Our Third Skin

Our Third Skin:
a vertical somatic
topography

a thesis by
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Disclaimer

Please note that all of the work showcased in this Research Portfolio document was showcased in Design
Review Three (75%).

0.0 Abstract

It can be argued that there is an absence of reverence between contemporary architecture that governs our **urban environment** and the **human body**. Current architectural forms are unwittingly unresponsive to the dynamic flow of human action thus realising a denaturalisation of the human body's transformations. The natural body deliberately expresses itself through reactive and interactive dynamic fluctuations whilst planar verticality and horizontality are qualities that commonly delineate the revered contemporary architecture of our lived realities.

This thesis explored the human body as both a metaphorical and literal site. Provoking an investigation into how the body responds to the surface of architecture in an attempt to redefine how the design of architecture can better respond to the body as an active controller for defining space and generating form. This notion elicits the exploration of the relationship between; body and space, body and surface, body and form.

By actively trying to understand the fundamental parameters of **interior architecture** that enhance our experience of being, this thesis is a commentary on how principles of interior architecture can be extracted and adapted to thrive within the ubiquitous realities of the urban environment. This is an effort to return form back to something more intimately attuned to the body's stature.

The motivation of this thesis was to create a design methodology that transitions from concept, to design and reach its realisation – where material enables the abstract intellect of form to be thought. With each phase propelled by the aspiration to better understand the relationship between the biological body and architecture.

Following the framework of body space, interaction, and form, the methodology of the thesis has been developed at three scales of immediacy, maturing from the wearable to the inhabitable.

The first level of immediacy considered and intuitively explores the **body as a 'site'**. By using the biological body and the scale of the body to understand the body as a vessel that both contains and occupies space.

The second level of immediacy and scale increased and responded to the intimate expressions of the self upon the **surface of architecture**. An investigation into how the anatomy of the body responds to the planar and static nature of surface. Actualising an experiential surface that departs from being a flat rigid surface and becomes suppler like an epidermis. Such an architecture that excites and transforms the body that is subject to it.

As the methodology manifests the possibility of using the body as a design generative, the third and last level of immediacy is an amalgamation and development upon the previous analyses. The existential dialect between the surface of the body and the surface of architecture generates the contours of a 'vertical somatic topography'. Site and material are introduced to shift the ephemeral form to reach physical conception through a series of scale models. The chosen site's organisation and behaviour of material(s) directed and balanced the variations of form.

The form creates a new immersive spatial condition that entices passer-byers to rediscover an omitted space in the city. The antithetical form of the installation deconstructs and disturbs the space in which it is presented imposing an affective reaction between body and surface - counteracting the sensory deprivation and suggests a space to slow, ingest, interact, and confer yourself in a moment of realisation of the surrounding architecture's immobility and insensitivity to the ever dynamic natural body.

0.1 Research Methodology Diagram

Observation
It can be argued that there is an absence of reverence between the contemporary architecture that governs our urban environment(s) and the human body.

Question
How do modes of communication between body and architecture affect the design, construction and experience of space?

○ The First, The Second, and the Third Skin

"What represents you in the
world?

Your body.

So what is more important?

It's to use your body. To use the
body as the centre of these works.

The body generates interaction,
the movement and all the effects."

- Cantoni & Crescenti's

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0.2 Introduction

The relationship between the human body and architecture has a long and entrenched history. Rich in metaphorical exchange and objectival roles, the human form has been an epistemological subject that has funded the production of architecture throughout our creative evolution. However, the urban fabric has fallen victim to and been weakened by the repetitive conventional design process that conforms to the functional requirements of two-dimensional, static, planar and stable statures. Vertical facades have become the face of architecture and have been accepted as a neutral and unbiased condition.

Contemporary architecture's navigation to flat planar surfaces is evidence of our estrangement from culturally rendering the relationship between the organic biological body and the inert matter of architecture. Inferring an architectural language that is deeply conditioned to flat horizontal planes and vertical surfaces. In affect, the surfaces that frame our places for inhabitation evade from connecting the body with space and merely provide a backdrop for the biological silhouette. In an effort to follow a few architects and sculptors, and follow the experiential discourse of numerous performance artists, this thesis aims to render surfaces that evolve out of their often-planar posture and become better accustomed to the spatial expressions of the human body. In order to retain the functional requirements of urban surfaces, the notion of prosthetic in relation and response to architectural practice provides a platform that enables architecture to consider its relationship to the biological body. Facilitating the idea that the material environment should be driven by the notion of extension – extending the physical and temporal immediacy of the body.

As we directly engage with the surface of architecture, interiority is diverse. The perceived experience of being inside and being outside is absorbed through the physicality of the body. Therefore when considering the communication between body and architecture (surface), inside and outside are interchangeable. The 'skin' that signifies the what is deemed interior and what is deemed exterior enables the two conditions of eloquently engaged with one other. Thus presenting a pliable plane that extends and weaves between the scales of the body and architecture. The application of interior strategies in the 'urban' environment provides the architecture of surface (our third skin) with the capacity to induce more intimate operations with the body through an affective reaction. Such a reaction suggests communication through a lived experience that allows for the mind and body to be current and present. Introducing an experience that is less passive and disturbs our often-autonomous traverse through urban corridors.

This process proposes an alternative approach to the conventional design process of vertical surfaces and manifests the possibility of using the human body as a design generative. Throughout the development of this thesis my body will be used as the on-going source and medium of

experimentation. In using my own body in its dualistic synergy – mind and body, as an object and subject – it provides a more holistic detection of space, mass and boundary, all in which propel the fabrication of a prosthetic serpentine surface. By using my own body it is not with the intention to propose a humanistic model but an alternative and more holistic solution that includes the ‘aberrant’ body to break down the rectilinear limits synonymous with contemporary architecture. A methodology deeply grounded in and suggestive of reigniting the relationship between human bodies to their mainstay – architecture.

0.3 Literature Review

0.3.1 The First, the Second and the Third Skin

Our human skin is the first layer that we inhabit, our first dress. The most primitive organ as Paul Valery once remarked, “The deepest thing in man is the skin” (Jormaka 312). Hence why situations where one touches another with bare skin become the “most intimate, the most instinctive and the most primal” (Jormaka 312). Clothing consecutively becomes our second skin. A practice of spatially ornamenting our epidermic selves (Smith 147). The metaphor of skin has slipped into the lexicon of architectural vocabulary, whereby the enclosure of walls in a way becomes our third membrane.

Doris Sung, an artist, architect
and researcher states,

“... the first is our human skin,
the second is our clothing,
and the third should be the
buildings we inhabit.”

Although the transition from the metaphor of the second skin to the third skin denotes the conceptual bridge between body and building, the resultant architecture struggles to be other than flat and unchanging. By ordinary if the nature of architecture is fixed, permanent and deeply conditioned to be of a planar nature, then clothing, not to mention our natural skin, is its very antithesis. As our skin has been the foundation of boundless architectural concepts, it is understandable that architecture yearns to respond and be at the presence of our living biological bodies.

When skin becomes the focus of discussion in interior architecture, it is liberated from the structural confines of architecture. If we were to elaborate upon the metaphor of the third skin and establish a discrete transitional skin between the second and third, such architecture would lend itself to be a pliable plane that extends and weaves between the scales of body and architecture.

First Skin

Figure 2

Second Skin

Figure 3

Discrete Transitional Skin

Figure 4

A pliable plane that extends and weaves between the scales of body and architecture.

0.4 Design Methodology

Immediacy One

Body as a 'Site'
single spatial entity

the theory of proxemics in the
construction of intimate space

Immediacy Two

Body to Surface
an existential dialect between the
surface of the of body and the
surface of architecture

the capacity of architecture and its
surfaces to affect and be affected

Immediacy Three

Surface to Site
shifting the ephemeral form to
reach physical conception

an architecture that excites and
transforms the body that is subject to it

(i) body as space

(ii) body in space

(iii) body to surface
surface to body

(iv) the anatomy of the body in
response to a planar surface

Prosthetic Installation

Vertical Somatic
Topography

(v) site response

(vi) construction

Our Third Skin

wearable

surface

urban

Figure 5

1

Immediacy One

body as a 'site'

What

By intuitively exploring the body as a 'site', how much space does the body claim as space and in space?

Why

We unconsciously claim territory beyond the boundary of our skin. Behaviour we call territoriality. This process of naturalistic observations and experimental investigations of the body aims to grant the often-construed space-less body temporary ownership of the space it carries with it – the physically uninhabited territory we construct around our 'vessel'.

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1.0 Introduction *to body as 'site'*

We characteristically claim territory – unconsciously practiced – beyond the boundary of our skin. A behaviour we call territoriality. This thesis begins by intuitively exploring the body as a 'site'. A review of literature identifies walking, standing, sitting and lying as the four principle body postures. By identifying these essential body postures this chapter will be composed of various experiments that explore the body (a) as space and (b) the body in space.

For the purpose of this experiment both phases, (1.3) "body as space" and (1.4 and 1.7) "body in space", will use my own body as the principal subject matter – instrument – for observing human form and motion. "By using one's self as a control [it is]...possible to identify structure points in the distance-sensing system" (Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" 116).

The experiments progress through various mediums recording personal observations of self through, photographs, calculation, castings, film and painting. In all medias using the self as the controlled variable to examine my body's space-defining and space-making actions. The analogue and the digital analyses will imply the bodily presence at a particular moment rather than a representation of a figurative or abstract object. This experimental process aims to grant the often-construed space-less body temporary ownership of the space it constructs around itself.

1.1 Literature Review

Figure 6

1.1.1 Theory of Proxemics

“[The] mistaken notion...that man's boundary begins and ends with his skin...think of man as surrounded by a series of expanding and contracting fields which provide information of many kinds”
(Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" 115).

Amidst the study of communication, cues of non-verbal communication have attracted numerous theorists and researches throughout the fields of Culture, Psychology, Architecture and more. In particular, Proxemics behaviour has become a profound set of observations and theories that explains how humankind perceives and uses space as a communication tool.

in the book *The Hidden Dimension* (Baldassare and Feller 484), Edward T Hall meditates on the mistaken notion "... that man's boundary begins and ends with his skin" and instead suggests that, like other animals, human's exercise territoriality ("The Hidden Dimension" 115); a non-verbal animal behaviour within which organisms lay claim to a space beyond their physical boundary ("The Hidden Dimension" 7).

Proxemics denotes, "The study of how human beings communicate through their use of space" (Angus 2). Hall defines the term as, "The spatial dimension of non-verbal behaviour."

Through naturalistic observations of a specific user group in the United States of America (1970's white America), Hall extrapolates upon this idea identifying four levels of social distance:

1. Intimate distance – 0.45 m

This zone is commonly referenced by the metaphor 'personal bubble' and is inhabited by people who we know well. Within this distance voices are customarily soft, and there is less impediment on one's visual perception and the range of motion of one's appendages. If both individuals were to make physical gestures, a haptic encounter would occur. The other individual may still feel the individual's degree of breath and odours.

2. Personal distance – 1.2m

This zone is commonly referenced by the metaphor 'personal bubble' and is inhabited by people who we know well. Within this distance voices are customarily soft, and there is less impediment on one's visual perception and the range of motion of one's appendages. If both individuals were to make physical gestures, a haptic encounter would occur.

1.1 Literature Review

3. Social distance – 3.6m

This zone of interaction is generally used for gatherings or when interacting with an individual who is not particularly well known. At such a distance one can perceive the other bodies in their entirety. Bodies would by ordinary remain detached and disconnected during dynamic fluctuations and bodily expressions.

4. Public distance – 7.6m

This zone fundamentally only facilitates public interaction, as it demands the projection of one's voice. At such a distance sensing codes such as thermal, olfaction, and kinaesthetic/touch are ultimately severed.

