



*How Can Architecture Capture Moments
The Way Photography Does?*

CONSTRUCTING MOMENTS
By Ethan Bisco

*CAN THE USE OF THE FRAME BE USED
AS A FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRACTICE
TO CHOREGRAPH INTENTION AND
EXPERIENCE BEHIND ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN?*

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David Hoffman

1975



Tony Ray Jones

1969

This Essay Explores The Concept Of Mediated Perception — The Idea That A “Middleman” Exists Between The Architect/Designer And The Communication Of Their Vision. I Use The Camera As An Example Of How This Vision Is Translated Into Visual Material.

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Declaration Of Work

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Ba (Hons) Interior Architecture

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. Where the work of others is used or drawn on, it is attributed to the relevant source.

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ETHAN BISCO



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Abstract

THIS ESSAY EXPLORES THE CONCEPTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE, POSITIONING THE CAMERA AS A MEDIATOR THAT ACTIVELY CONSTRUCTS SPATIAL EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN PASSIVELY RECORDING IT. DRAWING ON THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM SUSAN SONTAG, JUHANI PALLASMAA, PETER ZUMTHOR, AND OTHERS, THE RESEARCH ARGUES THAT BOTH PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE OPERATE THROUGH PROCESSES OF SELECTION, FRAMING, AND CONTROL OF LIGHT TO SHAPE ATMOSPHERE, PERCEPTION, AND MEANING. THE CAMERA LENS IS UNDERSTOOD AS AN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PROCESS, WHICH PLAYS A ROLE IN DIRECTING PERCEPTION AND SHAPING LIVED EXPERIENCE.

THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY—PARTICULARLY THE WORK OF JULIUS SHULMAN—THE ESSAY DEMONSTRATES HOW PHOTOGRAPHIC FRAMING CAN TRANSLATE ARCHITECTURAL INTENT, MEDIATE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR, AND HUMANISE MODERNIST SPACE BY INCLUDING LIVED EXPERIENCE. SHULMAN'S IMAGES ARE UNDERSTOOD AS SPATIAL CONSTRUCTS THAT INFLUENCE HOW ARCHITECTURE IS READ CULTURALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

THESE THEORETICAL IDEAS ARE TESTED THROUGH DESIGN RESEARCH USING PHOTOGRAPHY, COLLAGE, AND DRAWING, WITH THE BARBICAN CENTRE IN LONDON SERVING AS A CASE STUDY. ADOPTING THE FIGURE OF THE FLÂNEUR, THE RESEARCH INVESTIGATES HOW MOVEMENT, LIGHT, MATERIALITY, AND COMPOSITION CHOREOGRAPH EXPERIENCE. ULTIMATELY, THE ESSAY PROPOSES THAT ARCHITECTURE, LIKE PHOTOGRAPHY, CAN BE INTENTIONALLY "FRAMED" TO CURATE PERCEPTION, COMMUNICATE DESIGN INTENT, AND CREATE MEANINGFUL, ATMOSPHERIC ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN PEOPLE, SPACE, AND ENVIRONMENT.

ETHAN BISCO

004

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CONCLUSION



THIS ESSAY INVESTIGATES THE IDEA OF USING THE CAMERA AS A CRITICAL LENS TO COMMUNICATE AN ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER'S VISION. IT EXPLORES WHETHER FRAMING CAN OPERATE AS A FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLE TO SHAPE ARCHITECTURAL INTENTION AND USER EXPERIENCE. IN DOING SO, THE ESSAY CONSIDERS THE RELEVANCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY WITHIN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AND EXAMINES THE CAMERA AS AN EXTENSION OF THE DESIGNER'S VISION. THE DISCUSSION DRAWS ON THE WORK OF JUHANI PALLASMAA, SUSAN SONTAG, AND JULIUS SHULMAN, AS WELL AS ESTABLISHED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THEORY.

STUDYING ARCHITECTURE HAS HEIGHTENED MY AWARENESS OF VISUAL STIMULI AND THE COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES THAT MAKE CERTAIN SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS FEEL INTENTIONAL OR AESTHETICALLY PLEASING. VISUAL COMPOSITION PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, BUT IT IS NOT EXCLUSIVE TO ARCHITECTURE; IT INFLUENCES MANY CREATIVE PRACTICES. THE ABILITY TO GUIDE AND DIRECT THE VIEWER'S GAZE IS, THEREFORE, A SKILL DESIGNERS CAN EMPLOY TO SHAPE SPATIAL EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION.

THIS AWARENESS LED ME TO EXPLORE THE CAMERA AS A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW PERCEPTION IS FRAMED AND WHAT CAN READ FROM IT. RATHER THAN MERELY CAPTURING AN IMAGE, THE CAMERA ACTIVELY CONSTRUCTS HOW A PERSPECTIVE IS SEEN. ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER JULIUS SHULMAN EXEMPLIFIES THIS APPROACH: THROUGH PRECISE FRAMING, HIS PHOTOGRAPHS COMMUNICATE ARCHITECTURAL INTENTION WITHIN A SINGLE IMAGE, DEMONSTRATING HOW COMPOSITION CAN ARTICULATE BOTH FORM AND PURPOSE. I HOPE TO SHARE SOME OF MY CURIOSITY AND THINKING, WHILE GROUNDING IT ESTABLISHED RESEARCH AND DESIGN.



S7, 2004

Beate Gütschow

Beate Gütschow

S14, 2005



CHAPTER

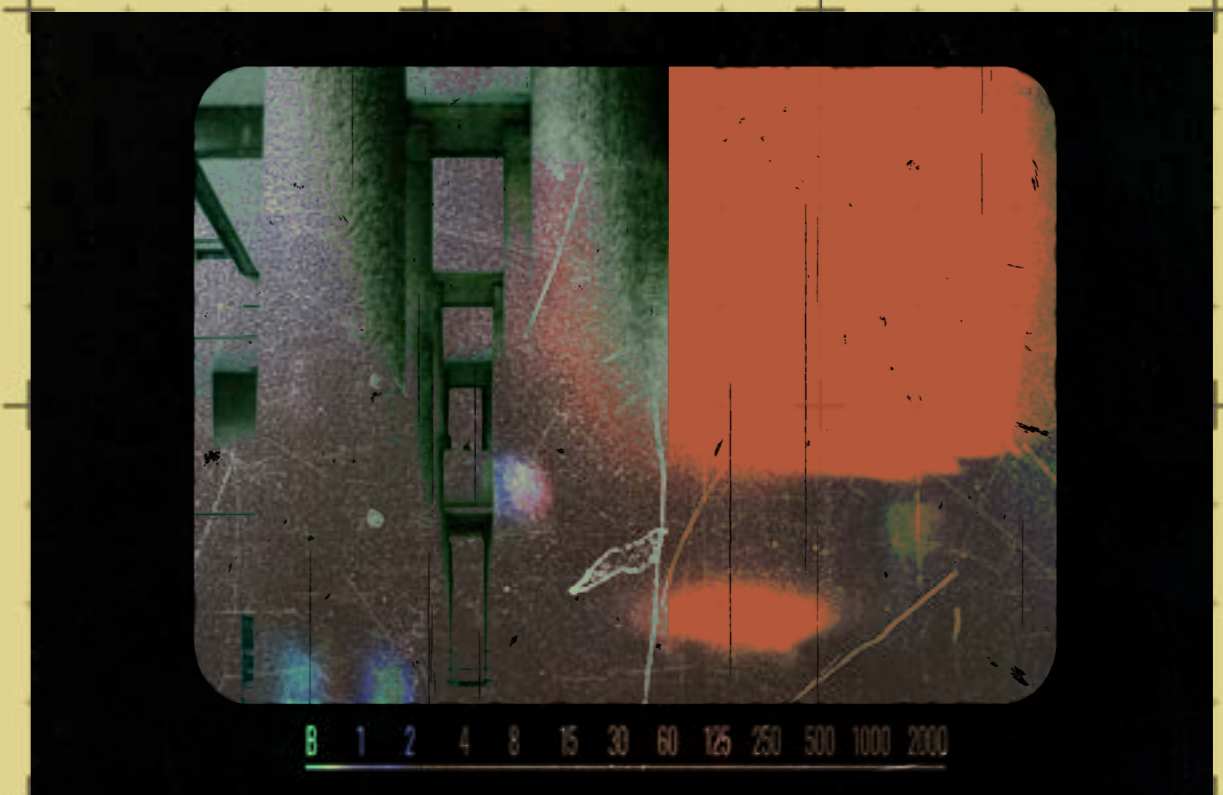


UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT BEHIND MY IDEA

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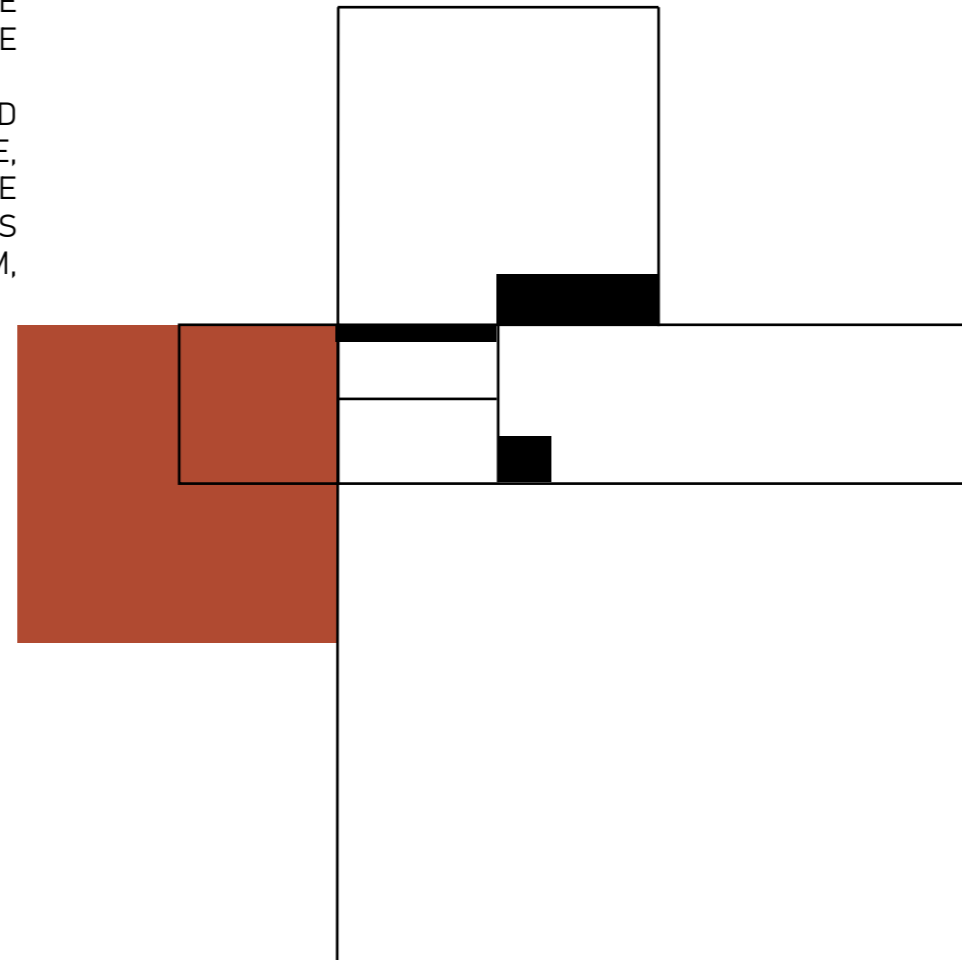
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A TRADITIONAL MANUAL SLR CAMERA FUNCTIONS BY USING A LENS TO FOCUS LIGHT REFLECTED FROM OBJECTS INTO A LIGHT TIGHT ENCLOSURE, CONTAINING A LIGHT SENSITIVE RECEPTOR. THE CAMERA COMPRISES OF A LENS, A LIGHT-SENSITIVE SURFACE—EITHER FILM OR A DIGITAL SENSOR—AND MECHANICS THAT ADJUST EXPOSURE. LIGHT PASSING THROUGH THE LENS BENDS AND IS REFRACTED TO FORM AN IMAGE ON THE LIGHT SENSITIVE SURFACE, THIS COULD BE FILM, GLASS PLATE, OR A SENSOR CHIP WITH PHOTOSENSITIVE PIXELS. THE APERTURE SETTING CONTROLS THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT ENTERING THE CAMERA, WHILE THE SHUTTER SPEED DETERMINES THE DURATION OF EXPOSURE. TOGETHER, THESE ELEMENTS ARE USED CREATIVELY TO SHAPE WHAT IS CAPTURED AND THEREFORE HOW THE CAPTURED IMAGE APPEARS.

