A Visual Retrospective of Urban Social Movement in Christiania:

Thinking through drawing

Alisa Cairns
20006700
BA(Hons) Interior Architecture
University of the West of England
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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to research Christiania versus the state through an original photographic archive. It aims to identify community as the central node of architecture, through the method of design research and narrative techniques. The research situates itself in a superimposition of the urban space in Christiania, to explore the notion of movement that articulates urban form, as hypothesised by Bernard Tschumi. Concerning Castells theory of Urban Social Movement, it implicates that desire for autonomy can significantly infer the establishment of the surrounding built environment.

To what extent has Christiania resisted political conditions and pursued autonomy through Urban Social Movement?

Statement of Own Work

This study was completed as part of the BA(Hons) Interior Architecture degree at the University of the West of England. The work is my own, and when the work of others is applied it is attributed to the relevant source.

Alisa Cairns

Copyright Statement

Acknowledgement

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I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Matthew Hynam, for his support and encouragement during this dissertation that fueled my creativity.

Introduction

Christiania is an alternative 'free' community in the heart of Copenhagen. This dissertation will narrate Christiania as an urban autonomous development, initiated by urban struggles and predominantly housing shortage (So Danish!, 2023). Christiania was born as a squat in 1971, when local squatters wanted to create a space carved out by political contradiction. It was led by *anarchism* (Midtgaard, p.300), which may be defined as a political theory, that opposes the present political climate. It advocates the abolition of a capitalist government and other forms of authority, fundamental to an established material society. Capitalism was an object of rebellion amongst youth. Whereby, Christiania introduced a space of local autonomy, diversity, and experimentation of informal architecture. After many years of struggle and negotiation, Christiania had managed to defend the space and an agreement was signed with the Danish state for the purchase of the land (Zinovich, p.94). Christiania lives presently as the largest and longest squat in Europe, inhabited by a collectively controlled community of activists and many of the original settlers remain in the space.

Christiania has had an impact on the built environment, due to the movement of people. Castells (1983) concluded in the early 1980s that Urban Social Movement was an approach to achieve some control over the urban environment, responding to social systematic inequalities. Christiania is a significant example of social movement, in reaction to the state. This dissertation is concerned with community as the core of urban process, using Christiania as a case study, with reference to Castells, as well as, the actualisation of activism, that leads to the occupation of space. There will be a degree of research through photographic analysis to investigate such statement. Throughout the 1970s, photographic archive was a significant part of the media, especially for broadcasting and intensifying awareness outside of Christiania. Photography seems to play a more significant role than architectural drawing (Carpenter, 2022). Therefore, this medium of documentation is critical to understanding the temporal sequence of events and drawing out the syntactical elements of photographs would seem most interesting and apposite. This dissertation seeks to illustrate Christiania as product of event to form and will be substantiated through drawing.

Fig 1

Fig 1: Outer line of defence, recognised as ramparts act as a boundary line between Christiania and broader Copenhagen (Heward, 2021)

Methodology

The research will be synthesised through a mode of design research and exploratory inventiveness. The following chapters will seek to manipulate an existing panoply of archived photographs of Christiania from the 1970s. *Ethnography* is the interpretation of historical, cultural and social contexts of a community. It is a research-based method, and the research may be conducted through visual mediums such as photographs. This is defined as *visual ethnography* (Tate). Visual ethnography is particularly useful for an immediate sense of context. It is efficient to study Christiania in this way, as the visual language of photography can stimulate a deeper understanding of lived experience, through engaging directly with the community in a situated experience (Carpenter, 2022). Photography has the capacity to communicate the nuanced qualities of a community by meaningfully involving inhabitants, thus resulting in an analogue of reality.

