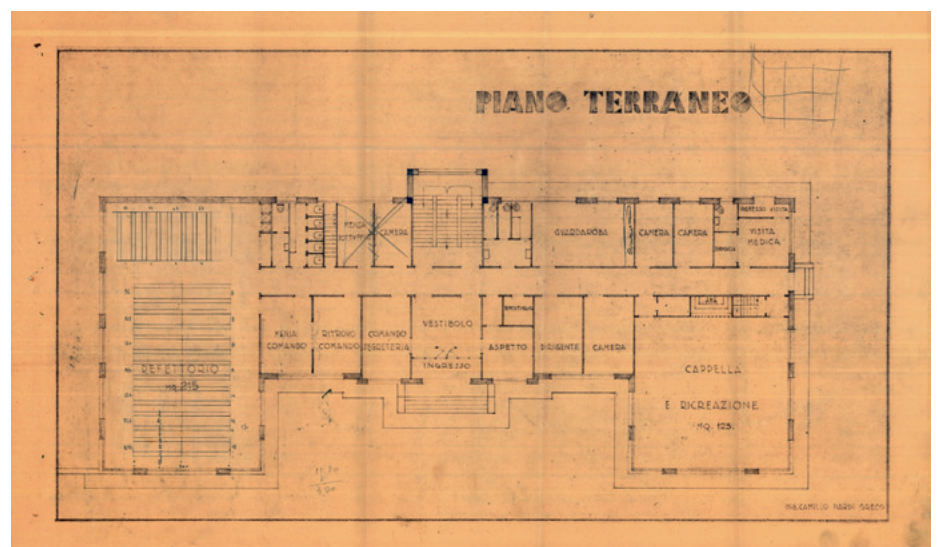


Figure 1: Ground floor plan of the Colonia of Renesso, @Archive Camillo Nardi Greco, Genova

Abandoned after WWII, the *Colonie* were forgotten – their difficult historical legacy has prevented them from being re-used. The research I carried out sheds light on how these interiors were designed and unveils their double nature - they emerge from the landscape as icons of political power but their interiors are very sensible, designed carefully around the everyday rhythms of human life.



Figure 2: Historical view of the tower of Montemaggio, @Archive Camillo Nardi Greco, Genova

The double nature of the Colonie has been investigated in order to identify opportunities for renovation and new use, with the help of the students in my *Interior Design Studios*.^[2] We studied and redesigned two Fascist Summer Camps located in the Ligurian Apennines, in the municipality of Savignone; the first is *Renesso for 8/14 years old girls* (the so called Piccole Italiane), which is next to the village, in the hamlet of Renesso, and the other is *Montemaggio for 8/14 years old boys* (the *Balilla*), which is in the woods of the hamlet of Montemaggio, higher up the valley and visible from far away. They were constructed in 1933 and 1937 by the engineer Camillo Nardi Greco, helped in Renesso by Alfredo Fineschi.

Knowledge/identity: reading the existing

The two buildings are high up in the Scrivia Valley. *Montemaggio* in particular is perfectly visible for dozens of kilometres - its unique identity written in its white façade, with the asymmetric tower originally bearing inscriptions that proclaim Fascist ideas. The interiors at *Montemaggio* are the object of systematic vandalism. People have entered the building - unprotected and unprotectable because of its position - and systematically destroyed it: doors, windows, partitions and false ceilings. This is a relentless process that nobody is able to control. The interior, the “soft” part of the building, translating fascist ideas about taking care of children, is hidden and largely forgotten.

From our historical and archival research we understood that the now semi-abandoned volumes were coloured and designed in detail, with bespoke furniture. In the dining hall ‘all tables are blue: they are made in the upper part of a material composed by slate and nitrocellulose, washable and unbreakable; they are edged with steel, to protect corners from dents and cuts. Dishes are all yellow: every soup plate is embossed with the initials of the Fascist Federation of Genoa in golden letters. Cutlery: spoons, knives and forks are of a brand new type, exhibited this year for the first time in the Triennale of Milan.’^[3]

The process of documenting and interpreting the identity of the *Colonie*, initially uses traditional methods, such as direct survey and the consultation of historical sources. Their reconstruction, through drawings and three-dimensional maquettes, highlight unexpected opportunities to re-use their inhabitable spaces. The circulation of the building is one of the main features and is designed to direct children from the outer garden, to the entrance hall and stairwell.



Figure 3: Historical view of the dormitories of Montemaggio, @Archive Camillo Nardi Greco, Genova

Entering Renesso (and to some extent *Montemaggio*) means crossing a set of interconnected spaces, perfectly controlled in their design and construction. From the outer open space, children had to reach the raised ground floor, climbing up eight steps that were built and finished using bricks. Upon reaching the landing they had to cross a double, full height door in chestnut, framed by decorations in a local green marble; an inner landing with the inscription A.XI ^[4] framed by white tiles on a field of grey tiles; and a second glazed door, before arriving at the entrance hall. The floor finish is continuous throughout, and leads to the main staircase. Concrete transverse beams and a large geometrical lamp, articulate the ceiling. The three flights of stairs are made of three different materials and different colours: red for the metal banister, black for the treads, the skirting, and the top of the opaque part of the parapet, and white for the plaster of the walls and risers. The full space is perfectly lighted by two big rectangular windows.

The identity of these buildings is written in their *material form*. As in all arts, the *signifier* (the material form and appearance of the work) and the *signified* (the cognitive, intellectual and emotional content), are embodied and convey their meaning. The reconstructed plans and sections highlight the unexpected and precise control of all the elements of architecture, from the layout to detailing and materiality.



Figure 5: The relentless process of demolition as seen during the first survey to the Colonia, @Stefania Ubiglia

Old/new: design strategies

The focus of the studio was not only to investigate the history of these buildings but also to envision ways of giving them a new life: the discovery of their interiors and the need to make their identity understandable, has prompted ideas on how to re-use them. Designers, in order to interpret and translate hidden spaces, need to undertake a process of reading and comprehending. Students were asked to identify and preserve irreplaceable qualities and to write a new chapter in the history of the building: the building itself setting opportunities and constraints.

Following this approach, the projects developed for the Studio, and deepened in a Master's degree thesis, have continued to imagine the *Colonia* as a place to take care of young people. One approach was to maintain and *reinforce a selected feature*: the tension in height of Montemaggio, expressed by the higher right tower, can be seen in the project for a Science Museum for Children. The whole height of the tower becomes visible thanks to superimposed voids on different levels, crossed by a transparent slide bringing young guests back from the higher level of the exhibition to the entrance floor.^[5]



Figure 6: Survey and improper uses of the canteen of the Colonia of Montemaggio, @Stefania Ubiglia

Another strategy was to *recognize and evolve a feature*, in this instance the strict functionalism of the *Colonie* and the organization of the circulation of large groups of children - translated into long, straight corridors along the rear façade of Montemaggio. The feature is highlighted and transformed by modifying the corridors in order to disrupt and diversify the rhythm of the circulation.^[6]

A last approach was to *recognize and exceed a feature*: the strict symmetry of the dormitory of Montemaggio is completely overtaken by the new distribution of space, moving the entrance of the art and performance area to the side of the building.^[7]

Hidden/unveiled: a possible conclusion

Every design opportunity comes from the comprehension of the identity of the building. In the specific case of the *Colonie*, it means to unveil what is hidden, invisible or concealed, yet existing. This process allows us to dissect different layers of meaning in order to bring to light its basic, fundamental identity.

Interiors are a part of this identity, but not the main, nor the unique one: they are one of the actors in a play. The presence of opposite attitudes in this specific typology of building, monumental and intimate, makes their recognition difficult. Every interpretation, for preservation or for re-use, has to accept the nature of the building, working not only on commonly recognized features, but also on the ones usually undervalued or neglected, expressed by the complex material forms of architecture.

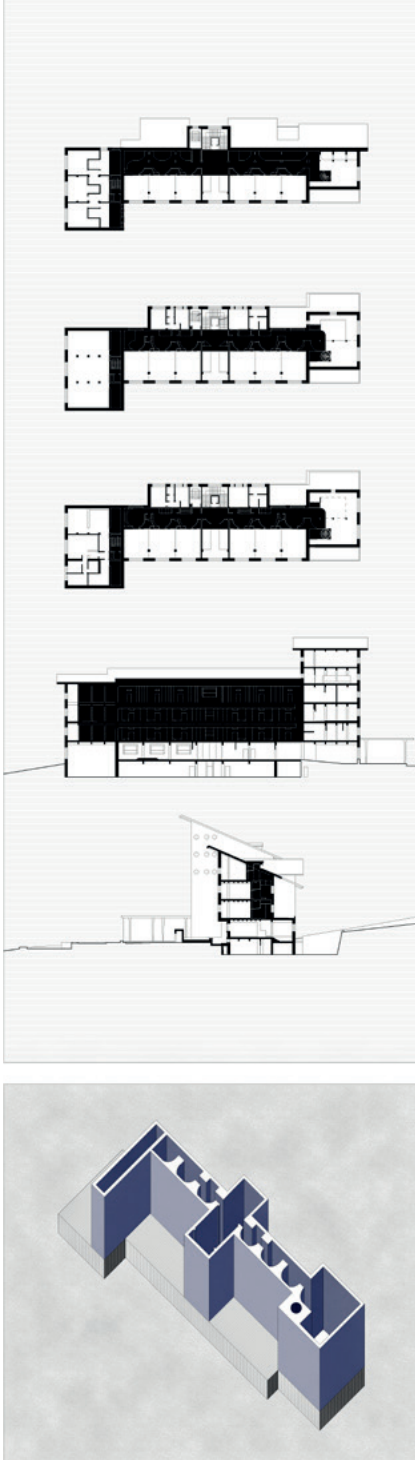


Figure 7: Diagrams showing the broadening and narrowing in the old corridor. Saligari, Riccardo, Tavazzi, Matteo, and Aversa, Marta (supervisor). *Upgrading Montemaggio. Inside architecture: unconventional spaces for private and public dwelling, fostering a new way of learning by doing.* Master Degree Thesis, Milano: Politecnico di Milano, 2016/2017.

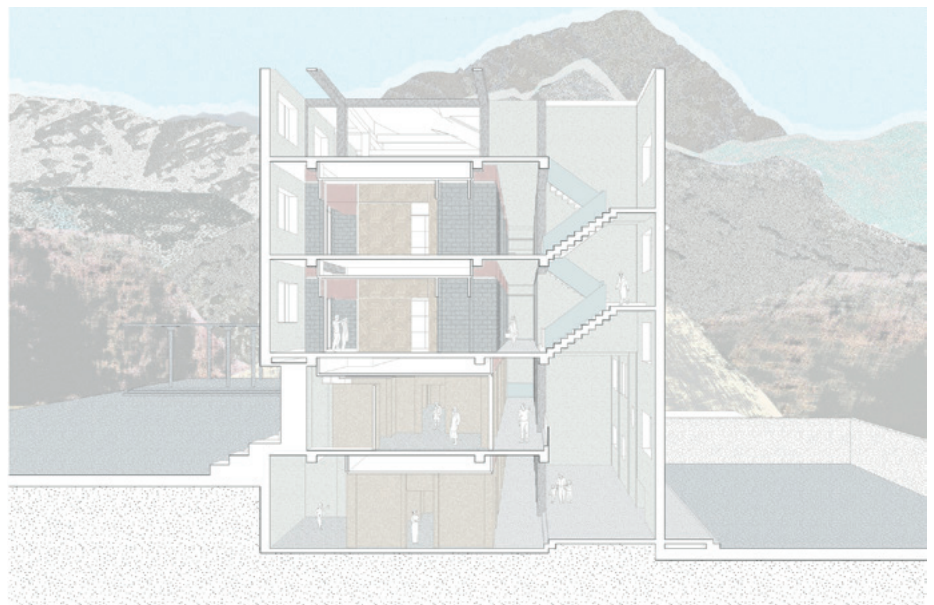


Figure 8: The new distribution of spaces overtaking the strict, functionalist symmetry of the original layout, Merlo, Martina, and Rufin, Gonçalo. *Upgrading Renesso. project for the Interior Design and Preservation Studio 2, 2016/2017: Politecnico di Milano*

Notes & Citations

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2. I refer my experiences to the following Design Studios I supervised in the *Architecture, Built Environment, Interiors* Master Degree of AUIC School of Politecnico of Milano, and to the 6 thesis derived from them: *Interior Design and Preservation Studio*, with prof. Nora Lombardini for the Preservation module, A.Y. 2015/16 and 2016/17; *Architecture of Interiors Design Studio*, with prof. Luana Filogamo for the Building Physics module, A.Y. 2017/18.
3. The description was originally published in a local newspaper. Silvia Barisone, *Architetture in Liguria dagli anni venti agli anni cinquanta* (Milano: Abitare Segesta, 2004).
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In a Darkened Room: reflecting on the negated interior #negated RESEARCH

Nigel Simpkins

*Nigel Simpkins is senior lecturer and programme lead for Design: Culture and Society at the University of Central Lancashire
NBSimpkins@uclan.ac.uk*

Abstract

This paper explores the idea of the photograph as both revealing and concealing of its own interior origins, asking whether the camera obscura's interiority is useful in understanding changes in our relationship with the city. I explore exterior/inner/interior interactions, firstly from the subjective, bodily experience of a camera obscura in Tavira Portugal; a detached and voyeuristic view which renders the outside close yet strangely distant. Secondly, by juxtaposing the camera obscura with Rachel Whiteread's Water Tower, I examine the paradox of an interior which, in changing the way the city is viewed, has simultaneously contributed to its own hiddenness.

Introduction

Design: Culture and Society is a three-year history and theory programme at the University of Central Lancashire, aimed at giving students of Interior and Product Design and Visual Communications a critical approach to design. Starting from spaces and objects, projects explore intersections between different disciplinary contexts. As an interior designer and educator, I have developed the programme to show how the interior in a broad sense can inform multiple disciplinary fields.

In this instance, interior is explored through its connection with the photographic image, examining how spatial engagement with the city through the camera obscura enabled a distancing between subject and object that led to the interior being negated, subsumed into the image itself.



Figure 1: converted water tower, Tavira, Portugal, 'seeing without being seen'. (Photograph Nigel Simpkins)

A version of this paper was delivered to second year design students and formed the basis of seminar discussions about the dominance of the image in the modern city.

The town of Tavira in Portugal is overlooked by a water tower, now disused, its empty tank repurposed as a camera obscura [Figure 1]. High above the heat of the winding streets, I enter the converted cistern, plunged suddenly from bright sunlight into the dark shadow of the chamber. It is cold inside, and as my eyes adjust, I can just make out a large circular disc in the centre, watched by a dozen other people gathered around its darkened surface.



Figure 2: the camera obscura's dark interior creates an eerily detached sense of the silent city below.
(Photograph Nigel Simpkins)

The eagerly awaited moment of reveal is met with exclamations as the overhead mirror is uncovered to project a bright image of the city outside onto the surface of the disc, served up as though on an illuminated platter [Figure 2]. At first glance, the image is strangely distorted and still. There is no sound, no sense of the heat outside, no smell, no pollution; the town below takes on a strange, detached quality, watched over by the camera's eye; seeing without being seen.

There is another disused water tower whose interior marks a changing view of the city. This tank, high above the streets of Soho in New York, was cast by artist Rachel Whiteread as a double of its own interior, revealing more than just the negated volume of its hidden chamber. The tank was once part of a high level urban landscape, that together with other similar structures, formed part of a system that supplied the city below. By inverting the space of the tank in translucent resin, Whiteread recalls memories of the people it once served; a ghostly presence cast in light against the bright sky.^[1]

These two water towers have been remade to contain and reveal aspects of the city through their own interiors. Each one carries in its essential interior condition a link between the observer and city, outer world and inner thought. In both conditions, the interior plays a dual role of concealment and revealing. As both physical and metaphorical space, the interior reveals the city, whilst obscuring itself.

There is an uncanny quality to both examples that, in their doubling of the interior, recalls the Surrealist claim that the city could be changed by changing the way we look at it. Finding strange and disquieting qualities in everyday settings, the Surrealist project was to find new ways to look at the world by opening routes to the unconscious. In that quest, the interior often features, not only as the location of the familiar and the uncanny, but also as a spatial metaphor linking the outer world and the inner mind.

The ability of photographs to capture atmosphere was discussed by Walter Benjamin, who noted the eerie qualities of emptied spaces, doors and passages in Eugene Atget's photographs of Paris. Benjamin saw a strange emptiness in these pictures

that went beyond the rational, documentary capabilities of the medium and into the subject's memories^[2], a projection of inner thoughts onto the photographic image that connects to a sense of interiority.

From Darkness to Light

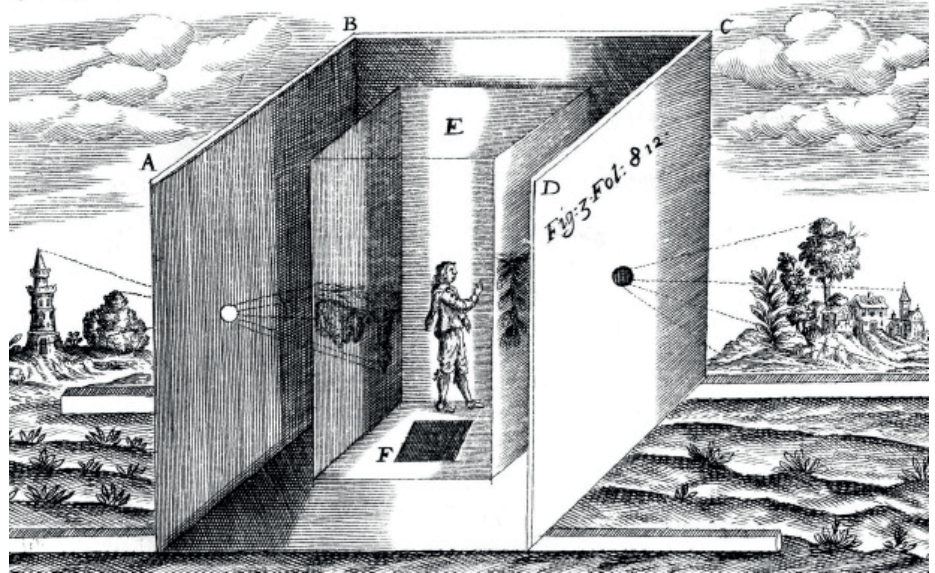


Figure 3: The darkened room of the camera obscura became a useful model for the workings of the eye ... (Athanasius Kircher [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons)

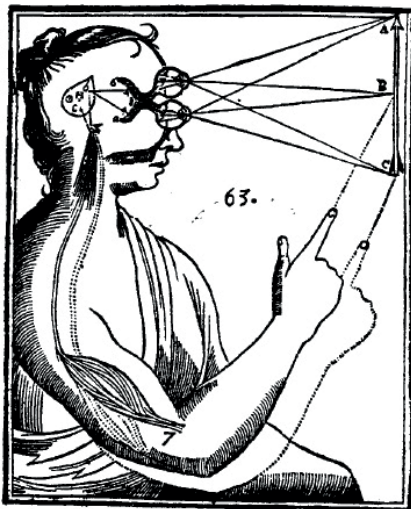


Figure 4: ... and later as an interior spatial metaphor connecting the outer world and inner thought. Increasing emphasis on the scopic realm suppressed the interior nature of the image beneath the image itself. 'Descartes: A Treatise on the formation of the foetus'. (Wellcome Collection, CC BY)

About a hundred years before photography enabled images to be recorded, the camera obscura had been a popular spectacle that opened new ways to see the city [Figure 3]. Its popularity gave expression to an emerging visual society and it is often suggested that the camera obscura's optical arrangement led to the development of photography. While it is true that the principle of projecting an image onto the wall of a darkened room is similar to that used by a modern camera, there were crucial differences, not least in the fleeting glimpse generated by the camera obscura's inability to record the image.