The standard measurements that Hall produced is suggestive of appropriate distances individuals should maintain while engaging socially depending on their familiarity. Yet most individuals are unfamiliar and unconcerned of the Proxemic behaviour within their own culture, yet they become conscious of them when their own personal space is violated. Seemingly, interactions between two bodily entities are a responsive negotiation of space. Fundamentally our spatial behaviour stems from one's own perception and awareness of their 'intimate space' as it is from the intimate space that social conduct – whether non-contact or contact – develops and extends from.

The aim in the next series of exercises is to test Edward T. Hall's theory. In particular looking at the 'intimate space', by recording personal observations of self through photographs, calculations, castings, film and painting, using the self as a control to examine my body's space-defining and space-making actions. In sum the experiential exercises and naturalistic observations will endeavour to provide insight into the space my body inhabits and the space my body wears.

1.2 Artist Profiles

1.2.1 Antony Gormley

Acclaimed sculptor Antony Gormley explores human form and space; the space that exists within us and the space we feel around us. His work contemplates on the bounding condition of the body and the intimate interior space we feel within our bodies.

In the outset of Gormley's TEDtalk, presented at a TEDGlobal conference in 2012, he proposes to the studio audience to close their eyes. Whilst the eyelids flutter shut he follows suit and continues on to say, "So close your eyes for a minute. Here we are, in space, the subject, and collective space of the darkness of the body. ... It is objectless. There are no things in it. It is dimensionless. It is limitless. It is endless" (Gormley). Mind, body, and I to complied. An overwhelming realisation of this unwritten intimate space, subjective space, this space we all live was profound.

After this exercise Hall's notion of "... that man's boundary begins and ends with his skin..." resurfaced (Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" 115). It could be said that Gormley indirectly provides a delicate narration upon Hall's sentiment through his work. Yet what Gormley considers first, which is less suggestive in Hall's mediation of a body's space, is the understanding of our interior space. Gormley then progresses by taking the understanding of the mind and body's space and letting that inform the more holistic human space, inclusive of the space that exists beyond our intimate vessel. This is evident in Gormley's non-linear succession of projects that explore scale, body composition and location.

Figure 7

Three Places, 1983 [part of the series *Three Part Lead Bodycase Works*, 1981-1984]

This early series, which consists of three lead and fibreglass figures, uses the anatomy of Gormley's body in three elemental body postures – lying, sitting and standing. These unwittingly hermetic sculptures were an attempt to transition the perception of the body from being less of a thing and more of a place. Rendering the body as "... a site of transformation, and an axis of physical and spatial experience" (qtd. Hall Art Foundation).

1.2 Artist Profiles

Figure 8

Passage, 2016

The experiential installation *Passage* is an experience to be experienced. A human-shaped tunnel based on Gormley’s own body, much like his other work, “yet it teaches us more about ourselves and our instincts than about the artist” (Khan).

Inspired by Tanish Kahn’s narration of the sequence of events that occur when experiencing the installation, and in conjunction with numerous observations of experiential photographs, the experience of *Passage* can be described along these lines:

As one tentatively confronts the tunnel’s opening one instinctively ducks, despite the profile being scaled to accommodate. When the body steps into the profile, the body limits the light entering the tunnel. The one-way linear installation is filled with impending darkness and emptiness. As one gingerly navigates forward they intuitively project their arms out to protect the front body. Once the end is reached and the body turns around, the horizon of light invite us back with ease. To all appearances the journey back is much easier than the journey in.

This experience seems to evoke and reference the experience of closing one’s eyes. When you close your eyes and try to decipher the intimate interior space of the body, the looming darkness seems to make “It is dimensionless. It is limitless. It is endless” (Gormley). Maybe this experience of *Passage* forces people to confront the human landscape that can often seems space-less.

Breathing Room III, 2010 [part of the series *Breathing Room*, 2006-2012]

Breathing Room is an installation series that was dedicated to make three-dimensional drawings within a space. The installation lingers between being architecture and a depiction of architecture.

Gormley recited in his TEDTalk, "... is it possible taking that idea of mind, body, body-building, to supplant the first body, the biological body with the second, the body of architecture and the built environment" (Gormley).

Presumably this series is symbolic of Gormley's fascination in the relationship between the human space and architecture. Dominika Cecot describes the installation as a commentary on the idea that "human beings are the only creatures inhabiting constructed environments" (Cecot). What re-surfaces is the challenging and wider question(s) of (i) what is the relationship between human space (biological body) and the space they occupy and (ii) what are the possibilities of using the biological body's space to catalyse an architectural experience – a kind of "first-hand somatic narrative" (Gormley).

Figure 9

1.2 Artist Profiles

1.2.2 Bhikku Bodhi and Roberto Chabet

Whether it be an elemental stone toss, a metal cast of his own body, inhabitable sculptures, parasitic anatomies on skyscrapers, or architectural installations, each form functions by encouraging observers to consider the mass and spatial capacity/limitations of one's own body. Upon reflection of Gormley's work I noticed that he takes the body and pauses it in a moment in time. Transferring the ever-dynamic body into an un-hurried static substance. With each movement, transition and pause, the volume of the body remains constant. However when sourcing the space beyond our epidermic sac, as shown in Three Places, do the varying postures that invite the contraction and expansion of our appendages change the volume of space we claim around our body?

In order to investigate this notion and provide a holistic understanding of the body's inhabited space and territory, common body postures need to be identified and explored.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, a Theravada Buddhist monk, states,

“The body can assume four basic postures – walking, standing, sitting and lying down ... The contemplation of the postures illuminates the impersonal nature of the body. It reveals that the body is not a self or the belonging of a self, but merely a configuration of living matter subject to the directing influence of volition” (Bodhi 86).

Figure 10

Sitting, Standing, Lying, and Walking. , 2011 [part of the series Breathing Room, 2006-2012]

This question of body posture/position and space, in conjunction with the writings of Bodhi, led me to Roberto Chabet.

What Roberto Chabet documented in his installation exhibition was the variable dimensions of the body when assuming the gesture of sitting, standing, lying and walking. Having not personally seen the exhibition it is hard to decipher from the photographs what the difference is between the areas of the found objects. Even so, the plywood composition of panels do suggest that in each elemental position the volume of space the body occupies is various and particular.

This preclusion will be referenced and investigated throughout the series of naturalistic exercises and experiential observations.

1.3 Body as Space

1.3.1 Posture Drawings

Aim(s):

Before attempting to analyse the space the body contains and occupies, perceiving and translating the body and its form was imperative. A week was spent doing figure sketches in an attempt to better understand (i) the anatomical positions of the body and likewise exploring (ii) various drawing materials. Materials such as charcoal, pen, pencil and collage were exercised.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

What was initially an exercise to enhance my abilities to observing and representing the body became a highly introspective exercise. When looking at the shape of the body I began to realise my navigation towards defining the edge and the silhouette first. Then I would progress further into looking at the contours and the flesh (tone and texture).

Drawing the outline of the body's space was not dissimilar to the theoretical speculation of Edward T. Hall when he discusses the boundary of the skin as the start and end of one's space, and the sculpture, *Passage* by Antony Gormley. In both instances they highlight this notion of the silhouette, the edge, the outline of the body as the first and commonly the last thing we identify when looking at a body as a spatially being.

Progress:

These realisations drafted the question of (i) what is the physicality of being human? (ii) What is the bodies implied space – when you see beyond the skin (in either direction) where does the skin stop and where does the environment start?

Figure 11

1.3 Body as Space

1.3.2 Vessel

Aim(s):

From the previous exercise, the physicality of being human was an astute sentiment that I wanted to explore in this casting series. We often perceive our body's as a solid but what happens when you looking at the mass as a void.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

This casting exercise was undoubtedly profound. A series of plaster casts were taken of various parts on my body. Using the epidermis as a plane to abstract and measure the space the body contains provides an intimate and holistic optical. By flipping the script and looking at parts of the body from the position and perspective that others interpret your body from it showcases the body not just as a solid but also as a solid and void all at once.

Progress:

Although the castings were clearly a static mode of representation, likewise the posture drawings, there was a willingness of the imagination to make them move. And so, the idea of moving in space and using your body to measure the space became intriguing.

shoulder

waist

forearm

wrist

thigh

Figure 12

1.3 Body as Space

1.3.3 Photography Series

Aim(s):

Referencing 1.2.2 Bhikku Bodhi and Roberto Chabet I was compelled to analyse the physicality of my body in these suggested four postures. By using the physicality of my body the recorded gestures intend to advise and mediate on the proxemics theory and generate a personal understanding of the body's space and territory.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

By capturing these three postures in all four elevations and in plan, it enables me to observe the physicality of the body and its implied space. Noticeably echoing the representation of the body's space in Chabet's installation. The space of the body in front elevation and side elevation is vastly disparate, akin to the body in any elevation and in plan.

Progress:

Once the series of photographs were completed, the concepts of contained space vs. occupied space, wearable space vs. inhabitable space, emerged. This query as to how these photographs could help me towards understanding the latent space my body unconsciously and instinctively claims as space and in space. The following exercises will trial and error different means of adapting these photographs to record the body as space and in space.

Figure 13

1.3 Body as Space

1.3.4 Collage Series

Aim(s):

It is often construed that one's territory begins and ends with the skin. By blurring the boundary of the skin, does it in affect blur the boundedness?

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

The difficulty of this exercise came from trying to conceive the right balance of voided space and rendered space. Enough to enable the receiver to perceive the body and its gesture but not too much that it easily suggests the edge of the body.

The collage alludes to the space physically occupied by the body. Yet the absence of the edge in conjunction with areas left unoccupied allows the viewer/receiver to fill in the voids left unentertained and give shape to the body's boundary.

Progress:

The collage series challenges our perception of the body's boundary and subsequently its occupied space. Inverse to what was observed when doing 1.3.1 *Posture Drawings*, this exercise prompts the analysis and consideration of the interior space before defining the limits. Attesting to the challenge around depicting one's territory – intimate space - beyond the boundary of the skin. (The inverse to what was observed when doing the figure drawings.)

With an understanding of the *Body as Space*, what does the representation of the body look like when it is a *Body in Space*? Known as territoriality - how much space does the physical body unconsciously and intuitively claim as space?

Figure 14

1.4 Body in Space

1.4.1 Bounding Box

Aim(s):

The aim of this exercise is to fortify this notion of the body's implied space by questioning: does the body claim the voided space created around the various protruding parts of the body?

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

In rendering the voids created between the various protruding parts of the body it gave this uninhabited space intensity. In doing so you begin to see the spatial manifestations and the power of the void around our vessel. Whether established by tangents or enveloped by a 90 degree bounding plane, these unoccupied spaces seem to extend out from our physical edge and our boundary almost desires to pocket them – in almost an attempt to extend the vessels contained space.

Progress:

Still these spaces are circumstantial. If the intention is to mediate on the suggestive theory of Proxemics and the 'intimate space' Hall discloses to be a 0.45m radius from our body, movement, extension and contraction needs to be introduced to provide a more holistic evaluation.

Figure 15

1.4 Body in Space

1.4.2 Physical Capacity

Aim(s):

To investigate how much space could the body command/occupy.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

As realised in the previous exercise, 1.4.1 *Bounding Box*, the space whether occupied or unoccupied is circumstantial. We are not static beings but expressive beings that communicate through dynamic fluctuations. This series of graphic analyses were conducted to illustrate how far appendages could comfortably extend in each of the three elemental positions. Further questioning, if our body can extend and physically be present within this domain, do we then claim this as part of our territory?

Progress:

The amplitude of space that the body could extend into was quite fascinating, especially when viewed in contrast to the previous exercise. The physicality of our body versus the physical extension of the body and how much that changes our possible territory is significantly different.

What was possibly most profound was the realisation of when analysing my body on a computer, an evident divide flourished. I started to see my body as other rather than the vessel and the living continuum to which I belonged. Although the extensions were calculated from the anatomical dimensions of my body there was still this looming realisation that I was making assumptions in an attempt to define my territory. I was not convinced that this was akin to what my body intuitively deemed as my space. I started to question, why I was make assumptions for my body and mind, rather than using instinctive nature. These design experiments and reflections led me to the written works of Eve Ensler and Elizabeth Grosz, and an array of performance artists.