IN THIS SENSE, THE CAMERA DOES MORE THAN SIMPLY RECORD WHAT LIES IN FRONT OF IT. THROUGH ITS CONTROL OF LIGHT, SCALE, AND FRAMING, IT INFLUENCES HOW SPACE AND ATMOSPHERE ARE PERCEIVED. COMPARABLE WITH ARCHITECTURE, IT SHAPES EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE CAREFUL MANIPULATION OF FORM, ENCLOSURE, AND EXPOSURE.

007



The Eyes Of The Skin Architecture And The Senses 3th Edition 1996

Mediation And Framing

THE CAMERA LENS CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PORTAL THROUGH WHICH SPACE IS PERCEIVED, FILTERED, AND REIMAGINED. MUCH LIKE THE ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER, THE CAMERA OPERATES AS A MEDIATOR, SHAPING PERCEPTION THROUGH COMPOSITIONAL DECISIONS INVOLVING LIGHT, MATERIALITY, AND SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT IN ORDER TO EVOKE A PARTICULAR ATMOSPHERE OR EFFECT.

JUHANI PALLASMAA EXPANDS ON THIS UNDERSTANDING IN THE EYES OF THE SKIN: ARCHITECTURE AND THE SENSES (1996), ARGUING THAT ARCHITECTURE MEDIATES EXPERIENCE THROUGH SENSORY QUALITIES SUCH AS LIGHT, MATERIALITY, AND HAPTICITY, AND THAT ATMOSPHERE IS SHAPED THROUGH BODILY PERCEPTION RATHER THAN VISION ALONE. BOTH ARCHITECTURE AND THE CAMERA FRAME EXPERIENCE WITHIN DEFINED BOUNDARIES: THE FOUR WALLS OF A ROOM, OR THE EDGES OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC FRAME.



008

Photography as an Active Construction of Experience

SUSAN SONTAG POSITIONS THE CAMERA NOT AS A NEUTRAL RECORDING DEVICE, BUT AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTOR OF REALITY. SHE ARGUES THAT PHOTOGRAPHY “TEACHES US A NEW VISUAL CODE” AND, IN DOING SO, “ALTERS AND ENLARGES OUR NOTIONS OF WHAT IS WORTH LOOKING AT” (SONTAG, 1977). THIS REINFORCES THE IDEA THAT PHOTOGRAPHY CONSTRUCTS EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN SIMPLY DOCUMENTING IT.

ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES, THEREFORE, ARE NOT INCIDENTAL. THEY ARE CENTRAL TO HOW BOTH ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNICATE EMOTION AND INTENTION. PALLASMAA SUGGESTS THAT “HUMAN BEINGS CAN EMPATHISE WITH INANIMATE ROOMS WHEN THEY INTERIORLY ESTABLISH AN EMBODIED SIMULATION OF CERTAIN ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES” (1996). THIS SUPPORTS THE NOTION THAT SPATIAL EXPERIENCE EMERGES THROUGH SENSORY ENGAGEMENT WITH “FORM, PROPORTION, RHYTHM, MATERIALS, LIGHT AND SHADE, TEMPERATURE, AND SOUNDS.” (CANEPA ET AL., 2019) FURTHER BACKING UP BÖHME (2017) AND ZUMTHOR'S “FIELD OF CONSCIOUSNESS” TALKED ABOUT IN HIS BOOK ATMOSPHERES (ZUMTHOR, 2006).

THIS UNDERSTANDING HAS INFLUENCED MY OWN DESIGN THINKING, PARTICULARLY THE IDEA THAT ARCHITECTURE SHOULD CULTIVATE STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH ITS EXTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT—PHYSICALLY, PERCEPTUALLY, AND ATMOSPHERICALLY. THE CONCEPT OF ‘BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN’ REINFORCES THE ROLE OF ATMOSPHERE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT, BODY, AND SPACE.



Photography as Spatial Representation

AT ITS CORE, THE CAMERA IS AN INSTRUMENT OF SELECTION. IT IS DECISIVE IN WHAT IT INCLUDES AND WHAT IT EXCLUDES, OPERATING AS AN EXTENSION OF THE DESIGNER'S INTENT. A PHOTOGRAPH CAN THEREFORE BE UNDERSTOOD AS A SPATIAL CONSTRUCT—A FORM OF ARCHITECTURAL REPRESENTATION ARTICULATED THROUGH LIGHT AND PERSPECTIVE.

MUCH LIKE A PLAN OR SECTION, A PHOTOGRAPH PRESENTS A CHOSEN VIEWPOINT. IT REVEALS HOW SPACE IS INTENDED TO BE EXPERIENCED, UNDERSTOOD, AND INTERPRETED THROUGH DESIGN. IN THIS WAY, PHOTOGRAPHY, LIKE ARCHITECTURE, BECOMES AN ACTIVE PROCESS RATHER THAN A PASSIVE RECORD. AS SONTAG DESCRIBES, A PHOTOGRAPH IS A “THIN SLICE OF SPACE AS WELL AS TIME” (1977), SUGGESTING THAT IT OPERATES AS A SPATIAL ARTIFACT RATHER THAN SIMPLE VISUAL DOCUMENTATION.

Design Intention, and Evaluation

THROUGH FRAMING, PHOTOGRAPHY ISOLATES SPECIFIC MOMENTS, VIEWPOINTS, AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS. LIKE ARCHITECTURE, PHOTOGRAPHY RELIES ON SELECTION—DECIDING WHAT IS REVEALED OR NOT, WHAT IS EMPHASISED, WHAT IS REPEATED AND WHAT IS EXCLUDED. I QUESTION WHETHER THIS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CAN ADOPT THE SAME LEVEL OF SELECTIVITY FOUND IN PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION. OR MAYBE IT ALREADY DOES? CAN LIGHT BE USED TO AFFECT THE 'EXPOSURE' OF INTERIOR SPACES. IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDEREXPOSE ARCHITECTURE OR OVEREXPOSE IT?

PHOTOGRAPHY ALSO PROVIDES A VALUABLE TOOL FOR EVALUATING ARCHITECTURE, BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS INTENDED DESIGN AND THROUGH ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS. BY FIXING A MOMENT IN TIME, A PHOTOGRAPH ALLOWS DESIGNERS TO STEP BACK AND REFLECT ON ATMOSPHERE, INTENTION, AND SPATIAL PERCEPTION. AS PART OF THIS METHODOLOGY, I INTEND TO EXPERIENCE, CRITIQUE, ANALYSE THE BARBICAN, LONDON, USING PHOTOGRAPHY. I HOPE TO LOOK AT THE CREATION AND DESIGN OF SPACE IN A UNIQUE WAY – BEING ABLE TO CRITIQUE THE INTENTION OF DESIGN. MY EXPERIENCE OF THE BARBICAN COULD BE DIFFERENT IF I WERE NOT TO BE PHOTOGRAPHING IT.



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Julius Shulman, Case Study House 16, 1946
Photography Archive

Tony Ray-Jones: Lillington Gardens Estate,

1969



B 1 2 4 8 15 30 60 125 250 500 1000 2000

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Turker Alagozyaylasi



DESIGN CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS A SELECTIVE PROCESS, LIKE COMPOSING A PHOTOGRAPH. CERTAIN PERSPECTIVES NATURALLY ATTRACT ATTENTION, WHICH MAKES ME QUESTION WHAT MAKES THEM VISUALLY APPEALING. I THINK THAT ARCHITECTURE CAN BE IMAGINED AS A SERIES OF CURATED VIEWS—SPACES COMPOSED LIKE PHOTOGRAPHS, WHERE EACH FRAME GUIDES THE EYE TOWARD FOCAL POINTS AND DRAWS IT ALONG DELIBERATE LEADING LINES OF MOVEMENT. OR MAYBE IT IS NOT ABOUT DRAWING THE EYE, IT'S ABOUT COMPOSING FORM IN A WAY TO REFLECT ITS PURPOSE.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE WHY SPECIFIC AREAS ARE LEFT OPEN OR NOT, WHY CEILINGS VARY IN HEIGHT, WHY A GIVEN MATERIAL IS CHOSEN AND HOW WINDOWS POSITIONS VARY TO ADMIT LIGHT. JUST AS A CAMERA CONTROLS EXPOSURE TO INFLUENCE THE FINAL IMAGE, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CAN MANIPULATE LIGHT TO SHAPE ATMOSPHERE. EXCESSIVE LIGHT MAY CREATE OVEREXPOSURE, DIMINISHING SPATIAL QUALITIES, WHILE LIMITED LIGHT CAN EMPHASIZE AREAS OF FOCUS.

CAN ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION BE REFINED TO ACHIEVE GREATER CLARITY AND INTENTION? WHY DO CERTAIN SPACES INVITE FRAMING WHILE OTHERS DO NOT? IS THIS RESPONSE DRIVEN BY ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT, ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES, OR THE UNDERLYING COMPOSITION OF THE SPACE? WHY DOES SOME DESIGN FEEL PLEASING AS IT GUIDES MY GAZE?