The camera obscura also became a useful model in the early nineteenth century for explaining how the human visual apparatus was believed to work, such that it became a paradigm for understanding the eye and the importance of the sense of vision. Jonathan Crary locates a key shift in the status of the observer in the Cartesian separation of mind and body in which vision was believed to be the primary sense for receiving information from the outside world ^[3] [Figure 4]. As an explanatory model for the way the human eye works, the camera obscura became significant not only for helping to explain the sense of vision, but also as a metaphor for connection between the mind and the outside world, representing, as Crary puts it, '... the most rational possibilities of a perceiver within the increasingly dynamic disorder of the world on which human knowledge is based, mediating the outside world with the inner mind.' ^[4]

There is something reassuring about the use of an historic model as metaphor for unfamiliar, contemporary phenomena. In the rapidly expanding city of the nineteenth century, for example, the camera obscura's comforting enclosure presented a useful analogy for commentators to discuss public anxiety about the complexities of urban life. In Pierce Egan's 1821 account of London life, *Life in London*, the author uses the idea of camera obscura as a metaphor for framing the city, a trope through which to view the city's dangers from a detached and safe place. ^[5] [Figure 5]

'The author has chosen for his readers a Camera Obscura view of London, not only from its safety, but because it is so snug, and also possesses the invaluable advantage of seeing and not being seen.' ^[6]



Figure 5: ‘Tom Getting the Best of a Charley’, Pierce Egan’s *London Life* used the literary trope of the camera obscura to portray the rapidly changing city from a detached and safe viewpoint. (© British Library Board, 838.i.2., opp. page 232).

Beyond its function as a visual apparatus, the camera obscura's view from interior to external world provided a device for the writer and reader to imagine life in the city. To observe in this way depended on the body's presence, mediated by the interior space of the camera, to create a distance between subject and object. The voyeuristic relationship represented in Egan's account showed how the interior viewpoint of the device provided a view of the city, in which the position of the observer was recognised, separate and unseen.

From an interior perspective, the darkened room can be seen as more than a means to view the outside world; it also presents a re-ordering of the relationship between viewer and viewed world, where the observer is simultaneously isolated from the outside world, whilst remaining visually connected. As Crary puts it, ‘an observer is isolated, enclosed and autonomous within (the camera obscura’s) dark confines, it is thus inseparable from a certain metaphysic of interiority.’^[7]

Although the camera obscura provided a useful model to illustrate this shift in the status of the observer, its prominence as a literary trope declined in the nineteenth century. As rational scientific knowledge replaced the use of metaphorical example, so the camera obscura's ability to represent the eye and to act as a metaphorical link between external world and inner thought, was superseded by the emerging language of psychological discovery, reframing discussion about the interaction of outer perception and inner mind.

The use of both city and interior as metaphors for the workings of the mind, was anticipated to some extent by the interior condition inherent to the camera obscura. The Surrealists presented an interpretation of modernism that explored the irrational alongside the rational, often using photography to explore links between city and mind. As previously noted, Atget's photographs of thresholds and doorways were cited by Benjamin for their portrayal of a surreal sensibility in exploring boundaries between interior and exterior that coincided with the development of psychoanalysis, noting that,

‘... no face is Surrealistic to the same degree as the true face of a city. No picture by de Chirico or Max Ernst can match the sharp elevations of the city’s inner strongholds...’ [8]

As the photograph superseded the camera obscura, it seems that its connective spatial model changed. Beatriz Colomina suggests that the interiority on which that apparatus depends had become subsumed into the image itself as the negative within the camera became indistinguishable from the printed, externalised picture.^[9]

Not only does the camera obscura connect visually between the interior and exterior, but it also opens up an analogy between the outer world and inner thought, processes in which the strange and irrational come to the surface. The blurring of boundaries between reality and imagination that the interior view provides, can create a disturbing experience in the processing of inner thoughts and memories. The eerie sense of silent movement projected onto the camera obscura's surface, heightened by the "cosy", quasi-homely atmosphere of the darkened chamber, instils a quality, consistent with encounters with the everyday in which the familiar takes on a strange sense of its opposite, the uncanny^[10].

Following the Surrealist notion that the city can be changed by the way we look at it, I return to the two water towers for their capacity to show the interior as a bridge between outside and inside. In the rooftop perspective afforded by Whiteread's water tower, the cast of the tank's inner space is turned inside out. Set alongside the outward faces of its neighbouring cisterns, this interior gestures towards now obscured memories.

Similarly, the camera obscura at Tavira shows how the inside of the city has become obscured in urban discourse by the visual apparatus that purportedly displaced it. Is it that photography, rather than simply evolving from the camera obscura, created a different sense of space in which the interior becomes subsumed into the photographic image; where the interior, disappears in its own representation?^[11]

Reflecting in the Dark

As the mirror is once again obscured, the room darkens and I am left to reflect on the camera obscura's ability to reveal the city to the observer who engages spatially with a reflection of the world. The interior condition, in both its physical and metaphorical forms, has the capacity to mediate between the inner mind and the outer world.

Investigation of, and through, the interior can move us towards an imaginary and atmospheric city triggered by inner memories. In pursuing the goal of new interior knowledge, conception of the interior for its doubled state opens possibilities for the negative to reveal something that the scopic realm has kept hidden. A photograph can convey an atmosphere and trigger an emotional response just as the cast impression of an interior is able to convey the memory of its past. By distancing subject from object, the photograph and the cast reconnect with inner worlds that are both strange and familiar, yet hidden.

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Atlantic Wall bunkers possible Re-use. Strategies for the re-appropriation of a forgotten heritage. #concealed STUDIO

Gennaro Postiglione & Francesco Lenzi

Gennaro Postiglione: is Full Professor in Architecture of Interiors and Head of MSc in Architecture Architecture-Built Environment-Interiors at Politecnico di Milano, gennaro.postiglione@polimi.it

Francesco Lenzi: is PhD in Interior and Exhibition Design and Adjunct Professor in Architecture of Interiors at Politecnico di Milano, francesco.lenzi@polimi.it

Abstract

The Design Studio has developed a project aimed at enhancing the remains of the Atlantic Wall, fostering the recovery of several artefacts completely forgotten and hidden from the everyday gaze, in order to promote *Le Grand Tour de l'Atlantique*: an equipped path, similar to the great alpine tracks, where simple bivouacs allow the division of the crossing into stages, acting as “points of support” (*Stützpunkt*). This is a journey in the places of the Great War, in memory of those events, along an extraordinary coastline rich with countless elements of cultural and natural value, but also in contact with monumental ruins full of history. The project explores ways of re-appropriating both these hidden interiors and their monumental landscapes.

The Atlantic Wall (AW) is a fortified Atlantic coastal infrastructure erected by the Nazis during World War Two, in order to protect the Atlantic coastline stretching from the Pyrenees to North Cape from the much-feared Allied landings. This immense defensive line was supposed to be composed of 15,000 buildings (of which only around 12,000 were actually built) set out strategically along nearly 6,000 km, with an average inland penetration of several kilometres. Despite these stunning figures, as well as the remarkable amount of buildings still standing and the dramatic related memories, the AW has been largely disregarded or at least underestimated as to its potential to narrate the events that brought it into being. This is proven by the overall state of abandonment in which most of its structures stand: the progressive decay of an uncomfortable heritage. A system of spaces and objects removed from the everyday gaze due to their dramatic past.

The AW educational experience was viewed as an important piece of a larger puzzle aimed at the re-appropriation of special hidden interiors completely removed from collective memory for their highly problematic heritage: finding a way to voice their material and immaterial value. In fact, the theme was chosen with the aim to give a new semantic dimension to objects – bunkers and other military buildings – generally forgotten or deliberately excluded from everyday life, setting them within a broad unifying framework. Therefore, the objective of the course was to explore possible processes for the re-appropriation of the AW's artefacts, considering the infrastructure as the largest European transnational shared memory, a possible tool for enhancing inclusive dynamics instead of conflictual ones^[1] typically connoting these interiors [Figure1].

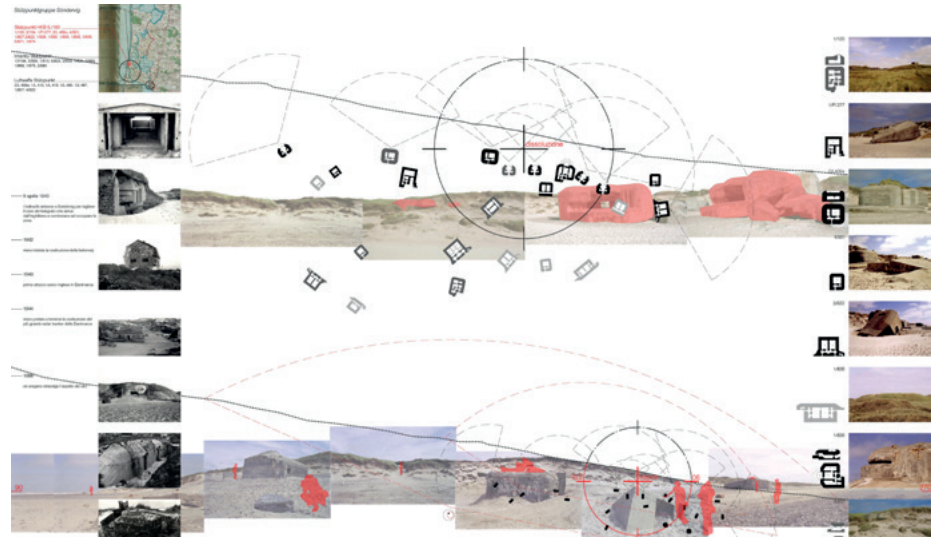


Figure 1: AW survey © AWLM2005. The detailed survey of a specific *Stützpunkt* located in the North of Denmark shows the relation between each bunker and their surroundings: at the same time their hidden interiors were tightly connected with their contexts but at the same time their position in territory was only determined by their defensive role, without any respect or integration with the landscape. Atopic architecture vs integrated landscape infrastructure, this is one of the paradoxes AW bunkers.

The operational field of the course was developed through strong trans-scalar research, connecting the specific elements and artefacts to a broader and more general scheme. Students were first of all asked to conduct a wide-ranging study aimed at acquiring knowledge on the AW's systemic and structural value, as well as on its peculiar relationship with the natural environment and, most of all, its powerful and frightening hidden interiors. In fact, bunkers and their rooms meld into the Atlantic coastal landscape in a relationship nowadays defined as symbiotic, despite its violent and overbearing genesis. Scattered along the coast - sometimes partially swallowed up by the very land they used to violently occupy - the AW bunkers appear as *objets trouvés*.

This interpretation and mapping were possible owing to the discovery, analysis and assembly of iconographic and cartographic documents which allowed for the reconstruction of an archaeological landscape of the conflict, recognising its great expressive and testimonial potential as well as its aesthetic-landscape value [Figure 1]. A practical step supporting the themed itinerary - which we called *Le Grand Tour de l'Atlantique* - was the creation of a large map of the AW, capable of restoring the meaning and overall readability of its heritage made of places and buildings, history and memories: putting AW rooms one after another. While mapping the territory, as a natural integration, students catalogued their interiors according to the functional typology, trying to grasp, at the same time, the potentially figurative value of their interiors^[2]. The consideration of the formal and material qualities of the buildings - that somehow transcend the unavoidable testimonial value, bringing them back to the condition of architecture - triggered the planning phase aimed at their reassessment.

Students were asked to draw up assumptions on how to enhance this cultural landscape, making the relationship between man, environment and memory somehow more accessible and understandable, through different interpretations aimed at bringing back to life their spaces: from defensive rooms totally inaccessible to welcoming interiors opening up their space to the “foreigner”, to the “other”, the “unexpected” one. Indeed, the places where the AW bunkers are located have a spectacular quality. Therefore, we asked the students to investigate this aspect by highlighting the relationship between their interior spaces and the landscape. The bunkers, set in this evocative context, were reconsidered as belonging to an integral narrative process where the direct experience of the artefacts is once again part of an extended and complex territorial system. Taking into consideration the bunkers objective - to watch over a specific section of the territory, they were re-designed as optical cameras capturing the surrounding landscape. The common starting point was based on the fundamental idea of building new bridges between people, artefacts, places and history, turning these difficult and hidden interiors

into a tool for the re-appropriation of the territory and the landscape. Using this strategy, the students' proposals began by disrupting the *unheimlich* quality of the AW and its wartime identity in favour of new possible horizons. To this end, Giorgio Agamben's poetic power was used recalling the following phrase: 'If to consecrate (sacralise) is the verb that describes things leaving the sphere of human law, by contrast to profane means to restore them to man's free use. [...] Deactivating an old use making it inoperative, potentially generates a new use'^[3].

The proposals were thus aimed at restoring the AW hidden interiors and their natural context to the direct experience of *nudo luogo* (bare place): through minimum linking interventions and devices capable of connecting them and assigning them a poetic use, the AW rooms were reconsidered as milestones of a themed itinerary. The system of paths and small equipped spaces re-connecting the bunkers – in turn reconsidered as places where it is possible to stop and build relationships – was designed as a means to re-approach and enter into contact with WWII history in a reconciliatory view: on the one hand, the path reveals the testamentary scope of the dramatic events that left their mark on it, and on the other, it attempts to offer itself as a meeting point for people geographically and culturally distant, where they can enter into new relationships, radically transforming what was hidden into a manifesto^[4]. The sense of *Le Grand Tour de l'Atlantique* is based on the attempt to reconsider this painful heritage as a possible reconciliation between places, events and people through the observation, reflection and use of a territory studded with material and immaterial traces. Through the different design proposals, these forgotten interiors are literally restored to the public gaze, in a physical and symbolic process able of translating simple practices into vectors of new dwelling models.

On such a basis, the proposal formulated by students Daniela Canzi and Ester Golia was based on the attempt to rediscover the AW as an architectural artefact which, beyond its bond with the past, can be recognised by visitors while they regain its possession. The project methodology progresses in parallel with the strategy and approach used by the Germans for the construction of the AW: standard and repeatable buildings positioned in a vast and diversified territory according to precise requirements provided in the *Regelbau*. Starting from the AW state of abandonment, the aim of the project is to bring to light the entire defensive system observing it from points of view that are different from military logics, especially through unexplored viewpoints such as the architectural, landscape and aesthetic ones. Therefore, it is organised on the basis of a three-level standardised hierarchical information system drawing inspiration from the settlement criteria used by the Germans, with the aim to restore the AW to its original identity of unitary artefact drawing strength and meaning from the fact of being a system of correlated junctions and where the mono-functional hidden rooms play a key role. The first level of the new design is the national one. Each country is provided with a national historical archive relating to the AW. The second level of information involves a system of info-centres all alike in different points of the coastline. The information centres follow a particular settlement criterion that draws inspiration from an analysis of the quantity of concrete used in the construction of the AW. The third and last level is mainly local and is connected to each single interior grafted along the defence line with the task to provide information in the specific place. Using the AW rooms typology as a design strategy constitutes the most practical modality for providing information on its hidden nature against its natural manifested context.

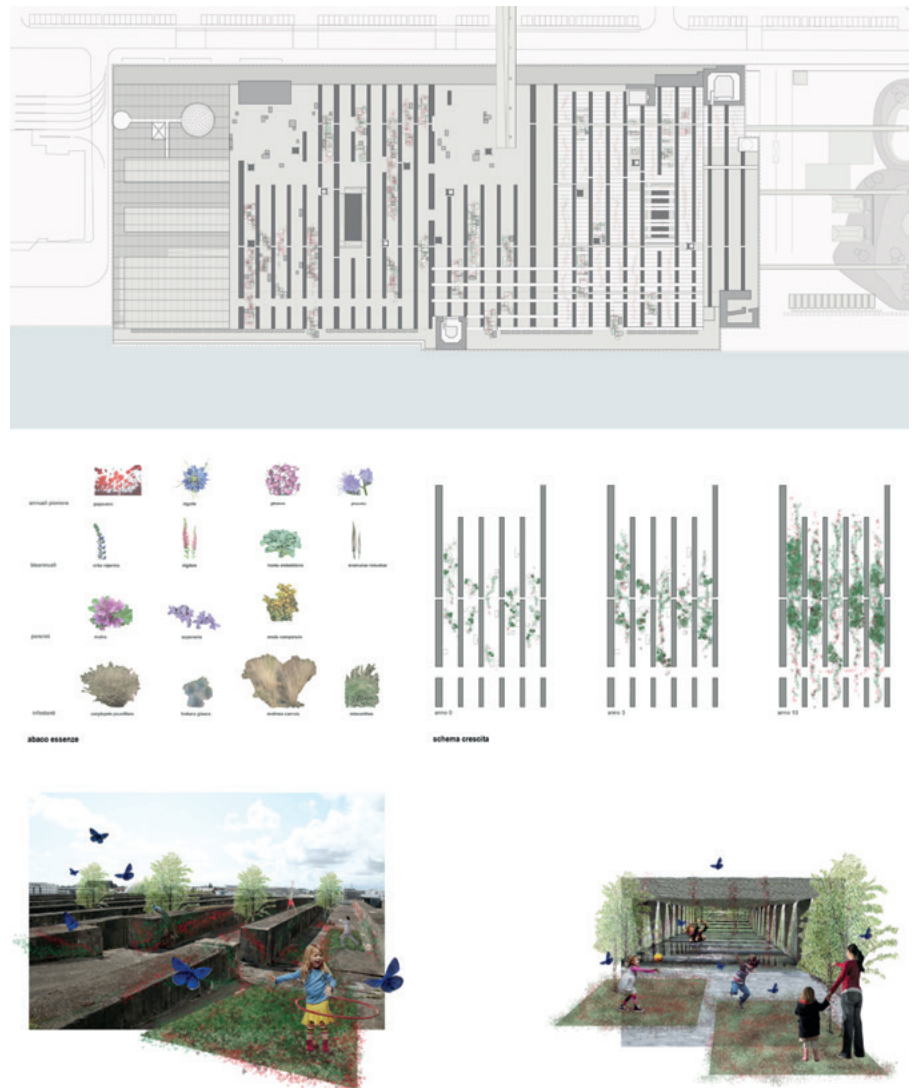


Figure 2: The roof park © students V. Bormolini, C. Brunelli, M. Parati. To assess the final and total re-appropriation of the monumental and iconic building, the project enhances the artificial landscape of its roof, already an eco-system of birds and wild grassroots, implementing the presence of water and vegetation and allowing people accessing the new urban park stepping with their feet on the “head” of the cyclopic and massive U-Boot.