Figure 16

1.5 Literature Review

1.5.1 The Living Body in its Duality

the relationship between body and mind

This acknowledgment of a disassociation with my body steeped over a couple of days. Relinquished from the act of making, I scouted for examples, whether written words, spoken words, or practical examples, that embodied this perplexing paradox between mind and body.

A TedTalk given by Eve Ensler, a poet, artist and activist, discusses her intimate journey of realising that “me only existing in the trying and my body was often in the way” (Ensler). Ensler goes on to say, “We often live through our head but not through our bodies” (Ensler). Ensler continues on to discuss her lived experiences that led her to discover this unfamiliarity that her mind had with her body. As her dialogue progresses it was the suggestion of an objectification and the subsequent hierarchy that came from objectifying her body that became most compelling.

Body follows the mind. This fragmented sentiment that the body comes secondary to the mind echoed a kind of manipulation I felt as a result of conducting an analysis of the self on a computer. As previously said, although my analyses were calculated and “correct”, there was a level of assumption and manipulation that my mind was conducting over my body.

Yet, maybe it is not about trying to define where the mind is and where the body is in relation to each other. Rather an understanding that these two do not reject or sanction each other but inform and superimpose into this network of constant communication. In my previous exercise it was not that the mind was assuming the movements of the body, it was just that the body was frozen and eliminated from its ability to experience.

Theorist, Elizabeth Grosz, avows:

A living body in this duality – not mind and body... but a single surface or plane, as Merleau-Ponty has suggested, that is capable of being folded, twisted, or inverted, which may be seen to contain one side and another, or rather, an inside and outside, two overlapping and superimposable ever-changing networks of strata, separated by a relatively porous sac, an epidermal clothing or biological architecture, yet linked by practice, action, or movement, through ingestion, incorporation and action (Grosz 146).

In this quote, Grosz proposes that the mind and body are inseparable. The body – mind and the biological body – is the general medium through which we experience, perceive, interact and respond to the world.

Whether you believe in the distinctness of the mind and the body, or the concept of them superimposing and overlapping, the concept of experience is rooted in both. Allowing the body and the mind to be current in an experience, whether one does precede the other or if they do in fact superimpose, enables the act of bringing truth into being. This connectedness is found in the act of the body living experiences through its duality.

A search for practical examples of artists using the intuition of their bodies sees the work of Caroline Denervaud, Trisha Brown and Tom Marioni, analysed next. The following artists explore and embody this lived experience of mind and body through using the physical scale and physical capacity of the human body.

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1.6 Artist Profiles

1.6.1 Caroline Denervaud

Figure 17

“The pronounced lines with an organic softness mimic the natural curves and motions of her body” (Coeval Magazine).

Denervaud’s work relies on her ability to completely relinquish the adulations of her body to be predicted by her emotions. The artist states, “I work mostly on intrinsic research” (qtd. Coeval Magazine). Her performance work is body centric and movement-heavy in both its production and completion, and responds to the intimate connection and relationship between her emotions and her body.

Making the performative process of her work just as much a part of the art as the finished work. Caroline explains that the preparation of the setting is vital towards enabling her to completely immerse herself in emotions. From the decision to drape the paper over a floor or a wall, the choice of material to record her gestures, her clothing and “most important: the music”, each ingredient is her source of preparation (Coeval Magazine).

Figure 18

1.6 Artist Profiles

1.6.2 Trisha Brown

Figure 19

Brown expanded her performative practices into notational drawings. In an effort to understand movement, Brown traces her body's choreography in an attempt to describe the movement her body wanted to make which compositional vocabulary failed to interpret. The drawings became a dual system of documentation and generation - ergo internalising the perplexing relationship and sequence between "diagram, movement and document" (Eleey).

Although her drawings primarily functioned as an exercise in which she could portray "movement within the body or between a given group of bodies," rather than delineating the trajectory of the body, it is the use of the body and the liberation of the body's intuition to resonate and interpret the messages of the mind that is of interest.

1.6.3. Tom Marioni

Brown's work led me to discover the performing works of Tom Marioni. In particular, *Drawing a Line as Far As I Can Reach*. In this on-going performance series, Marioni diagrams the specific movement of his arm; repeatedly tracing and retracing "the line of his arm's extension" (Eleey). This performance echoes the 1.4.2 *Physical Capacity* exercise I conducted.

In all three instances, the use of the body as a tool to inscribe the direct contact of the artist's body leaves irrefutable physical evidence of the body's presence. A body that is inclusive of mind and anatomy. Much like Elizabeth Grosz's sentiment, much of the work is grounded in intuition that stems from the relationship and interpretation the constantly reverberates between mind and body. This inspired the next series of life scale paintings.

Figure 20

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.1 Live Trace Performance Art

Energised by the written words, spoken words, and practical examples that contemplate the bounding condition of the body and the perplexing paradox between mind and body, the next series of intuitive traces are an effort to explore, discover and represent the physical presence of the body and its intuitive perception of intimate space.

In the production of these paintings I locate my body within a studio with highly absorbing, non-reflective surfaces. The environment obstructs the ability for me to observe the movements of my body. The setting fully enabled the body to connect to the mind and trace its intuition with little distraction.

My right and left hand gripped compressed charcoal sticks. When the body decidedly started to move, the hands navigated the paper marking the boundary of what the visceral mind deemed as personal territory. Questioning what my body treated as the spatial territory it claimed beyond the epidermis.

Filming the process of tracing was an essential judgment inspired by Caroline Denervaud, Trisha Brown and Tom Marioni. As I was intentionally relinquishing the composition to the natural body's motions and the perspective of intuition, the video enabled me to see myself experiencing the process. Seeing the motions enabled me to accept the marks that were. Enabling me to be the source of exploration and a researcher/observer.

Figure 21

Through the observation of the video and the charcoal traces what impulsively happened was an unprecedented synthesis of Tim Marioni and Caroline Denervaud.

In the lying down composition, the first movement of the arm traced the extension of my arm; the physical capacity of my body as illustrated in the 1.4.2 *Physical Capacity* series. The second trace was more a mark of emotion rather than movement - my arm moved in an irregular circular motion around a small area to the front of my face and neck. My body continued to map and trace these small, seemingly abstract, areas in each of the three elemental body positions. What then flourished was the recognition of these small areas as my most intimate and most vulnerable. The space I most intuitively perceived and claimed as part of my territory although physically uninhabited.

Inspired by Caroline Denervaud, in an attempt to strengthen and amplify these uninhabited and impermanent vicinities, I rendered them in a pigment reminiscent of skin.

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.2 Live Trace Posture 1 Lying

Figure 22

1.7.3 Live Trace Posture 2 Sitting

Figure 23

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.4 Live Trace Posture 3 Standing

Figure 24

Eva Mahdalickova writes, “The flesh indicates at first the relation between the subject and the world, the interiority expressing itself or the exteriority interiorizing” (Mahdalickova). The expressions of the body that were captured in photographs, videos and left as charcoal traces on paper to later be pigmented with a pink hue, are symbolic of the interiority expressing itself in anticipation for it to be perceived. The instinctive territorialisation of the body no longer remained imperceptible but granted a language and acknowledged.

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.5 Analysis

Aim(s):

After the performative 1.7.1-1.7.4 *Live Drawings* were complete, I decidedly chose to superimpose them onto two of the former observations – inclusive of 1.4.1 *Bounding Box* and 1.4.2 *Physical Capacity*. This was to see if there were any correlations between the various modes of observation and representation.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

What was most profound was not necessarily bound to dimensions but more with the body's navigation towards granting the front body with the most space. This intuitive gesture of the body is reminiscent to the observations that were made when people experienced Antony Gormley's *Passage*. People would commonly project their arms forward when progressing into the impending darkness of the installation. In the fabrication of the prosthetic, it will be interesting to see if this security of the front body reverberates.

Progress:

With the ambition to construct a prosthetic form to communicate the uninhabited space the body commands around itself in mind, the extrapolation of key geometries is crucial in order to inform the form of the prosthetic.

Figure 25

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.6 Prosthetic Frame

Extrapolation of key geometries.

Figure 26

Figure 27

1.7 Body in Space *revisited*

1.7.7 Prosthetic Fabrication

Aim(s):

By materialising the findings into wearable garments it is an attempt to render and materialise the invisible boundary of the body's space.

Reflection(s) and Observations(s):

Unlike the fixed dimension that Edward T. Hall suggests in his Proxemics theory, a bubble with a fixed diameter/radius does not surround the body as a spatial entity. But in fact, it is surrounded by space that expands and contracts around the body at various locations.

front elevation

plan

Figure 28

1.7.7 Prosthetic Analysis

Reflection(s) and Observations(s) continued:

The prosthetic illustrates that constantly expanding and contracting fields surround us. This is dissimilar to the unchanging bubble that Edward T. Hall suggests. Notably, the front body commands the most space.

Nonetheless to mediate on the 0.45m diameters, the findings show that my personal bubble ranges between 0.411m and 0.498m to give an average of 0.4545m.

Figure 29

1.8 Reflection and Conclusion

Whilst the theoretical perspective of Edward T. Hall is exceptionally close to the dimension output resulted from the experiments I conducted, the chapter evolved to become more than just mediating on his research. The process of using my body as the protagonist in this series of exercises showcased the importance of experiencing the body as not only an object, but as a subject.

Prior to conducting these experiments, the reflection I had on my body only gave thought to my body and rarely the experience of it. Yet in truth, there is no other way to know the body than to live it in its duality, as a subject and an object. It is in this contemplation where the thesis will intently progress.

Joanne Entwistle writes,

Merleau-Ponty places the body at the centre of his analysis ... i.e., from the place of our body in the world... we grasp external space, relationships between objects and our relationship to them through our position in, and movement through, the world. (Entwistle 333)

This quote articulates that it is through our ability to understand our bodies as both one that is perceived and one that perceives that allows us to holistically detect space, mass and boundary. The human figure is not an object controlled by the mind, but a complex subject and medium that allows us to perceive, experience, interact, respond, and understand the world. The inward presence of the human body plays a significant role in the outward perception of the body. Suggesting that rather than being an object located within an environment, the human body is too a subject; temporal and dynamically spatial.

Merleau-Ponty has a strong intent on relating the spatial body back to the built environment. After all the body is always among other things. When left in an undefined or unperceived space, the experience of the body reveals a seemingly ambiguous mode of existence. In search of understanding the experience of the body and space, do the surfaces that inform our spaces for inhabitation fail to reflect the space of the human body?

Figure 30

2

Immediacy Two

body to surface

What

If architecture has the capacity to instil an affective reaction, how can the surface of architecture be designed to promote a dialogue between the body's (nature) intimate space and the architecture (culture) that defines the spaces we inhabit?

Why

Horizontal planes and vertical walls often choreograph Urbanscape. These elements that congeal into objects of architecture embody characteristics of fixity and rigidity. It can be argued that these static planar surfaces are unwittingly unresponsive to the dynamic flow of human action, thus realising a denaturalisation of the human body's transformations. Making the architecture that frames our shared urban environment an unaccustomed extension of the biological body.

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2.0 Introduction to *body to surface*

The second level of immediacy/scale increases and responds to the intimate expressions of the self upon the surface of architecture.

Akin to the first chapter, my body will continue to be at the primacy of the generative design process that seeks to discover a biological form from which will fabricate a surface. Propelled by the notion of Thomas Schropher, “The skin is the material layer where the soul and the world commingle”, this chapter seeks to choreograph prosthetic surfaces that depart from horizontal and vertical planes. The methodology celebrates the intuition of the natural body through the expression of making to evaluate the spatial connection between the skin of the body and the skin of architecture.