Furthermore, the medium of photography borrows from creative practises and encourages design thinking in unexpected ways. Murray Fraser's *Design research in Architecture: An Overview* (2013) aims to enrich the possibilities of architectural research. Architectural design research may be defined as processes and outcomes of design thinking and broader contributions (Fraser, 2013). Architectural research is expansive because it amalgamates strands of the built environment, social science and humanities. It is a mode of expression, as well as a condition of self-understanding. Fraser (2013, p.7) notes that Bernand Tschumi, who proposed *The Manhattan Transcripts* in 1981, suggests that theoretical concepts may be either applied to a project or inferred from the outcomes. As part of the methodology, this dissertation will introduce lateral thinking and a new paradigm of research into Christiania. It will present thinking through drawing, influenced by Tschumi's visual communication. Tschumi argues that form follows function (Bernand Tschumi Architects). *The Manhattan Transcripts* manifest an architectural interpretation of reality that stems from direct event, function or programme. The drawings transcribe the complex relationship between space and use. This research will endeavour to synergise Christiania as an environment that is not planned but emerges through the movement of people.

The act of mapping allows designers and researchers to creatively advance in the unfolding of spatial and social processes, alongside the increased complexity around the built environment (Corner, 1999). Mapping has a capacity for surface expression of social processes, while creating possibilities within the space, through a capacity to reformulate the existing (Corner, p.214). Architectural research relies on creative leaps, through a sense of freedom and opportunity (Fraser, p.3). It may be produced through the process of testing and evaluating. Although, there are challenges such as repeatability or transparency, through history. So, it is important to critique our own methodological assumptions (Fraser, p.2) in order to be rigorous and relevant. The purpose of this research is to re-frame the Urban Social Movement in Christiana by applying the creative agency of drawing to archived photographs. The visual communication of Tschumi, where composition reflects the relation between space and movement, is most pertinent to this research. The *literature review* is seamlessly absorbed throughout the dissertation.
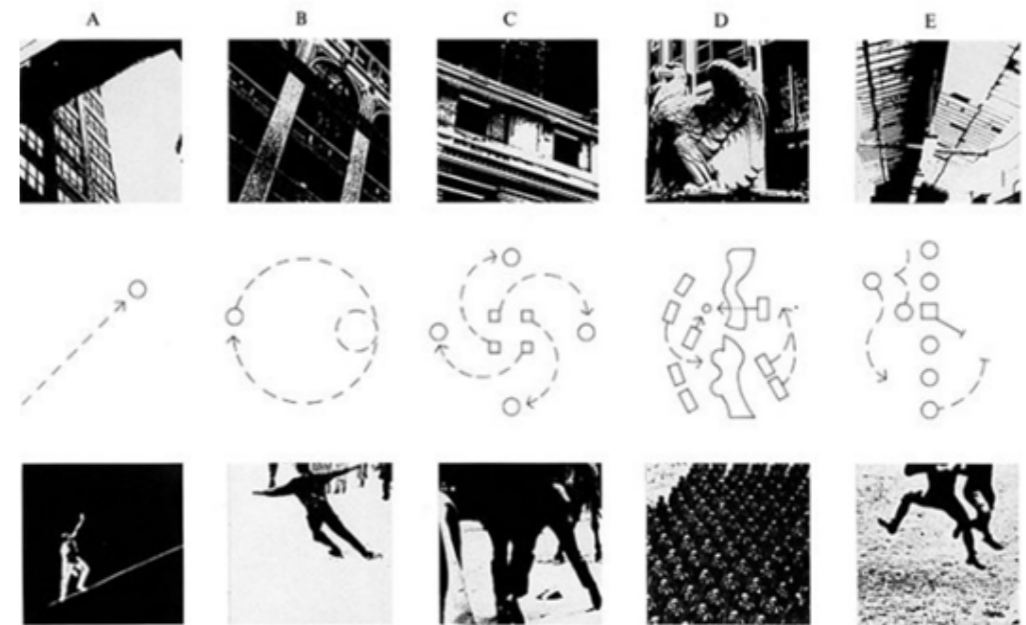