013



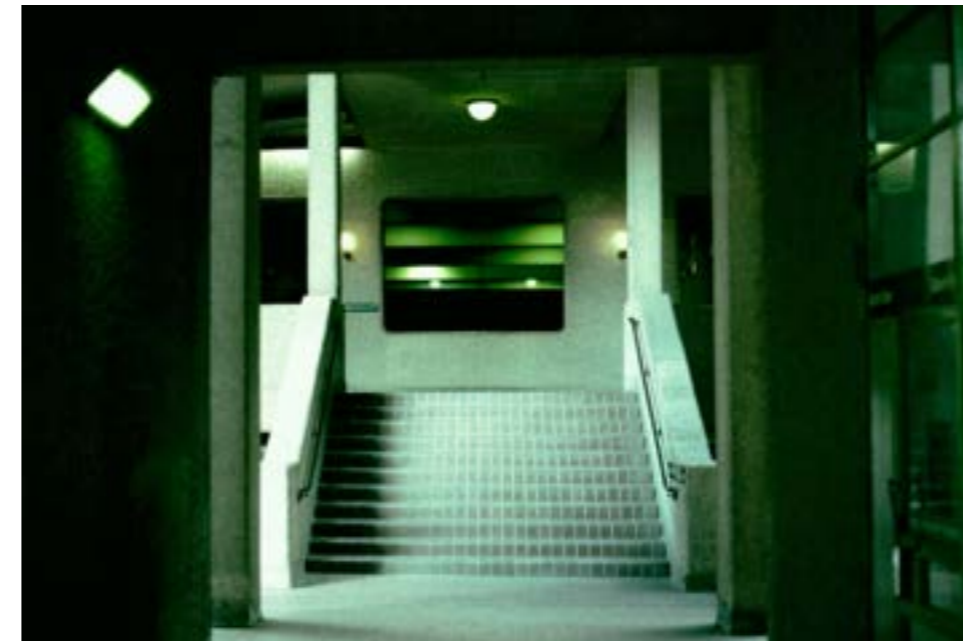
COLUMBUS FILM (KOGONADA, 2017) THE DIRECTOR WAS VERY SELECTIVE ABOUT THE SHOTS IN WHICH WERE CHOSEN. THEY WERE CURATED IN A WAY WHERE ONLY CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE SCENE WERE SHOWN. SPECIFIC DESIGN CHOICES WERE IDENTIFIED TO HARMONISE THE SHOT. SCENES COULD BE PAUSED, AND SMALL DETAILS COULD BE STUDIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STORY. THESE ARE ALL COMPOSITIONAL DESIGN CHOICES INFLUENCED BY THE STORY WHICH PLAY A ROLE IN BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SPACE. THE CAMERA IS USED AS A MEDIATOR FOR THE DIRECTOR TO FOCUS THE VIEWER INTO THEIR PERSONAL VISION FOR THE SPACE. THE CAMERA LENS DRAWS THE ATTENTION OF THE VIEWER TO THE IMPORTANCE/ IRRELEVANCE OF THE SCENE, AND IT DICTATES THE FIXED ROUTE THAT THE VIEWER MUST TAKE. IT CAN INFLUENCE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FILM. THIS COULD BE LOST IF HYPOTHETICALLY THE VIEWER COULD BE PHYSICALLY IN THE SCENE WITH NO FRAME TO FILTER THE SELECTION OF THE SET/BUILDING/... IS IT POSSIBLE TO REPLICATE THIS SAME DIRECTION AND SPECIFICITY THAT A DIRECTOR CAN NARROW DOWN INTO A SHOT - INTO THE DESIGN OF ARCHITECTURE?

Movie Stills From Columbus 2017 (Kogonada)



14/36

Bisco, E 2025



Ideology

WHAT DRAWS ME TO THE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT I TAKE. IF I DESIGN THROUGH A FRAME OR LENS, CAN THE VIEWER FEEL WHAT FIRST DREW ME IN? WHEN MOVING THROUGH A ROOM OR BUILDING, I'M ATTRACTED TO HOW ELEMENTS ARE COMPOSED TOGETHER. WHAT CATCHES MY EYE ARE THE CHOICES OF MATERIAL, LIGHT AND SHADOW, PERSPECTIVE, COLOUR, FORM, PRESSURE AND RELEASE, MASS AND VOID, GREEN SPACE AND TEXTURE.

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FILMMAKERS ILA BÊKA AND LOUISE LEMOINE HAVE BECOME CULT FIGURES IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL DISCUSSION BECAUSE THEY OVERTURN THE CONVENTIONS OF HOW ARCHITECTURE IS REPRESENTED. RATHER THAN REPEATING THE TRADITIONAL IMAGES OF STAGNANT, "EMPTY BUILDINGS" (ILA BEKA 2017, DIMA STOUHI 2018)— VOID OF ANY HUMANS AND LACKING REPRESENTATION OF HOW SPACE WAS DESIGNED TO HOST. THEY CENTRE THEIR FILMS ON THE PEOPLE WHO INHABIT THEM. THEIR APPROACH REFRAMES ARCHITECTURE NOT AS AN AESTHETIC OBJECT, BUT AS A LIVED, EMOTIONAL, AND OFTEN UNPREDICTABLE EXPERIENCE.



Koolhaas Houselife 2008

A DEFINING EXAMPLE IS (KOOLHAAS HOUSELIFE., 2008), PART OF THEIR WIDER LIVING ARCHITECTURES SERIES. INSTEAD OF GLORIFYING REM KOOLHAAS'S MAISON À BORDEAUX THROUGH FORMAL COMPOSITIONS, THEY FOLLOW THE HOUSEKEEPER OVER TWO WEEKS, OBSERVING HER ROUTINES AND DIFFICULTIES AS SHE MAINTAINS THE HOME. THROUGH THIS INTIMATE PERSPECTIVE, BÊKA AND LEMOINE EXPOSE THE GAP BETWEEN ARCHITECTURAL INTENTION AND THE EVERYDAY REALITIES THAT UNFOLD WITHIN DESIGNED SPACE. IT IS IRONIC THAT ARCHITECTS DESIGN WITH USE IN MIND, YET ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION TYPICALLY PRESENT "EMPTY SPACE AND BEAUTIFUL LIGHT," (ILA BEKA 2017, DIMA STOUHI 2018), ERASING THE HUMAN PRESENCE THAT GIVES ARCHITECTURE MEANING. THEIR FILMS DELIBERATELY COUNTER THIS BY SHOWING HOW BODIES MOVE, STRUGGLE, ADAPT, AND CREATE EMOTIONAL RESONANCE WITHIN ARCHITECTURAL FORM .



The Maison à Bordeaux 1998 Rem Koolhaas OMA

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BÊKA AND LEMOINE ARGUE "THAT THE MOVEMENT INSIDE ARCHITECTURE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE ARCHITECTURE WORKS." (ILA BEKA, 2017). REJECTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE OF CONVENTIONAL ARCHITECTURE DOCUMENTARIES, THEIR FILMS INSTEAD AIM TO MAKE VIEWERS CURIOUS. BY FOCUSING ON EVERYDAY USERS, THEY OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF ARCHITECTURAL CRITIQUE; AS BÊKA STATES, "EXPERTISE CAN ACT AS A FILTER, DISTANCING VIEWERS FROM THE IMMEDIACY OF EXPERIENCE, WHEREAS THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN EVERYDAY USER CAN REVEAL TRUTHS THAT FORMAL ANALYSIS OVERLOOKS." (BEKA 2017). THIS VIEWPOINT CHALLENGES MY OWN ARGUMENT BY PROPOSING ANOTHER WAY TO THINK ABOUT FRAMING AND CHOREOGRAPHING ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, WHERE THE CAMERA DICTATES PERSPECTIVE AND VIEWER FOCUS, CLOSELY ECHOING THE APPROACH I SEEK TO EXPRESS IN THIS WRITING.



'Tokyo Ride' Beka and Lemoine 2020



CHAPTER

Frameing Architecture

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AS PART OF MY METHODOLOGY, I WILL ANALYSE THE WORK OF THE WELL-KNOWN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER JULIUS SHULMAN, TO STUDY HIS TECHNIQUE AND BETTER UNDERSTAND THE THEORY BEHIND HIS SUCCESS. I AIM TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF PHOTOGRAPHING ARCHITECTURE AND HOW USING THE LENS AS A MEDIATOR, CAN HELP THE PERCEPTION OF READING ARCHITECTURE. JULIUS SHULMAN WAS WIDELY RECOGNISED AS "THE GO-TO PHOTOGRAPHER FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S MODERNIST ARCHITECTS" (KILSTON, 2011). HIS WORK PLAYED A KEY ROLE TO THE SUCCESS OF MANY ARCHITECTS DURING THE 1950/60S ACROSS AMERICA AND SHAPED HOW ARCHITECTURE WAS SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE PUBLIC. MUCH OF THIS UNDERSTANDING IS INFORMED BY THE SHORT DOCUMENTARY VISUAL ACOUSTICS: THE MODERNISM OF JULIUS SHULMAN (2009).



011 - 02

HE WORKED IN CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH RICHARD NEUTRA, PHOTOGRAPHING HIS ARCHITECTURE IN WAYS THAT COMPLEMENTED ITS DESIGN ELEMENTS THROUGH "LUMINOUS AND MEMORABLY COMPOSED IMAGES" (AMELAR, 2022). NEUTRA WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HOW PHOTOGRAPHY COULD CAPTURE THE CONTRAST IN LIGHTING INTENSITY BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR SPACES—A DESIGN FEATURE THAT SHULMAN CAREFULLY TRANSLATED INTO THE PHOTOGRAPHIC FRAME (OR IMAGE).



2622 - 32



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BETWEEN 1945 AND 1966, THE CASE STUDY HOUSES PROGRAM SET OUT TO RETHINK HOUSING FOR THE POST-WAR PERIOD. THE PROGRAM COMMISSIONED A SERIES OF AFFORDABLE, EASY-TO-BUILD EXPERIMENTAL HOMES, RESULTING IN 36 PROTOTYPES THAT EXPLORED NEW WAYS OF LIVING. LED BY JOHN ENTENZA, THE EDITOR OF ARTS & ARCHITECTURE, THE INITIATIVE ATTRACTED PROMINENT ARCHITECTS WORKING IN LOS ANGELES, INCLUDING RICHARD NEUTRA, CHARLES AND RAY EAMES, PIERRE KOENIG, AND EERO SAARINEN. TOGETHER, THESE PROJECTS HELPED SHAPE THE IDEA OF THE MODERN HOME, WHILE ALSO EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS THAT CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE ARCHITECTURE INTERNATIONALLY TODAY (DEJTIAR, 2021).