In this chapter, the understanding of the body’s proxemics perception will be carried through and tested. However, it will be tested against the material forces and qualities of the surfaces that express spaces for inhabitation. The work of architect Federick Kiesler, along with performance artists Marina Abramovic and Yves Klein, are paramount precedents that inspire and help facilitate the series of investigations that question: how can surfaces navigate away from their planar postures and evolve out of the human body’s form to better accommodate the living practices and experience of the body? By exploring architecture’s capability of inducing a more intimate operation with its audience, are there feasible opportunities for surfaces to embody forms that are more symbolic of and in sympathy with the biological body?

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Theory of Proxemics *Revisited*

“If one sees man surrounded by a series of invisible bubbles which have measureable dimensions, architecture can be seen in a new light.”
- Edward T Hall

As discussed in *Immediacy One - Body as Site*, Edward T. Hall proposes that the personal territory individual's form between their body and receivers is often disclosed by the following characteristics: posture dimensions, body angle, physical distance, touch, eye contact, thermal heat, smell and vocal volume. Although all these factors are prominent in our definition of different types of personal territory, the material characteristic of space and the representation of space is only briefly discussed amidst Hall's theory.

The discussion of space is inclusive of and limited to the following summary:

Hall explains, “If one sees man surrounded by a series of invisible bubbles which have measureable dimensions, architecture can be seen in a new light” (Hall).

From this notion Hall distinguishes three categories of space:

1. Fixed feature space: (building and city layouts)
2. Semi fixed space: (moveable parts of a setting)
3. Informal Space: (interpersonal distances)

Although Hall vaguely alludes to how the representation of the physical built environment can influence our emotional state, there is little acknowledgement regarding the impact that Architecture has on a body's physical spatial proximity to its environment. One might say that architecture's influence on how we physically and emotionally inhabit a space is suggestive of how we fundamentally detect and use a space. The design of a space can advocate, advise, and influence how the living body responds, navigates and acts within its boundaries. Namely instilling an affective reaction.

What was first a question of (Immediacy One) how much space does the body unconsciously construct around it's vessel as intimate space, is now a question of, (Chapter 2 Body to Surface) if fixed feature space has the capacity to instil an affective reaction, how can the surface of architecture be designed to promote a dialogue between the body's intimate space and the architecture that defines the spaces our intimate being inhabits.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.2 Architecture as Prostheses

Following the fabrication of the prosthetic installation in *Immediacy One - Body as 'Site'*, this notion of prosthetic became particularly intriguing. This literature review focuses on the wider implications of prosthetic in relation/ response to architectural practice.

The body's capacity for prosthetic extension is not an avant-garde or rare sentiment. The relationship between the body and prostheses is commonly and narrowly considered as the practical act of replacing a missing or impaired organ or appendage. Allowing the body to function its pre-given virtualities. However, the cultural predominance of our creative evolution, prostheses have expanded beyond the idea of pragmatic need. As a consequence of inventiveness, prostheses have been proliferated to something that is supplementary to the already existing and functioning body. In defiance of pragmatic need such prosthetic application enables the body the ability to create new bodily behaviours - qualities or abilities. In this light, architecture can be seen as a cultural prosthetic to the natural body. Perceiving architecture in such a way realises the possibility of a mutual metamorphosis, "... transforming both the body supplemented and the object that supplements it" (Grosz 148). If architecture is employed by man and culturally inherited in order to fortify the relatively fragile architecture and porous surface of the body, then how can the surface of architecture be enriched by harnessing the material resources and/or of the natural body?

In suggesting that the relationship is one of extension, what then needs to be addressed is the relationship between the biological body (nature) and architecture (culture). How can the material environment be driven by the notion of extension - extending the physical, geographical and temporal immediacy of the body? Enabling architecture to be something of the biological.

It can be argued that the non-living inert matter of architecture has evolved to become other than the living organic matter of the beings that inhabit it. Yet, architecture is the most primitive example of human evolution. "... the first production, the first form of art, in human evolution" (Grosz 152). Our estrangement from culturally rendering the relationship between our living organic matter and the non-living inert matter of architecture has directed architecture to be deeply conditioned to the 0 of horizontal planes and 90 degree angles of vertical surfaces. Causing architecture to replicate the past and manifest nostalgia. Yet, through the perception of architecture as a prosthetic the material world can be seen as "the ongoing source and condition for life" (Grosz 152). Conclusively, inert matter (architecture) should be the prosthetic for living beings, and living beings should be the augmentations of the inert matter (architecture).

2.1.3 The Theory of Affect

Chapter two, in particular, aims to understand the capacity of architecture and its surfaces to affect and be affected by the surface and space of the body. The experiential observations and experiments will attempt to address the theoretical foundation of 'affect' to distil the body's affective tendencies. And ultimately propel a conceptual surface design that revives the dialogue between body and architecture.

'Affect' retains an incredibly complicated theoretical discourse. It can be interpreted and mean many different things. Often used as a noun, Nigel Thrift, in his text *Intensities of Feeling*, emphasises that the theory of affect is usually associated with "words such as emotion and feeling, and consequent repertoire of terms such as hatred, shame... anguish, pride, love, happiness, hope, and wonder, though for various reasons, I do not think these words work well as a simple translation of the term 'affect'" (Thrift 59). As affect' commonly, if not only, occurs in the printed language the denotative terms has little foregoing capacity to engage with the complex realities of form. It is here, consequently, that 'affect' invites many interpretations.

As Thrift progresses, he alludes to a simple definition that can depart affect's descriptive use in the printed medium of language and be appropriated to architecture, "affect as the influence of change" (Ibbotson 15). Within the framework of architecture, Peter Eisenman "suggests this change is a sensate response to the physical environment" (Ibbotson 15). As part of our primal being, these sensate responses are rapid and often induced unconsciously. Yet they are the primary channels that instruct how we engage and perceive our surrounding environment. These immaterial intensities are perceived by the skin, which then reverberate through the interior body and subsequently navigate the body's exterior epidermis. These affects cultivate an experience that is later accompanied by a change in the body's state (Ibbotson 15). This perpetual affective system activates our interaction between people and the built physical environment.

Marc Hansen suggests in his text *Wearable Space*, that the "landing site" is the "field of action" that connects a body with space. In the urban environment, when two unknown bodies interact, the 'unknown/foreign' often doesn't conform to our expected conventions, thus the body is forced to recalibrate itself. It is these moments that cause us to confront our habitual reactions. Architecture works in a similar manner. When architecture doesn't conform to our expected conventions it disrupts the body, the space confuses us and compels us to concentrate and recalibrate – this experience provokes an affective reaction. Therefore, architecture has the capacity to construct

"An affective interaction that resonates between the surface of the body
and the surface of architecture" (Ibbotson 19).

2.2 Architect Review

2.2.1 Frederick Kiesler

The fluid surfaces and dynamic space of the *Endless House* project by Viennese architect Frederick Kiesler looked beyond simply serving the physiological functions of man. By continuously seeking to understand and impose the dynamic flow of human action, Kiesler's architecture was driven by endless space dictated by the human body. Strongly grounded in exploring the relationship between figurative arts and architecture, Kiesler's drawings and models manifest the possibility of using the human body as a design generative (Carta). The interior space enveloped by curved surfaces blur the distinction between the horizontal and vertical planes in a gesture to create a flexible and dynamic space representative of how the human body presents itself over time and in space. The organic nature of the forms generates a series of interconnected internal spaces. Although *Endless House*, never came into fruition it is still considered one of the most revered architectural concepts that endeavoured to project the field of architecture into a more conscious discipline. The project is a symbolic gesture that embraces the concept of immersing an inhabitant into an environment that is more indicative of its natural transformations.

Kiesler demolishes the spatial boundaries between the body and architecture and clearly alludes to the relationship that exists and should be celebrated between the bodies, space, time and architecture. This assertion parallels the observation and critique expressed through the writings by Elizabeth Grosz. The relationship between the human body (nature) and architecture (culture) should be one of extension.

Figure 31

2.3 Artist Profiles

Inspired by architect 2.2.1 Frederick Kiesler, and his work strived for a new and complementary energy field between the human body and architecture, this spawned a further investigation into performance artists. Akin to the inspiration gathered by performance artists in 1.0 Immediacy One - Body as 'Site', performative artists such as Marina Abramović and Yves Klein are analysed for their ability to engage the human body with architecture. Pronouncing the role of passivity.

2.3.1 Marina Abramović

The androgynous performance, performed by Abramovic herself and her collaborator Ulay (Frank Uwe Laysiepen), questioned the compartmentalised identities of feminine and masculine. Performed at the Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, in Bologna, Italy, Abramovic and Ulay stood naked on either side of the gallery's narrow entrance (O'Sullivan). The narrowness of the threshold forced visitors to manoeuvre sideways in order to pass between the two naked artists.

What was initially observed was the conscious decisions made on part of the spectators to face either the naked female body or the naked male body (O'Sullivan). But what became even more acute upon reflection of the performance was that the vulnerability of the two naked artists was eclipsed by the vulnerability and uncertainty of the visitors. The performance quintessentially forced the viewers to confront the overwhelming role of passivity, which transformed the performance into a reflection of the spectator's reactions and interactions with the two bodies.

In this participatory art the audience is not reliant on a particular set of instructions. Leaving the impact of Marina and Ulay on the participants beyond their realm of control. Nonetheless, the active physical engagement between the artists and the viewer reaffirms that the sensations of discomfort and intimacy are mutual, generating an almost overarching unifying force.

Figure 32

2.3 Artist Profiles

2.3.2 Yves Klein

After being inspired by his practice in judo, Klein's became infatuated by the lingering marks that were left on the mat when a fighter encountered the ground. In 1958, in a friend's apartment, Klein began to experiment with using the human figure as a 'paint brush'. After applying blue paint to a nude model, Klein guided her "in rolling across a sheet of paper that had me place on the floor" (Russell). Peculiarly, the initial experiments with the human body troubled Klein. The heavy mass of paint left by the trace of the body was too inhibited by probability and spontaneity. His control was annexed. Nonetheless, Klein continued to haggle with the intrigue of using "living brushes" and in "February 1960 staged a live public premiere at his own apartment utilising his new medium" – the human figure (Russell).

Klein's work was enveloped by stigma and approval. Much of the stigma seemed to reference the term "living brush" and the artist-to-model relationship, which was extrapolated into a power dynamic; an authoritative power struggle. By directing the motions of nude models, he obtains ultimate control over his female subjects. This impression is candidly disclosed by a writers/feminist art collective known Toxic Titties (Steinmetz et al). Whereby the cohort of critics criticise Klein for enforcing patriarchal values by fundamentally objectifying the female body as an object for the male gaze. However, in an interview conducted by the BBC with one of the female models who co-operated with Yves Klien in some of his prints, Elena Palumbo-Mosca states, "No, I was not a paintbrush, because, in spite of all, I did use my brain. I was not a brush, I was a person who co-operated"

This decry was too contrasted by praise. Fellow critics describe his artistic philosophy and process as visionary. Critic and friend, Pierre Restany, looked at this body of work in a more introspective manner (Russell). The brilliance and innovation of Klein's artistry was not bestowed in the line or shape of the female body, nor the monochromatic composition, but in the emotional atmosphere that his work embodied. The compositions were a vibration and signal of life.

What becomes most astute through the observation of the Anthropométries series is not the form of the body left behind but the space left un-pigmented by the paint and unentertained by the body. This observation echoes the critical claim previously discussed in regards to architecture being deeply conditioned to flat 90 degree angles. This void is evidence of architecture's estrangement from the organic matter of its main protagonist, the human body. This communicates that the current structure of surfaces hinders our ability to connect our biology to the biology of architecture. In turn resulting in our passivity and estrangement from architecture.