Fig 2

1.0 History of Christiania

This chapter will underline a brief history of Christiania. The movement of people in Copenhagen began in 1971 due to housing shortages (So Danish!, 2023) and people were led by a desire of freedom, solidarity, state opposition and system change. Tension between the Danish Government and Christiania escalated during the late 1970s (Zinovich, p.89). The government attempted to gain control over the area to use it for development to align with the broader context of Copenhagen. Christiania sought for *'the right to the city'*, such as against the normalisation of private property and advocated a collective right to land and housing (Hansen, p.226). To uphold this, Christiania introduced a counter capitalism, determined by social and environmental justice. It largely constituted the individual taking care of the collective (The Green Plan, 1991). With frequent threats of eviction from the Danish Government, there was constant negotiation and protest between Christiania and the state. A pivotal moment for Christiania was in 1989 when the *Christiania Law* was passed (Midtgaard, p.301). The law considered the right of use of the land, allowing the continued existence of Christiania with measures in place with the Ministry of Environment, but opposition and negotiation with the state continued.

A part of the land that Christiania occupied was sold to inhabitants in 2011 (Zinovich, p.94) by the state, including the *Ministry of Defence* and an agreement was introduced to rent the remaining part. It is important to note that the Ministry of Defence played a big role in the actualisation of Christiania. The relationship between them has been complex, but there was a degree of tolerance from the Ministry of Defence, dissimilar to the rest of the Danish state. The Christiania Law of 1989 was formed in close accordance with the Ministry of Environment, who introduced a *Local Plan*. The plan compromised two parts: a 'rural' part and an 'urban' part that had potential for further development (Cappola and Vanolo, p.1158). Inhabitants of Christiania aspired to act on their own plans and responded by presenting an alternative Green Plan (1991). The plan introduced a bridge between people and ecology, with a basic condition of sustainability. There was a large extent of protest from Christiania during *COP15*, when a global negotiation about climate change was held in Copenhagen (Chatterton et al., 2012). The protest was partly successful. The case of Christiania reflects the persistent conflict between autonomy and broader context. Consequently, it strongly influenced later autonomous developments.

Fig 3

Fig 3: Archived photograph of inhabitants in Christiania (anon)

1971

Fig 4

Fig 5

A group of squatters committed themselves to developing a self-sustaining community. A rise of political consciousness initiated a pursuit of individual freedom, participant democracy and self-fulfilment (Zinovich, p.87). They stampede into the fence of abandoned military barracks and occupy a former military base. There were no explicit plans for the unoccupied area. The squatters broadcast a call for others who were affected by the housing shortage to join them (So Danish!, 2023). Consequently, the police attempted to evict the squatters; however, too many squatters responded to the broadcast. Christiania is born.

1972

Fig 6

The newly formed community aimed to overarch the political landscape of the time. They sought to develop a new political and social structure, shaped by urban activism and space reproduction. The squatters engage in negotiation with the Ministry of Defence. They reach a consensus and Christiania is stamped as a *social experiment* (Zinovich, p.87).

1974

Fig 7

Attempts of police eviction resume. The Danish Government declares that Christiania must be cleared by April 1976 (Zinovich, p.88). Inhabitants argue that no individuals may be legally evicted until an agreement with the Ministry of Defence is implemented.

1977

Fig 8

Fig 9

Christiania loses a number of cases, and subsequently appeals to Denmark's Supreme Court, but is rejected. Throughout this time, the *"Love and Chaos"* exhibition opens at the Royal Danish Academy, featuring art by inhabitants of Christiania, as well as *"Our Music"*, a CD that features music and poetry (The Christiania Guide, 2004). This exemplifies the multifaceted representation of the community through the actualisation of creative potential. Inhabitants form an alliance with Danish citizens, by inviting them to Christiania and through public solidarity and legitimacy, the settlement is able to continue.

1989

Fig 10

Fig 11

After a number of negotiations with the Ministry of Defence, the 'Christiania Law' was passed, regulating the relationship between Christiania and the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry of Defence proposed a Local Plan, with strategies to legalise the Christiania area (Midtgaard, p.301).

1991

Fig 12

Fig 13

Christiania proposes a Green Plan with a vision of environmental sustainability, under self-administration, where inhabitants may develop individually and freely while accepting responsibility for the well-being of the entire community. The Green Plan (1991) reshapes ecological consciousness and way of living, such as a car free settlement.

