Blurring Binaries

A Queer Approach to Architecture

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for mum and dad

Blurring Binaries: A Queer Approach to Architecture

by

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Abstract

Binary oppositions are a divisive force in social and physical space. This thesis engages the notion of heteronormativity as the primary source of binarism which oppresses expressive diversity of sexuality, gender and architecture. Queer, as the antithesis of binarism, is used as a process and as an action enacted through spatial design and experience to challenge normative assumptions in architecture. **This thesis proposes a queer approach to design, questioning and blurring architectural binaries.** A process of questioning, designing and reflecting – in non-linear, iterative, design-led research – establishes itself through three projects, each increasing in scale and complexity. For the purpose of clarity, the thesis is structured in a linear fashion: theoretical context and case study analysis is established before engaging with this design process at three scales – installation (breaking binaries), domestic (blending binaries) and public (blurring binaries) – followed by overall reflection. Primary modes of experimentation include analogue and digital drawing and modelling with photography as a method of documentation. This thesis concludes that, by focusing on modes of being and engagement, read and lived conditions combine in blurred non-binary experience. Blurring binaries enables people to engage their diverse subjectivities in space, making their space queer, instead of being defined by heteronormative social and architectural norms.

Preface

First I must ‘out’ myself to you dear reader: I am queer. I am someone who has had an overwhelmingly positive experience of being queer and I am extremely fortunate in this. I have a very supportive family and a fantastic boyfriend. I am young, white, male and middle class, with the amazing rights and opportunities that those before me have fought for. The least I can do is to use this platform for the better of future generations and for the good of my discipline, however far that goes.

When I embarked on this thesis I was interested in what my queer approach could bring to the architectural discipline, having never really thought it could have an influence before. It was from this personal, queer frame of mind that I came to notice the inherent division and binarism of heteronormativity embedded in architecture. To critique these architectural binaries, through my queer approach, became the motivation behind my research.

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Introduction

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Introduction

We live in a binarised world. Our conception and construction of sexuality, gender and architecture express many divisive societal norms. Queer is the antithesis of binarism. Queer provides ways of blurring – strategies for challenging and playing with binaries to question constructed norms. My approach in design follows Brent Pilkey’s observations:

Recognising the problems of heteronormativity, queer approaches have recently moved towards a model of sexual diversity, which moves away from a binary of normal/abnormal.

(2013, p. 15)

So rather than defining norms of space, queer works to open space up to possibility and diversity of interpretation.

Queer has been a powerful notion since the 1980s, as Judith Butler explains, ““Queer” derives its force precisely through the

repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation [and] insult” (1993, p. 18). This is represented through acts of living, doing and designing to create space which unpacks binaries. Pilkey notes that, “as an action, queering potentially allows an unrestrictive group of subjectivities to take part without limiting membership or raising questions of authenticity” (2013, p. 23). As a result, queering is understood in this thesis as a process and an action that is enacted: it is used as a verb, that is, ‘to queer’ (2013, p. 24).

For this thesis I engage with the notion of heteronormativity as the primary source of binarism, which oppresses diversity of sexuality, gender and architecture. Defined by human geographer Gavin Brown, heteronormativity is “the processes that socially construct a privileged heterosexuality

(and related binary understandings of gender) over homosexuality and unconventional presentations of gender” (Brown, 2009, p. 1496; see also Bell et al, 1994; Browne et al, 2007; Hubbard, 2008). Engaging with architecture, the heterosexual matrix defines how we understand our built environment (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). Critically, following L K Weisman (1992, p.10):

Those who have the power to define their society's symbolic universe have the power to create a world in which they and their priorities, beliefs, and operating procedures are not only dominant, but accepted and endorsed without question by the vast majority.

Meanwhile, from a queer perspective, this domination is delegitimising and oppressive. Binary systems so often depend on ‘us versus them,’ where difference from the other defines each side (Friedman, 1998, p. 19). I aim to use a queer approach to question and blur heteronormative divisions to create diversity of space for everyone to stand level.

Scope

There is a heavy focus on the process of design in this thesis – following course guidelines where design work has a weighting of 75% and the rest is vested in written work to situate the design research (Marques, 2016).

This thesis takes an ontological approach to sexuality and gender, rather than an epistemological approach which places identity into further discrete categories (such as race, class, disability or geography) which interact to produce differing queer experiences. While I acknowledge that this intersectional approach is prevalent in queer theory, this is still a product of modernist colonial epistemology which “produces an Other,” contrary to my aim to blur rather than uphold binaries (Puar, 2012, p. 52,54).

The distinct use of queer as a verb in this thesis, rather than a noun, acknowledges and moves away from the political nature of the word and its sometimes problematic use. Discussing queer as a noun is treated with caution in academic contexts as it is often used as an umbrella term for the community of non-heterosexual people, while frequently only referring to specific people – namely white gay men (Pilkey, 2013, p. 24). I acknowledge that this thesis can in no way reflect the diversity of the queer community; this is *my* queer approach.

My supervisory stream has to break up the thesis work into three projects at three scales, setting out the process make-up of this thesis.

These are:

1: installation scale, the Queer Surface;

2: domestic scale, the Queer Living Room;

3: public scale, the Queer City.

Separate aims, developed within these projects, each tackle a different queer approach to architectural binaries. I aim to break the experiential binary between people and architecture at the installation scale, blend the binary of gendered space at the domestic scale, and blur binaries of spatial conditions, their scale and programme at the public scale.

Proposition

This thesis explores how architectural binaries can be blurred through a theoretical (ideas-based) and active (design-based) queer approach to design.

Initially, my research aimed to ask how architecture could be an active mechanism to amplify the pride and identity of the modern queer community. However, my design research evolved into a critique of binaries from a queer perspective because the former proposition became unwieldy. I could not represent the wide and diverse identities and experiences of the queer community in design beyond my own approach.

Methodology

Design through research activity is exploratory and is both a way of inquiring and a way of producing new knowledge (Downton, 2003; Frankel & Racine, 2010). Design-led research is unusual because, as Jane Rendell says, “architectural design research can raise questions rather than provide answers” (2013, p. 118). This is particularly interesting from a queer perspective as design research can, as Rendell argues, “pose critiques of architecture’s position and role - cultural, economic, ideological, material, political and social” (2013, p. 118). When conducting this research through a queer perspective, I look to “question what we normally take for granted: in other words, [...] question our methodologies, the way we do things, and our terminologies” in order to have a queer consciousness throughout the whole process (Rendell, 2013, p. 118).

This research project operates through iterative design and testing in multiple mediums, scales and sites; producing work continuously before post-evaluation and reiteration. The main methods of experimentation used in this thesis are analogue and digital drawing and model making with photography as a method of documentation and exploration. Specific

to the installation project, photography was also used as social documentary fieldwork (Wagner, 2007, p. 26) to document a small interactive observational study at my university queer group (conducted pursuant to ethics application number 22762). Complementary to the design-as-research process, research into historical and present queer space and theory is completed throughout the thesis, informing and adding depth to the design iterations.

Operating in multiple scales and moving up and down between them is an integral part of the design method within each of the three scales. When conducting such experiments, this process draws from Yaneva’s observations:

Architects scale up and down in order to see what might follow; they do so either as an exploratory move by probing in trial-and-error fashion, or as a systematic test aiming for an intended outcome to be confirmed or disconfirmed. (2005, p. 868)

My explorations and tests constantly scale up and down while overarching focus progresses through the scale of the hand, the body, room scale, building scale and up to an urban block before transitioning back through to small scale to confirm links with Yaneva’s ideas.

05. Making

06. Folded furniture: Domestic Scale

Thesis Structure

Following this introductory chapter are the chapters for theoretical context in this thesis and case studies for each scale.

- 2... *Theoretical Context* situates this thesis in queer and feminist architectural texts and ideas. Then I look into the theory of read and lived space for engaging binary disruption in my architectural design.
 - 3... *Case Studies* analysis involves work at each of the three scales: from Cybele Lyle, Eileen Gray, and Junya Ishigami. These are read from a queer perspective and analysed for their design engagement between read and lived space.
-

Next are the design chapters for the installation, domestic, and public projects. Each set out their aim and method, present the design process, and conclude with reflection.

- 4... *Breaking Binaries* details the installation project. Queer Surface engages people with architecture to experiment with how they physically interact with wall surfaces.
- 5... *Blending Binaries* details the domestic project. Queer Living Room critiques traditionally gendered space in the home to develop gender neutral living spaces.
- 6... *Blurring Binaries* details the public project. Queer City looks at the changing network of queer space in the context of Wellington. Stitching this back together involves blurring boundaries of space, programme, scale, and method.
- 7... *Conclusion*, a reflection on the thesis as a whole, summarises and analyses the benefits and drawbacks of my queer approach to architecture.

Theoretical Context

07. Personal installation interaction

Theoretical Context

This chapter looks at the key figures and ideas of queer and feminist architectural theory which influence this thesis. I first discuss queering binaries and project potential strategies for disrupting dichotomies in architecture. Second I look to Aaron Betsky's *Queer Space* to provide an historical background of queer space. Then, with help from Katarina Bonnevier, Brent Pilkey and others, I critique Betsky's views on queer space and project a way out of the closet. This chapter concludes with a discussion between read and lived experience for a queer approach to architecture.

Queering Binaries

In understanding patriarchal and heteronormative structures, dichotomies are an

essential concept. People are often classified into binary systems of male/female, woman/man and hetero/homo creating a social system where one group has power and status while the other is rendered powerless and inferior (Weisman, 1992, p. 10; Wilson, 2010, p. 142). In addition to defining social space, heteronormative dichotomies define the way we conceptualise physical space and architecture (Weisman, 1992, p. 10). However, binary oppositions are only a product of practice, ritual and repetition (Wilson, 2010, p. 142). Theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler explain that these binaries, sexuality in particular, are constructed (see also: Mikkola, 2008; Wilson, 2010). Butler points out, "[t]hinking the body constructed demands a rethinking of the meaning of construction itself" (Butler, 1990, p. xi). This thesis questions society's constructed binary

regimes because they limit, restrict and control personal, bodily and creative expression.