Figure 33

2.3 Artist Profiles

2.3.3 Further Commentary

(on Marina Abramović and Yves Klein)

The performative artwork conducted by Abramovic is strongly rooted in the relations between audience and performer. Possibly unlike Klein where the audience might be implicated by their distortive tendency to objectify the female body, Marina's work often conceals this domain of objectification because the interactions with the audience occurs within one's most intimate space and causes the audience to confront the passivity innate to objectification.

Notably when comparing the methodology of Klein to the tactics employed by Abramovic, the critical shift that occurs is when the artist uses their own bodies rather than the bodies of other women in place of his/her own. As stated in 1.8 Reflection and Conclusion, the human body is not an object controlled by the mind, or in the instance of Yves Klein, the mind of someone else, but a complex subject and medium that allows us to perceive, experience, respond, interact and understand the world. To which the next series of exercises, akin to the first chapter, will continue to use my own body as the on-going source and medium of experimentation. By conducting experiments that investigate the space between the human body and the planes that often outline places for our inhabitation, the intention is to explore the possibility of a dualistic synergy; one that reignites the relationship between the human body and its mainstay, architecture.

2.4 Body to Surface

2.4.1 Body Imprint

exercise one

Aim(s):

Inspired by *Anthropometries* and the incidences of negative space surrounding the various pigmented traces left by the body, this exercise endeavoured to understand the positive and negative negotiations between the surface of architecture and the surface of the my body.

Finding(s) and Observation(s):

This exercise flourished into an intimately profound realisation of the detachment between the physicality of my body and the physical presence of an architectural plane. Arriving at each elevation, there was an eagerness to generate the greatest connection between my body and the surface, an attempt to establish a type of synchronisation. However, when the uneven and fleshy plane of the human body encounters the rigid and planar surface, there is only so much contact that can be constituted as the body's capacity to endure the pressure and subsequent deformation reaches a maximum. Here one realises that the carnal experience between body and architecture results in a denaturalisation of the human body.

The front body surfaced the elevations that embodied the greatest level of hesitation. Yet it encountered the most pressure and the most deformation. Arguably, the front body comes into physical contact with architecture the least. We commonly lean against architecture using the side body or back body. This reflects the findings from the prosthetic where we unconsciously grant the front body with most spatial territory.

Progress:

This discernible contrast in the physicality between the two independent forces - the surface of the body and of architecture - materialises an opportunity. It is within this voided space between the two conditions that provides the opportunity to investigate physical responsiveness and accommodation.

Figure 34

2.4 Body to Surface

2.4.2 Body Imprint

exercise two

Aim(s):

The following imprints, Meandering Feet, illustrates the traces of the feet left behind when walking on a flat horizontal plane, and when ascending/descending a series of stairs.

Finding(s) and Observation(s):

The small area of one's feet is a prevailing connection between body and architecture. In the three principal body postures feet are almost assuredly in contact with a plane.

By analysing the thread of traces left on the paper, the ball of the foot seems to sustain the most pressure. Beyond looking at the areas of increased pigmentation, it is quite profound when you realise that such a small area of your body sustains the pressure of your body's load.

Progress:

The perplexity between the encounter of the body and a plane is highly reflective and stimulating. The evidence presents ample opportunities to try curate a perceptible exchange between the two subjects in an effort to interlace the body and architecture. The traces left behind on the paper clearly indicate the fleshy deformations that the body endures when in contact with a rigid flat plane, yet what impact is the body having on the surface of the architecture?

Figure 35

2.4 Body to Surface

2.4.3 Pressure Series

Aim(s):

Investigating the ability for architecture to affect and to be affected.

Finding(s) and Observation(s):

Although this series of photographs emphasise the fleshy deformations that occur when our body is pressed against a surface, the photographs provides an alternative perspective that is more suggestive of the relationship between body and architecture being interdependent. By being able to see the two conditions abut, the denaturalisation becomes even more allusive.

Progress:

In comparison to the 2.5.1 and 2.5.1 **Imprint Series**, the photographs stimulate a more emotional response, as one is able to detect the natural pigment of the skin and contours. There is a heightened sensitivity, as the contact is not abstracted by a monochromatic account. You see the skin and the flesh in all its involvement. The skin and deformed flesh that has made contact and skin that has surrendered to the background. In the photographs there is an allusive and curious participatory recognition between the skin of the body and the skin of the architecture, restoring the prospect and zeal of having the surface become a more acclimatised extension of the human body.

Figure 36

2.4 Body to Surface

2.4.4 Castings

Aim(s):

Inspired by the previous imprints and photography, this series of castings intends to show the transition of the foot from its natural state to when the foot acquires the enormity of the body's pressure.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

You start to notice the pliability of the skin. Furthermore, by noticing the voided space between the foot and the surface it is subject to, it highlights how surfaces are not conducive to our body and skin's morphology.

Progress:

Akin to the previous sentiments, this too is another means of representing and justifying the need to dilute the division between functionalism and delivery.

relaxed
seated

compressed
standing

extended
tiptoes

Figure 37

2.5 A Narration

2.5.1 *Skin*

The suggestion of skin resurfaced and became incredibly provocative. Skin not only in reference to the biological body but also as a metaphor within the lexicon of architectural vocabulary. When referencing architecture to skin there is indisputable subjectivity.

When our history persists to showcase that architecture to the human body is an essential accessory, the disassociation between the form of the human body and architecture is quite obscure. Yet when we consider the possibility that architecture poses to be seen as a prosthetic, as per *2.1.2 Architecture as Protheses* literature review, it suggests a spatial liquefaction; a synchronisation. A relationship similar to the expression of the body's interiority through our physical expressions could be ignited between the skin of the body and architecture.

The adjacent series of maquette models will endeavour to generate form based on the findings from the former series of imprints and photographs. Investigating how this physical experience of the body against a planar surface can be used as an expression of form to develop an architectural skin.

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.1 Photography Series

If architecture to the human body is a natural and paramount relationship, why do we inhabit vertical and horizontal planes?

Aim(s):

How does the anatomy of the front body respond to the planar static posture of a surface?

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

The navigation towards focusing on the front body was a conscious decision based on the experience my body had when forced to try coordinate with the wall in [2.5.1 Body Imprint](#). As stated in the observation(s) and reflection(s), I asserted, that the front body surfaced as the elevation that embodied the greatest level of hesitation yet encountered the most pressure and the most deformation. This heightened sensitivity that surrounded the expression of the front body, which was too pronounced when determining the form of the prosthetic, was compelling. It was a specific relationship that I wanted to continue to explore. One that was not conforming to how we commonly connect with architecture; a connection that was often left unentertained. It also foreshadowed a greater possible connection that greater harnessed the sensing codes such as thermal and olfaction, as well as kinaesthetic/touch and sight.

The series of photographs allude to the spatial association and dissociation between the intimate body and the plane at successive distances. Though the process of drawing over the photographs a series of contours were generated. Akin to principally looking at the void in a majority of the experimental investigations and naturalistic observations, the void again surfaces as the raw material of opportunity. These contours render the expanding and contracting void created between the surface of the body and the surface of architecture.

Progress:

By abstracting these forms, is it a means to facilitate the generation of a surface form to project towards the body?

series one

series two

Figure 38 Contact
(above) (media - photography)

Figure 39
(below)

series one
analysis

series two
analysis

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.1 Photography Series Time-lapse Analysis

Figure 40

Aim(s):

Stimulated by mere curiosity, the time-lapse was generated as a means to identify the successive scale of void between body and plane.

Progress:

On the following page, further analysis is conducted which refers back to immediacy one's **1.7.6 Prosthetic Frame**. This analysis intends to observe if there are any correlations between the expressions of the body captured in time-lapse above and the inward perception of the body's space that was captured in **1.7.2 - 1.7.4 Live Trace** and embodied by the prosthetic.

series one
time-lapse
analysis

series two
time-lapse
analysis

Figure 41

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.2 Time-lapse Analysis

Aim(s):

To investigate if the expression of space revealed in 1.7.2 - 1.7.4 Live Trace and 1.7.6 Prosthetic Frame has any correlation to the physical expression of the body in response to a vertical plane.

Reflection(s) and Observation(s):

The spatial expression of the body in the live traces series, which later destined the prosthetic form, was largely symbolic of how the inward presence of the human body determined the outward perception of the body. Upon reflection, this experiment left the body in a more ambiguous mode of existence as it was uninterrupted by a lot of the stimulus that establish an environment. As Merleau-Ponty states, "Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it's caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing" (163). In contrast to the live traces where the body intuitively determines its space, the photography series forces engagement and highlights how the spatial body and the built environment are profoundly integrated. Re-engaging the contact of the skin upon a surface, the series illustrates how the human body is a receptive and sensitive subject, not just an object located within an environment. The relationship between the skin of the body and the skin of architecture is dynamic and spatial.

Having experimented with the body in two conditions of engagement, one left largely uninterrupted by the environment and the other liberally engaged, superimposing the findings of the front body from immediacy one and the time-lapse of photographs was curious. The diagram on the right demonstrates the body's registration of spatial intimacy is distinctly similar. The space within the outer contour of the body and the surface is what the body expressed as most intimate. Habitually being the space where tactility is facilitated and not discontinued. This too matches the trace of the hand as the body intuitively claimed the pink vicinity as most intimate.

time-lapse
contours

overlaid with front
body projection

Figure 42

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.3 Series One Surface Maquette

Note: Aim(s), Observation(s) and Reflection(s), and Progress for 2.7.3 Series One Surface Maquette and 2.7.4 Series Two Surface Maquette

Aim(s):

By using the vertical contours abstracted from the expression of the human body in 2.7.1 *Photography Series*, could this generate a form that would better habituate and acclimate the biological body to architecture? With the intention of rendering the void, it is an attempt and quest to see if it would increase the contact between an architectural skin and the epidermis of the audience.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Although the intention of each profile is to be dynamic and organic, when placed in a composition the form is quintessentially stratified and structural. Not necessarily planar but it embodies the sense of movement and undulation to a lesser degree than anticipated.

Progress:

The next exercise and the consequent maquettes attempt to disrupt this stratification and add a greater illusion of action and expression.

Figure 43

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.4 Series Two Surface Maquette

Figure 44

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.5 Combined Maquette

series one and two

Aim(s): As the investigation unravelled into something seemingly more stratified and structural, this series was a response to the notion of 'skin'.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

In an attempt to overlay the medium-density fibreboard profiles with a skin, it aimed to introduce pliability and plasticity. However, the interpretation of skin remained too literal and expected. It too masked the curiosity of the void and left a majority of the void unable to be entertained by the presence of another body.

By trying to analyse the experiential quality of the form, there was something ominous and uninviting about the form. Through this analysis, a quote by Rasmussen, which states, "[...] markedly convex forms give an impression of mass while concave ones lead to an impression of space" become influential. Associating his quote with my surface there was a realisation of, despite the form intentionally rendering the negative space between body and surface in an attempt to render the area of disassociation, the form was in affect pushing one's proximity further away from the wall as it projected outwards.

Progress:

When Abramovic and Ulay participated in their performance, their bodies became a prosthetic/temporal contour of the surface. As described in [2.3.1 Marina Abramović](#), the performance quintessentially forced the viewers to confront the overwhelming role of passivity by encountering the two bodies through tactile expression. Could the expression of the surface then be indicative of the human form; rather than the abstract and anonymous void?

Figure 45

series one
and two

Figure 46

2.6 Body to Surface

2.6.6 Inversion

series one and two combined then inverted

Rasmuseen states, *"[...] markedly convex forms give an impression of mass while concave ones lead to an impression of space."*
(1962)

Aim(s):

Inspired by 2.3.1 Marina Abramović and reflecting upon the sentiments suggested by Elizabeth Grosz 2.1.2 Architecture as Prostheses, rather than rendering the void, could the surface not just take the form of the body? As Grosz suggests in her writings, inert matter (architecture) should be the prosthetic for living beings, and living beings should be the augmentations of the inert matter. So why not enable the surface to become something of the biological?