Fig 4: Squatters stampeding into ramparts (anon)
Fig 5: Gathering in Christiania (anon)
Fig 6: Entrance to Christiania (anon)
Fig 7: Danish police (anon)
Fig 8: Former military barrack (anon)
Fig 9: Inhabitants of Christiania (anon)
Fig 10: Built environment (anon)
Fig 11: Inhabitant building a window frame with recycled wood (anon)
Fig 12: Wood workshop (anon)
Fig 13: Urban context of Christiania (anon)

1996

Fig 14

The Ministry of Defence refused the Green Plan; however, to celebrate 25 years, Christiania agrees on a strategy that integrates aspects from both the Local Plan and the Green Plan. The Ministry of Defence, as Christiania's landlord, paid all dues to date (Clayden, p.61).

2004

Fig 15

The community was awarded eighteen months' notice to dissolve itself by the Danish Government, despite the agreement with the Ministry of Defence (Reimer, p.124).

Fig 16

Through protest and violence, Christiania and the government continue to negotiate extensively. A revised Christiania Law is implemented.

2007

Fig 17

Fig 18

In correlation to the Green Plan (1991), the barracks are restored to their original condition. A government negotiation group, suggests selling the rest of the space to developers, to finance the experimentation of green architecture and engineering (Zinovich, pp.93). Christiania petitions against it. The purpose of the Green Plan was to implement sustainable urbanism, through renewable energy and recycling. In other words, enhancing available resources, and preserving the rich motivation behind the community, through creativity and sustainable solutions.

Fig 19

Fig 20

Tension in Copenhagen was in full bloom as protest in Christiania resumes against 'COP15': *The Climate Summit*. The Danish Government failed to take meaningful and urgent action to address climate change. So, an alternative 'Climate Summit' was organised to articulate a new political agenda for mobilising environmental activism (Chatterton et al., 2012). The government attempted to silence oppositional voices; nonetheless, COP15 recognised the need for enhanced action against climate change and came to a political agreement known as the *Copenhagen Accord* (European Environment Agency, 2010). Hence, Christiania's efforts to address climate change effactually influenced the state, despite efforts to suppress the alternative summit.

2009

Fig 21

Fig 22

Fig 14: Inhabitants of Christiania (anon)
Fig 15: Danish police enter Christiania (anon)
Fig 16: Protest in Christiania (anon)
Fig 17: Reformation of military barracks (anon)
Fig 18: Experimentation of informal architecture in Christiania (anon)
Fig 19: Emerging typologies of architecture (anon)
Fig 20: Self-built house (anon)
Fig 21: Continuation of protest (anon)
Fig 22: Danish police (anon)
Fig 23: Urban context (anon)

2011

Fig 23

Conclusively, Christiania and the Danish Government reach an agreement. The agreement provides for the purchase of the land by inhabitants and allowed for the collective ownership.

2.0 Alternative Capitalism

After having discussed the profound history of Christiania, it is useful to apply Castells' theoretical framework: *Urban Social Movement in The City and the Grassroots*, to understand the emerging phases of autonomy. Castells articulates the production of space as "living systems, made, transformed and experienced by people" (Castells, p.3). Through this, Castells cements the input of social activism into the shaping of space as he suggests that urban form is produced by the direct relationship between space and community. Christiania manifests a community of self-sustaining activists, where social value is embedded in the form and diversity of architecture. Castells' theory suggests movements are often characterised by conflicting social, political and class structures (Castells, 1983). The movement of squatters occurred as an outgrowth of social, political and economic inequality, through a major shortage of affordable housing, especially amongst youth. The acute lack of affordable housing was a product of capitalism (So Danish!, 2023). In a capitalist economy, the factors of production are managed by private entities. In reaction to the state, squatters began moving into uninhabited spaces, specifically empty military barracks, situated in Copenhagen. Therefore, Urban Social Movement begins when a group or community share specific values.