Queering has a disruptive power for our binarised heteronormative world condition. It challenges normative conceptions in society, as well as architecture. In *Queer Theory: An Introduction*, Jagose states that:

There is no generally acceptable definition of queer... Nevertheless, the inflection of queer that has proved most disruptive to received understandings of identity, community and politics is the one that problematizes normative consolidations of sex, gender and sexuality. (1997, p. 99)

Katarina Bonnevier helps explain the role of queer theory in an architectural process: “Queer works to destabilise divisive regimes based on binaristic thinking and perception; the thinking that constructs male and female as hierarchical oppositions, masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual,” is broken down (2005, p. 170; see also: Betsky, 1997; Sanders, 1996; Heynen & Baydar, 2005). Binaries are very destructive in the way that they erase the middle ground where queer identity lies.

Queer Space

Aaron Betsky’s seminal 1997 book *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* was one of the first books published on queer use and understanding of architectural space. It provides a good account of space interpreted as queer across history – from Roman bathhouses right up until the beginnings of queer cyberspace. Betsky talks about some inspiring and affective queer spaces but the book highlights an ingrained interior condition of queer space, hidden from society, perceiving it as, “by its very nature, [...] something that is not built, only implied, and usually invisible” (1997, p. 18). To support this, Betsky cites not only how same-sex love has almost always been illegal or taboo in western societies, but also its distance from the regulation of society through perpetuating values in family and home (1997, p. 19). This is, of course, changing because of increasing acceptance of, and equality for the queer community as well as social and law reforms across the western world.

Betsky’s *Queer Space* is problematically driven by a white, gay, male-centric view. Brent Pilkey notes that Betsky’s personal reading “applies stereotyped gay traits including the obsession with sex as well as individual

vanity to canonical architecture” (2013, p. 23). Extending this critique, Richard Williams cites Betsky’s sexualisation of Philip Johnson’s Glass House when arguing that queer space is less about sexual acts than “a way to talk about alternative ways of inhabiting architectural space, and indeed of imagining space altogether” (2013, p. 178). These critiques show that queer approaches to architecture have moved beyond Betsky’s *Queer Space*, rendering the book helpful only as a historical reference and point of departure.

Another problematic element of *Queer Space* is Betsky’s reliance on the concept of the closet to define queer space. This is limiting and closes down the potential of a queer approach in architecture because, as Bonnevier argues:

It is one principle out of many, but not necessarily in every spatial expression of queerness. To insist on the closet limits queer space to a dichotomy of heterosexuality and homosexuality. The act of closeting is a normative way to dismiss queer space to the fringes of normalcy and contain it within the deviant other. (2005, p. 175)

Problematic for this thesis, Betsky’s notion of queer space and the closet relies on and maintains the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Oswin, 2008, p. 91). Projecting a method of leaving the closet, my approach

develops towards the use of pride, outward expression and subverting binary power to queer architecture. Next I look at how meaning and lived space can help with this process.

Meaning

How we interact with and interpret architectural meaning has important implications for my queer approach to designing architecture. Architecture is read by users through a learned semiotic language embedded in building elements (Broadbent, 1978; see also: Peirce, 1931; de Saussure, 1966). The standard body of read space is a contemplative body, understanding architecture from a distance. In this relationship with architecture, in all its modes, buildings have the power to transmit ideas and emotions through their inherent meaning.

Architecture’s defining characteristic is that of communicating and transmitting meaning (Hopkins, 2012, p. 4; see also: Broadbent, 1978; Agrest & Gandelsonas, 1996). Architectural meaning can be conveyed in many different elements and constructions. Hopkins acknowledges form, material, scale, ornamentation and, most explicitly, signage as expressing architectural meaning (2012, p. 4). These meanings tend to be abstract,

Representing
Heteronormativity

Representing
Queer

Blend and overlay trigger geometry experiments relating to my
proposed ways of questioning heteronormative binaries.

Representing
a blend or in-
between state

The inverted pink triangle is an established
queer pride symbol – re-appropriated from
ID badges for homosexuals interned in Nazi
concentration camps (Plant, 1988).

such as expressing social and cultural status, wealth, power or simply a direction to the front door (Hopkins, 2012, p. 4). However, many meanings in architecture have been problematic for minorities such as the queer community because of their inherent heteronormativity:

Architecture thus defined is a record of deeds done by those who have had the power to build. It is shaped by social, political, and economic forces and values embodied in the forms themselves, the processes through which they are built, and the manner in which they are used. (Weisman, 1992, p. 2)

Breaking free from historic biases against the queer community, it is possible to use architectural meaning for queer benefit. First, through using and propagating queer symbols, left, the culture can gain a foothold in the architectural universe. Secondly, a queer approach to architecture can disrupt heteronormative symbols by critiquing and experimenting with them.

Lived Space

While read space inscribes meaning in architecture, lived space is about how the user experiences space. The body of lived space is an active body, engaged directly with architecture. In this, feminist theory is

of great help, focusing on “being as a mode of knowing,” which therefore challenges the objectivity of knowledge (Hemmings, 2012, p. 148; see also: Code, 1995). Richard Williams explains how a queer perspective in architecture opens space up to the input of lived experience:

[B]uildings might be thought of in ways that depart from the rational and normative, and how they might properly take account of lived experience. The introduction of subjective experience, in other words how we feel about architectural space, is one area in which queer architectural history makes a significant contribution. (2013, p. 178)

Architecture is experienced by people through the way we inhabit and interact with our designed environments. Queering this lived experience becomes a strategy for challenging norms. As Williams suggests in the above quote, typical architectural meaning does not effectively take account of peoples’ experience of architecture. A queer approach can introduce the importance of lived experience to space and create a more engaging architecture which activates the body. This lived perspective is particularly vital to the process of designing architecture because space, according to Lefebvre, is a production of people rather than built elements (1991, p. 191; see also: Pilkey,

08. Public scale detail

2013, p. 31). The reality of social interaction between people, he believes, is what produces space (1991, p. 191). An interesting notion to take this in a new direction is to experiment with the interaction between people and architecture, engaging lived space through touch, movement, and interactivity.

Between Read and Lived Space

A dynamic relationship is produced between spaces with meaning and lived space. This thesis develops in this intersection. Designing architecture with both meaningful and lived elements will engage me, as the designer, and potential users in reading and experiencing liminal space. This contends with how architects and users both create space while architectural discourse has traditionally treated these parties as unequal (Pilkey, 2013, p. 30). Hill notes that this problematic binary exists, but stresses that “the architect and user both produce architecture, the former by design, the latter by inhabitation. As architecture is experienced, the user has as creative a role as the architect” (Hill, 1998, p. 140). Both parties have the opportunity to queer their surroundings as “queerness is constituted, not in space, but in the body of the queer” through both their inhabitation and gaze (Reed, 1996, p. 64). By unpacking

binaristic norms and working between read and lived space, I argue I can move towards engaging queer enactment through the design and experience of architecture.

Conclusion

Through this contextual research, queer theory, meaning and lived space were interrogated for their strategies towards a queer approach in architecture. In order to challenge heteronormativity, my queer approach works between read and lived space through a process of queering architecture’s inherent dichotomies. The binary concept is now engaged for each scale project with three options to disrupt binaries architecturally: break and merge boundaries, blend opposites into ambiguity, and blur binaries to provide a spectrum between dichotomies. I now look to three case studies to extract their strategies for the design work which follows.

Case Studies

09. Cybele Lyle, *Shifting Spaces*, 2012, Oakland, Pro Arts 2 x 2 Solos. Photo by Chris Fraser.

Case Studies

This chapter analyses three case studies to review strategies for a queer approach to space. First, I look to Cybele Lyle for her approach to breaking binaries through disrupting perspective. Second, Eileen Gray provides valuable methods for blending binaries, particularly in relation to gendered space in the home. Third, I explore Junya Ishigami's work on blurring binaries through play with threshold, landscape and transparency. These three case studies inform and relate to my installation, domestic, and public scale projects respectively, although learning from all three is applicable to each scale project.

Cybele Lyle

Selected works by artist Cybele Lyle, 2012

Cybele Lyle is an interdisciplinary artist who broaches the realm of architecture with

her varied work. She uses non-traditional photography, video, sculpture and collage to extend the language of architecture to the surrounding environment (Barringer, 2012).

Queer Reading

By taking architecture apart and upsetting the fundamental aspect of our perspective, Lyle breaks down the barriers of architecture and makes spaces that are open to everyone. Lyle questions the norms of architecture and its representation by cutting and crossing boundaries. This, in turn, subverts architecture's claims to permanence, dominance and absoluteness. Where established codes, structures and practices are broken, architecture's direction of bodily movement, behaviour and identity is disrupted. Reacting to architectural binaries, Lyle's work inhabits

10. Cybele Lyle, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, 2012, Oakland, Royal Nonesuch Gallery

11. Cybele Lyle, *Print 1*, 2012

12. Cybele Lyle, *Print 2*, 2012

13. An image from Lyle's studio, 2012

a space somewhere between two and three dimensions, and between interior and exterior, to make norms ambiguous (Barringer, 2012).

In Lyle's words, her spatial abstraction process is "taking away the power of their being closed spaces created by someone else, permanent, heavy and loaded with history, and making them movable and open" (Lyle, qtd. in Haas, 2012). Lyle's work, through her thought behind it, investigates how heteronormative power affects people through readable architecture and how that can be broken down by playing with lived experience.

Between Read and Lived Space

Lyle breaks down heteronormative binaries of architecture and art by breaking, disrupting, flattening and expanding surface and perspective. She challenges how we read normative space by breaking images up into new perspective states of abstracted landscapes. This method of optical illusion breaks down read binaries in architecture and art, creating ambiguous space.