Another relevant work is the project formulated by students Valeria Bormolini, Claudia Brunelli, Margherita Parati, based on the proposal to renovate the Saint-Nazaire submarine base in France. The base is one of the 11 U-Boot bunkers built along the AW whose function was to host the German submarines returning from their offensive missions in the Atlantic Ocean and allow for their construction and maintenance. The building is a compact rectangular volume covering more than 38,000 sqm and is made of 480,000 cubic metres of reinforced concrete. The project is based on two main strategies of intervention, both acting on hidden and completely dark interiors of this monumental building: the first re-vitalises some of the interiors with a daily market, recalling values of traditional local markets which are meeting places, trade thresholds, gathering places; the second provides for the inclusion of several urban services within some other hidden spaces – an AW exhibition room, a small library, a cinema – as laid down by local town plans in the immediate area around the base [Figure 2]. Therefore, the re-appropriation strategy fits into the existing framework without substantial building modifications, with the exception of an opening in the roofing needed to bring “to light” those long-time hidden interiors. At the same time, though, it rewrites the daily use through activities with strong social connotations historically characterised by the possibility for people to meet and socialise. In particular, the market –where food plays an important role as means of intercultural dialogue – maintains a margin of relational spontaneity and unexpectedness through organisational and execution modalities that avoid rigid classifications: a total subversion of the enclosed character of this inhospitable

building and its interiors. Somewhere in-between the desire to remove painful memories and the fear of losing traces fundamental for the memory of one's identity, the grounds of the project allow for mediation. The capacity of the project to become the interpreter of a forgotten space starts from the very essence of the interior space to welcome new exchanges between physical environment and human behaviour by changing the collective perception of the place.

Other interesting proposals were those in which the bunkers forgotten interiors were simply restored to their original function as landscape point-of-view, without a full-blown transformation in their use. Gigantic cameras focusing on the horizon, eternally awaiting the event for which they were built, as in *The Longest Day* (1962, movie directed by Ken Annakin, Andrew Marton, Bernhard Wicki, Darryl F. Zanuck).

At the end of the educational experience, the laboratory results were exhibited in the patio of Politecnico di Milano. Along with the students, we created an exhibition system based on the reproduction of one bunker interior on a scale 1:1 and a series of images put together in a "panoptic order" capable of generating a strongly experiential path that recalled the planimetric situation of the Stützpunkt of Soulac-Sur-Mer, along the French Atlantic southern coastline. To access the hidden interior, naked of its wall depth reduced to a simple skin, manifested strongly the wish to neutralise its scary but powerful presence. The choice to reproduce one room interior trying to respect not only its dimensions but also its enormous mono-material structure, required great effort rewarded by the immersive visual experience. Even the circular order of the 360° panorama – positioned on the basis of the bunkers position in the landscape – was conceived with the intention to reproduce a privileged spatial dimension and experience in order to observe the landscape of/from the bunkers with new eyes - the same horizontal view characterising human perspective and thus re-appropriating the hidden interiors of the AW exactly with the same gaze that was before excluded [Figure 3].



Figure 3: POLIMI exhibition © G. Postiglione. The re-enactment of a Stützpunkt, between mock-up and scaled fragments, pictures and drawings, has its clue in the ultimate interior of the bunker cell: inaccessible, compact, hidden, massive. The act of taking off its volumetry, and unveiling it as a simple and fragile, almost innocent, room has the power of enhancing its interior and the strong interiority of such a large scale intervention.

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Concealed interiors for production in the Age of Industry 4.0

#concealed RESEARCH

Silvia Piardi, Francesco Scullica, Michele Ottomanelli & Elena Elgani

Silvia Piardi is Head of the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, IT.

Francesco Scullica is an associate professor, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, IT.

Michele Ottomanelli is an adjunct professor, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, IT.

Elena Elgani is an adjunct professor, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, IT.

elena.elgani@polimi.it

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to investigate the hidden dimension of smart factories from the perspective of the interior, with relevant case studies that test the definition of the new factory: transparent, hybrid spaces, that relocate the individual in the midst of production[1], and are focused on the integration of the site of production with the city. The paper presents the ongoing research “Spaces for Production in the Age of industry 4.0: the Man at the Centre of the Factory” developed by the authors at the Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with Senaf for Mecspe 2019.

Introduction

Contemporary workspaces and, in particular, industrial and manufacturing ones, are a focal point of our society. These spaces are an important setting for design research, in spite of modifications imposed by technological advancement and by lifestyle change. It can be said that people would keep working even in the future, even if they have to relate more and more to intelligent and self-sufficient systems. Workplaces are rapidly changing from neutral environments to spaces with increased ambition: the central role of ‘career’ in our life has unquestionably elevated the workspace to be one of key significance. Workspaces should sustain us, nourish us with inspiration, be challenging and comfortable. However, during the past few years, factories have too often been considered exclusively as spatial diagrams in which functions are made to fit into the space provided. However, the recent fourth industrial revolution has imposed a further transformation based on a responsive and adaptive manufacturing system^[1]. This innovative mode, called industry 4.0, generates new typologies of space for the production of goods: smart factories. For contemporary and innovative productive spaces, previous layouts and spatial organization are completely outdated because the production lines are entirely twisted, often exposed as showrooms instead of being hidden as technical space.

Today a new archetype, imposed by the industry 4.0 formula, sets the metamorphosis of the factory and the definition of new spaces: it is necessary to investigate these smart factories to understand their transformation. The changes are many and radical. The smart factory is occupied by a new generation of machinery, robots and cobots - devices used by professionals in a network of connections, sometimes making the production process itself invisible to the eyes of the worker. Furthermore, the machines become digital and willing to learn. When the mechatronics dialogue with IT, new expertise is required from the workers and previous tasks are transformed through new business models based on data analysis to evaluate efficiency and productivity. Sometimes this culture of innovation, typical of digital manufacturing processes, comes with skills based on a creative and analogic dimension such as “open access” and “open ended”, bringing to life methods of entrepreneurship, which allow for the creation of startups and microbusinesses based on auto-production. Fab-labs and maker-spaces that have opened in the last few years in every urban centre are



Figure 1: DEGW - Lombardini 22 designed the new headquarter of SEW Eurodrive in Italy by applying design strategies to connect different spaces, like meeting area and factory, in order to create innovative relationship - Author ph. Dario Tettamanzi.

tangible examples. Here self-determination and social innovation define new business models. In this way industry has become smaller in some cases, but surely also cleaner and smarter as well.

The research

From the planning point of view, which are the themes that directly affect these new spaces of production? And what kind of role do they offer? This is the main topic of the research “Spaces for Production in the Age of industry 4.0: the Man at the Centre of the Factory” developed by the authors at the Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with Senaf for Mecspe 2019.

First of all, a new relationship with the territory is established. On one side we witness a return of spaces of production to the city, replacing stores, within shopping malls and dwellings and/or in abandoned spaces. These compact production systems named “mini factories” represent a new typology of manufacturing systems that enable the flexible production of sustainable personalized small or micro products closer to the customer in terms of features offered, place of fabrication, delivery time and price^[3]. The custom headphone company Normal, which built a retail and factory space on the first floor of a NY building, can be considered a significant example^[4]. Normal uses an app able to take photos of both ears and a 3d printing system to realise the final customized product which is sent to the client in a short time. The space includes the store, the factory and also the offices for the brand, revealing the entire production process to the customer – the wall of the factory is completely transparent enabling the customers to see the preparation of their headphones. Clients have a personalized product at an affordable price with a unique customer experience. The architectural historian Nina Rappaport has reexamined the history of the factory in her book *Vertical Urban Factory*^[5], concluding that factories with new features could be reintegrated into city life in order to create a new paradigm for vertical factories, that are sustainable and integrated into the dense urban context and able to create a new relationship with it.

In other examples, the new smart factory remains connected to context. This is a strategic choice that takes into account the quality of production, the dimension of the site, the availability of manpower, and the continuity of a specific tradition. This situation is common in Italy for many small and medium enterprises. Nevertheless, the relationship with the context to which these enterprises belong is

intensified by seeking opportunities to open up to the territory, not only in terms of activities offered to employees, but also through the design of buildings able to merge with the surrounding context.

These transformations deeply affect the design of the work/production interior where new and innovative production lines, increasingly efficient and autonomous devices capable of self-monitoring the process and to perform precise tasks in aseptic and clean spaces, are in need of a completely different design approach. In this new and smart industrial context, technological equipment obscures the worker's role, opening up ethical and political questions. Undoubtedly workers are facilitated and supported in the performance of their duties by new devices such as user-friendly dashboards, programming systems, VR viewers or smart glasses that remember the tasks to be performed, smart watches, smartphones and computers. Often, however, the spaces in which these tasks must be carried out are designed for the machines and not for the workers: the result is huge spaces with neutral colors in which the spatial circulation is the result of the optimization of flow, the efficiency of process and a generic environmental comfort, while little attention is paid to those details that could, even indirectly, improve the experience of the worker.

The world of design has recently begun to focus on the spaces of the factory, proposing solutions for the expansion and redefinition of industrial layouts in which new values are expressed, such as continuity between the production areas and the offices where administrative activities are carried out. A continuity that can be achieved through buffer zones, which work as a filter between very different activities, but also as an opportunity for people to meet - relaxation areas, cafeterias and meeting spaces, designed with reference to the workplace, undertake this connective role. The result is efficient and produces welcoming environments where greater attention is paid to details such as the choice of colours and materials. These relational places are designed to be domestic and have an impact on decreasing stress, as demonstrated by the SEW Eurodrive project in the province of Milan by Lombardini 22^[6], where the different work teams are connected through the removal of physical and mental barriers with flexible and fluid spaces and meeting points.

An example of this relational space is visible in the Rold group^[7], which conceived a way to show in real time the performances of the machines by connecting a touch screen with a simple interface to each device. This system allows workers to receive alarms on their personal electronic devices, leading to a rise in the number of spontaneous meeting points in the productive plant with touchscreens and high tables where workers and team leaders can discuss productive matters in a calmer and more concealed environment while still being immersed in the productive area of the factory.

At the same time the sensibility of some businessmen that offer benefits to their employees in a system of corporate welfare can also be translated into spatial solutions; an example is the Arcoplex group, a company that decided to make available to its employees a baby-sitting service, a gym, a sauna and a pool that can be used by the workers and by their families during the week. The trust in progress, the celebration of technology and processes are a prompt to envision new opportunities for these typologies of spaces and is often reflected in design outcomes: the increase of transparency, for example, metaphorically and physically testifies to the will to reconnect the inside and the outside - sites of production and the city. The challenge for today's designers is to handle the dichotomy between technological innovation and the transformation of productive systems.



Figure 2: At Rold (Italy) machinery are interconnected through a web network that allows therefore to be controlled remotely and to show in real time the performances of the machine - Author ph. U. Monchiero.

Can the interior of a smart factory evolve from a hidden technical space to a hybrid and integrated space in the city? The TRUMPF factory in Chicago^[8], is a perfect example of how the designer Barkow Leibinger, exposed the hidden spaces of production to the public. This new centre combines the spaces of production and presentation/sales, and turns high tech machines and innovative production processes into exhibition-like show pieces. The wide glazed side of the factory runs along the interstate road and allows travellers to see, even from the façade, the production process. The architecture itself also integrates the cultural, environmental and productive heritage of the site: the robust and elegant steel and glass construction with Corten cladding connects to the history of the “rust belt”^[9].

Conclusions

Design needs to understand changes in production, provide flexibility for the working spaces and machines and focus on the operator's needs. For what concerns Italy, the urge to keep up with the 4th industrial revolution, means to adapt existing buildings to include the new methods of production. It is possible to drive the change only if there will be an evolution in cultural and business models: the revolution imposed by industry 4.0 can open up a new paradigm for industrial spaces in the future.

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9. An informal term that refers to the industrial decline of the Midwestern region of the United States.

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Members Only - The private life of the gay and bi-sexual, male sauna #concealed PRACTICE

Michael Westthorp

*Michael Westthorp is a design practitioner and lecturer at Middlesex University
m.westthorp@mdx.ac.uk*

Abstract

This paper explores the typology of the gay sauna, examining the design process behind one of London's largest and most frequently visited venues, which the author designed. It ponders the dichotomy of society's acceptance of the expression of sexuality, against the concealed, clandestine nature of such establishments. It exposes, partially, the arrangement and materiality of a hidden interior and juxtaposes the safety that this space engenders with that of 'home'.

'Space is a pressing matter and it matters which bodies, where and how, press up against it. Most important of all is who these bodies are with: in what historical and actual spatial configuration they find and define themselves.' Elspeth Probyn. ^[1]

In 2004 I was commissioned to design *Pleasuredrome* which would go on to become, arguably, London's most visited, gay and bi-sexual male sauna [Figure 1]. It is the only venue of this type to be continuously open 24 hours of the day, seven days a week, every day of the year. It is also the only interior of this type to receive recognition from the D&AD awards (annual awards for the design industry). A clandestine space, inaccessible to the general public, the entry criteria is based upon age, gender and sexual orientation. Customers use the space as restaurant, bar, psuedo-hotel, cinema, club, washhouse, spa and Grindr meet-up joint, staying for up to 12 hours at a time. It is a sexual space where encounters are nurtured and stimulated. A hidden world, always populated, within an island site under a railway, part of the city, yet removed.

We all understand the need for a safe space, a place where we 'can be ourselves', for many of us this safe space manifests in the idea of 'home'. While I will not attempt to explore the myriad interpretations and theories of 'home' here, it nevertheless connotes belonging and familiarity and establishes feelings of security, acceptance and comfort - all principals which make one feel safe.

Home also provides a rare opportunity for concealment from the outside world. Members of the gay community however may have had to experience a fracture from their traditional family home, with all of the embedded sense of security this provides, particularly when family members have been unable to fully accept their sexuality. Duyvendak and Verplanke outline a situation many gay men and lesbians experience, 'since their family homes were often quite hellish for them – with family members rejecting their sexual preferences... they often had to look for new places that could become their home'. ^[2]

Pleasuredrome is very well attended on Christmas day when some of the customers are unwilling and/or unable to return to a judgemental family environment. This displacement from home, a space which many of us take for granted, is not of course unique to the gay community. As people leave the places of their past, by choice or through necessity, it is common to sometimes want to regain the sense of safety that has been lost. While a new circumstance can be exciting and offer great potential, the transitional process can also be alienating. A new environment whether country, city, building or interior, can give rise to anxiety as well as opportunity. The need for a place where one can be, express and realise oneself, explore shared histories, increasingly has to be sought, at least temporarily, within the public realm.

In his writings on *Third Place* Ray Oldenburg describes the 'neutral ground' in which 'no one is required to play host, and in which we all feel at home and comfortable'. ^[3] The rise of interest in such spaces gives testament to an interior's ability to 'arrest

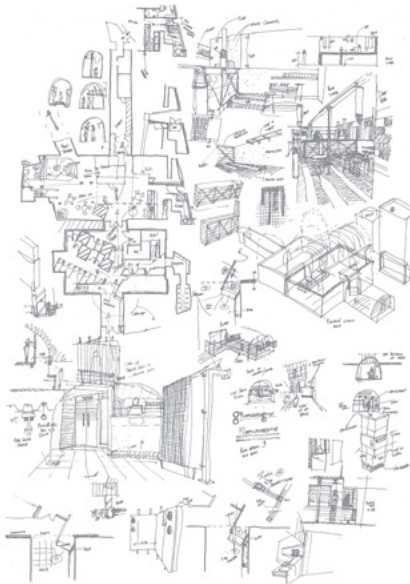


Figure 1: Sketch scheme sheet 3.

transient and timid inclinations, amplify and solidify them...thereby grant us more permanent access to a range of emotional textures'.^[4] While this describes the inner, restorative quality of certain buildings, specifically their interior spaces, more typically third places offer the foundation for an environment where we can connect, be understood and be valued. The need for spaces which provide refuge, the ability to be concealed from outside observation, while also offering connection to people who may provide some level of affinity, is an understandable human aspiration. If this private life cannot be found at home then we must look elsewhere.



Figure 2: Main Entrance façade draws on portcullis imagery, the warm light directs the eye. (Credit: M. Westthorpe)



Figure 3: Reception Tunnel. The reception desk is in contrast to its surroundings. (Credit: Philip Vile)



Figure 4: Main Stair to changing room. (Credit: Philip Vile)

The inconsistent nature of society's attitude towards gay sexuality is compounded by closures in, along with the tightening of secrecy surrounding the sauna scene. While in the UK, gay saunas are perfectly legal, their presence is dissolving and becoming more inconsequential. When discussing the design of the entrance, the client wished to strike the balance between enabling customer's discretion, while attempting to have a conversation with the surrounding streetscape and wider context. The building was subject to an arson attack during construction and while it would be speculative to suggest this was homophobic in motivation, it did serve as a reminder that not everyone in the existing neighbourhood was happy with the forthcoming development. The threshold itself is purposely prolonged. The sequence attempts to contain as Thomas Micchelli describes 'the exquisite limen of suspension, confusion, escalating tension'.^[5] The facade [Figure 2] is latticed, open yet protective, beginning to cut down the view to the interior beyond. A deep brick tunnel [Figure 3] offers the customer protection from the street, while allowing obscured views through coloured glass into the main space. The reception sits at an acute angle to the geometry of the existing space, jutting into the tunnel, grabbing attention in its contrasting arrangement and materiality. Overhead, mesh screens allow views into the changing rooms above.

