WALKING BACKWARDS ON UNEVEN GROUND

these are the rooms in which my ghosts live .

Walking Backwards on Uneven Ground

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for Joy,

I have had the incredible privilege of connection with some astonishing, patient, and generous people during this thesis.

Thank you to Dr. Rebecca Kiddle. I am so grateful for your guidance and companionship on this journey.

Thank you to my beloved friends and family. This work is as much on your shoulders as it is in my head.

x

ABSTRACT

All place has embedded meaning – it is a reflexive method for understanding ourselves through existence in space. We create meaning in place by associating it with (personal and/or collective) memory. As we frame our worlds in context of our places and spaces, architects have an ethical responsibility to their clients, and to the wider society whom they serve. This thesis posits that contemporary architecture in Aotearoa must respond to a need to diversify views on aesthetic preference. This research investigates memory and meaning creation as considered through nostalgia, and subsequently, the cumulative knowledge gained through impressions or experiences. This research utilises an auto-ethnographic methodology to explore personal experience – through memory – as the building blocks of the self. This self-construction is inextricably related to the development of personal aesthetic preferences and is extrapolated out to the collective aesthetic preference or norm. This work reflects on - and moves us towards - a critique of form, function, and meaning-making processes, that claim objectivity; in support of subjectivities.

PREFACE

At my most positive and my most peaceful I am a romantic, and perhaps even an informal• romanticist.

Where possible I prefer to live in scenes I create; a sunday morning at home is a symphony composed of memories, imagination, nostalgia, and god forbid – reality. Tasting notes of this particular daydream include the sun streaming through a window at the kitchen sink – or maybe the gentle sound of rain on the roof. Golden classics on a record player. Coffee in a hand-thrown mug, warm butter and pancake batter wafting through the room.

In my travels through nostalgia and day-dream I have found that when I look forwards, I look backwards. An imagined scene is not set purely in the future, because it is composed of notes from the past. One paints with the hues on their palette.

As such, I spend a lot of time in my memories••. I am interested in the ways that we carry these with us, often without realizing. It is for this reason that I was first drawn to the broader topic of memory in this work.

Decanter Bay was profoundly affecting on my younger self, and was a clear opening focus of my study. Prior to undertaking this work, however, I had visited the bay only twice. First, at four years of age on a family holiday. On this trip, we were joined by my Grandma Joy – with whom I was very close until her passing in 2019. In holding this place, I have held joy with me.

Other moments in time and mind have also been sheltered in this cove - some literally, such as my tenth birthday, and some metaphorically – such as my continued love of a misty moody southern day.

Looking past this thesis, towards a potential career in architecture in Aotearoa, I have been unable to shake an uneasy feeling. If I wish to lead an ethical life, how can I abide playing the role of architect on land that is not my own? How do my memories rest in these hills?

Who am I to design on this land?

I am yet to answer this question... it certainly isn't the work of one young Pākehā in twelve months.

For now, I can ask more simply Ko wai au? Who are my waters? Where are my memories?

In an attempt to go into the future with eyes just a little more open; seeing my world, seeing myself, and seeing what I bring to design.

Ka mua, ka muri •

Above all, I must reflect that undertaking this work was a love affair of nostalgia, memory, and day-dreaming. It was a privilege to take time to dig into my past, my memories, and myself.

with love and gratitude,

Kate

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INTRODUCTION

This section is the laying out of the work. In this part I have introduced myself, and offered insight into why I began this work – to contextualise the research, and the personal or wider concerns it considers. I discuss literature or knowledges that contribute to an overall theoretical framework, which is necessary for perceiving the work. I also set out the scope and structure of the research.

POSITIONALITY

`we must recognize and take account of our own position, as
well as that of our research participants, and write this into our research practice'.*

- Linda McDowell 1992, *in Rose 1997*

*. . . the positionality is an opportunity to reflect on - and express - the place /person who conducts the research,
and 'position' it within dialogues . . . to acknowledge the intersection between academic knowledge and power
... and to situate oneself in the research*

As far as is known to me, I stretch back through Pākehā rivers of lineage. Undertaking this research required me to, for the first time, engage more actively with my family trees. The knowledge that is held within my whanau relate our lines to the south of England, Wales, and along the way a 'bastard' child of a Lord in English occupied Scotland. I am the living product of what, on a personal scale I do not doubt was an emigration of hope, but on a greater scale is in fact a violent and enduring colonisation.

From this world of colonisation I have benefitted in a multitude of ways. The knowledges of my upbringing have always been reflected to me - and supported by - the world generally; including the school system and media.

Additionally, I have had access to not only a (extremely Euro-centric) private secondary education, but I was encouraged to achieve a tertiary qualification. In all of these environments I have not only been a part of the Pākehā centric norm, but I have also enjoyed the support of my wider family; a family meal once a week during my studies - encouragement from all. The comfort that my privilege has furnished me with has made me unconsciously complicit in the structures of my world. It is my life work – and an underlying intention in this thesis – to continue to unpick these false frameworks, and support myself and other Pākehā in our own decolonisation.

To develop this thesis I have been working within – and with the support of – a western Euro-centric institution; a system founded on exclusion and prejudice. Universities have a history of epistemological and ontological discrimination, suppression, and violence which has significantly underpinned – and 'validated' - colonisation. This persists within the institutional frameworks – reflected particulalry in the types (whose) of the knowledge that are favoured and endorsed. Although I have worked to produce this research through a critical lens, I regret that I have relied heavily upon ideas that are accepted by western knowledge generally. It has been my intention to re-work those thoughts as part of a new framework; turning the old on its head to create a contemporary way of knowing. Despite this, further work on the ideas that this thesis introduces would terrifically benefit from a more thorough inclusion of knowledge from outside of the mainstream Pākehā learnings.

The positionality with which I approach this work is, sincerely, explicitly that of my state of being; a privileged young Pākehā grappling with the world – straddling a complex divide between how I have been taught it to be, how I re-learning it to be, and how I wish it to be.

I acknowledge it is itself a privilege to be naive, it is a privilege to have to learn – to be able to learn. I am earnest in this work, and, I am grateful.

"I read somewhere that writers, or perhaps all artists, are haunted or hunted by

unusually vivid memories of their early lives"

- Byatt 1998

SCOPE

This thesis does not attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of the relationships between memory and architecture, nor does it aim to produce a final design or solve a research question. This research is an intuitive and iterative pursuit of knowing through design research. This thesis is primarily embodied by speculative process work, and does not produce a specific architectural resolution to a distinct question.

Ultimately, this thesis does not set out to answer questions, but ask them.

RESEARCH AIM

It is the life work of every person to make sense of oneself. We constantly and iteratively interpret and reinterpret the world around us, kneading the dough of our lives for meaning. Lived reality is an experience of the mental flux between the experienced, spiritual, remembered and imagined.

This thesis looks to memories of places to investigate how it is that we create meaning, and perhaps in doing so, we create ourselves.

This work responds to the following meta-narrative:

Exploring relationships between personal-self-creation, bias and/or aesthetic judgement, and architectural meta ethics that move us towards a critique of form, function, and meaning making processes, that deny inherent subjectivities.

"Few people have the imagination for reality"

- attributed to Goethe (Bosworth 1984)

The overarching methodological approach was broken into three parts – of unequal weightings -, each informed by and building on the previous;

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

This thesis is an auto-ethnographic journey. A narrative of personal discovery through design-led research in three parts. The theoretical research, methods, and case studies are woven throughout, following and supporting the epistemological journey taken over the course of this work.

1. Part one is an attempt at an autoethnographic / auto-archaeological dissection of memory on a singular scale. Memory, meaning, and experience are naively explored in an auto-historicist / pseudoscientific style at one site. This inevitably resulted in the collapse of the original research question or framework, prompting the recalibration of the research question.

2. Part two introduces an amended research direction in response to the findings of part one. Simultaneously an intuitive literature review and iterative process design experiments are conducted. Part two sees an extension of the work through the inclusion of both new theory and a greater data set.

3. Part three expands upon both part one and part two – reaching farther than the constraints of the previous two parts. Inter-disciplinary links are drawn between ways of thinking, which are explored through various iterative design experiments in different modes and at different scales.
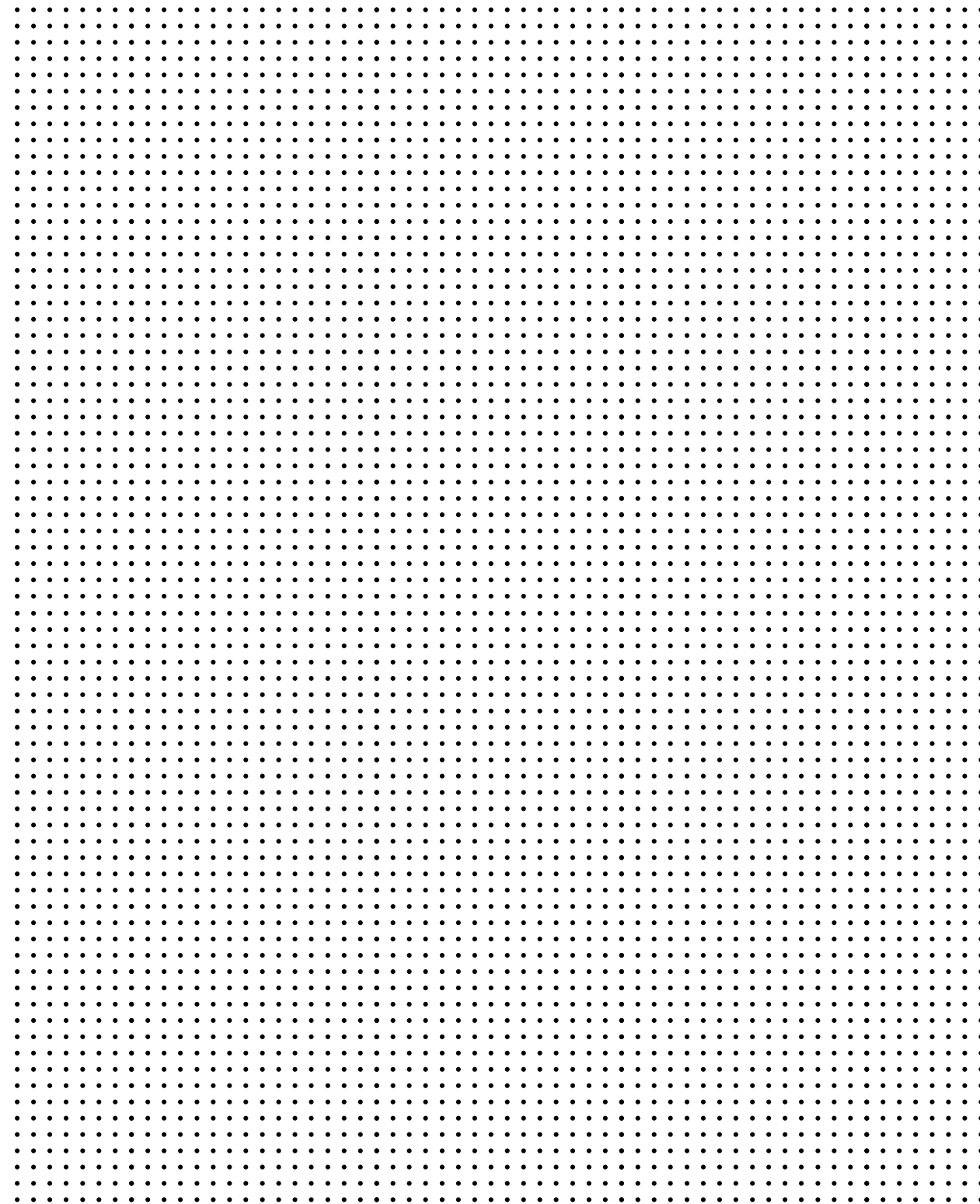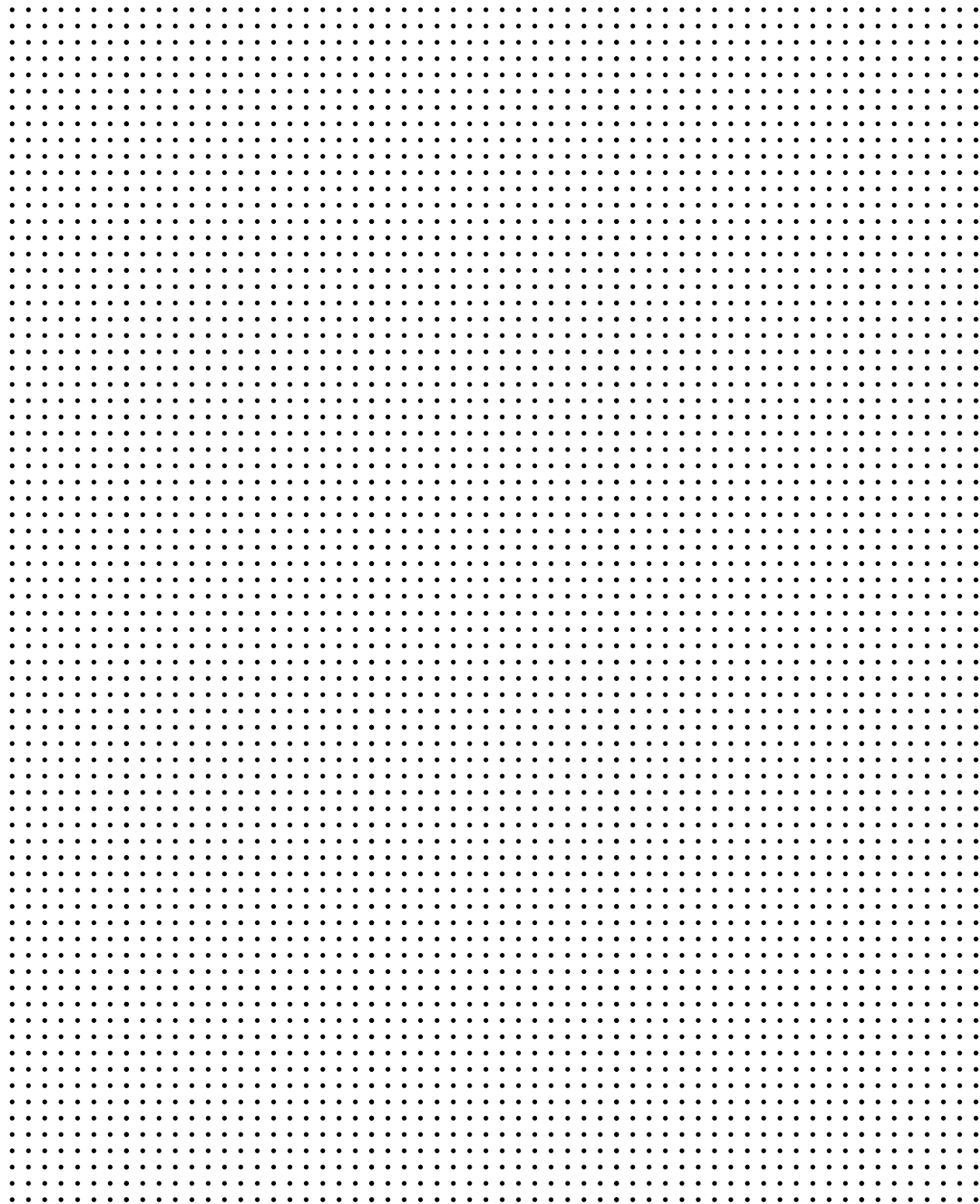
FOUNDATIONAL
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This next part of the work discusses the knowledges and critical theory that I assimilate into an overall theoretical framework. This set of knowledges is foundational in understanding the research.

note : the hierarchy of the diagram denotes only the way that I have positioned them in my thinking, or the connections I made in accessing them.
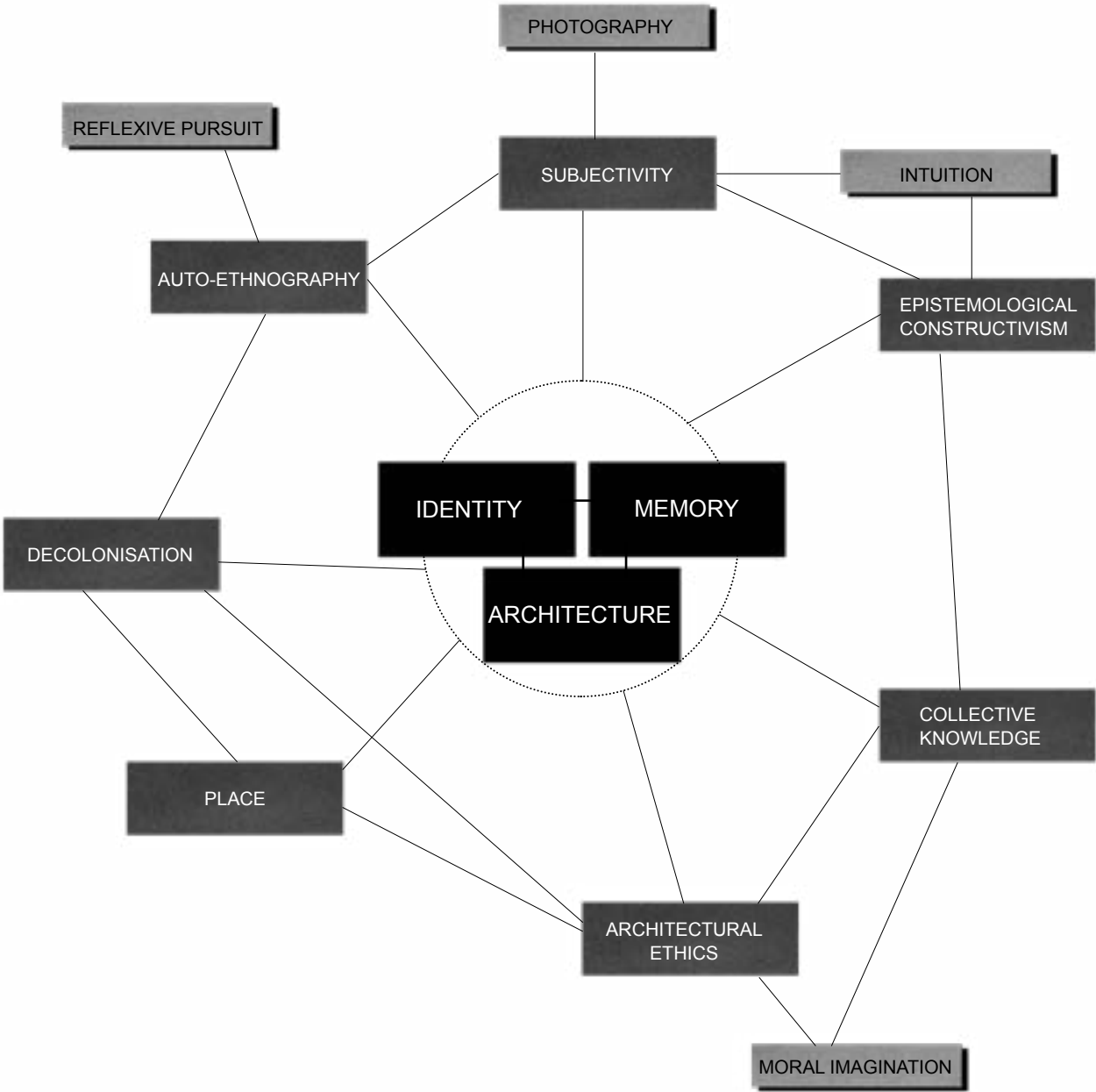
PHOTOGRAPHY

REFLEXIVE PURSUIT

SUBJECTIVITY

INTUITION

AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

IDENTITY   MEMORY

DECOLONISATION

ARCHITECTURE

COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

PLACE

ARCHITECTURAL ETHICS

MORAL IMAGINATION

fig.3. diagram : overall theoretical framework

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Typically in western education, research is conducted within the assumption of objectivity - denying the presence of that researcher or claiming them to be outside of the research. Using an autoethnographic framework I, the researcher, am situated at the centre of this research. Autoethnography reflects a profound and pronounced concern with subjectivity, not just in the research itself, but in the ways that we affect and understand the world around us. Durham tells us that "autoethnography invites us to consider how our bodies and lived experience shape how we interact and represent culture" (Durham 2017). French philosopher and sociologist Jean-Francois Lyotard told us "there is no objective truth, only narratives about truth" (Chaplin 2011). Autoethnography is an embodied method that asks "how am I?" by turning inward to the personal truth constructed from personal experience.

This core value of autoethnography is also the strength of the methodology; that an autoethnographic work pursues reflexive awareness. Autoethnography not only carefully and systematically produces 'scientific' knowledge, but it also provides the background against which the knowledge can be evaluated by its audience. It claims to be only that which it is; not an objective truth, but only one peice of a greater puzzle of knowledge, produced at a specific time under specific conditions.

Autoethnography essentially acknowledges the parameters of the research. Take for example an experiment in a lab, autoethnography accepts that the outcome of the experiment is dependent upon not only how the experiment is conducted (as in typical western objective science), but also what knowledge the experiment is seeking to confirm. For research typically is conducted to answer a question, and autoethnography accepts the obvious and fundamental truth; that different questions will return different answers. Further, autoethnography asserts that who is conducting the experiment (and what their lived narratives are) affects the outcomes of the research – even to the degree of that particular question having ever been asked.

This research has been conducted as a personal exploration along a (sometimes non-linear) journey. The original research question became defunct as early as the end of part one, and the themes of the work were naturally developed and transformed into a new research interest twice further. This was a natural progression of the work as it shifted; a methodological structure that reflects the very epistemological content of the work.

Rather than use a passive third person tense, which presumes both a separation between the writer and the text and also an objectivity, this work has been written in a first person past tense. This supports the autoethnographic framework that fundamentally underpins this research.

REFLEXIVE PURSUIT

This thesis is created through a reflexive approach to research, in which the research outcomes of each part (and during each part) inform subsequential directions of enquiry. Using the approach of iterative design experiments I embrace the intuitive flow of the research. This method of discovery underpins foundational beliefs I hold in regard to learning and knowledge – that knowing is a continuous and active approach, rather than the holding of information. This thesis is interested in research as it is embedded and embodied within processes; a sentiment supported in Palaasmaa's work which highlights that architecture is more about understanding the world around us, and less about final built results (2012).

The methodology I have developed in this thesis primarily involves iterative design process experimentation in parallel with ongoing theoretical research, together in an intuitive and continuous exchange. As a result, the review of literature in this thesis is in no way exhaustive on any topic discussed. With the exception of the literature based research, methods I have used in this research are predominantly autoethnographic. Principally, these methods used are process based, and seek to create knowledge as a new methodology or way of seeing.
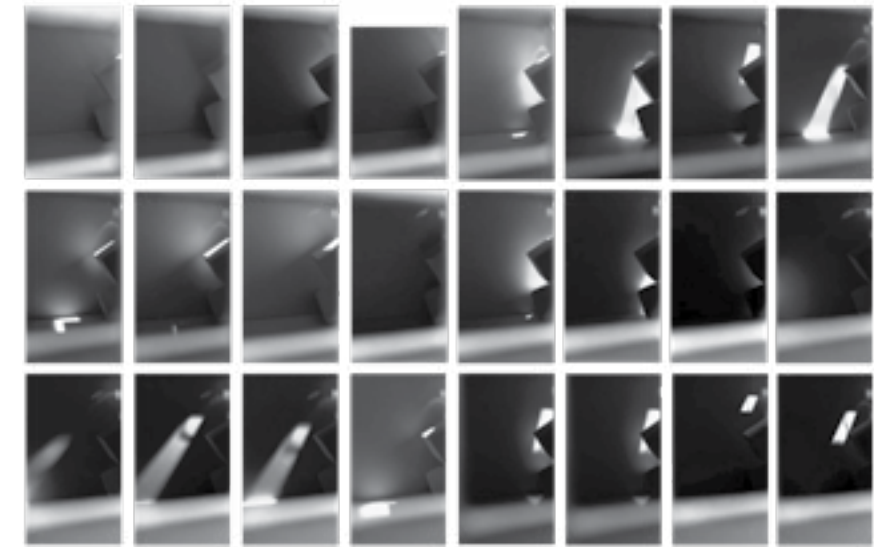
fig.4. iterative study

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

For this research epistemological constructivism is understood not as constructivism but as constructivist approaches. Constructivist approaches are characterised as a "horizontal meta-science"; a way of thinking or approaching knowing that is not discipline-bound, but that can be applied over any number of disciplines or interdisciplinary topics (Riegler 2012). This is particularly appropriate for this thesis, as this literature research and review occurs subsequently in the intuitive curiosity of the work. Constructivist approaches both apply to and bind together all of the earlier research and thought, including: memory, literary sciences, cognition, learning, and architectural design.

Constructivist approaches essentially hold the idea that mental processes are actively constructed by each individual's mind (rather than passively acquired) (Riegler 2012). The term constructing itself implies the basic nature of the overarching philosophy – that our impressions are actively interconnected elements. I visualise this philosophical approach as building blocks in a jenga-like tower. Each person could put the blocks together differently, and the final tower would be different. So too, each person constructs their mental world with different information and in different ways.

The notion of the ongoing expands upon constructivist approaches, introducing the concept of equilibrium (Riegler 2012). It proposes that our mental processes continually adjust, assimilating new information as we mediate it. Continuing with the jenga analogy, this would look like adding new bricks to our jenga tower in such a way that the tower does not fall – keeping equilibrium. This has two implications; that we new impressions are perceived through the 'blocks' our mental state is already constructed out of, and that we mediate new impressions in such a way that they do not upset what we already perceive. All that we know is linked together in an intricate but delicate web.
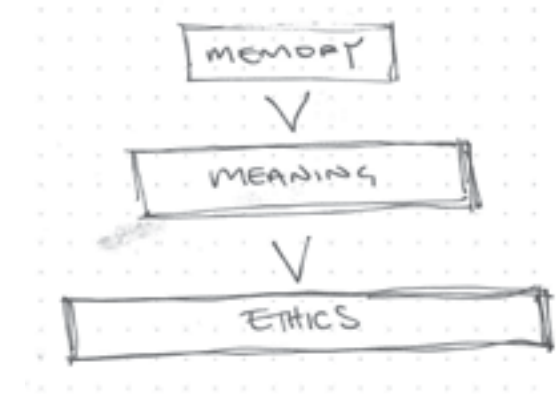

fig.5. memory, meaning, ethics; relationship

INTUITION

Architecture is a rare profession in that it encourages, and even glorifies, the practice of intuition. Intuition has been characterised in architectural thought as "an indirect perception of the deeper meanings and possibilities inherent in things and situations" (MacKinnon 1962). Other authors further describe intuitions as patterns (Linzey 1998).

Intuition or 'patterns' are understood to be the framework that is created to understand the stimuli. In architecture, the architect weaves together this stimuli – from the site, the client, the social expectations etc – and produces a tangible design. Intuition is then yet another example of reading or mediating impressions. Linzey writes; "intuitive patterns, compared to sensory things, are often ontologically unstable...volatile not only in the sense that they are transitory, but also because they are highly mobile and analogical" (Linzey 1998).

ARCHITECTURAL ETHICS

Ethics are embedded in architecture; as a practice it is inherently ethical. Some critics write that architecture is as much about ethics as it is about design

(Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 2000)

Consciously and intentionally, or not, architects presume the preferences and desires of others – or, perhaps more accurately, architects presume the preferences of the client to be as their own. At the very least there is a professional assumption that the architect's preferences are 'correct'. This is innate - and in some ways, necessary - in the practice of architecture. A home (as an abitrary example of project and programme) when designed for a client, is a blend of building standards, societal presuppositions of function, the client's expressed wants, and inevitably, the architect's personal preferences. Architecture is therefore ethical in that it reflects humanity/society back to us. It defines how we should live, and thus too how we should be. It is "a symbolic expression of the limitations, tensions, hopes and expectations of a community" (Botta 1997).

Architecture is "cultural mores physically constructed" (Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 2000; Botta 1997). Each building makes a contribution to the personality or built fabric of the city, signalling what is deemed important by that society. Further it is constructed at a massive scale and in a distinctly public way. Architecture is unavoidable. Unlike public art for example, which can be avoided by not entering the gallery, the gallery building itself is far harder to avoid. Even in the shadow that the gallery building casts over the adjoining street might, architecture makes itself known publicly. Even privately, we have less control over how and what we can interact with than one might presume.

Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo tell us that "the departure point for architecture's special ethics is the central activity of architecture: "designing buildings". Leaving aside for the moment how an architect goes about designing, consider how an architect knows what to design" (2000). They state "to be 'good at designing a building', of course, the architect has to know about buildings, ...how to invent them so they have beauty, and so forth" (Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 2000). The implication here is that the designer must have a necessary interest, not in designing, but in knowing. If the purpose of architecture typically is to 'improve' things, to make a home more liveable as an example, then how is it that we judge improvement (Norberg-Schulz 1968)? How is it that as architects we judge what is 'good' or 'right'? These judgements are the essence of design, and the essence of the ethics of architecture. Further, in judging what is right, that which isn't is by default also defined. Architecture has the power to communicate both what is acceptable, and what is excluded.

a note on scope

When considering the ethical implications of architecture the issue of aesthetics is unavoidable. This research approaches aesthetics and beauty through the lens of the autoethnographic framework, and is therefore consciously reflects only personal preferences. This is towards a personal understanding of knowing, and knowing as a framework for constructing preferences and subjective ideals of beauty.

● ● ● Architect Henry Cobb writes about a concept he called the uneasy professional; "a pervasive uncertainty about how best to fulfill my duty as a professional …a nearly perpetual state of mind …as surely it must be for every architect in practice today whose work significantly touches or shapes the public realm" (Spector 2001). This thesis responds to this professional anxiety in architectural ethicist Tom Spector's approach; "understanding that unease is an inherent part of [their/ our] role" and addressing discomfort directly (Spector 2001; Jones 2020).

Given that architecture is about not just design, but also ethics, as architects we have the responsibility to consider more than design or construction knowledge. We must challenge ourselves to peel away layers, and take the time to consider not only the worlds around us – but also to imagine the worlds into which we would desire to raise the buildings we birth.

As architects we have the opportunity to exercise moral imagination, and utilise architecture in the redemptive roles it has the potential to play.

MORAL IMAGINATION

"Imagination becomes an exploration of structures of experience in which the future as potential event is allowed to interpret the present, so that in a sense it is a way of seeing what is known and understood, but with new insights and in new ways. Narrative...reinterprets 'the past' so that new light is shed on the present. Moral imagination takes that process forward in that it allows the future to illumine that present. We achieve this by using our imagination in situations where moral choices must be made to create scenarios on the basis of which we can make judgements as to how to proceed"

(Collier 2005)

Moral imagination is the ethical holding that as human creatures we have ability to imagine forward possibilities in order to understand or frame current events (Heath 2017; Leach 2005). Moral imagination requires a certain radical empathy (and I posit too, a slowness or gentleness) - a feral sensitivity, in order to imaginatively experiment in the reality of others. Architects have a unique opportunity to fashion futures, and also a unique responsibility to the ethics of these envisioned worlds. Imagination can be a radical act – one that "remakes things entirely and goes beyond what we currently know" (Thomas 2019). It is an opportunity to explore utopian worlds, towards radically different futures.

Architectural practitioners have a unique professional relationship with the future. To design is to envision the future; the practice of architecture itself is a relationship with a future state. Architecture is so innately related to issues of temporality; it speaks to and of the past, yet it is also the role of the architect to shape a vision of the future. Moral imagination, in the context of architecture could also play an important role in the critique of our contemporary environments – whether these be our tangible occupied worlds, or our socio-psychological worlds.

DECOLONISATION + COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Architecture has the influence to determine what the future could be and – in exercising moral imagination - the opportunity to evaluate how the present is, an additional component is in establishing how the present (socio-cultural condition) is constructed. Umberto Eco tells us that "...no culture (in the topological sense of the word, as a system of scientific and artistic ideas, myths, religions, values and everyday customs) can subsist and survive without a collective memory. Societies have always relied on memory in order to preserve their own identity..." (Eco 2013). As a nation we are the sum of our collective knowledge and memories – and, architecture is one of the vessel of this collective memory.

In *Imagining Decolonisation* Moana Jackson quotes Cherokee writer Thomas King as saying "The truth about stories is that that's all we are" (Okri 1997; Jackson 2020). The stories we tell ourselves are so intrinsically intertwined with both who we perceive ourselves to be, and who we become. This is a self-perpetuating cycle; in the context of Aotearoa: what mainstream Pākehā are as a collective (or at least societally dominant) entity is the knowledge – or architecture – that we produce. As Eco states "even in inventing something new we need a common encyclopaedia from which to start" (2013). Here, this common encyclopaedia is understood as the collective knowledge as to how a house should be. The ethical design issue is not only how the house is designed, but also what or which (or whose) knowledge we are drawing from.

Ben Okri; "Nations and people are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings"
(Okri 1997)

Contemporary New Zealand relies upon narratives and ways of knowing rooted in colonial violence and Western cultures. This is felt in the prioritising of Euro-centric knowledge and ways of knowing, and the continued destruction and suppression of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. Decolonisation begins as a mental activity at the personal scale; it is a personal revaluation of what knowledge is prioritised and an investigation into why it is considered superior.

"Because whakapapa traverses time between the past, present and future, the building of new relationships and the telling of new stories begins with the identification and 'un-telling' of colonisation's past and present lies"
(Jackson 2020)

a note on scope

It is important for me to acknowledge that in the work of decolonisation, intentions are insignificant. This thesis is rife with contradictions (even having been produced through a western Euro-centric Pākehā normative institution sited on stolen land), as is my own psyche and life. This thesis is a personal reflexive journey, and it is not my intention to speak to the collective knowledge or culture of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a starting point for a lifetime of peeling back layers and self-reflection, it is not an end result nor an end of the road.

This is the start of my work to see my place in the contemporary collective environment, to understand how it is for me to be Pākehā. This is not a new or decolonised way of knowing, this is the start to understanding my way of knowing. This is the development of a personal conceptual framework through which I perceive knowing, and through which I approach practicing architecture.

Going forward, in practice and in life, as a Pākehā I seek to take my cues in the work of decolonisation from Indigenous peoples. This work is simply a chronicle of the opening of my eyes. We cannot evaluate that which we are unwilling to acknowledge.

"the joy of becoming Pākehā is that it requires and nurtures a doubled being: a sense of shared humanity with Māori as well as a deep sense of otherness, of the unknown and the unknowable. For me, it is within that fundamental tension

- it's like the positive tension in a handshake, or a kind steady gaze between two people - that I feel truly alive, and where I make sense"

- Jones 2020

● ● ●

fig. 6. contrast

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A MEDIUM
/ a note on authenticity and subjectivity

Although contemporary art theory continues to acknowledge the presence and power of the photographer in the photograph, as a medium or method photography has a particularly interesting relationship with authenticity and subjectivity. In its relationship with reality a photograph has a distinct sense of factuality; an implicit quality of authenticity. This feeling of accuracy or 'trueness', although misconstrued, implies a value in the photographic medium as evidence or proof (Newhall 2006).

Photography separates the person taking the photograph from the image itself; "the visitor himself is distant", the landscape or subject exists outside the gaze of the photographer (Marot 2003). A photograph has the power to trick us into believing that we are witnessing an object, scene, or person purely – rather than through the gaze of another person. We begin to assimilate the subject and the picture, believing them to be the same thing.

This apparent objectivity is the truth and trick of photography, as photographs are – perhaps deceptively - powerfully subjective. For example, a photograph captures one impression, at one time, by one person, using certain technology – and so on.

Nevertheless there is a natural seduction in photography – the way in which a photograph can immobilise a fragment of a memory. In a similar way to our own nostalgia, photographs "alludes to the past and future only in so far as they exist in the present, the past through its surviving relics, the future through prophecy visible in the present" (Szarkowski 2007).

INTRODUCTION

It is in relation to place that we situate ourselves. Place is not only the physical world, but a complex blend of different psychological meanings including the political, social, and personal and collective historical. Part one of this thesis is concerned with embedded intangible meaning in place. This is interpreted to be the way that a place can hold memory, or meaning in memory of experiences in that place. "The experiences of space cannot be separated from the events than happen in it; space is situated, contingent and differentiated" (Corner 2014).

This concept is tied to seeking to understand some mystic sense that architecture lives inside us; chasing a mischievous notion that within ourselves we live within architecture. It is concerned with exploring relationships between memory, space, and representation – seeking to understand how place can be special (even on a personal scale), following a hunch that it is because we embed meaning in place through our memories of them.

AIMS

Part one was a dissection of memory on a singular scale. The intention was to create a pseudo-scientific experiment in which my own memories were under the microscope. This first part of the research was intended to be the focus of the entire work, that by unpicking memory within this singular specific context I could understand some of that which connects experience and meaning.

. . . *visiting Decanter Bay*

Kate W generously granted access to Decanter Bay, and use of the bach for five nights for a koha.
I am incredibly grateful to her, and also to the other residents of the bay who made me so welcome.

METHODOLOGY

Part one of this research is concerned with this genius loci – this embedded meaning in place; how we remember place, and how we attach meaning to it. This first phase sought to investigate these themes through one specific place associated with a disinct set of memories during a particular time in my life. Decanter Bay was selected as it represented a personal example of a place in which enduring memories had been 'created', and which seemed to be a key foundation for significant reoccurring values in personal nostalgic narratives. I sought to remember the bay – attempting to conduct a faithful comparison between the place as I remembered it and how was for me to experience again. I hypothesised that this rigid approach would answer questions about how special qualities are embedded in place, towards an understanding of how our experiences in space impact our connections with places.

I set out to undertake a kind of autoethnographic scientific comparison. Selecting one site, and one set of memories in that place, rather than memories in general.

theory review

draw + model bach

write prose / extract memory data

build diorama

RE - MEMBERING

sketch, photograph

journal

document / experience

RE - VISITING

site analysis

compile data

design experiment

RE - CONDITIONING
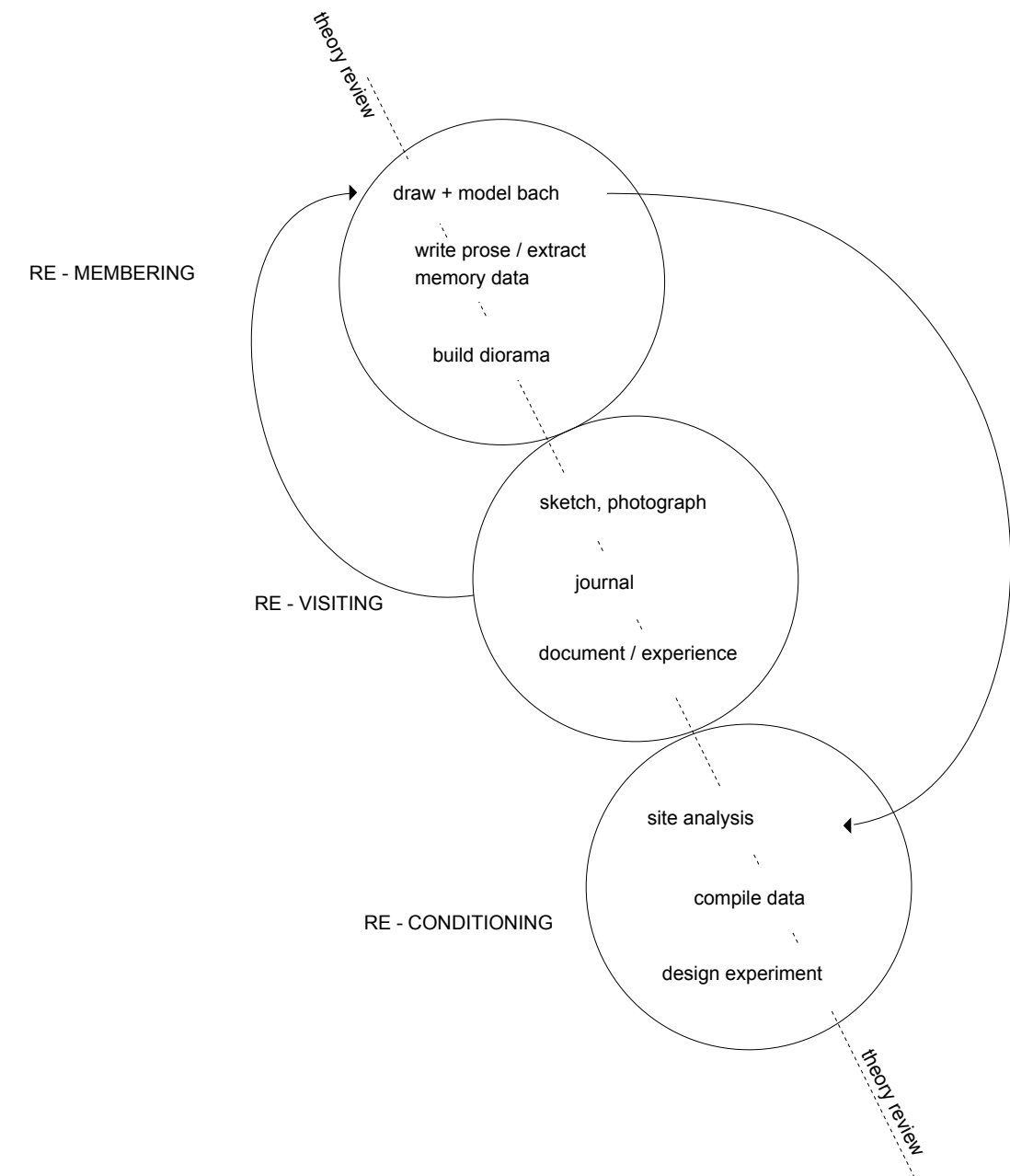
theory review

fig.7. part one methodology diagram

METHODS

To begin, I reviewed theory and case studies to create a framework of knowledge and ways of approaching the work of phase one.