Her disruption of space through works such as *Shifting Spaces* (fig. 08) moves her work towards affecting the lived experience of those viewing her work as well. Levi

Barringer explains how Lyle engages viewers in exploring her constructions:

Instead of using literal figures to represent the human impact of architecture, Lyle incorporates the bodies of viewers as her subjects. Her installations allow bodies to navigate abstract textures and explore the malleability of subjectivity through constructed space. (2012)

This negotiation among bodies, space and identity moves the viewer's focus from how they read the object-driven field of architecture to the experience of Lyle's process-driven explorations. She creates readable intimacy out of open spaces and makes enclosures out of the sky, all to engage a lived space for viewers through architecturalising experience.

Conclusion

Cybele Lyle breaks binaries of space, surface and perspective to create an inclusive and boundless queer space and time. Engaging with readable space, Lyle produces a distorted lived experience in her work to enable the viewer to question their perception of architecture.

14. Images of E.1027 taken by Gray for the 1929 winter issue of *L'Architecture Vivante*

Eileen Gray

Villa E.1027 in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, 1929

Eileen Gray used her background in furniture design to integrate small scale design and intimate space into her first work of architecture – the Villa E.1027 – built between 1926 and 1929. For this case study, I look to Bonnevier to situate a queer reading of this house, which helps us understand Gray’s approach to subverting gendered space in the home. Between read and lived space, E.1027 is “among the purest examples of domestic architecture and interior design of the period” (Aram Designs, 2013).

Queer Reading

To disturb the binary between the feminine boudoir and the masculine study, Gray combined these gendered spaces in her concept of *Living-room*: “a multifunctional space for all aspects of life – pleasure, rest,

studies, business meetings and parties” (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). This approach was manifested in Gray’s 1923 *Boudoir de Monte Carlo* and was developed further in the living space of E.1027 (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). In these spaces, Eileen Gray counteracted and slipped gendered dichotomies into ambiguity, a place where everyone could feel welcome. As Bonnevier describes:

The boudoir in her interpretation became the most public space of the building, as well as the most intimate. There is no spatial opposition between these two categories; in fact, there are no such absolute categories, rather the “Grayian” boudoir supports a multitude of situations. Visitors are greeted and entertained in this space, but one can also settle in. (2005, p. 166)

This diversity of experience in one space highlights a conceptual core of performance

15. Gray's 1923 "*Boudoir de Monte Carlo*" displayed at XIV Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, Paris

16. The living-room of E.1027, 1929

in E.1027. That diversity also subverts domestic spatial norms, which are read, by showing “that which is being performed in the space, with the help of the architecture, decides what space it is,” (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). Domestic performance in E.1027 exists between read and lived experience.

Between Read and Lived Space

The living-room of E.1027 critiques heteronormativity in the home. Gendered space is only a read precondition imposed by heteronormative society and performance. Gray challenges these gendered readings of space by overlapping gendered and neutral activities in one ambiguous and all-purpose living room. Bonnevier notes that “the building as an act is ambiguous, open to interpretation, [and] not confined with normative constraints” to question the read and lived experience of domestic architecture (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). The engaging experience of the house is extended through the way it calls for action: “The architecture prescribes a behaviour where the body is engaged with the building elements” where a person and the house set each other in motion (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166).

Further challenging normative readings of architecture, Gray made E.1027 literally

readable as well. Provocative stencilled text directed users, particularly around the entry (Bonnevier, 2007, p.61).

Conclusion

Eileen Gray’s E.1027 blended gendered spatial binaries of the domestic realm by shifting normative performance in merged space. Critiquing heteronormative modernist architecture, Gray produced architecture fine-tuned to the lived experience of the users.

Image removed for copyright.

18. External view of E.1027 from the sea. Photo by Manuel Bougot, since refurbishment, 2015.

19. Eileen Gray's experiential movement diagram choreographed by her architecture and response to the Sun.

**Eileen Gray
Roquebrune, Cap Martin
upper level**

- 1 entrance
- 2 closet
- 3 living room
- 4 foyer
- 5 bathroom
- 6 sleeping alcove
- 7 upper terrace
- 8 hallway
- 9, 10 master bedroom
- 11 terrace
- 12 bathroom
- 13 lavatory
- 14 kitchen
- 15 laundry area
- lower level**
- 16 bedroom
- 17 dressing room
- 18 service entrance
- 19 bathroom
- 20 service
- 21 lower level living area
- 22 storage

21. Kanagawa Institute of Technology Workshop interior landscape, 2008

22. KAIT Workshop minimalist and limitless forest, 2008

Junya Ishigami

Kanagawa Institute of Technology Workshop, 2008

Junya Ishigami is a Japanese architect whose unique minimalist style incorporates crossing the boundary between art, architecture and landscape. Ishigami's work explores issues such as density, transport, landscape, structure, scale and the urban/rural dichotomy (Chin, 2014). In relation to disrupting binaries, his processes and architecture produce boundless spaces and ideas which blur spatial conditions, disciplines and scales. The study and work space for the Kanagawa Institute of Technology (KAIT) exemplifies Ishigami's style.

Queer Reading

While Ishigami's work has in no way been a specifically queer exploration of space, many concepts and elements of his work can be interpreted as queer through his approach to blurring binaries. Ishigami frees his work from normative processes and ideals through "a quest for the pure and essential in architecture" (Elali, 2013). Using both scientific and artistic observation and processes, architecture is a boundless field of infinite possibilities for Ishigami (Chin, 2014). This allows him, through his work, to affect

every area of life while raising existential questions of both society and architecture.

His cross-disciplinary approach is another way Ishigami blurs boundaries, using varied processes to subvert architectural norms. Andrea Chin explains this approach gives an opportunity for "blurring the frontiers between design, architecture, urbanism, landscape and geography" (2014). Working across disciplines also blurs boundaries of scale. This provides Ishigami with the opportunity to question historically privileged scales and address concerns of the body across scales to achieve a richer architecture. His is an approach which engages the body in designing between read and lived space.

Between Read and Lived Space

Ishigami's minimalism, which gives the viewer interpretive agency, questions the normal reading of space. Lived space is engaged through his highly experiential play with threshold, transparency, reflection and architecture as landscape. Chin speculates that this strategy blurs architectural binaries because:

This "presence and absence" of architecture cultivates a form of ambiguity at the boundaries between occupied and empty space,

Image removed for copyright.

23. KAIT Workshop Plan, Junya Ishigami + Associates, 2008

24. KAIT Workshop – transparency and reflection, taken by Iwan Baan, 2008

architecture and nature, the artificial and the organic, resulting in extraordinary spaces.
(Chin, 2014)

This is particularly apparent in the KAIT Workshop where groups of columns ambiguously divide the area to create changeable indistinct spaces (Architizer, 2008). The columns are arranged within the architecture to affect people as they move through the space. As if trees were placed on a landscape: “there are different trails, like animal tracks” Ishigami says, “With this ambiguity we are trying to create a new flexibility of architecture” (qtd. in Chang, 2011). Ishigami is acutely aware of the way people relate to their environment and calls on the user to read themselves into the space and design their own alternative ways of living (Chin, 2014). Ishigami provides a simple playful backdrop to peoples’ lives and experiences.

Transparency and reflection are integral to Ishigami’s work – making space readable as open and boundless while subtly affecting the intimate lived space of the users. Ishigami talks of two aspects of transparency which are integral to his thoughts on architecture and how he designs rich experiences for everyone who interacts with his designs (Ishigami, in Elali, 2013). These are a feeling of freedom,

and the variation of space and style which can be achieved through reflection and refraction (Ishigami, in Elali, 2013). So this transparent element of Ishigami’s architecture, especially in boundary and threshold space, both define and free the read and lived space of the users.

Conclusion

Junya Ishigami’s work spurs processes and elements for boundless and blurred architecture. He shifts the defined architecture discipline into ambiguous space by engaging scale, boundary, transparency, and landscape across disciplines. He uses intricate design and technology in relation to nature to instil engaging lived experience in his architecture.

25. Junya Ishigami at the KAIT Workshop, taken by Iwan Baan, 2008

Breaking Binaries

Queer Surface

Design Chapter 1

Installation

This chapter outlines my first design experiment at the installation scale. This project deals with a binary I perceive between the body and the built, where space is read remotely, privileging sight over the lived sense of touch. Also important at this stage of my thesis was an interest in queer identity and how that could be expressed architecturally. This chapter first states the background, aim and methods for the installation scale before describing the design process and outcome, followed by reflection.

Background

Installations have an ability to disrupt and challenge norms through their accessible and experimental nature. Scott Carey speculates that installations can queer spatial norms and dichotomies by embodying:

an in-between space that negotiates the dichotomy between the inside of the body and the outside of the body, between private and public realms, between the historical past and the now, between the periphery and center of the many contested intersecting terrains of identity. (2007, p. 2)

My architectural installation breaks the normative binary between people and architecture. By provoking experimental interaction with architectural wall surface, the lived experience of architecture engages with previously static built components.

This small-scale exploration tests how architecture can be queered by negotiating the binaristic boundary between the body and the built. Katarina Bonnevier, discussing queering this binary through design, notes that “queer implies inter-changeability and excess;

[where] the possibility to move, make several interpretations, slide over, or reposition limits” makes it possible to question norms of staple architectural elements (2007, p. 22). Architectural surface, as well as interaction with that surface, is important to Bonnevier when built architecture is interpreted as queer: “Material queerness is situated in the surface – that is, in the interrelation between built matter and the active subject” (2007, p. 56). So the surface of a wall can be pushed, prodded, taken apart, worn even, in order to queer and question the architectural norms we are used to.

Aim

In this first stage I had several aims: first, to break the binary between the body and the built through an architectural installation. Secondly, regarding my initial research question, understand if and how personal identity could affect architecture and how architecture could reflect one’s identity. Thirdly, and similarly, find out how people construct their own spaces and facades to reflect their identities.