Moreover, inhabitants of Christiania shared a specific identity in a local context. This identity was resistance to the accepted political condition, kindling the shift towards local autonomy. According to Castells (1983), *autonomy* is a separation of activists from political conditions, in the form of resistance. The expression *local autonomy* is defined as the independence a local government holds within a larger political structure. Squatters in Copenhagen sought to move away from a centralised governance, led by a strong desire for a decentralised governance. Thus, all decisions in Christiania must be made by a consensus of the community. Christiania demonstrates a direct correlation between activism and urban space by challenging the capitalist normalities and the growing intervention of the state in production and consumption, as described by Castells (1983). In this sense, squatting was the alternative capitalism and unconventional housing strategy; ergo, inhabitants wanted to create a space of counter capitalism and greater freedom, led by the Urban Social Movement.

There is some discourse around the legitimacy of Christiania's autonomy. In this instance, autonomy may be described as the desire to explore creative routes out of the capitalist present by rejecting authoritarianism (Chatterton at al., 2012). On the other hand, Cappola and Vanolo (2015, p.1155) articulate that autonomy is not a collective production of people or place, but rather a transient and situated social construct. In support of this claim, they discuss the continuous negotiation of autonomous settlements in a global capitalist economy (Cappola and Vanolo, p.1165). So, this continuum infers the tendency towards autonomy to be constantly fractured and inconsistent and it posits autonomy as a complex force that cannot be established but it subject to negotiation.

Consequently, the 2011 agreement mobilises a new interplay between Christiania and the state. Cappola and Vanolo (2015, p.1161) state that the agreement between Christiania and the state provides for a loss of independence, imposing a new 'norm', therefore there is a "loss of autonomy". In reflection of this, several of the community funding values are subverted, such as the agreement of land ownership, so in some ways, the settlement loses its integral node. Conversely, the primary objective of autonomy is to advocate a sense of agency, as well as a decentralised governance. It is important to note that despite external pressure, Christiania was able to develop and preserve full autonomous culture until the state came to agreement with them. The Christiania Law of 1989 was amended in 2004, in order to progressively merge Christiania with a number of Danish regulations, while at the same time allowing shared values amongst inhabitants to persist. The 2004 Act permits Christiania exemption from law enforcement, property law and planning laws. In spite of that, the act abolishes some previous exemptions from Danish regulation, such as the requirement to pay rent (Midtgaard, p.302). The act that was formed prior to agreement with the state in 2011, stays in effect for Christiania, sustaining a socially motivated locality of production (Reimer, p.128). Accordingly, the stance against a centralised governance remains likewise and continues to be practised, without having to negotiate with the state. In this regard, Christiania has accomplished mechanisms of control with a continued alternative capitalism through autonomy that remains as adaptable and resilient as it has proven to be through time.

2.1 Alternative Architecture

Having considered alternative capitalism, Christiania is also an interesting case for alternative architecture due to the transformation of barracks and old military buildings into habitable spaces. The informal architecture reflects the values of those inhabiting the space (Kuntz et al., 2014). Christiania emerged from a interior of old military barracks and expanded out. The objective was to build a space where individuals may unfold freely, with a shared responsibility for the community (The Green Plan, 1991). Christiania reflects these principles through a dynamic nexus between architecture and social dimensions, as the architecture evolved in response to the community's shared values and desire for individual freedom, especially an alternative capitalism. The architecture unfolds with community needs, along the axis of local autonomy. It is a prime example of architecture as a socially embedded practice where the built environment reflects the community. The architecture in Christiania presents a new typology of design through informal architecture. There has been an increased interest into the role of experimentation in architecture, where individuals may find fulfilment in a strong community that transcends into independent housing with access to a number of shared spaces (So Danish!, 2023). The social entanglement of Christiania into the making of place, resulted in a former military space used for new and informal uses. While Copenhagen is an orderly city, the alternative lifestyle of inhabitants of Christiania, sought for alternative housing. Thus, this meant radically shifting housing typology.