Following this, I began to collect elements of my memories of Decanter Bay. These fragmented studies in prose are nostalgic odes to the place as I remember it. These were often narrative but always intuitive; some focusing on a mood, others on an event, others still on a phenomenological component. Simultaneously I mapped, and then modelled, Decanter Bay as I remembered it. This allowed me to situate the memories and elements I was chronicling, creating an as-remembered site.

The physical model was developed into a diorama within a handcrafted sapele mahogany case/casket. This allowed me to transmute the amassed data into a fantastical physical representation of my own memories – further expanding on the liminal meanings of memory, meaning, and representation.

Moving into the second part of phase one I sought to (literally) inhabit this remembered space. I conducted delicate investigation - balancing avoiding new information yet seeking to contact those who are responsible for the bach/land. After some correspondence, they were so generous as to offer me five winter nights in Decanter Bay – staying in the now-unused bach itself - for koha. Decanter Bay does not have cellphone service and is accessed via a one car gravel farm road, with steep cliffs dropping straight into the Pacific Ocean. I spent my time in the bay photographing, filming, writing, and journalling. These processes were broken up and inspired by walks around the bay and building up the log-burner/stove fire. The final day of the time in the bay was my 24th birthday – twenty years since the first time I had been in the bay. The sunrise was harmony.

Back in studio, I curated the gathered data – compiling the film and audio content into legible clips. I also conducted a formal architectural site analysis of the bay, and developed a conceptual architectural response to my memories and experiences.
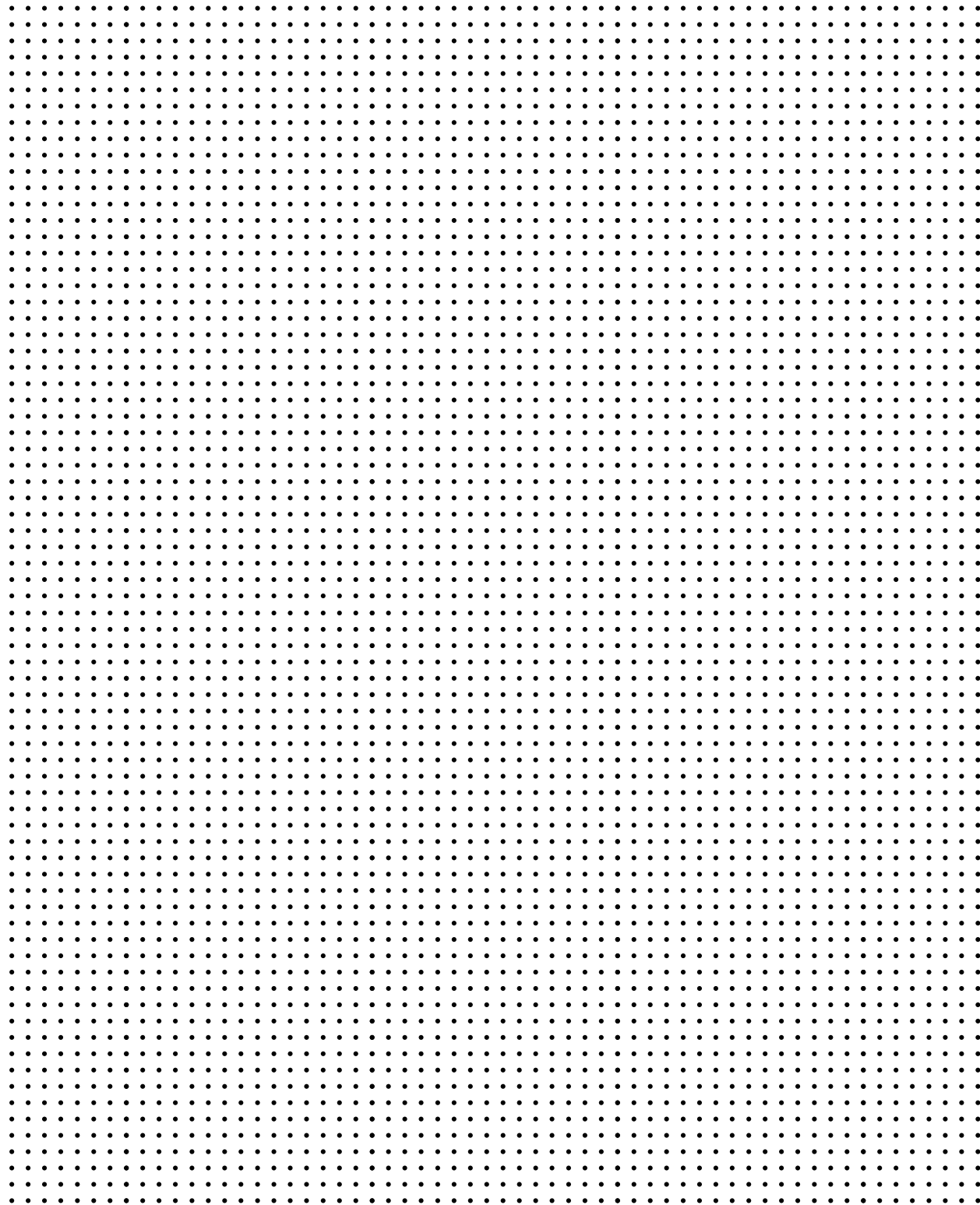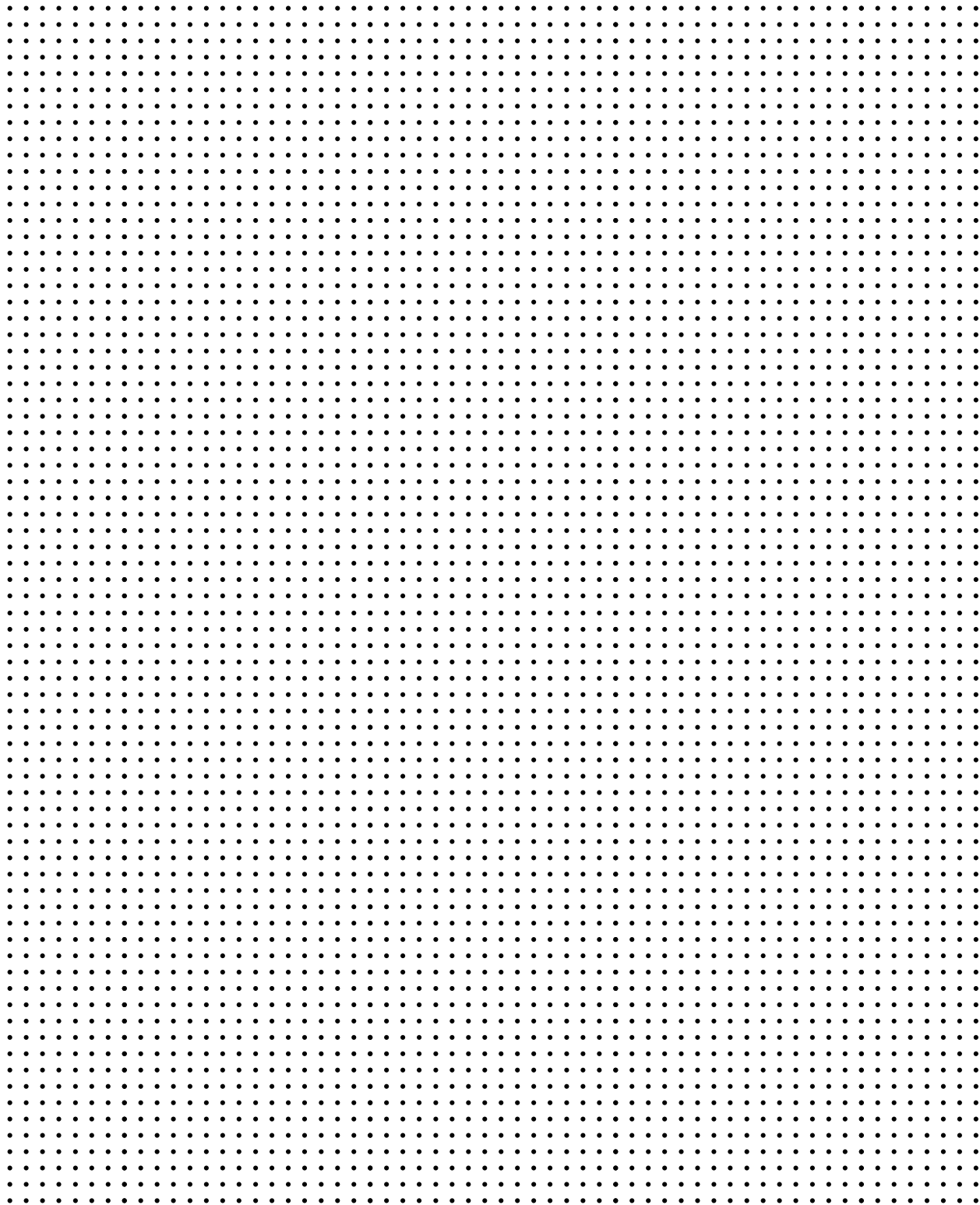
fig.8. Banks Peninsula [site]

Ōhinehou

Ōtoromiro

Akaroa
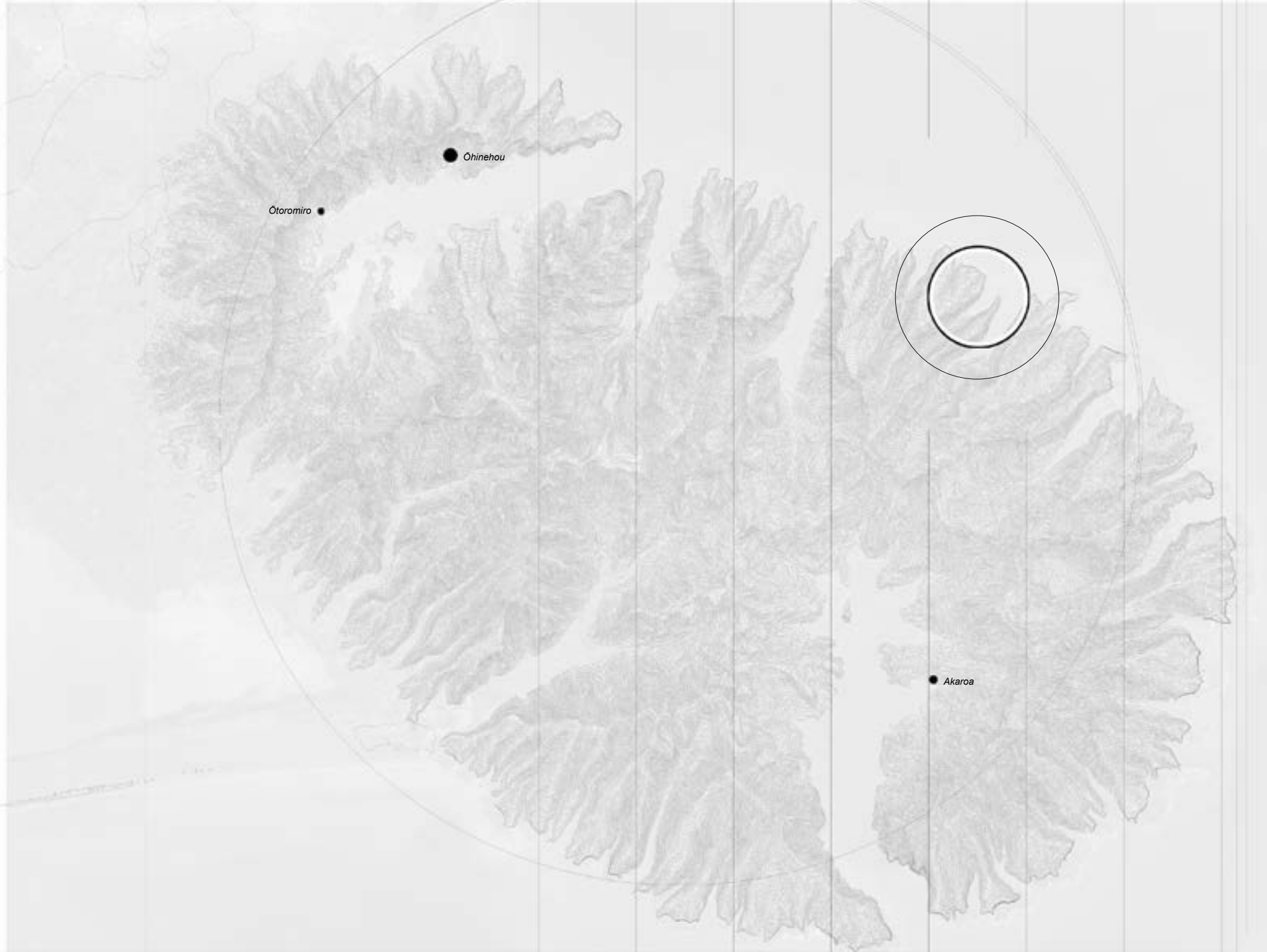
SITE
DECANTER BAY

Decanter Bay is a small secluded inlet in Te Pātaka-o-Rākaihautū (Banks Peninsula) on the South Island of New Zealand.

N

Topographically, the bay is a valley with grassy hills rising steeply on both sides. The valley runs a narrow five and a half kilometres (approximately) from the shore towards the South West, or in to the centre of the Peninsula.

The bay is on the Northern side of the Peninsula, and faces roughly North-East, with views directly out to the Pacific Ocean. The swimmable beach is a gradient mix of rocks and sand, with a small creek feeding in on the Eastern edge.

fig.9. Decanter headlands
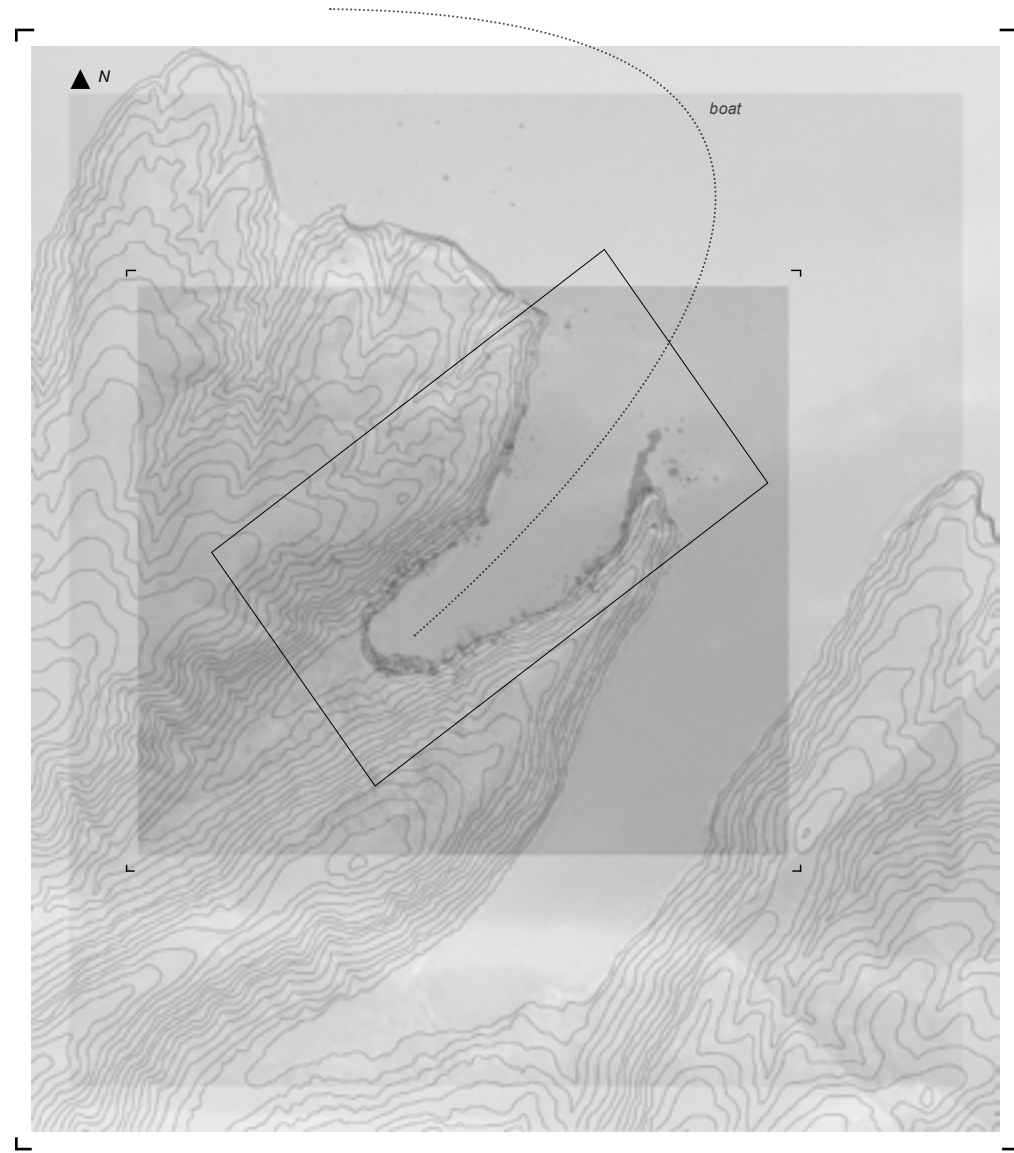
fig.10.   Little Akaloa + Decanter Bay
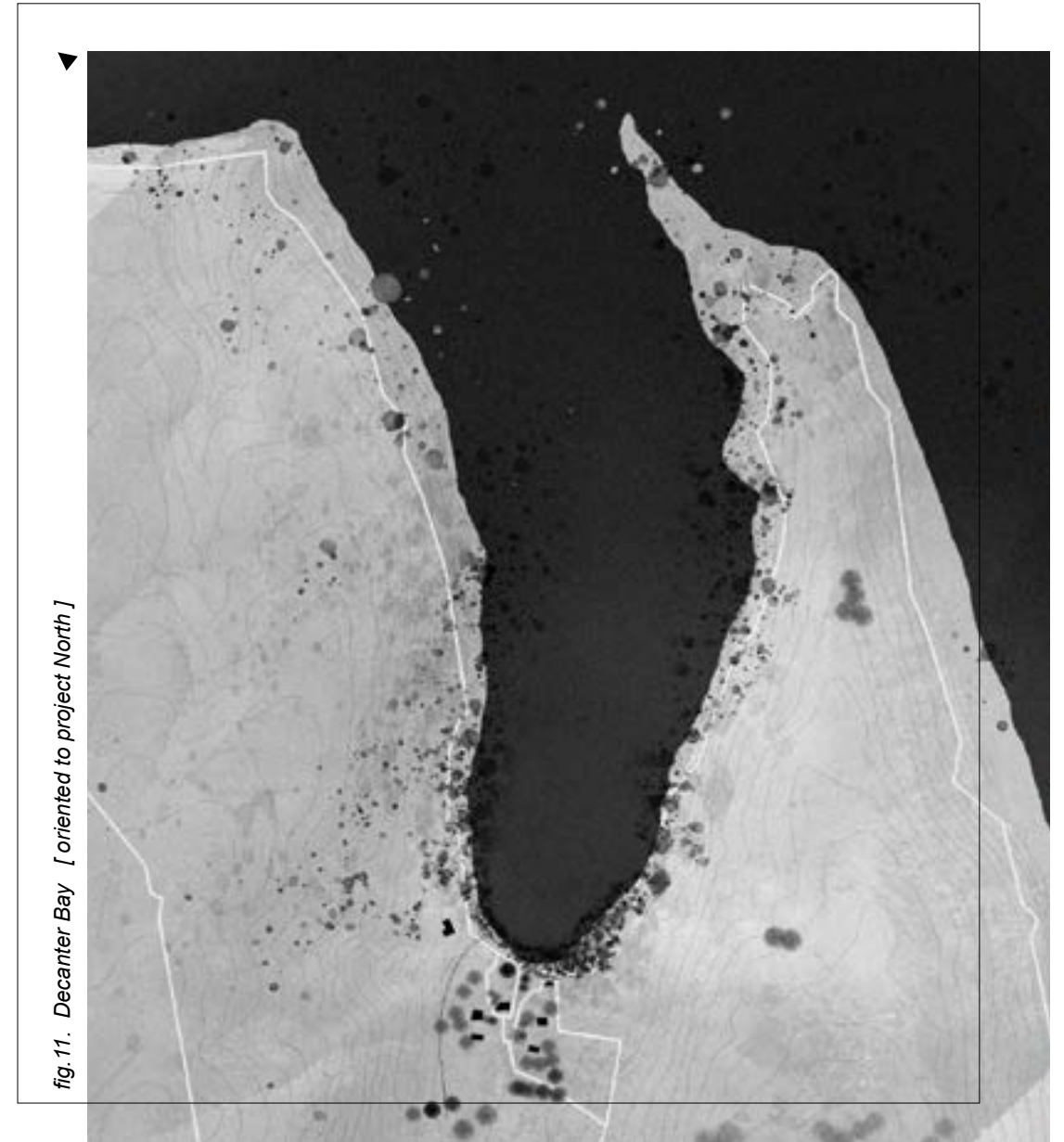
fig.11.   Decanter Bay   [oriented to project North]

SITE : DECANTER BAY

Excluding the shore – which is publicly owned as part of the 'Queen's chain' - all of the land is privately owned, and operated as sheep farms (Welham 2003). As a result, no public access exists to the beach. The bay is accessed via a private gravel farm road; a single-car-width path that winds around a steep cliff-drop into the ocean below. Decanter Bay is around one and a half hours drive South-East from Christchurch, but can also be accessed via the water. Originally, in Pākehā history, boat-access was the only way to enter the bay until it was necessary to begin driving farmstock up and over the hills (Jacobson 1914).

Although the land has been farmed roughly 200 years the bay itself is habitat to a multitude of native and introduced flora and fauna. Given the relative remoteness of the bay, it hosts an abundance of Kaimoana – for example: paua, moki, and butterfish. The land is smattered with Ti Kouka, norfolk pines, and Harekeke. When I visited, in winter, the giant echiums were brown, but the cold-hardy macrocarpas were magnificent. Sheep were regular visitors to me – nice company for my morning coffee on the deck. Possibly some possums sang to me at night.

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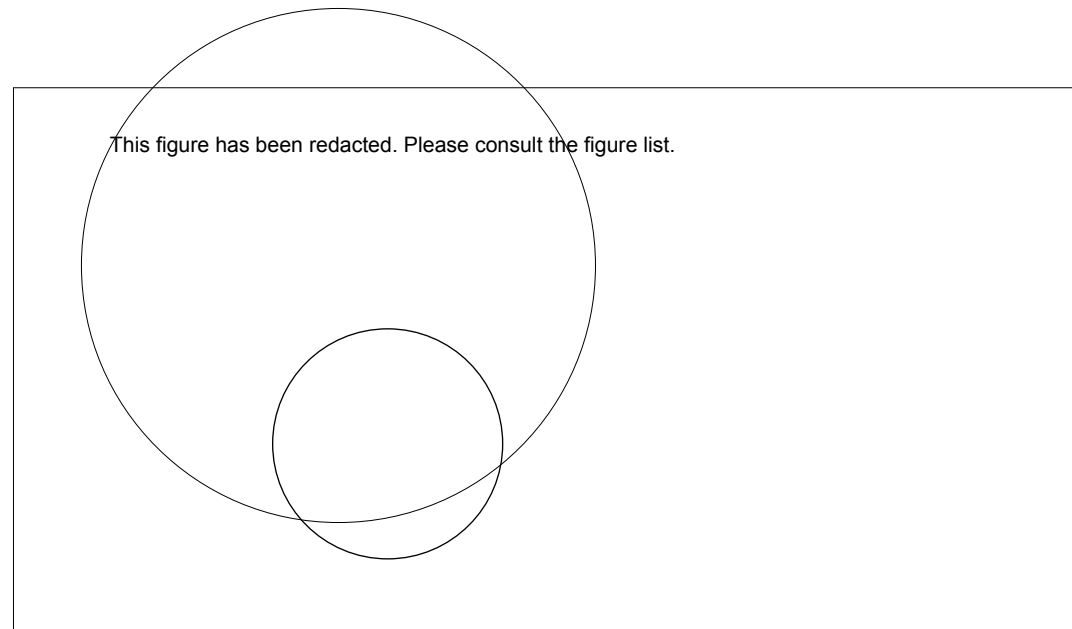
fig.12. *from the headlands into the bay*

fig.13. *cold trees*

SITE

Colonial occupation of Decanter Bay began around 1850, when Mr. T Duncan 'purchased' the land from early colonial Government (Jacobson 1914; Cyclopedia Company Limited 1903).

Although written / (western) history of the bay is fairly sparse, and (european) settler) sources should be approached critically, there is indication of Maori occupation of the bay which - in ongoing colonial violence - has been essentially erased.

In the time a small number of residences have been slowly added to the bay. First, the original farm homestead was built in 1851, and then a second residence on a hill towards the southern side of the bay (Welham 2003). At the time of this thesis, three homes stand in the bay excluding the beachfront bach. The bay still does not receive cell service, but some of the homes have wifi connections.

fig. 14. sail rock
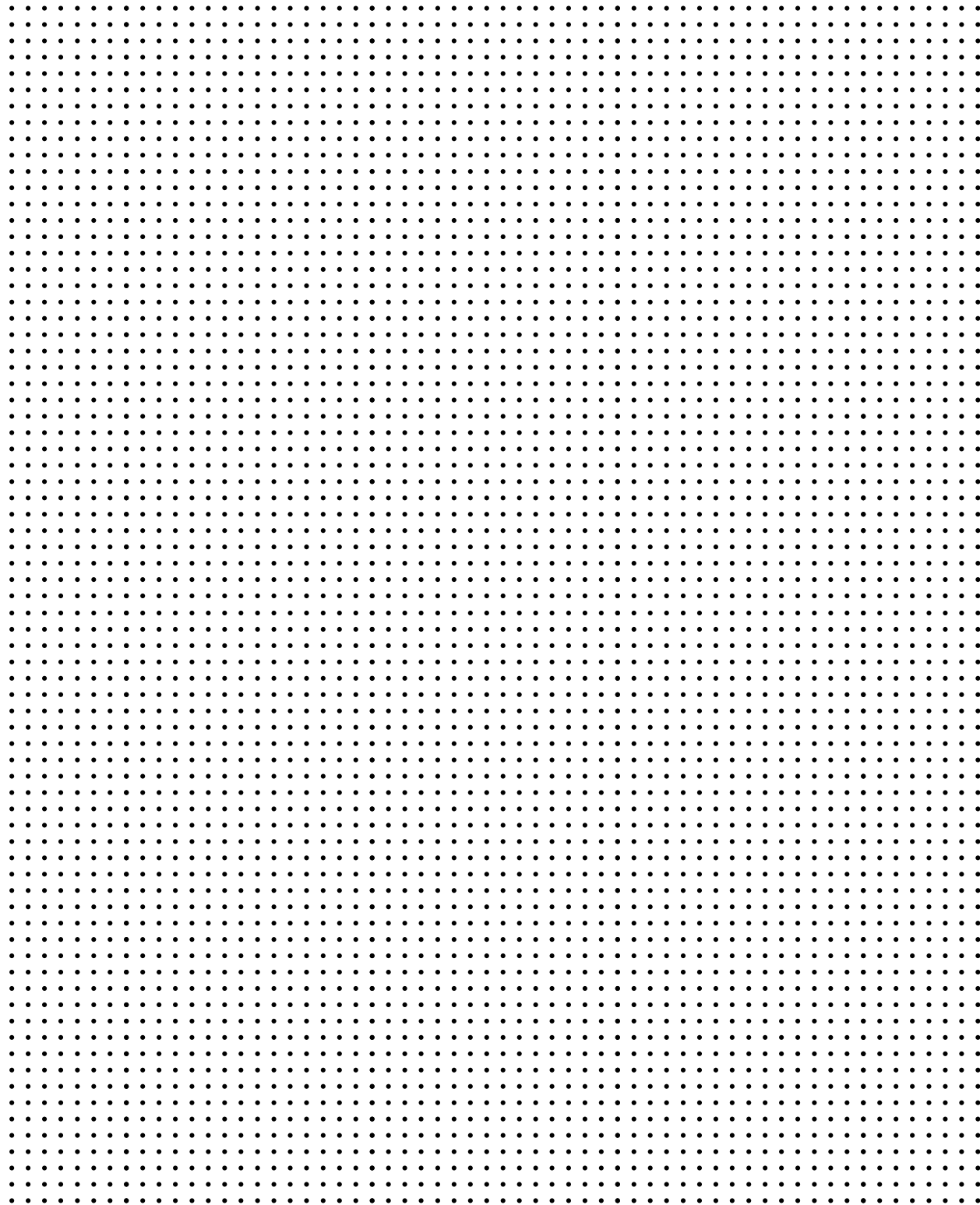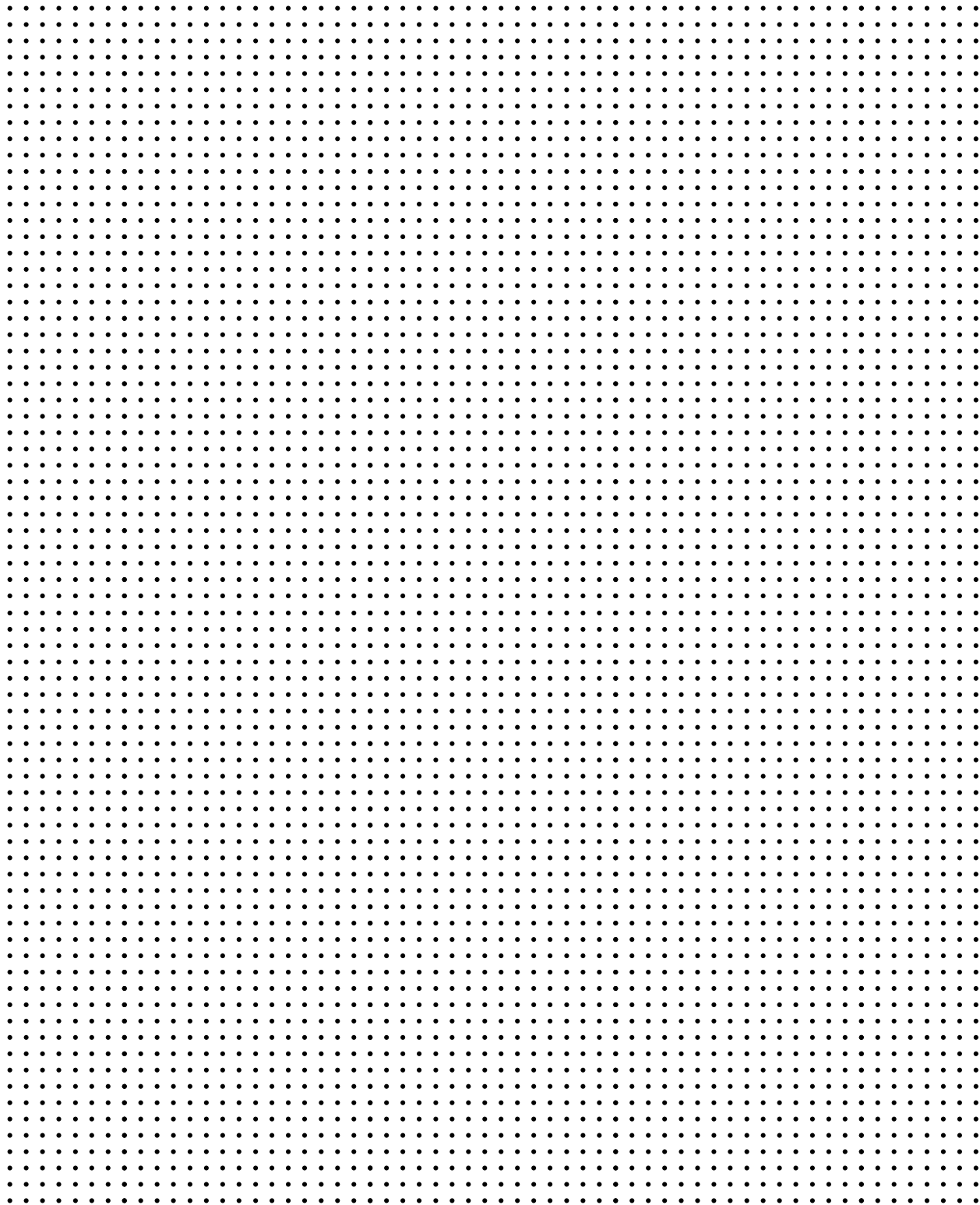
PART ONE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the research discusses the knowledges and critical theory that I researched or relied upon for part one of the research. These were also introduced into the overall theoretical framework.

In this section I have also discussed three case studies that I reviewed concurrently with the work of part one. These illuminated conceptual approaches, or provided methods, for the research.
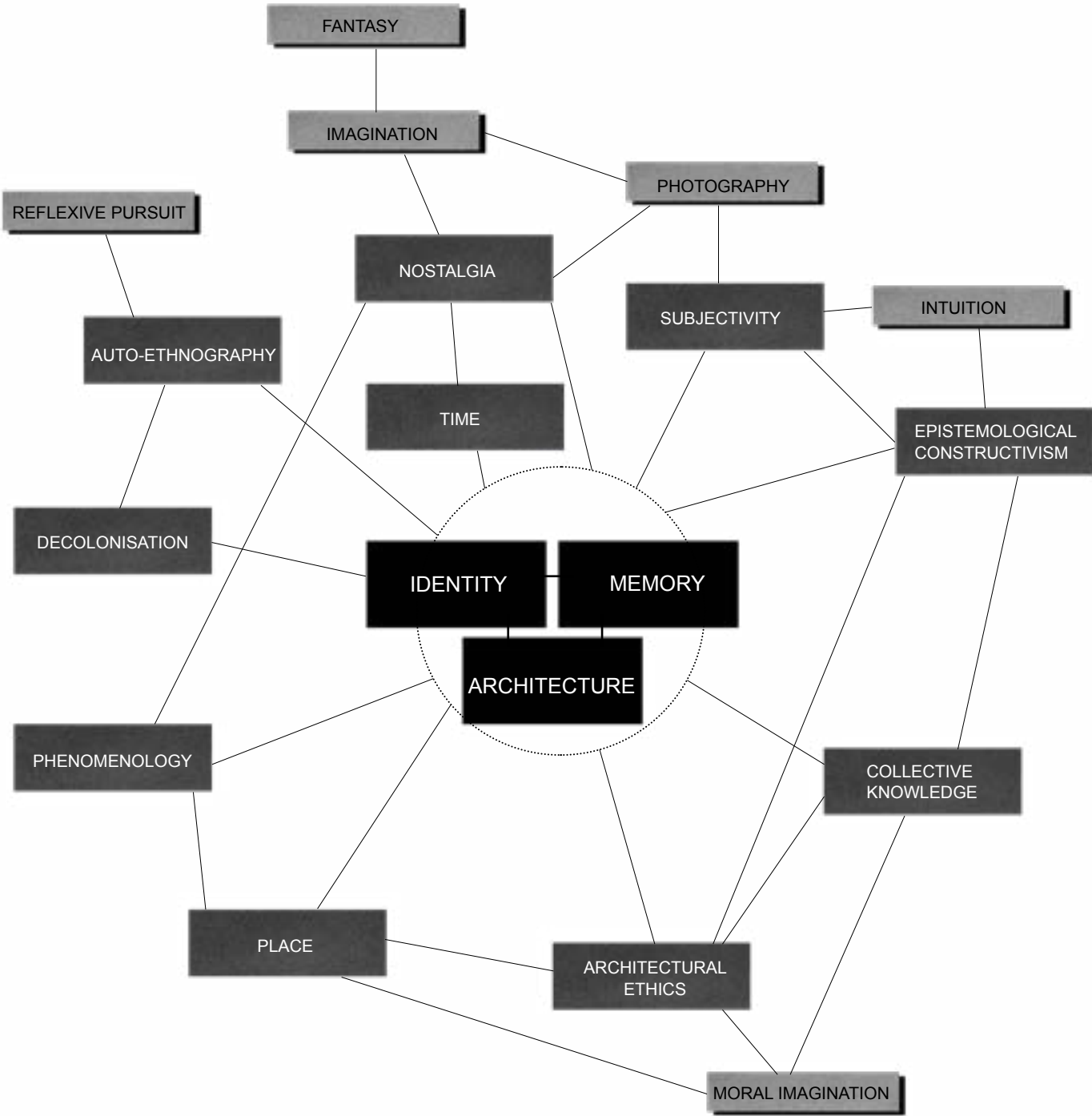
fig.15. diagram : part one theoretical framework

NOSTALGIA

The foundational hunch of this thesis (and/or inevitably only part one) can be characterised as nostalgia. A complex and universal feeling; (as a word) translates from a Greek compound of: nostos (returning home) and algos (pain or yearning) (Margali 2011).

When researching nostalgia additional subjects are offered; 'happiness', 'desire', 'emotional distress', 'memory', 'impermanence', 'poetry', 'emotion'. These are some of the golden threads of human life, common to all. Nostalgia is the mirror each use to look back at these through time, as though the events of our lives are words written in reverse - making more sense when read in reflection.

As humans we are so drawn to nostalgia. We have an innate anxiety about time passing; about loss, and about our lack of control - that with each step forward we are stepping into the unknown. Nostalgia is a fantastical remembering; "in and of the present, while its reference is of the past and thus absent. Inevitably, every act of memory carries with it a dimension of betrayal, forgetting, and absence" (Huyssen 2003). Our nostalgia is therefore not only active imagination, but is also deeply melancholic.

Nostalgia is our bittersweet documentation of the tones and fragments of our lives – making sense of them as a cohesive linear narrative. It is our idealised distortion of the past, to create a sentimental innoncence. Nostalgia is our re-framing of past events or memories as necessary, significant, or beautiful - creating meaning and value in our worlds. Nostalgia is not some passive rose tinted light we bathe in; it is an active state.

In the   n o s t a l g i c   state we are creating our personal histories.

we are coming home to ourselves.

●●● does nostalgia help contextualise embedded meaning in place?

NZIA 10 STORIES

Annually the NZIA produces a journal titled *10 Stories: Writing About Architecture*. The essays in the journal celebrate writing about architecture, and reveal the intimacy of our relationships with place. The majority of the NZIA essays discuss themes including sentimentality and architecture – buildings that become part of the author's internal architectural lives. Often the essays go further; personifying architecture – talking of buildings as guardians or as childhood best friends.

In the text *A Constant Presence,* Karen Wrigglesworth discusses growing up in isolated Whanganui. She talks about The Bastia Hill water tower watching over her; "...this tower became my closest and most reliable friend – a personal confidante and favoured companion" (2019). The water tower is a gauge of time for the author, a symbol of childhood. Further, Wrigglesworth describes the composition and history of the tower – transforming the structure into a symbol of time generally, or theoretically. The tower stands, through the passing of the years, and reminds Wrigglesworth "how important it is to appreciate our friends – both living and inanimate – while we still have them" (2019).

In writing about place we reflect on it, and can attempt to measure or convey a sense of impact. The NZIA's annual collection of essays demonstrate a focus on understanding our lives through the places we have lived them in.

CREEKS AND KITCHENS

Creeks and Kitchens is a brief memoir compilation by Maurice Gee. It is comprised of two texts set respectively in two specific places of Gee's childhood. These reminiscences describe in detail the creek in which he played, and the kitchen in which his mother prepared food. The text demonstrates the remembering of detail from key yet mundane childhood places, and also links these places to the fictional writing Gee produced in his adult life.

"When someone says the word 'kitchen' I get an instant flash of that room, with its black stove and drying rack, its brown lino, its worn mat and wooden table, the Philco radio on the mantelpiece. And 'creek' works in a similar way. These are things that can start me writing, they have memory attached to them and, in a more shadowy way, values and meanings. They're part of an emotional and moral universe, they're stopping places and they're starting places" (Gee 2014).

Creeks and Kitchens provides another example of the ongoing implications of memories of place; that we continue to carry places with us, and that piece by piece these memories become key components of our inner lives.

MONUMENTS OF THE PASSAIC

In 1967 American artist Robert Smithson completed a project of three parts. Titled *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic*, the work exists in three manifestations: an article published in Artforum, a photowork, and a photographic series (Holt/ Smithson Foundation n.d.). Smithson, an artist known for using photography and his interest in the spatial arts, conducted the work in the city of Passaic U.S.A. Passaic is a suburban city in the county of New Jersey; a place of "unremarkable industrial landscapes" and suburban banality. Smithson chronicles these mundane landscapes, and his journey through them, in a written article and a photographic series. In intention it was a challenge of "aesthetic merit and historical signifance", but in practice it is also an autoethnographic approach to a work of self-historicism.

In the work Smithson documents the physical debris among which we live our lives, alongside his actions and thoughts. The implications of *The Monuments of the Passaic* include a concern for the ways in which our built environments hold us, and reflect us back to ourselves. Further, the article is an example of methods of recording and documenting both our physical world, and our psychological relations within them (Holt/Smithson Foundation n.d.).

Smithson's work implicates the ordinary object as holding meaning (see: fig .16.) - and in mapping these non-sites (fig.17.), renders the relationship between site and object into a symbolic language. There is, in this synthesis, an "intertwining the here with that which is there - or at least elsewhere" (Kandel 1995). For this research, Smithsons' *The Monuments of the Passaic* illustrated an approach to documenting site and an experience of it.

This figure has been redacted. Please consult the figure list.

fig.16. The Sand-Box Monument . 1967

This figure has been redacted. Please consult the figure list.

This figure has been redacted. Please consult the figure list.

fig.17. *Negative Map, Showing Region of the Monuments Along the Passaic River . 1967*

fig.18. *The Fountain Monument . 1967*

80

"I am convinced that the future is lost somewhere in the dumps of the non-historical past; it is in yesterday's news-papers, in the jejune advertisements of science-fiction movies, in the false mirror of our rejected dreams. Time turns metaphors into things, and stacks them up in cold rooms, or places them in the celestial playgrounds of the suburbs."