The staircase [Figure 4], which continues the route, begins to envelope the customer further shielding and protecting them from view. In some areas we exposed the existing brick wall [Figure 5] so that the layers of protection, which make up the enclosures, are revealed. Lockers, used as walls, divide the large volume of the changing room into smaller compartments. An angled mirror [Figure 6] mounted above the second stair, allows views from the changing room down into the ground floor. This entrance sequence happens before the customer descends into the main spaces of the venue. All has been designed so that the space gradually pulls the viewer into the hidden interior, slowly removing the outer environment.

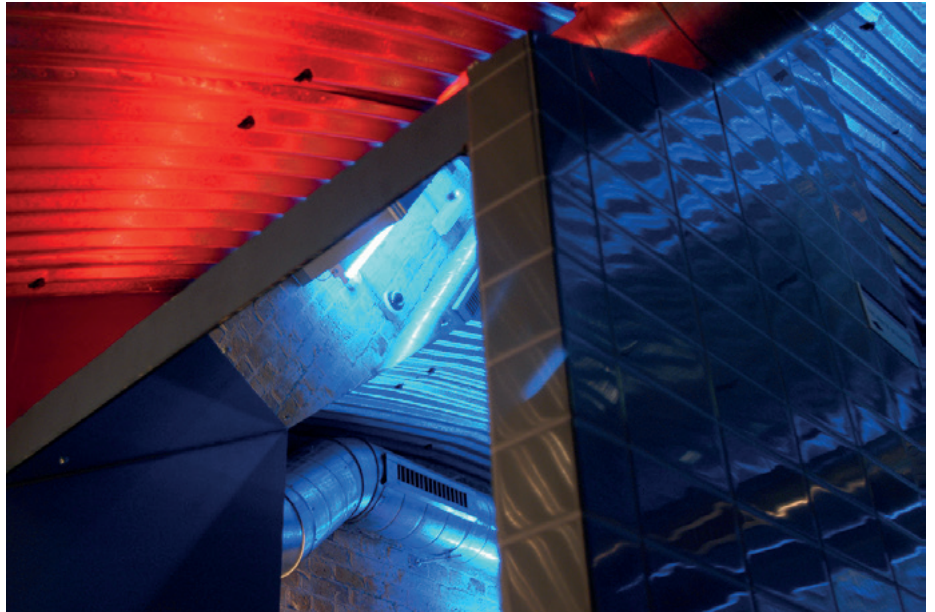


Figure 6: Overhead mirror offers angled views from the changing rooms.

The themes of exposure and protection continue into the inner areas of the venue. The bar's vinyl front looks incapable of supporting the heavy Rimex counter above [Figure 7]. Barrisol panels overhead [Figure 8] reflect slightly distorted views of the spa pool. Concrete and brick provide the textural counterpoint to the recycled plastic and acrylic screens. Materials sit on top of other materials, detailed in a way to show the intention of support, screening and layering.

As it never closes, *Pleasuredrome* is often a party space, sometimes a refuge, at times both. The design attempts to reflect this paradox. The spatial variance of the main areas tries to allow for alternation between prowling and solace. We agreed with the client that the space should be most akin to the feel of a nightclub, a place where traditionally intentional and coincidental encounters are contained and enabled. The interconnectedness of the arrangement of the spaces provides opportunities for voyeurism and encounter, while the larger areas [Figure 8] soon break down into smaller, quieter locations [Figure 9].



Figure 8: Longer view with pool, reflective materials interconnect the spaces.

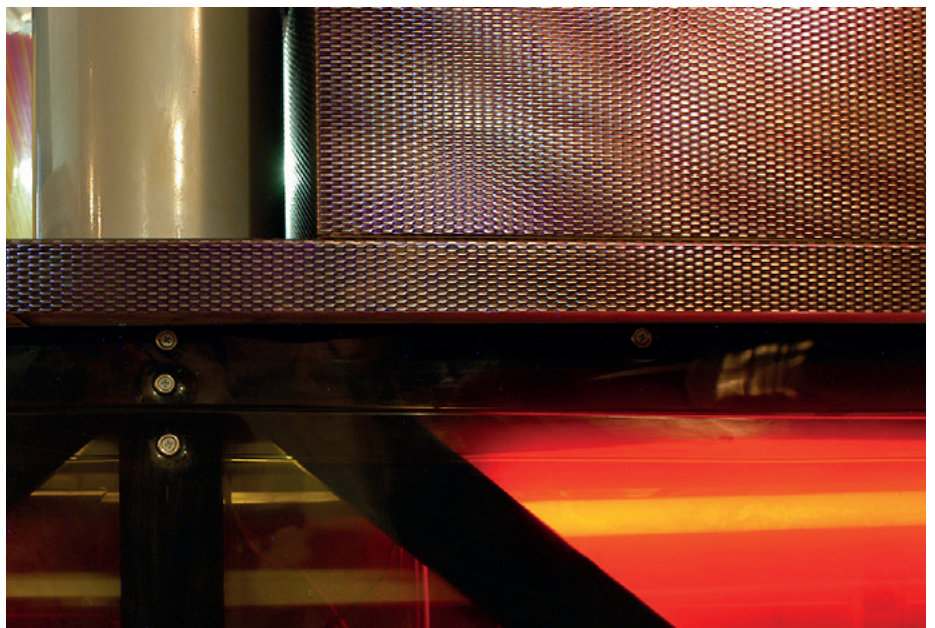


Figure 7: Bar detail.



Figure 9: Some spaces can offer quieter moments within the venue. (Credit: Philip Vile)

No windows exist to the street within this environment, accentuating the feeling of removal from the outer world's complexities. It is tempting to provide floor plans of the premises within this article, however I feel this would render the fabric of the building transparent to the viewer and therefore not in keeping with the spirit of concealment, which the design tries to implement. While the act of 'coming out' implies a spatial imagery, moving from the privacy of the 'closet' to the openness of public acceptance, the sauna space contradicts this notion, remaining concealed. It is only right, in my view, that the hidden is revealed "through a glass darkly", so that the user's privacy is not open to scrutiny. Like so many private member's clubs, part of the appeal is their inaccessibility. A gay sauna provokes intrigue due to the need for discretion to remain paramount. Through the design I attempted to provide a safe space which fulfils the expectations of a very specific user group, albeit a space where those users normally wear only a towel.

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The Juniper Tree #erased RESEARCH

Thomas Kendall

Thomas Kendall is associate director at art, architecture and landscape practice, Wayward. He also teaches interior architecture at Middlesex University and architecture at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL
tom@wayward.co.uk

Abstract

This is a short story, one that owes its origins to the conjunction of a fairy tale and a rule, the rule of something unseen. This is a short story, a retelling of The Juniper Tree. This is a story of loss and discovery (and revenge, and absurd moral stances and apples). The text will explore the impact of the hidden, the invisible and the erased, but on the page it is an exploration of the white space between words, missing letters, whole paragraphs, and the way we fill in the blanks.

INTRODUCTION

"We come into the world intent on finding narrative in everyone: in the landscape, in the skies, in the faces of others, and, of course, in the images and words that our species creates. We read our own lives and those of others, we read the societies we live in and those that lie beyond our borders, we read pictures and buildings, we read that which lies between the covers of a book."

- Alberto Manguel^[1]

Subtraction, the removal of . Something displaced, lost, forgotten, erased or under erasure, something lost or perhaps just un-utterable - C. Resnais^[2]

"The important thing is the ineffable - the white space between the words" - Max Frisch^[3]

THIS TEXT is not written in the traditional sense, instead, as you will see, it is more of a construction, || ARCHITECTURE || and this "assemblage of bits and pieces [...] forces an abandonment of the idea of [the] reader as a passive receptor. The reader must engage, work on, rewrite this text. The reader must be a writer."^[4]

Along this path you will find various textual exercises and experiments from the physical and visual, to the grammatical and etymological, TEXT-periments if you will. This journey of the reader into the world of constructed writing is an unfamiliar adventure.

You are being handed a text, a space to explore, a story-world where you will find a struggle between antagonistic "realities, inducing an ontological flicker, the fiction's reality and the [pages white space] coming into focus by turns, first one, then the other. And this flicker seems to induce instability."^[5] These altered structures and the oscillation between them causes perspectival shifts, alter-experiences and new perceptions of what you, the reader, are reading, creating an active engagement with the text, so that you, "the reader [are] no longer a consumer but a producer of the text,"^[6] a reader-writer if you will.

THIS TEXT is concerned with how the act of writing and that of designing / construction architecture / space are similar. It is the idea that architecture / space can be written and conversely that writing, as a habitable space, can be spatial and constructed.

It is “[...]in the constructive operation upon many possible relationships at many levels of scale (letter, word, sentence, paragraph, plot), the literary work not only begins to bear a resemblance to architecture [...], but also becomes a model of what architecture might be,”^[7] i.e. architecture as WOR[L]D.

THIS TEXT you are about to read, though focusing on subtraction, the unseen, the hidden, explores a variety of modifications - *constructive operations* - to the written structure. These operations are all within the understanding of “writing literature” but here are used to explore space and the impact of space upon narrative. There are clues in that which is hidden, the spaces left, the letters left unused. The white space between black marks tells as much story as the marks themselves.

THIS TEXT is the story of the Juniper Tree, originally written by Philipp Otto Runge and donated to the Brothers Grimm. This story however is told through the constructive operations of the *unseen (glossary of terms below)*. The story is in fragments, the construction itself acting as the gaps between the original narrative that the two might be read together.

~~The Juniper Tree~~

This———^[9] is how it happened.

~~My mother she killed me~~

~~My father he ate me~~

~~My sister buried my bones~~

~~She bound them all in a silken cloth~~

~~And laid them under the juniper tree~~

~~Tee-wit tee-wit, what a beautiful bird am I~~

~~What a beautiful bird am I.^[9]~~

My mother she chopped me

My father he guzzled me

My sister dug my grave

She buried me under the Juniper Tree

I am a bird now, I am a bird now [10]

What a beautiful bird am I

House

Once in these parts, not so long ago neither, there was a house. It had pale walls and dark rimmed windows and a red door. A slate path lined with herbs and canes of sweet peas wove the front garden - Dong Quai, stinging nettles, false unicorn root, red raspberry leaf, motherwort, mugwort, parsley, chaste tree, white penies, yarrow, borage, dandelions, red clover, burdock, echinacea, evening primrose, milk thistle, horny got weed, damania, black haw, lemon balm, hibiscus, nettles, yellow dock, chamomile.^[11]

It is a place where a pious and hardworking man lives and a woman works. They are both sad and so spend a lot of time inside the house, they make sure it is always clean. There is a tree next to house, who's branches tickle the window and protect it.^[12]

The house had no child

Edda^[13]

I remembered him before he came out of me. My body knew I would die and so gave me a moments grace to know my son.

^[14]It was as if I had passed him by one day and there was a second's recognition between us, a recognition that felt all of my atoms jump with an unearthly desire to hold him, just for a moment, and he looked so so ^[15] so whole. It was as though I had entered a book and emerged from it covered in inky fragments of his story and in it, I had been a page and so had he, and as the book closed, we were together. Through the pages I saw it all, every little black mark, each depredation, and as I died, I wept.

We had tried for so long to make him happen, tender lovers for years till near desperation made us bash our bodies against one another till the only fruit was bruised flesh. I blamed the Island. It permeated every part of our lives. Poveglia. The island where the dead grow out of the ground into rows of juniper trees, and women weep for the lives of unborn children.

My husband and I were the caretakers of the island. For centuries it had been a place for the dead and the insane – where plague victims were dumped and burned across the fields till the soil was fecund with their ashes. After the sick had departed, the Council planted rows of juniper trees across the island as a memorial to the dead, and in commemorating them, forgot them. But the families didn't forget them. They still visited, and over time this isle of death became known as a giver of life. Women whose families had been lost came and wept amongst the trees for the dead to give them a child.

And as I stood in the garden I thought, and I took him, my husband, out to the rows of trees and in the morning light we lay there and he took me. We were tender once more. The junipers cones crushed under my bony limbs scratching and perfuming my skin.^[16]

Tree

Threeea^[17] ^p, twoo daooown nice box it sits neeeare me white
 washed walls and a pink dör[18] not looked after now
 sadness when she diiiyed
 just one girl child shee[19] has, shee löks at me with greeene in the
 face

Marlena

Can I sleep in your bed big brother I'm scared of the bugs that come at night and the
 juniper tree scratches at my window?

Ava ^[20]

"Mother, where are you going with
 that ^[21]?", said the boy.

"Ava, you are fundamentally awful mind, and that is
 coming from me! You, you are my favourite kind of woman.
 Actually, you're my favourite kind of mother; you are a
 rancorous one," said Death.

Ava focused again on the woodchopper
 in her hands and decided it needed to be just a
 little sharper, and went back to the stone to
 give it more of an edge. Something had to feel
 its ticklish edge soon, be it *her* tree trunk or *her* son.

This is what the ~~women~~ woman did

I, I, slam the box lid shut and splerrrkcrackk goes ~~my~~, her, my sons neck.

Boy

Then they changed.

Marlena

[illegible]

Ava

Cho chop chop chop chop chop chop, I made sausage', blood sausage' and stew', I, I,
 chop and I, I, boil and grind. All the bone' are gone, she took the bone'

He saw the empty chair, he saw it, but he didn't notice the flavour of his own son in the sausage'
 and stew' ^[26]I feed him.

Marlena

Come and sleep in my bed big brother

come and s'leep ^[27] in this bed I have made for you. I have dug it with my
 hands down past roots and bugs. I pyjama-ed ^[28] you in silk. I did, I did, I did, I won't leave

^[29]until you don't need me anymore.

I daren't tell father he loved you he wouldn't stop ^[30].

I can't stand the waiting for you. I feel like waiting for the door to open with yet more kindness on
 the other side is too much. I don't want more kindness.

~~"Father I know where brother is, where he has gone!"~~ ^[31]

Questions

Who is dead?

Who killed them?

Is their death real?

Who is that on the other side of you? ^[32]

Tree

Bones are in my toes; my toes wrap them and absorb my food bits. He isn't here, he isn't here anymore, he flew, he flew, he flew off.

Bird

I awake in pile' 'f leave' 'f feather' all haze in white mist with smell 'f fire l arms push up aside, leave' leave while feather' stick in me pin in me l I tear, I tear, I see sister she has tear' cross cheek' and chin peepers are red I have feather' and wing tip' and claw' I have singing l tale needs telling take take take I take flight, take take take, take take take, tale needs telling. See village and sing, heart hurt, sing, killed, eaters, dug in earth.

~~My mother she killed me~~
~~My father he ate me~~
~~My sister buried my bones~~
~~She bound them all in a silken cloth~~
~~And laid them under the juniper tree~~
Tee-wit tee-wit, what a beautiful bird am I
What a beautiful bird am I.^[33]

Villagers can't here
Villagers hear singing
What child? The boy the boy THE BOY
The bird the bird the bird

I sang I sang and sang and sang at them, the villager' and villager' gave me gifts,^[34] they gave me gifts, an aurum chain, a pair of red slipper', a weight that grinds grain I carry cross my neck.

My mother she killed me
My father he ate me
My sister buried my bones
She bound them all in a silken cloth
And laid them under the juniper tree
Tee-wit tee-wit, what a beautiful bird am I
What a beautiful bird am I.

Why gift me. Use gifts I use presently and punishment

Father I am here I am hear, I will sing at father
He hears just verse
[It frustrates he can't hear my pain, I will excuse him his nescience he was misled]
The chain is fathers presently
Father smiles

Girl

Father I am sad

Why? This bird brings gifts!

The bird it sings and makes me sad but I want to see what makes such familiar noise

Then go see

Come and stay with me bird, stay with me, you can sleep in my bed

What have you there?

Shoes, look father look mother, red shoes, a gift from the bird

I was so sad when I went out and now I feel happy, I am forgiven.

I can't tell father, it would break his heart

Ava

I wish it didn't sing, it stings inside while listening. I ,I snipped his spine
I did. Its singing stings! If I get up and walk and see the bird I might I can insist I'm
gifted indescribable gifts, I will claim it mine. I will wait till it gifts I, I will inherit it,^[35]

Tree

A millstone, biiiiiird had millstone round abaoooooout the neck and biiiiiird dropped it O
O
On shee

splerrrkkrackk

Blood pours into roots, sooooooaks in

Bird flies to my braaaaanches, toes wiggle and booooooones move and jiggle to the surface, the
boy is heeeeeeere.

Boy huumms

My mother she chopped me
My father he guzzled me
My sister dug my grave
She buried me under the Juniper Tree
I am a bird now, I am a bird now
What a beautiful bird am I

Father, Marlena come and see^[36]

Then they went into the house, sat down at the table, and ate ^[37].

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5. McHale, Brian, *Post-modernist Fiction*. p.180.
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7. Bloomer, Jennifer. "In the Museyroom," *Assemblage No. 5*, p.63.
8. The use of *sous rature* suggests a word under a state of erasure, however Kendall could just be creating a moment of pause, a spatial device for dramatic intent. Whilst it is unclear, is it advisable to speculate for fear one may miss something.
9. The use of *sous rature* here could be an erasure of the past for the new or perhaps as a desire to change the language of a child to something less specifically fairy tale-like and to something more characterful.
10. A reference to the song 'I am a bird gherl' by Anthony and the Johnsons.
11. A list of plants related to fertility
12. Note the removal of the definite article, "the" making the house, house, a character, someone to be interacted with.
13. A reference to a collection of Icelandic writings, early fairytales, in itself a collection of stories.
14. Is this use of *coupeur la ligne*, the subtraction of lines from a body of text or the "moments grace" given space?
15. Potential for a subtracted word, unclear as to its nature, if it added a description, or, alternatively, the space has been added to create pause
16. It appears that here nothing might be subtracted, the spaces are just pauses; a spatial grammar to facilitate the time needed between words. Perhaps all the mother lost was her self in gaining a son. This may be deliberate, that this is the only text where the words are not specifically altered.
17. Elongated vowels, a slowness of pace.
18. The subtraction of vowels and the addition of phonetic lettering alters perception based on an understanding of the addition creating skewed readings. It also hints at something alter with the tree as a character.
19. Addition of "e" to denote a new character, a clue, but also the extension of the word gives a tone, a judgement to the word.
20. Coming from Avalon meaning isle of apples - a nod to a murderous trap.
21. The space allows the reader to insert their item of choice, or perhaps just add a pause. This impact's their understanding of the story despite the clue in the next paragraph
22. This space unlike the I's seems to indicate something unsaid, a word held back or edited out.
23. The use of erased text here seems to be implying a second voice, perhaps that of Edda watching over her son.
The repetition of "I, I" appears to hint at two voices as well.