House 22 (The Stahl House)



2980 - 20

ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNISABLE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THIS SERIES DEPICTS CASE STUDY HOUSE NO. 22, ALSO KNOWN AS THE STAHL HOUSE, DESIGNED BY C.H. STAHL AND PIERRE KOENIG IN 1959. THE HOUSE FEATURES STEEL CONSTRUCTION, GLASS WALLS, CANTILEVERS, HILLSIDE VIEWS, AND A STRONG EMPHASIS ON INDOOR-OUTDOOR LIVING - A KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF MID-CENTURY MODERNISM. GLASS WALLS, HORIZON LINES, AND REFLECTIONS IN THE STAHL HOUSE ARE COMPOSED TO EMPHASISE CONTINUITY BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE LIVING AREAS. THE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN OF HOUSE 22 WERE SUCCESSFUL IN MANIPULATING LIGHT TO CONVEY ATMOSPHERE. PHOTO 2980-20P USED A LONG EXPOSURE TO CAPTURE THE IMMEDIATE FOREGROUND OF THE SUBJECT (INTERIOR) AS WELL AS THE BACKGROUND LOOKING OVER OF LA - TOGETHER THEY SHAPED/ INFLUENCED THE EFFECTS OF THE FINAL IMAGE. SHULMAN'S CAMERA MEDIATES THIS RELATIONSHIP, CAPTURING MOMENTS WHERE ARCHITECTURE APPEARS OPEN, EXPANSIVE, AND SEAMLESSLY CONNECTED TO ITS ENVIRONMENT. "THE BUILDING, ALONG WITH SHULMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHY, BECAME EMBLEMATIC OF A LUXURIOUS, INDOOR-OUTDOOR WAY OF LIFE IN LOS ANGELES IN WHICH THE SWIMMING POOL SEEMED PART OF THE LIVING ROOM" (MICHELSON, 2025). THE PUBLICATION OF SHULMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS IN ARTS & ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE (1960) HELPED TRANSFORM THE STAHL HOUSE INTO A CULTURAL SYMBOL OF LOS ANGELES MODERNISM AND AN ASPIRATIONAL LIFESTYLE THAT STILL ENDURES TODAY. THE IMAGES CAPTURED THE INTENT AND NARRATIVE BEHIND THE DESIGN, MAKING PHOTOGRAPHY A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE HOUSE'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY.



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The Frey House II

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE OF SHULMAN'S WORK IS THE FREY HOUSE II, DESIGNED BY SWISS ARCHITECT ALBERT FREY IN 1964. THIS PROJECT IS OF PERSONAL INTEREST TO ME BECAUSE OF ITS SEAMLESS INTEGRATION OF INTERIOR SPACE WITH THE SURROUNDING DESERT LANDSCAPE, WHILE STILL MAINTAINING EXPANSIVE VIEWS OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY BELOW. AS DESCRIBED, "FREY'S HOME CELEBRATES NATURE AT EVERY TURN; AT ITS CORE STANDS A DRAMATIC BOULDER AROUND WHICH FREY CONCEIVED HIS DESIGN" (DESIGNMIAMI, 2023). THE BOULDER PIERCES THE GLASS WALL AND ACTS AS A SPATIAL DIVIDER BETWEEN LIVING AND SLEEPING AREAS, REINFORCING THE IDEA THAT THE HOUSE WAS CAREFULLY CURATED TO BRING THE DESERT INTO THE INTERIOR. AFTER SELECTING THE SITE, FREY SPENT 12 MONTHS OBSERVING THE MOVEMENT OF THE SUN TO DETERMINE THE PLACEMENT OF WINDOWS AND LIVING SPACES, ENSURING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIGHT, SHADOW, THE CLIMATE, AND DAILY USE.



3875 - 03



3875 - 13



3875 - 09



3875 - 12k

THROUGH FRAMING, SHULMAN EMPHASISED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MAN-MADE AND THE NATURAL. THE SLEEK, HORIZONTAL LINES OF THE FREY HOUSE II CONTRASTS WITH THE IRREGULAR, ORGANIC FORMS OF PALM SPRINGS DESERT, WHILE THE MATERIALS USED IN CONSTRUCTION ECHO THE COLOURS AND TEXTURES OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. HIS PHOTOGRAPHS REVEAL HOW THE STRUCTURE APPEARS TO EMERGE FROM THE HILLSIDE, REINFORCING A KEY PRINCIPLE OF DESERT MODERNISM: THAT ARCHITECTURE CAN RESPOND TO CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY, AND TOPOGRAPHY WHILE STILL PROVIDING A COMFORTABLE HOME.

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Part A

The Importance Of Shulmans Work

SHULMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS ARE MORE THAN DOCUMENTATION; THEY FUNCTION AS SPATIAL CONSTRUCTS THAT FRAME ARCHITECTURAL IDEAS IN A WAY COMPARABLE TO DRAWINGS. THROUGH SELECTIVE COMPOSITION, THE CAMERA COMMUNICATES HOW THE HOUSE IS MEANT TO BE EXPERIENCED, PARTICULARLY IN ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH CLIMATE, LANDSCAPE, SHADOW AND LIGHT. SIMILARLY, EZRA STROLLER'S PHOTOGRAPHY RELIES HEAVILY ON SHADOWS, WHICH VARY WITH THE SEASONS AND TIME OF DAY, WEATHER, BRIGHTNESS, AFFECTING HOW BUILDING SURFACES AND THE ENVIRONMENT APPEARS.



Miller House 1937



Skinner House 1959

Sandpiper House 1958



EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT IS THE WAY SHULMAN HUMANISED MODERNISM, BY INCLUDING PEOPLE WITHIN HIS PHOTOGRAPHS; READING, RELAXING, OR SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE—HE ALLOWED VIEWERS TO IMAGINE THE SPACES AS LIVED-IN AND ATTAINABLE. THIS APPROACH CHALLENGED THE PERCEPTION OF MODERNISM AS STERILE OR MECHANICAL, REPLACING IT WITH AN IMAGE OF COMFORTABLE, ELEGANT LIVING IN CLOSE CONNECTION WITH ITS ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE.

WHEN PUBLISHED IN INFLUENTIAL MID-CENTURY MAGAZINES (LIFE, LOOK, TIME, AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING), SHULMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS PROMOTED A VISION OF THE "CALIFORNIA GOOD LIFE," CHARACTERISED BY OPENNESS, LIGHT, AND HARMONY BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENT. FREY HOUSE II, AS SEEN THROUGH HIS LENS, BECAME A SYMBOL OF A LIFESTYLE ROOTED IN CONNECTION TO PLACE.

Part A

Relevance With My Project

SHULMAN'S WORK DIRECTLY INFORMS MY OWN THINKING AROUND INTERIOR COMPOSITION, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO LIGHT, SPATIAL FRAMING, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE. HIS PHOTOGRAPHS DEMONSTRATE HOW CAREFULLY FRAMED MOMENTS CAN COMMUNICATE ATMOSPHERE AND DESIGN INTENT. THIS APPROACH CONNECTS WITH MY INTEREST IN CREATING INTERIOR SPACES THAT ENGAGE WITH THE NATURAL WORLD AND EXTEND BEYOND THEIR PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES. IMPORTANTLY, HIS FOCUS ON INCLUDING PEOPLE GROUNDS THE PHOTOGRAPHS IN REAL-LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES, RATHER THAN PRESENTING A PURELY CONCEPTUAL IDEA OF HOW A SPACE SHOULD BE USED. WITHOUT THIS GROUNDING, IMAGES RISK BECOMING OVERLY IDEALISTIC, SHIFTING THE FOCUS AWAY FROM ARCHITECTURE AS SOMETHING BUILT FOR PEOPLE AND TOWARD ARCHITECTURE AS A DEMONSTRATION OF CONCEPT ALONE. IN SOME CASES, THIS APPROACH CAN BE EFFECTIVE; HOWEVER, WHAT MADE SHULMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHS PARTICULARLY POWERFUL WAS THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE MODERN WORLD AND THEIR ABILITY TO BECOME SYMBOLS OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE TIME.

027

028

PETER ZUMTHOR'S WRITING ON ATMOSPHERE PROVIDES A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW ARCHITECTURE NEGOTIATES THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR EXPERIENCE. IN ATMOSPHERES 2006, HE REFLECTS ON THE MOMENT WHEN ONE BECOMES AWARE OF BEING EITHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE, DESCRIBING THRESHOLDS, CROSSINGS, AND "THE ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE" AS GENERATORS OF MEANING AND CONCENTRATION. ARCHITECTURE, FOR ZUMTHOR, IS NOT ONLY ABOUT ENCLOSURE, BUT ABOUT WHAT IS CONCEALED AND REVEALED: "THE FACADE ALSO SAYS: BUT I AM NOT GOING TO SHOW YOU EVERYTHING." THIS SELECTIVE WITHHOLDING REINFORCES THE IDEA THAT ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE IS MEDIATED RATHER THAN FULLY EXPOSED, SHAPED THROUGH WALLS, LIGHT, AND SPATIAL SEQUENCING.



029



Zumthors Shelter For Roman Ruins



Zumthors Field Chapel

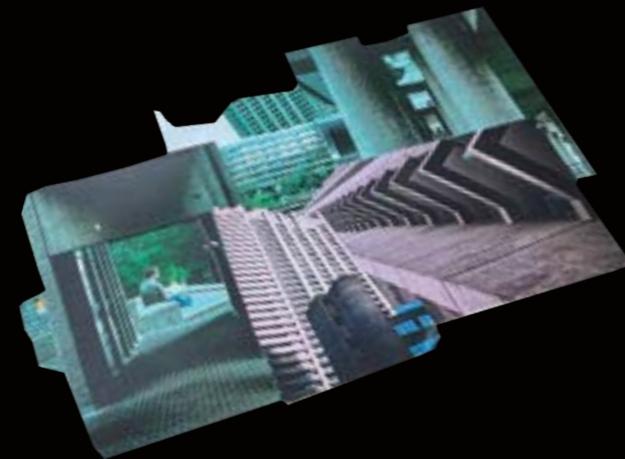
THIS UNDERSTANDING CLOSELY ALIGNS WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC THEORY. SUSAN SONTAG NOTES THAT PHOTOGRAPHS "PACKAGE THE WORLD," INVITING MANIPULATION THROUGH CROPPING, ENLARGEMENT, REDUCTION, AND EMPHASIS (ON PHOTOGRAPHY 1977). AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, LIGHT, IN BOTH PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE, BECOMES A TOOL OF SELECTION. SONTAG'S TAKE THAT PHOTOGRAPHY "FURNISHES EVIDENCE" WHILE ALSO DISTORTING REALITY (ON PHOTOGRAPHY, 1977) REINFORCES HOW LIGHT CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY CLARIFY AND OBSCURE WHAT WE PERCEIVE. "PHOTOGRAPHY CAPTURES SPACE, LIGHT, TEXTURE, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, TIME." (CAMPBELL 2004)

030

THESE IDEAS DIRECTLY INFORM MY OWN DESIGN THINKING, AS DEMONSTRATED IN CHAPTER 3. I HAVE USED PHOTO COLLAGE AS A METHOD OF SPATIAL EXPLORATION. MY COLLAGE OPERATES THROUGH PROCESSES OF SELECTION AND FRAMING, ALLOWING FRAGMENTS OF INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR, LIGHT AND SHADOW, ENCLOSURE AND OPENNESS TO COEXIST WITHIN A SINGLE COMPOSITION. RATHER THAN PRESENTING A WHOLE IMAGE, COLLAGE BECOMES A WAY OF TESTING SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ATMOSPHERES, HELPING TO UNDERSTAND SPACE OR REIMAGINE IT. IN THIS SENSE, COLLAGE FUNCTIONS AS A FORM OF DESIGN RESEARCH—AN EXPLORATORY PROCESS THROUGH WHICH I WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND SELECTION AND COMPOSITION.