- Smithson 1967

fig.19. The Great Pipe Monument . 1967

PARC DE LANCY

Parc de Lancy is located on the southwestern edge of Geneva, Switzerland, part of old town Lancy. Historically a rural settlement, old Lancy has become a residential suburb of Geneva and is now becoming obsorbed by the city's urban fabric.

In working at this site architect George Descombes, who spent his childhood in Geneva, (and resides there still), was returning to a landscape with which he was intimately familiar, but which had been altered drastically sinch his childhood (Marot 2003).

"This river is a part of the territory of my childhood; there is a lot of history here and a great number of stories told between friends...with these impressions in my mind I used to go to the river with my dog...The land its trees and river then seemed large and the reality of my own dimensions small. That has all changed, of course. The dimensions have changed. I became taller and the landscape smaller" (Descombes 2009).

Prior to becoming a park, the site of Parc de Lancy experienced some ecological devastation as a result of infrastructure development. In the 1940s a road was built where the park where the park would later come to be sited. Although part of management of the River Aire's watershed, the construction of this road resulted in the destruction of a rivulet, previously flowing free.

"The design refers to the history of the place and its sucessive transformations, and in doing so, it witnesses the upheavals experienced by the place – and questioned its current state of confusion. It therefore maintains a status as "lost property," slightly detached from the place to which it is connected"

- Marot 2003

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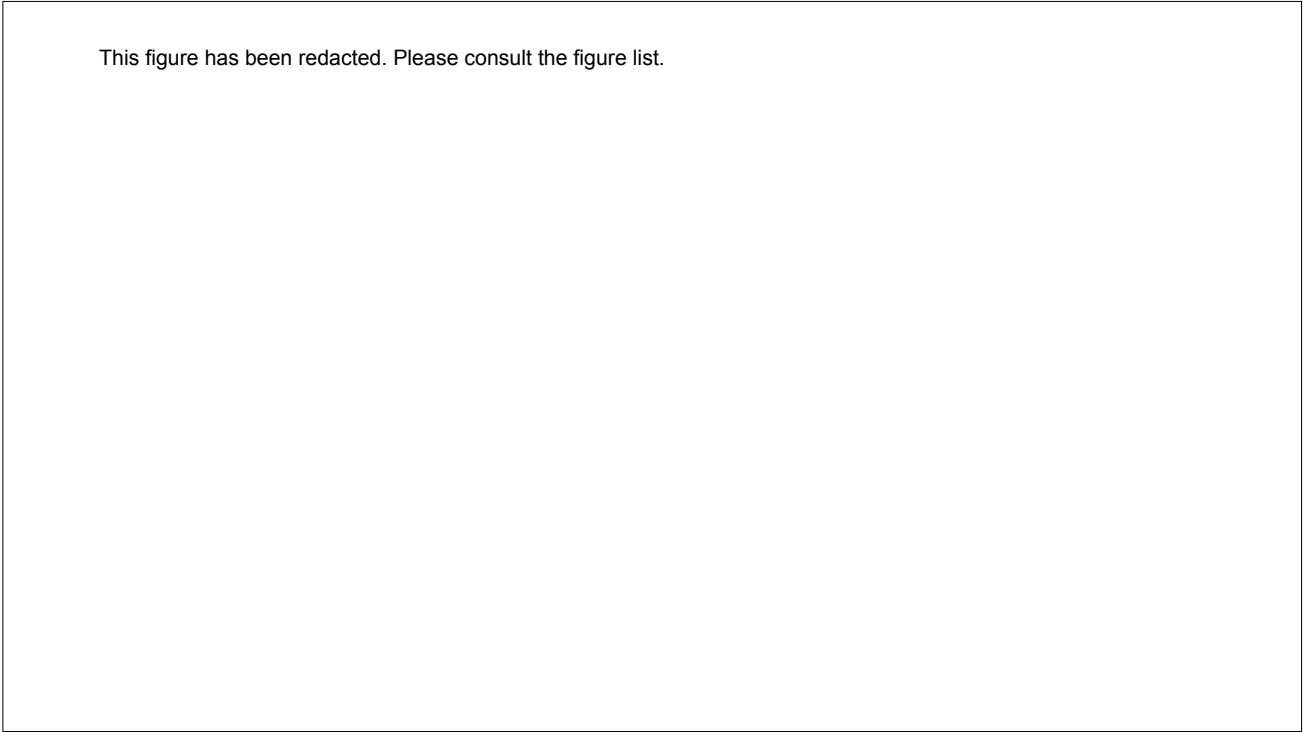
fig.20. Tunnel-Bridge, Parc de Lancy

84

fig.21 Parc de Lancy, plan

fig. 22. Tunnel-bridge photographic montage

The first phase of intervention, in 1981, was thus compensatory, addressing environmental problems created by the road built over forty years earlier (Descombes 2009). To create safe pedestrian access to the new park an access underpass was required beneath the road but spanning the stream. The conditions of each access point to the underpass were incongruous with each other, and resulted in conceptual ambiguity. The conceived ''tunnel-bridge' responds to the duality of this site; that to cross a stress implies a bridge, and to pass through the earth (here, an embankment) implies a tunnel. The design preserves and reveals the site conditions, allowing the history of the site to speak gently.

"The design refers to the history of the place and its successive transformations, and in doing so, it witnesses the upheavals experienced by the place – and questioned its current state of confusion. It therefore maintains a status as "lost property," slightly detached from the place to which it is connected" (Descombes 2009).

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fig.23. Tunnel-bridge, downstream

The Parc de Lancy 'tunnel-bridge' intervention is composed of corrugated steel sections, bolted together in situ to form a tube approximately thirty meters in length and three metres in diameter (Descombes 2009). A ninety-six metre footbridge runs through the tunnel, and extends beyond the corrugate tube on both ends. The intervention is comprised of distinct elements – it is both a tunnel and a bridge. This composite solution directly addresses the dualities of the site conditions, and of the conceptual value of the intervention. Literally, the intervention allows for the crossing of both the roadway and the stream – it allows those experiencing the space to be both above (the stream) and below (the road). Conceptually, the tunnel-bridge is a reappropriation of both the landscape, and also experience – both Descombes' personal and old Lancy's collective. The footbridge/tunnel is an exercise in dualities – in ghostly voices speaking from the past – it is not only a pedestrian link between here and there, it is a hyphen between mnemonic landscapes of the past and the present.

PHENOMENOLOGY

in context of Parc de Lancy

"The tunnel-bridge can be considered, in several respects, as a transposition of [this] memory: a machine that asserts itself using thoroughly contemporary formal vocabulary and materials, but which at the same time amplifies, distorts and echoes ripples and reflections of the water, the footbridge's flooring and grillwork allow it to exploit the drum of the tunnel and the structure's vibrations"

(Marot 2003)

Descombes' Tunnel-bridge at Parc de Lancy responds to the phenomenological experience of being at the site, and of Descombes' own memories. "The phenomenological character of an experience is what it is like subjectively to undergo an experience" (Tye 2018). At Parc de Lancy the phenomenological elements of the design help the body understand the in situ implications of the landscape. In this case, the tunnel-bridge helps demarcate Parc de Lancy as a park. The intentional focus on the phenomenal in the design of the Tunnel-Bridge also help communicate a feeling of Descombes' memories – a grasping of the genuis loci or the "spirit of place" (Norberg-Schulz 1980).

Through Norberg-Schulz we understand this intangible meaning of place as "character", which is determined by how things are. To determine the phenomenological character of place we must ask: how is the ground the on which we walk? How is the light with which we see? Elements such as these are themselves determined architecturally, depending upon "how things are made". So, the technical or material construction of the building, landscape, or place is the tangible realisation of the places' character (Norberg-Schulz 1980). At Parc de Lancy, the character of the Tunnel-Bridge realises the notion that the landscape is wending through different lives, and that these lives cut through the landscapes' character like a river scars the earth.

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fig.24. Tunnel-bridge, light

case studies

● ● ●
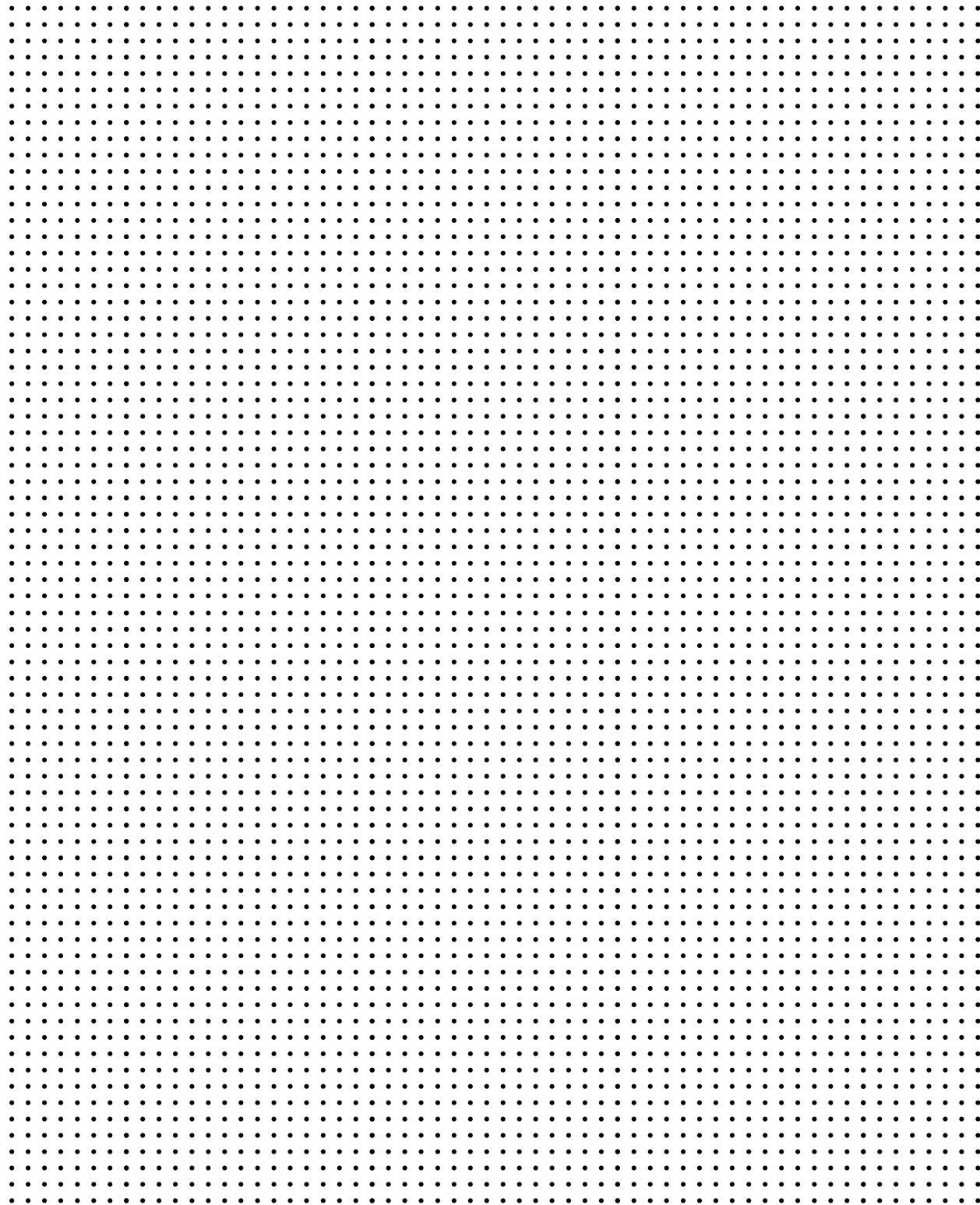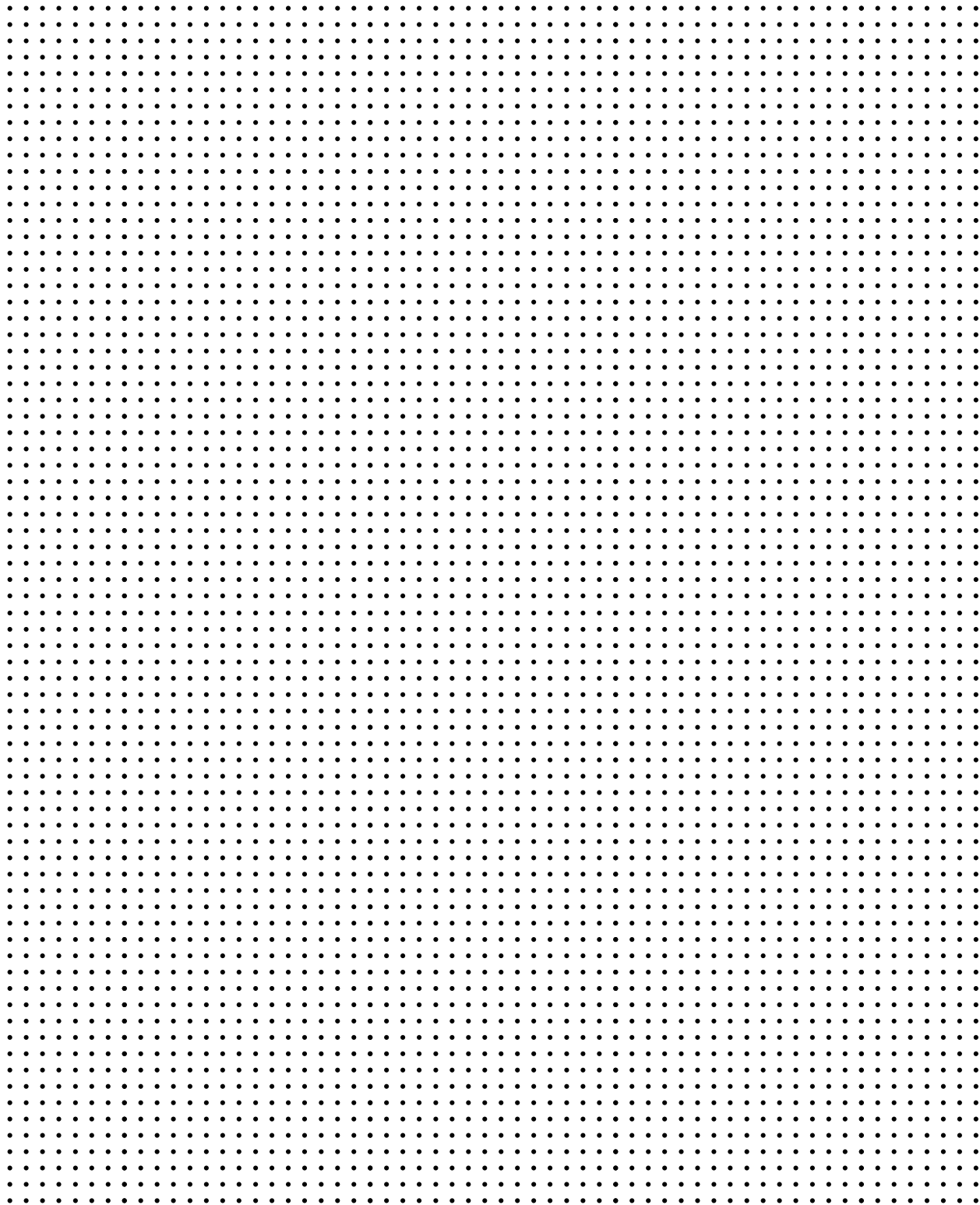
findings

The case studies indicated a greater background in the ways in which place holds meaning.

Smithson's monuments of the Passaic demonstrated an approach to site that values the everyday, and the implicit meaning that the spaces and places of our lives hold. The work also provided precedent for an autoethnographic mapping of site; complete with photographic and journal documentation.

Parc de Lancy was a valuable example of synthesising architectural intervention with phenomenological approaches to emphasise and create meaning in place - through experience.

These case studies provided a foundation upon which part one was developed, and the work of the thesis began.

PHASE ONE

DESIGN OUTCOMES

re me mber i n g

Tracing Memories [1 .5 .1] is concerned with remembering Decanter Bay; with picking apart my held / psychological site or place, and creating a data set of remembered elements.

fig.25 . in decanter bay, with family,   c. 1999

At age four I liked warm milk before bed and my rainbow-check wool blanket.

The blanket was heavy and scratchy on my knees as I sat between my Grandma and my older brother, warm milk in hand, looking out to the ocean – winter in the bay.

Unlike the memories I now have of them, those days were crisp – the sea air salty and straight from the South. Some days in winter when the light hits on a low angle and a cold wind brings pink to my nose and cheeks, my heart settles softly back into some space between that water and those hills... drags my mind (or is it the other way around?) back to those days in Decanter Bay – or maybe my imagined version of it – and,

it feels good, on a day like this, to put my toes in the nearest icy water, and face my soul out to the immensity of the Pacific Ocean, like a traveler locating North... or I guess, in this case, South.

Still, I visit this rocky shore, ghostly waves crashing in my mind as I lay to sleep, these memories subtle notes in the symphonies of understanding and intention.

I'm grateful I remember this special place – that I can go back to a sense of personal history, for although coveted, this place is borrowed – merely visited – in so many ways.

I haven't been back to Decanter Bay in over two decades, enough time for loved ones to pass away, for warm milk to have been replaced with whiskey, and for some relationships to have become more ships in the night than in the harbour. Yet, for reasons I am yet to understand, this bay is so many more maritime cliches to me. The mermaids' siren, the lighthouse, the safe harbour; these waters, these hills, those big smooth rocks and the cold crunchy air – call me home.

fig.26. brother on the swing   c. 1999

I'm not really sure I know how to get there anymore. Perhaps that is part of what this is... what is home? And how do I get there? Fortunately, memories are like water in that they find their own path and sometimes all you must do is allow yourself to   f o l l o w.

fig.27 . decanter bay site plan, from memory

1   bach

2   tree swing

3   farm access

boulder beach

4   decanter rocks

5   headlands walkway

these memories have their own movements

i cannot control how they flow and

twist - shifting through different rooms in my brain

as water flows

through the so-called path of least resistance

these thoughts are perhaps those times

and things that have fallen

to the deepest resting places of my brain

fig. 28 - 35 . decanter bay, elements from memory

MEMORY ELEMENTS

fig 36 - 44 . iterative studies of the bach, from memory
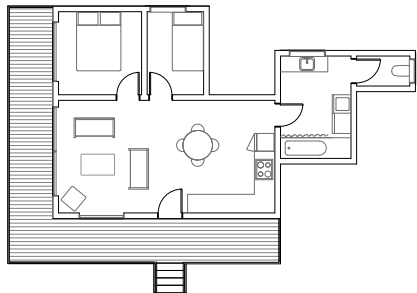
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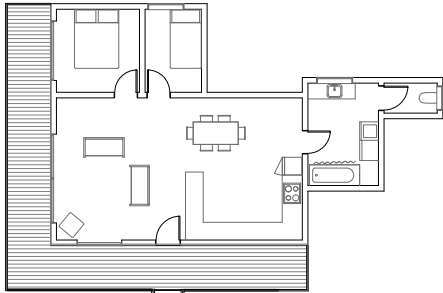
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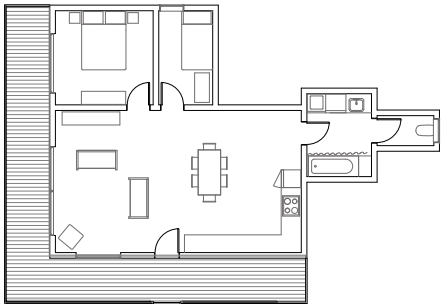
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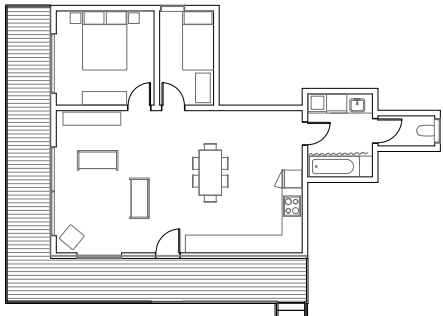
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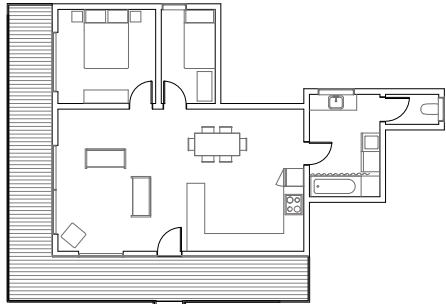
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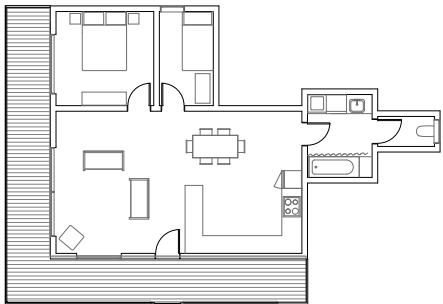
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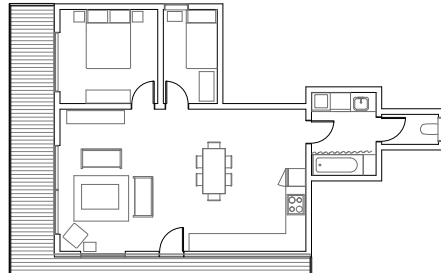
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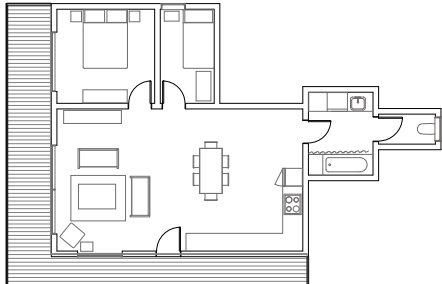
[8]

with each approach the memory of the bach c h a n g e s
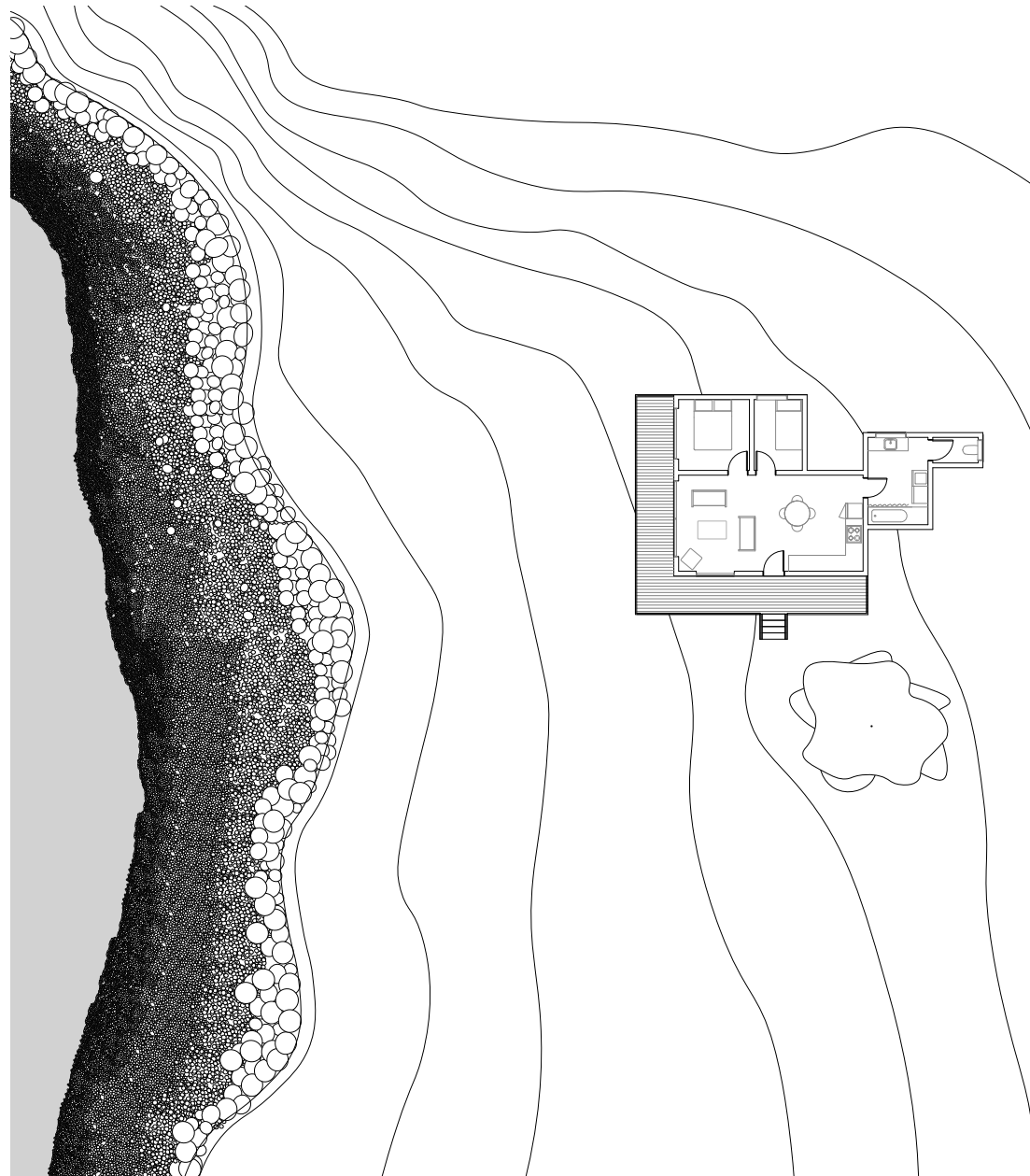
fig.45. the bach at decanter bay

these hills are a heavy cloak

landscape wrapped around my shoulders

i am held here

the rising behind,

the falling in front

fig.46. an early assumption of site

fig. 47. selecting the timber

the making of the diorama

fig. 48. at the timber yard
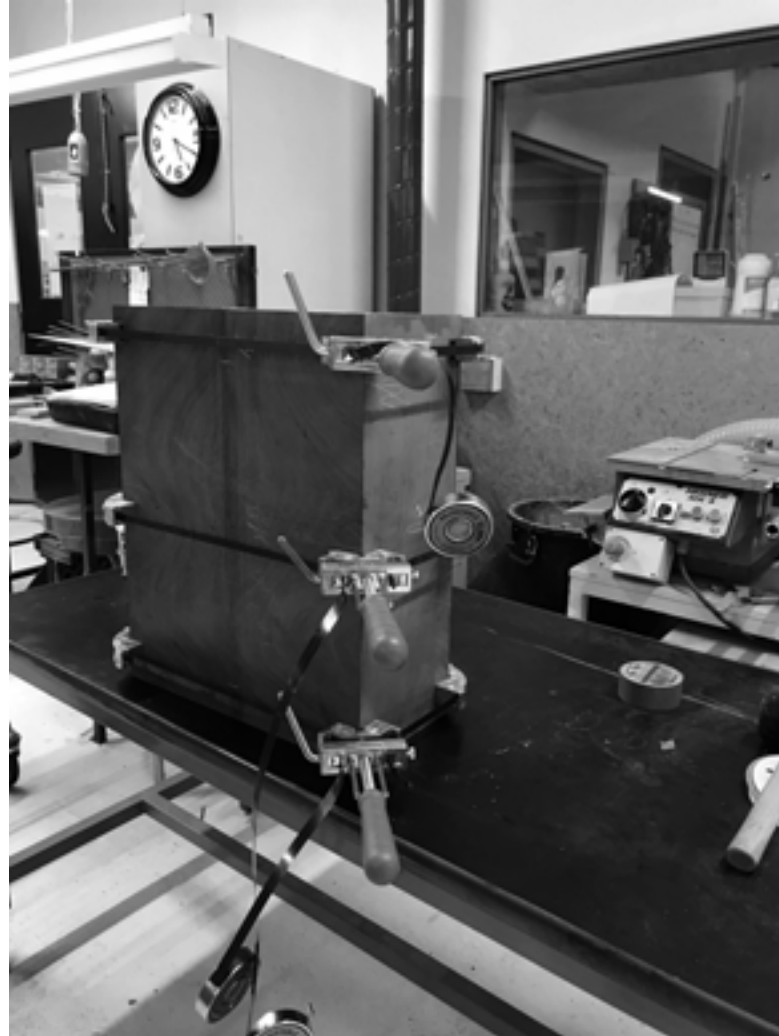
fig.49. joinery processes - - - clamping down

fig.50. wood shavings ; smoove edges

fig.51. Decanter Bay diorama

fig. 52. *Decanter Bay Diorama, Mahoghany case*

1.6.2 DIORAMA AS REPRESENTATION

fig.53. Decanter Bay Diorama, the bach

fig.54. Decanter Bay Diorama, the rocks

fig.55 - 60. peeping, from the bach
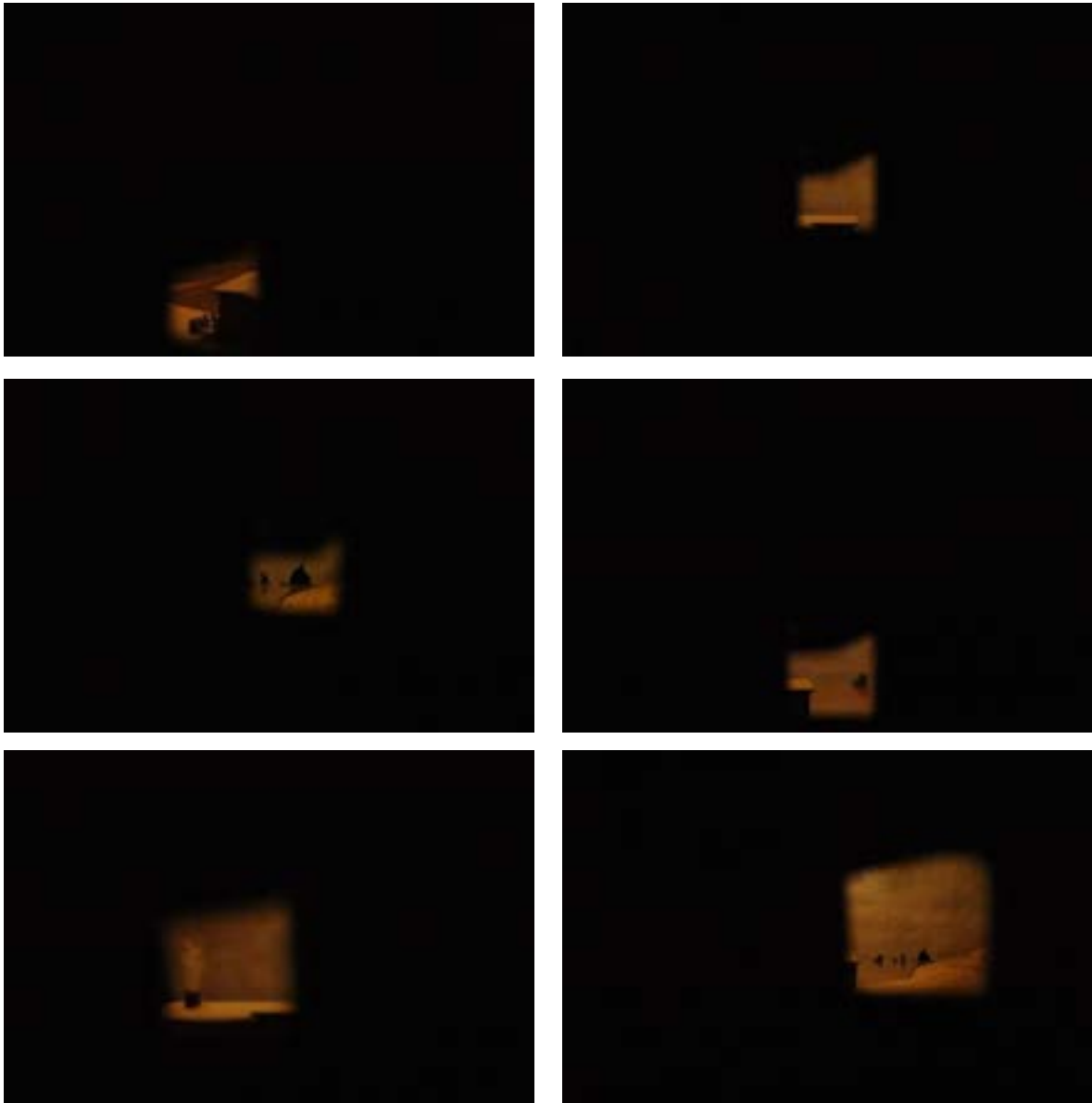
1 .6 .2   DIORAMA AS REPRESENTATION

fig.61 - 64. peeping, from the ocean

gazing through the p e e p h o l e
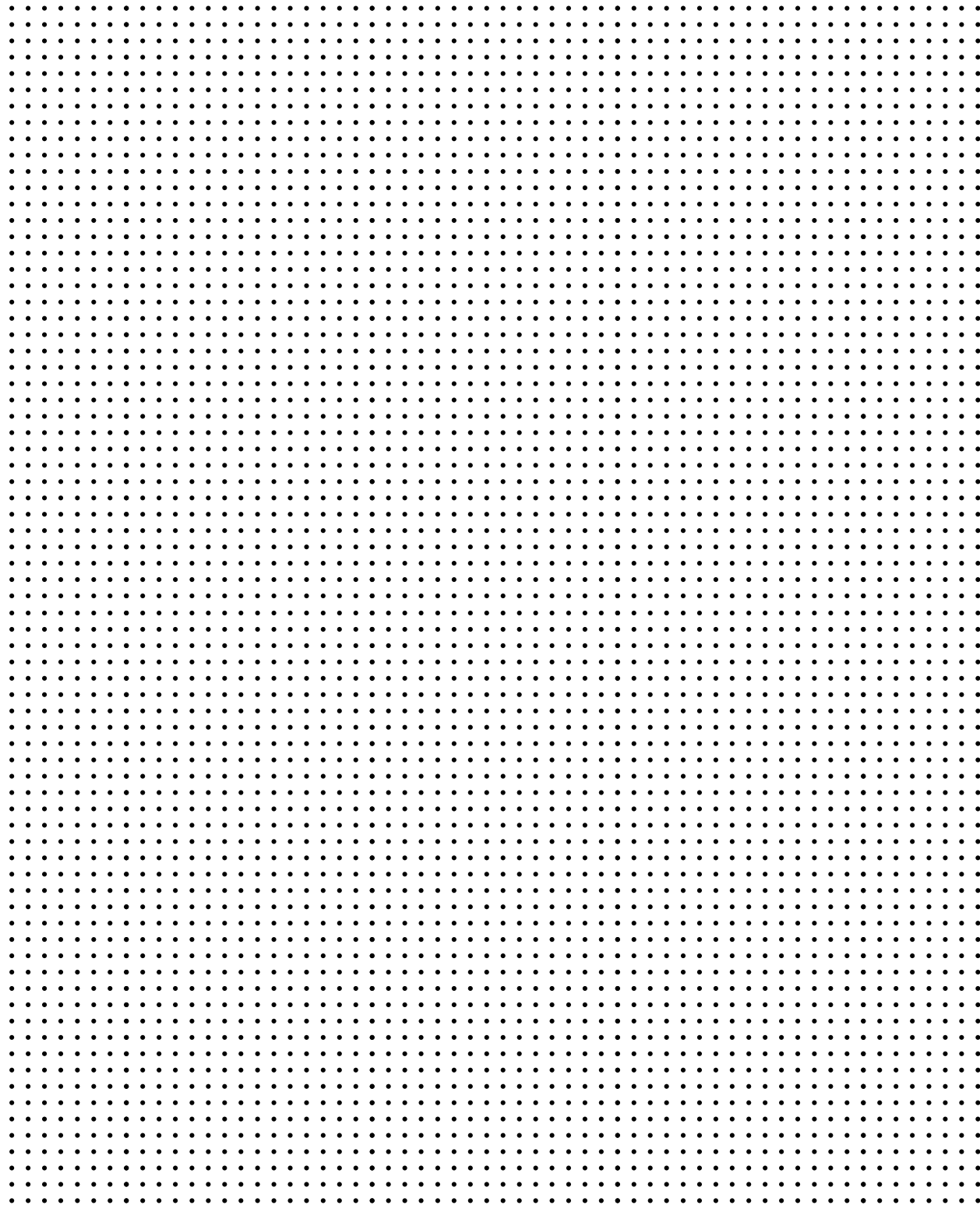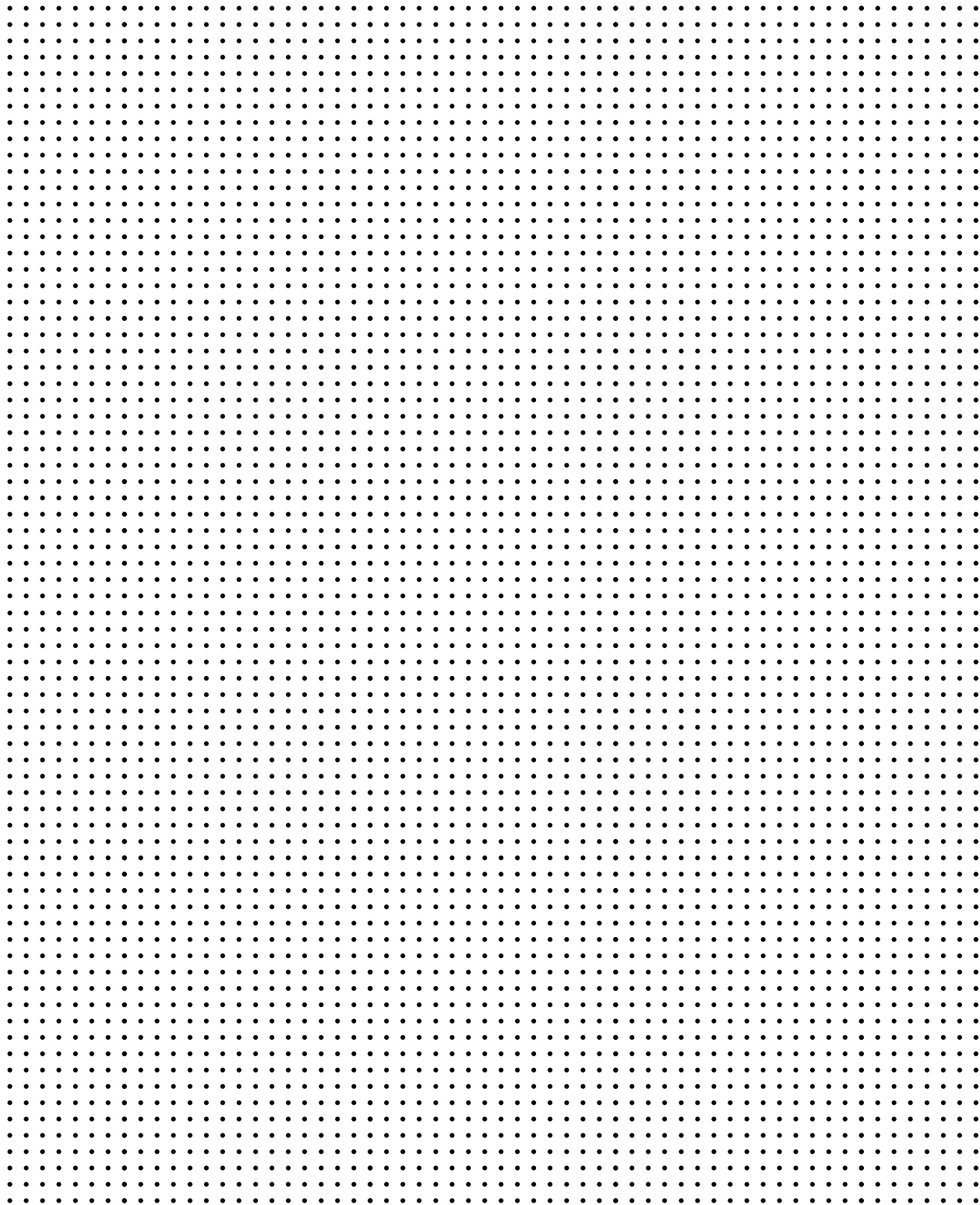
fig. 66.   the bach at decanter bay

During July of 2020, I travelled to Decanter Bay to stay five nights in the bach. This section of part one reveals some of the photography, journalling, drawing, and experiencing, I undertook during my time there.

fig. 67 . rising headlands

fig. 68 . wood stacks

fig. 69. open windows

fig. 70. Decanter textures

*figures 71 - 88, both this page
and opposite: polaroids from
visiting Decanter bay*

10.07.20   10 : 37

10.07.20   17 : 03

06.07.20   16 : 42

06.07.20   16 : 16

07.07.20   12 : 43

10.07.20   09 : 47

08.07.20   08 : 56

10.07.20   09 : 46

06.07.20   16 : 40

10.07.20   09 : 51

06.07.20   16 : 06

08.07.20   14 : 22

10.07.20   10 : 42

10.07.20   10 : 45

11.07.20   08 : 02

10.07.20   10 : 46

07.07.20   11 : 57

10.07.20   09 : 38

*the photos record a specific
moment in time - an attempt
to explicitly capture a
phenomenological impression*

fig. 89. approaching Decanter Bay

fig. 90. plan sketches made in situ

fig. 91. Decanter bach, to measurements

fig. 92. a soft light

fig. 93. on window

fig. 94. out window

fig. 95. Decanter rocks from above

re conditioning
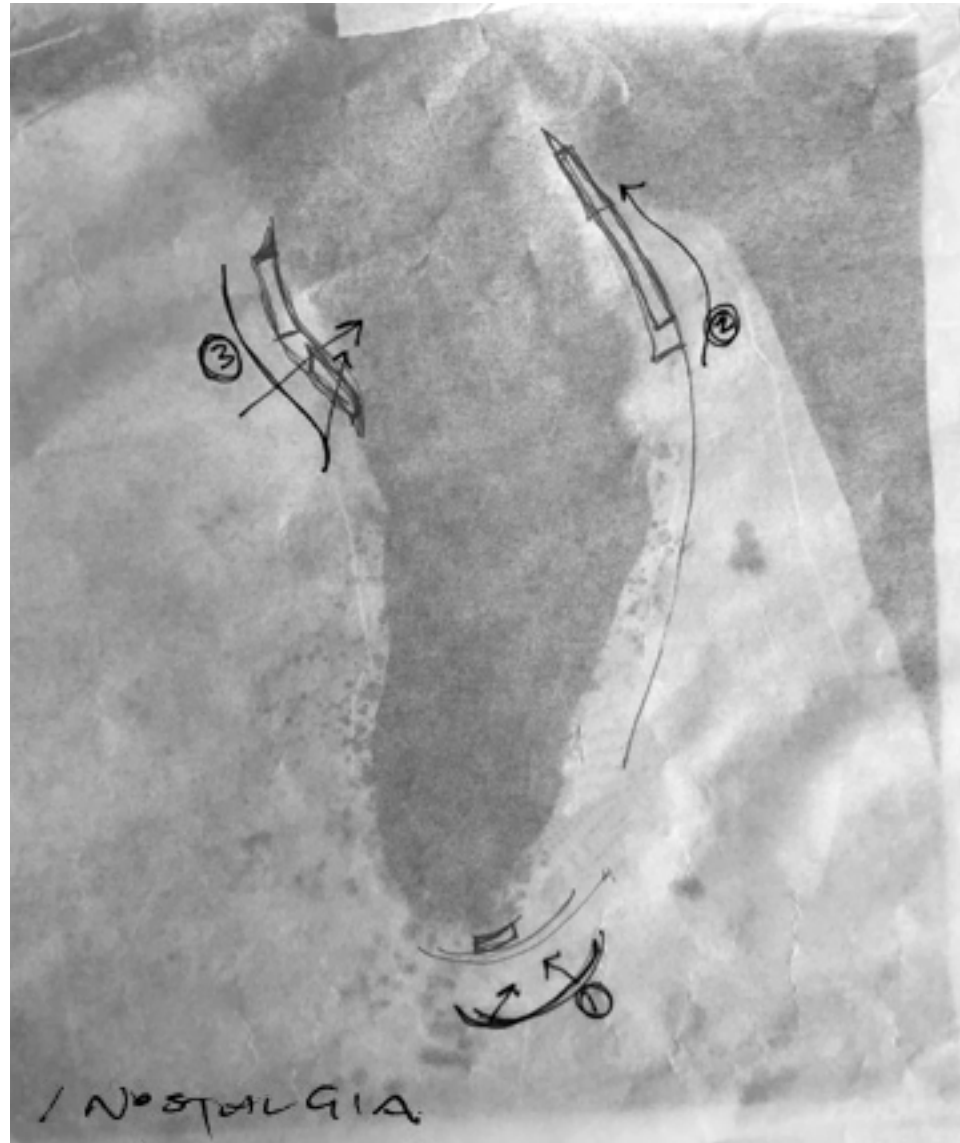
fig. 96 & 97. 3 lines : 3 modes of nostalgia

CONCEPT DESIGN

A series of three design interventions that observe and amplify both the site conditions and my own memories in this landscape. The design intervention is designed to be occupied – perhaps as a creative, meditative, or social retreat. A place designed to form connections – with one's self, with others, or with the site. Or, a place to create and consider meaning.