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Using the same 2.7.1 Photography Series the contours adversely represent the body's biological expression when encountering the vertical plane rather than the void. In doing so the profiles become detectable and relatable.

When the surface imitates the natural expression of the body, it allows the void to be left as void. Enticing people to inhabit the space often left un-entertained.

Progress:

Using the process of fabrication as a tool to help facilitate the observation and reflection of the potential experiential qualities of the surface, the next array of scale models will explore the opportunities of using the human form as the source for the surfaces expression.

inverted
analysis

Figure 47

2.7 Surface as Body

2.7.1 Surface as Body Maquette One

Aim(s):

The aim is to envision the newly extracted contours of the human form into a more lucid representation of what the surface could be developed around.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

As soon as the surface began to take the form of the human body, it rendered the horizontal plane as almost an extension of the vertical, reminiscent of 2.2.1 Frederick Kiesler. This is notably detectable in side elevation and plan, as the contours project and then fade into the horizontal plane. A comparatively more seamless and organic transition than the previous attempt at rendering the void, and increasingly more artful than the 90 degree angle of difference governing the junction of planes in the likes of a lot of contemporary architecture.

Despite my personal view that deemed the new contours that embodied the human stature to be quite palpable and pronounced, after entering into numerous discussions with thesis colleagues, the contours were not being interpreted or translated so distinctly.

The intention is not to make the form completely overt however for the source of the form to be somewhat apparent. Allowing the antithetical form to not be dubious but be relatable with the intention to participate in a dialogue with its audience.

Progress:

Trying to mediate on a level of suitable ambiguity, the subsequent phase will focus on means to make the contours more indicative of the human silhouette.

surface as
body
maquette

Figure 48

2.7 Surface as Body

2.7.2 Surface Installation Silhouettes

Note: Aim(s), and Observation(s) and Reflection(s) for 2.8.2 Surface Installation Silhouettes and 2.8.3 Installation Scale Models

Aim(s):

The aim of the next series of models is to introduce void as a means to better present the biological body as the source of the design. Additionally, exploring ways to blur the vertically stratified structure (a reoccurring issue first illuminated in 2.7.2 Series One Surface Maquette) and permit a suppler surface.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Again by tracing over the photographs, the profiles begin to celebrate void more within the profiles of the surface to help communicate the organic body. Location points of the body that are distinguishable and easily identified became void - such as the arms, hands, legs and feet. The porosity of the profiles gives the structure greater depth. Additionally the illusion of layers is seemingly more emblematic of the skins cellular tectonic.

Concurrently, the body to surface interaction developed into three various undulations as shown in plan diagrams. The intent was to experiment with various arrangements of the profiles to see how the architecture of the surface would change. This inspired the introduction of horizontal contours. Moving away from the vertically stratified structure of the profiles, horizontal contours introduce a greater sense of movement and progression. The contours provide a point of reference so one can better perceive the degree of movement and spatial submission between each profile.

Figure 49

series one

series two

series three

Figure 50

2.7 Surface as Body

2.7.3 Installation Scale Models

A series of scale models were made in order to enable the abstract intellect of form to be thought.

Note: Progression for 2.8.3 Installation Scale Model and 2.8.4 Vertical Somatic Topography

Progression:

The three variations of the surface provide different extensions of the skin and experiences of the body. The contraction and expansion of the connection is undulant and pliant. When the surfaces are placed together, this surface becomes even more forceful and desires greater understanding and interpretation – both, which are strong feelings within the body of one visually receiving the surface. It is within this visual interpretation that I want to explore the possibility for intimacy to felt, allowing the surface to connect to the environment and for the ability of touch to connect the audience to the surface - a synchronisation of the space defined by the surface and the space defined by the subject.

series one

Figure 51

2.7 Surface as Body

2.7.3 Installation Scale Models

series two

Figure 52

Figure 53

2.7 Surface as Body

2.7.4 Vertical Somatic Topography

Figure 54

2.8 Reflection and Conclusion

Throughout the literature reviews, artistic precedents and the series of bodily investigations/experiments, immediacy two's body of work reinstates and supports that the body is truly the general medium to which we have a world.

The mind projects the body onto its surroundings in an effort to generate understanding, to interpret the environment and to generate a feeling within the body, to that we then respond. It is here, somewhere in between our attention, perception, understanding, reason and communication/response, that an affective reaction and intimate connection is established. These connections that often cultivate a change in the body's state are heightened and demand greater awareness when a situation or environment does not conform to our expected conventions. Thus causing us to challenge our habitual reactions.

Architecture, even the mere architecture of a surface, has the capacity to generate an affective reaction. When you take something as dynamic, organic and energetic as the human body and engage it with a surface that is exact, stiff and flat, the differentiation it is startling. Adversely, if you take an architectural surface (or skin) and make it curved, organic and serpentine, it bestows a similar 'unfamiliar' effect on our understanding, interpretation and emotional response.

The intention behind the generation of these various surface prototypes was to re-engage the body to the environment. An engagement that better suggests that the relationship between the biological body (nature) and architecture (culture) should be one of extension - extending the physical, geographical and temporal immediacy of the body, exploring the potential for architecture to be something of the biological.

The space(s) that these surfaces project are supple yet definite, cryptic yet detectable, engaging yet piercing, and most importantly their architecture is completely polarising when placed in proximity to the ordinary surfaces that often define our spaces for inhabitation. As of yet, the surfaces exist without a location/context, and without the attention of what material will enable this form to be thought. The moving body of urbanity has yet to show its presence and impact on the process of curating these surfaces. Thus, the next chapter, *3.0 Surface to Site* will endeavour to look at the surfaces potential against the material forces of the urban environment.

Figure 55

Figure 56

3

Immediacy Three

surface to site

What

How can a prosthetic surface – a vertical somatic topography – be used as a tool to provide awareness and counteract the sensory deprivation, monotony and tactile sterility that seem to afflict the urban environment?

Why

It is the interstitial spaces – interior corridors – that are hankering for urban activation. When using the human body as metaphor in architecture, what is deemed as exterior and what is deemed as interior is suggested by the physical boundaries of the skin? Thus, through the introduction and application of this prosthetic skin onto the third skin of architecture, it signifies the potential for interior architectural strategies to be realised in urban corridors. This strategy and application is an attempt to induce a new immersive spatial condition.

Figure 57

"BUILDINGS ARE EVERY-
WHERE, large and small, ugly and
beautiful, ambitious and dumb.
We walk among them and live
inside them but are largely passive
dwellers in cities of towers, houses,
open spaces, and shops we had no
hand in creating. But we are their
best audience"

- Alexandra Lange

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3.0 Introduction to *surface to site*

Whilst each explorative phase matures in scale, there is perpetual motivation to respond to the founding question: How do modes of communication between body and architecture affect the way we design, construct and experience space? With the ambition to better understand the reciprocal relationship between the biological body and architecture through design, the process of naturalistic observations and experimental investigations has realised that the relationship has undoubtedly become one that is largely spatial. As Eva Mahdalickova explains, “... space is one of the most essential and natural experiences of our existence.”

When our urban surroundings are largely defined by vertical/ horizontal surfaces, the visually monotonous characteristic and qualities of our spaces for inhabitation generate a criterion of expected conventions. When the architecture conforms to these expected conventions, the spatial performance of the body is preconceived and lends itself to be a commonly passive experience. Through the development of a prosthetic surface – determined by how the body confers, engages and responds to flat planes – it explores the opportunity for surfaces to depart from their rigidity and expectedness, and be something of the biological.

This climatic explorative stage intends to challenge the findings of Immediacy Two and the conceptual 2.8.4 Vertical Somatic Topography with a site and introduce material behaviour to allow the ephemeral form to reach physical conception. The surface will disturb a chosen omitted space in Wellington Central and create a new immersive spatial condition.

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.1 The Dialogue between Interior and Exterior

Adolf Loos writes, “The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior” (Colomina 33). For Loos it was almost hopeless to render the exterior of a building in the experiential terms of the interior. What Loos is prescribing to the independent systems of architecture is a type of silence, “recognition to a kind of schizophrenic metropolitan life” (Colomina 33). Loo’s proclamation of the parting between the interior and exterior is no less a realisation of modern life. Where the existence of our being is proceeding on two disparate levels of experience.. “... Our intimate being has split from our social being” (Colomina 33). But, if “Modernity then coincides with the publicity of the private” as suggested by Colomina, is Loo’s depiction of the unprecedented split between the interior and the exterior superfluous? Then instead of accounting the antithesis between the interior and exterior what needs to be investigated is the redrawing of boundaries?

Within the context of the interior and exterior being two disparate conditions, Loos suggests that “The interior speaks the language of culture, the language of the experience of things; the exterior speaks the language of civilisation, that of information” (Colomina 33). What then happens when these two irreducible climates superimpose? This redefining of the boundary of interior and exterior presents the void, the seams between the elements as the raw material of possibly. The surface being the location where they superimpose.

Through the application of interior strategies, these spaces can eloquently engage ‘interior’ within the ‘urban’ and become the junction of the two disciplines. Revisiting the urban surfaces that outline the empty spaces between the masses, considering how the manipulation of surfaces and the generation of form can change the meaning of space. Surfaces that depart from the static and engage the body and architecture in a reciprocal dialogue. Colomina attests in her commentary on the City in her book *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, “... it is this obsessive concern with the surface that constructs the intimate. The intimate is not a space but a relationship between spaces” (Colomina 28).

3.1.2 The Urban Interior

The urban environment is being transformed in social and cultural ways arguably at a more rapid pace than the architecture. The prevalent traditional dichotomy between architecture for the interior and exterior is shifting. Unlike Loo's suggestion, boundaries are being traversed (Atmodiwirjo et al. 78). It is argued that this shift is a repercussion of the superimposing status of private and public space (Poot et al. 46). In response, temporary domesticised spaces and informal territories are surfacing as people are beginning to use public space more and more, almost as an extension of their own private living space. But at the core, the perceived experience of being inside and being outside is absorbed through the physicality of the body. Therefore when considering the relationship and communication of the biological body to architecture, being inside and being outside are interchangeable. The increasing interiority is diverse.

It is proposed here that the interstitial spaces – interior corridors – are hankering for activation. It is these 'voided' spaces and seams between the elements that create the urban environment; that resonate meaning to the city. Through the application of interior strategies, these spaces can eloquently engage 'interior' in the 'urban' and become the junction of two disciplines. When using the human body as metaphor in architecture, what is deemed as exterior and what is deemed as interior is suggested by the physical boundaries of the skin? Thus the skin becomes the boundary "through which the potential to span outward from the interior may be realised" (Handcock 7).

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.3 Sensual Neglect

Horizontal planes and vertical walls often choreograph urbanscape. These elements that congeal into objects of architecture embody characteristics of fixity and rigidity. The planar verticality and horizontality of the surfaces are conducive to certain uses and feelings (Lew 10). It can be argued the built environment merely appeal to prosaic means of inhabitation and exist in stark contrast to the human body.

The human body is anything but static. The body deliberately expresses itself through reactive and interactive fluctuations. The urban environment is a network of speed, chaos and unpredictability – all forces which are generated and shaped by the body. Thus is the architecture that frames our shared urban environment an unaccustomed extension of the human body? A defiance of pragmatic need that conforms to pre-given virtualities that don't recognise the natural body and realise a denaturalisation of the human body's transformations.

In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* he states, "The body is our general medium for having a world" (146). The physical body is the mediator between our conscious mind and the space(s) we inhabit. Our complex multi-sensory vessel mediates on the incoming stimulation in order for us to grant meaning to the inter-subjective environment we occupy. This enables us to react and interact with our surroundings. The only connection our internal selves have with the physical environment is the body. Irrefutably, without the body, a world would cease to exist. Alana Inglis pointedly states in her master's thesis *Boundary*, "There is no line; no body without space and no space without the body" (10).