Method

As positioned in the methodology section, experimentation and iteration through design drove this research project. The working method for this scale was based in physical 1:1 material tests and making of the final installation. The installation evolved from the input of many parallel investigations – from academic sources and personal ideas to project experiments and making.

During a small interactive observational study at my university queer group, photography was used as social documentary fieldwork (Wagner, 2007, p. 26). This was conducted to observe themes, commonalities and differences between responses and interactions with surface, space and architecture. (Pursuant to ethics application number 22762.)

Here, the first design experimentations were conducted with reference to Cybele Lyle's work. These experimentations helped determine how basic planes and boundaries of architecture can be disrupted to break down heteronormative binaries.

28. Perspective experiment series

Initial Experiments: Disrupting Perspective

29.

30.

31. Camera mirror experiment

There was also experimentation into how architectural structures could be worn, referencing the importance of expressing our identities through what we wear. These wearable architecture ideas and experiments were then combined with the concurrent

experiments into how architectural elements can be disrupted and challenged. This inspired negotiation and breaking of the binary between body and built.

32. Wearable experiment series

Initial Experiments: Wearable Architecture

33.

34.

35. Space frame enclosure

This timber wall frame helped define the idea for the final installation. Questioning how we can use and interact with architecture in a non-normative way, the new surface of the wall became an interactive component. Through challenging how people interacted with this

wall, it could prompt them to question their everyday interaction with the architecture around them. To encourage interaction, I explored attributes of playfulness, opposition, movement, perceived affordance and the unexpected, through the next series of

36. Installation base frame

design iterations. Eight final surfaces were developed from these attributes with an aim to create multiple different textures with ordered flexibility – all in a limited material palette and using simple processes such as cut, layer and fold.

37. Surface experiment series

38.

39. Material and movement tests

40.

41. Base surface texture

Surface 1

This very flexible and stretchy fabric was made to be solidified and structured. Card squares were overlapped on cotton to create a feather effect.

42. Stretched backing material

43. Layered feather or scale effect when moved

Surface 2

Following surface 1, balsa sticks on spandex cotton formalised fabric manipulation.

47. Base surface texture

Surface 3

This rough and stiff fabric was made more structured and defined. Card triangles on hessian created a malleable folded surface.

48. Distorted geometries

49. The forming effect of fabric and card requires engagement, otherwise it falls flat

Surface 4

Following surface 3, wire threaded through hessian formalised fabric to create more structured movement.

52. The wire structure challenged fabric manipulation by forming refined curved shaping

53. Base surface texture

Surface 5

This stiff plastic sheeting was made more malleable and engaging. The plastic was cut and stretched to create playful permeability.

54. Springback from material

55. Beautiful stretched shaping unknown until pulled

56. Base surface texture

Surface 6

Following surface 5, the translucent plastic was folded to create a much more 3D surface.

57. Curve formed by fold pattern

58. Angular fold pattern was aesthetically pleasing but uncooperative

Surface 7

This solid foam core board was made to be malleable and moveable. The board was scored and bent to make a stiff surface playful.

Surface 8

Following surface 7, the board became foldable through a refined scoring pattern.

64. This fold pattern was interesting but difficult to manipulate, challenging expected movement

65. Completed Installation

66. Framed surface series

Final Installation

67.

68. Interaction series

69. Wearable surface

70. Initial hesitancy

71. Dress ups

On completion, there was a process of observing and photographing people interacting with the installation surfaces. Here, people interact with the installation at *UniQ*, Victoria University's queer group.

72. Play series

Queer Interaction

73. Play

74. Strike a pose

75. Form making

76. Interaction series

77. Wearable surface

78. Scale armour

79. Facades

Personal interaction with the installation:
exploring and trying to understand my
queer approach with architectural surfaces,
shapes, patterns, and tessellations.

80. Interaction series

Personal Queer Interaction

81. Screen

82. View forming

83. Form making

84. Surface 1

85. Surface 2

86. Surface 5

87. Surface 6

88. Surface 3

89. Surface 4

90. Surface 7

91. Surface 8

Reflection

Installation Scale

I narrowed down my initial aims and questions towards understanding queer identity in architecture when I realised how intangible queer identity is. Understanding my queer approach as questioning binaries later in the thesis, consolidated this project in the ideas I had about the body/built boundary. As my first play with binaries in this queer approach to the installation however, the action of breaking the binary was quite abrupt.

There was trouble obtaining the interaction and expression desired from the project, and reaching useful conclusions was also difficult. One problem was our muted everyday experience of the built environment. As Bader explains, getting people to interact with architecture itself – the wall – is difficult because most people are used to ignoring it as the given setting for their lives:

Architecture's daily impact on its users is the result of neither concentration nor focused attention. Preoccupied with everyday tasks, most people do not stop to observe the architectural object as a work of art. (2015, p. 244)

Similar to Bader, I found people were often hesitant and did not know what to do when first confronted with the installation. However this partially proves my experiment as my disruption of the heteronormative binary between body and built challenges our normative read and lived experience.

The project was limited in some way by the boundaries imposed by the found wooden frame, influencing the way I designed and made the surfaces and also how people interacted with them. The installation still worked without the frame however, as seen

at my university queer group, where the surfaces were more engaging when removed from the normative wall situation and experimented with through group driven play and interaction. This underlined how meaning is created in the process of making and interacting, rather than necessarily resting with the final designed and intended outcome (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166).

Critically, the making of the surfaces for the final design did not produce as much generative information as it could have because of a lack of iterative testing and exploration. The less interesting or engaging surfaces would have benefitted with more experimentation in materials, processes and designs. Layering surfaces, making them more 3D, or playing more with perspective in relation to Cybele Lyle's work could have generated more exciting forms, ideas and interactions.

How I designed, made and interacted with this installation ended up being the most important outcome of this process. The project established my first approach to queering architecture, which was taken forward to guide and be developed in the next design stages. The surfaces and patterns created for the installation, which move and form in so many ways when interacted with, were taken further

into the domestic and public scales. Through further experimentation, they can be scaled up and down, multiplied, layered and collaged – developing into successful generators for the following larger scale projects.

94. Surface 1, lit from behind

Blending Binaries

Queer Living Room

95. Domestic model detail

Design Chapter 2

Domestic

This chapter outlines my design exploration in the domestic scale. Again, I set out the background, aim, method and site before describing the design process, final design and reflection. My design experimentation carried on from the installation project by incorporating elements and, with the addition of site and precedent, developed the project further into the domestic programme.

Background

Historically the home has been a contested space for queer people. On one hand, the home has been used as a safe space where people could hide their identity, the 'closet' for what they perceived as an unnatural identity (Betsky, 1997, p. 10 ; see also: Brown, 2000). On the other hand, the home has been an unwelcome space for queer people as their

families may not have been accepting of their queer identities (Gorman-Murray, 2008, p. 31; see also: Valentine et al. 2003; D' Augelli et al. 1998).

There are so many binaries in our heteronormative conceptions of home: from public/private and ornamentation/structure, to the ultimate construct of female versus male gendered space. In my queer approach to domestic architecture, these three binaristic ideas of home were challenged through a process of blending binaries. The process of blending gendered spaces and functions together into multipurpose ambiguous space is the idea behind disrupting gendered binaries in the domestic scale.

Aim

The aim of the domestic project was to use queer theory and design experimentation to question and challenge the norms and binaries inherent in the heteronormative home. Creating an inclusive living space for any user, no matter their gender or sexuality, was a move away from the nuclear family model. In line with my initial research ideas, there was also an underlying aim to create an architecture where queer pride and identity could be read, especially on a site of somewhat hidden queer use – right.

Method

Following my design-as-research methodology, the analogue and digital processes for this scale were driven through iterative drawing and model making experiments. This project also developed in reference to wider research and case study architect Eileen Gray.

Site: James Smith Corner

The old James Smith's department store on the corner of Manners and Cuba Streets, Central Wellington, was chosen as the site for this project. The 1960s rainbow coloured facade section on lower Cuba Street was singled out for the domestic scale. The occupation of the basement by Ivy Bar and Cabaret, one of only two gay bars in Wellington, made this site particularly interesting. This hidden space below ground is a representation of Betsky's problematic historical view of hidden and sexualised queer space (1997). Cottrill notes this relationship and speculates on how it can be resisted:

In order to critique heteronormativity, queer spaces must have a permanent presence. Queer spaces biding in the underground of cities and towns create nothing more than apparitions to be forgotten and erased from culture. (2006, p. 364).

Permanent presence through architectural interaction and expression in the external public realm enables queered architecture to be clearly read.

Process Stage 1: Post-Installation

The patterns which developed in the installation surfaces were highlighted as very precise and regimented. Through interaction, the geometries were disrupted in three dimensions, and those geometries were further teased out when drawn over – on the following spread.

Next was a process of analogue and digital drawing which deviated from the regimented formality of equilateral shapes and tessellation. Images were digitally triangulated into this new language as well, but this risked losing the engaging third dimension of the interactive installation, so I undertook an experimental process of making the triangulated drawings 3D again through various digital and analogue methods.

Drawing over my interaction with the installation surfaces, teasing out the geometries which have been disrupted through three dimensional manipulation.

98. Experimental drawing series

99. Surface 8

100. Surface 1

101. Surface 6

Drawing out a triangular grid which deviates from the regimented formality and precision of equilateral shapes and tessellation.

102. Drawing series

103.

104. Close up

105.

Digital drawing over the pictures of me interacting with the installation surfaces. This triangulates the images into 2D patterns of irregular tessellation.

106. Development series

107. Surface 1 Development

108. Development series

109. Surface 3 Development

Making the triangulation 3D again after the dimension loss from the interactive installation surface.

110. Building out of 2D series

111. Folding the triangulated images

112.

113. Close up

Translating to three dimensions digitally,
using node proximity to affect the height
of each point and make a complex textured
surface.