Three lines collectively represent my occupying and moving through the space in my mind; a different significant element of my nostalgic love affair with Decanter Bay. A single line – representative of the mode of each element, and my relationship with the site;

 Embrace: to be held by

 Journey : to return to

 View : to gaze upon

... from these concepts I developed a design intervention based on Embrace

fig. 98 & 99. embrace; Iterative design processes

fig. 100. embrace / retreat

N

1 . studio
2 . hall
3 . courtyard / deck
4 . kitchen / living
5 . sunken lounge
6 . bedroom
7 . laundry
8 . bathroom
9 . wardobe
10 . wet room
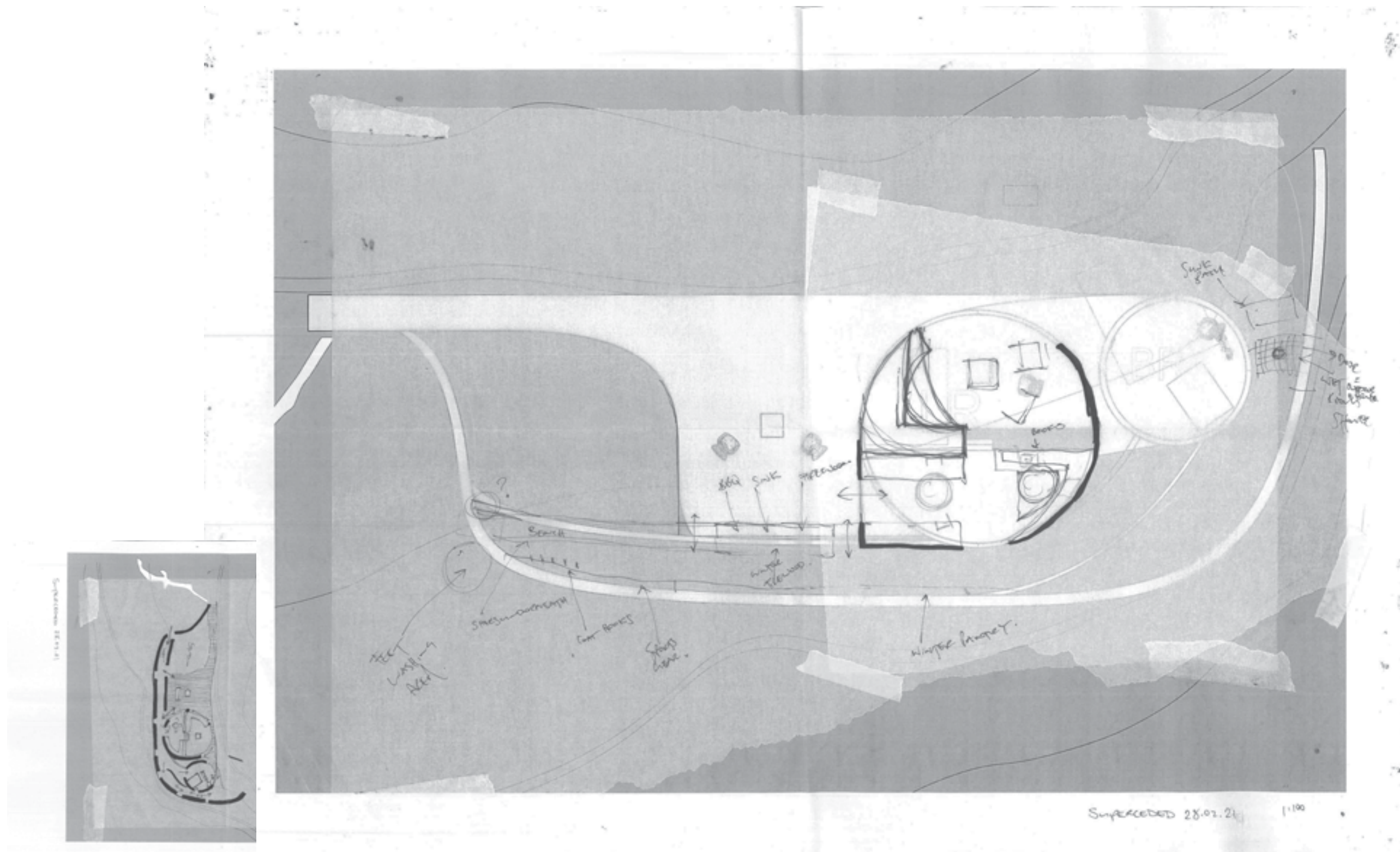
fig. 100. embrace / retreat floor plan

a . studio storage
b . entrance bench (shoe store beneath)
c . storage (outdoor equip)
d . fish sink, bbq, firewood storage
e . fire pit
f . brass floor-inset
g . day bed
h . suspended fireplace
i . ramp (down) to bedroom level
j . sunken bath
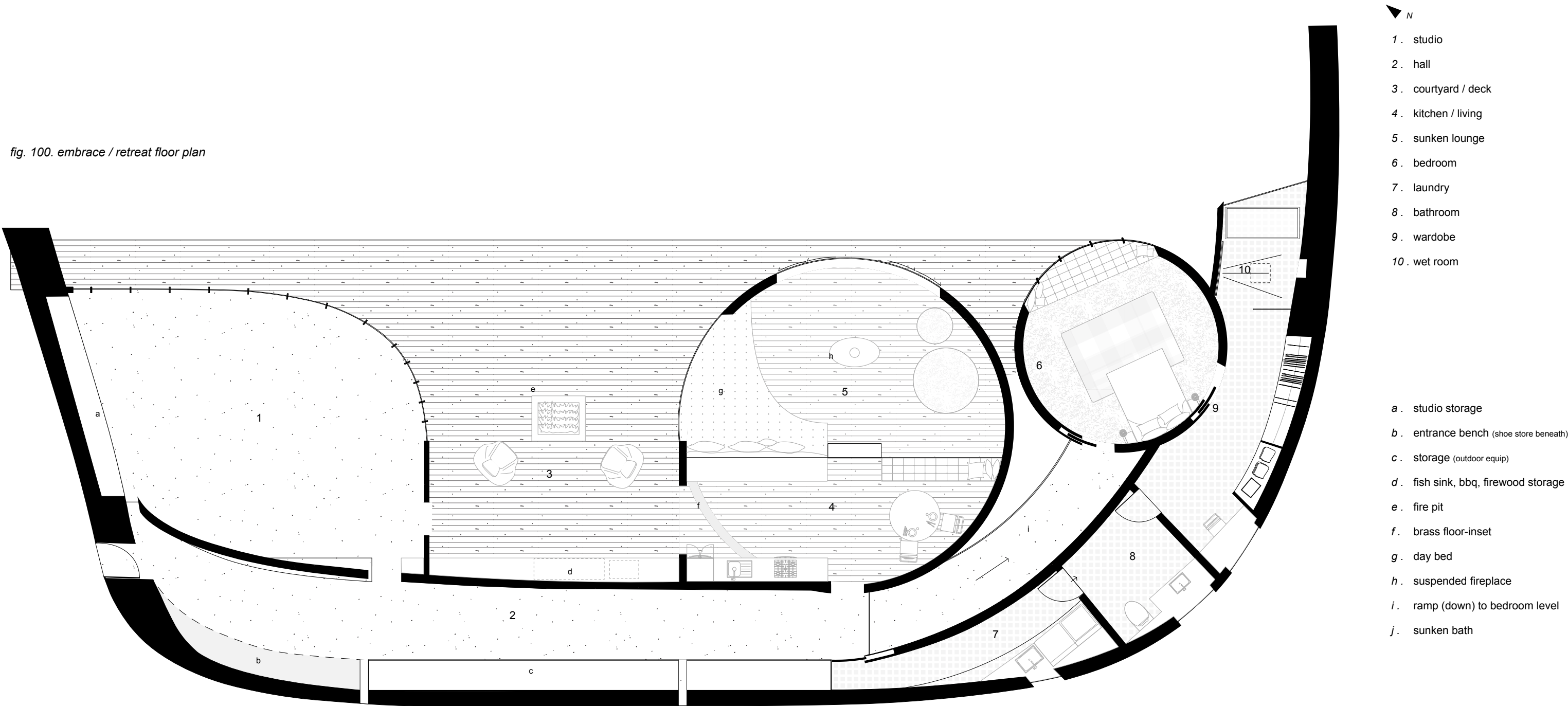
fig. 102. embrace___

to be subtle against the landscape, another contour, nestling into the hills

'Embrace' is a conceptual design intervention examining different modes of my nostalgic state of being.

Embrace responds to a relationship with the site; of being cradled. The design intervention is defined by the conceptual and physical line of the design – formally holding and sheltering the inhabitants.

This directly responds to my understanding of the site; of the hills - of being in a valley; of having visited in Winter - of being snug.

The main formal line also protects the intervention from the South, the source of the coldest winds in sweeping down through the valley.

fig. 103. retreat section
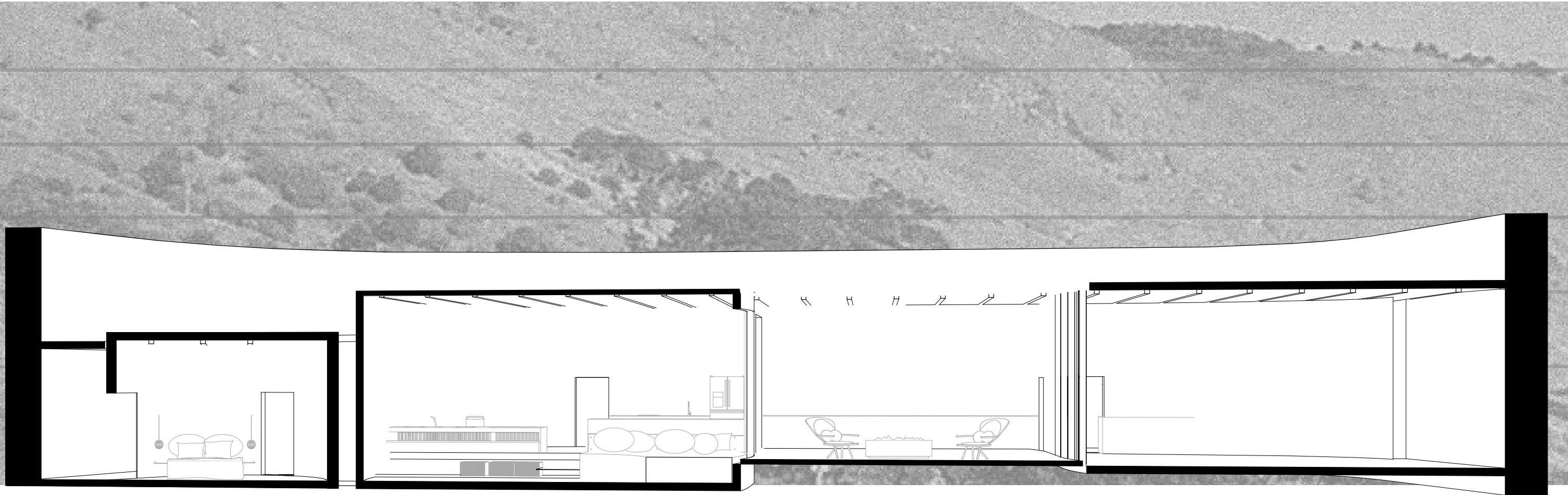
The circular plan of the rooms reflect a sense of enclosure or softness, whilst also helping the building subtly soften into the landscape.

The curved walls also help reverb and amplify the ocean sounds - heightening the phenomenological experience of being in this place.

fig. 104. studio

[in a liminal light]

at twilight

fig. 105. bedroom. from bathroom
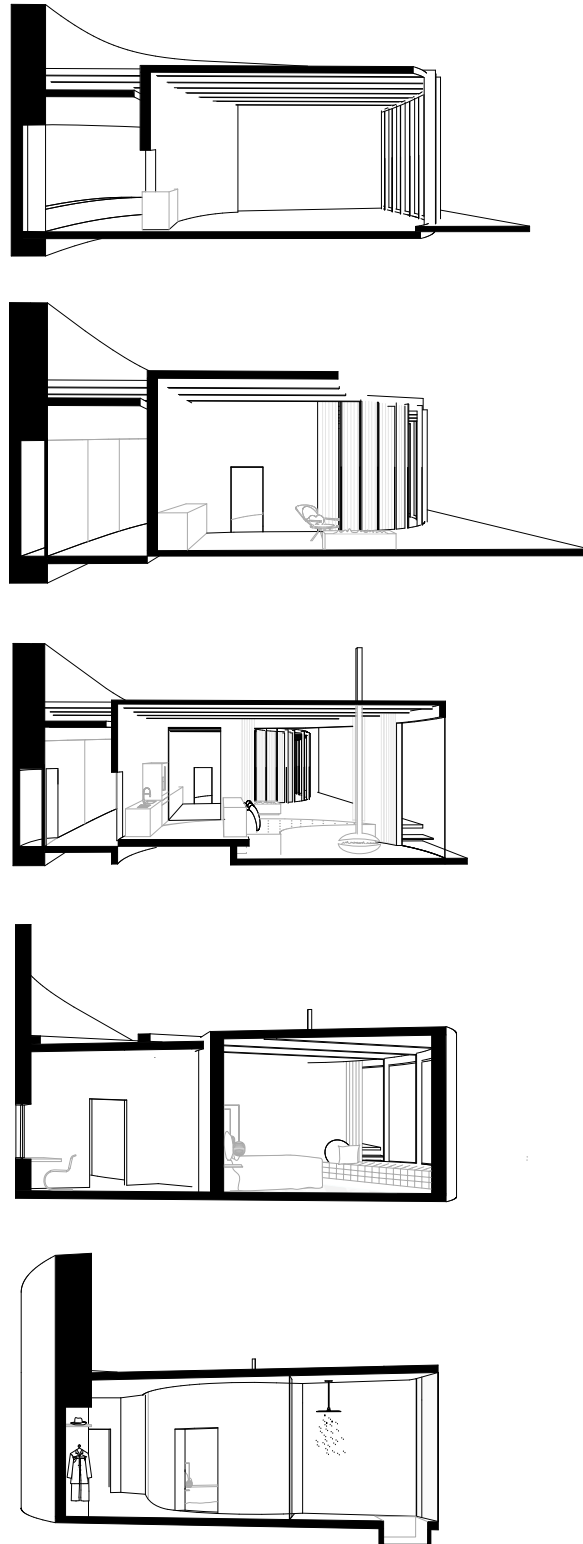
Between the two curved forms of the living space and the bedroom a view shaft opens to the bay. This provides a link through the compression to the ocean - release. This maintains the psychological relationship with the bay, and also mirrors the experience of being in the valley, facing the ocean.

The bedroom is specifically oriented to the East, to the rising sun. Winter in Decanter Bay has a heightened temporal impact; days beginning and ending are felt strongly - and the sunrises and sunsets are often the key markers of the days, as - in between - the sky is a flat grey.

fig. 106 - 110. embrace sections

REFLECTION ON   1 .6 .4 [Embrace]

Decanter Bay was, of course, different from how I had remembered it - and different again from how I had expected it would be. I had assumed that as the bay had not changed in my memory, it would not have changed in real life. In some ways this is true; the little beach logburner was where it has always been, resting in a cradle of rocks near the high-tide line; the grass was dry and golden – I have never seen it green as I have only ever visited in winter. Yet still, on visiting Decanter Bay the shore line was smaller than expected; in my mind expansive, but now of course, I had grown older. In a very temporal and apparent way, I was experiencing this landscape in a different way.

It is impossible to re-experience a space again, for you are neither experiencing the space anew, as it was, or as you remembered it. I had thought that in visiting the bay I would be able to once again capture those feelings. To re-experience somehow that time, these memories – to slice them apart from the rest of everything I have known. I had intended to dissect them, to gaze at them through some kind of distanced and empirical psychological microscope.

My focus was shifted – from the ways in which some places hold a special quality or have a genuis loci, to the ways in which we hold special places in our own minds. The places form the architecture of our internal lives, and in our mediated perception of them they are special. Unless to consciously attempt to detach some from the other, to experience is to combine all senses, all memories. A person is not one thing, a person is a sum of their whole. Each experience is a re-experiencing of everything already seen, felt, tasted etc. ...Just as "a house...arouses memories of things real and imagined", for me - the bach at Decanter Bay now intertwines in my mind with time away, with abstract and potentially imagined concepts (Pallasmaa 2012) .

Just as that cold salty breeze calls me to Banks Peninsula bays, so too I now associate that 1970s bach style deck railing with an imagined scenario in my head. Now I think of hosting friends, of topping up their wine, sitting together on the deck as the sun sets. I was a child in Decanter Bay, and obviously never did this. I don't believe or recall my parents to have done this. This idea of hosting and coming together at the bach is fabricated, a composite - neither quite memory nor dream alone. It is now nostalgia – a fantasy of different things I've seen, experienced, and dreamed of – psychologically embedded in Decanter Bay.

fig. 111. sunrise in decanter bay, July 11 2020

CRITICAL REFLECTION

I had intended that at this stage of the research I would produce an iterative design outcome in response to the apparent differences I found between my memories and the site (as it was to inhabit again). The intention was that this part – part one – be, in fact, the entire research occupation of this thesis. However intuitive and critical reflection necessitated a redirection of research direction. As a result, part one does not produce a detailed or refined design outcome. Instead this entire part of the thesis becomes the foundation of this thesis on knowing.

The knowledge framed through the process experiments provided crucial redirection of the thesis, pivoting the entire research work into a new part two. It became apparent through the work in this stage, that this thesis is more tied to issues of how to be an architect than how to design architecture. Issues of how to look at the world, how to think about space, place, meaning, and value. Given the architect's social influence or power, how to work with humility and generosity of spirit?

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the findings of part one, a shift in research direction occurs in part two. The investigation of meaning and memory is expanded to include a further fifty sites drawn from my memory.

Our nostalgia, our aesthetic preferences and personal taste, are cumulative – they are an assemblage of our memories. Part two casts a wider net. Fifty-one memories drawn in plan, ranging from the first house I lived in as a child, to the flat I live in now. These made up a wider data set - an accumulation of mnemonic places, confined by typology (residental) and time (my age).

AIMS

The second part of this thesis utilizes process experiments to examine our lifetime undertaking to collect spatial memories, assembling psychological homes from different fragments.

fig. 112. memory diagram

"Place and event, space and mind, mutually define each other and fuse inevitably into into a singular experience . The mind perceives the world and the world exists through experience. Experiencing a space or a house is a dialogue, a kind of exchange: I place myself in the space and the space settles in me"

- Juhani Pallasmaa (2012)

METHODOLOGY

Phase two of this research is also iterative and process based. The design process work was undertaken alongside continuous intuitive investigation of theory as it related to and encouraged the design work. As appropriate to the design processes new approaches were considered.

The work is a series of layered processes that reflect the previous design investigation or respond to the theoretical framework, often looping back around in the subsequent design process experiment.
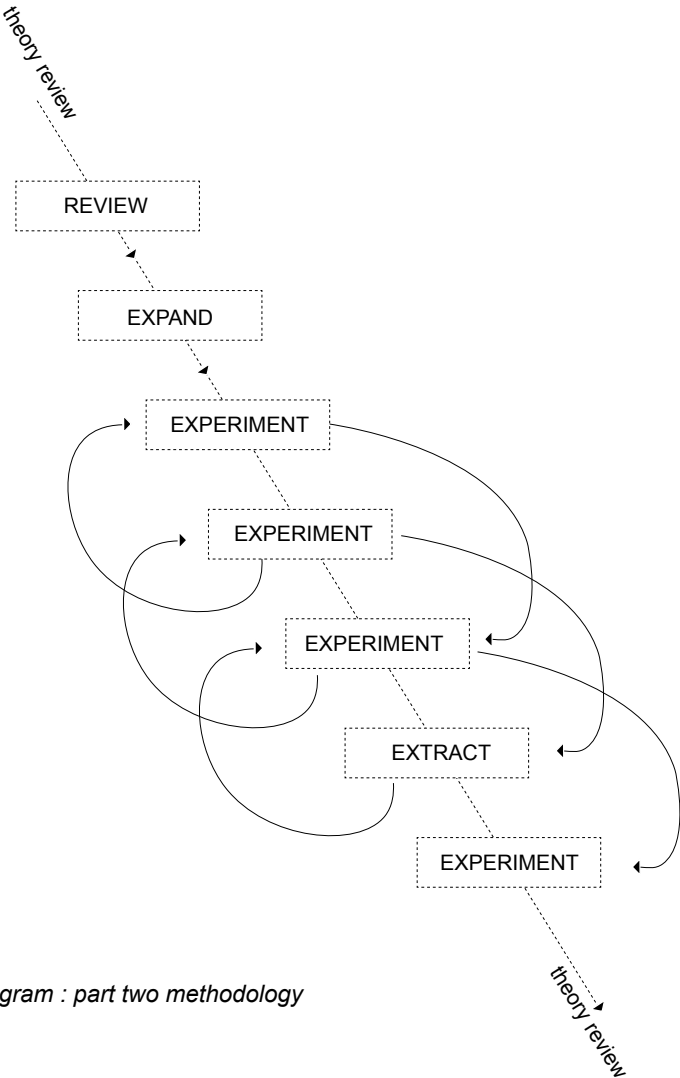
fig. 113. diagram : part two methodology

METHODS

The second part of this thesis began in reviewing art practices, literature, and theory.

I then extended the database of memory – developing a further fifty residences in plan. These were drawn intuitively; the selection and order of each plan arising from the last, or some spontaneous memory stimulated by the work as a whole. During this process I iteratively worked through the plans as I drew them, allowing them to shift slightly as they settled out from the mind onto the new space of the page. I then identified parameters, and created a framework within which to understand the memories in context to each other.

The key driver for the process was in experimenting with ways of setting the memories together. Design experiments such as cyanotype photographic exposures, iterative digital degradation, and abstract physical modelling were undertaken to explore conceptual methods of merging the memories and/or plans.

PART TWO
THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the research discusses the knowledges and critical theory that I researched or relied upon for part two of the research. These were also assimilated into the foundation of theory, carried through the research going forward.

In this section I have also discussed two case studies that I reviewed alongside working through the design experiments.
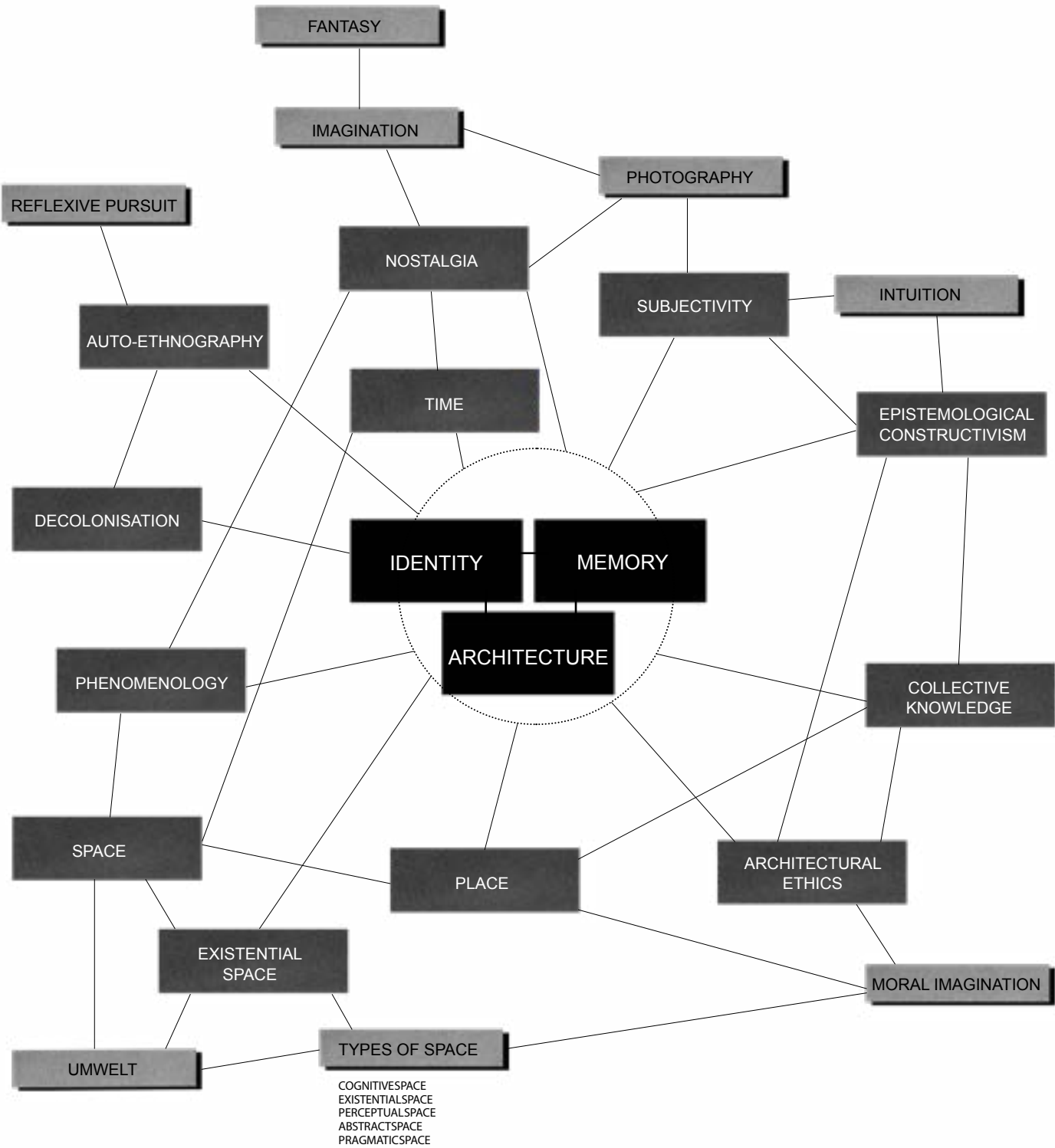
fig. 114. diagram : part two theoretical framework

EXISTENTIAL SPACE CONCEPTS

Christian Norberg-Schulz writes in *Existence, Space & Architecture* that "Man's interest in space has existential roots. It stems from a need to grasp vital relations in his environment, to bring meaning and order into a world of events and actions" (1971). We create associations with space – transforming it into place – so as to frame ourselves in our worlds. This is manifested in various important ways; a passing of time, a shared culture, and a personal identity. As individuals and collectives we rely upon space in order to frame our existence (Treib 2009).

As inextricably linked as our perceptions are with space, so too are space and memory innately dependent upon each other. We store our impression or associations within spaces, space becomes the framework within which we invest memories - connecting ourselves along strands through our temporal existential realities (Hornstein 2011; Norberg-Schulz 1971; Pallasmaa 2012).

fig. 115. abstract space

PERCEPTION MEDIATION

Jacob van Uexkull - forefather of semiotics - developed the notion of umwelt, a term normally translated as 'self-centered world'. The theory introduces the idea that despite occupying the same physical environments, biological beings can and do occupy different perceptions of these worlds. As our perception mediates our worlds, we are in fact occupying our own perceived world.

"Like the spider with its web, so every subject weaves relationships between itself and particular properties of objects; the many strands are then woven together and finally form the basis of the subject's very existence"

- Christian Norberg-Schulz (1971)

Further, we understand our spaces as a gradual construction of perception – or an on-going layering of perception. Our experiences thus inform our subsequent experiences. With exponentially increasing complexity we construct the spaces and characters of our lives (Downs and Stea 1973). For example: a school is only a school because we have come to understand it to be so. Then, we contextualise ourselves as students in the school, and so on.

Philosopher Alain de Botton suggests of human psychology that 'we harbour within us many different selves' (De Botton 2006). These selves are held within us by our surroundings – that "to speak of a home in relation to a building is simply to recognise its harmony in our understanding of ourselves and the psychological setting we view ourselves in. We are therefore the sum of our memories, or as Pallasmaa states; "we are what we remember" (2009). We ourselves are collages of fragments of our lives, constantly layered and edited.

"We live in mental worlds in which the material and the spiritual, as well as the experienced, the remembered, and the imagined, constantly fuse into each other"

- Juhani Pallasmaa (2009)

Lived reality is a construction, particular to each individual.

"...I never saw that remarkable house again, for it passed into the possession of

strangers after my grandfather's death. In the memories I have of it, shaped as

they were by a child's understanding, it is not a building; to my mind, it consists

of discrete parts: here a room, there a room, and here a stretch of passage that

does not connect these two rooms but is preserved in isolation, as a fragment. In

this way, it is all dispersed within me: the rooms, the staircases that descended

with such an elaborate ceremony, and other tight, spiral stairs where one passed

through the dark as the blood passes through the veins; the rooms in the towers,

the balconies hung on high, the unexpected galleries on to which one was thrust

by a little door – all of these things are still within me, and will never cease

to be in me. It is as though the image of this house has fallen into me from a

measureless height and shattered on the bottom-most part of myself"

- in, *The Notebooks of Malte Brigge,* Rilke 1985

PIECES OF OURSELVES
/ and Rachel Whiteread's art practices

Rilke describes the assimilation of places into our selves – how we ourselves hold inside us the fragmented pieces of our lives. Rachel Whiteread's art practice provides an example of collecting and presenting these pieces. Whiteread's act practices is known for her interest in the physical whispers of past lives – of the human debris of living. She has successfully captured, for example, traces of soot from fireplaces, or the lost hairs caught in mattresses thrown-away. The artist's work is intricately intertwined with memories, and often seeks to convey the shadow of something – the physical memory that stays behind when something is gone.

In discussion of her drawing practices Whiteread has stated: "with each drawing, I have an ability to recall where I did that drawing and the circumstances of its making," she specifies, "It's as if the drawing absorbed the time of its making" (Whiteread, in Pesenti and Gallagher 2010). To view one of Whiteread's drawings to steal a glimpse of the artist's private moment in time – to imagine oneself in the fantasy of that memory.

Rachel Whiteread's work intrigued me as a multi-disciplinary art practice that links notions of memory, disappearance, traces, and form. Examining her work prompted me to consider the small moments of architecture that impact our memories – the more phenomenological qualities of mnemonic time that carry the quality or nostalgia of that specific memory. Whiteread's work also provided a precedent as to how I may begin to pick these qualities out of my own memories – taking the work of fifty-one remembered spaces beyond the plan.

"This is why conceptual art was interesting. When conceptual artists started to question the nature of their disciplines, of representation, of the art market, the role of the museum, the role of the gallery, they were raising fundamental questions... For me architecture is in a constant state of definition, hence it is necessary to establish a dialogue with other areas of knowledge. I have often considered what certain artists, filmmakers, or scientists have explored and have used imported expressions"

- Tschumi, in Fontana-Giusti 2016

This figure has been redacted. Please consult the figure list.

fig. 116. Untitled (Black Window), [Acrylic on graph paper], Rachel Whiteread, 1992

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fig. 117. Stairs, [Correction fluid on black paper], Rachel Whiteread, 1995

It harks back to different times in history, but it's all about humankind: where we've lived, what we've done, how we've communicated with our spaces and places that we've been in… My work is a language and the language develops.

- Whiteread, (in Robertson n.d.)

CHERNIKHOV'S CONSTRUCTIVISM

Whiteread's interest in processes and series is echoed in Russian Constructivist Chernikhov's work on series, and his passion for development drawings. Chernikhov's understanding of Constructivism as being "a way of perceiving space and plasticity and composing connected spatial structures, a property of the architectural form underlying the act of discovery and perception" (Khmelnitsky 2013). He was heavily supportive of the pursuit of the creative idea – a pursuit which was manifested in his interest in fantastics. Chernikhov spoke of 'fantastics' as working drawings used to develop ideas (not refined architectural utopias) (Khmelnitsky 2013; Cooke 1984).

Chernikhov also spoke of the relationship between fantasy and history, making the conceptual link between the mysticism of memory and the mystery of the future. These ideologies were encouraging to me, and also informed my design practice around connecting my memory elements to create new forms or depictions of existential spaces.

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fig. 118. Chernikhov's constructions

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"Man is innately a builder in all aspects of his life, and this makes itself felt from the very first moments of his existence"

- Chernikhov 1931, in (Cooke 1984)

fig. 119. excerpt from 'Chernikhov Fantasy and Construction

PART TWO

DESIGN OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the design experiments undertaken in part two;

The first part of phase two was involved with exploring my own memories of residential typologies. I sketched an additional fifty residences from memory - later translating them into digital plans.

figures 120-171 both this page and opposite: . sketches : residential typology from memory

GRANDMA'S HOUSE

CRESSY TERRACE

3 YEARS

LONDON STREET

SIMEON

JUSTYN

BROOKLYN

STIFTSBOGEN

NEUHAUSEN

FAMILY DINNER

GRANDPA

HOSPITAL

LONDON

CHRISTY

LOCKDOWN

GRETA

HALL STREET

ABEL SMITH

GRASS STREET

ARO VALLEY

PARIS

VIENNA

MARTINBOROUGH

POTLUCKS

EX
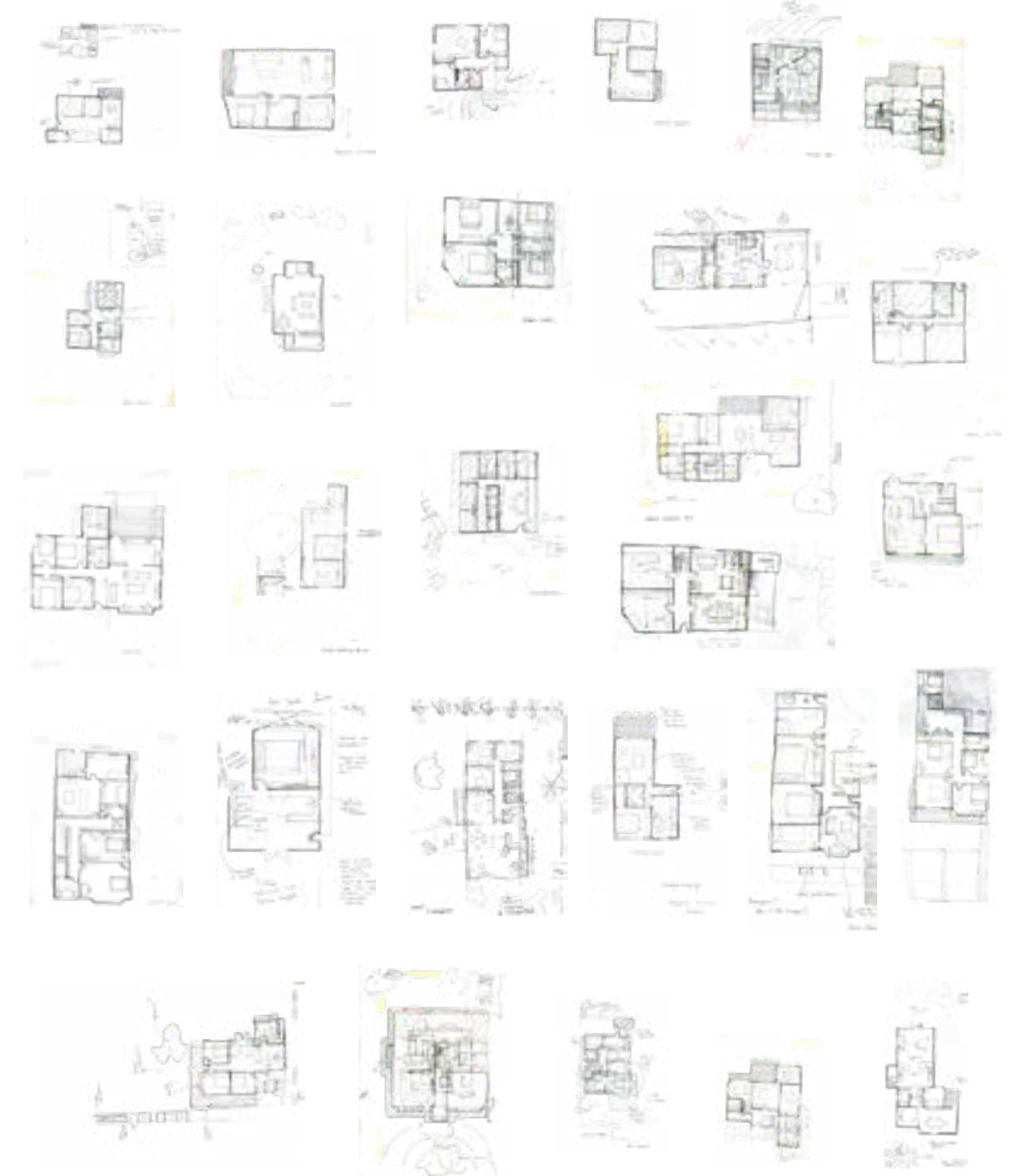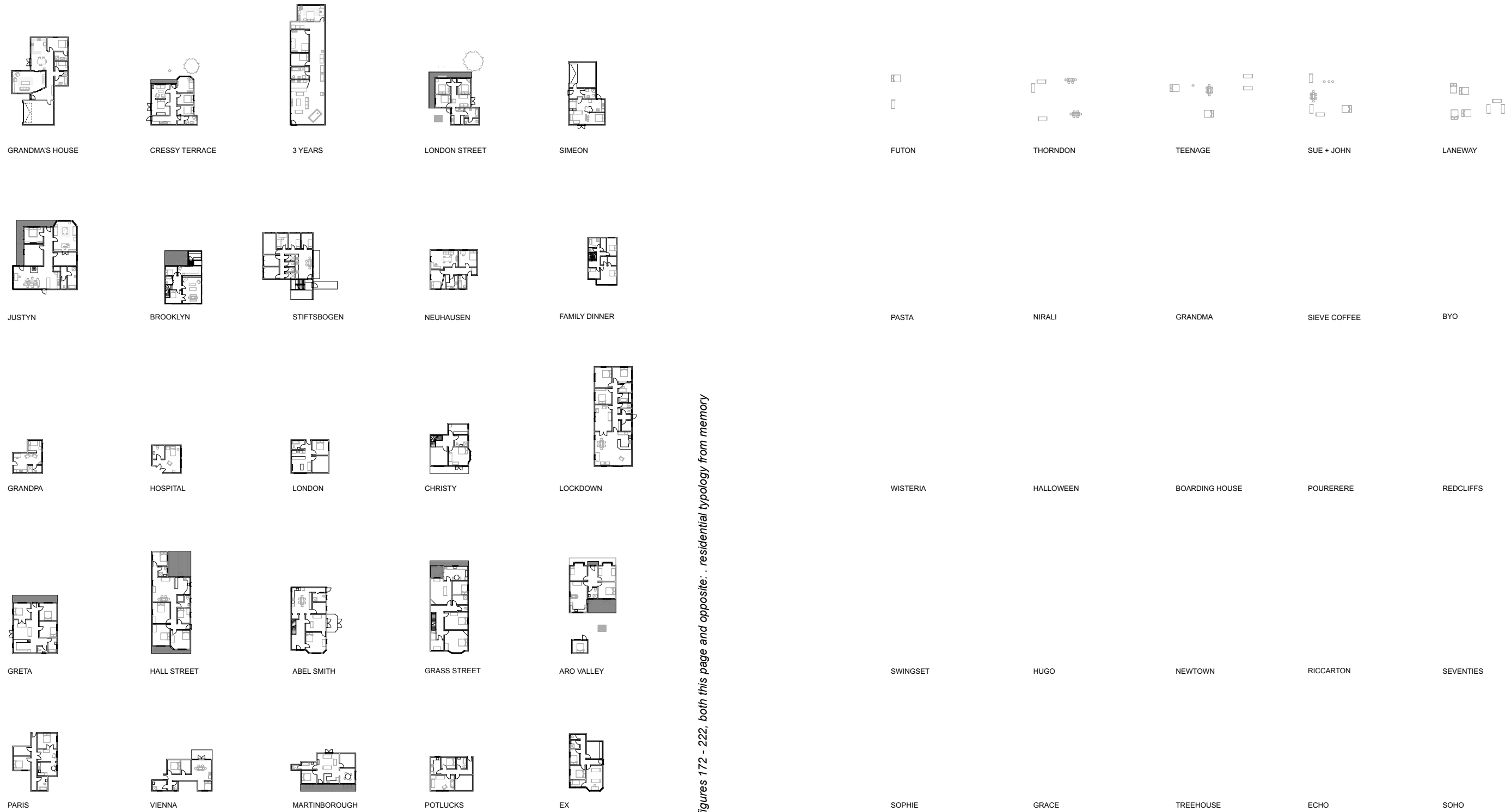
figures 172 - 222, both this page and opposite: . residential typology from memory