The houses in Christiania are built by the individual and are often wooden huts built without regulation. The Danish Government expressed concerns over building standards, as most infrastructure in Christiania is informal and does not meet building regulations (Midtgaard, p.302), so the 2004 Act addressed this. Clayden (1999) presents a house that was a product of two wooden wagons (fig 24). At the front of the house is a wooden veranda and the interior of the house (fig 25) is pine wood cladded. The houses in Christiania are built with a plethora of accessible resources with wood being a common constituent. There is running water with a local system for cleaning it and with a wood burning stove and predominantly renewable energy, the house has low energy consumption (Clayden, p.59). Accordingly, the housing strategies are consistent with the suggested Green Plan (1991). Clayden (1999, p.60) expressed that the space was "in need of some modernisation". In contrast to the liberated lifestyle that inhabitants of Christiania pursue, the housing shows greatly traditional qualities.

Fig 24

Fig 25

Fig 24: Exterior of house built from two wooden wagons (Clayden, 1999)
Fig 25: Interior of house built from two wooden wagons (Clayden, 1999)

The new housing typology promotes freedom of informal techniques in design. Whereby, the role of design fiction is present in Christiania (Kuntz et al., 2014). The typology of housing in Christiania posits that fiction, or informality can be integrated with reality in different architectural experiments. As the normative ordering of space traditionally is seen as a primary condition for viable social life (Reimer, p.128), Christiania was established to intensify social production. An incentive for inhabitants is the idea of transformation. In particular, the former barracks welcome multiprogram possibilities, such as workshops and cafes (Kuntz et al., p.8.6). Further evident through the reuse and adaptation of accessible and salvageable resources (Heward, 2023). It draws a parallel to the proposed area of ecological balance in the Green Plan (1991), while considering spatial complexities related to use. Another case of housing in Christiania (fig 26) demonstrates the integration with nature. The house is obscured amongst surrounding greenery, as well as being situated before a river. The Green Plan (1991) aimed to balance the area with nature. In John Heward's article *a walk along the lane of the outer defences* (2023), he explores the original uses of the space, such as low river banks produced to cover troops when the former space was a military base. Heward (2023) expresses the dense greenery that lines the urban space, despite the location in an urban context. This further supports the demonstration of reformation merged with the evolving needs of inhabitants.

Fig 26

Fig 27

Fig 26: House situated on the river in Christiania (1995)
Fig 27: Example of lived experience (1995)

3.0 Designo

To assist with research, archived photographs necessitate a systematic approach. Roland Barthes' *Image Music Text* (1977) was a valuable resource, to better comprehend how to interpret photographs. It explores images, music and text as forms of cultural expression and provides the tools to analyse them. In the part discussing images, Barthes (1977) explores the nature of visual representation and the broader language of photography. *'Rhetoric of the image'* (1977, pp.33) is particularly useful to understand the three messages, that each image conveys. The first is *linguistic*, as an image immediately communicates a first message that is affirmed in the caption. The following message is *literal*, that involves the subject that yields an obvious message. The third and final message is *symbolic* that emerges from a continuum of exploration into the image's composition. So, the distinction between the literal and symbolic message is 'operational' (1977, pp.40). Thus, the qualities of the literal message are relational, but not substantial.

To consider this notion, producing a series of drawings (fig 28), that separate the literal from the symbolic, allowed for the reduction of the literal meaning to an absolute state. After isolating the literal message, the most common message relayed people. A vastly crucial aspect of documenting the making of place in Christiania was to capture the inhabitants. This finding is especially pertinent in light of Christiania's socially embedded environment. The layers provided a sense of complexity, presuming the symbolic meaning is visible in Christiania's urban context. The lack of significance is apparent without the literal message, or in other words, without the presence of people. The *Syntax*, as described by Barthes (1977), is a number of images that amalgamate to form a sequence. This denotes, that the context can no longer be found at the level of only one photograph.