114. Elevation

115. The manipulation from above

116. Elevation close up

117. Messy boudoir drawing detail

Process Stage 2: Domestic Space

Eileen Gray, case study architect for this scale, provided a strategy to disturb the gender binary in the home. I follow her concept of *Living-room*: “a multifunctional space for all aspects of life – pleasure, rest, studies, business meetings and parties” (Bonnevier, 2005, p. 166). This concept for the home enabled my design experiments to counteract and slip the simplicity of gendered dichotomies into ambiguity. As an experiment, left and on the following spread, elements of gendered spaces – the feminine boudoir and masculine study – were drawn over to discover their differing triangular languages, and how they could be brought closer together.

Following this, and inspired by the installation project’s primary geometry, squares, circles and triangles were experimented with physically, by folding, for 3D idea generation in small- and large-scale furniture then developing to building form.

118. Folded shapes

119. Boudoir drawing

Boudoir

120. Boudoir drawing detail

121. Boudoir trace drawing, both rich and textural in this messy state.

122. Study drawing

Study

123. Study drawing detail

124. Study trace drawing, both rich and textural in this messy state.

Following Eileen Gray as a furniture designer, these folded shapes were experimented with to engage Gray's living-room concept with the different ways we work today. Starting small-scale, for *working from the bed in the living-room*, these folded

shapes became adjustable tray tables to prop up on the bed. They would allow work to be completed in a more comfortable position by adjusting folds and levels for whoever and wherever they are used.

125. Shape folding experiment series

126. Folded triangles

127. Potential scale to lap

128. Shapes as tray tables

With larger scale furniture, I experimented with the bed – how we rest – combined with the chair – how we study. Ergonomics and furniture design standards were researched to help with this design stage but they became problematic from a queer point

of view as those things are very scientific, static and produced from a normative perspective. As Imrie suggests, ergonomic standards provide only single ‘normal’ recommendations for accommodating the diversity of the human race (2003, p. 47).

129. Ergonomic development series

130. Work towards designing a spectrum of potential comfort angles where the changing shape allows users to find their optimum spot for comfort in their chosen activity.

131. Digitally randomised fold lines on triangles

A thousand digital versions of each primary shape were folded randomly to see what forms could come out for the process ahead.

132. Digitally randomised shape folding experiment series

133. Folded squares

134. Folded circles

135. Folded triangles

The folded shapes were put together trying to imitate them forming larger surfaces and starting to wrap and fold from horizontal to vertical.

136. Combining shapes experiment series

137. Patch

138. Strip

139. Wrap

Putting the digitally randomised shapes together, working towards a continuous surface or strip that could wrap around into a building form.

140. Digitally randomised folded triangles coming together

141. Open combined surface

142. Folded strip

143. Closed combined surface

Process Stage 3: Coming Together

Everything was pieced together as the process moved up to the scale of building form. Following Eileen Gray's example, I tried to blend my furniture ideas with architecture, crossing scales, spaces and disciplines. Bonnevier marvels at how Gray achieved this transformation: "It is as if she folded the surfaces into spaces, into entire interiors, to a complete building – E.1027" (2005, p. 163).

The folded strip ideas on the following pages inspired my subsequent process to design the way these strips would wrap in a building section, perpendicular to the existing building facade. A series of these sections were then layered into a building. This method worked successfully in a paper model, left, which had an interesting and unexpected composite form but it lacked detail or spatial qualities. The following pages describe the process of reaching a final design.

144. Sections of potential forming strips

These initial ideas imagine the colours and mullion lines of the existing façade extending and wrapping over the building in folded strips. This would use the triangular language and folded strips to develop a form, accentuating the hidden queer identity and pride of the place and the people who use it.

145. In the study drawing language

146. In the boudoir drawing language

147. Extending the mullion lines into a faceted and folded language

Designing and layering possible section shapes. The shapes then evoke overall form with possible folded strips between the slices.

148. Drawn section series

149. Layered up

150. Evoking form

151. Form with existing building

Going into further detail on the previous experiment, I designed each section in 2D right down to the furniture to evoke inhabitation. These sections were designed with reference to sections at intervals across the plan of Villa E.1027 – superimposed to scale on site (fig. 151). A complete house design emerged from this process, represented in the model shown on the following pages.

152. Villa E.1027 superimposed on site with section lines

153. Building sections layered up

154. Sections laser cut and layered up, first look at potential space

The making of the final domestic model:
First laser cutting the sections out of
white card then threading coloured cotton
through the points to create form, wrapping
from the existing facade.

155. Making series

Making

156. Laser cut sections

157. First thread experiment

158. First piece completed

159. Final model series

Final Model

160. Object view

161. Plan view

162. Human scale view

163. Eileen Gray's experiential movement diagram of E.1027

164. Diagramming movement and inhabitation in plan, referencing Eileen Gray's diagram of E.1027, above.

165. Stair entry - left, adaptable bed space of the Living-Room - right, and centre: looking through to the guest bed, bathroom, and outdoor space.

A multifunctional space for all aspects of life...

Pleasure,
Rest,

166. Study and dining space at the other end of the Living-Room, behind which is the private bedroom and kitchen.

Studies,

167. Looking through to the kitchen and main bathroom, meeting and dining space of the Living-Room opening out to a balcony on the right.

Business Meetings,

168. The Living-Room used to its full potential as a multi-functional and multi-experiential space challenging norms.

and
Parties.

169. The model in context with Ivy Bar below

Reflection

Domestic Scale

It was a really engaging process disrupting heteronormative ideals and dichotomies entrenched in architecture as they are repeated often without question. While making a space specifically for the ‘other,’ I tried to make the resulting architecture from this scale work for everyone in some way, incorporating adjustable furniture where you can choose your comfort zone. It was also interesting trying to further express the pride of the existing building and the hidden queer uses of it.

Olivier Vallerand speculates on the impact queering has on domestic space:

The potential of a theory of queer space is in rethinking how domestic spaces can be designed to allow everyone to better manage how their self identifications are expressed through their living environments (Vallerand, 2014, p. 10)

The queer reading of the case study E.1027 and Eileen Gray’s living-room concept were integral to the thinking behind this project. Gray successfully dissolved her furniture into the cohesive architecture of E.1027. On cohesiveness however, my final design has a visual and spatial opposition between the defined section cuts and the free thread form, setting up more unwanted binaries. Interestingly, by putting more generic elements of architecture amongst the triangulated language, the generic norms they evoke could be critiqued and played off – queered – by making normal abnormal in this setting.

Unintentionally, the house design managed to set up another strong binary after trying to disrupt them: where the wrapped, triangulated new form sits atop the flat linear existing building. This could have been disrupted,

and would have created a more interesting design, if the triangulated architecture started burrowing into the existing building, engaging more with the public realm, or even making a connection between the house on top and the bar underneath.

By directly addressing Betsky's historical understanding of queer space – the hidden, interior and sexualised space of Ivy Bar – I produced an architecture which can be publicly read as showing queer pride and identity. Through blending gendered space, I worked towards an ambiguous and non-binary lived architecture as well.

Next, the public scale project can combine the read space of the domestic and the lived experience of the installation to engage both me as the designer and potential users in queering space.

170. Plan view of the party

171. Domestic scale project pin up for review

Blurring Binaries

Queer City

172. Fuzzy boundary model detail

Design Chapter 3

Public

In the final section of this three-part design investigation, I set out the thinking and process for the public-scale intervention, queering the city. With the vast shift in scale from domestic to public came a shift towards questioning design processes and thinking. I outline the background, aim and method for the public-scale before describing the design process in four sections: first, I queer and question my digital parametric process, which was an approach I favoured in the following two stages. Secondly, I researched the queer network of Wellington and responded to its losses through design. Thirdly, I outline my preliminary design exploration of a public-scale building. Finally, I describe my processes towards a final Queer City design. Following the final design presentation, I reflect on the entire public-scale process.

Background

Following from the conception of blending binaries at the domestic scale, throughout the public-scale project I took a spectrum approach to blur architectural binaries. All sexual and gender identities lie on a spectrum rather than at any binarised opposition (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948, pp. 636–659). I used this idea as an approach to architecture by producing gradations between different meanings and experiences, as well as between spatial and built states.

Queer has an interesting and varied relationship with public space. Public space has been the most common place where the queer community could interact and foster their own social and cultural networks by putting normative spaces to queer purposes

173. Re-establishing Wellington's queer network.

(Chauncey, 1996, p. 224). George Chauncey argues that space has no natural meaning or character; rather, space is invested with meaning by its designers and users through their own reading and experience (1996, p. 224; see also: de Certeau, 1988). While this produced meaning is often heteronormative, queer works to counteract that – first by calling it out, then by playing with a spectrum of alternatives (Oswin, 2008, p. 90; see also: Binnie, 1997; Bell & Valentine, 1995). It is the public sphere where I challenge heteronormative spaces and binaries which divide public and private, inside and outside, and read and lived space.

Aim

With the public scale project I aimed to queer and question my experimental design processes to further push the design outcomes. Experimentation and disruption was aimed at the architectural binaries of public/private and inside/outside as these were particularly applicable to the public use and scale of the project. As discussed above, I sought to use the idea of a spectrum as a driver for this disruption. Also, an underlying aim for this scale was to create an architecture which amplified and stitched back together the lost queer spatial network of Wellington.

Method

Furthering the design-as-research methodology, my process for this scale was heavily experimental and iterative. This also developed in reference to my wider background research and case study architect Junya Ishigami. The active design methods used were analogue and digital drawing and modelling including parametric design tools. Moving between and blurring scales, programmes and methods was important at every stage of this project.

174. Model making

175. Diagram of digital authorship experimentation in Rhino and Grasshopper

Queering the Digital

Before now I had not been critical of the digital tools I was using to generate randomised shapes, lines and folds. Authorship really interested me from a queer perspective as there is often a binary seen between computer scripting and human authorship. Rolf Hughes notes this authorial relationship:

Once the autopoietic system is up and running, the author would thereafter seem to be not so much dead (or terminally afflicted) as written out of the equation altogether. (Anstey, Grillner, & Hughes, 2007, p. 132)

Aiming to create a spectrum or middle ground, I decided to test varying degrees of digital and human authorship of randomised geometry. Figure 174 on the left is a visual summary of this process. Authorship was tested by combining Grasshopper's parameters – integers and automatic randomisation – and my own input – from choosing randomised

grasshopper results, to using standard non-parametric digital modelling tools to create similar geometry.