FUTON

THORNDON

TEENAGE

SUE + JOHN

LANEWAY

PASTA

NIRALI

GRANDMA

SIEVE COFFEE

BYO

WISTERIA

HALLOWEEN

BOARDING HOUSE

POURERERE

REDCLIFFS

SWINGSET

HUGO

NEWTOWN

RICCARTON

SEVENTIES

SOPHIE

GRACE

TREEHOUSE

ECHO

SOHO
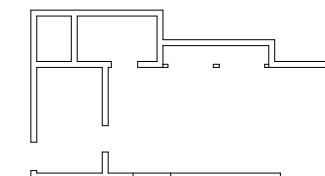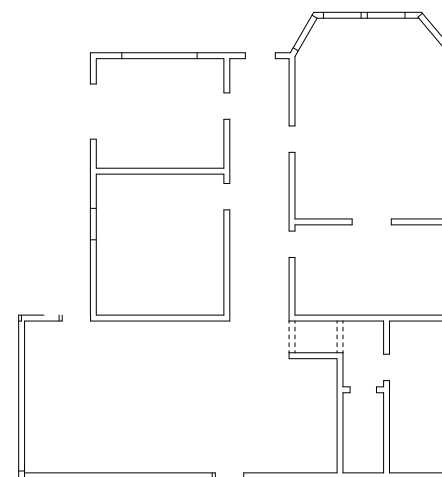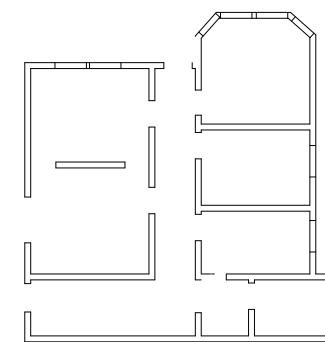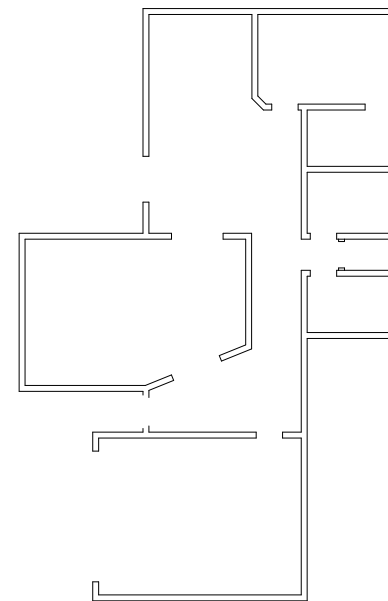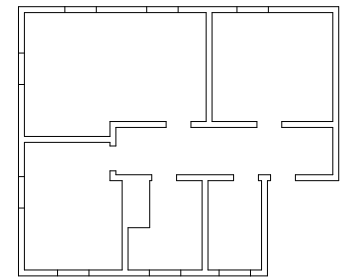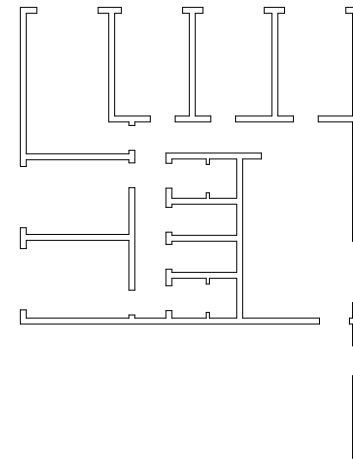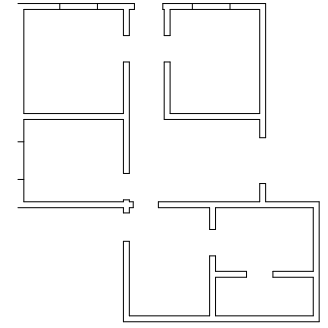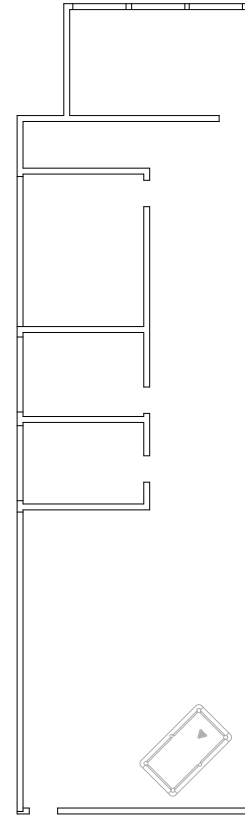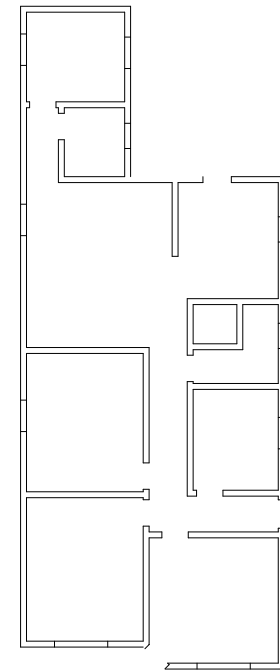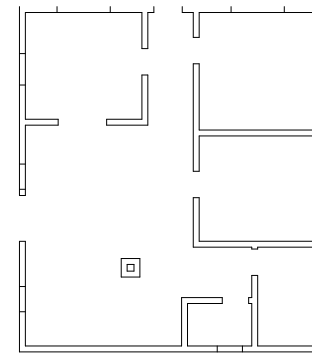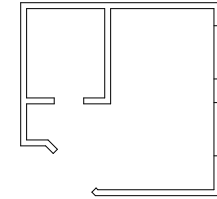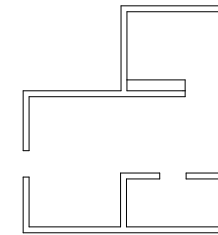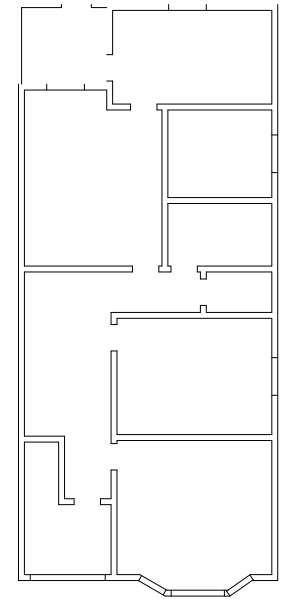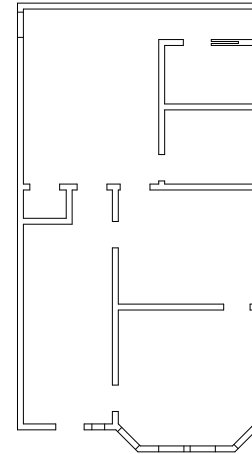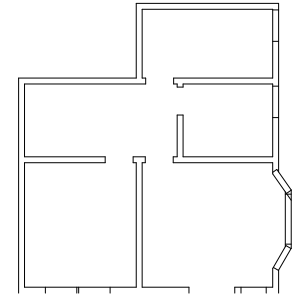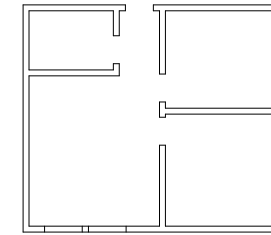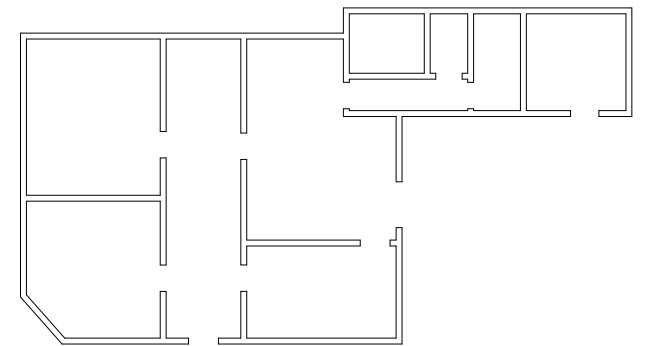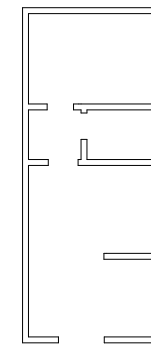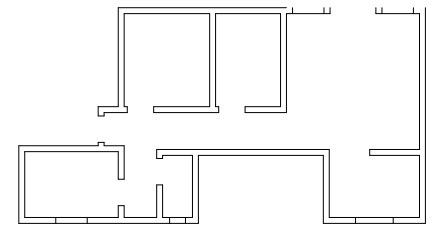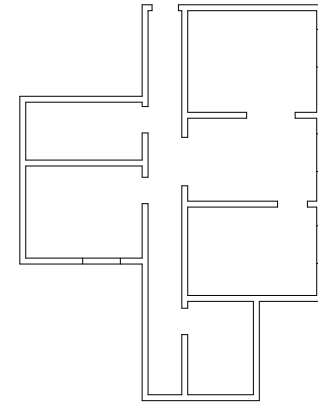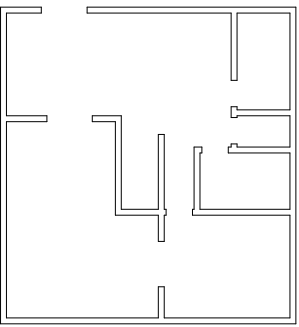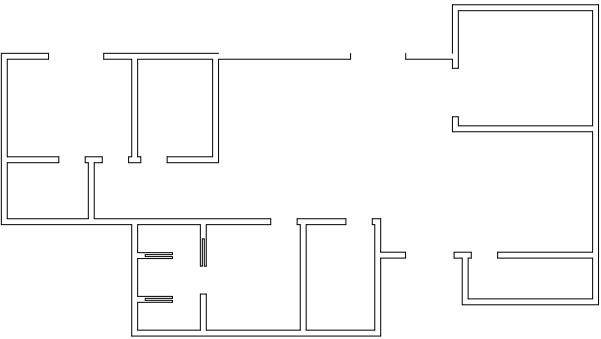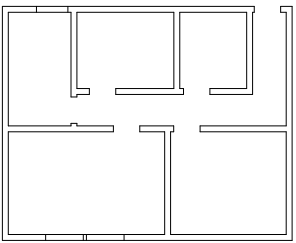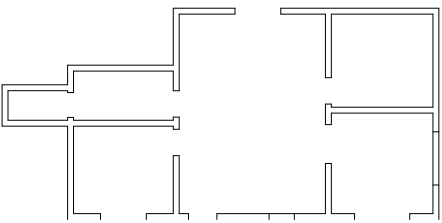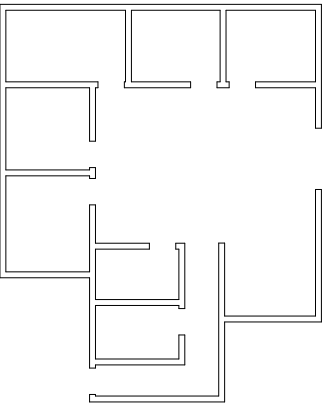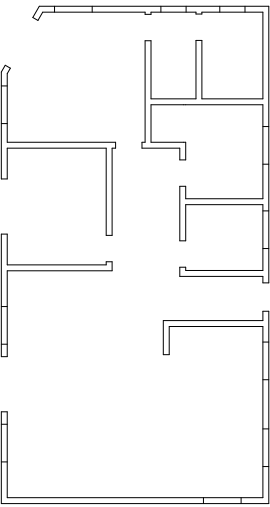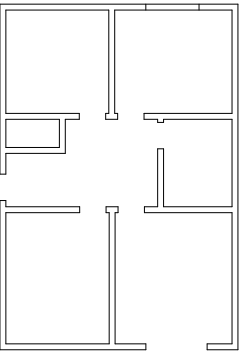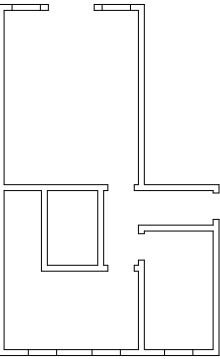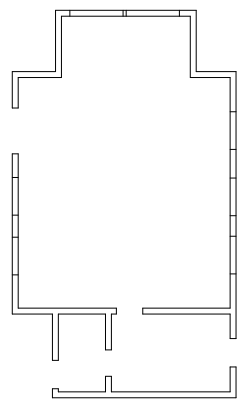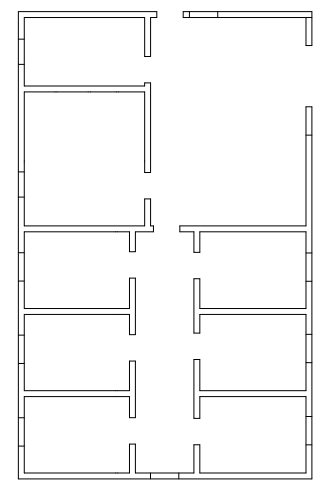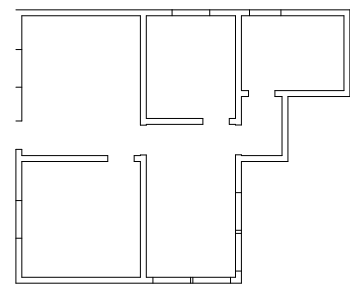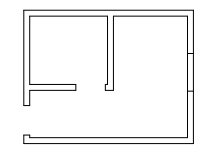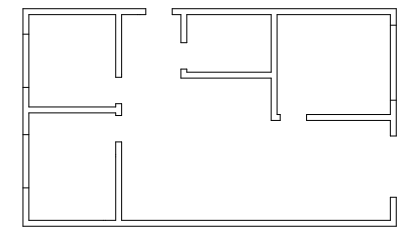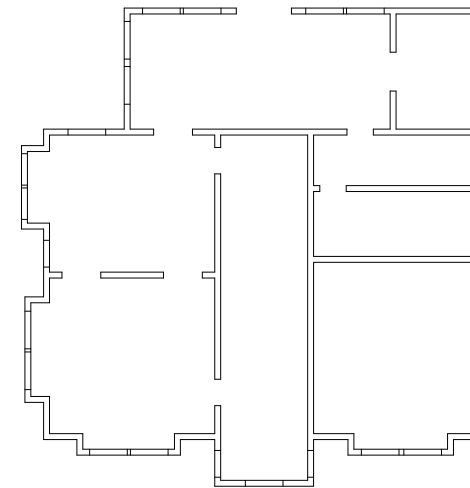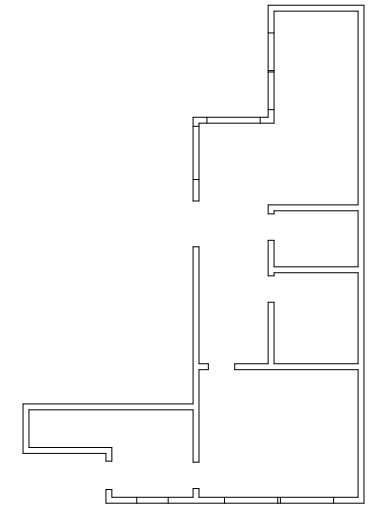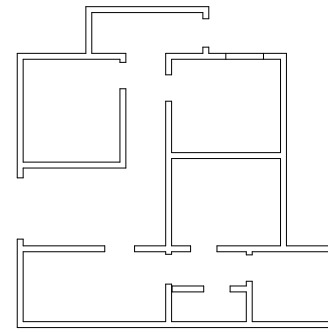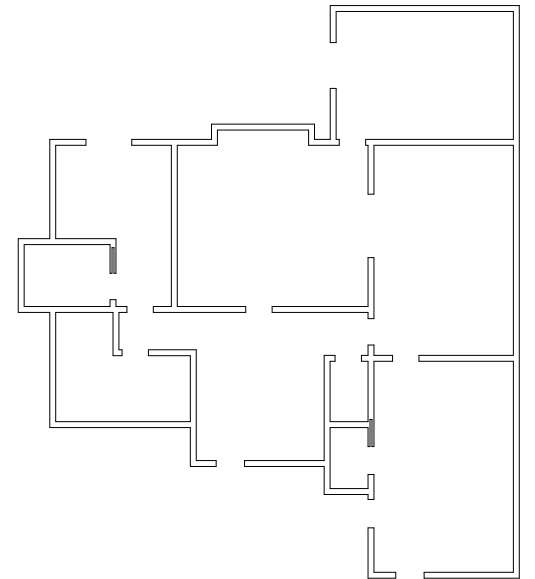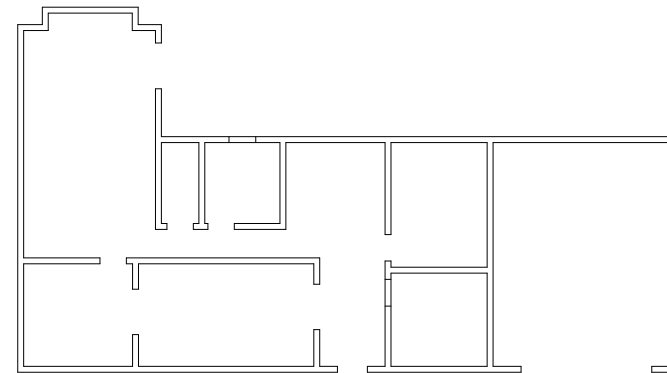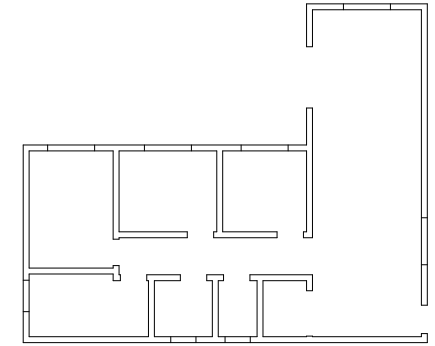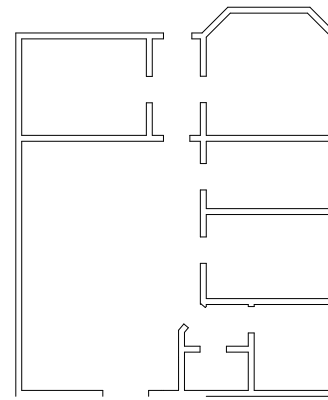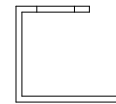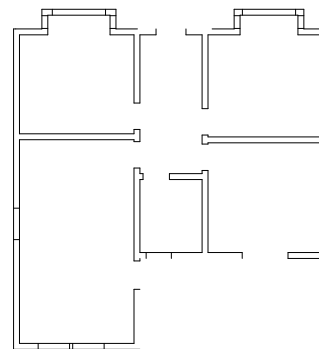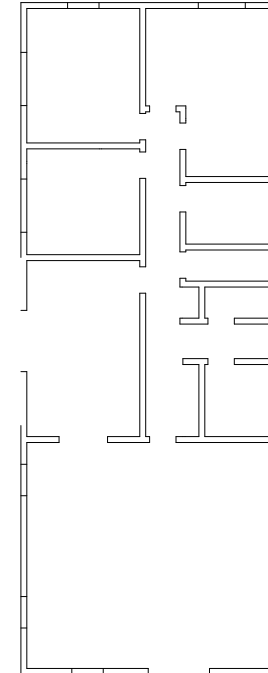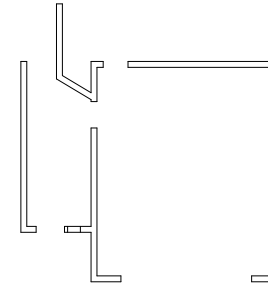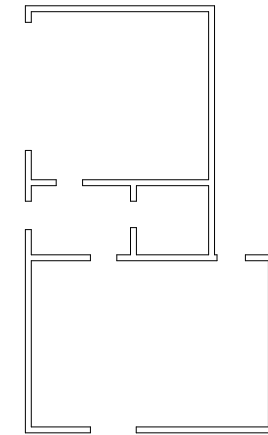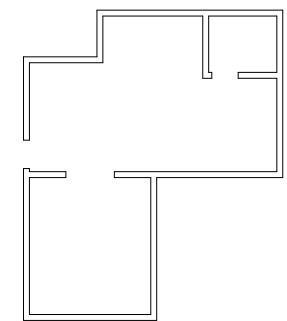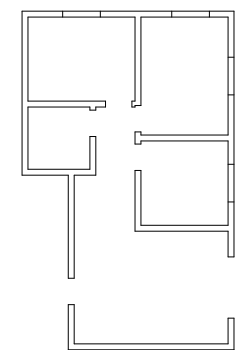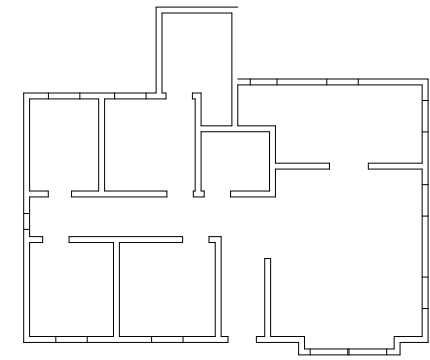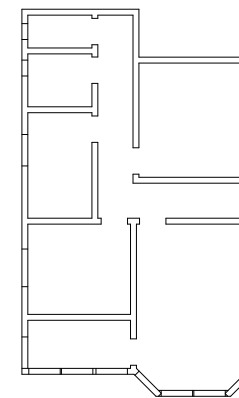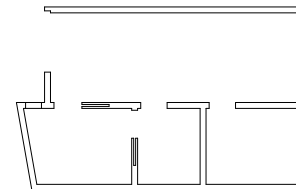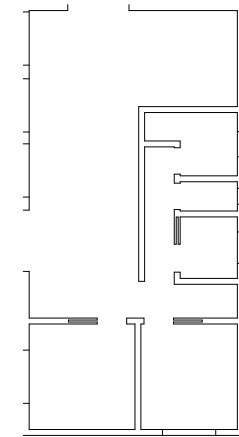
fig.223 *residential memories in a time-space matrix*

2 .5 .1

I explored assessing the plans along a chronological timeline, and as part of a matrix; attempting to develop a framework of significance.

Each plan is placed along a time-space continuum; left to right in chronological time, and spaced top to bottom in an intuitive appraisal of to what degree my experience in that space has been impactful.

'importance ' (?) of experience

chronological time

The plans are roughly divided into chronological sections of my life, such as childhood, early university life, an affecting summer.

Plans that overlap have some significant connection to each other.

Yellow dots communciate that at some time, I myself have lived there.

fig.224. matrix [left]

memories as plans

traces of (my) lives lived

rooms in which my ghosts still linger
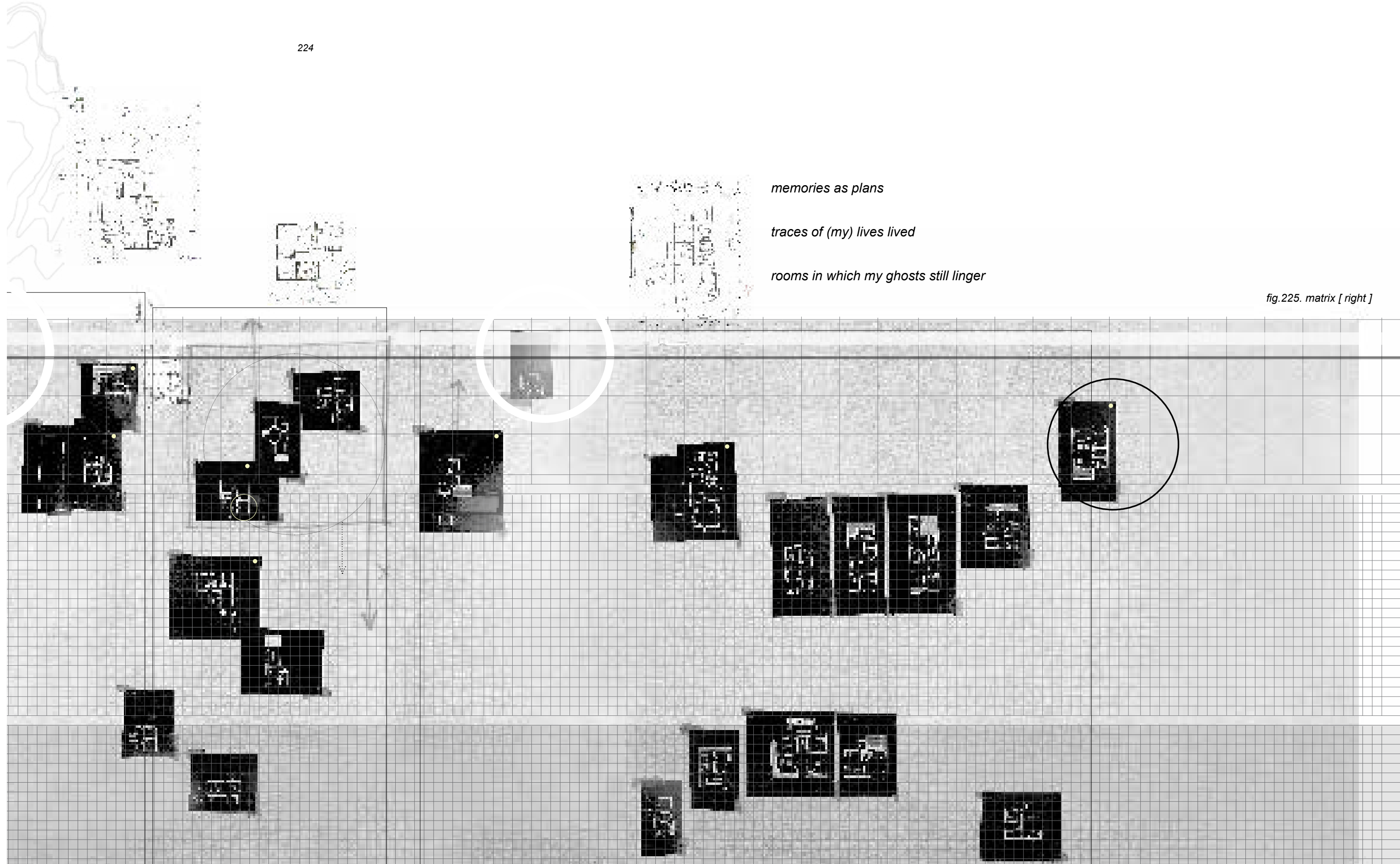
fig.225. matrix [right]

fig. 226 . in the studio

2.5.2 LAYERING AS CONSTRUCTING

An abstract analogue framework - working between modes by pulling the digital plans back out of the computer.

fig. 227. depth in transparencies
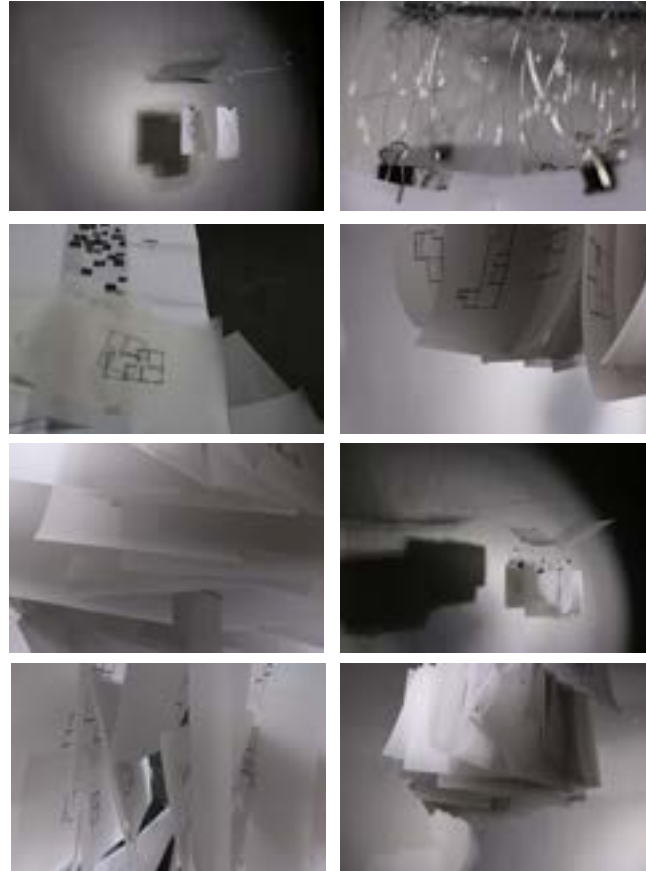
My intention had been that in producing this physical framework of the memories I would create new plans using transparencies.
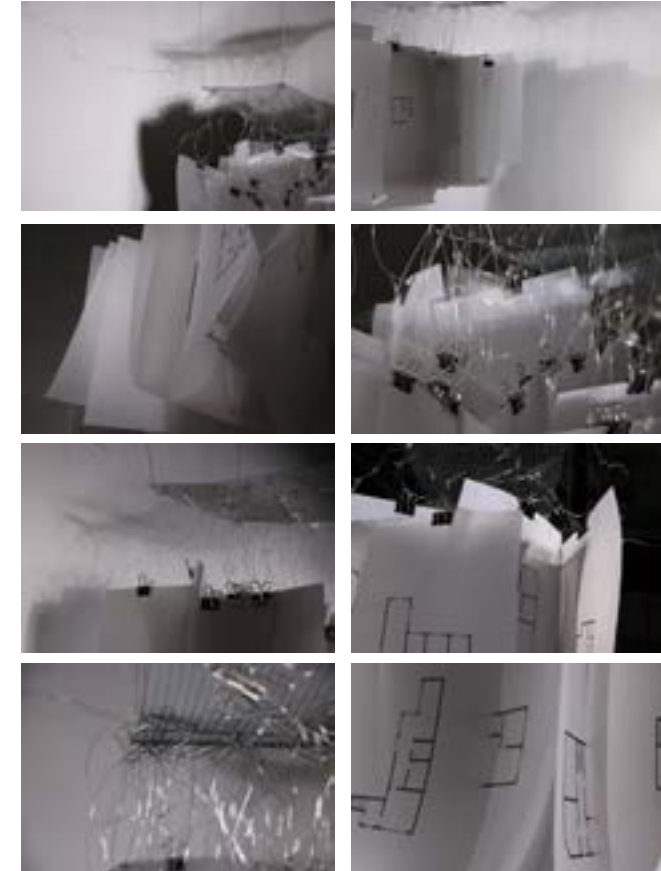
Instead, I found that the plans became m o r e opaque. This began to contribute to my interest in ways of remembering.

2 .5 .3 DIGITAL D E GR E DAT IO N AS CONSTRUCTION

Using a simple process of digital degradation I explored concepts of destroying, blending, and reusing.

The process was a linear experiment, layering plans over plans continuously; creating amorphous forms through a gradual corruption of visual data. This became the foundation upon which new plans were understood as they were introduced to the work

decaying and growing

fig. 244 - 293 . digital decay
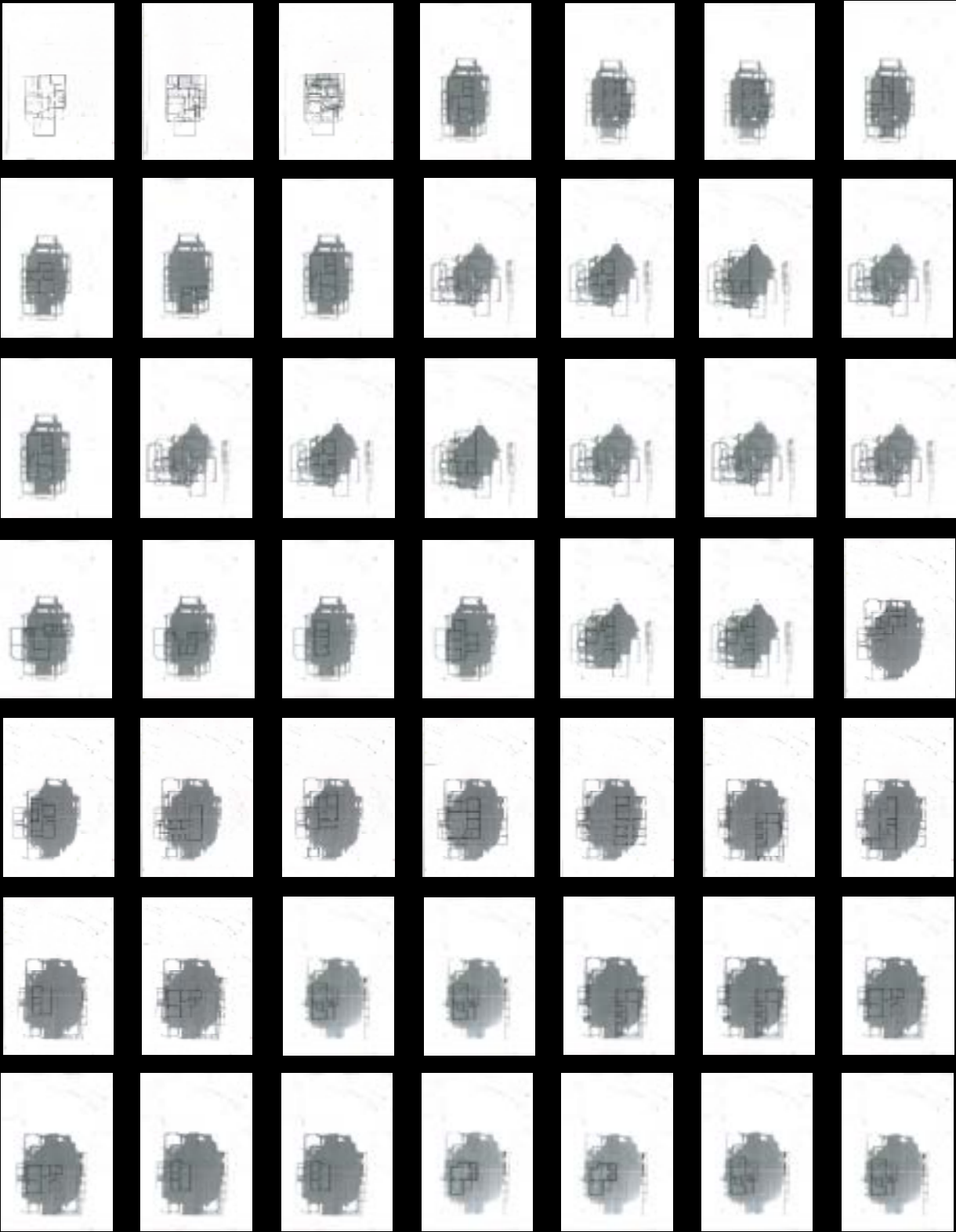
2.5.4 EXPOSURE AS CONSTRUCTING

It was only after making the cynaotypes that I realised that my intended order of prints had been reversed.

     - that the memory / plan that I had intended to appear most clearly and most vividly was represented, instead, behind the others.

In trying to represent newer memories or 'more important' memories, I had inadvertantly called to the fore older or hazy memories

- called them into clarity, but a new clarity

(re) constructing them more clearly than ever.

fig. 294 . cyanotype I

The cyanotype experiments re-affirmed the connection of memories -
emphasising the ways in which all our experiences become connected inside us
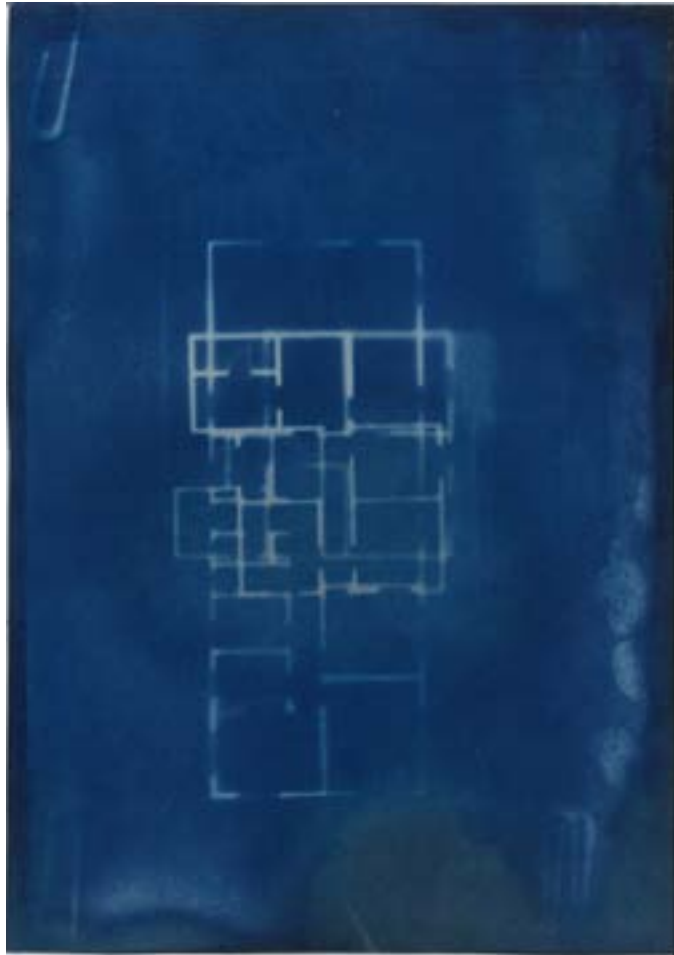
fig. 295. cyanotype II

fig. 296 . cyanotype III

2.5.5 EXPLORATIONS IN EXISTENTIAL SPACE AND MEMORY

In response to the theoretical framework and the case studies, this design experiment considers a new existential space within myself – the psychological construction of the memories.