It is not uncommon for people to dignify that society, culture, politics and money divides us internally. Architecture goes relatively unseen as a factor that invests years in dividing us. "Spatial experience is our social interaction with the world" (Fisher 83). So, if much of the contemporary architecture that frames our social environment is comprised of manufactured materials, flatness and romanticised perfection, architecture "has lost touch with the holistic process and expression of making" (Fisher 199). The planarity of contemporary architecture inherently removes us from our primal awareness of space.

Thomas Ibbotson in his master's thesis *Skin* states, "It has become obvious that there is a disparity between the static surfaces of architecture and the dynamic surface of the active body" (9). If the skin is a sensory surface through which we perceive and understand the world, then why do we not adapt the metaphor through architecture to heighten sensorial and somatic relationships between body and architecture? Can surface be an expressive interface that helps architecture become something more attuned to the body?

3.2 Site Selection

3.2.1 Wellington City Council Laneway Upgrades

When decidedly choosing to locate a design in an urban space the requirement to know the council's goals and ambitions is essential. Throughout the evaluation of Wellington City Council's Inner City Regeneration plan(s) and specifically the laneway projects, the importance of flexibility and creating a dynamic central city is energetically advocated.

Upon personal reflection, the projects that have since been completed (for example figure 58 and figure 59) seem to celebrate improved lighting, anti-slip surfaces, and periodic incidences of vegetation, as well as decorative (painted) facades and street furniture. Undeniably these upgrades do make the pedestrian routes safer and more inviting – encouraging more foot traffic. However, the creativity of the designs seems to be restricted by the reign of planar surfaces and the collinear paths that the surfaces designate. Despite being upgraded, the creativity of the designs does not offer a sensual or true experience to its assistants. A lot of our laneways and streets remain utilitarian as the engagement between the architecture and body is dormant and left rather passive.

Figure 58 Bond Street refresh and community garden

Figure 59 Cuba Connection refresh

Key projects in our plan

Inner City Regeneration:
"Making streets and laneways
more inviting."
– Wellington City Council (2015)

THIRD PARTY CONTENT

Figure 60 Our 10-year Plan
Wellington City Council

3.2 Site Selection

3.2.2 Additional Wellington Laneway Precedents

Figure 61 Egmont Street upgrade

Figure 62 Eva and Leeds Street

Following on from the previous sentiment that expresses the lack of intimate operations between the surfaces of recently upgraded laneways and the body, the spaces and surfaces are merely a backdrop for the biological silhouette.

3.2 Site Selection

3.2.3 Initial Site Concept

Aim(s):

After meandering through the laneways of Wellington Central, the initial inclination was directed at locating the prosthetic surface within Bond Street. A photographic site analysis (Figure 64) and concept collage (Figure 65 on the following spread) was done.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

The reasoning for locating the prosthetic skin throughout this passage that connects Cuba Street and Victoria/Willis Street was inspired by personal observation of pedestrian's walking velocity. When changing orientation off of Cuba Street or Victoria/Willis Street and to then walking along the length of Bond Street, people's walking pace seemed to increase. Yet, when they encountered either Victoria Street or Cuba Street their slower pace resumed. Was this a result of Bond Street providing very little stimulus and so the gaze was always projected in front leading people on a definite trajectory? The allure of this connection too was that it seemed to link two very distinct environments. The bridge between these two very distinctive and contrasting poles did not charge Bond Street with energy, yet left it in idle. Charged with overwhelming emptiness.

Progression:

After the site analysis maquette of Bond Street was complete and the impulsive concept collage, the impact was relatively residual. I think the topographic surface was underwhelmed by composition, placement and location. It was not a convincing plea. For that reason the desire and impulse to promptly locate the design in a laneway was put aside. The more holistic process and expression of making presided again and were inspired through the contemplation of the following precedents [3.3.1 Les Atrounautes](#) and [3.3.2 Richard Serra](#).

Figure 63

Figure 64

3.2 Site Selection

3.2.3 Initial Site Concept

Figure 65

3.3 Artists' Profiles

3.3.1 Les Astronautes

Designed for the Les Passages Insolites art festival, Canadian design collective Les Astronautes designed Delirious Frites as a temporary urban installation that lines an omitted alley in Quebec (Howarth). The hundreds of protruding pool noodles create a completely immersive environment that deliberately contrasts the historical context. The “uncanny, organic and lifelike” walls invite pedestrians to walk through, touch and hide amongst the tubes (Howarth).

Lighting on both surfaces illuminates the alleyway and generates a festive nighttime environment. But beyond being “pink, fluffy and narrow,” the design collective’s more complex and underlying approach to defining space is where the success of this installation stems from. Their designs are energetic, witty and reformist, and are deliberately dedicated to creating “total environments, surprising atmospheres that intrigue and throw people into a totally different world” (Shapedscape).

In a short interview with Shapedscape, the design collective described that the success of the installation resided in people’s interaction. They go on to say:

We were surprised to see how much people were curious and wanted to make the detour to walk through it. As designers (almost architects!) it was very interesting to witness this anonymous and unused space become such an attraction. Some residents of the area even started to integrate the passage in their daily commute.

The power of designing something unpredictable, wandering and somewhat bizarre that does not conform to our expected conventions proves successfully in this precedent. People respond to the unfamiliar and unconventional, thus allowing the design to instruct a different and more attentive connection between the anonymous architecture and the biological body.

The use of both surfaces, indicative of almost a cocoon like setting, is a design intent that I want to experiment with. Instead of focusing on one wall, what if both surfaces of the laneway were presented with this prosthetic somatic topography. Would that construct and instruct a more immersive and sensorial status?

Inspired by Les Astronautes adaption of surfaces and unprecedented anatomies, this installation led me to enquire the works of [3.3.2 Richard Serra](#) and subsequently contemplate the performance installation by Marina and Ulay further.

Figure 66-8

3.3 Artists' Profiles

3.3.2 Richard Serra

Richard Serra utilises the tradition of sculpture as a vehicle to return the art form back to something more intimately attuned to the body's stature.

Serra's concern with the implicit relationship between sculpture and viewer has directed his work to transcend the cloistered space of galleries and museums. The physical insertion of his gargantuan sculptures in public spaces such as "municipal parks, corporate plazas and memorial sites – defies the public's expected conventions of an outdoor environment and causes the body to recalibrate itself. By provoking a temporal affective reaction it advocates for Serra's desire to make art something that is "participatory in modern society, that is, a gesture, or physical insertion into everyday life" ("Richard Serra").

Serra's retrospective sculptures constructed from tons of looming Cor-Ten steel pushes the viewer's experience beyond the optical and works towards inducing a somatic participation. Serra calls his mecca sculptures "the least optical pieces" (Kimmelman).

First exhibited at the Dia:Beacon art centre, the layout of Torqued Ellipses circumscribes a path enclosed by bent, curved and folded steel plates that transforms the public nature of the site and engenders a personal exploration (Caspary).

The minimalism employs "a rhetoric of purity, primacy, and immediacy" (Chave 266). The curving steel causes the interior corridors to contract and expand. The feeling of disorientation and melancholy causes the viewer to become conscious and willing to trust in the unadorned surface. Unwittingly you become partner with the emotionally charged artwork. You get to know the nature of the architecture bestowed within only by walking through the steel skin. Reminiscing on his filmmaking background, one could parallel the experiences his sculptures curate to the characteristics of film. As described by Michael Kimmelman, the unexpected cavities and enclosures, "were like plot twists with surprise endings" (Kimmelman).

Figure 69

3.4 Corridor Series

3.4.1 Enclosed By not site specific

Aim(s):

Inspired by the likes of 3.3.1 *Les Astronautes* and 3.3.2 *Richard Serra*, and performance artist 2.3.1 *Marina Abramović*, the maquettes that were made in *Immediacy Two - Body to Surface* were used for further experimentation to generate a bounded passage, "corridor."

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Rather than looking at each surface in isolation, the organisation of them parallel to each other proposes a sensation of expansion and contraction. Such an experience would generate a wave of connection, disconnection and re-connection between the surface of architecture and the surface of the occupant's biological body; challenging and restoring our psychological and physical receptivity to the environment. Akin to the characteristics that the surface attempts to emulate, the relationship/experience between the inert surface of architecture and our undulant biological cloth would become suppliant, adaptable and responsive through involvement and incorporation.

Note: 3.4.1 Enclosed By continues

series one.two

series two.three

series three.one

Figure 71

Figure 72

3.4 Corridor Series

3.4.1 Enclosed By

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Additionally, the notion of expansion and contraction references the findings of Immediacy One - **Body as 'Site'**. In the design and construction of the prosthetic what became most profound upon reflection was that unlike the fixed dimensions that are often granted to our 'personal bubble', the body is actually a spatial entity surrounded by space that expands and contracts around the body at various coordinates. Our intimate space is not a constant radius around our body but undulant and fluctuant.

The findings from **1.7.7 Prosthetic Analysis**, disclosed that my intimate "bubble" fluctuated between 0.411m and 0.498m in radius. Using this as a simple indicator, the plan diagrams on the adjacent page are suggestive of how the corridor composition of the surfaces challenges this intimate space through the means of contraction and expansion upon this intimate sphere.

Note: 3.4.1 Enclosed By continues

series one.two

series two.three

series three.one

Figure 73

Figure 74

3.4 Corridor Series

3.4.1 Enclosed By Corridor

Progression:

With this navigation away from single surfaces to the concept of a corridor reinstates that the anatomy and available surfaces of Bond Street are neither conducive nor accommodating of such a composition. Nonetheless, site specificity is an imperative step towards driving the design of the composition, the possible construction techniques and evaluating the experience(s) of the prosthetic *vertical somatic topography*.

Figure 75

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.1 Site Profile

After navigating the laneways of Wellington on foot, investigating the briefs of laneways that are either going through regeneration schemes or require some form of imminent regeneration, and conducting brief historical accounts of the city's seams, Lombard Street quickly became an enticing venue.

Running perpendicular and bisecting eastern Bond Street (original site), Lombard Street is a seemingly anonymous site with a relevant historic and modern narrative. Once a main arterial route that connected Wellington's original foreshore to maritime "wharves, timber yards, and maritime administration buildings" (Wellington City Council). *See appendix 1 for Historic photographs

Today, Lombard Street is a predominantly pedestrian thoroughfare that is currently going through a one of the council's laneway upgrades. Construction began in June 2017 and has been progressing concurrently with the master's thesis program. This provides the opportunity to respond to the real conditions of the site simultaneously over the term of construction.

It was quite startling that the site that has been left for the most part redundant and anonymous once formed the original shoreline of the Wellington waterfront. The site that was once at the presence of human bodies has long been left omitted and used as a "shortcut" rather than a "thoroughfare." The dreary, anonymous and forgotten laneway with a profound historic and contemporary profile has been left in the wake of Wellington's modernisation and is hankering for

Figure 76

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.2 Council Proposal and Site Anatomy

Figures 78 and 79 are artistic representations of the council’s vision for Lombard Street. Akin to the projects previously discussed, the upgrade echoes and embodies similar utilitarian characteristics. The upgrading of materials, lighting, increased vegetation and the introduction of more storefronts lends the creativity of the space to becoming bland, homogenous and unauthentic.

As shown in the installations by 3.3.1 Les Astronautes and 3.3.2 Richard Serra, the power of curating a unique and relevant spatial experience is imperative to inhabitant’s emotional and physical receptivity to their environment. Engaging the community within the public domain is invaluable.

A new three storey building on the west and older multi-storey buildings on the east defines Lombard Street. The vertical projection of these buildings generates a narrow and uninterrupted pathway. The framework of bare surfaces provides the opportunity to incorporate a prosthetic form in an effort to establish/define a new type of geometry that does not conform to the usual rectilinear thoroughfare. As a designer and a pedestrian, there is this yearning for the site to widen and narrow, to create shifts in the perception of space and distance which is left unresolved in the current scheme.