031



THIS APPROACH IS INSPIRED BY WALTER BENJAMIN'S WRITING ON THE PARISIAN ARCADES (1927 - 1940) AND THE FIGURE OF THE 'FLÂNEUR'. IN THE ARCADES PROJECT, BENJAMIN DESCRIBES THE FLÂNEUR AS "AN OBSERVER WHO EXPERIENCES THE CITY THROUGH MOVEMENT, REFLECTION, AND FRAGMENTED PERCEPTION—ENCOUNTERING SPACE THROUGH SHOP WINDOWS AND LAYERED INTERIORS" (BENJAMIN, 1999). THE ARCADES THEMSELVES EXIST AS A PHYSICAL IN BETWEEN, NEITHER FULLY INTERIOR NOR EXTERIOR, MUCH LIKE THE FRAGMENTED SPACES EXPLORED THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY. PERCEPTION WORKS SELECTIVELY, LETTING MEANING ARISE FROM PARTIAL VIEWS RATHER THAN COMPLETE VISIBILITY—SIMILAR TO PHOTOGRAPHY.

032



Walter Benjamin's 'Arcades Project'

The Modulor Man 1948



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THEORY SUPPORTS THIS IDEA. PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION—BALANCE, PROPORTION, RHYTHM, HIERARCHY, AND UNITY—PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK THROUGH WHICH SPATIAL COHERENCE IS ACHIEVED. AS LE CORBUSIER STATED, “PROPORTION IS THE TOOL OF ORDER” (LE MODULOR 1, 1954), AND ARCHITECTURE IS “THE MASTERLY, CORRECT AND MAGNIFICENT PLAY OF MASSES BROUGHT TOGETHER IN LIGHT” (VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE, 1923). THESE PRINCIPLES EMPHASISE THAT ARCHITECTURE IS SHAPED NOT ONLY BY FORM, BUT BY HOW FORM IS REVEALED AND EXPERIENCED THROUGH LIGHT AND MOVEMENT.



The Unite D'habitation

WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, MY DESIGN METHODOLOGY TREATS MEDIATION AS A PRODUCTIVE TOOL. THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND DRAWING, I EXPLORE HOW ARCHITECTURAL FORM, LIGHT, AND SPATIAL BOUNDARIES SHAPE ATMOSPHERE AND PERCEPTION. RATHER THAN SEEKING COMPLETE REPRESENTATION, THE PROCESS ACCEPTS FRAGMENTATION AND UNCERTAINTY, REFLECTING HOW ARCHITECTURE IS ENCOUNTERED THROUGH SELECTING MOMENTS, AND FRAMED EXPERIENCES. MY DESIGN METHODOLOGY (IN CHAPTER 3) THEREFORE FUNCTIONS AS A WAY OF THINKING THROUGH ARCHITECTURE, OBSERVATION, AND DESIGN INTENT.

ARCHITECTURE, HOWEVER, IS NOT STATIC. IT UNFOLDS THROUGH TIME AND MOTION. AS LE CORBUSIER LATER NOTED, “ARCHITECTURE IS APPRECIATED WHILE MOVING, WITH ONE’S FEET” (PRECISIONS, 1930). THIS REINFORCES THE IMPORTANCE OF SEQUENCE, TRANSITION, AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES—WHICH IS ALSO RELEVANT TO PHOTOGRAPHY. CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH - ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND AFFECT: A SPATIOTEMPORAL STUDY OF AROUSAL FURTHER SUPPORTS THIS EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION, SHOWING THAT FORM, SPATIAL COMPLEXITY, THRESHOLDS, AND LIGHT INFLUENCE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE (XYLAKIS, LIAPIS AND YANNAKAKIS, 2021).



Le Corbusier

Marseille 1947

CHAPTER

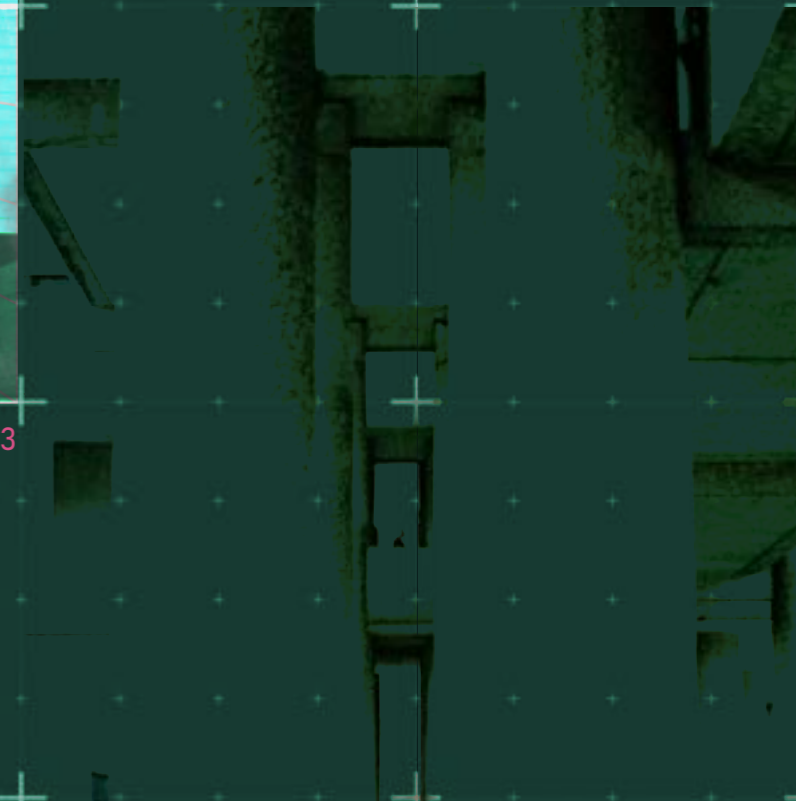
Design Research

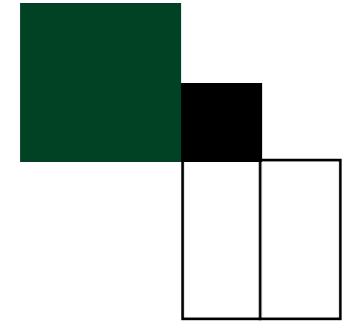
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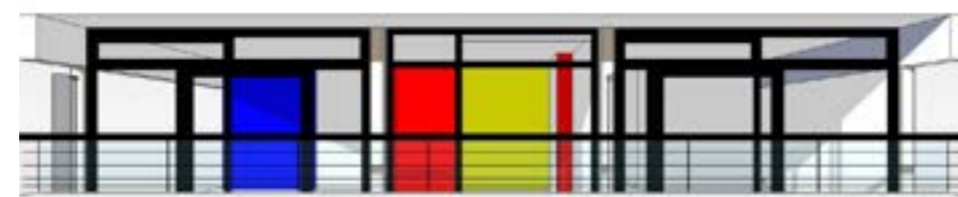
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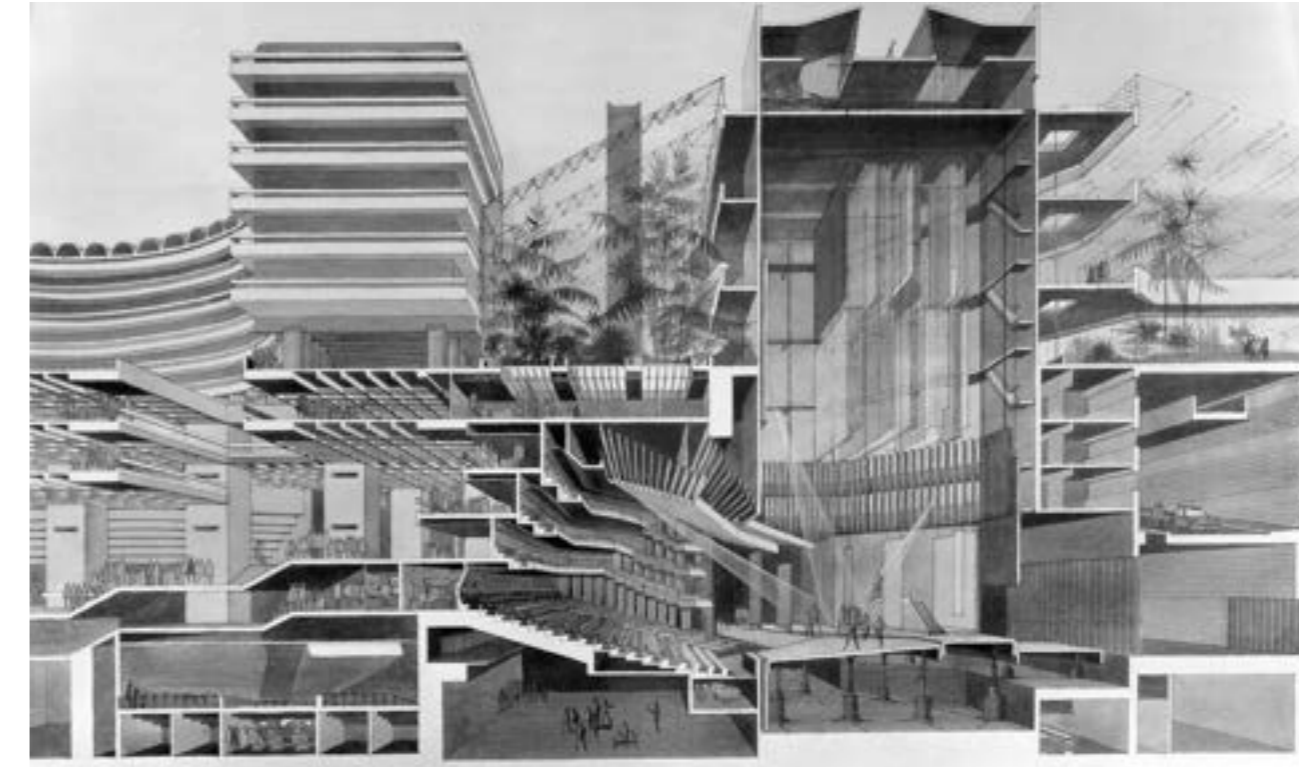
AS PART OF THIS ESSAY, I WILL EXPLORE THEORY WITH DESIGN RESEARCH IN FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND DRAWING. I HAVE CHOSEN TO USE THE BARBICAN CENTRE (LONDON) AS A SUBJECT TO EXPLORE AND TEXT MY IDEAS. I WILL USE IDEAS OF THE FLÂNEUR, WITH THE IDEA TO WANDER WITHOUT TRUE DIRECTION OR MEANING, ALLOWING ME TO SEE HOW THE BARBICAN CHOREOGRAPHS EXPERIENCE. I DEEMED THE BARBICAN TO BE RELEVANT TO THIS PROJECT BECAUSE THE BRUTALIST FORMS CREATE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR, SHAPING MOMENTS OF OPENNESS AND ENCLOSURE. I FEEL THE DEVELOPMENT HAS A STRONG RANGE OF KEY THEMES THAT ARE BROUGHT UP IN THIS ESSAY - ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES, MATERIALITY, COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES, CONNECTION TO PEOPLE AND LINKS TO ENVIRONMENT.