I kept playing with the balance of authorship in the proceeding design work, trying to keep it reasonably even between digital and human. The input balance changed over the course of the following design sections: erring more on the digital side for the Queer Wellington and preliminary design sections and on the human side for my final design process.

176. Modelling the computer generated folded canopies

Queer History Wellington

First in my design process, I look from the scale of the city to find out about the networks of queer spaces available to Wellington's queer community. It was interesting to note how these networks have changed over time and affected the intensity to which Wellington has been queered.

Space is citizenship: the lack of queer space within the "public" sphere signifies an erasure, not only of queer representation and narrative, but queer experiences and memories themselves. (Wilson, 2010)

Amplifying the history of queer spaces was important to show the integral nature of queer culture in the city. So to achieve this, I first researched and mapped queer spaces in Wellington drawing out the networks as they changed over time. This really highlighted to me how much of the queer space network has been lost over time, with only two gay

bars left in the city. In order to amplify the queer history of these sites all over central Wellington, I designed a new Love Letter Network of interactive canopy interventions for each site. These shelters would make visible the queer cultural histories of each site around Wellington, as well as providing mailboxes to send love letters. Each installation was designed to be moved, rearranged and charged with activity.

These small-scale interventions that cover the city can be read in relation to each other as a large public space. They engage users with queered meaning and experience. However, this queer city needs more than canopies amplifying its history. In the next sections I describe my design process towards acknowledging the lost functions of the Wellington queer network in a queer city centre.

177. Sites of queer significance in Wellington

1. National Library: Home of the *Lesbian and Gay Archives New Zealand (LAGANZ)*
2. Parliament, centre of protests on both sides and of law reform legislation.
3. St. Andrew's, an inclusive church since 1991
4. Bowen House, Human Rights amendment bill passed here in 1993, 'lesbian' included in defining sexual orientation.
5. Cruising: Railway Tavern, meeting place. Station toilets used for anonymous sex.
6. Magistrates Court, saw many trials of men for "indecent assault on a male" until 1986.
7. Shed 21, site of the 3rd *Devotion* Party, 1993
8. Lambton Quay, third site of the Dorian Queer Club, c1970-c1980
9. TSB Arena, site of the 5th *Devotion*, 1996
10. Lesbian and Gay Resource Centre, '80-86
11. Site of Carmen Rupe's Le Balcon drag cabaret
12. Hosted controversial queer art exhibitions in 1995. Former library hosted 1980s law reform meetings
13. 1st Circa Theatre: host of queer performances
14. Site of *Beacons of Hope*, a public AIDS memorial, 1990s
15. Hosted *Out in the Square* 2008-2014, Asia Pacific Outgames 2011, and queer equality gatherings
16. Fourth site of the Dorian Club 1980-87, Outrage (lesbian private club) 1991-93
17. Sun/Wakefield Sauna 1960s-84, openly queer from 1976.
18. Site of the 4th (1995) and 6th *Devotion* Parties (1997). Both anti and pro-law reform meetings, 1980s
19. Michael Fowler Centre: many queer New Zealand composers works have been performed here
20. Circa Theatre: host of queer performances
21. Te Papa holds queer-related taonga, including the NZ AIDS Memorial Quilt
22. Overseas Passenger Terminal: Site of the first *Devotion* Party, 1991
23. Site of gay bars: Alfies2, Barneys, Twist & Shout, Bojangles, and the OUT! bookshop
24. Pro law reform march '85. Love Parade '15
25. Ivy Bar and Cabaret, gay bar 2013-Present.
26. Site of the *Bistro*, and *Tavern* Bars of the Royal Oak Hotel - Queer space 1950s-'79. Site of *Toledo* and *Pound* Bars of The Oaks.
27. The Opera House hosted *Queen of the Whole Universe*, a queer beauty pageant, 2011
28. Destination of multiple law reform rallies
29. Second site of the Wakefield Sauna
30. Cruising: former toilets used for sex
31. Waitangi Park: venue of Pride celebration *Out in the Park* 2016-
32. S&M's (Scotty & Mal's) Cocktail Bar
33. Site of the Knutcracker, a red light district gathering space, especially for trans people
34. Gay Community Centre site, 1986-1989
35. Access Radio, platform for queer voices
36. The Film Archives hold and show media coverage of queer issues and events
37. St James theatre: host of queer performances
38. Checkmate Gay Sauna and Cruise Club
39. Site of Body Positive + 1st NZAF Centre
40. Photospace Gallery, exhibited multiple queer artist's work
41. Paramount Theatre: host of *Outtakes, a Reel Queer Film Festival* - mid 1990s-
42. Queen Victoria statue, focus of 1977 demonstration promoting lesbian visibility
43. Downstage Theatre: host of many queer performances
44. Cruising: former toilets used for sex
45. Bats Theatre: host of many queer performances
46. Rush Bar, Emperors Sauna, closed 2014
47. Salvation Army Citadel, very against law reform in the 1980s. Scene of a pro reform protest March 1985
48. Site of Carmen Rupe's Coffee Lounge
49. Site of Club 41, Wellington's first lesbian club, 1973-77
50. Dominion Hotel site, 1980s queer pub
51. NZ AIDS Foundation Awhina Centre LILAC women only lesbian library
52. Former site of Club Ivy, multi-storey gay bar, closed 2012

Information courtesy of LAGANZ, Alison Laurie and Hugh Young

Pre 1980

178.

1980s

Homosexual Law Reform

179.

1990s

180.

2000s

181.

2010s

Cultural Significance Today

182.

2010s

Social Significance Today

183.

184: Re-establishing the network and amplifying queer history

185. Focus shifts to human scale canopies

186. Logo

187. Folded triangles from the Domestic scale

Process

Stemming from these furniture experiments in the domestic, the digital design process was adapted to create randomised canopy designs.

188. Computer randomised folded triangles

189. Process of canopy authorship

190. Transfer from digital making to physical making

138

191. Folded canopies

From Digital to Analogue

192. Like butterflies pinned to a board

The Oaks

Site of The Royal Oak Hotel. The Public Bar, the Bistro Bar and the Tavern Bar were notable gathering places for lesbians, gay men and transsexuals from at least the 1950s to 1979 when the Royal Oak was demolished.

Gay and lesbian gathering was very much under the control of the licensing laws until 1967, when ten o'clock closing was introduced after a referendum. The Bistro Bar was one of the first to bend the licensing laws, about 1963, by offering a token meal (a bowl of rice for 2/6) and so becoming a licensed restaurant where both women and men could drink until 10pm. Women were not admitted to most public bars at all, and to certain private bars (marked "Ladies and Escorts Only" but commonly called "cats' bars") only

with a male escort. This was intended to prevent prostitution. Gay men formed natural escorts for lesbians under this restriction, both finding more interesting company once they were inside.

The Royal Oak of the 1970s ("virtually the only gay pub in the area") features in Barry Nonweiler's novel "That Other Realm of Freedom."

The Toledo (previously the Bamboo Bar, reverting to its earlier name) operated near to the site until 1995. A club called £ (Pound) and a bar called Sovereign were run by Mal Vaughan on the site in the 2000s.

Courtesy of LAGANZ, Alison Laurie and Hugh Young

193. Including queer histories

Detailed Design

194. Larger scale modelling including movement

195. Sketching through movement detail and mailbox design

196. Final detailed canopy design

197. Preliminary design perspective

Queer City

Preliminary Design

After understanding the decline, division and loss of the Wellington queer community network, in my public scale explorations I aimed to create a re-establishing space to feel safe and feel part of a community. Above, I tried a city wide approach which would engage queer culture across a broad network. Now it was time to celebrate this community and the culture they have in a central, combined, and shared space - a Queer City Centre.

Integral to the preliminary design iterations was the theme and idea of an anti-skyscraper. Leslie Kanes Weisman expresses the problematics of the normative skyscraper by describing it as “the pinnacle of patriarchal symbology and the masculine mystique of the big, the erect, and the forceful” (1992, p. 16). My queer expression of a ‘skyscraper’ was to provide another spectrum, an architecture

to mediate between ground and sky. The spectrum between solid and void allowed a reading of intimacy: caressing, or kissing the sky rather than a violent scraping.

The spectrum approach to ideas and designs was important to each part of the design process. First a site was chosen and programme gathered from the queer Wellington research. Then experiments and iterations of flocking, ground plane, structure, enclosure, furniture, and inhabitation were completed to produce a preliminary design presented at the August review. Digital parametric processes and experiments with authorship were very influential in the method of this design stage. This stage ends with a reflection on this initial design, suggesting ways forward into the final design stage.

198. The Royal Oak Hotel, c.1926

199. The Oaks building from the Cuba/Dixon corner, 2016

200. The Oaks, James Smith's and skybridge, c. Early 1980s

Site Research

The Oaks Corner

This site, bordered by Te Aro Park and three streets – Manners, Cuba and Dixon – was the site of the Royal Oak Hotel until 1979. It is now the site of The Oaks complex – designed by Warren and Mahoney and completed in 1981 (NZIA, 2013). The hotel's Bistro Bar was a notable queer gathering place from at least the 1950s to 1979 when the Royal Oak was demolished (Laurie & Young, 2011). Its queer history carried on through multiple gay bars on the site. The Toledo (previously the Bamboo Bar) operated there until 1995, subsequently a club called £ (Pound) and a bar called Sovereign were run by gay bar magnate Mal Vaughan on the site in the 2000s (Laurie & Young, 2011).

For my speculative project I treated this as a flat site but still holding its queer history. This decision was in part due to the poor condition and poor public approval of the existing Oaks building (Maximus, 2011).