- The project will:
- highlight the entrance to Lombard Street to make it easier for people to find their way around
 - brighten the area at night with new and energy efficient lighting
 - create a shared space to encourage people to visit the area
 - improve the sewer, stormwater, and electrical services along Lombard and Bond streets
 - improve the quality and slip resistance of paved surfaces
 - make improvements to the Bond and Victoria streets junction.

(Wellington City Council)

THIRD PARTY CONTENT

Figure 78

THIRD PARTY CONTENT

Figure 79

Figure 80

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.3 Site Anatomy Response

Aim(s):

Whilst the council were implementing their design, this thesis was responding with a very different, suggestive design. After reflecting upon the council's vision and the desire to having something deviating from the supposed, the next series of diagrams investigates the various opportunities that the site anatomy provides for the implementation of the developed surface.

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

In the Corridor Installation Series, the attention of the audience would be primarily on the installation and not on the existing site's surfaces.

Figure 81

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):
In the Punctuation Series, the
attention of the audience would be
shared between the installation and
the site's surfaces.

*Note: 3.5.3 Site Anatomy Response
progresses to 3.5.4 Site Anatomy
Response Synthesis*

Figure 82

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.4 Site Anatomy Response Synthesis

Observation(s) and Reflection(s):

Upon reflection on the previous compositions, the 4.360m width of the site allows for the two configurations.

Reintroducing the intimate space indicator as per the previous exploration [3.4.1 Enclosed By](#), the diagram on the adjacent page illustrates how the wider corridor facilitates one/two individuals to gingerly navigate the site with little stress upon their intimate space. Whilst the alternative condition generates a more intimate experience whereby the vertical somatic topography compresses one against the existing architecture, forcing one to engage with the current static whole of the surfaces around.

Progression:

In order to illustrate these spatial conditions in more experiential terms, this composition will be modified and rendered into a sequence of perspectives in an attempt to make this abstract intellect more tangible.

Note: Refer back to 3.4.1 Enclosed By

Figure 83

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.5 Concept Collages

The prosthetic surface informed by the body, lines the anonymous laneway counteracting the planar verticality and horizontality that commands the site. The composition and orientation of the installation emulates a gateway to the original shoreline. Generating a completely immersive environment and experience that intends to remove the “otherness” between the static surfaces of architecture and the dynamic surface of the active body.

Figure 84

Figure 85

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.6 Concept Collage Reflection and Surface Analysis

After contemplating 3.5.5 Concept Collages and trying to depict the experiential qualities of the surfaces, the lack of consideration towards representing the site's material qualities was hindering. If the vertical somatic topography intends to function as a prosthetic, ignoring the existing surfaces to which they will be arranged on or adjacent to seemed counterintuitive.

This navigation away from addressing the site's materiality also questioned the materiality of the prosthetic surfaces themselves. Throughout the fabrication of models in immediacy two and throughout this chapter's digital representation, the surface has intuitively adopted characteristics of timber with little rationalisation or speculation.

Surfaces and materials define the spaces our bodies inhabit and experience. Materials are the surfaces we touch - they celebrate light and shadow, reflect the sounds we send and receive, reveal the textures we taste, and the perfumes we smell.

The surface analysis diagram on the adjacent page was made in conjunction with numerous site visits. It provides an exploration into how the organisation and behaviour of material(s) can help guide, direct and balance the variation of form.

Key

- metal facade
- glazing
- masonry
- stores/entries
- overhang

Figure 86

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.7 Surface Opportunities

The material and surface analysis challenges the location of the prosthetic surfaces within the space. By acknowledging the reflective qualities of the glazing, the incubation of the overhang, and the possibility to fix the prosthetic surface to the crimped metal façade, the organisation of the site's materials and surfaces facilitated a more mindful and responsive organization of the prosthetic surfaces.

- Key
- a. single prosthetic surface attached to metal facade
 - b. stand-alone, mirrored surface installation anchored to ground plane

Figure 87

Figure 88

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.8 Surface Tectonic/Fixing

- a. single prosthetic surface attached to metal facade

Figure 89

Figure 90

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.8 Surface Tectonic/Fixing

- b. stand-alone, mirrored surface installation anchored to ground plane

Figure 91

3.5 Lombard Street

3.5.9 Material Exploration

As previously disclosed, the site and the nearby area has a varied maritime history, inclusive of being the site of wharves, timber yards, and maritime administration buildings.

Having tested various material compositions, and having reflected upon the intuitive navigation towards representing the surfaces with timber like qualities, the continuation of timber was rationalised and upheld through the final visualisation of the installation.

More specifically, cupressus macrocarpa was chosen for its qualities beyond its decorative and visual allure. Macrocarpa is readily available on the market, endures low shrinkage, and has excellent stability and workability. Furthermore, macrocarpa has a lovely perfume, which would help excite the senses, induce encounters beyond the visual, and incubate occupants as they meander through the topography.

steel + cupressus
macrocarpa

copper + cupressus
macrocarpa

white steel

Figure 93

3.6 Our Third Skin

The antithetical form of the installation de-constructs and disturbs the space in which it is presented imposing an affective spatial reaction between body and surface.

Figure 94

Figure 95

3.6 Our Third Skin

The new space defined by the somatic topography provides a point of difference and counteracts the sensory deprivation bestowed within the existing planar surfaces. The prosthetic suggests a space to slow, ingest, interact, and confer you in a moment of realisation of architecture's immobility and insensitivity to the ever-dynamic natural body.

Figure 96

Figure 97

3.7 Models

3.7.1 Site Scale Model (1:15)

Note: Aim(s) for 3.7.1 Site Scale Model (1:15) and 3.7.2 Tectonic Scale Model (1:1)

Aim(s):

Akin to my intentions behind the model making in the second chapter, I wanted to revisit model making as the main means of representation/communication. Often the gap between the abstract intellect and the physical conception is where the experiential qualities of the design can be left dormant. Through the fabrication of a 1:15 scale model of the installation and context, in conjunction with a 1:1 segment scale model of the installation tectonic, it is a means to mitigate the ambiguity in the design and help communicate key experiential qualities of the design such as, scale, texture, materiality, and shadow/light. It also allows the design to become tangible and emerge from the confines of visual 2-dimensional representation. The process of fabrication too challenges and verifies the structural integrity of the design tectonic.

Figure 98

Figure 99

3.7 Models

3.7.1 Site Scale Model (1:15)

Figure 100-1

Figure 102

3.7 Models

3.7.1 Site Scale Model (1:15)

Fabrication Photographs

Figure 103-4

Figure 105-6

3.7 Models

3.7.1 Site Scale Model (1:15)

Fabrication Photographs

Figure 107

Figure 108

3.7 Models

3.7.2 Tectonic Scale Model (1:1)

Figure 109

Figure 110

3.7 Models

3.7.2 Tectonic Scale Model (1:1)

Figure 111-2

Figure 113-4

3.7 Models

3.7.2 Tectonic Scale Model (1:1)

Fabrication Photographs

Figure 115

Figure 116-7

3.8 Final Exhibition

Figure 118 Final Visual Presentation

3.9 The Trace of the Skin

Figure 119

4.0 *Our Third Skin* Conclusion

In the discipline of Interior Architecture, the human body is at the core of everything we design. Yet as I was framing spaces for inhabitation, I gradually became conscious of my inept understanding of my own body's space. How was I designing spaces for inhabitation when I did not even understand how much space my body occupied? These vertical walls and horizontal planes became overwhelmingly passive and constant, whilst my body desired to be active, variable and dimensional. This propelled my thesis and devised the question that I endeavoured to provide insight to: How do modes of communication affect the way we construction, use and experience space?

When you analyse contemporary architecture at and/or from the scale of the human body, you become unequivocally aware of the relationship between the body of architecture and the biological body. A relationship of spatial opposition, passivity and detachment. The built terrain of the urban environment and the erected structures that emerge at monumental scales define our spaces for inhabitation, yet they remain unwittingly unsympathetic and unresponsive to the dynamic fluctuations of human anatomy.

Thrift's theory of affect prompts a more holistic and compelling exchange. A discussion that challenges the way we imagine, represent and calibrate the relationship between the inert matter of architecture and the dynamic matter of the biological body. To engage the body with architecture, the discourse of affect suggests that triggering the sensate impulses of the physical body and conscious mind injects the body and amplifies the experience of the built environment.

As a site of transformation, and the axis of spatial experience, I decided to use the cognitive and physical landscape of my body as the source of inspiration throughout the progression of this thesis. Prior to this thesis, I rarely gave thought to the experience of my body. Yet it is our general medium through which we experience, perceive, interact and respond to the world. Enabling myself to be the source of exploration and a researcher/observer, it allowed be to better understand how the body detects space, mass and boundary. It is within this vulnerability bestowed within the process of getting know and understand my body that only then I could begin to know, understand and design for others.

Centred in numerous theories and as depicted in the series of bodily analysis and the final fabrication of the *Body to Space Prosthetic*, the permeability between the body and space is fluid, intrinsic and instinctive. If the way we experience space is conditioned by the way we express space, do the surfaces/the skins of architecture then in virtue frame spaces for inhabitation that are an

unaccustomed extension of the human body? It is through this process of using my body that I discovered that it was the uniformity of the built environment that left the visceral interior mind at bay and the body in a seemingly ambiguous state. Here one realises that the carnal experience between body and architecture results in a denaturalisation of the human body. But just as the interior body affects the exterior body, interior architecture should too influence the exterior skin. It is here that the third skin became the focus of the thesis. Analysing the metaphor to generate a pliable plane that extends and weaves between the scales of the body and architecture.

The notion of skin was questioned in chapter two in the series *Body Imprint* where an intimately profound realisation of detachment between the physicality of my body and the physical presence of an architectural plane flourished. This discernible contrast, though confronting, was exciting. Materialising an opportunity for these two conditions to become physically responsive and accommodate one another.

By acknowledging that the skin of architecture is the protagonist that defines and communicates space, the sensorial and somatic interface between body and architecture progressed the design-led research. The process of naturalistic observations and experimental investigations of the body, galvanised by the notion of space and skin, showcases how the human body can be used as an organic origin and aesthetic catalyst for architecture. Realising a dynamic skin (prosthetic surface) that departs from the prevalent planar stature and embodies geometry that is inspired by the oscillating form of the organic body.

This expression of the body used to inform the undulations and proportions of the *Our Third Skin* adapts to its occupants through an intentioned unexpected awakening and arousing curiosity – an affective reaction. The interplay between the control of the inert skin and the freedom of the dynamic movement of the occupant, suggests a type of balance. A relationship that manifests qualities that sparks when the two unite. Impacting not only the occupant's bodily practices but intellectual, emotional and physiological being through their personal spatial exploration. Akin to the works of Richard Serra, the physical insertion of the prosthetic surface could occur in any given context. Whether an interior or exterior environment. Yet the purpose of supplementing urban surfaces was a gesture of showcasing the duality that exists not only in the body but also between the interior and the exterior of architecture.

Ultimately, when conceived from the biological body, architecture has the capacity to activate and intensify our senses, stimulate our consciousness and fundamentally heighten our experience of the built environment. No longer are the vertical and horizontal planes that conceive our voids for inhabitation realise a denaturalisation of the human body's transformations, they are a canvas of opportunity to return architecture back to something of the biological and truly be our third skin.

4.0 *Our Third Skin* Conclusion

This thesis provides the foundations for further exploration into how the body can be used as the protagonist in designing, constructing and enhancing the lived experience of the built environment. A design led research portfolio that is grounded through the holistic process and expression of making to bind the interdependent conditions of architecture and the biological body. If the body communicates through space and the spatiality of the body exists in its inherence to the physical built world, the body should be the protagonist of architectural design and be the solution to our sensual estrangement from architecture. The hope is that this thesis will inspire fellow designers to investigate the relationship between the human body and space, and too show that interior strategies that can be applied to any program, at any scale, and within any environment/context, as architecture is always for bodies and yearns to be at the presence of the human body.

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Our Third Skin