24. The repetition of this phrasing suggests a voice influencing and changing what she is saying ever so slightly, pushing, goading Marlena to act.
25. Whilst we are unsure if Marlena hits brother at this point it can be assumed, she has from the repetition and the breakdown of text implying a breakdown of character. The use of apostrophes to denote the missing letter reminds us of the word she is trying to say
26. the removal of plurals - "s" - and the leaving of a trace, an apostrophe, suggests that several became singular.
27. The subtraction of "l" changing the word from sleep to seep, hinting that the murder has occurred.
28. Paragoge - addition at the end of a sentence. This intimates a child's understanding of a shroud.
29. *Coupeur la ligne*: the section is full of gaps, the words that Marlena.
30. This could be in reference to Father eating the stew Ava made from Brothers flesh.
31. Words unsaid, not just here but in the original story, the father never finds out what happened to his son.
32. This is a reference to T.S. Eliot's poem, *What The Thunder Said*, a poem about the quest for knowledge. This line was about an expedition where the group imagined (hallucinated) there was an additional member to their party. Kendall includes it here to remind you, you are the additional person writing alongside himself.
*"Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
-But who is that on the other side of you?"*
- T.S. Eliot, 1954, *What The Thunder Said*, *The Waste Land*
33. The erasure here is of the words, that those he sings too, apparently ignore - a cry for help
34. The only plural in the sentence highlights the importance of the gifts. Are the gifts payment? Do they only care about the song? Are they to acknowledge they have heard him but don't know how to help? Are they guilt fuelled responses? Are they to hearten in the hope this story of sorrow will pass them by?
35. It seems safe to assume the Kendall might have originally used a different word here, something like "own" but for the Belle Absent rule. The change to inherit is an interesting alternative when considering the outcome of the narrative.
36. Is the tree inviting them to come and see? Is the tree Edda, a possible narrator throughout?
37. Ate what...?

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Lost Interiors: An investigation of the Keskidee Centre #lost RESEARCH

Charlotte Anthony

*Charlotte Anthony is a Master of Architecture student at the University of Westminster
canthonyresearch@rickyard.co.uk*

Abstract

This article discusses the methodology used to investigate a building which no longer exists. The subject of the investigation was the Keskidee Centre, Britain's first black-led arts centre, which, despite achieving international cultural significance in the late 1970s and being chosen as the location for Bob Marley's 'Is this Love?' music video, is relatively unknown and little published information exists. The investigation utilised primary sources including archive material and interviews to reconstruct the Keskidee Centre through text.

At approximately 9:30pm on Thursday 8th March 2012, about 40 firefighters began tackling a fire at Christ Apostolic Church in Islington.^[1] The fire began at the building's ground floor and spread through its four-storeys to its roof so that ultimately, the damage was too severe for the building to be repaired and the remaining structure was demolished, [Figure 1: Dilapidated remains of the Keskidee Centre]. The cause of the fire was never determined.



Figure 1: Dilapidated remains of the Keskidee Centre, Author's photograph, 2018



Figure 2: South elevation of the Keswidee Centre, photographer and date unknown. Huntley Family Archives at London Metropolitan Archives

This article documents my investigation into this building's lost interiors. In 1971, the now demolished building was a derelict Victorian Mission Hall, which was acquired and repurposed to become Britain's first black-led arts centre, The Keswidee Centre^[2] [Figure 2: South elevation of the Keswidee Centre]. The Keswidee was opened by Oscar Abrams, a Guyanese architect and community activist, joined by other members of the Islington branch of Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), one of Britain's earliest anti-racism pressure groups. They founded the centre as a grassroots organisation to support the disadvantaged local West Indian community in practical matters associated with settling in the UK, as well as to provide educational skills and a cultural base.^[3]

The Keswidee Centre, named after a Guyanese songbird, began simply as a community centre for local young black people but its cultural impact would come to define its legacy as the Centre contributed to the successful careers of black arts icons, including dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson and composer and Kora player Tunde Jegede.^[4] The Keswidee's theatre programme also achieved international acclaim in its own right and within a decade of opening, its success attracted Jamaican reggae musician Bob Marley to choose the Keswidee as the location for his 'Is this Love?' music video in 1978. However, financial challenges afflicted the Keswidee throughout the 1980s forcing it to close permanently in 1992.^[5]

Methods of investigation

The object of my study no longer exists, making it an unusual subject for an architectural investigation. Architects are used to understanding a space primarily by being in it, or by reviewing hundreds of photographs, detailed plans and physical or computer-generated models, resources which do not exist for the Keswidee. Often, we will read about others' experience of being in the place when we cannot visit ourselves. Unfortunately, the Keswidee Centre is lost in these traditional methods of investigation as there are few published works which discuss it. To date, press and academic work have focused on Keswidee as a theatre and music venue, overlooking its primary purpose as a cultural and community centre.^[6] My investigation aimed to reframe the Centre in an architectural light and consider the importance of the building itself in enabling this creativity and the affordances it provided those who used it.

Without the ability to visit the building or read about those who had, the adopted methodology was an architectural investigation to connect clues identified in archives with information gathered in interviews to reconstruct an image of the Keskidee Centre. The Centre was part of a crucial network of people who supported the diasporic community, including John La Rose and Jessica and Eric Huntley who established the archives of the George Padmore Institute and the Huntley Family Archives respectively, from which much of my research was completed. The decision about what to store in archives is as much a reflection of what we value as a society as the content itself. It is important that both the George Padmore Institute and the Huntley Archives were collated by those it concerned, making them especially valuable resources for investigating an otherwise neglected aspect of recent social history.

The George Padmore Institute is an archive, educational resource and research centre connected to New Beacon Books in Stroud Green, North London, holding documents about Britain's community of Caribbean, African and Asian descent.^[7] It contains details about activist groups and cultural activities which took place at the Keskidee Centre. The Huntley Archive was deposited at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) in 2005 and contains documents, including legal and marketing material which the Huntley family retained after the closure of the Keskidee.^[8] The third archive I used was Islington Local History Centre, which holds Islington's historic maps and directories and also held an exhibition titled 'The Keskidee. A community that discovered itself' in 2009.^[9] I was also able to find some architectural information at Historic England's archive. My research benefited greatly from oral historian Alan Dein's recorded interviews with actors and young people who had occupied the Keskidee.^[10] The former users described the activities that took place and their feelings regarding the importance of the Keskidee. Through their descriptions, the interviewees unintentionally described the spaces they had once occupied.

Piecing archive clues together

The Keskidee Centre was very much an architecture of programme. At LMA, I found an advertising leaflet produced by the Keskidee Trust which described the spaces of the building when purchased, 'a large and a small hall plus four sizeable rooms and a kitchen'.^[11] Abrams recognised that the various large rooms of the Keskidee could be easily reconfigured to suit the needs of the local black community, who were prioritised in the building's adaptive reuse. It was important for me to find as much information about the building's alterations to be able to date the changes and understand their relationship with Keskidee's timeline of success to determine any impact.



Figure 3: The attic room in use for a Black Parents Movement meeting, October 1979. Photographer unknown. George Padmore Institute Archive



Figure 4: The attic room in use for a Black Parents Movement meeting, October 1979. Photographer unknown. George Padmore Institute Archive

I compared a Historic England report to an 'Existing Plan' dated 1975, from the Huntley Archives and concluded that Abrams had inserted two upper floors.^[12] The newly created upper room displayed the Victorian Mission Hall's exposed roof timbers, where the rafters were described as having a 'very high collar'^[13] and were 'mitred at the top with no ridge beam'.^[14] Photographs I discovered at the George Padmore Institute supported this finding and showed how the room was used, [Figures 3-4: The attic room in use for a Black Parents Movement meeting]. Abrams installed skylights into the slated roof and a semi-circular window on the south façade^[15] which flooded the upper space with light. These alterations made this attic interior particularly well-suited for reading and so it became the Keskidee's library, with Linton Kwesi Johnson as the centre's librarian.

The significance of this window installation would not have been obvious at the time, however Abrams' ability to visualise how design can unlock the function of a space in this instance had profound implications. It was in this room that Johnson developed his unique work which led to him being credited as the inventor of dub poetry,^[16] giving him worldwide success and showing that through alteration and reuse the centre could contribute to society in ways not possible before.

Constructing a vision of the Keskidee Centre through memory and interview

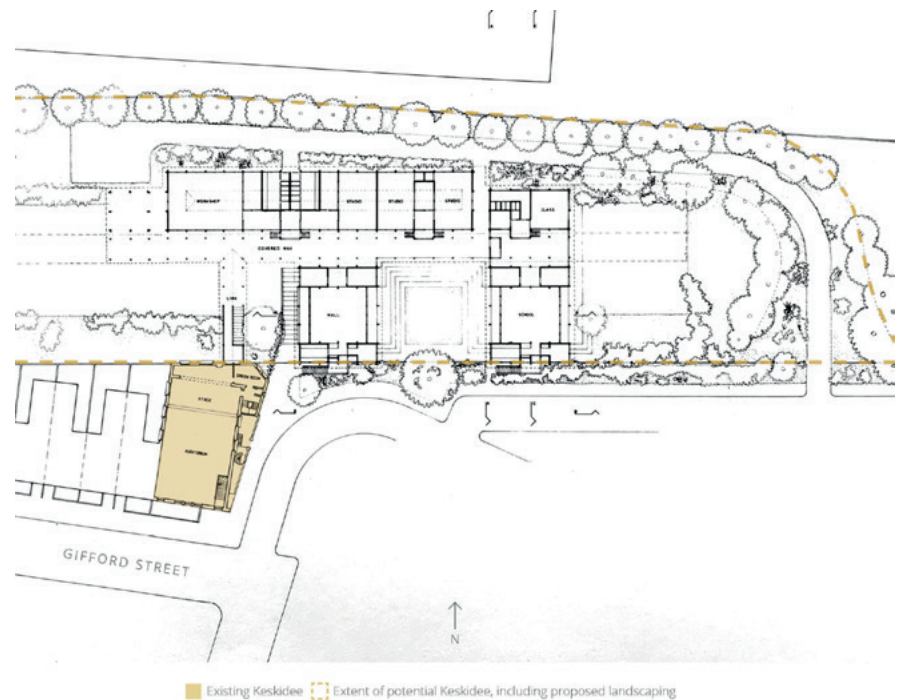


Figure 5: Site Plan at Floor Level (annotations by author), Peter Bell and Partners Architects, 1st July 1976, Huntley Family Archives at London Metropolitan Archives

It is almost impossible to research using archive material with any preconceived idea of what you will find, especially with an under-documented subject such as the Keskidee Centre. Whilst researching at the LMA, amongst notebooks, legal documents and advertising material in Jessica and Eric Huntley's family archives, I found architectural drawings^[17] by Peter Bell and Partners Architects depicting a large extension for the Keskidee Centre that, if built, would have increased its footprint approximately fourfold (Figure 5: Site Plan at Ground Floor Level, with annotations by author). The potential Keskidee's expansive plans, sections and elevations were a surprising discovery as there is no other evidence to suggest founder Oscar Abrams was considering a development on such a scale. These plans appear to have been drawn up without reference to a budget for construction or other constraint, suggesting that these drawings represent potentially the best indication of Abrams' ultimate vision for the Keskidee. That the scheme was never realised shows the magnitude of the Keskidee's lost potential.

This research is framed in the context of a period of important social history which is, significantly, still in living memory and so is subject to multiple, often conflicting, interpretations. The limitations of memory were clear when I contacted Peter Bell to discuss the project which he had worked on relatively briefly a long time ago as I used his own plans I found at LMA to aid his recollection. I also interviewed Norma Ashe, co-founding trustee of the Keskidee Centre. Ashe did not remember Abrams discussing his idea for a much larger Keskidee Centre with her, but she was able to provide significant understanding of Abrams' character, praising his selflessness, work ethic and determination. On the other hand, Bell had met Abrams only a handful of times and so was much more removed from the emotional implications of the project but he provided technical information about the building I was unable to find elsewhere. The interview methodology was key to reconstructing the building, and so memories have been fundamental to the outcome of my investigation, but are inherently imperfect, incomplete and subjective.

Conclusion

Research for my investigative work on the Keskidee Centre has been predominantly from primary sources. I have relied on my architectural skills to recreate the Keskidee from the dilapidated remains of the end-of-terrace building where possible. An ability to interpret found architectural information and to imagine space helps to understand our lost buildings. Archive material led me to conduct interviews and listen to recorded conversations about the building, therefore undertaking an ethnographic study to immerse myself in the feeling of the building throughout its life.

For others undertaking an architectural investigation, it may be elucidating to start with secondary sources to gain a general understanding of the research topic, which could be online articles and newspapers or other material found in a university library. A next step would be to pursue primary sources which is time consuming but you discover valuable content which may not appear in secondary sources. Some primary sources may be found at national archives, such as those at Kew and Historic England. Local archives can provide more detail. It is important to consider the provenance of the archive material and search for information donated by primary users if available. It is possible that local councils will store pertinent material, perhaps in the directories of a local library. Locating primary sources may lead you to potential interviewees such as architects, from architectural drawings, and building's trustees, from legal or marketing documents.

My investigatory work was rewarding as conducting interviews and exploring archives has led me to unexpected discoveries. Studying the Keskidee Centre has given me a greater appreciation of the significance of impression, memory and feeling in determining a lost building's legacy.

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Open Neighbourhoods. Disclosing the hidden potentialities of urban interiors #forgotten STUDIO

Chiara Lecce

*Chiara Lecce, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Interior and Spatial Design, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, IT.
chiara.lecce@polimi.it*

Abstract

This paper seeks to report the ten years of didactic experience developed through the Interior and Exhibition Design Studios, which were part of the Interior and Spatial Design Masters degree course at Politecnico di Milano. *Open Neighbourhoods*. For a genetic evolution of the urban metabolism is the common title assigned to the labs, whose aim has been to read, interpret and rethink the contemporary value of the “Interior Design” discipline, exploring the vast “open” field of design research related to the most erratic and hidden ways of inhabiting spaces.

1. Open Neighbourhoods. For a genetic evolution of the urban metabolism: a common design approach and method

During recent times, the metropolis has been hit by radical transformations of the global era. Deindustrialization has brought about the problem of disused areas and buildings, small commercial activities have been overtaken by multinational chain stores, social housing has been undermined by the big real estate of the Nineties. This socio-economic situation urges design disciplines into action, to address the agency of design in establishing a new relationship with reality. Hidden interiors can be found where the globalization disrupts local communities, made of small commercial activities, social relations, familiar and symbolic landmarks of every city zone.

Open Neighbourhood. For a genetic evolution of the urban metabolism has been the common title of the didactic experience developed during the Interior and Exhibition Design Studios led by Giampiero Bosoni, Ico Migliore and Chiara Lecce as part of the Interior and Spatial Design Masters degree course at Politecnico di Milano: a ten year long (2009-2019) didactic experience declined through different spaces, projects and modalities with more than 400 students involved and 50 final theses elaborated; a title which indicates a design approach oriented to a reinterpretation of the “Interior Design” discipline, exploring new and hidden ways of inhabiting spaces in the urban environment. *The Open Neighbourhoods’* design approach has been generally set into three steps: 1. Occupy Urban Voids; 2. Enhance Existing Realities; 3. Temporary Interventions.

Defining a genetic evolution of the urban metabolism inside the *diffused city*^[1] starts from the word metabolism (from Greek: μεταβολή metabolē, “change”) which is the set of life-sustaining chemical transformations within the cells of living organisms. These enzyme-catalyzed reactions allow organisms to grow and reproduce, maintain their structures, and respond to their environments. Similarly, the students were asked to analyze, explore, interact and finally respond to the urban realities exposed to them during this period. Most of the time the research focused on different typologies of hidden interiors, more precisely urban interiors.

The contemporary metropolis, in this specific case the city of Milan, has been dissected and investigated through its hidden places: infrastructural in-between spaces and urban voids, underground spaces, forgotten and abandoned interiors, all “invisible landscapes”^[2] equally sharing interior and exterior urban realities. As stated by Arianna Veloce for the article *Urban hybridization. Regeneration techniques of the city’s consolidated tissue*: ‘The external space will be merged into the internal one for a final hybridization in between public and private, in between city and buildings. Imaging an urban structure in which events, scenarios and different landscapes are strictly

hybridized between themselves, the possibility of a perpetual mutation emerges by the idea of a restored urban genetic code capable of triggering chain transformation starting from a mutation of one of its single entities' ^[3].

So, the concept of *genetic evolution of the urban metabolism* meant a design vision that bases itself on the analysis and an innovative critical observation of the contemporary (and next venture), conditions of living in the flow of transformation of urban areas. The design method adopted during this time has been generally articulated in: a first phase of meta-design research (*problem setting*) dedicated to analysing the urban reality and pick up significant case studies, in order to individuate innovative scenarios for the city's usability and for the new generation of "living behaviors"; and a second phase of design concept (problem solving) and project definition in terms of communication and technical arrangements.

Starting from the first phase, students had to immerse themselves into the neighbourhood where their project was located: in order to capture inhabitants' feelings and memories of the place, individuate commonly recognized local landmarks, commercial activities, cultural spaces, contacting zone associations, know the history and the geography of the site and, above all, try to understand the reasons why that place has been marginalized or abandoned, hence hidden within the cityscape.

In the end, students had to understand, as much they could, the series of socio-cultural, political and urbanistic dynamics interacting with the place and consequently seek for its hidden potentialities. The hidden potentialities were then translated into a design concept which didn't mean, for instance, a simple redesign or an embellishment. The concept had to transform critical analysis into revitalizing design projects. Starting with a programme of activities, the concept had to imply strategies that could interact with and react to the context, define a set of functions and sustainable services, comprehend (from the very first steps) a communication and brand identity strategy in order to make the project visible.

In parallel with the analysis of the area of the project, students received a specific theme of research, correlated with the lab's main topics, in order to create a collection of rich case studies that were shared and used collectively by all the other students. *Open Neighbourhoods* has always individuated a specific design approach where the potentialities of temporary design interventions were conceived to redefine empty spaces into dynamic settings: projects for temporary construction which, unlike conventional architecture have no clear-cut divisions between the inside and outside. It might be referred to as "architecture with time limit", which is not conceived to be permanent, even though it sometimes actually becomes so, and whose ultimate aim is to provoke thought and arouse feelings. In constructing these artificial landscapes, a project develops and evolves around themes and issues to be communicated and is implemented by means of a smoothly flowing process for supplementing and stratifying the various elements required for its construction, such as light, graphics, images and structures.^[4] The long term action of the *Open Neighbourhoods* labs has demonstrated also another relevant characteristic of this kind of temporary intervention: small ephemeral projects based on a sensitive understanding of the local (hidden) potentialities: bringing a qualitative design concept can actually trigger the durable reconfiguration of entire urban areas – a phenomenon that has regularly occurred over the last ten years with several examples around the world.^[5]

The temporary nature of the *Open Neighbourhood* has promoted projects in urban areas in need of regeneration: spaces that were something in the past, that lie abandoned in the present and their future reconfiguration is variably estimated to happen in ten or twenty years - temporary design programmes proposing new functions that arguably will have a long-term effect.