Barbican

Living

035



1970

Chamberlin, Powell

And Bon Architects

036

B 1 2 4 8 15 30 60 125 250 500 1000 2000

AS I PHOTOGRAPHED THE BARBICAN, I NOTICED HOW THE LAYOUT SUBTLY DIRECTED MY MOVEMENT. THE ARCHITECTURE SEEMED TO GUIDE MY GAZE TOWARD CERTAIN MOMENTS AND DETAILS, ALMOST CHOREOGRAPHING THE WAY I EXPERIENCED THE SPACE. I FOUND MYSELF ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO THE SUNLIGHT SLIPPING THROUGH GAPS BENEATH THE HOUSING BLOCKS, THE RHYTHM OF THE CONCRETE COLUMNS, THE DRAMATIC CANTILEVERS, AND THE GENTLE BALANCE BETWEEN HARD, HEAVY MATERIALS AND SOFTER ELEMENTS LIKE WATER AND GLASS.

WALKING THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT FELT LIKE FOLLOWING A SET PATH—ONE THAT ENCOURAGED ME TO TAKE IN EACH SECTION WITHOUT RUSHING AND APPRECIATE HOW IT HAS BEEN COMPOSED TOGETHER. EVEN WITH ITS MONUMENTAL SCALE, THE OPEN SPACES FELT SURPRISINGLY CALM AND INVITING, WITH GENEROUS LIGHT AND TERRACES THAT OFFERED A MIX OF OPENNESS AND PRIVACY.

ON A MORE DETAILED LEVEL, I NOTICED HOW THE FLATS ARE TIED TOGETHER BY EXTERIOR BALCONIES AND SHARED OUTDOOR SPACES, THEIR FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS GIVING A SENSE OF TRANSPARENCY AND CONNECTION (WHILE ALSO ON A FUNCTIONAL LEVEL, ALLOWING LOTS OF LIGHT TO ENTER DEEP INTO THE RESIDENTIAL MASS). ALTHOUGH THE BARBICAN IS PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL, THE MANY COMMUNAL AREAS PULL THE BUILDINGS TOGETHER INTO A COHERENT WHOLE. THE RAISED WALKWAYS LINK THE MAIN STRUCTURES WHILE REMAINING BRIGHT AND OPEN, GIVING ME CONSTANT GLIMPSES ACROSS THE ESTATE AS I MOVED THROUGH IT.



037



Photography By Ethan Bisco

038

B 1 2 4 8 15 30 60 125 250 500 1000 2000

Personal Intention

MY PHOTOGRAPHS INTEND TO CAPTURE SNAPSHOTS TO HIGHLIGHT KEY ARCHITECTURAL FORMS WHILE ALSO CAPTURING THE QUIETER, MORE PEACEFUL MOMENTS THAT UNFOLD WITHIN THE SURROUNDING SPACES. BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO BOTH THE STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS AND THE EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS THEY FRAME, I AIM TO SHOW HOW THE ARCHITECTURE SUPPORTS A SENSE OF CALM, COMMUNITY, AND SHARED EXPERIENCE. THEY INTEND TO SHOW LIFE, WHILE NOT BEING BUSTLING, IT IS PEACEFUL AND USED AS A THROUGH FLOW PASSAGE. THEREFORE, CREATING AN EXPERIENCE FOR THE VIEWER THAT IS THE SAME AS MINE. I WAS LUCKY TO EXPERIENCE THE AREA ON A SEMI SUNNY DAY, WHERE I CAPTURED THE EFFECT OF SUNLIGHT AND CONTRAST BETWEEN COVERED AREAS AND OPEN SPACE. ON A BRIGHTER DAY THIS CONTRACT WOULD BE MORE DRAMATIC, CREATING SOME ATTRACTIVE SHADOWS TO COMPLETELY JUXTAPOSE THE COVERED AND UNCOVERED SPACES - CREATING A STRONGER EFFECT OF 'OUTSIDE, INSIDE'.

Photography By Ethan Bisco

"I Try To Compose Architecture Like A Piece Of Music, With A Rhythm Of Materials, Surfaces, And Sounds, So That Everything Comes Together In A Unified Whole." — Peter Zumthor, Lecture Notes, Early 2000s



039

040

09/36

Bisco E 2025



I FELT THAT THIS EXERCISE WAS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW I COULD DEVELOP MY DESIGN THINKING IN PRACTICE, IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THE ARCHITECTURE I WAS EXPERIENCING BY ANALYSING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND INTERACTIONS OF THE SPACE. CHOOSING THE IMAGES TO CAPTURE WAS A WAY IN WHICH I COULD BREAK DOWN THE SPACE INTO CHUNKS TO CAPTURE MOMENTS BEHIND THE INTENT OF THE DESIGN OF SPACE. FOR EXAMPLE, BEING ABLE TO CAPTURE MOMENT OF A MAN READING A BOOK BY THE WATERSIDE AND FRAME THE INTENT BEHIND THE DESIGN CHOICE OF THAT PART OF THE BARBICAN. THIS IS A COMMUNAL PEACEFUL SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN ESCAPE FROM THE BUSTLE OF THE URBAN CITY AND USE THE SPACE CREATED. THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY I WAS ABLE TO CAPTURE REPETITION OF BRUTALIST FORM IN SINGLE IMAGES ALONG WITH A VARIETY OF MATERIALITY AND EXPRESS HOW LIGHT WILL CAST SHADOWS INTO SPACE CHANGING ITS LOOK, FEEL AND ATMOSPHERE.



041

BEING ABLE TO GO THROUGH THE PROCESS OF FRAMING THESE 'MOMENTS' IS A GREAT WAY TO REFLECT ON MY OWN DESIGN THINKING. HYPOTHETICALLY, IF THESE MOMENTS WERE PLANNED DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS, FORM COULD BE COMPOSED IN A WAY TO ALLOW THESE MOMENTS TO OCCUR ONCE SAID DESIGN PROJECT IS COMPLETED. IT'S EASIER TO BREAK DOWN A PROJECT IF KEY MOMENTS CAN BE SUMMED UP INTO FRAMES AND THEREFORE CAN BE USED TO COMMUNICATE. BRINGING THESE FRAMES OF INTENT TOGETHER INTO A COHESIVE DESIGN WILL RESULT IN CURATING AN EXPERIENCE ACCUMULATING THESE DIFFERENT MOMENTS.

25/36

Bisco E 2025



042

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OUT ZONES OF THE BARBICAN CENTRE

DETAILED LEVEL-TO-LEVEL, I NOTICED HOW THE FLATS ARE THE MOST
SPACES, THEIR FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS GIVING A SENSE OF
PRINCIPAL LEVEL, ALLOWING LOTS OF LIGHT TO ENTER THE SPACES
RAISED WALKWAYS LINK THE MAIN STRUCTURES WHILE
GLIMPSES ACROSS THE ESTATE AS I MOVED THROUGH.

WHERE I COULD I TRIED TO CAPTURE THE EFFECT OF
LIGHT AND CONTRAST BETWEEN COVERED AREAS
OPEN SPACE. ON A BRIGHTER DAY THE CONTRAST
BE GREATER AND WOULD MAKE FOR SOME
SHADOWS TO COMPLETELY JUXTAPOSE
AND UNCOVERED SPACES – CREATING A
EFFECT OF THIS ‘OUTSIDE, INSIDE’ I SPEAK

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WITHIN THE AREA, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THE KEY
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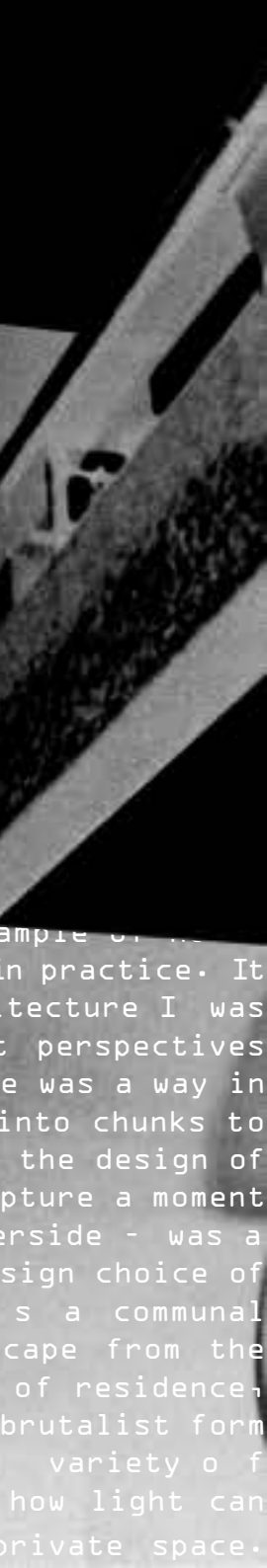
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I BECAME INCREASINGLY AWARE OF
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EXPERIENCE OF THE SPACE.

THE BARBICAN
ARCHITECTURE IS A FEEL OF
MUSIC WITH A RHYTHM OF
WALKWAYS, STAIRS, AND
SPACES. BY THE BARBICAN
COMES TOGETHER IN A SENSE
OF LIFE – THE SPACE
BEHIND THE GREAT WALL

I FOUND MYSELF SPOONING DOWN TO
SUNLIGHT SHIPPING THROUGH GAPS BETWEEN THE
HOUSING BLOCKS. THE RHYTHM OF THE TOWER'S
COLUMNS, THE DRAMATIC CAPS, AND THE
GENTLE BALANCE BETWEEN HARD HEAVY MATERIALS
AND SOFTER ELEMENTS LIKE WATER AND PLANTS.

CHOOSING PHOTOS TO TAKE WAS A WAY IN WHICH
I COULD BREAK DOWN THE SPACE INTO MOMENTS TO
CAPTURE MOMENTS BEHIND THE INTENT OF THE
DESIGN OF SPACE.