A fantastical imagining of an existential space within my mind; if our memories were a framework or a series of buildings in a grid – how might they look?

fig. 297. into existential space
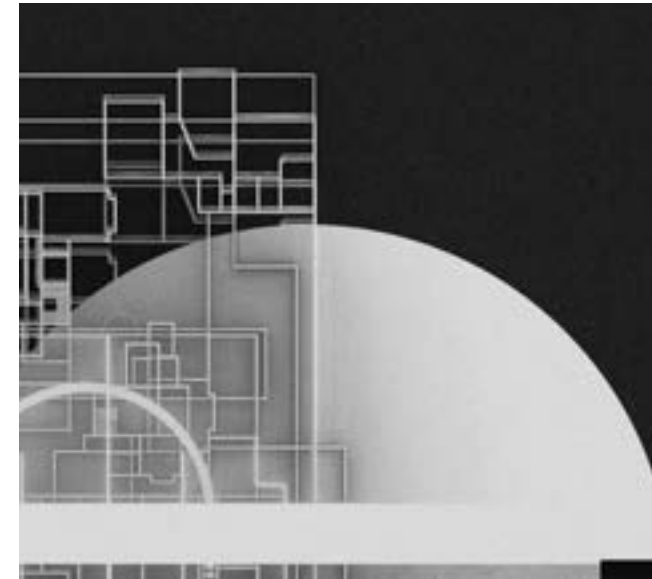
fig. 298 . trace layers w moon

fig. 299 . memory - space - matrix

If we collect data from all the places that we inhabit, if our memories continue to live inside us, how might this be depicted architecturally

Our memories inside us ... us inside our memories .... inside us

a composition of grids and pipes connecting and separating the memories

    - a mass of horizontal and vertical compositions combined into a 3D grid
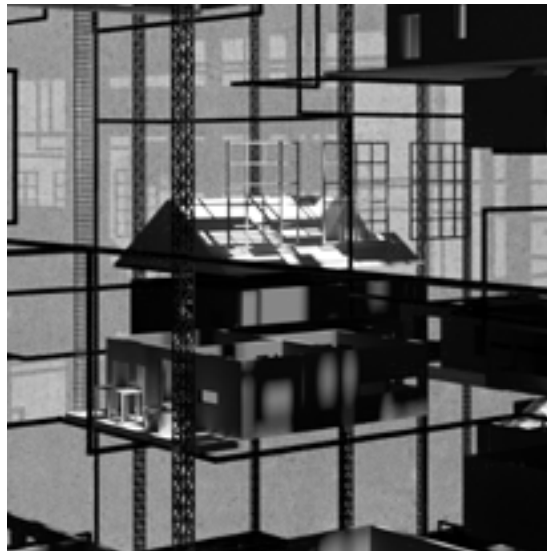
fig. 300. sieve coffee
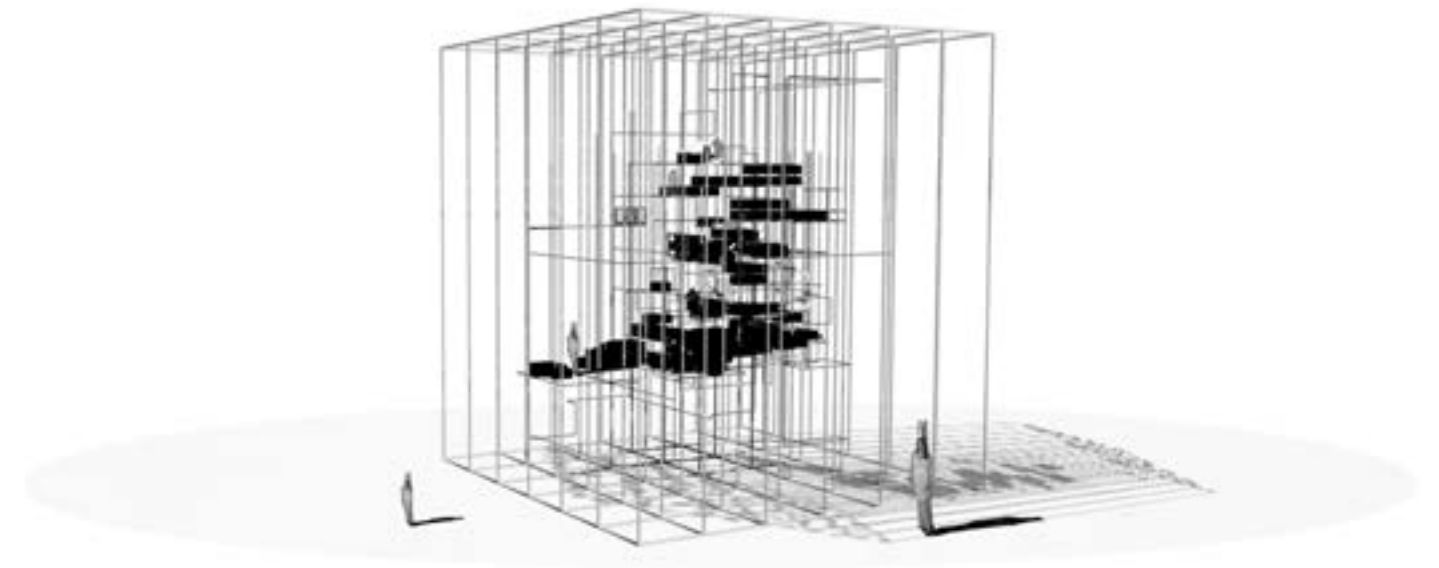
fig. 301. memory grid
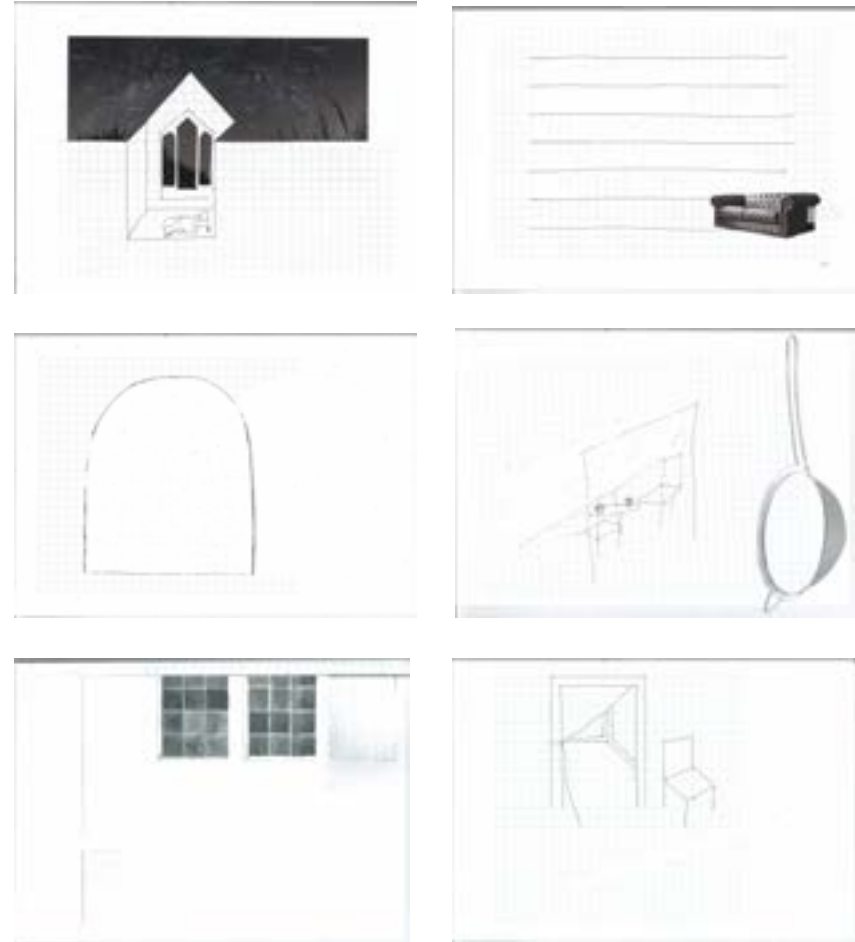
Reflecting on the earlier process experiments I found that particular plans were found to be significant as a result of a significant phenomenological and/or emotional experience. Although all the places are stored within me, some are felt more strongly. Experiments in extraction allowed me to draw out some architectural or phenomenological elements.

fig. 302 . impressions
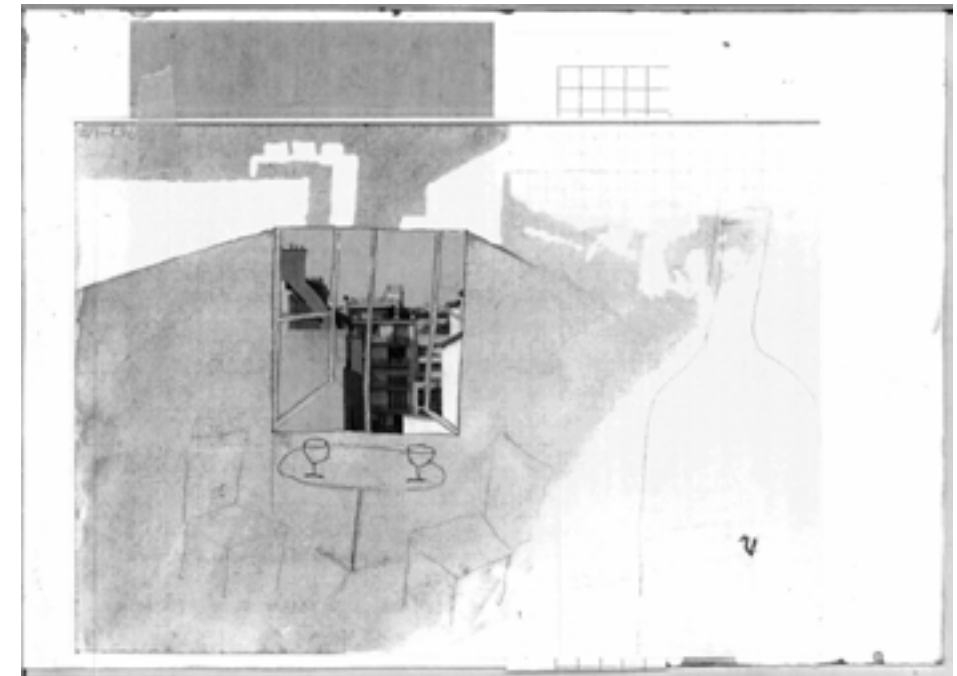
fig. 303. red wine at the garret

fig. 304 . extracted fragments I
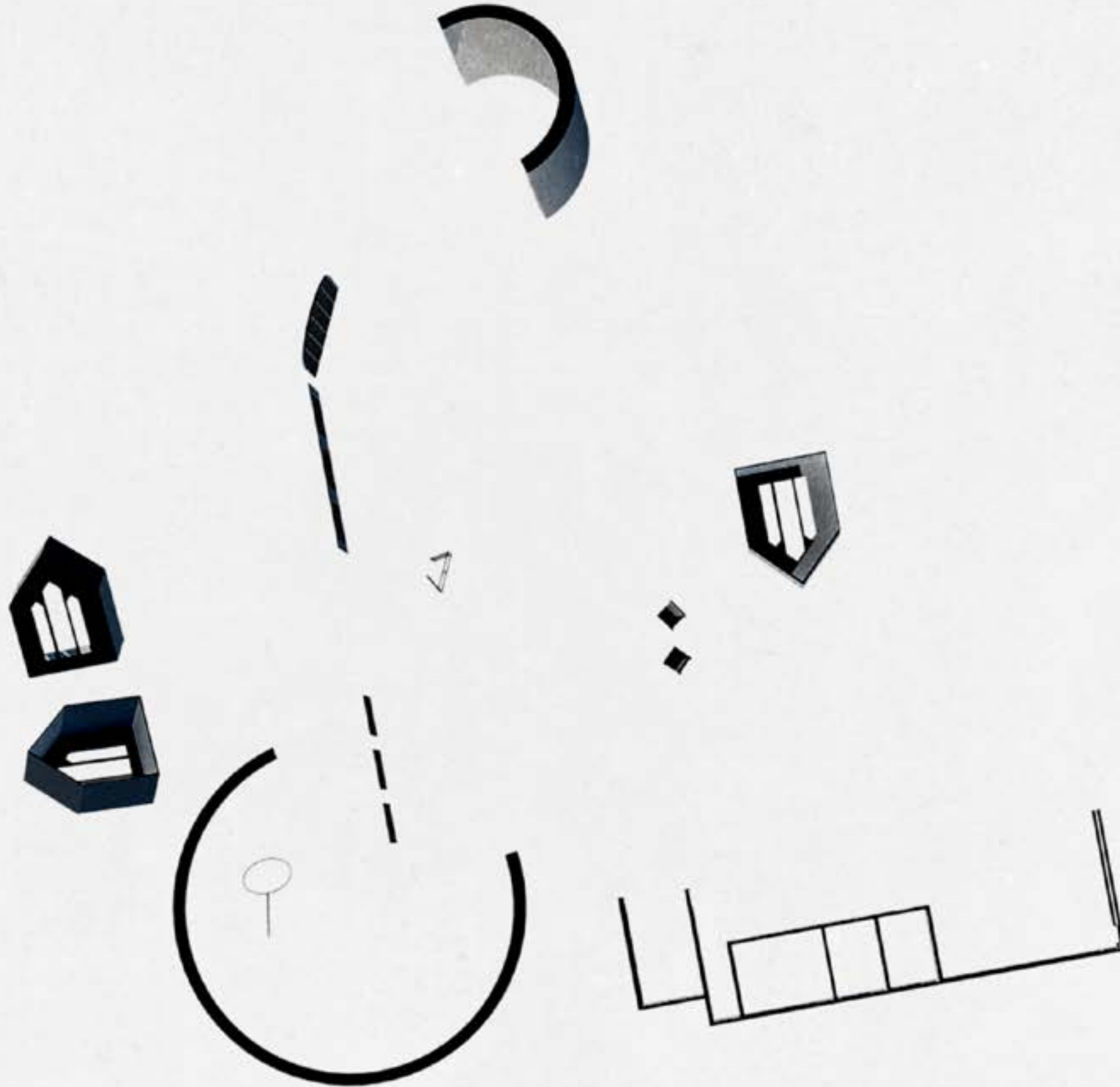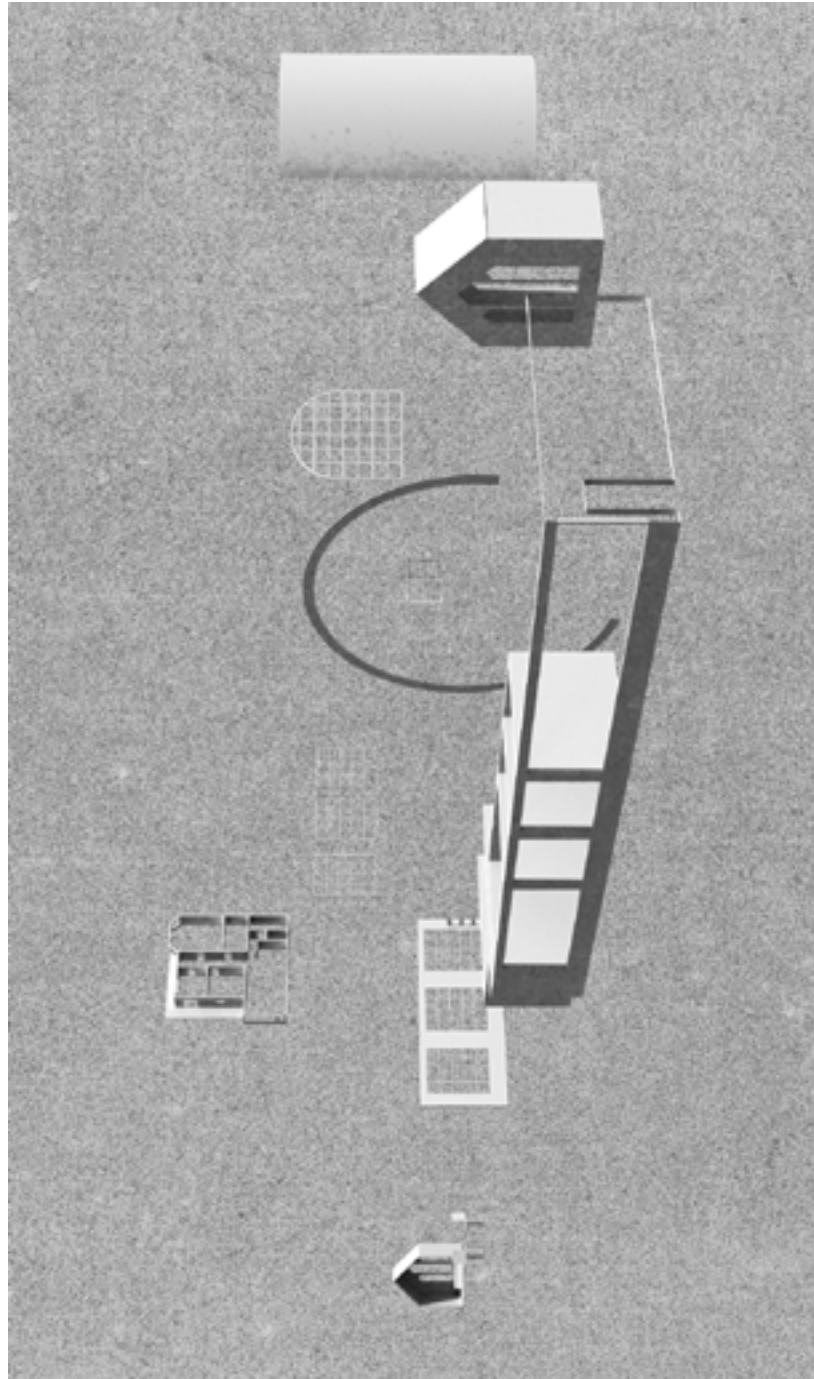
fig. 305 . extracted fragments II
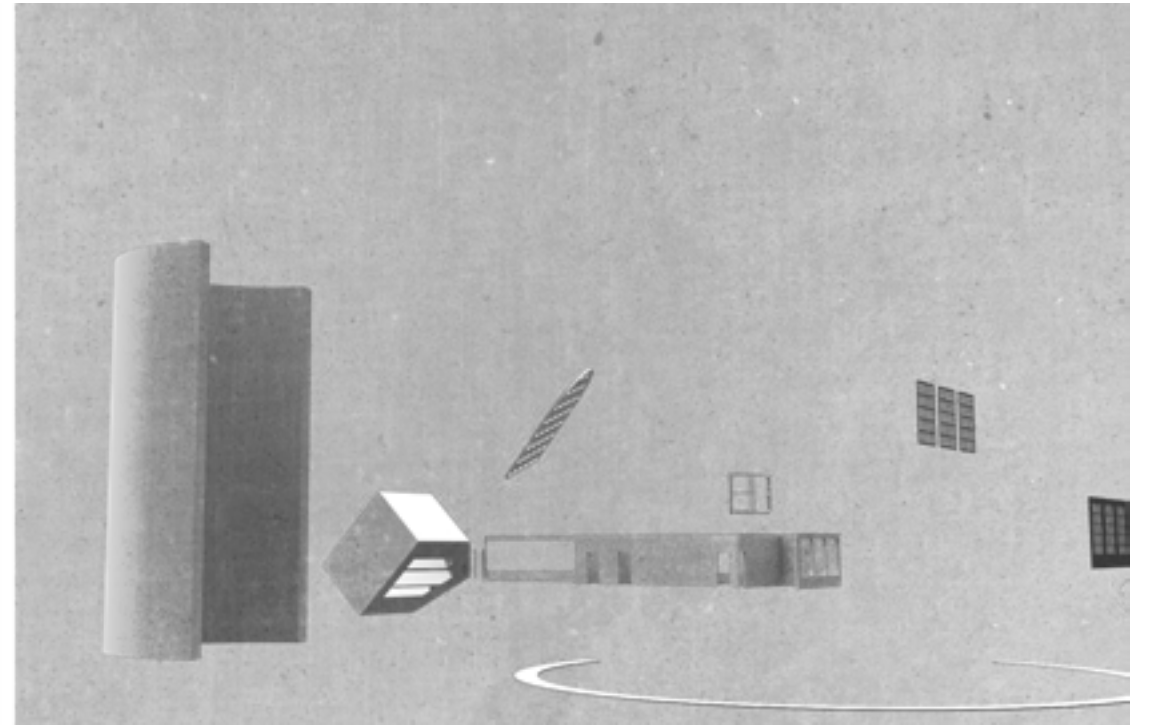
fig. 306 . extracted fragments III

2 . 5 . 7   CONSTRUCTING WITH EXTRACTIONS
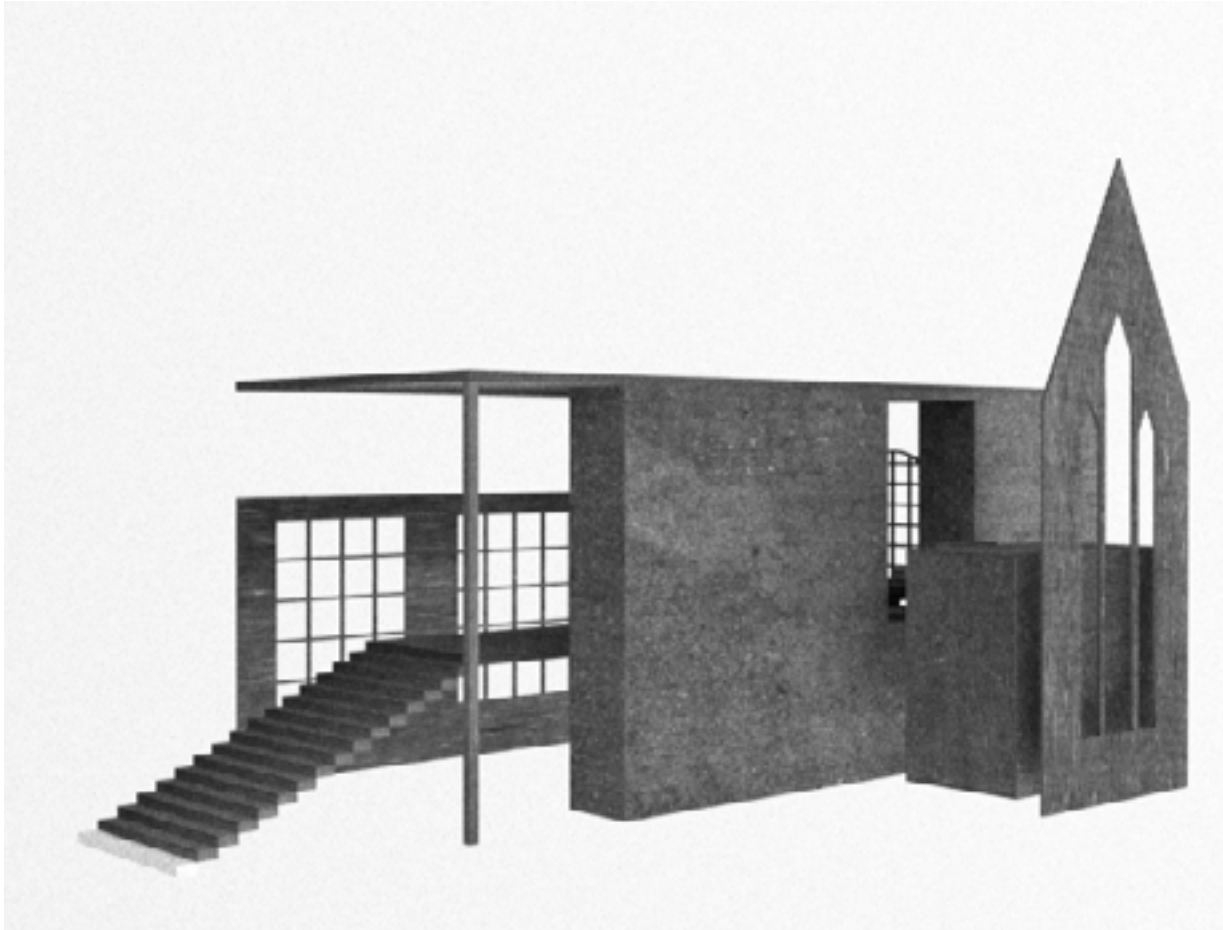
fig. 307 . abstract construction

The final design experiment in phase two is the constructive design of a house for memories. Elements extracted from the memories are the building blocks or materials for this exploration of construction- a response to the previous part one of the research, and the literature and case studies.

Just as our memories are pieces of us, the architectural memory elements act as pieces. These individual forms could be constructively arranged and rearranged endlessly – to create a virtually perpetual series of interventions.

This intervention gives the impression of a house – despite being comprised of various disparate moments of joining or blending. The intervention has a sense of weightlessness; it is an architectural fantasy.
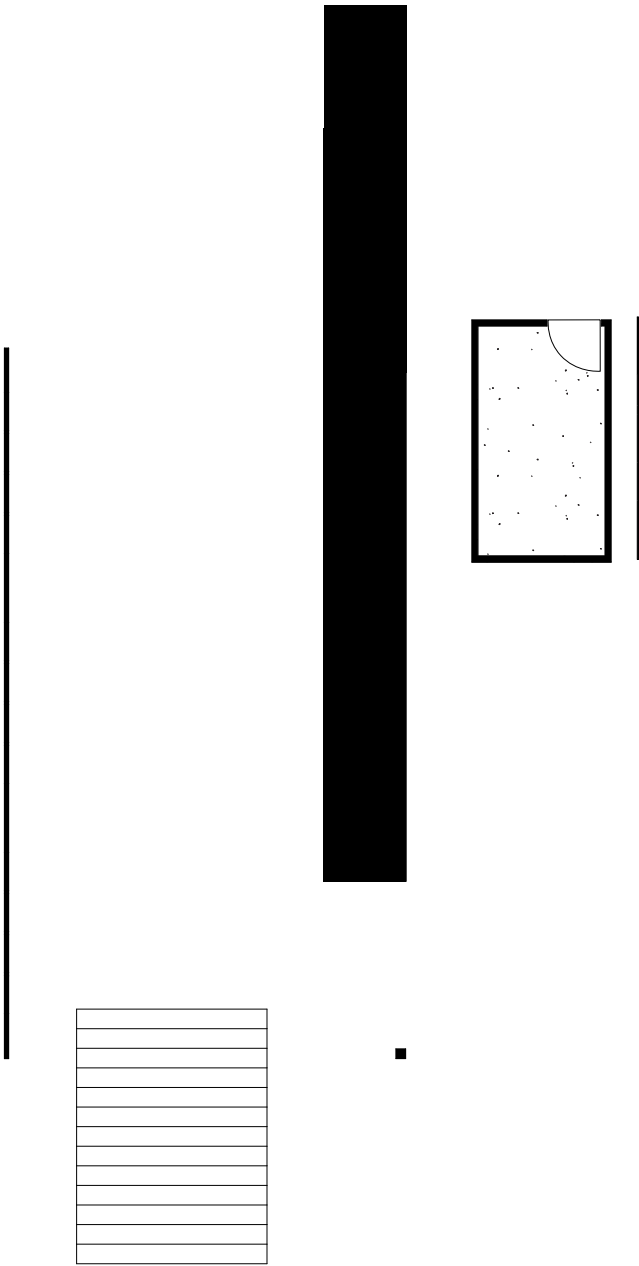
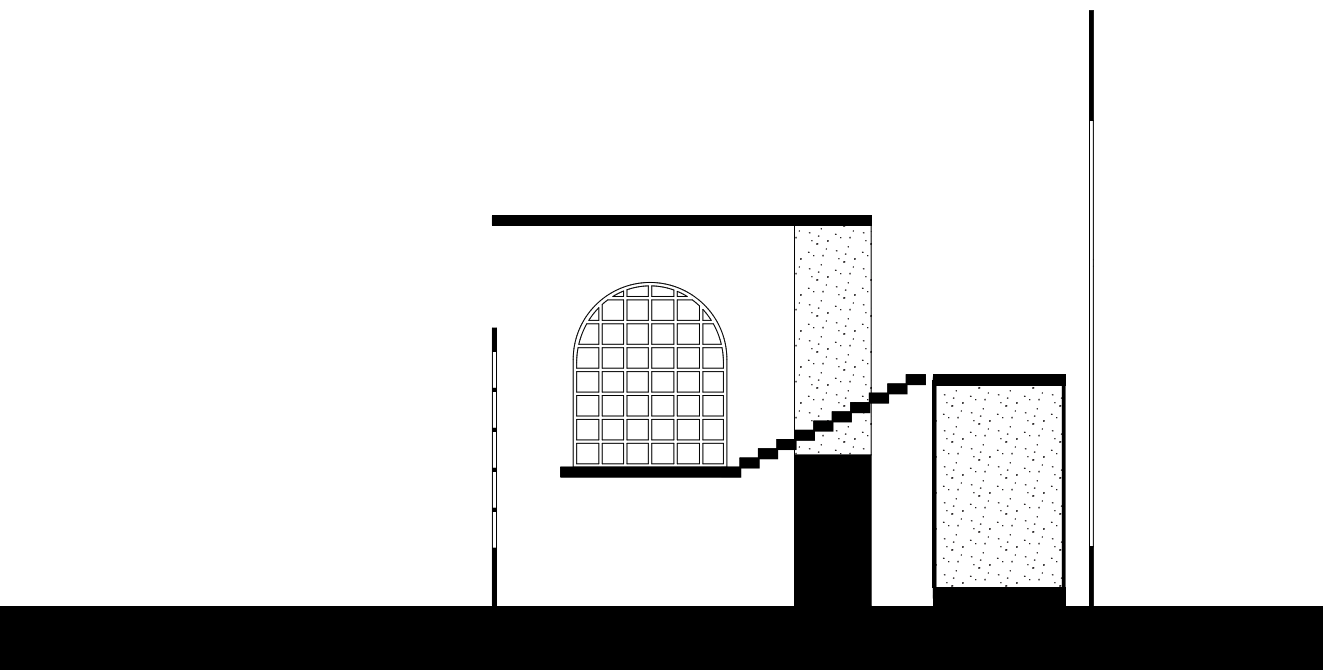fig. 308 . house of extractions plan I
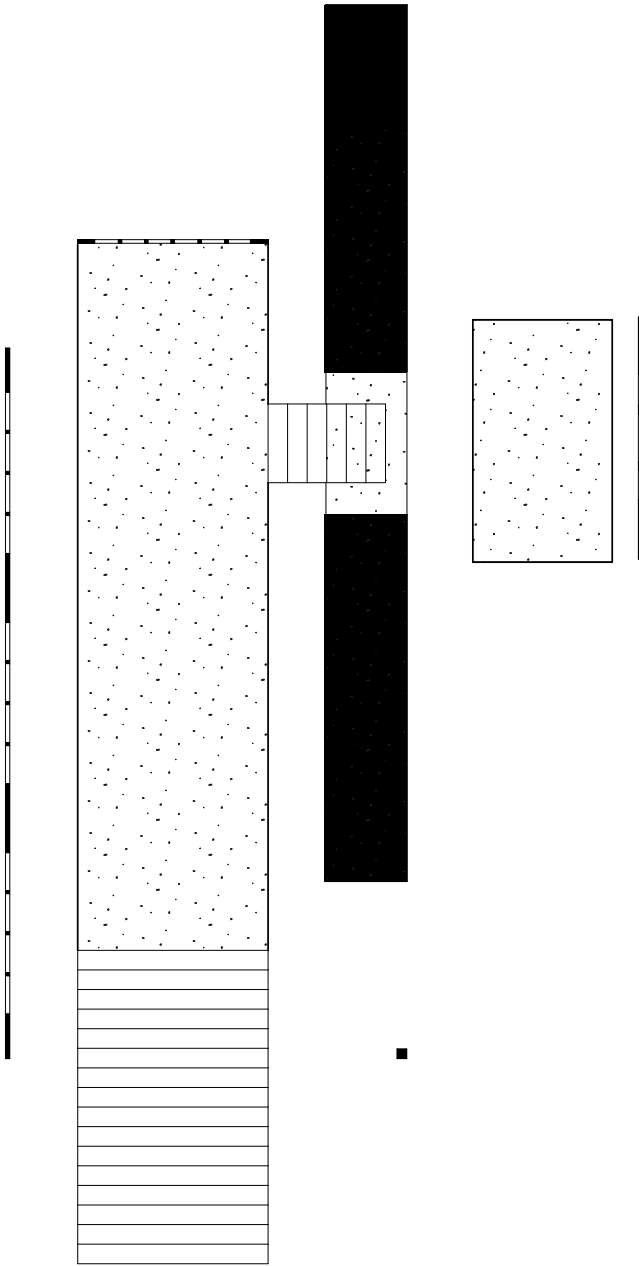
fig. 309 . house of extractions plan II

It is a union of forms from memory, or... a union of memories in form.

It is various modes of joining, most definitively; aligning, resting, and intersecting.
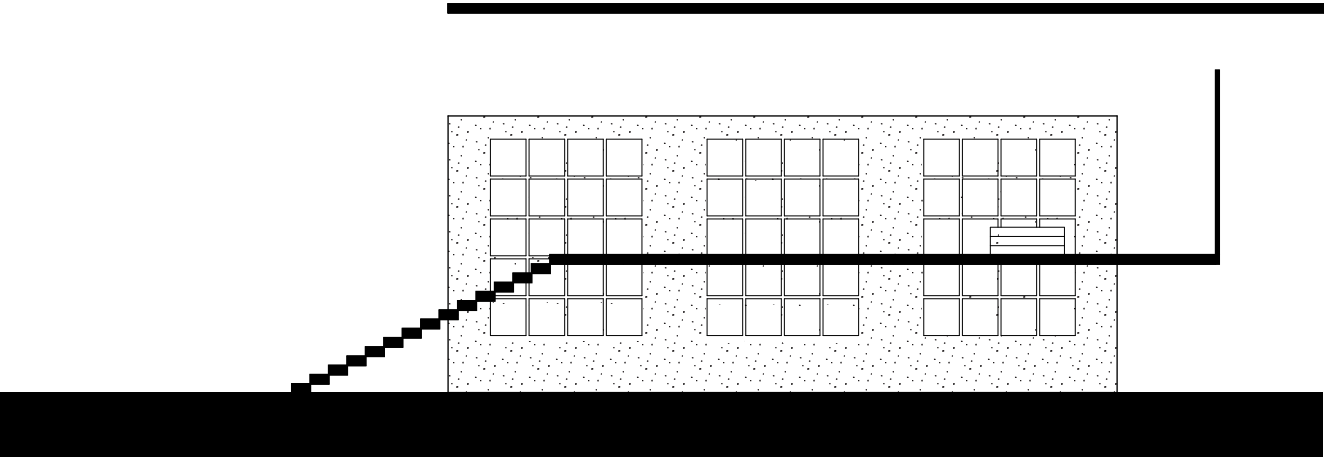
It is houses within houses.

fig. 310 & 311. house of extractions section

CRITICAL REFLECTION

The series of process design experiments in part two explore notions of the construction of knowledge. They pick at the houses inside me, and play with the idea that my nostalgia is a culmination of memories and fantasy bound together in an ever-changing mass.

This is my internal architectural life – the world in which I situate myself psychologically. The window frames from which I peer out into my four-dimensional phenomenological reality. This is a continuously evolving library of memories. These memories hold my experiences, mediate my experiences, and create new experiences. Every house I enter into from here onwards, is also every house I have been in before.

This exploratory design challenged me to consider further the processes of memory itself – the balancing act of memory. Questioning design as the balancing act between present and past, just as nostalgia is the state of memory between present and past.

fig. 312 . existential extractions

fig. 313 . kineticism

INTRODUCTION

If we are made up of all our memories. How do we construct memories? As, in doing so – are we not constructing ourselves? Following the intuitive flow of the research part three of the work examines the liminal elements of memory, knowledge, and the temporal present.

"a perceptual act is never isolated; it is only the most recent phase of a stream of innmerable similar acts, performed in the past and surviving in memory"
- Arnheim 1970, *in Schwartzenberg 2009*

AIMS

Focusing on the notion of movement and balance between temporal states, part three aims to explore the role of memory as knowledge creation, and knowledge creation as epistemological constructivism. Part three is an ode to subjectivity, towards a commentary on bias, preference, 'taste', and aesthetics, in architecture.

METHODOLOGY

Phase three responds intuitively to the previous two phases of this research. It is rooted in a third review of literature, further realising the theoretical framework developed in parts one and two. In response to this framework, and process works iteratively loop each other, in a continuously reflexive cycle of design exercises. The final experiments act as a summing up of ideas discussed or explored in part three, as an icing to the work produced in the research overall.
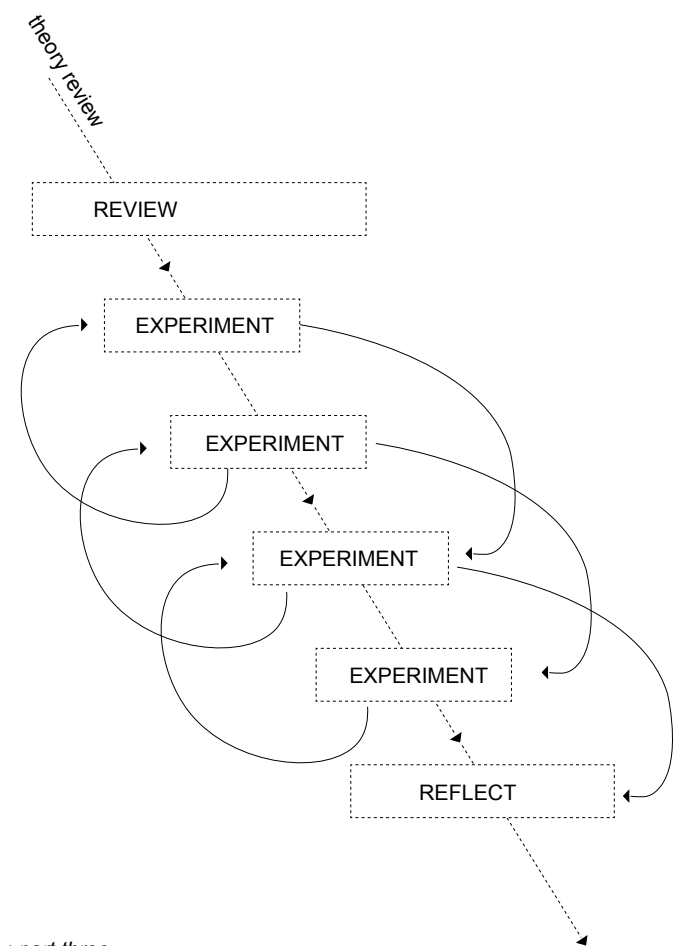
METHODS

In parallel to reviewing theory on the neurological and psychological structures of knowing, I undertook series of intuitive process-based design experiments, settling into an architectural manifestation of memory as knowledge. In response to psychological theories of assimilation, I undertook a series of process drawings around kinetics structures, moving parts, and multiple layers – referring back, also, to the work of part two. In response to these works in process, I developed studies in balance and movement – primarily in response to ideas around construction, liminalities, and equilibrium.

I then realised these studies as a conceptual work of architecture; abstractly responding to the themes and processes of the drawing studies.

Rather than situate this project in an existing or real site it felt appropriate to develop a manifestation of a fantasy site – an intervention sitting between memory and imagination. This method of assessing and creating a site responds to the processes and literature of this part three, in addition to the learnings of parts one and two.

Finally, I developed a sculptural work, realised as a digital model.

fig. 314 . diagram ; part three

PART THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the research expands upon the psychological / neurological context of individual memory making. This research is linked back to the growing theoretical framework, and contextualised in contemporary architectural ethics.

In this section I have also discussed two case studies that I reviewed alongside working through the design experiments.

fig. 315. diagram : part three theoretical framework

FANTASY

IMAGINATION

PHOTOGRAPHY

REFLEXIVE PURSUIT

NOSTALGIA

SUBJECTIVITY

INTUITION

AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

TIME

RADICAL CONSTUCTIVISM

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

DECOLONISATION

IDENTITY

MEMORY

ARCHITECTURE

PHENOMENOLOGY

COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

PLACE

SPACE

PSYCHOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTIVE PROCESSES

ARCHITECTURAL ETHICS

EXISTENTIAL SPACE

UMWELT

QUALIA

ASSIMILATION

MORAL IMAGINATION

TYPES OF SPACE

COGNITIVESPACE
EXISTENTIALSPACE
PERCEPTUALSPACE
ABSTRACTSPACE
PRAGMATICSPACE

NEUROLOGICAL LINK-MAKING

NEUROLOGICAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL

This research is concerned with studying not so much the physicality of architecture, as the psychology of architecture. It is exploring how we construct the psychology of place – how we create meaningful and rich existences – and how memory may contribute to these processes in our lives.

Memory, as a process itself, is what cognitive scientists refer to as an imaginative reconstructive process (Schwartzenberg 2009). Contemporary thinking in neurosciences and cognitive studies consider memory to be not a file cabinet or a computer system – with a static specific place for each piece of information – but a continued re-simulation and re-combination of impressions (Rose 1998). We understand then that memories are not so much information as they are impressions – "constantly conjured and reconsidered" (Schwartzenberg 2009). Rudolf Arnheim, 20th century perceptual psychologist and art theorist, discussed perceptual acts as being innately linked. He described perceptual acts as being tied together in a perpetual "stream of innumerable similar acts, performed in the past and surviving in memory" (Schwartzenberg 2009).

Qualia - "emotionally ordered detail depicting" - is a term often used by cognitive scientists to refer to the psychological processes of developing an existential context (Schwartzenberg 2009). These processes are dependent upon the brain's operation composed of a network of nerve cells (neurons) connected by synapses (Sejnowski 1998). Learning algorithms alter the neural network to store new information in response to what psychologists and cognitive scientists call "sharpening strategies". These are the neurological functions by which our brains and mind "select and enhance specific things to hold them in our memory" (Schwartzenberg 2009).

Essentially, when we continually emphasise certain memories or impressions they become stronger, deeper, and more known to us – innate to us. The more we emphasise the memories or meaning the more firm they are to us, and the closer relationship they have with other neurological processes of how information is represented, processed, stored and recalled (Sejnowski 1998). In context of long-term memories these are what are referred to as non-declarative forms of memory; (the maintenance of) essentially unconscious forms of procedural knowledge involved with intuitive practices (Cubritt 2007).

Classic examples of this type of non-declarative memory might be riding a bike or speaking one's primary language. However, it is also crucial to our personal identity. These types of memories are so innate to us that they are what our psychological architecture is comprised of. Memories are always the private property of the remembering mind, so much a part of *our - selves* that they make up the very fabric of our separate and self-conscious selves.

This research on the neurological and cognitive processes of memory informed my imagined visual structure of memory – the way I framed in, thought about it – pictured it in my head. It became clear to me that epistemological constructivism is metaphorical for memory processes, that memory processes are metaphorical for architectural knowledge.

A MOMENT OF REFLEXIVITY
/ a note on scope

This thesis is concerned almost solely with individual perception and memory – rather than collective memory, or the other frameworks by which memory is so validly understood. This research places a burden on the individual that must be identified as a western post-enlightenment assumption about the nature of knowledge. This focus on the individual, and on personal memory, is therefore itself historically and culturally conditioned. I wish to note that although there is an implicitness with which I accept the role of the individual as a source of knowledge, I do not believe the individual to be "the sole site of memory". It is merely the scope for this brief research work.

A LINK TO ARCHITECTURAL ETHICS

"To impose order on the mass of incoming sense impressions, the mind measures this information against existing mental models and classifies it accordingly. Where there is novelty, the existing knowledge structure is modified. But if the rate of novelty is excessive, that is, if it threatens the fundamental structure of information, the novelty is rejected"

- Smith 1987

As new knowledges must be assimilated into our existing mental structures we should be aware of this psychological practice. Our self-preservation practice of harmony in knowledge also renders it difficult to understand preferences (for example) that are different to our own. The notions that don't fit in with our knowledges and ways of knowing are rejected by our brains because they are not in harmony with our existing knowledges and ways of knowing – they are more difficult to assimilate.