Indeed, we can define them as hidden spaces (or hidden urban interiors from our perspective). In order to have a close-up of the *Open Neighbourhood* outcomes, a selection of four design studios from the last ten years is discussed here, rereading them through typologies of hidden urban interiors such as: "hidden neighbourhoods", "hidden underground", "hidden micro architectures", "hidden in-between".

2. Hidden Neighbourhoods

In 2009 *Open Neighbourhoods. Via Padova quartiere aperto* was the first Interior Design Concept studio conceived under the *Open Neighbourhood vision* [Figure 1]. Students were asked to address the problematics of a specific urban area of Milan: the road axis constituted by via Padova and its surrounding neighbourhood - an historical area which has experienced a deep social transformation, particularly characterized by a growing multiethnic presence. All the world metropolises have been always, and continue to be, places of vitality and intercrossing tensions, mostly positive, but regrettably also with negative implications. Difficulties rise when the inhabitants, representing the new working and cultural energy of the neighbourhood, are excluded from the process of urban and social planning of the place where they live.

Students had to confront this reality and design a new “open” system of spaces, activities, events and services able to appreciate the many bottom up enterprises active around the area. The proposal was to create a dynamic network of new “galleries”, to ideate original social and shared (both material and cultural) places, service and communication spaces, innovative retail systems, new exhibition forms. The process, keeping in mind the historical memory of the neighbourhood, has identified keys to future interpretation and outlook.

Students discovered a multifaceted quarter with a strong community feeling (despite the multiethnic co-existence), with several hidden resources made of abandoned shops and degraded public areas that would be transformed into vital social and economic activities. A place where marginalized communities had developed a strong attachment to the neighbourhood, re-generating the street’s vitality and micro-economy.

Students elaborated heterogeneous projects working both on interior and exterior spaces: some of them designed along all the 1.5km extent of via Padova, imagining new services like a bicycle path or communication systems linked to the bus stations, such as the case of “Artigianato 56” by Chiara Cannizzaro and Sabrina Danella. The project took advantage of the bus line 56, that covers all the road, in order to rediscover forgotten handicraft places like the shoemaker’s shop, a lute maker’s atelier and a carpentry laboratory, where young migrant apprentices are learning from old Milanese artisans.

Other students concentrated their concepts on revitalizing several abandoned commercial spaces, like the project “milanopen” by Bori Fenyvesi and Noemi Monus which boosted social connections for the residents: ‘In the empty shops we decided to make a temporary system, with cultural functions, like cinema, theatre plays, or live music. Temporary because the concept considers that these functions take place when shops are empty and not yet rented, so all the designed elements are mobile.’

Other similar projects considered community sharing systems of services, secondhand shops, art installations along the street or setting up new collective places from degraded public gardens like the case of “Il Grande Tavolo di Via Padova” by Natalia Rueda, Christine Urban and Violeta Babatzia: ‘Via Padova is not a dangerous street, as it is often considered. The people of via Padova are responsible workers with families, people who seek a better quality of life, who want to be productive and useful to the community. It is a street full of life, with shops, telling a lot of stories. The aim of our project was to find a place where the inhabitants of via Padova could socialize and learn to share common spaces, and in an abandoned public park we found a 34 meters long structure which was a sort of platform roof with low brick walls on the sides¹⁶. The idea was to imagine a long table running under this structure, which could act like a meeting point, an integration place where it was possible to play, study, organize birthday parties, eat and read, dividing the table into three parts: a working area, a play area and a barbecue area.

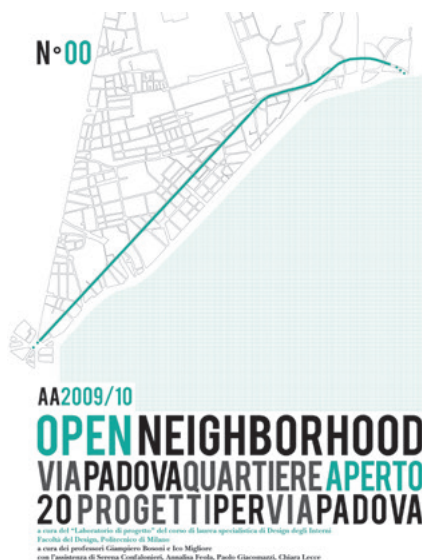


Figure 1: cover page of the book *Open Neighbourhoods. Via Padova quartiere aperto. 20 progetti per via Padova*, edited by Giampaolo Bosoni and Ico Migliore, 2010.

3. Hidden underground

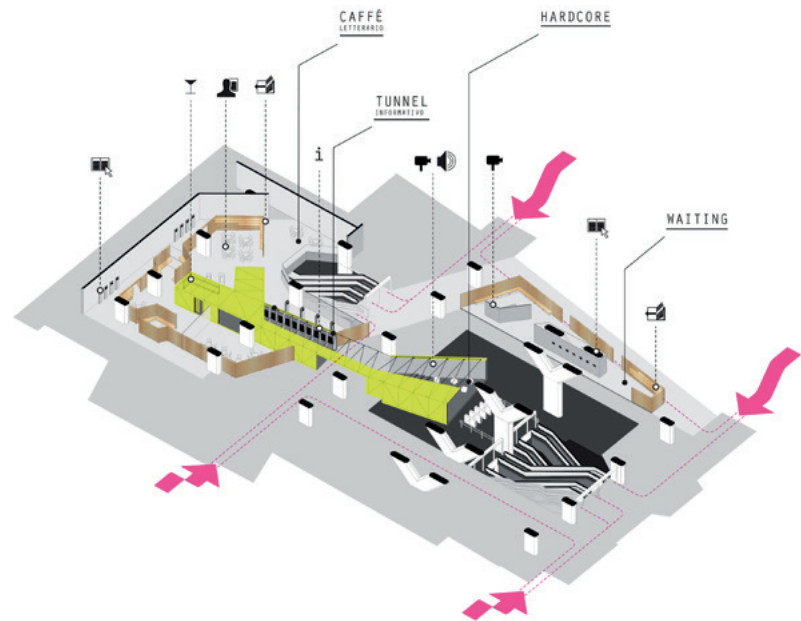


Figure 2: Placebook by Gianluca Iannotta, 2012. (Credit: Gianluca Iannotta).

“Underground Architectures” was the title of the Final Synthesis Studio (II° year of the Interior Design Masters degree) approached during the A.A. 2010/2011 and dedicated to the huge underground stations of the Milanese urban train system called *passante ferroviario* (similar to Paris’ RER). The aim was to envision a series of evolutionary strategies of these enzymatic places of interconnection, imagining that these underground spaces could be an active part of the contemporary urban landscape. In particular students’ projects had to deal with evolved social concepts specifically dedicated to young people’s (15-30 years old) hidden needs, divided into five main themes: music, food, publishing, media, sex and religion. Students’ projects have been mostly developed through parasitic occupation of these hidden spaces.^[7] An exemplary work derived from this lab was the thesis project “Placebook. Un bypass per nuove forme d’espressione letteraria nella stazione Passante di Milano Repubblica” by Gianluca Iannotta. The project envisioned a new typology of space dedicated to emerging writers - a sort of “speakers’ corner”, transferred underground and located inside a parasitic object able to promote new cultural dynamics, whose simple presence catches the eye of language, information and communication research institutions [Figure 2]. Explaining the motivation of the project Iannotta says: ‘Nowadays transience and frenzied rhythms which inhibit habitability and urban context sharing are factors which give birth to the need of building spaces that have the potentiality to carry out a new “open source city”’^[8].

4. Hidden Micro Architectures

“Dehors” Final Synthesis Studio of the Interior Design Masters degree, faced in 2013 the loss of newspaper kiosks within the city of Milan: disappearing commercial activities that are seriously suffering in relation to the printed paper market global crisis. At the same time, these small architectures, spread among the urban tissue, often represent a community reference point in the neighbourhood. In fact, the newspaper kiosk is a typical element of Italian cities and although small scale, it is a pervasive and recognizable object within the urban context - a hidden micro space which is getting lost in the global digital market. The lab challenged the idea of re-functionalizing the kiosk taking advantage of its widespread selling network, integrating its primary commercial nature with renovated meeting and consumption spaces able to activate the local micro economy and social cohesion. The meta-design research

phase was dedicated firstly to a detailed exploration of a range of typologies of microarchitecture (social innovation, food, materials and interactive technologies, information, mobility, business, entertainment, urban ecosystem, urban space, citizen services). Then the groups were assigned to specific Milan neighbourhoods in order to map all the existing newspaper kiosks, analysing critical situations and successively choosing one of them as the subject of their re-functionalization project.

“The Newsbook Project” by Sara Maniscalco and Riccardo Mara for example offered a personalized newspaper, seeking the collaboration between different publishers and offering the consumer the possibility of collecting a proper selection of news, printed on demand [Figure 3].



Figure 3: *The Newsbook Project* by Sara Maniscalco and Riccardo Mara, 2013. (Credit: Sara Maniscalco and Riccardo Mara).

“ZTA” by Maddalena Guglielmelli and Elena Meroni foresees the big contemporary trend (almost four years in advance) of food delivery systems. Starting from the kiosk located at the busy crossroads between via Pirelli and via Melchiorre Gioia, the students designed the “Zona Take-Away”, a small space perfectly organised to prepare food for take away, particularly targeted for workers’ lunch (but easily extendable) [Figure 4].

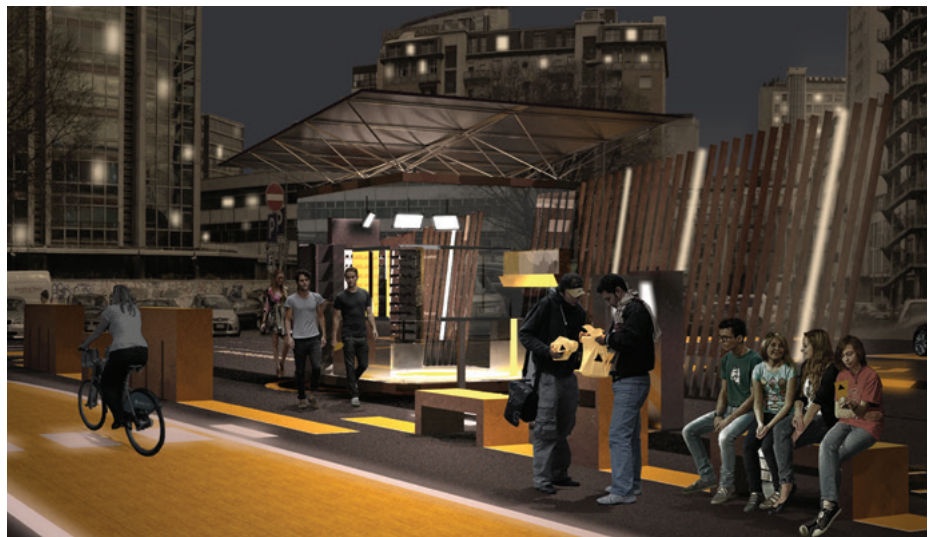


Figure 4: *ZTA* by Maddalena Guglielmelli and Elena Meroni, 2013. (Credit: Maddalena Guglielmelli and Elena Meroni).

5. Hidden In-Between

Second Hand / Second Life. Magazzini Raccordati. Proposte per il riuso e la rifunzionalizzazione dei Magazzini Raccordati di Milano has been one of the last Open Neighbourhood labs (A.A. 2017/2018). I Magazzini Raccordati are abandoned warehouses derived from a system of rails that still run along the tunnels excavated under the elevated rails of Milan's Central Station. The warehouses hosted for many years (from the 1930s to 1980s) several wholesale activities that arrived directly by train. Starting from the 70's, warehouses were gradually abandoned because of the predominance of different systems of goods distribution (principally traveling on wheels). The result was 140 warehouses of 356 square metres each (12,5 x 28,5 m), for a total of almost 50,000 square meters of empty space extending on two sides (Via Sammartini and Via Ferrante Aporti) for 1.5km.

The common theme of the lab was based on the concept of “exchange” (*scambio*) attributed to new retail spaces and articulated into ten themes (music, apparel, art, food, children, house, electronics, sport, books and brand identity) to be tested inside the fascinating and hidden tunnels of Magazzini Raccordati. A strategic element in regeneration projects is communication design - sort of brand identity able to expose and explain the design approach. During the work on Magazzini Raccordati two groups of students were chosen to design the common brand identity for all the other students' projects: one developed along the street front of the warehouses and the other one inside the long tunnel that connects internally all of the warehouses which still contain the tracks of the original railway.



Figure 5: *RaccordaMi* by Bo Yue Cao, Eleonora Cappellacci and Greta Gulienetti, 2018. (Credit: Bo Yue Cao, Eleonora Cappellacci and Greta Gulienetti).

This last project, titled “RaccordaMi” by Bo Yue Cao, Eleonora Cappellacci and Greta Gulienetti, was fascinating, despite the initial uncertainties of the students, because it revealed all the potentialities of hidden interiors like this, with a suggestive path made of metal boardwalk, humid ecosystem plants and luminous signs indicating the way [Figure 5]. It is no coincidence that during the last two years, some of these tunnels were the set of suggestive design installations during the Milanese Design Week, thanks to the foresight of Ventura Projects^[9].

6. Conclusion

The research work carried out by the *Open Neighbourhood* labs has been an attempt to interpret some of the complexities of ‘(...) an epoch in which conditions of social, cultural, and economic crisis (...) are the premise for any sort of social, cultural and economic growth.’[10] Andrea Branzi’s theories expressed in his renowned book *Weak and Diffuse Modernity: The World of Projects at the Beginning of the 21st Century* is used here to strengthen the concept of urban metabolism and its hidden interiors: ‘To modify according to one’s own living, productive, commercial, or promotional needs the space inherited from earlier processes of dismissal produces a sort of urban metabolism. This metabolism is difficult to predict or govern because it is linked to the interrupted currents of this new relational economy. A very similar situation is now occurring in many cities of the industrial world. (...) Many of the new economy’s typical activities have found a home in dismissed areas, entire creative districts set themselves up in abandoned industries, finding this submarket prizes, adequate services, and evolved forms of “incubators”’[11].

Branzi’s reflections dated 2006 bring us back to the present day where we can observe the tangible consequences of these “weak” mutations of urban metabolism. Hidden urban interiors embody precious potentialities because of their deeply-rooted connections with the context (even if its original nature was completely different than the future one), disclosing new (and unexpected) forces inside the neighbourhood. Acting like sort of “hunters” of hidden spaces, students have developed during these ten years a series of design solutions able to disclose these forgotten interiors, making them newly visible.

The interest around hidden urban interiors has grown during these last ten years confirming the thesis that sees temporary design interventions as a possible agent of transformation over a long time period. Exploring hidden urban spaces will continue to be a stimulating field of research and reflection in order to take advantage of the hidden potentialities that are essential enzymes for urban metabolism.

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Between the digital and the physical: SENSITIVE_SCAPE

Giovanna Piccinno

*Architect, Associate professor, President and Coordinator of the BSc in Interior Design and of the MSc in Interior and Spatial Design at Politecnico di Milano, School of Design_ Design Department, Milan, Italy
giovanna.piccinno@polimi.it*

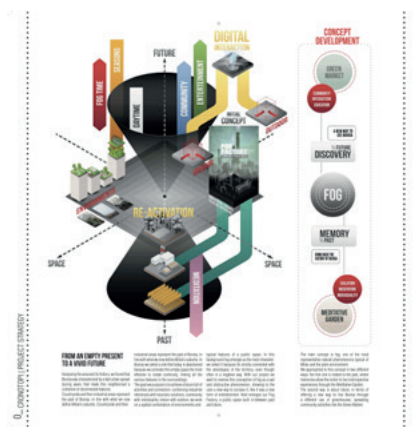
Abstract

This paper explores the reinvention of residual, intermediate, and hidden urban spaces to host the new online/offline behaviours of the contemporary nomadic citizen. The dematerialization of physical space, which supports the non-stop flow of digital information is filtered by a system of relationships. Within this context people assume the role of interface between spaces, generating an online/offline SENSITIVE_SCAPE.

1_ Digital city | networking city

The territory of the third millennium is transforming the ways in which users inhabit space. The formal deconstruction of the contemporary metropolis is a direct consequence of the processes of socio-economic transformations and the Age of Access. Post-industrial development has created indeterminate spaces, often hidden or forgotten, these spaces offer a refuge for diversity and are continually subjected to new programmes of use, often spontaneous. Here the boundary between virtual and physical space is gradually becoming thinner.

The landscapes that we inhabit, both physical and mental, are becoming deformed, as Marc Augé considers: 'Our everyday environment has changed in just a few decades', which has obliged us - inhabitants, citizens, researchers and designers – to deeply reconsider the logic for defining urban environments and social behaviours: *'feelings, perceptions and imagination are the categories that have been shaken by technological innovations and by the power of the industrial apparatus that makes said innovations widespread'*^[1]. Since the early 1990s the deep process for separating time and space has intervened in this new landscape as an activator of the mechanisms necessary to update behaviours, most of which have involved the uprooting of social institutions (the main categories being: kinship, politics, economy, religion) - a phenomenon that the English sociologist Anthony Giddens describes as *disembedding*^[2]. For Giddens disembedding describes behaviours that enable social relationships to be carried out free from specific places and contexts, recombining them in indefinite zones of space and time. Thomas Friedman^[3], defines this space-time compression process as the *death of distance* which entails the progressive reduction of distance - a restriction for social action.