The Italian term *designo* is the root of the word 'design' and translates as 'drawing'. *Design Research in Architecture: An overview* (2013, pp.15) first introduced this term. To define the scope of the history of drawing and design at interplay, Murray (2013) stated designo allowed architecture to be viewed as a liberal art. So, designo focuses on the intangible idea of architecture, rather than the physical form. It suggests design is merely an idea. The term designo resurfaced in *Bernand Tschumi Draws Architecture!* (Hartoonian, 2010), where designo was discussed as a visual expression of the ideas in mind. Bernard Tschumi illustrates the nature of designo, since he draws a parallel to the concept behind the image. *The Manhattan transcripts* are enabling to anticipate further than the partial representation of the image, as drawing is considered an unrestricted medium. Tschumi served as a compelling precedent of design research, that guided exploration in a similar context. Christiania is comparable to Tschumi's relayed concepts, considering how architecture responds to the events that occur in the space. Christiania challenges accepted social and political norms, so it appears coherent to diverge from traditional architectural drawing. Ergo, drawing through thinking, in this sense, enabled the conceptualisation of the archived photographs into diagrams.

Fig 28: Investigating the literal and symbolic message (Cairns, 2023)

Fig 28

A further analysis of *The Manhattan Transcripts* found Bernard Tschumi's aim was to challenge assumption of movement, programme and event in the urban context (Hartoonian, 2010). Tschumi plots three elements (fig 29) to develop concepts primarily centred around form further, through abstraction and simulation. Tschumi introduced a representational dimension that is instrumental to Christiania, in order to re-imagine the movement of people. Hartoonian (2010, p.29), uses *The Manhattan Transcripts* as a point of reference to discuss the horizontal and vertical structure of a drawing. The axis facilitates the flow of energy throughout the drawing, as it narrates the order of syntax. His claim that Tschumi draws architecture in a constructivist ideal (Hartoonian, p.40) confirms the horizontal and vertical are part of Tschumi's attempts to challenge visual architectural representation and introduce a more experiential understanding of the built environment, articulating the relationship between event and form.
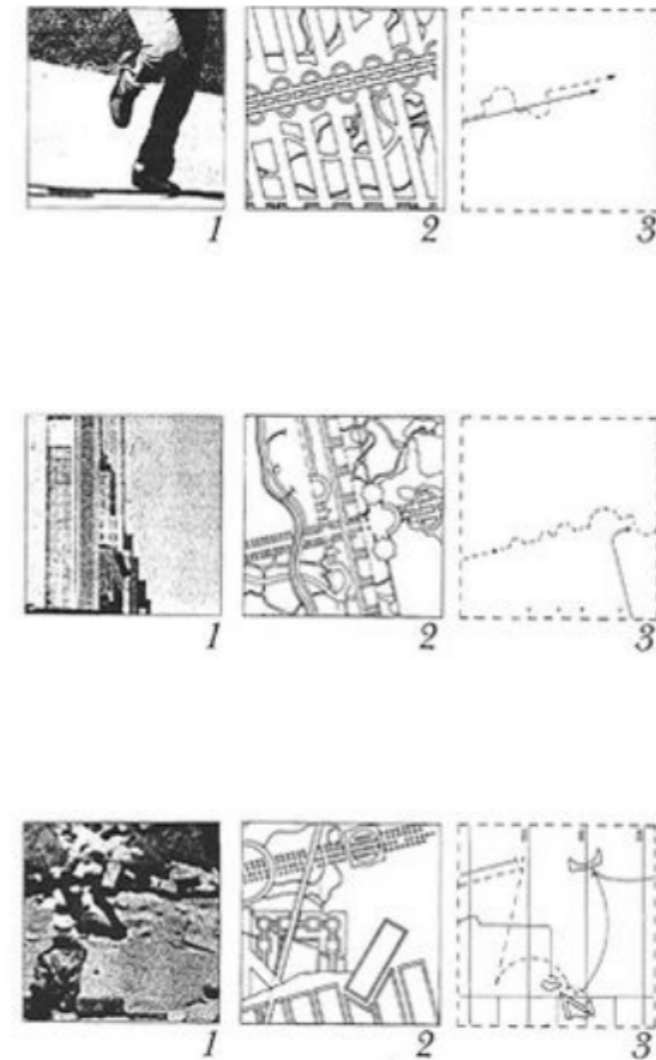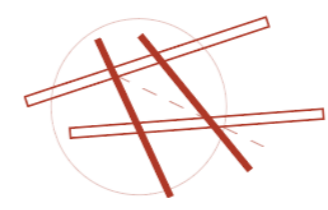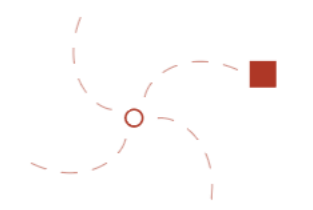