FOR EXAMPLE, BEING ABLE TO CAPTURE A MOMENT OF A MAN READING A BOOK BY THE
WATERSIDE – WAS A WAY TO FRAME THE INTENT BEING THE DESIGN CHOICE OF THAT
PART OF THE BARBICAN. THIS IS A COMMUNAL PEACEFUL SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN
ESCAPE FROM THE URBAN CITY OR EVEN FROM THE COMPLEX OF RESIDENCE.



the rhythm of the concrete columns, the gentle balance between hard, heavy materials and softer elements like water and glass. Walking through the development felt like following a set path that encouraged me to take in each section without rushing. Even with its monumental scale, the space felt surprisingly calm and intimate, a place that offered a moment of quiet reflection amidst the urban environment.

While also peaceful and unobtrusive, the surrounding spaces, by drawing attention to structural elements and the everyday interactions they frame, I aim to create an architecture that supports a sense of community and shared experience. The design is not just a functional and useful space, but a place where it is lucky to be on a sunny day, capturing the essence of the architectural intent.

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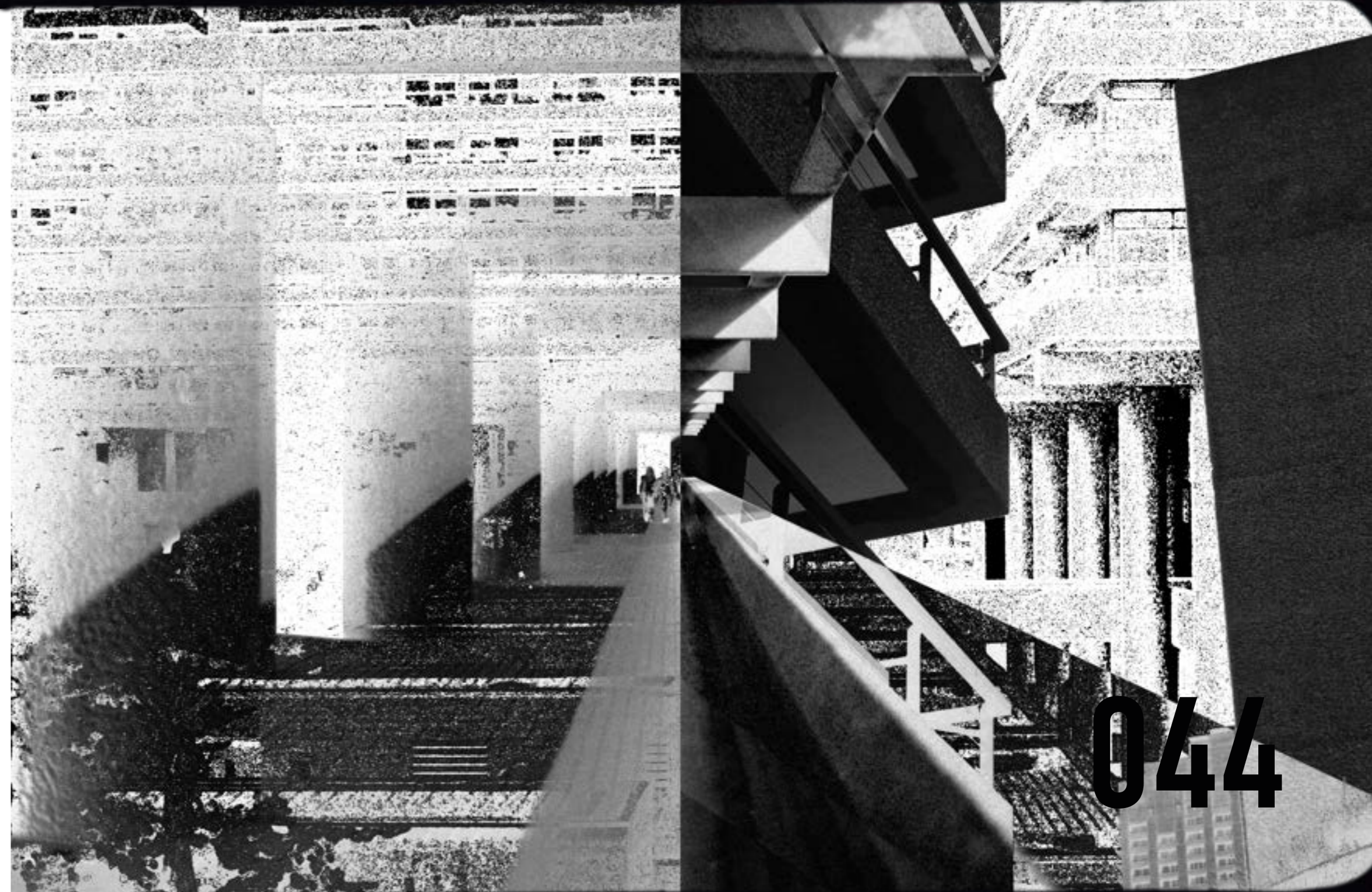
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Drawing

By Bisco E



THESE PHOTOGRAPHS INTEND TO DRAW LIGHT AND TEXTURE FROM MULTIPLE IMAGES. IT PLAYS A CONCEPTUAL ROLE OF BRINGING TOGETHER DIFFERENT IDEAS THAT COULD NOT BE CAPTURED BY JUST A SINGLE IMAGE. IN ESSENCE IT ACTS AS A COLLAGE. IT DISPLAYS A MIX OF PERSPECTIVES, FORM, TEXTURE, PEOPLE, LIGHT AND SHADOW. BY MASKING AND CROPPING THESE INTERESTING FORMS, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SELECT WHAT DREW ME TO PHOTOGRAPH THE VIEWS. BY SELECTING BLACK AND WHITE IT SIMPLIFIES THE DISTRACTIONS, HIGHLIGHTING SPECIFIC INTERESTING SHAPES, TEXTURES AND FEATURES. IT DRAWS THE EYE TO THE WAY THAT LIGHT IS CAST INTO THE BARBICAN AND THE SHADOWS THAT IT CREATES. I TRY TO PLAY WITH THE SCALE TO REFLECT THE FEELING OF BEING IN THE BARBICAN, WHERE THERE ARE LARGE FORMS AND TALL BUILDINGS IN THE DISTANCE - BUT WHEN FOCUSING ON THE IMMEDIATE DETAILS OF THE BARBICAN, THE DISTANT BUILDINGS APPEAR SMALL. THE PEOPLE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE COMMUNAL SPACE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE EYE.

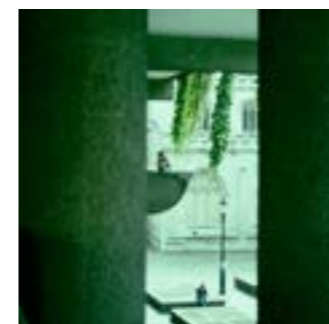


043

044

COMPOSITION IS A THEME THAT I HAVE FOUND INTERESTING TO EXPLORE IN DETAIL, THE WAY IN WHICH PHYSICAL ELEMENTS AND FEATURES ARE POSITIONED HAVE A DRASTIC SIGNIFICANCE ON ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES. COMPOSITION CAN BE INFLUENCED BY THE CAMERA TO HIGHLIGHT / DRAW THE ATTENTION TO BY THE VIEWER. THE CAMERA BEING USED AS AN EXTENSION TO THE DESIGNER, ARCHITECT, PHOTOGRAPHER, DIRECTOR, FILMMAKER... TO HELP COMMUNICATE THEIR VISION AND SHARE THE EXPERIENCE. THE PERSPECTIVE CAN BE INFLUENCED DEPENDING ON WHO IS LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS, LIGHTING AND WHAT THE LENS IS CAPTURING. I APPRECIATED HOW A SPACE CAN BE CURATED IN A WAY TO CHALLENGE THE EXPERIENCE AND VARY THE EXPERIENCE FOR THE USER. THE BARBICAN ARCHITECTS HAVE DESIGNED A MULTIFUNCTIONAL RESIDENCY AND SPACE THAT HAS ITS OWN IDENTITY SEPARATE FROM THE URBANISED CENTRE OF LONDON. ONE CAN FEEL IMMERSED, ENCLOSED WITHIN IT. IT IS A PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE THAT IS GROUNDED IN ITS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HARSH FORM AND ITS LAYOUT COMPOSITION THAT SEPARATE THE SPACE FROM THE REST OF THE CITY. . WITH ITS ABSENCE OF ROADS, IT PROMOTES THROUGH FLOWING FOOT TRAFFIC ALONG WITH EASY ACCESS FOR RESIDENTS AND EXPERIENCE THE MANY VARIED VISUAL CHANGING SETTINGS.