••• another

A MOMENT OF REFLEXIVITY

Reframing my knowing through radical constructivism allowed me to challenge some of the assumptions around knowledge, as it is rooted in Western tradition. Primarily, the fundamental critique of objectivity under radical constructivism allows a reassessment of how (and therefore what) information is privileged. It should be further considered, however, that radical constructivism is itself an idea located in Western thought, and should therefore be understood not as a destination in knowing, but as one of many doorways we must walk through on our journey (Sweeting 2018).

fig. 316. *Aotearoa natural landscape*

3 .3 .

ALEXANDER CALDER

Modernist artist Alexander Calder's sculptural works are an exercise in kinetics and balance. For me, they speak to a moment of pause in movement. A threshold between having moved before, and the possibility of moving again.

The sculptures are comprised of objects – elements suspended in an eternal rhythm. A perpetual conversation with the past and future, as they exist tangibly in the present for the viewer.

This figure has been redacted. Please consult the figure list.

fig. 317. The Blériot . 1949

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fig. 318. Hanging Spider, 1940

Hanging Spider (c. 1940) is a suspended mobile (mobile - French for 'moving') constructed from painted sheet metal and wire. Although titled spider, it is not intended to figuratively represent a spider. Instead, it reflects an interest in life, movement, and the possibility of accident as having a role in art (Whitney Museum of American Art 2021). The whimsical composition is compelled by the ambient air currents of movement in the world around it.

Calder's sculptures transcend the time and space of the viewing, as graceful kinetic objects they are in conversation with an infinite balance and continuum – a relationship with a flexibility between past and future.

fig. 319.   the Tongariro Power Scheme
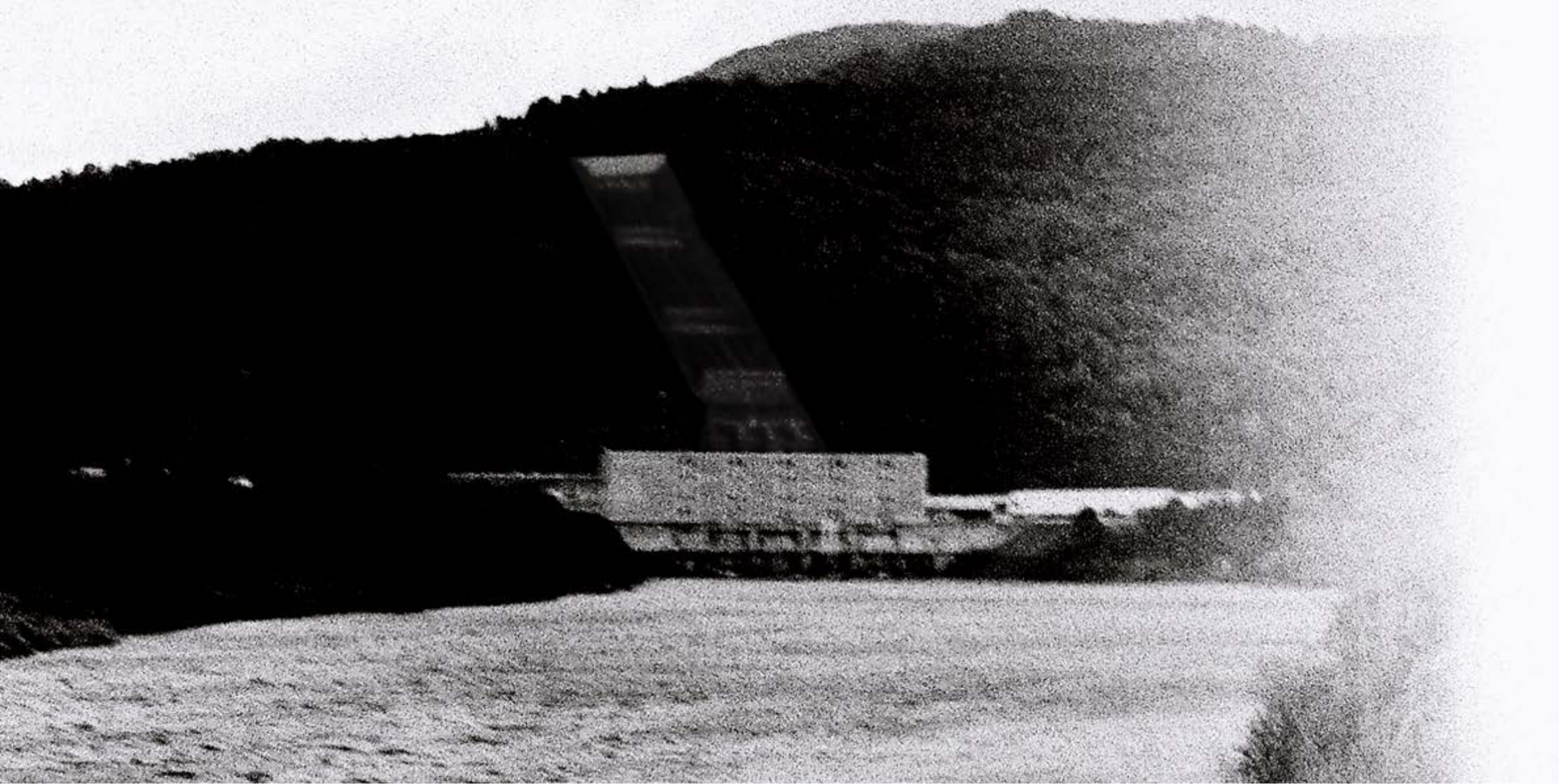
PART THREE

DESIGN OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the design experiments undertaken in part three;

3 .5 .1 LINES AS LAYERS

This set of drawings explore layers in relationship to an introduced kinetic language. Each drawing responds to - or creates anew - an amalgamation of plans from part two of the research. Layers of movement lines are applied, exploring connections between the plans, the page, space, and introduced lines - focusing on shifting views and proportions as new layers are introduced.

fig. 320. drawing experiment I
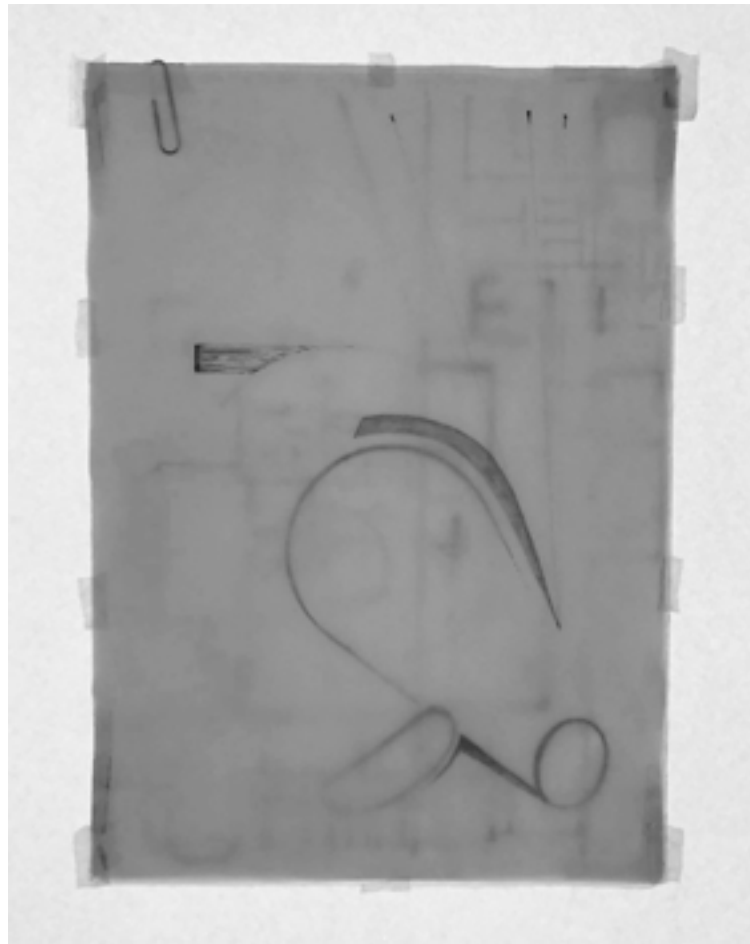
fig. 321. drawing experiment II
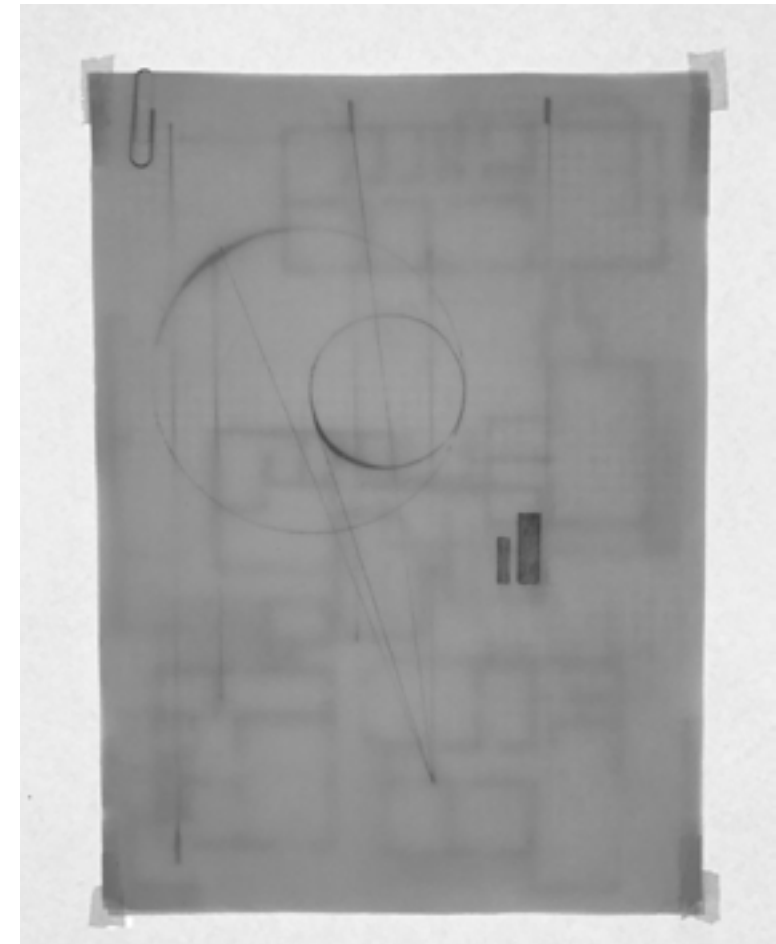
fig. 322. drawing experiment III
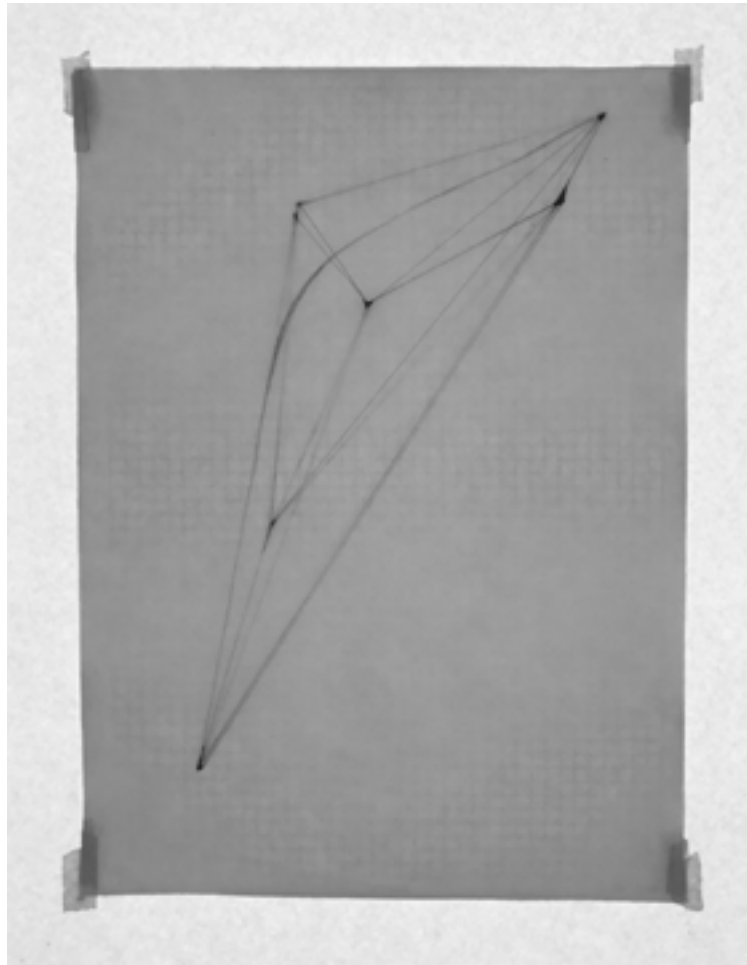
fig. 323. drawing experiment IIII
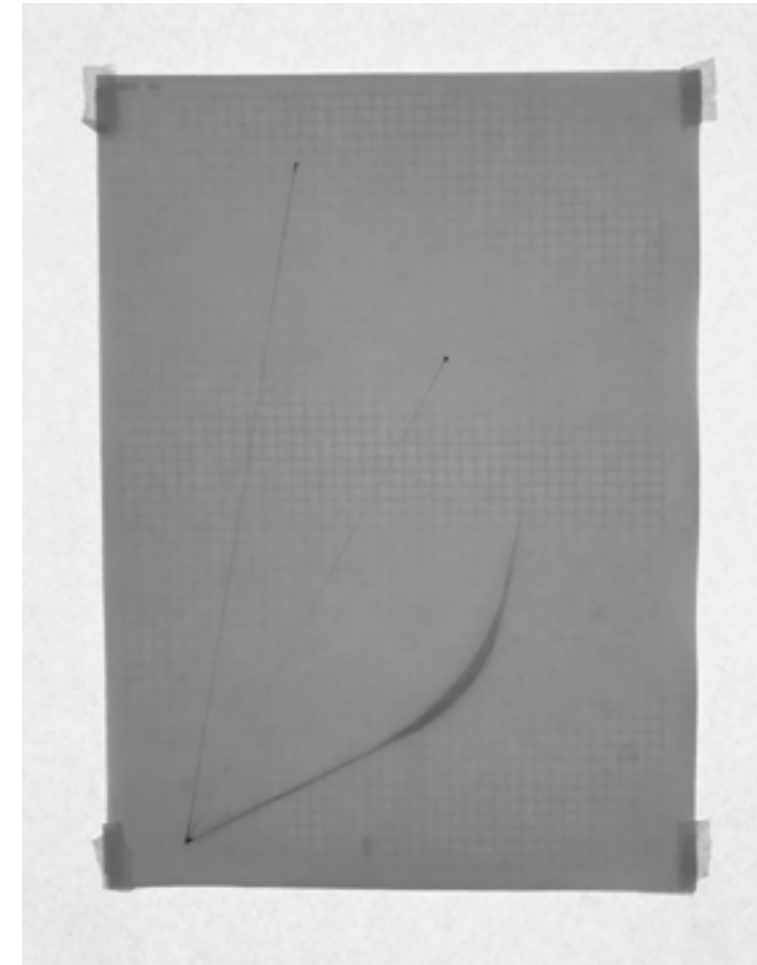
fig. 324. drawing experiment V

fig. 326. power scheme

fig. 325. construction

● ● ● photographic explorations of built p a t t e r n s and h a r mo ni e s

3 .5 .2 MOVEMENT AS STILLNESS
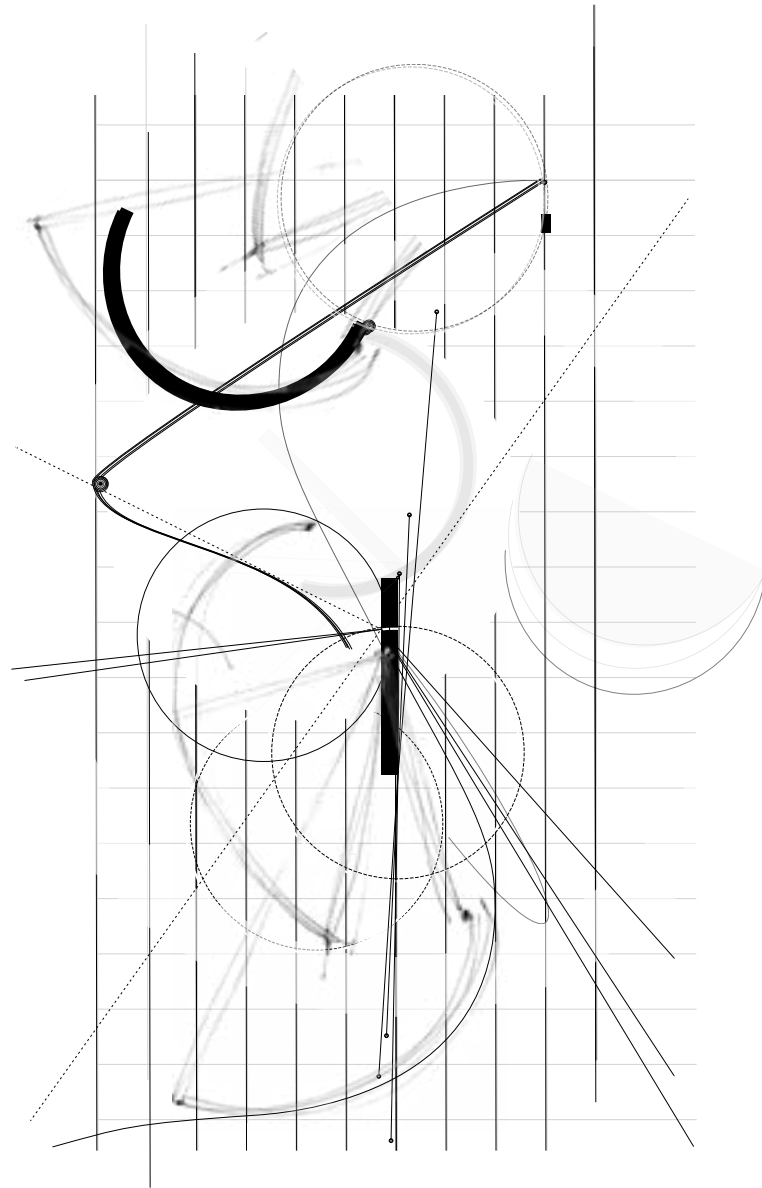
fig. 327. kinetic drawing I

fig. 328. kinetic drawing II
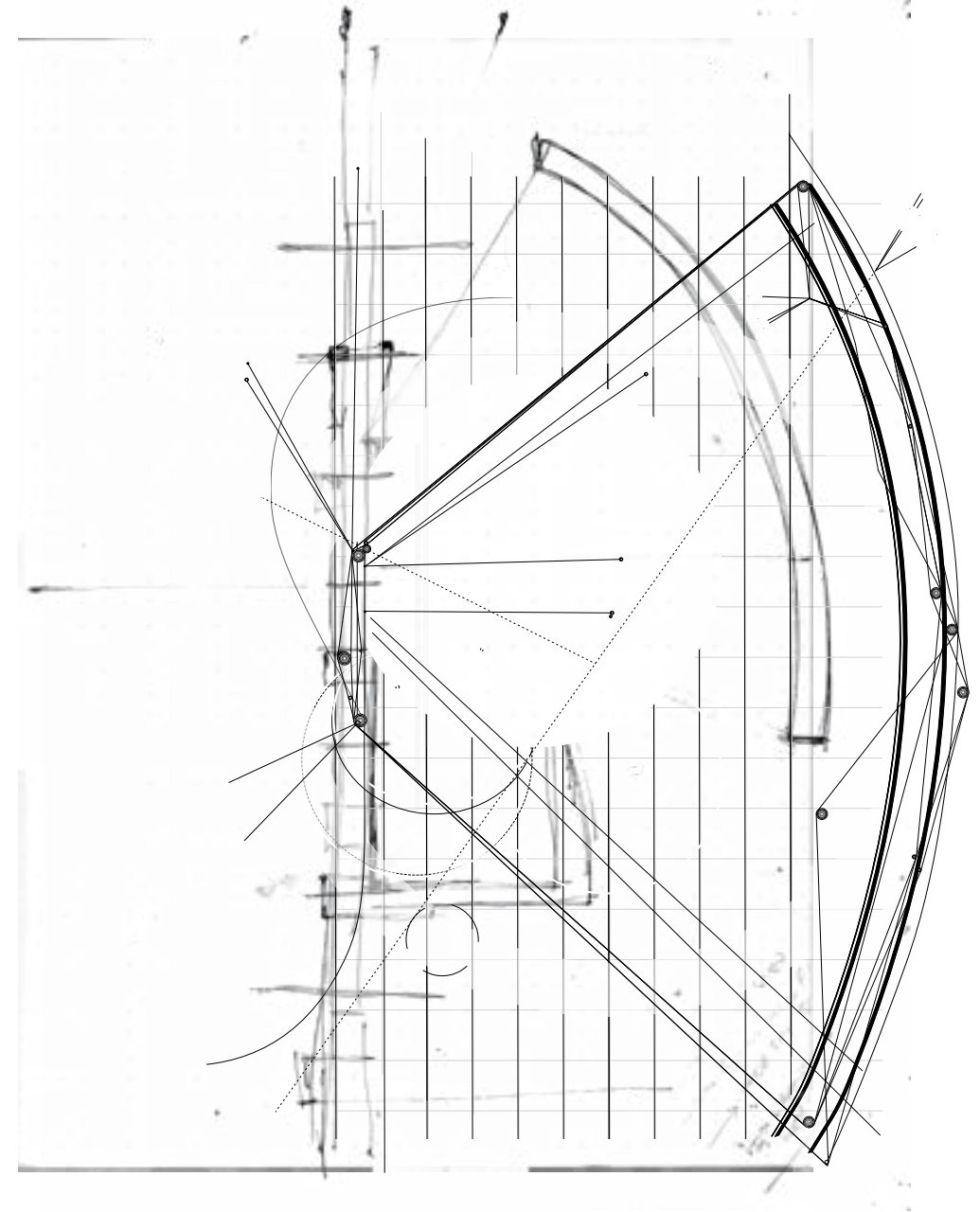
In response to the case studies and theory introduced in part three these drawings expand on ideas of movement - arounds pulleys and pivoting. Exploration of rhythm in forms, and the sense of vitality achieved in bending slender impressions into fragmented compositions. Inevitably, these process works lead to the development of a conceptual architectural proposition representing knowledge construction and temporal liminality.
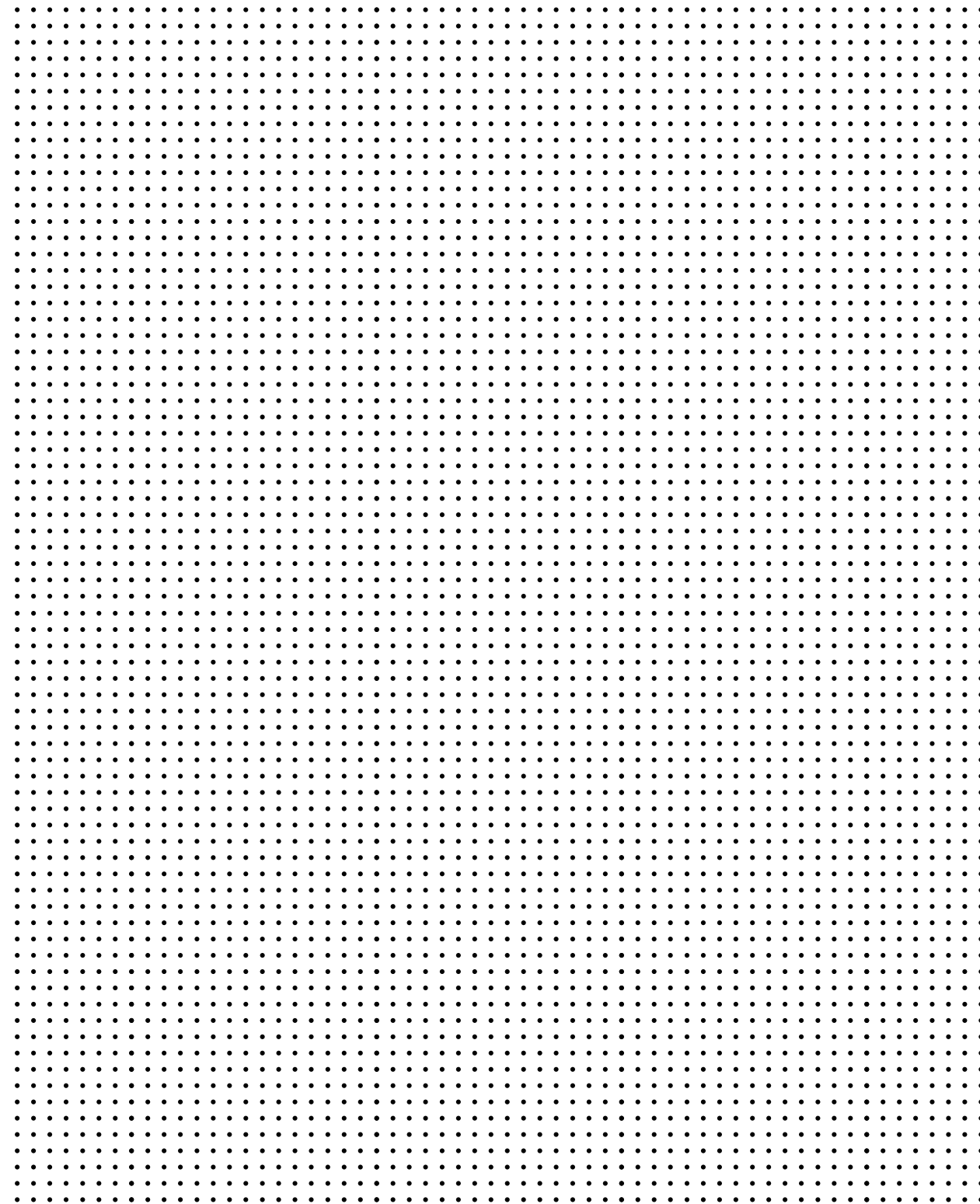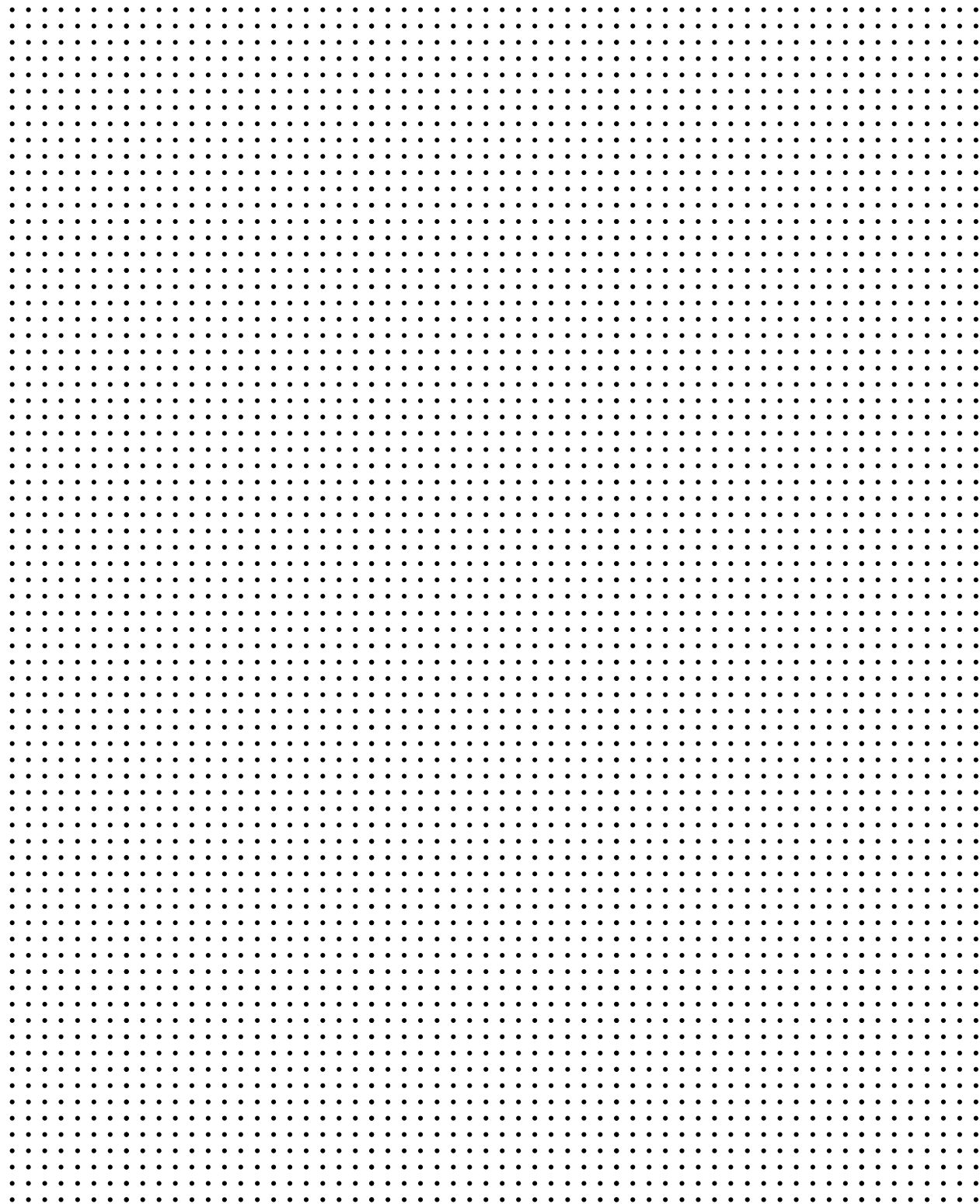
fig. 329. reaching forward

PRESENT GHOSTS

Phase three's cumulative architectural representation is a hyper-metaphorical or conceptual approach to the embodiment of memory as a way of knowing. The crane-like appearance immediately calls upon the language of construction, and places the design in the context of temporal flux.

Formally, the design consists of three major elements. These elements are in a state of balance, each part bound to the other. These elements abstractly reference three temporal states of being; the past, the present, the future. The central form remains upright, bound to the past and the present to counterweight – or make sense of – the now. This push-pull is affected most by the addition of constructive elements to the other sections of the design – as a new piece of construction is added to the past, so the future must adjust.

fig. 330. liminal construction
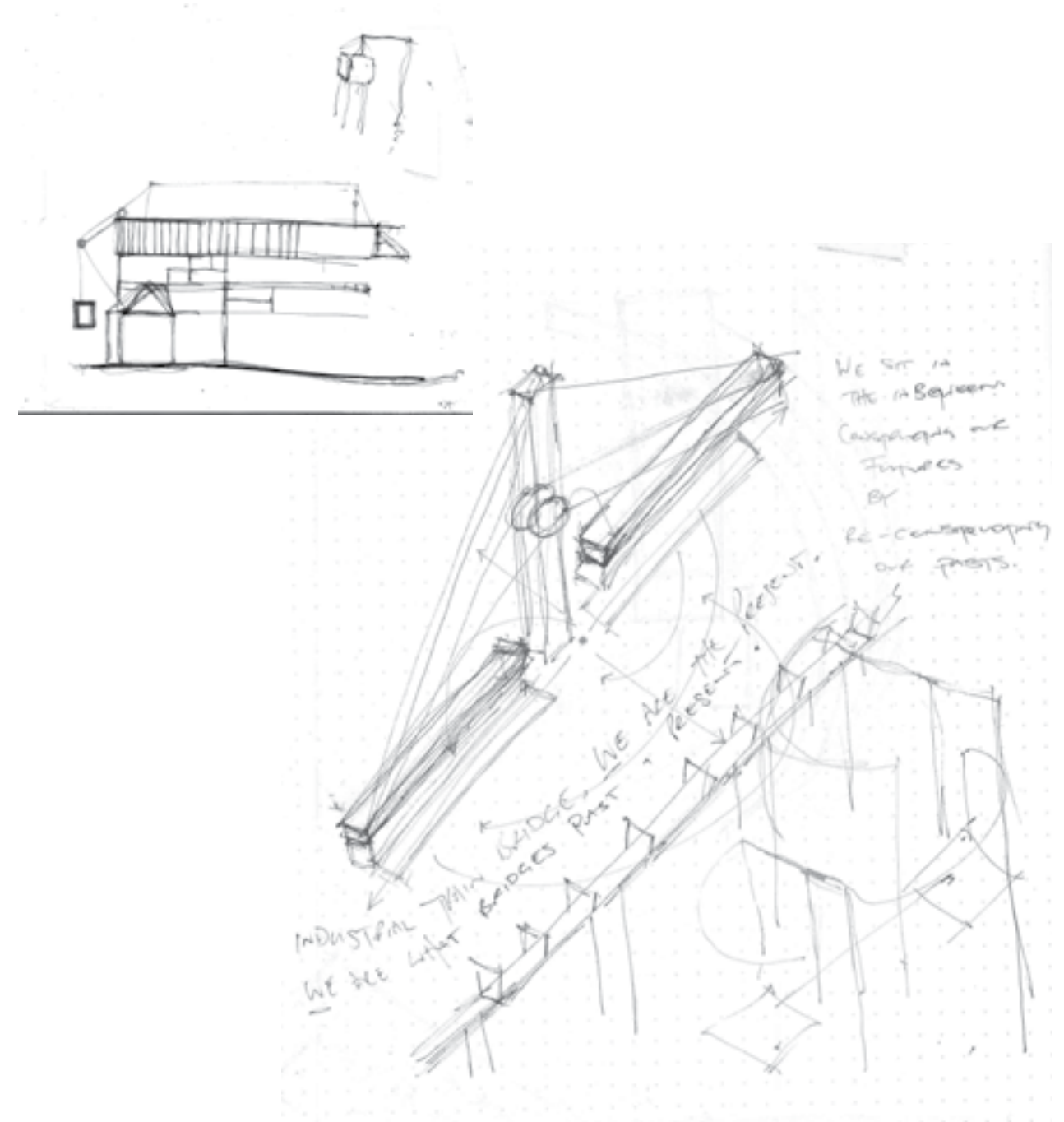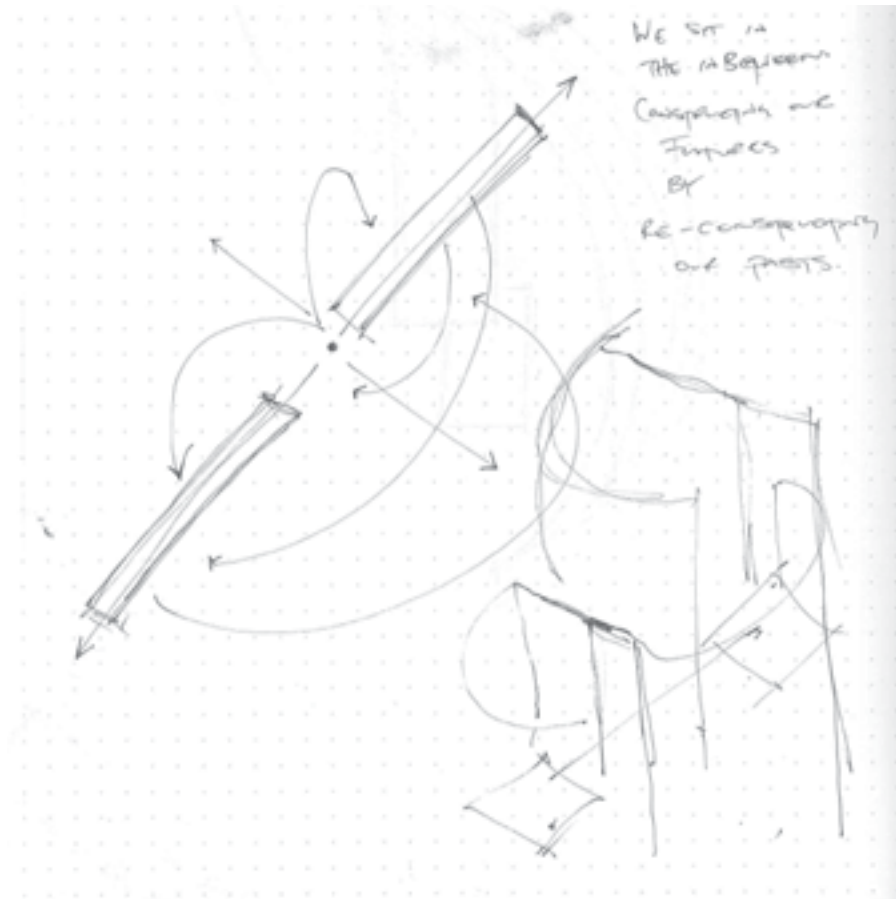
fig. 331 - 33 studies, towards a liminal architecture

fig. 334. into the future tense

N
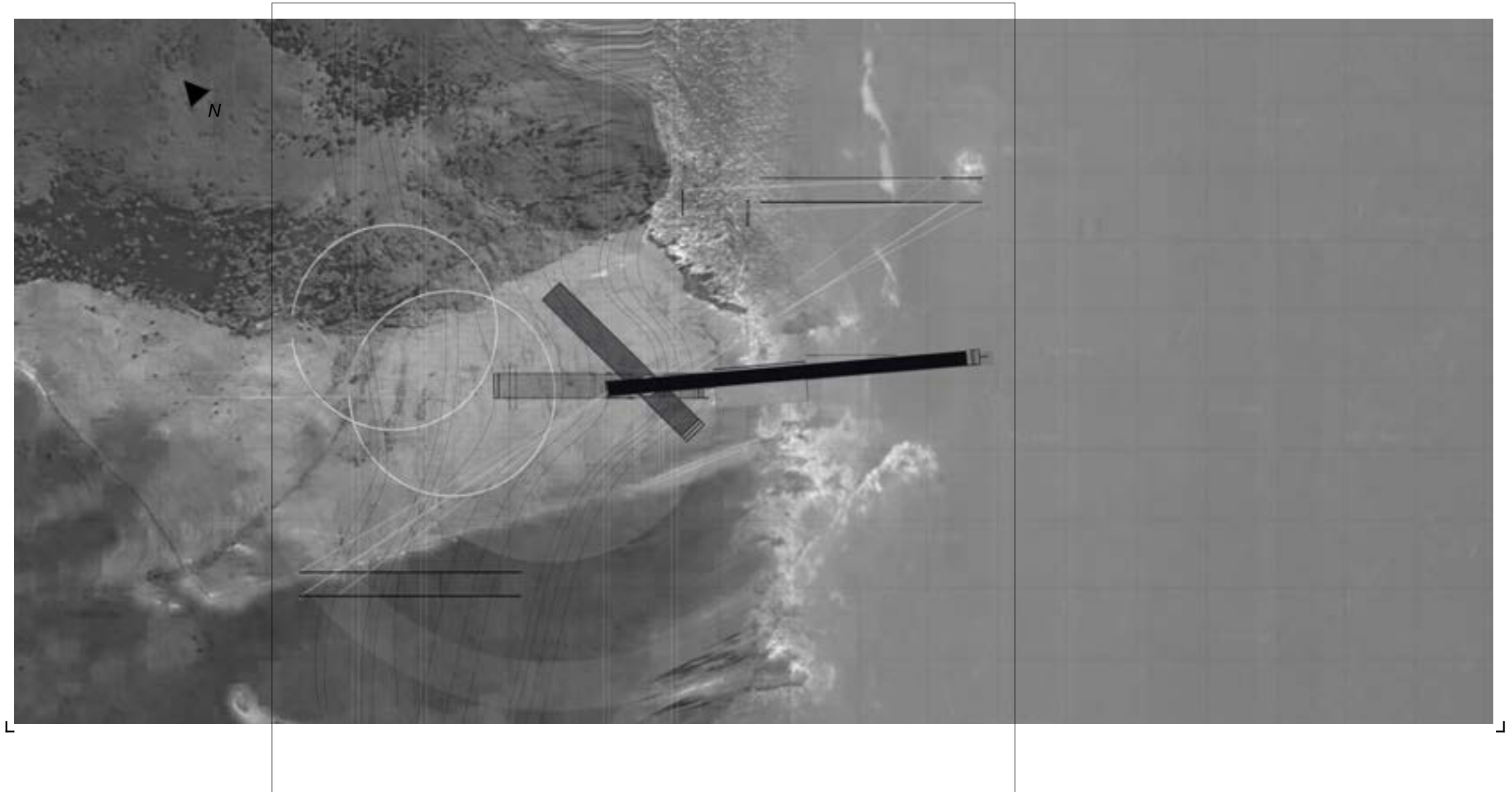
fig. 335. a liminal architecture ; plan

fig. 336. low platform

fig. 337.   elevation

The intervention sits between the mountainous coast and the ocean. The 'past' bound to the land, the future stretching into the horizon.