Fig 29

3.1 The Urban Transcript
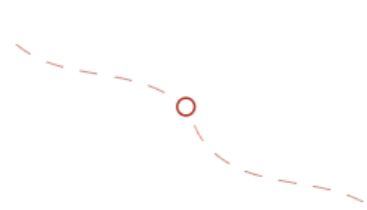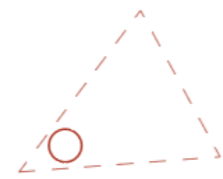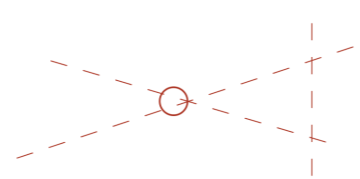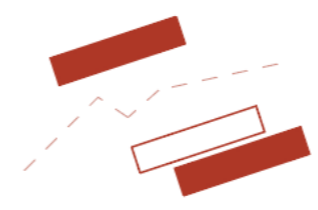
Fig 30: Movement path into unoccupied urban space (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 31: Movement paths into urban space as a result of broadcasting (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 32: Implementation of Christiania's boundary (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 33: Danish police intersect the boundary (Cairns, 2023)

Fig 34: Movement through Christiania as military barracks become habitable (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 35: Informal architecture unfolds with community needs and existing form within the boundary (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 36: Movement of inhabitants as protest advances beyond the boundary of Christiania (Cairns, 2023)
Fig 37: Cemented boundary through agreement with the Danish state (Cairns, 2023)

The diagrams reveal a succession of movement throughout Christiania and Bernard Tschumi's methods are noticeable. The conception of spatial quality and the notion of movement is supported by the employment of a multitude of line. In architecture, a broken line is traditionally used to represent elements that are not visible. A photograph has a static quality, but when translated into a diagram, the broken line (fig 30) serves a specific purpose. The broken line creates a path and the fragmentation implies that there is movement. The solid line (fig 32) denotes the tangible form within the urban space. In this context, it signifies the boundary of Christiania, as well as the point of arrival, suggested by the circle. The shape that is filled (fig 34) represents the more fixed quality of urban space in the photographs, such as the military barracks. The more informal qualities, that were resultant of Urban Social Movement are signified by empty shape. Withal, it was paramount to consider the horizontal and vertical composition. Through documenting movement as a transcript, it allows exploration of the relation between syntactical elements. The horizontal illustrates the condition of Christiania and identifies the sequence of events, following the order in which they unfolded. The diagrams emerge vertically from the photographs. This technique has been used to imply the interaction between urban formation and movement. Consequently, this relation contributes to the missing link between architecture and movement.

In conclusion, Urban Social Movement was an integral facet in shaping the architectural narrative and production in Christiania. The urban form emerged in response to the alternative degree of capitalism that inhabitants desired. Employing Castells' theory (1983), inhabitants were able to exert a degree of control over the urban environment, displaying resilience to external pressures from the state and influencing subsequent autonomous settlements. Visual ethnographic analysis into archived photographs enriched the exploration of movement in Christiania. It demonstrated that photography served as a significant visual expression of a tangible environment and subsisted as an invaluable tool for documenting the development and transformation of Christiania.

Through creatively exploring an original photographic archive, an abstraction beyond the urban environment emerged. With the support of design research, it revealed the condition of possibility within Christiania and led to the exploration of narrative techniques. The idea of event to form presented by Bernard Tschumi (Bernard Tschumi Architects), informed the lens that Christiania was researched through. The relation between architectural form and movement was affirmed through diagrammatic representation. The implications of the research concerned understanding what the built form is asking for. In the case of Christiania, the informality of architectural form, emerged as a manifestation of inhabitant's desire for local autonomy. The preservation of autonomy was facilitated by the strong input of social and environmental activism. Consequently, the ensued built environment of Christiania is a reflection of community.

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