045



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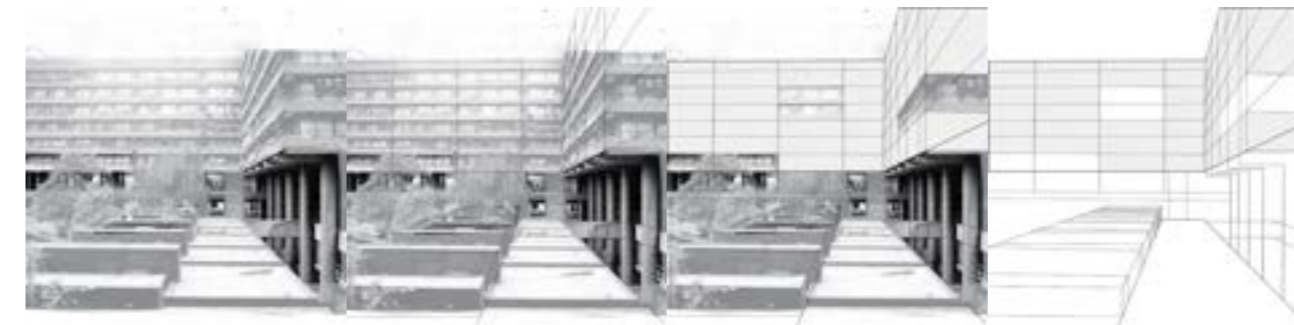
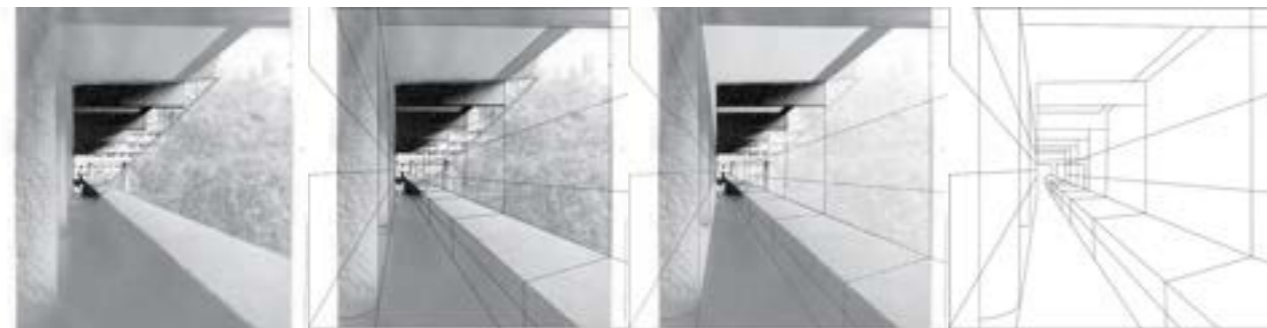
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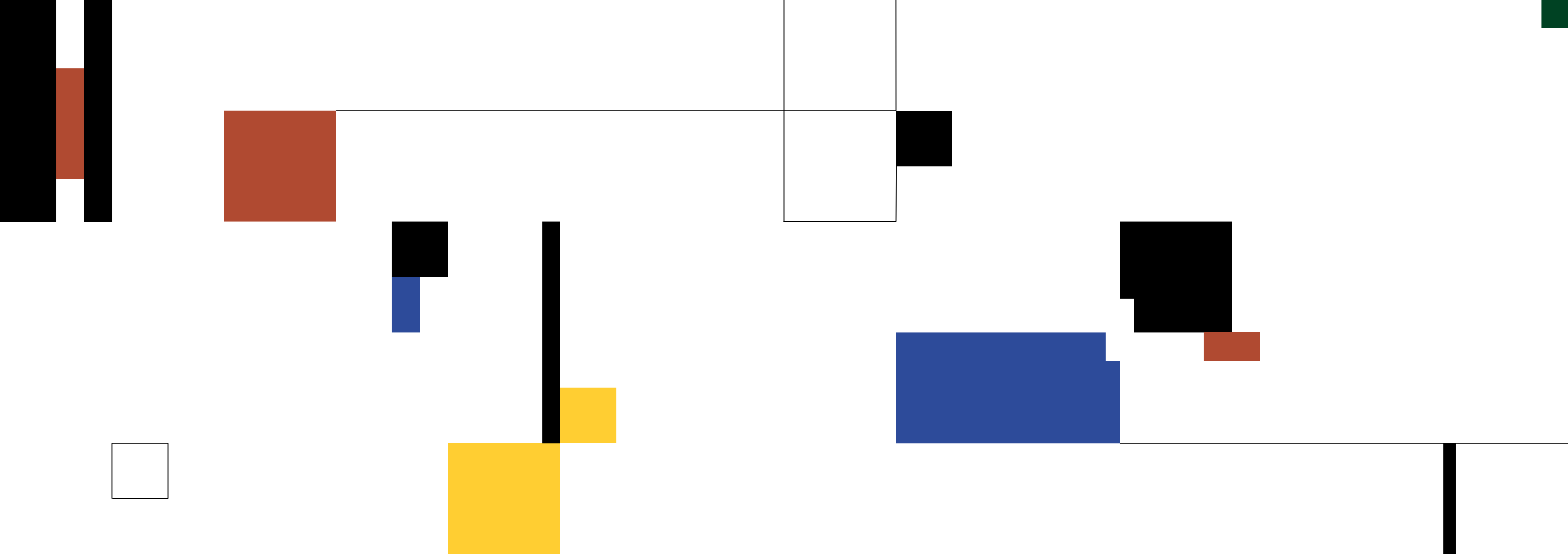
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Bisco E 2025

046



THIS SERIES OF DRAWINGS EXPLORES HOW PERSPECTIVE AND FORM CAN BE SIMPLIFIED. THE PHOTOGRAPHS CAPTURE AN ON-THE-SPOT ANALYSIS AT THE MOMENT IT WAS TAKEN, WHILE THE DRAWINGS SERVE TO BREAK DOWN AND EXTEND THIS ANALYSIS. GRID LINES ARE USED TO DECONSTRUCT THE PHOTOGRAPH, IDENTIFYING WHERE PLANES MEET AND HOW THEY LEAD THE EYE THROUGH THE IMAGE. BY SELECTIVELY REMOVING SECTIONS OF THE GRID, ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO SPECIFIC POINTS OF INTEREST. THIS PROCESS ALLOWS THE IMAGE TO BE REDUCED AND TRANSLATED INTO A TWO-DIMENSIONAL DRAWING THAT CAN BE EASILY COMPARED TO AN ARCHITECTURAL PLAN OR ELEVATION. EACH SET OF DRAWINGS FOLLOWS A LINEAR, STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS, MIRRORING MY THOUGHT PROCESS WHEN COMPOSING THESE IMAGES.



Conclusion

I HAVE ENJOYED THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING, DECIPHERING, AND RESEARCHING INFORMATION FOR THIS ESSAY. MY CURIOSITY FOR THE SUBJECT HAS INSPIRED FURTHER RESEARCH AND INFLUENCED MY DESIGN RESEARCH CHAPTER. IT BROADENED MY INTEREST IN PHOTOGRAPHY, WHERE I WILL APPLY THESE NEW SKILLS AND INTERESTS INTO DESIGN PROJECTS. A KEY OUTCOME FROM CONDUCTING THIS RESEARCH IS A SENSE OF STOPPING AND ANALYSING A SPACE OR ATMOSPHERE, SELECTING MOMENTS IN DESIGN, AND THINKING ABOUT THE INTENT BEHIND IT. BY CAPTURING A MOMENT, IT CAN HELP WITH THIS, AND I FOUND BY PHOTOGRAPHING ARCHITECTURE THAT I EXPERIENCE IS A WAY TO REFLECT ON THEM. MY PERSPECTIVE IS CAPTURED. THE IDEA THAT I AM DRAWN TO SOMETHING AND THAT BY PHOTOGRAPHING IT, FEELS SATISFYING TO ME. THE PHOTO VARIES BUT BY COMPARING THE SUBJECT, SIMILARITIES CAN BE FOUND AND CERTAIN PHOTOGRAPHIC FEATURES BECOME COHESIVE.



Kalfus Guest House

1981

049

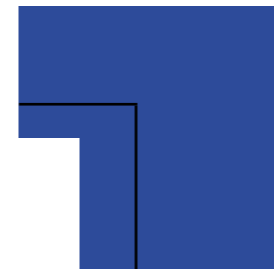


ETHAN BISCO

050

POST RESEARCH, I BELIEVE THAT ARCHITECTURE CAN BE FRAMED. IT CAN BE CURATED IN A WAY WHERE DESIGN INTENT IS DEMONSTRATED THROUGH FORM AND PERSPECTIVE. THE WAY A PERSON EXPERIENCES ARCHITECTURE DICTATES FEELING AND SHAPES HOW THAT INTENTION IS READ. WHEN DESIGNING FOR THE PERSON, AND WITH A SPECIFIC VIEWPOINT IN MIND—LIKE SHOOTING AN EXPOSURE THROUGH A CAMERA LENS—DESIGNERS CAN CONVEY THEIR VISION AND FRAME THEIR STORY. FILMMAKERS CAPTURE THIS MOMENT IN A MOVING FORM BY INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO INTERACT WITH THE SCENE OR SHOT, AMPLIFYING THE NARRATIVE, ALL FROM DRAWS FROM A SINGLE PERSPECTIVE: THE CAMERA.

I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT ARCHITECTURE SHOULD BE DESIGNED FROM ONE PERSPECTIVE OR FOCAL POINT; HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THERE IS MUCH TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS WAY OF THINKING WHEN DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE. BY PUTTING A DESIGNER BEHIND A LENS, THEY CAN CONVEY AN EXPERIENCE AND HIGHLIGHT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, FROM THE INTENDED USER'S POINT OF VIEW. THIS APPROACH BECOMES A WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE EXPERIENCER, TRANSLATING THE DESIGNER'S VISION. THE LENS ACTS AS AN EXTENSION OF VISION, ALLOWING AN IDEA TO BE CAPTURED AND DEMONSTRATED. SOME OF THIS THINKING CAN BE RELATED TO THE IDEA OF ALBERTI'S WINDOW, WHERE PAINTING FUNCTIONS AS AN "OPEN WINDOW" (LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI, 1435) THROUGH WHICH THE VIEWER SEES A REALISTIC, THREE-DIMENSIONAL SCENE. USING SINGLE-POINT LINEAR PERSPECTIVE CREATES A BELIEVABLE ILLUSION OF DEPTH, PRODUCING A SUBJECTIVE AND SELECTIVE VIEW OF THE WORLD FROM THE VIEWER'S PERSPECTIVE. IN MY RESEARCH, I HAVE USED THE CAMERA AS A TOOL OF CAPTURE RATHER THAN PAINTING, BUT THE UNDERLYING THEORY REMAINS SIMILAR.



ALONG WITH FRAMING ARCHITECTURE WITHIN ITS OWN DESIGN, A SUB THEME IN THIS ESSAY, IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND ITS SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT. I FEEL ARCHITECTURE SHOULD HAVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ITS INTERIOR ATMOSPHERE AND ITS SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT. CAN THIS RELATIONSHIP BE INCLUDED IN ITS 'DESIGN WITHIN THE FRAME'? OR IS THIS MORE OF A TECHNIQUE THAT RELATES TO FORM AND DESIGN THEORY? I ARGUE WITH THIS POTENTIAL THINKING AS JULIUS SHULMAN WAS ABLE TO CONVEY DESIGNERS' INTENT WITH RELATION TO NATURE, PEOPLE AND CULTURE BY PHOTOGRAPHING ARCHITECTURE. SOMETIMES IN A SINGULAR IMAGE.

IF DESIGN VISION CAN BE FRAMED, THEN DESIGNING TO FRAME INTENTION IS POSSIBLE. THEREFORE, THE EXPERIENCER CAN EXPERIENCE THE PERSPECTIVE AND THE VISION OF THE DESIGNER THROUGH MOVING IN AND THROUGH ARCHITECTURE. CAPTURING VIEWPOINTS AND DRAWING THE EYE. A SIMILAR FEELING THAT I GET WHEN I AM DRAWN TO TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH OF SOMETHING. ARE YOU; CAPTURING EMOTIONS, DEMONSTRATING FORM, CAPTURING HOW LIGHT INTERACTS WITH SPACE, EXPRESSING A CULTURE OR CULTURAL MOVEMENT, EDUCATING THE INTENTION OF A DESIGN, OR JUST HOW PEOPLE ARE BEING PEOPLE? THERE ARE ENDLESS STORIES THAT AN IMAGE CAN COMMUNICATE, THERE ARE ENDLESS STORIES ARCHITECTURE CAN CONVEY. CAPTURING MOMENTS AND ALLOWING PEOPLE TO MOVE THROUGH THE SPACE AND CREATE THEIR OWN IMAGES. ARCHITECTURE IS A KEY CATALYST TO HARMONISE PEOPLE WITH ONE AND OTHER, AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT. BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO FRAME SOMEONE'S PERSPECTIVE, ARCHITECTURE CAN BECOME AN EXPERIENCE THAT DRAWS PEOPLE IN AN INTENDED WAY.

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