1. SPATIAL-INTERIOR-SCAPE (SPATIAL DESIGN LOGIC)

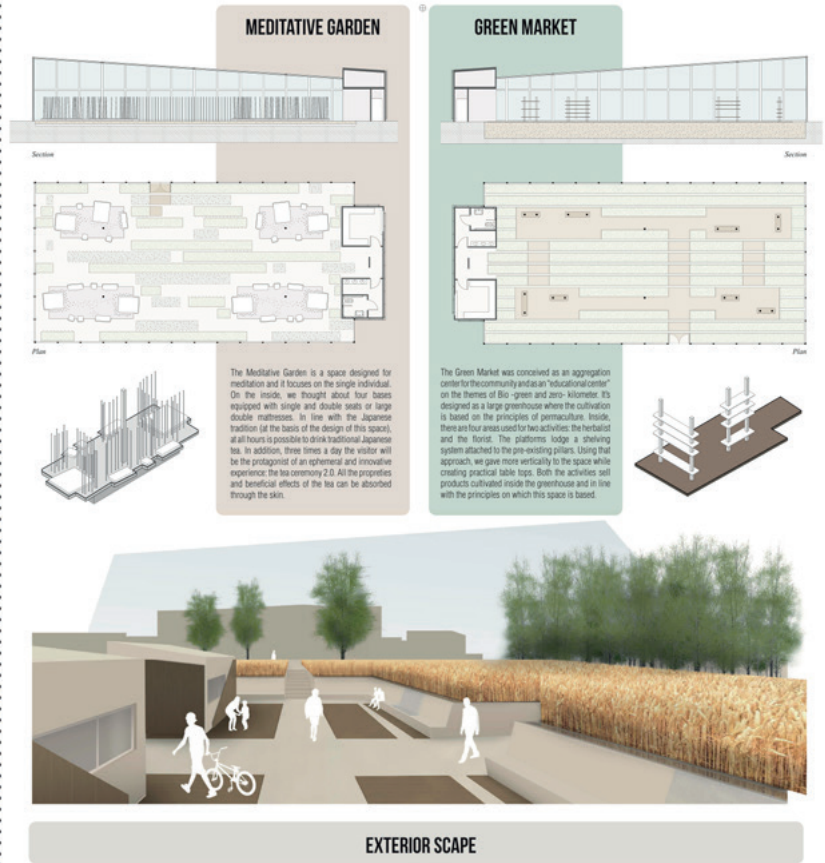


Figure 1: Fog factory. Team 6_students: Federico Quaini, Valentina Riolo, Daniel Volpi.
From an empty present to a vivid future. A spatial design strategy for new urban environment and new social behaviours.

2_ De-structured cities and intermediate zones

The continuous transformation of the landscape, where cities play a central role, creates a disruption which generates *in-between spaces*^[4] - indeterminate spaces, often hidden or forgotten, that operate as a refuge for diversity, continually subject to new programmes of use, often spontaneous. I believe these *in-between spaces* represent today privileged places, metaphors for the possible relationships *between humans and objects, and the physical and virtual realms*.

These *intermediate zones* are becoming crucial knots in the urban social system, offering the potential to introduce new strategies able to translate the boundary between virtual and physical space that is becoming everyday thinner. One example of the many changes in the urban condition includes the greater integration of the architecture of infrastructure - sometimes completely abandoned - which is gaining a renewed role through the integration of additional functions, implemented in response to the demands of the new citizen, cosmopolitan and consumer. The most representative, iconic and inspiring case study is the elevated linear park High Line, created on a disused spur of the New York Central Railroad on the west side of Manhattan in New York city (Project 2006-opening 2009). The project leader James Corner Field Operations (landscape architecture) collaborated with Diller Scofidio+Renfro (architecture) and Piet Oudolf (garden design) proposing a sort of "living system" made of nature and cultural attractions as part of a long-term plan for the park to host temporary installations and performances. This infrastructural landscape constitutes an interesting field of enquiry, open to new interpretations and responsive to design interventions that provide new meaningful narratives



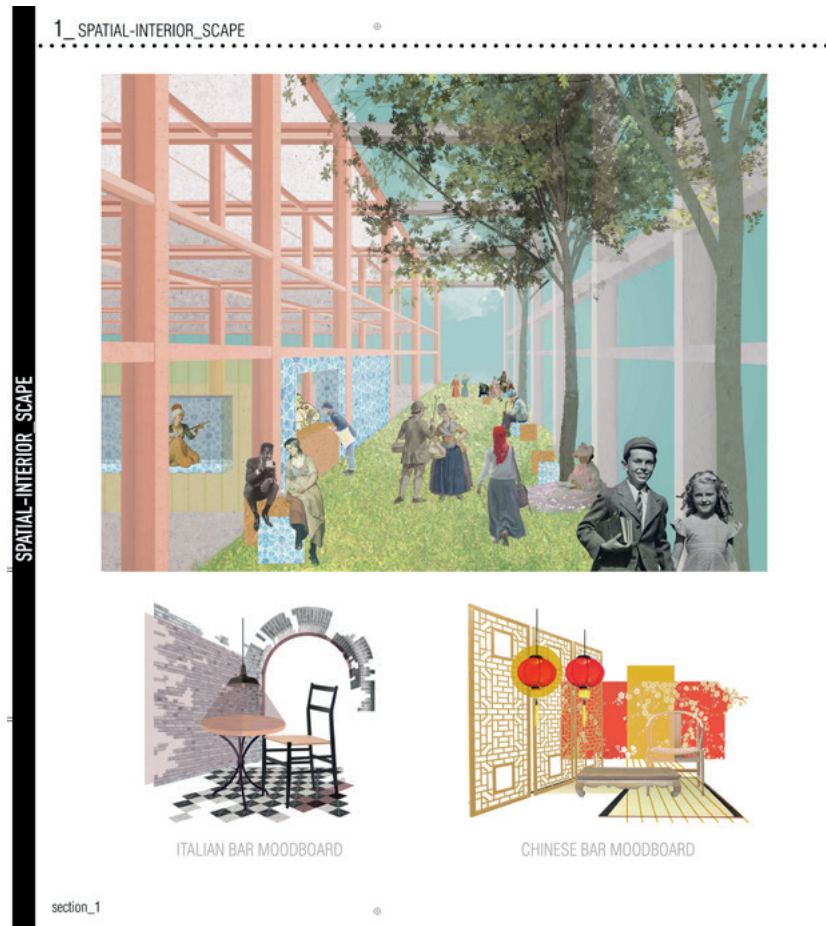


Figure 2: Tutto tondo. Team 5_ Students: Aseel Dosh, Mahnaz Jahangiri, Maria Monna, Tëssie van der Voort Maarschalk. Designing spatial and interior solutions around and inside existing building and places.

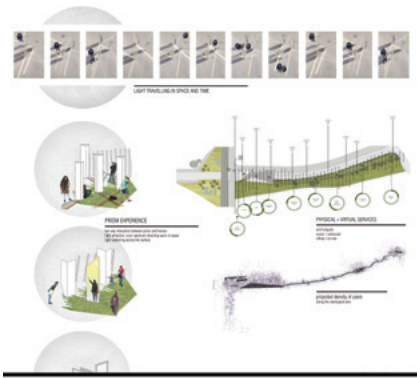


Figure 3: Urban sensory Lab. Team 5_ Students: Aseel Dosh, Mahnaz Jahangiri, Maria Monna, Tëssie van der Voort Maarschalk. Sensitive_scape and digital aspect for a sensory environment in forgotten urban spaces. Connectivity + services + “the inbetweens” + natural-scape

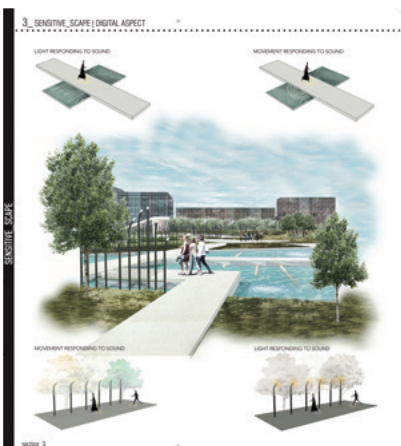


Figure 4: Soundscape. Team 8_ Students: Bahar Hami, Elnaz Torabzadeh, Siyka Georgieva, Huimin Chen. Movement and light responding to sound.

There is the need to develop projects for this new category of urban place capable of *mediating across the continuous online/offline condition that guides our daily behaviours*: places designed to connect the *analogical | real space* and the *digital | virtual one*. In the future, Ambient Intelligence, Ubiquitous Computing (UC) and the Internet of Things (IoT) will radically modify the use of urban spaces due to their pervasiveness, and it will be necessary to update the criteria for designing them. These infrastructures aim at “disseminating” network connectivity in the domestic and non-domestic environments, extending from devices to surfaces and objects of daily use. Therefore, UC and IoT *require the accurate design of the transition from the physical to the digital*, from materiality to immateriality, from visibility to invisibility - mixed realities that emerge as a continuum between digital space and real space.

The *relational aspect*, both virtual and real, is the decisive element for the new project and it may be capable of intervening in territories, environments and on users activating new experiences. What happens is a sort of dematerialization of the physical space, which supports a non-stop digital flow, filtered by the social system of relationships. People can assume the role of the interface between the digital and the physical, defining urban landscape and spatial relationships through digital systems. Users generate an *online/offline SENSITIVE_SCAPE* through physical-digital actions.

4_ Unresolved and performative spaces

Unresolved, hidden, neglected urban *interspaces* assume the role of connective tissue - *hot-spots* of a *network* continuously updated, and within which the most varied activities can be hosted. Spatial-interior design is an activity that intervenes in space according to configurative, light, progressive, regressive and even systemic modalities. One of its strengths is that it can create a strong connection between *analogical | real* and *digital | virtual* space.

The unstoppable flow of digital data across the analogic and digital can be supported by a physical component, the real space, completing an exchange of experiences and knowledge *face to face*, in a true *arena*. These designed places, with their countless and unusual typologies of environments, can host new sharing behaviours owing to their different “programmed” qualities: relational, environmental, functional, aesthetic and perceptive, with reference to a logic of belonging to communities and a logic of *branding*. But they can also give back to citizens the sense and value of *the public good*. In this regard, design disciplines represent a unique opportunity to generate new creative spatial concepts by working as a continuous process, identifying and interpreting new scenarios.

The Interior and Spatial design approach is very agile, disseminated in several episodes. It is systematic, often aiming at a *possible* condition, even removable and/or transferable, and can be continuously updated. It also acts at environmental level, including *performance* and ephemeral aspects connected to temporariness or virtuality - responsive environments able to create the new *sensitive_scape*. This perfectly dialogues with different environments: from the historical and precious, to the former industrial, but also to the most forgotten, hidden, and neglected (*dirt space*)^[5], identifying each time appropriate strategies and languages. It is an approach characterized by its ability to synthetically and variably relate the most exquisitely configurative aspects of urban spaces with the functional, symbolic, conceptual, temporal, cinematic, interactive, artistic, poetic, artificial and natural, even of conflict and protest . . . ; basically, with all the mutable elements that constitute a large part of the contemporaneous urban scenario, in the emerging *wi-fi city*.

Design Studio activity

Landscape and interior-spatial design, 1st y MSc, A.y. 2017/18 [caption]

The Masters course dealt with the actions of Landscape and Spatial-Interior Design in urban areas, in the Milano-Bovisa district, in agreement with the Municipality of Milan - District *Municipio 9*, with particular attention to the evolving, intermediate, residual and often hidden, neglected spaces, by giving value to the aspects of hospitality of the city's public spaces, by using different landscape and spatial-interior design tactics and tools. These include the natural elements, the environmental, functional and aesthetic characteristics, the performative and interactive actions, the adaptability and variability of the spatial interventions. The Design Studio investigated this phenomenon through an actual, critical and experimental approach, testing in which way the natural, physical and ephemeral design hypotheses could become some of the city's interior_scapes and sensitive_scape for the new urban future scenario.

The various designed "city interior_scapes and sensitive_scape" offered the poetics of storytelling with the juxtaposition and layering of smaller designs into a whole; a composition made of memories, displaced contexts, future visions, recycled meanings, and metamorphosis, which allows the city to create itself, to read itself and to form its own meanings from unpublished or borrowed fragments, towards a continuous updating of the environment and of the landscape.



Figure 5: Landscape and Spatial-Interior Design_DESIGN STUDIO

Professors: Giovanna Piccinno, Carolina Fois, Marco Barsottini | Assistants: Daniele Mazzinghi, Jovana Vukoje _ Exhibition _ School of Design _ Politecnico di Milano (It), January 2018

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Affective reasoning: hidden interiors #forgotten PRACTICE

Rebecca Disney & Simon Lanyon-Hogg

Rebecca Disney (r.disney@mdx.ac.uk) is a Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University and practicing Designer.

Simon Lanyon Hogg (simon@lanyon-hogg.com) is a Chartered Architect.

Abstract

This essay explores the role of affective reasoning in a design process; examining what could be referred to as an initial instinctive response to a space and questioning its value and merit as a strategy for analysis and cognition. Employing a range of methodologies, drawings, making, photographs and printmaking, we carefully examine, investigate and analyse a forgotten and overlooked space.

A 300-year-old dilapidated builder's workshop packed to the rafters with paint, metal, tools and construction materials, obscuring the character of the host building and its inherent qualities. The occupancy was utilitarian and functional. Blocking windows, goods stacked on the floors and tools leaning against the walls concealed the echoes of previous lives, forgotten and undervalued. Beneath this detritus the old flag stones, stained with grease and paint emerged. The brick and timber walls were framed with ad hoc shelving and daylight worked deep into the plan.

This space resonates, we sense and see the possibilities of the existing building. Can the designer intuit the latent atmosphere of a space, employing affective reasoning^[1] through drawing and making to examine and clarify the essence of the found object?

This document is a record of the conversion of this builder's workshop into residential use. A 10-year longitudinal study of the evolution of the interiors: an archive of drawings, photographs, thoughts and notations.

As 'temporary custodians' our aim is not to mimic but to respect and be sensitive to the building's inherent materiality; to register a light footprint on its surface whilst maintaining the integrity of the found object, ever mindful and questioning at what point is the character of the space erased? Our ambition was to make apparent the intangible qualities and elements sensed but not necessarily seen.

"I think we are always searching for something hidden or merely potential or hypothetical, following its traces whenever they appear on the surface."^[2]

The Workshop sits in the centre of a village, opposite a 12th century church at the Southerly tip of the Isle of Wight. Historic newspaper reports tell of smugglers concealing rum in its garden, but latterly it was used as a general builders and glaziers workshop. The building has been constructed incrementally over the last 300 years from local limestone, handmade bricks and softwood timber. A stone workers cottage, a brick store with a timber shed at first floor; it is a narrative of pragmatic occupation and form follows need.

During its last tenure, the building was let on a peppercorn rent^[3] to a small building construction company. The stone cottage was a makeshift office space and the first floor of the shed inhabited by benches, drills and circular saws. The roof was rickety, timber was infested with woodworm, there was no insulation and the building was vulnerable. A straightforward solution would have been to demolish and start again.

However, there was something within this building that resonated within us, demanding value and respect. We did not commence with a rigid concept, but continually touched and *felt* our way through haptic encounters, taking the phenomenologists stance as a guide. "In every dwelling, even the richest, the first task... is to find the original shell... to determine the profound reality of all the subtle shadings of our attachment to a chosen spot."^[4]



Working empirically with materials, learning traditional techniques such as lime mortaring and adding flint teeth^[5] to buttress the structure has enabled us to connect with the lives and craft of the previous occupants, unveiling and deciphering narratives old and new. Over time, by listening to the building and researching its inherent properties we have enabled the building to breathe again.

This is an account of this process of investigation, interpretation and design intervention: documenting our practice, outlining specific tools and strategies. “In order to create extraordinary spaces with integrity and atmospheric presence we need to identify what we find valuable, what we are moved and inspired by.”^[6]

01 -being attentive to

Our analysis commenced with an initial deep cleaning process: investing in a visceral reading of the space. Following the notion that “touch can cement an empathic or affective bond, opening an entirely new channel of communication.”^[7] In the manner of an archaeologist, steadily brushing and sweeping years of workshop debris, we unearthed old letters tucked on shelves (dated 1890), [Figure 1] a raffle ticket hastily pinned to a rafter, a tax disc from 1959, a box of rusty handmade nails and poignantly the village noticeboard listing all the men that went to war, their names inscribed with a cross if they failed to return.

02 -slow looking

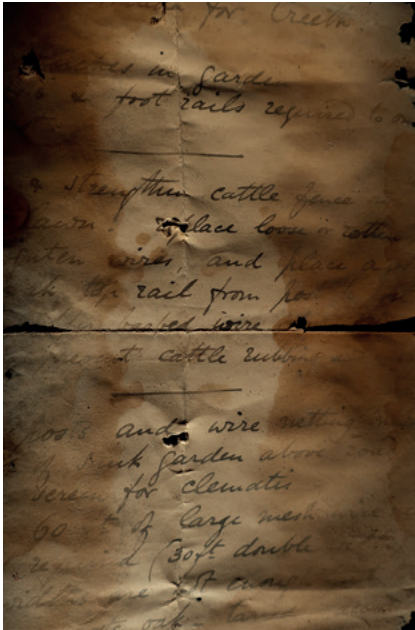


Figure 1: One of several old handwritten documents uncovered. It's content reveals details of the types of work undertaken in the old builders workshop (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

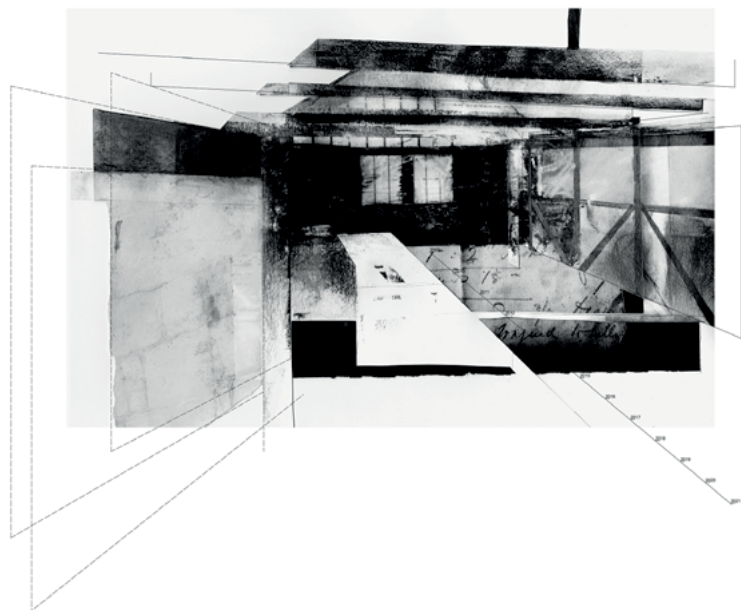


Figure 2: Collage, taking time to observing and record (Credit: Rebecca Disney)



Figure 3: Drawings exploring traces, materiality and a sense of absence (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

In a modest book *Wabi Sabi: Further Thoughts*, the author describes a process of no-think-walk-look-shoot; a photographic survey of his environs. Every day over a period of months he simply recorded whatever “captured”^[8] his interest. In this manner, we photographed, made drawings and collages [Figure 2]: photographs to grasp our first observations, drawings to examine and interpret the redolent echoes of the rooms and large 4m long monoprints to scribe a direct hand to eye view. Focusing on imprints, traces and residues, [Figure 3] we collated nuances almost too hidden to notice. In the words of Koren, we observed in these procedures something “so faint, tentative, delicate and subtle that it may be overlooked – or mistaken as trivial or insignificant”^[9]. These acts of purposefully *slow looking* “taking time to carefully observe more than the eye can see at first glance”^[10] enabled us to penetrate deep into the skin of the building, heightening our sensitivity to the emotive patina within.