201. The Oaks building site and context

202. View of Te Aro Park looking east

203. Te Aro Park development plan, 1990

Site Research

Te Aro Park

Located on the corner of Dixon and Manners streets, Te Aro Park is a large triangular space wedged between the two streets and the Oaks building. This shape is interpreted as a Māori waka in the park's design with a prow at the apex and lines of cabbage trees serving as symbolic oarsmen (Menzies & Challenger, 2002). The pools and water movement across the site reflect Te Waimapihi stream and the original Wellington shoreline (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2). Designer Shona Rapira Davies' handmade and painted tiles cover the seating pods, line the four pools and terrace edges, overlay the ground in certain areas and cover the canoe prow (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2).

In the pools, tiles depict three female figures representing three generations of women; girl, adult and elderly (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2). The strong horizontal elements of the park's

design also symbolise the 'feminine' doctrine of weaving (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2). These horizontal elements, made up of the terrace walls, pools and seating, symbolise weaving patterns in their tessellated triangular forms (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2). The vertical elements of the park represent 'masculine' principles – the prow in particular reinforces the men's job of sailing, or riding the war canoe (WCC Parks, 1991, p. 2).

24 Hour
Queer
City

Needed?

Cuba Street
Spectrum

Artifice
Ornamentation
Closed
Private

- Gallery
- Community Centre
- Venue
- Theatre?
- Artist Residences

Cross Programming

Boundary?

- Library
- Archive
- Bar + Dance Club
- Restaurant/Café

Cross Programming

Public

Building
Inside
High
Genuine
Structure
Open

Dixon Street
Spectrum

Manners Street

Pride

- Publicity
- Play
- Love

Identity

Spectrum
Male ↔ Female
Hetero ↔ Homo

Anti-Skyscraper

Spectrum
Phallic ↔ Yonic
Solid ↔ Void

Horizontal?
Moiré Grid

Digital

Spectrum/All-in-one
- Authorship

Culture
- Memorial

Parkland
Outside
Law

205. 24 hours of assumed activity

Spectrum Planning

To blur architectural binaries I proposed positioning opposing states across the site in order to design with a spectrum of blurred states in-between. As visualised through the drawing, left, the main three spectrums were between public and private on the Cuba Street axis, inside to outside on the Dixon Street axis, and solid to void on the vertical axis. These spectrums helped define initial thoughts on programme placement and other binary blurring which could be played with.

The urban context was also considered – in particular the pedestrian paths around and through the site, as well as the laneways and urban geometry intersecting with the site.

Cross-Programming

I chose the building programmes for the queer city centre in relation to my Wellington queer history research. This was because queer culture permeated and became a part of almost every aspect of the life of the city at some stage. From archives to bars, the queer community was there.

I took a broad selection of programmes appropriate for the site and my queer city centre idea, outlined in the diagram above. Here I speculated as to how these varying programmes could interact over an assumed 24 hours of activity. This potential cross-programming engaged with the queer city concept, where designed spaces could be multifunctional and fluid with time.

Flocking Experiments

208. Defining heights and zones

209. The randomised canopy geometries flock onto the site creating enclosed inhabitable space and open folly space

210. Faceted ground plane experiment

Experiments in Meeting the Ground

211. Faceted ground plane in relation to canopy structure

212. Spectrally breaking up a ramped surface as it approaches the ground

213. Working with how the canopies approach the ground and their footprints

Structure Experiments

216. Vertical structure spreading load when meeting canopies below

217. Catenary arches evoking gothic structure where the elements branch to bring the force to the ground.

- Artist Residences
- Memorial
- Studio Spaces
- Park
- Gallery
- Cafe
- Dance Club
- Library
- Archive

219. Spatial drawing series

Spatial Planning Experiments

220. Bevelled separate spaces in relation to faceted ground plane

221. Mapping usable space under the canopies close to the ground

222. Space adapting to how the canopies meet the ground

Enclosure Experiments

225. Glazed bevelled spaces within the canopy environment

Lost Human Scale

228. Massive scale compared to a human, no sense of lived experience

229. People in a more human scale space

230. Seating, tables and divides: furniture model series

Furniture Experiments

231. Stool iterations

232. Curved archive study space

233. Enclosed angular study space

234. Human scale architecture drawing series

Inhabitation Experiments

235. Flattened design, shells stepping up above and down into the ground

236. The canopies are inhabitable above and below

237. Better relationship with human scale

Final Preliminary Design

238. Plan view with inhabitation

239. 24 hours of assumed activity

Final Preliminary Design: Defining Programme

Residence

Studios

Community Centre

Gallery

Library

Night Club

Archive

Cafe

Kitchen

Park

Memorial Theatre

242. Section

243. Perspective view towards Cuba Street

244. Perspective view from Cuba/Dixon corner

245. Interior view of archive and library spaces

246. Interior/exterior view of the gallery space

247. Photo series

248. Plan view

249. Inhabited space

250. Enclosed space under the shell

251. Inhabited shell including furniture elements

252. Preliminary public scale project pin up for review

Reflection

Preliminary Design

Going into the August review, left, I was looking for some advice on where I could take the project next. I was struggling with the scale, meaning, detail and repetitive process. There was also a problem that the spectrums, which I had defined as integral to the public project, were becoming lost. Below I draw from my review feedback.

The outcome of my preliminary design stage was described as a built diagram, as the stepped shells could only be a thin representation of architecture. This was a useful description to change my thinking, as it generated a way forward by classifying my preliminary design as a diagram for my final. From read space, it needed to come back to lived experience.

With reference to the British Pavilion in Shanghai, a design shift was recommended

from sharp to fuzzy. This would give depth and ambiguity to boundaries and would strengthen the spectrum approach. Creating spaces of unknown boundary or scale was an aim which came out of this. Breaking a flat surface into a fuzzy one provides potential for interactive, tactile, and sensual architecture.

Even though I tried to bring the project back from a scale lost in a birds-eye-view, I failed to engage a conversation between scales. Integrating the installation and domestic scales back into the public was suggested, which would bring an intimate lived scale back into the design. The project also got lost in my digital processes and its awkward randomised geometry. There was not enough input from me, the programmes, or the users, so I explored different mediums through the next design stage.

253. Final design exterior view detail

Queer City

Final Design

At this stage I recognised that my work with subverting binaries, in all three scales, was the real core of my thesis. Acknowledging this led to the change in research question – from architecture amplifying queer pride and identity, to blurring binaries with a queer approach. Along with the spectrum approach, this became the primary driver of my final design process.

With such a meaning-driven process for the preliminary design with only readable aspects for users, it was very important to engage with lived space in the final design process and work between these states – following Williams and Hill (2013, p. 178; 1998, p. 140). Experiential design was important to make the final building a space where queer people can engage and interact with architecture and each other to queer the space themselves.

This final design section shifted mediums and methods while developing ideas from the preliminary design and reflection. Outlined in five stages: first, through model experiments in spatial surfaces, I engaged a fuzzy boundary idea which became integral to the final design. Secondly, I tried different iterations of size defined programme spaces across the site. Thirdly, I undertook the first experiments into defined roof shells and the first fuzzy boundary experiments in overlap space between programmes. Fourthly, after reflection on these first experiments and new case study research, further experiments were undertaken into the shell design and fuzzy boundaries. Lastly, the final design emerged through final experiments into planning, furniture, lived space, and enclosure. After presenting the final design I reflect on the public scale project as a whole.

254. Scaled inhabitation series

Spatial Surface Experiments

255. Field tectonics

256. Extruded space

257. Layer and perspective

258.

259. Stepped

260. Flat fanned into 3D

261. Scaled openings

262. Scaled inhabitation series

263. Space influenced from above

264. Paper walls

265. Reflection and translucency

266.

267. Step and fan

268. Folded slats

269. Faceted cave-like space

270. Scaled inhabitation series

271. Hand scale - reaching through fuzzy space

272. Interactive surface

273. Fuzzy surface

274. Interactive curtains, referencing installation scale

275. Drawing out ideas

Spectrum Space: Fuzzy Boundary

276. Potential archive boundary

277. Potential library boundary

278. Potential cafe boundary

280. Potential night club boundary

281. Potential gallery boundary

282. Overall shell space

Archive

Library

Night Club

Cafe

283. Sized spaces to scale, triangles used to reflect the preliminary canopy designs

Programme Planning

284. Preliminary design - too much space
285. Wheel design for the sized programmes

286. Spread across the Oaks site and Te Aro Park

Gallery

Residences

Park

Community
Space

287. Regimented triangular layout, starting to think about overlap space

0 5 12.5 25m

Converging Shell Space

288. Adapted, more loose programme planning

289 First go at planning the sized shells with digital processes

290. The 3D shells with thickness, eaves and potential fuzzy boundary zone

Overlap Space: Fuzzy Boundary

291. Drawing out the overlap's section

292. Drawing out the boundary in elevation

293. Render, very flat and blocky

294. Planning the overlap zone

Reflection So Far

The first experiments above were not as light and fluid as I was aiming for after the preliminary design review. The shells and fuzzy boundaries in this iteration became really thick and solid and boundaries felt hindering rather than free. Another hindrance for these first experiments was intersecting geometry, making spaces and detail difficult to work with.

The idea of a fuzzy boundary was generative for the project – but it needed rethinking. I looked to different modes of architecture which could inspire new paths to take the project. Following case study architect Junya Ishigami, I looked to pavilion architecture, blending building with landscape, lightness, air and undefined boundless space. Spatial experience became important in terms of overlapping programme where “there should be a variation of purposes for each person, for each user” (Ishigami, qtd. in Elali, 2013).

295. Overlap section

296. Ishigami's KAIT Workshop, blurring boundaries of space

297. Ishigami's KAIT Workshop, blurring boundaries of landscape and architecture

298. Folding experiments series

Shell Development

299. Drawing out overlap options to counteract awkward intersecting geometry

301. Overlapping experiment

300. Grid structured roofs at a consistent angle so they overlap nicely

Fuzzy Boundary: Curtains

To create a more free and ephemeral fuzzy boundary condition, I designed curtains to occupy the overlap space between programmes. Referencing back to the installation scale's surfaces, and even using some of them, these curtains were designed for interaction – with the users, the environment and the rest of the architecture.