This (painfully metaphorical) site is a realm of imagined space, caught in the middle of the compass. Central in my narrative between those difference states that frame the present: past, future, north, south, east, west. This is the elusive manisfestation of a resting place within myself; an assemblage of memory data embodied as a site.
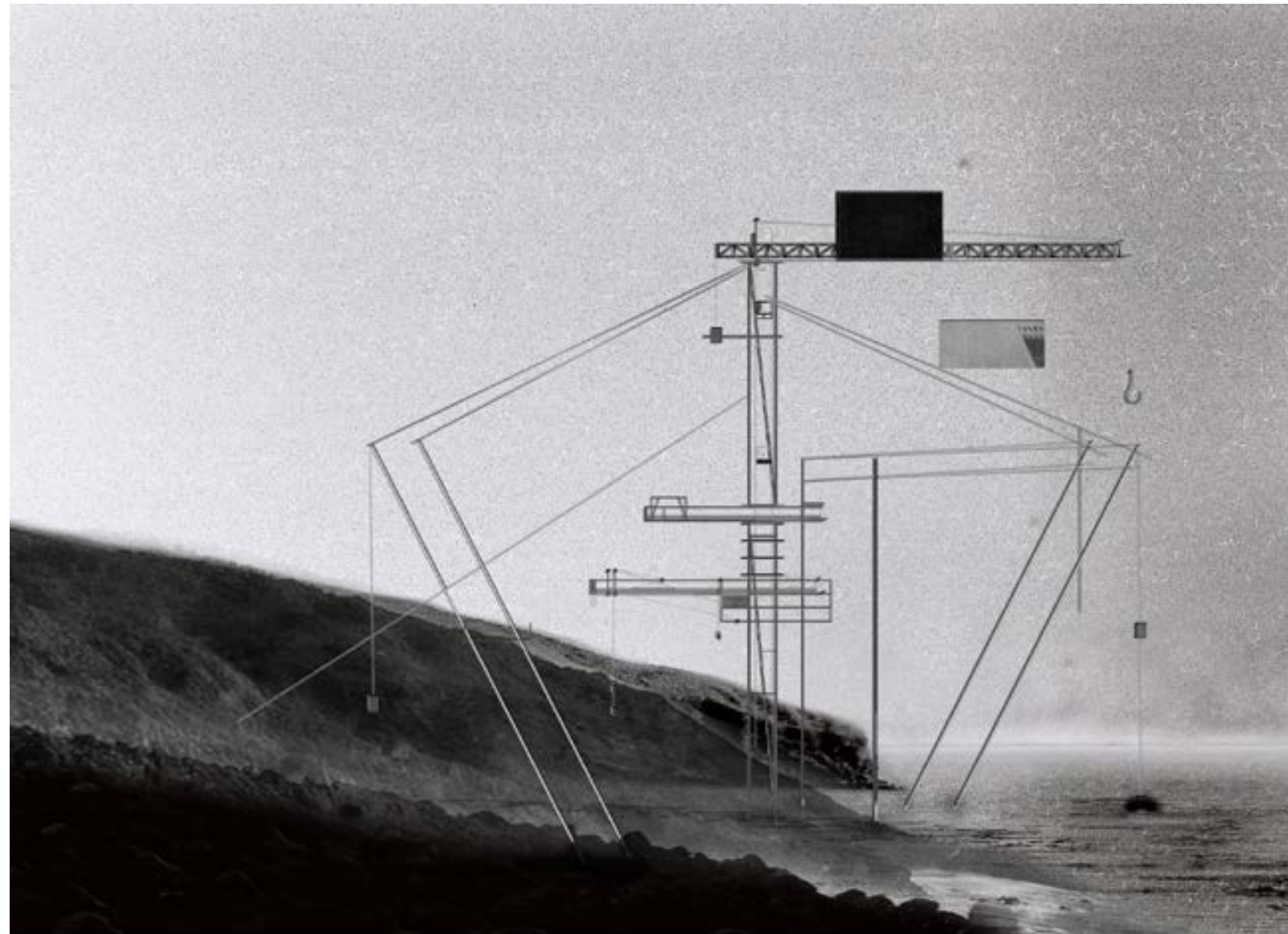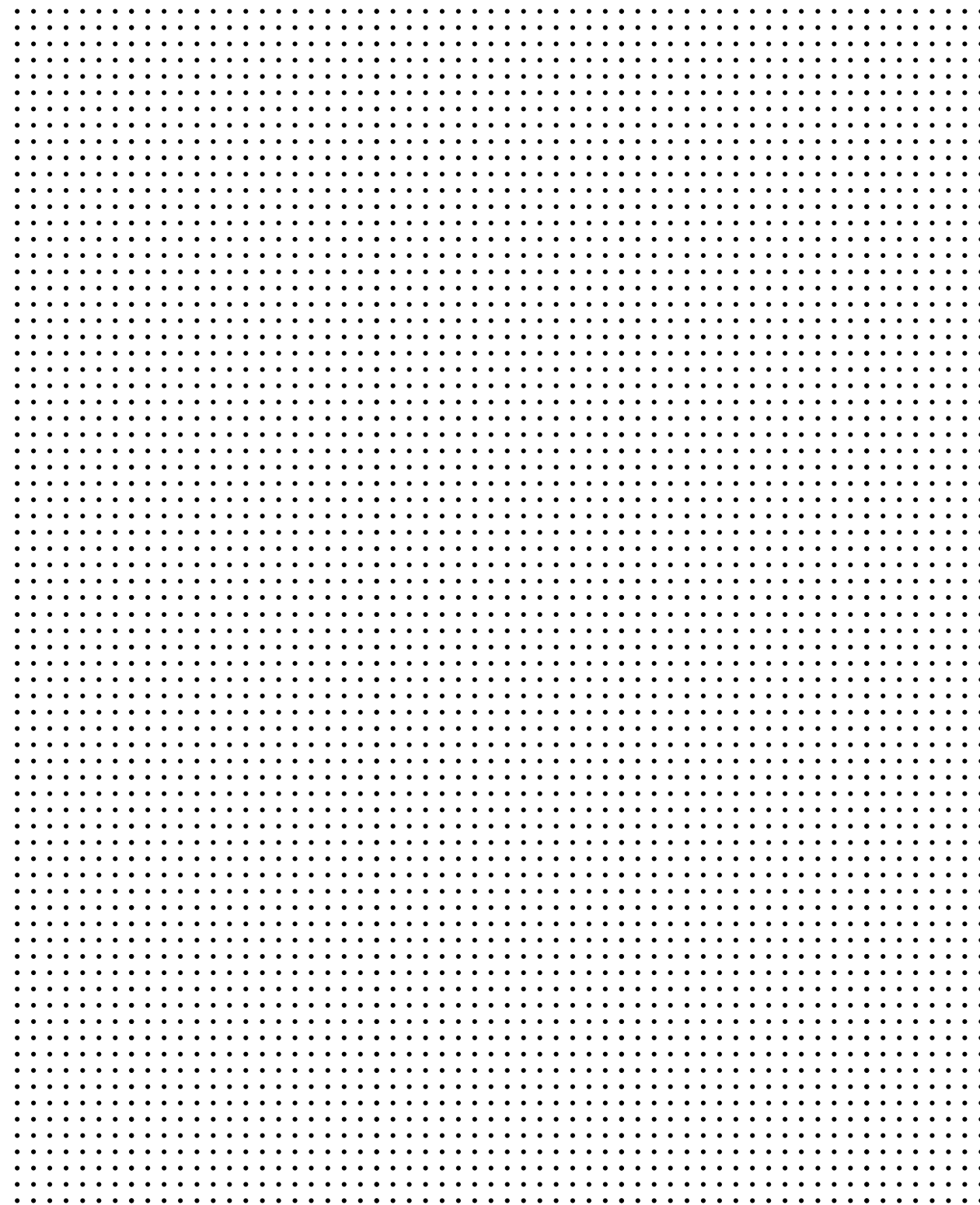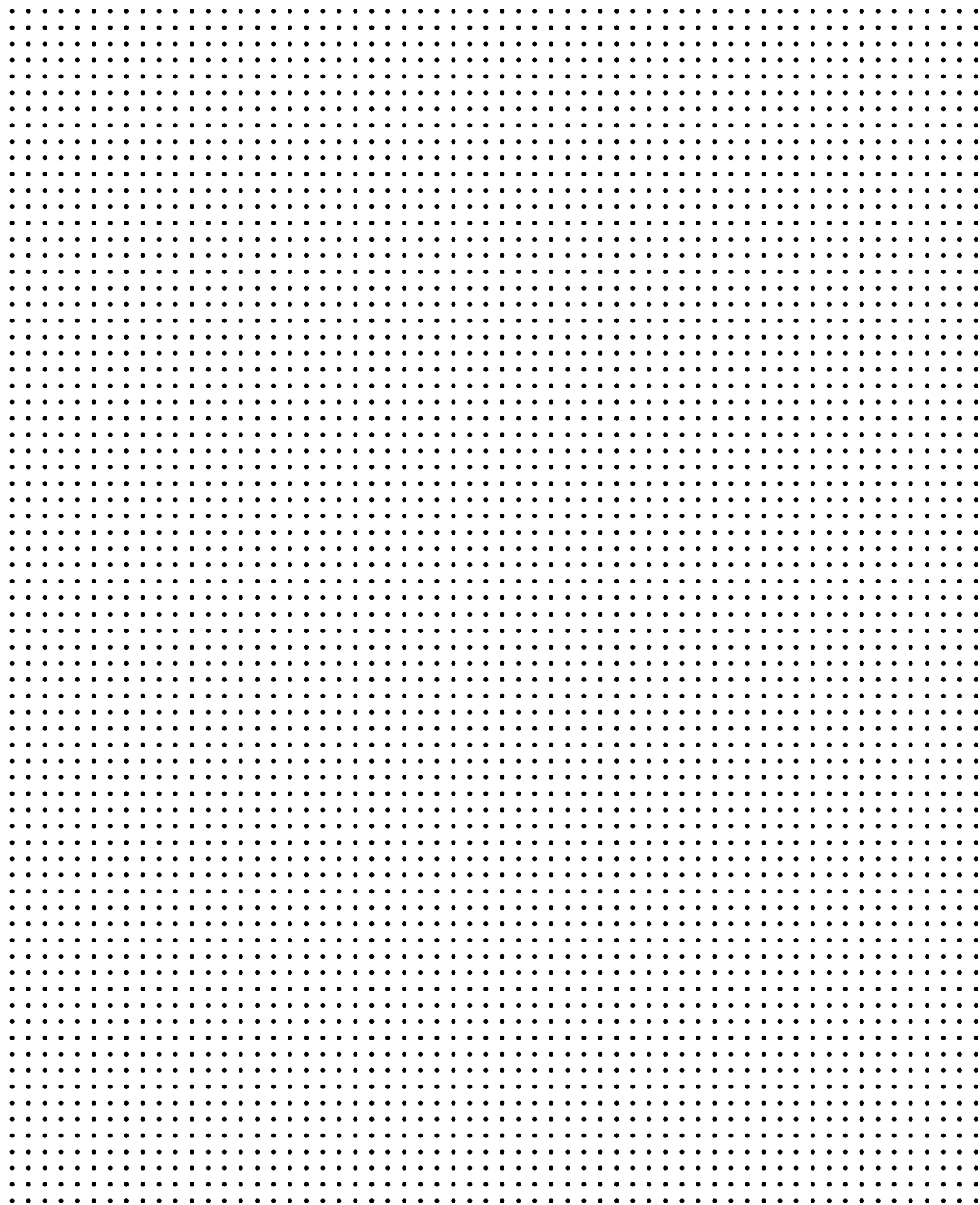
3 .5 .4 AN EXERCISE IN BALANCE

TO BE SUSPENDED

This final exploration, a sculptural model, investigates summarising ideas of balance, movement, and liminality. The frame, 1680mm tall, is roughly to my own physical dimensions. The suspended objects suggest a kind of abstract life.

The weight of the objects give the impression of inertia; hinting at the dual possibility of both movement and resistance.

The work represents an embodiment of memories and knowledge – it is kinetic preferences in cement and steel.
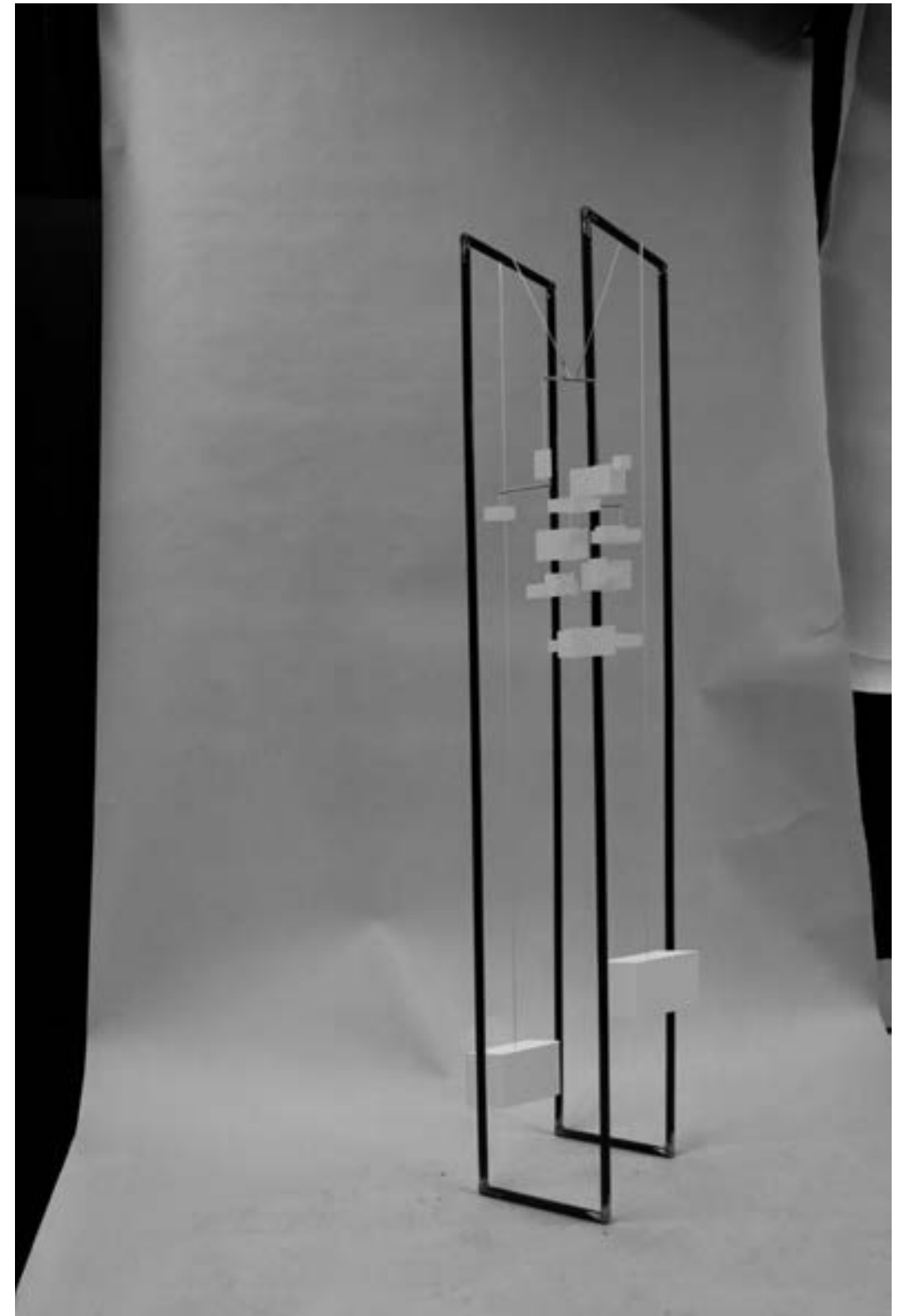
fig. 338. balance : axonometric
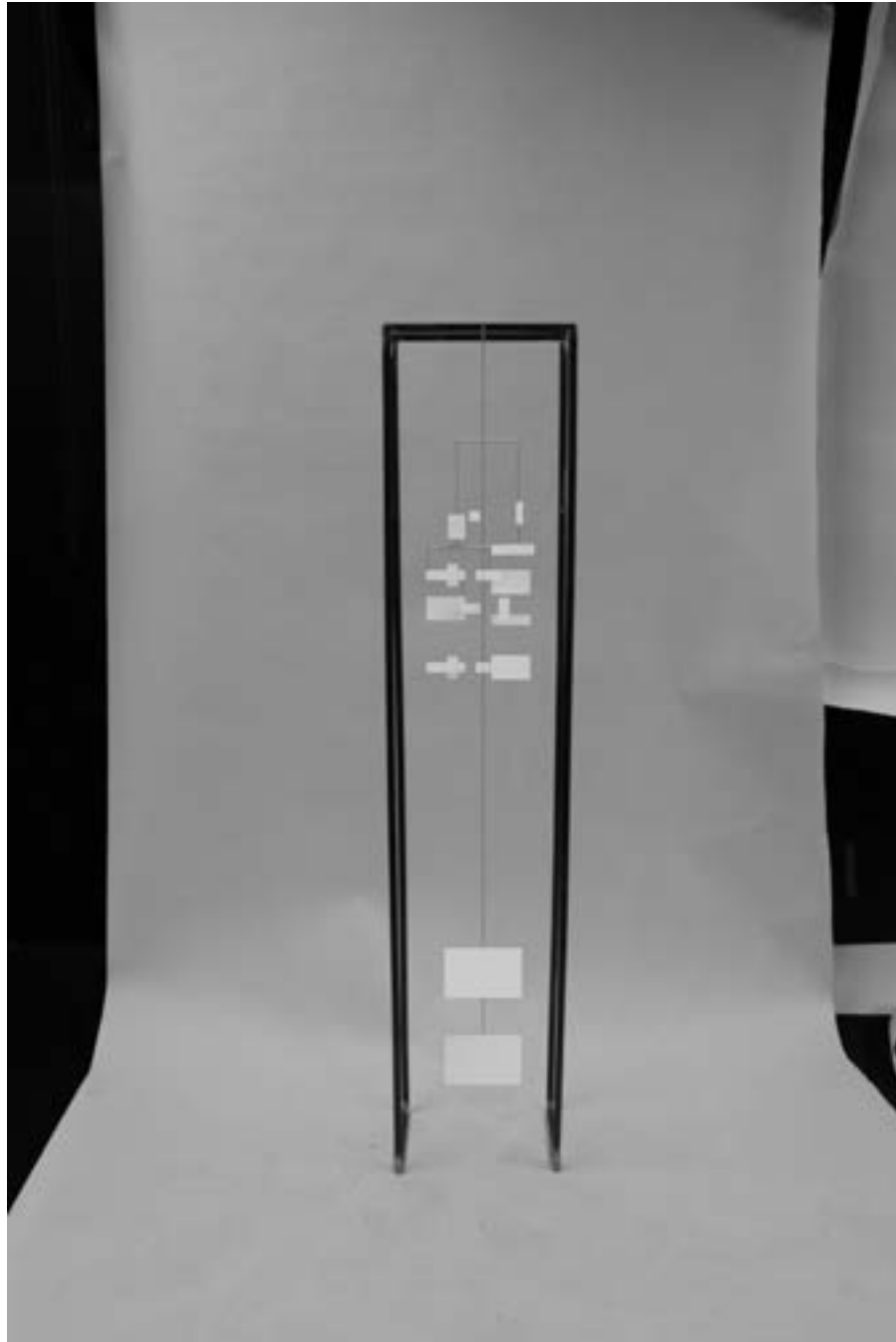
fig. 339. balance : elevation I
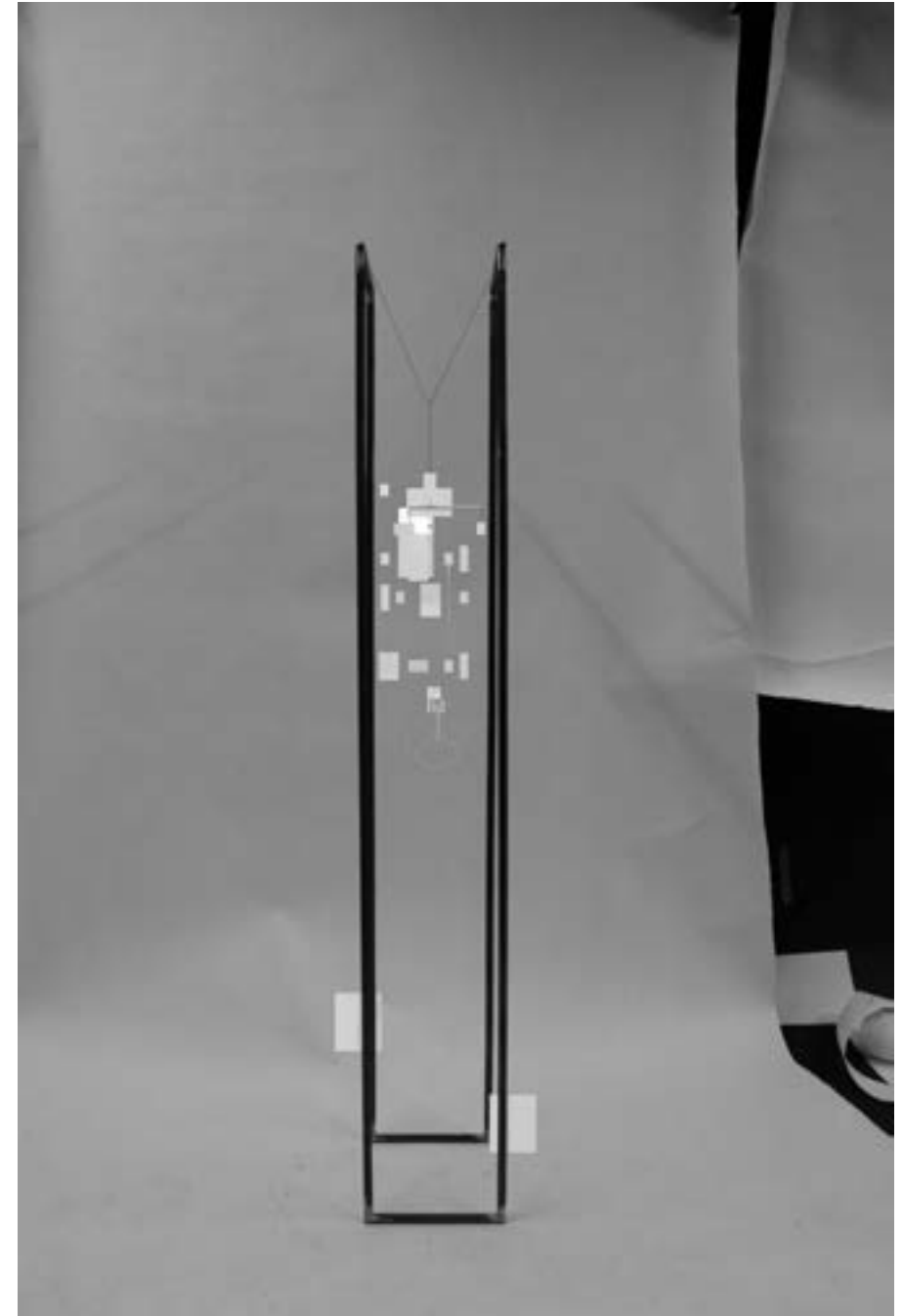
fig. 340. balance : elevation II

CRITICAL REFLECTION

The human memory holds the personal and collective knowledges – creations of the present state. We ourselves, as we perceive ourselves to be, are embodied knowledge – embodied processes. Part three explores kinetic conditions towards a notion of balance, as an investigation of the assimilation of new ideas into existing frameworks.

Design explorations call me to reflect that in the work of aesthetic preference we sit in-between – constructing futures by constructing, dismantling, and re-constructing the past. The architecture of taste is a kinetic state, an ongoing embodied process. These dynamic constructions are an obvious metaphor for learning - that is, to open our minds against unconscious bias, we are taking apart those old beliefs we held.

In the architecture of memory there is no construction without deconstruction. It is a literal metaphor for learning – for knowledge, and I have found, for taste.

When we create new (memory) we are inherently and irreversibly altering the old. The old still exists, but that specific iteration is gone, never to be perceived in the same way again.
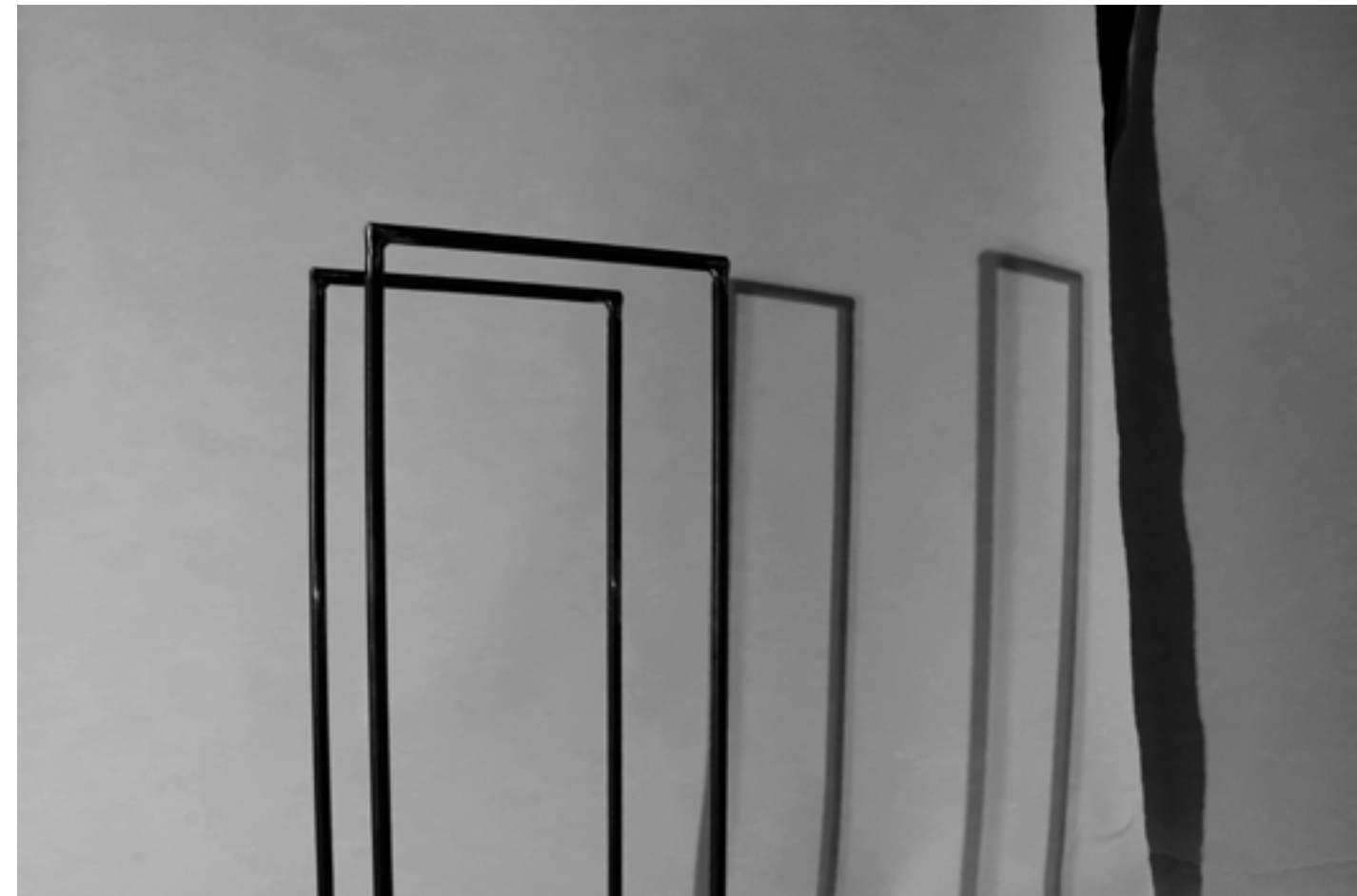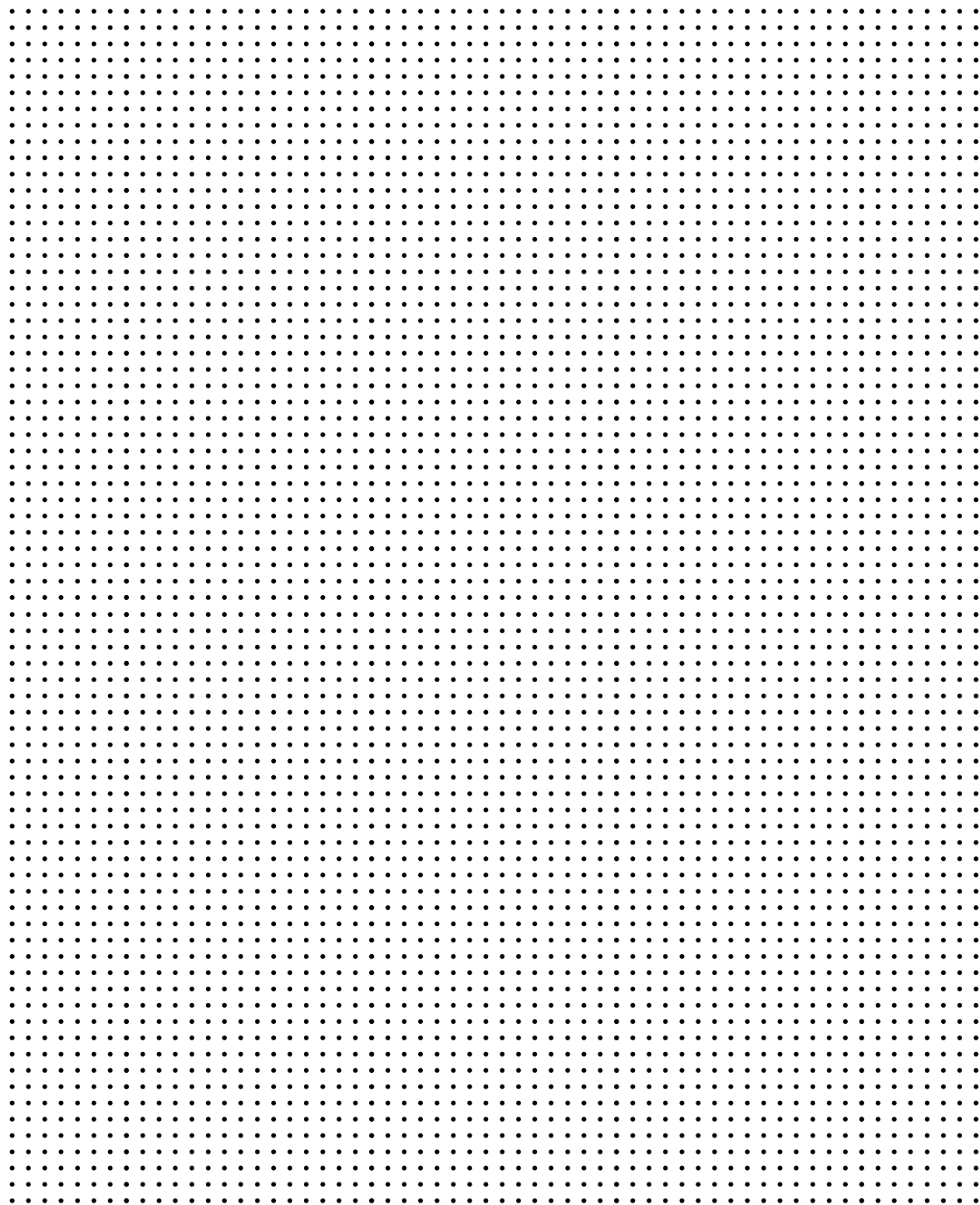

fig. 341. balance : structure
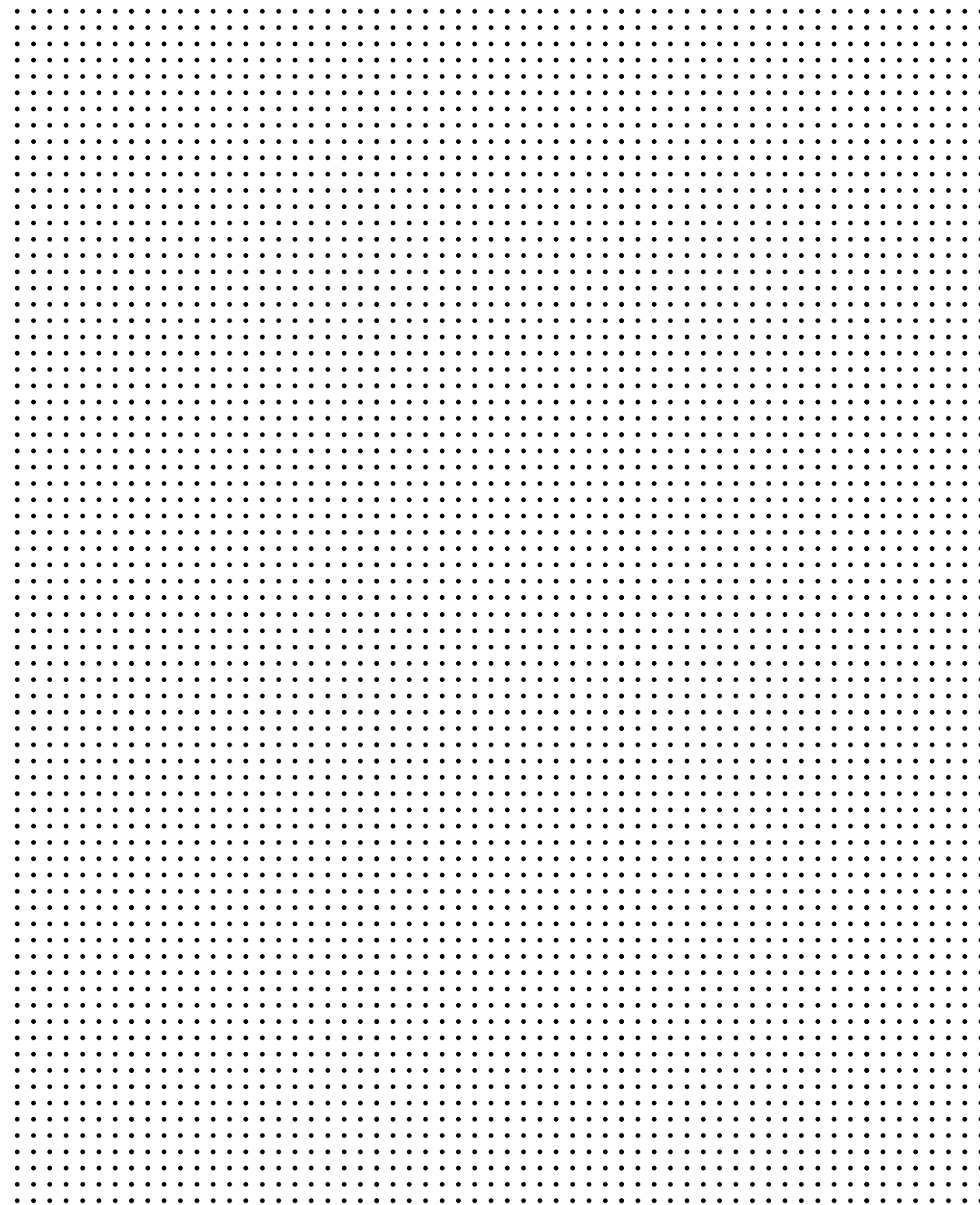
OVERALL
THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

This diagram illustrates the research, knowledges, and ways of knowing discussed throughout this thesis. Responding to these ideas, and identifying relationships between them, significantly contributed to the development of this work.
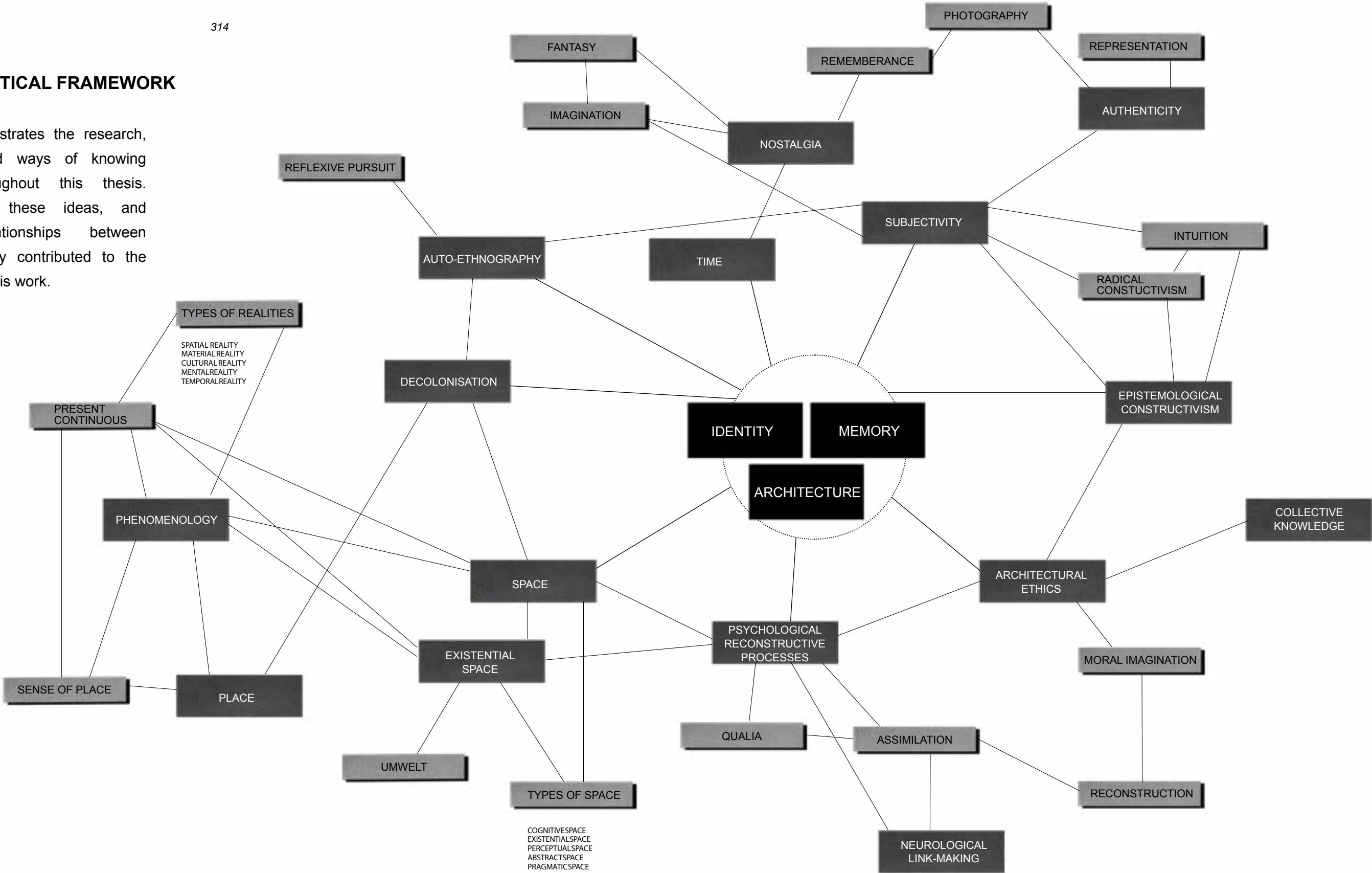

PHOTOGRAPHY

FANTASY

REPRESENTATION

REMEMBERANCE

IMAGINATION

AUTHENTICITY

NOSTALGIA

REFLEXIVE PURSUIT

SUBJECTIVITY

AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

TIME

INTUITION

RADICAL CONSTUCTIVISM

TYPES OF REALITIES

SPATIAL REALITY
MATERIAL REALITY
CULTURAL REALITY
MENTAL REALITY
TEMPORAL REALITY

DECOLONISATION

IDENTITY   MEMORY

ARCHITECTURE

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

PHENOMENOLOGY

SPACE

ARCHITECTURAL ETHICS

PSYCHOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTIVE PROCESSES

MORAL IMAGINATION

EXISTENTIAL SPACE

SENSE OF PLACE

PLACE

QUALIA

ASSIMILATION

RECONSTRUCTION

UMWELT

TYPES OF SPACE

NEUROLOGICAL LINK-MAKING

COGNITIVE SPACE
EXISTENTIAL SPACE
PERCEPTUAL SPACE
ABSTRACT SPACE
PRAGMATIC SPACE

fig. 342. theoretical findings / investigation : summary

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Through three phases this work asks questions of memory, knowledge construction, and inevitably aesthetics. I posit that in the context of architecture this research contributes to an understanding of how it is that we develop preferences (see also: aesthetics), towards the development of a theoretical framework or epistemological understanding that taste is subjective. To locate this notion within contemporary architectural meta-ethics is to contribute to the on-going discussion around the validity of non-centred / non-mainstream discourse.

The work of architecture is the work of creating, understanding, reading and designing patterns. It is forging connections, and bearing the burden of responsibility as to deciding which things are worth constructing and reconstructing, and which should in fact be torn down. Lugwig Wittgenstein is quoted as saying "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (Oxford University Press1922). The limits of architectural experience are the limits of our design vocabulary. We gain these building blocks from our experiences – from the impressions the rooms of our lives make on us.

To look to the future we are in fact looking to the past – to imagine is to draw upon all that you already know. It is impossible to imagine new futures without bringing the past with you; in the creation of new built environments, architects are the custodians of knowledges and ways of life. As we have the influence to shape futures, we should also have an understanding of how it is that we develop our preferences – and how this inevitably impacts other peoples.

To design is to situate oneself within the future space; how will this space be occupied, what will this place mean? The architect projects themself into a flexible future, an unstable construction. Here, the uncertainty is the ethical power and responsibility. It requires of us a gentle balancing of discomfort – to be flexible, to find the power in our subjectivity.

In context of architecture in Aotearoa, we have the opportunity to take advantage of this ontological instability – to understand it as a benefit in the pursuit of ethical futures. Through our lives we create meaning, through our memories we create knowledge. Meaning itself is a malleable medium. The irony of this thesis is that it began as an interest in nostalgia, in those fantasies of worlds that exist only in the soft misty place between what we have experienced and what we dream - that which felt immensely as a thesis of the past. It comes to be, in fact, that this is a thesis for the future.

Ka mua, ka muri.

We walk backwards into the future.

"gradually the architectural model of the arts of memory...becomes a model that must serve not only to remember but also to represent the very structure of universal knowledge. Architecture, after having been the model for memory, becomes the model for reasoning"

(Umberto Eco, 1986)

"ultimately
our   real
home is our
life"

Etel Adnan

FIGURES

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