03 -mapping habits and preoccupations

Analysis of our photographs and drawings showed a preoccupation with the diurnal passage of light. Due to the abundance of daylight at first floor in the timber shed it was an easy decision to determine this as the primary space, a flexible studio and living area. Establishing this as a datum, anchored sequential design decisions. In contrast, the ground floor of the brick building was inherently dark, the floor cold and damp. To bring in the morning light we introduced an east window, the southern wall opened up to the garden and to the west, an existing window restored. [Figure 4]

A small wall-mounted water heater, old workbench and camping stove served as a temporary kitchen for several years as we observed our natural predilections and rituals. In turn, the kitchen has established itself in the core of the ground floor, mediating between fireplace, entrance and staircase. Previously used as a garage and store, it's heavy flag floor bears traces of oil and spilled paint. The flags were diligently ordered and numbered before they were lifted for the fitting of insulation and underfloor heating. When replaced, the stones have been left unsealed in order to continue to register the passage of time and use.

04 -reconnaissance



Figure 3-2

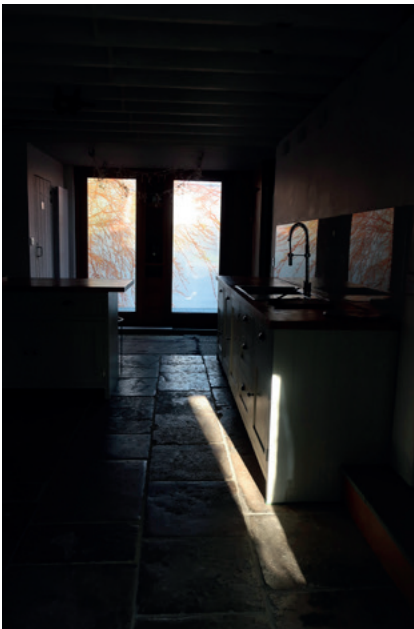


Figure 4: Daylight penetrating the ground floor, diffused through an translucent screen inserted in the North face (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

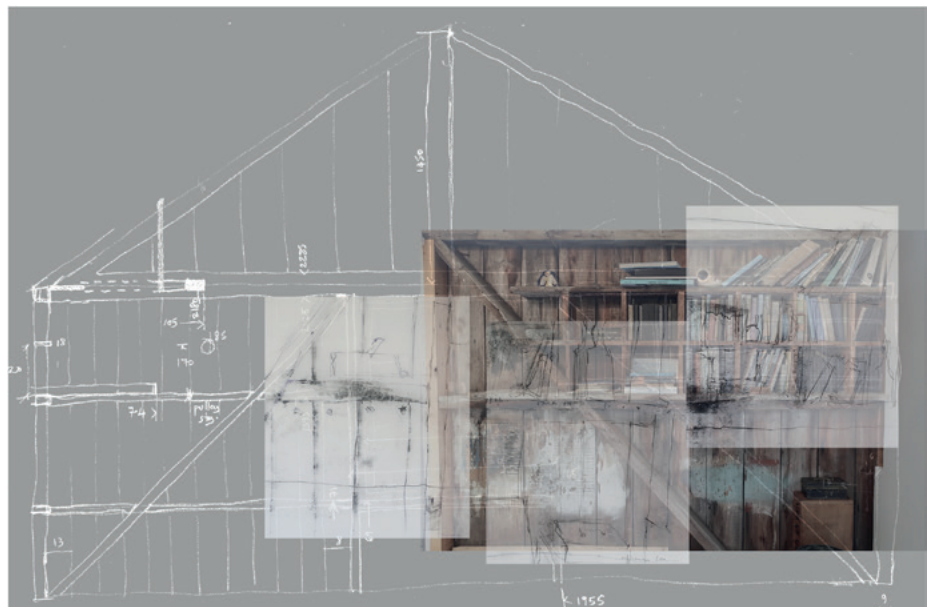


Figure 5: Collage surveying the walls of the timber shed, recording idiosyncrasies and misalignments not immediately apparent (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

Each wall was forensically audited: hand measured, recording each peculiarity and incidence. [Figure 5] This process of reconnaissance evidenced a surfeit of midden^[1] and clues; a piece of string left on a rusty hook, handwritten labels, (pencil on timber), spaces allocated to specific trades, profiles, timber wedges and “stops” that imply storage systems for tools or materials. It uncovered quirky asymmetries and constructional irregularities that were specific to site and construction.

Other surveys have been longer to mature, movement ties installed on cracks gave seasonal readings, signalling other criteria; in winter the water table rises and the stone cottage begins to swell. We do not aim to seek perfection and fine finish within this space but accept it's organic fluctuations. Designing with a tolerance for imperfections, materials are chosen for their ability to mature and season well. Waxed oak, natural leather, lime finishes and breathable paints that can creak, crack, discolour and stain over time.

05 -scrutiny

To examine the colours and textures resident in the buildings fabric, we employed the tools of the scientist: using scalpels and laboratory slides we worked sequentially around the walls, documenting location and materiality and collated tiny fragments of residues for examination. Encapsulated in layers of fine glass, hidden subtleties were unveiled and laid open to interpretation. From the stonewalls we gathered fine dust, from the old rafters lime wash was registered, other timbers showed oxidised wood fibres blackened with age. From the spine wall dark grey bitumen was recovered and brick samples from different locations, evidenced gradation of pigmentation that we had not been aware of.

06 -distillation and assimilation

The potency of the initial investigations lingered with us for several years prompting further research. A requirement for privacy in the bathroom and screening from the street brought us back to the qualities identified in the small-scale microscope slides. Through a process of distillation and assimilation: testing various materials, mark making, stitching into tracing paper and silk, scale models and full size trials, we explored numerous iterations. [Figure 6-7]

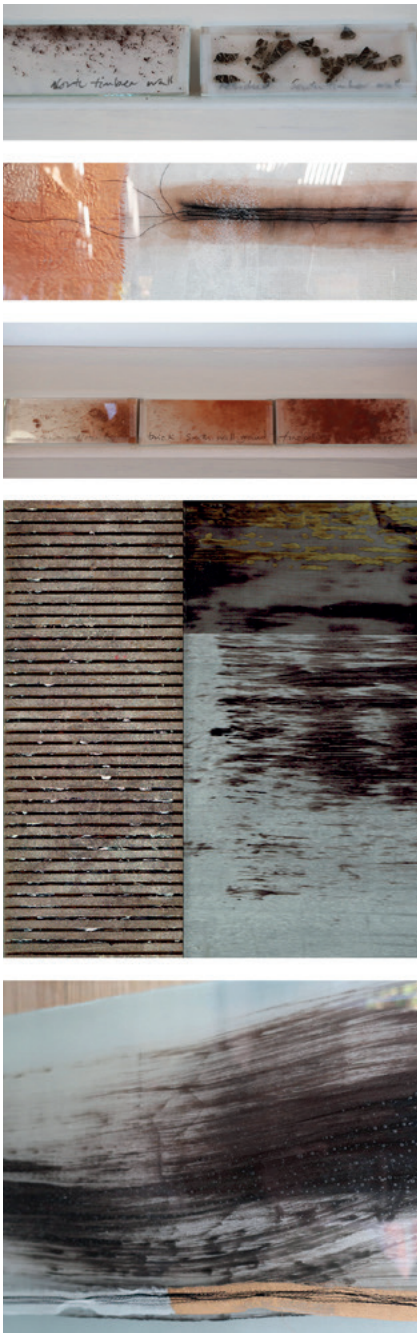


Figure 6: Exploratory mark making in response to the found qualities working in a range of media (Credit: Rebecca Disney)



Figure 7: Large-scale drawings translate and test the qualities unearthed in the early speculations (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

It was important to provide enclosure yet allow the found volumes of the building to remain, barely touched. These insertions have become a series of architectural “membranes”: that enable light to suffuse through the section of the building. Made from silk laminated in glass, the intention is that these panels are notionally transitory: constructed in a manner that implies impermanence. They currently illustrate our personal memories of a landscape and are therefore specific to our period of inhabitation. When we leave, new occupants could easily replace these moments as someone might remove picture frames. At night, two of these screens inserted within the north façade become radiant. The building begins to act like a magic lantern, relaying glimpses of activity, internal narratives and occupancy to the village street.

07 -dialogue

Within recent history, former tenants had established a new “doorway” to the first floor of the stone cottage by simply knocking through the spine wall, the jagged edge patched up with cement mortar. We have chosen to retain the brutal traces of this action, not tidying it up, not repairing it but acknowledging it as another chapter in this building’s narrative. [Figure 8]



Figure 8: Drawing examining the threshold between the stone cottage and timber shed casually ‘knocked through’ by earlier occupants (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

By highlighting this scar with copper leaf, we have followed the example of the artist Susan Collis whose work with architectural palimpsests, replaces items like rawl plugs or paint splats with sapphires, diamonds or gold. These precious inclusions ask us to question our notions of beauty and perception of value by drawing our attention to ordinary, everyday marks interred through function and use. This intervention physically highlights the threshold, reflecting the afternoon light and replacing the traditional architrave. The copper leaf is not sealed so over time its vivid lustre will oxidize and fade, its presence will continue to participate in the dialogue between the found object as an intermediary between the old and new.

Harmony and *stillness* are two significant words that Jim Ede chose to describe his home in Kettles Yard, Cambridge, the latter meaning “to be attentive, to take in, to search” and also just to be there and know.

This sense of *stillness*, by being there, has enabled us to develop an inventory of cognitive practice. Whilst the initial ‘frisson of the physical encounter’^[12] establishes the impetus of a design idea, it is these affective methodologies that have provoked a depth of enquiry, guiding and informing the realization of this concept into built

form. Through a process of caring for, repairing, cleaning, observing, listening and recording this building, our sense of “room” has deepened. As this relationship evolved our sensitivity to the qualities that had lain forgotten and dormant over many years has been heightened. In the manner of *Genius Loci*; the *spirit* of the place as discussed by Norberg-Schulz, the building has revealed itself to us over time. Our initial intentions have remained constant, but every step of inquisition revealed further evidence and clues, testing our decision making and enticing us to challenge conventions of “wall” and “enclosure”. The reciprocal nature of this experience has facilitated a new generation of narratives that sit quietly alongside their ancestors. Where possible, we have retained the traces that enrich the existent surfaces, the white paint that indicates the impatient act of cleaning a paintbrush, the handmade nails and the smoky residue and kettle hook on the fireplace remain. Old storage shelves previously stacked with pots of wood lacquer, and dirty cloths have become appropriated as bookshelves, [Figure 9] old winches in the roof facilitate the drying of our drawings and prints.

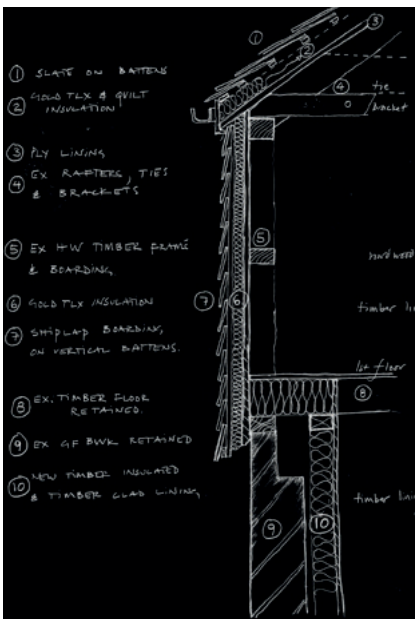


Figure 9: By insulating the timber shed on the outside we were able to retain the rich character of the space. The inherent patina remains and its voice still resonates (Credit: Rebecca Disney)



Figure 9: By insulating the timber shed on the outside we were able to retain the rich character of the space. The inherent patina remains and its voice still resonates (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

We have also laid new hidden imprints for future sleuths to decipher. In the north elevation, the original window set into the sliding gable doors finished at a height that restricted the view. We had this door carefully removed and the windowsill reduced, so that when seated, the hills in the distance can be seen unhindered: the evidence of this design decision is almost invisible.

In *Thinking Architecture*, Peter Zumthor recounts a conversation with a friend about the latest film of the director Aki Kaurismaki; by retelling the narrative of the film Zumthor realized what he was trying to *say* through his architecture.

‘he does not exploit them [the actors] to express a concept, but rather shows them in a light that lets us sense their dignity, and their secrets.’^[13]



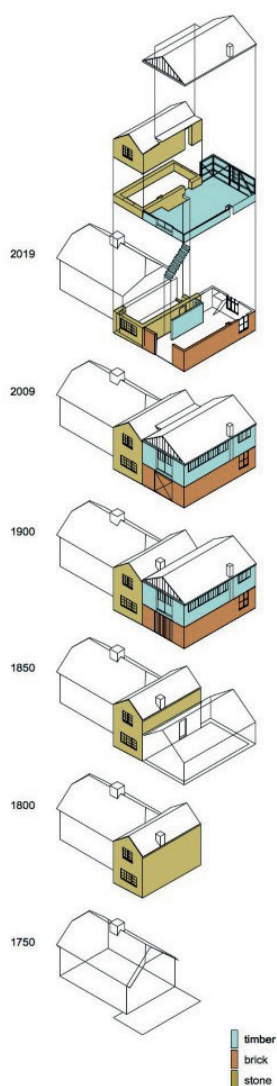
Figure 9: By insulating the timber shed on the outside we were able to retain the rich character of the space. The inherent patina remains and its voice still resonates (Credit: Rebecca Disney)

Postscript:

Early design decisions not discussed here, were simply to secure and maintain the body and integrity of the building before it crumbled. All of the lintels were made from hand-sawn timber; the large 9' x 11' timber beam holding up the south elevation of the stone cottage needed immediate attention. The west elevation of the timber shed was beyond repair and a whole wall at first floor level collapsed. To maintain the inherent proportions first observed, all the rotten windows were replaced with hardwood units replicated by a joiner in the next village. Only one original window remains, twisted and distorted, sitting as a testament to the heave and movement in the ground.

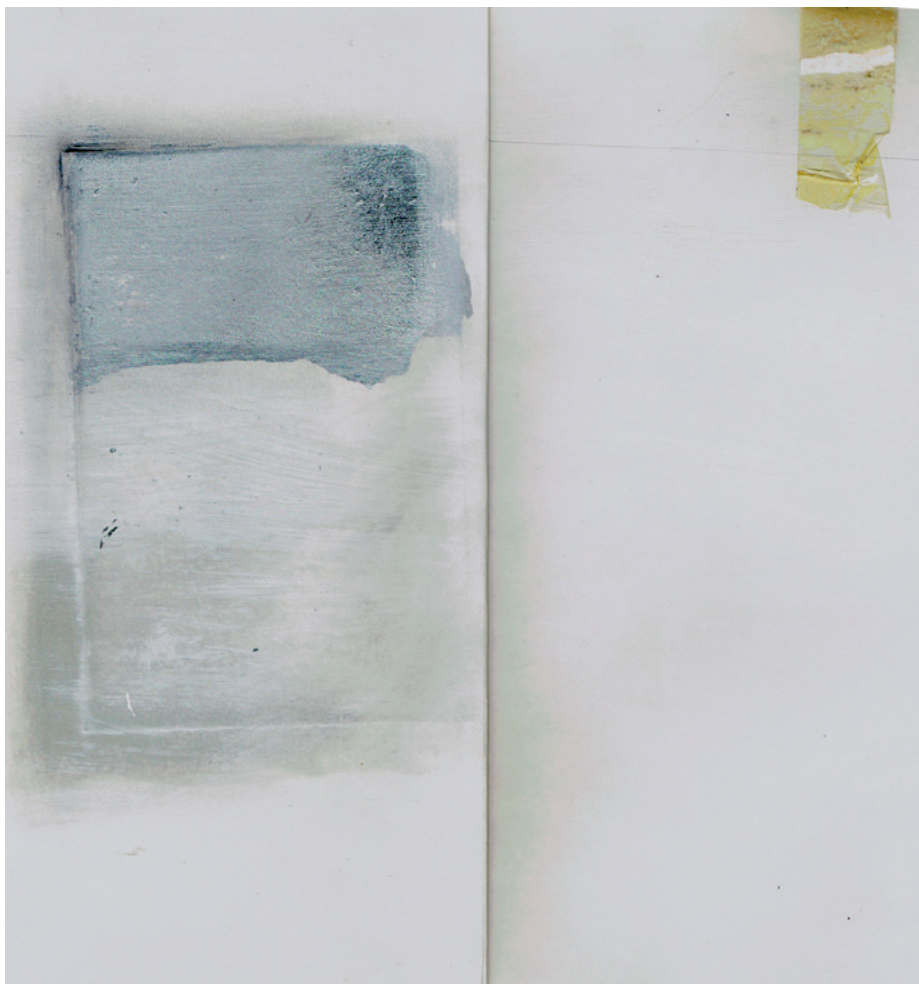
Notes & Citations

1. *Affective reasoning* – a process of analysis and cognition that relates to emotive responses; moods, feelings and attitudes.
2. Calvino, I (1996,77)
3. *Peppercorn rent* - a very low or nominal rent.
4. Bachelard, G (1994,4).
5. *Flint teeth* - hard stones that are inserted into stonewalls to stabilise the wall by packing stone and the lime mortar.
6. Littlefield, D & Lewis, S (2007,229)
7. Patterson, M (2007,3)
8. Koren, K (2015,41)
9. Koren, K (2015,49)
10. Tishman, S (2017,2)
11. *Midden* - A deposit of occupation debris, rubbish, or other by-products of human activity, such as shell, bone, or debitage, found close to a living area; a trash heap or pit.
12. De Bolla, P (2001,2)
13. Zumthor, P (2010, 53)



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Back cover

Francesca Murialdo

Francesca Murialdo, is an architect and a PhD in Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design. In the past 10 years she's been running her own practice and working as Adjunct Professor at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano. From 2015 she is Programme Leader in Interior Architecture at Middlesex University in London. Her interests focus on the scale, and physical connections between spaces, people and objects, underlining emerging behaviours and strategies.

Naomi House

Naomi House is a designer, educator and writer. Her specific expertise is in the field of interiors and its psycho-spatial dimension. Focusing on the agency of the interior and its role in informing everyday behaviours, she is particularly interested in the use of forensic methods as a strategy for analysing how objects and environments can be interpreted and animated.

Front Cover Image: Livia Wang

Vincent Van Gogh, 1853-1890, Painter, Lived Here 1873-1874

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