Curtains in some way embody the tension and constructed divide between the disciplines of architecture and interior design (Sanders, 2002). This divide embodies binaries of masculine/feminine, science/art, logic/intuition and architecture/decoration (Sanders, 2002). These gendered heteronormative notions within architecture were questioned and blurred through my curtain designs. Disrupting binaries through integrating these disciplines engaged read and lived experience together in ambiguous space.

305. Cafe Curtain

306. Fuzzy boundary model detail

307. Night Club Curtain

308. Archive and Library Curtain

309. Community Space and Admin Curtain

310. Gallery Curtain

Composing curtains to highlight
overlap space

312. Curtain configuration experiments

313. Curtains in fuzzy boundary model detail

314. Drawing out experiential elements

Lived Space: Planning

315. Drawing out furniture ideas and experimenting with boundary enclosure

First Iteration Test

316. By cutting and pasting an example of what I was thinking in plan, it became apparent there would be a conflict in geometric language.

317. Archive formal experiments

Lived Space: Furniture

318. Archive shelving experiments

Archive Space

319. Archive detail experiments

320. Most promising experiment in the space

321. Bar spatial experiments

Nightclub Bar Space

322. Bar planning experiments

323. Bar curtain experiments

324. Bar formal experiments

325. Drawing out ground plane and internal landscape ideas in relation to the overlap zones

Planning 2.0

Building + Landscape

326. Drawing out furniture and spatial ideas

327. Final landscape and ground plane detail

Enclosure

328. Bevelled enclosure experiment

329. Engaging subtlety in glass enclosures, also thinking about the different curtain languages

330. Subtle reflective sliding glass curtain wall within fuzzy boundary curtain zone

331. Simplifying and only enclosing internal space as needed, glass sections would slide

332. Archive perspective detail

Final Design

Queer City

The final series of pavilions serves as an interconnected and porous hub for the central Wellington community. Included are a queer focused archive and library, nightclub, cafe, gallery and open use community space, along with their required support spaces. The pavilions also interact with the park and provide spontaneous meeting spaces, performance spaces, seating and amphitheatres.

These spaces are activated through a nesting of scales, where public spaces and programmes are divided by fuzzy boundaries. Curtains, as other elements, can be changed and charged with different possibilities – allowing people to find their own journey and identity in the space (Sanders, 2002). One could be alone or be part of a community. The building is about providing a possible affective resonance, activation or amplification for people; or, more precisely, a space of possibility (Pilkey,

2013, pp. 23; see also: Hemmings, 2012). These spaces provide the possibility for encounter, where relations are performed or queer moments appear, rather than providing and naming it queer space (Vallerand, 2014).

My queer approach to design blurred the binaries between inside and outside, public and private, and between programmes, in order to make the architecture a space of possibility. My non-binary way of thinking and designing makes an inclusive, porous and transitory architecture.

Documenting the final design across the following pages include a plan in context, sections, rendered views, models and construction details.

- 333. Fold out page 1: Queer City Plan
- 334. Fold out page 2: Queer City Long Section A
- 335. Fold out page 3: Queer City Short Section B

- ✱: Main Entry Points
- 1: Library
 - 2: Seating
 - 3: Archive
 - 4: Issues and Admin
 - 5: Back of House
 - 6: Offices
 - 7: Bar
 - 8: Dance Floor
 - 9: Toilets
 - 10: Dining
 - 11: Servery
 - 12: Kitchen
 - 13: Gallery
 - 14: Education
 - 15: Workshop
 - 16: Open Pavilions
 - 17: Amphitheatre
 - 18: Community Space

Key

- Shell fold lines
- ... Columns
- Detail lines
- Glass curtain
- Fuzzy boundary curtains
- ✱ Fuzzy boundary landscape
- Grass landscaping

336. Exterior perspective

Free & Display
Parking
2 Hour Maximum
Please Pay
At Entrance

Special
Collection

archive
hive

337. Archive perspective

338. Library perspective

339. Fuzzy boundary model

340. Fuzzy Boundary

341. Photo series

342. Curtain Texture

343. Curtains and structure

344. Fuzzy space

Folded Shell: Detailed Design

3D Overview

Glazed Roof: 6mm Toughened Safety Glass in
Thermosash Alpha Glazing Bars

Structure: Structural Radiata hySPAN LVL
Diaphragm action in member
triangulation

Joints: 10mm 316 Stainless Steel Plate,
20Ø Pressed Steel Dowels

Curtain Rail: 32x22 316 SS Rail

Columns: 100Ø 316 SS CHS, brush finish

Column Base: 240Ø 10mm 316 SS Plate,
M12 500mm Hex Bolts

Foundation: 300x500 Concrete ground beam,
150 Concrete slab, 150 Hardfill

Section A and Elevation

Detail 1

Detail 2

345. Re-established Wellington queer network

Reflection

Public Scale

In calling this architecture queer, there is a disconnect between its queer programme and the 'queered' architecture resulting from the process. On reading the architectural spatiality of the final design, queer meaning can be seen to have become superficial through applied programme. This is understandable because, as George Chauncey puts it: "there is no queer space; there are only spaces used by queers or put to queer use" (1996, p. 224). So the triangular folded spaces and fuzzy boundaries do not make the architecture queer, people make a place queer. The queerness of the final building is through its engagement with people, and the queered architecture I have designed developed through my personal queer approach.

The process was about making a spectrum between binaries; the queer community programme was used as a vehicle to test that proposition. The process of designing has instilled a queerness in the resulting architecture by disrupting binaries through my queer approach. In particular the threshold nature of the fuzzy boundaries in this project means that they are more transitional than queer, extending its queer identity, and establishing its own category of in-between.

The Queer City proposal moved away from expressing queer pride and identity in its architecture because that first question became too unwieldy – as queer identity is such a broad spectrum to grapple with and design for. My research changed through working on the public scale project as I realised my queer approach had led towards the blurring binaries concept manifested throughout my design process.

It was a rewarding part of the process bringing pieces of the past thesis work full circle – back into the public scale. Through referencing some of the interactive installation surfaces, I was able to sample them and build off their concepts for the fuzzy boundary curtains. My folded furniture experiments and their digital processes from the domestic project developed, flocked and gained complexity to become folded space for the Queer City programme. Also, the Love Letter Network of canopies around Wellington developed the integral nesting of scales across boundaries of hand, human, room, building and urban scales. The canopies were integrated back in to represent the queer city stitched back together here at the end.

346. Final pin up, November 2016

Conclusion

347. Installation interaction

Conclusion

My queer approach has questioned society's problematic division of sexuality and gender by experimenting with how this can be subverted through the design of architecture. Designing spaces to be read and experienced was a big part of that because it would allow my questioning of norms to come across to users through their queered experience. This was in subtle ways, such as blurring read and lived boundaries, but also in bigger gestures such as expressing lost and unknown love and history across a city through signs which can be read.

This thesis was about binaries and how a queer approach to designing architecture questioned problematic oppositions. Starting with the installation scale, I challenged the binary between people and architecture by engaging people with surface to express

identity. Second, at the domestic scale, I blended the binary of gendered space in the home by designing space for all aspects of life. Third, I explored the public scale through a nesting of scales to blur binaries between spaces, programmes, and spatial conditions.

Critical Reflection

The relationship between read and lived space, and the influence of each side in my queer process approach, shifted throughout the thesis work. A major critique of each scale iteration is questioning the queerness of the designs. This is because the more obvious visual queer elements were read first in critical reviews as a superficial layer or aesthetic of queer meaning. However, that first reading left out the importance of the balance between read and lived space in this thesis. Readability

348. Domestic model detail

was important in the design process to make the expression of queer pride and identity legible, especially in the initial scales and explorations relating to the first research question. Moving through the public scale process and thinking back to the first scales, the queer approach to architecture highlighted the important relationship between read and lived space. This was emphasised by the process of queering direct human experience at each scale iteration through disrupted architectural binaries. Human scale interaction and performance with architecture moved the project towards a dialogue between reading and living queer space rather than setting up another binary between them.

The public building's fuzzy boundaries created a spectral transition between spaces, which is a blurring of architecture's physical material condition. A blurred perceptive and performed condition can be projected between different users in this space as well, a space of possibility for activation and encounter. To design material architecture with a queer approach, it needed to be thought of through the lived experience of it. Katarina Bonnevier expresses how these can connect to make built architecture queer: "Material queerness is situated in the surface – that is, in the interrelation between built matter and the active subject" (2007, p. 56). In my designs,

people are encouraged to interact with the architecture at each scale. Consequently, by focusing on modes of engagement, read material conditions and lived perceptive conditions combine in a queered relationship of affective experience (Hemmings, 2012, pp. 147–148). Human scale interaction brings architecture out of the objective norm and into affective queerness by blurring binaries.

The queer design process of architecture was the productive outcome of this thesis, rather than an architecture which expressed identity. I found that the deeper process, rather than any final designs, allowed the queer approach and ideas to flourish. This is in line with Benjamin Gianni and Scott Weir's thoughts, where "sexuality exceeds the purview of the architect" and queerness "is more a strategy than a space" (1995, p. 57; cited in Pilkey, 2013, p. 27). The queer approach directed the design process throughout the thesis work which, in turn, instilled queerness in each architectural scale. So the process of questioning binaries at each scale was what cemented the queer approach in each developed design. The final outcome from all three scales is really how people would be enabled to make their space queer, by the architecture which has been broken, blended, and blurred from binaristic origins.

349. Queer City curtain space

Epilogue

I hope this thesis represents even a small part of where a queer approach to architecture can take us in the future. By blurring binaries in our architecture, I hope we can make provocative spaces of possibility where society becomes more accepting and embracing of how the 'other' half live.

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