

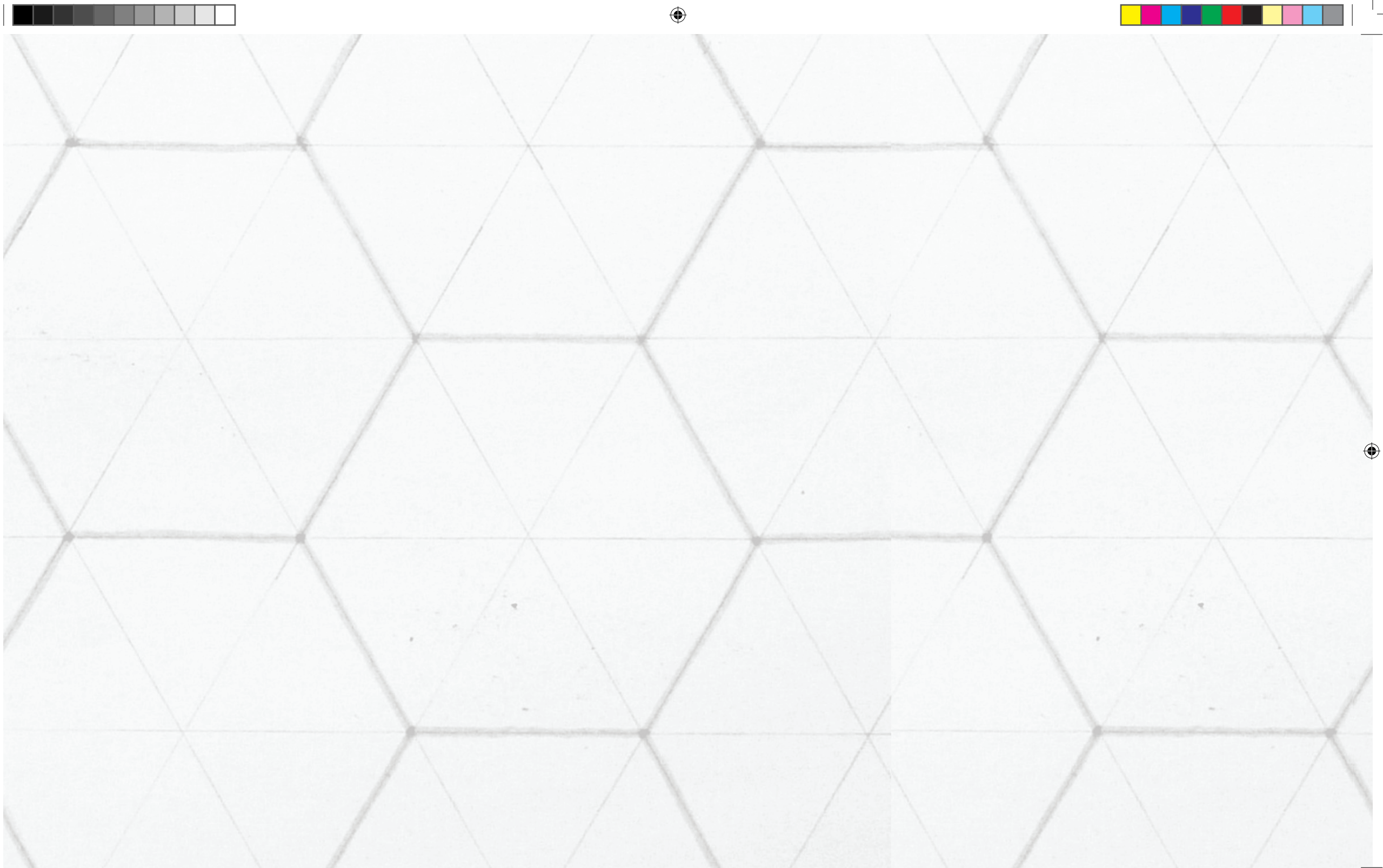


camouflage—architecture

Testing the architectural application of Neil Leach's
Camouflage theory as a model of Place-identity

ben m^clauchlan







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ABSTRACT

Discussion within architectural Place–identity theory has taken a shift. It has moved toward a more fluid condition. With traditional structures of identity holding less value to society, and imagery becoming more prevalent, new models of Place–identity are necessary. This is relative to a decreasing Nationalist view point and an increasing critique of the Post–Modern. Neil Leach, through his theory Camouflage, offers a way to rethink our relationship with Place. Camouflage describes the application of aesthetics as a tool. This becomes important when it is used to form a relationship between the self and Place. The research presented here tests the architectural application of Leach’s theory. This is done by the design of a building for the International Institute of Modern Letters in New Zealand. The design is broken into four components, concentrating on four key areas of the theory. Rather than looking at the building as a whole object, the skin and the planning of the building test the concepts of the visual image and inherent engagement this calls for. The strategic idea of becoming other is studied through the design of a writer’s studio and a theatre. These ideas work together in the design of the roof as an aesthetic interface. This architectural design is critiqued against Leach’s theoretical context and the building’s environment—against Place. Camouflage architecture sees the building itself become a background element. The focus shifts toward how the users of the building might accumulate identifications through the somatic relationships that the building facilitates. The results of this application are presented as an architectural explanation of Camouflage. This is further distilled into a doctrine of Place–identity. These conclusions offer a model for the application of Camouflage architecturally. More importantly they show how this application benefits the shift in Place–identity theory and practice.

CAMOUFLAGE—ARCHITECTURE

by

BEN McLAUCHLAN

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Camouflage—architecture II





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PREFACE

Neil Leach's book 'Camouflage' is a thesis of the contemporary aesthetic relationship between ourselves and our environment. This study is focused on architectural Place—identity. Specifically, it looks at the ability of architecture to facilitate the relationship between the self and Place. What is intended by the term Place, is Place in an entirety. It definitely includes the physical properties of Place. However, it also on an equal plane, includes the cultural; emotional; and temporal attributes of Place—it is all encompassing. This is important, as without differentiating it from a static image that might be defined as: the identity of a place, confusion within the discussion of Camouflage could arise.

The theory Camouflage is referred to plainly throughout the text. The book 'Camouflage' on the other hand, is denoted by quotation marks. Although it is explained throughout the text it is important that care is taken with Leach's definition of camouflage. As an aesthetic theory governing the relationship between us and our environment, Camouflage refers to a *model of representation*. While military camouflage is one specific type of representation, all others are considered and generally more important. To present an image distinguishing one self from the environment is equally a mode of camouflage.





Camouflage—Architecture





INTRODUCTION

Identity with Place is an important thread within architectural discussion. Our basic urge to feel connected—to relate to both the physical and cultural environment, has a power over us. However, the ways in which we relate to Place have undertaken a shift. Neil Leach is among many within the humanities today of the opinion that identity is ‘no longer a fixed condition but an ever re-negotiable site of individual expression’.¹ Identity can not be seen as an image to be projected. It is a fluid, rather than a static condition. The social shift remains toward a culture plagued with imagery. This highlights the importance aesthetics has for Place–identity.

In his book, ‘Camouflage’ 2006, architect and theorist Neil Leach discusses the process by which we identify with Place. Leach tackles recent cultural theory and its broadly negative view of an image orientated post–modernity. Perhaps what has been camouflaged here is true society. Society as it exists has been camouflaged beyond the smokescreen of the ‘image’. Leach begins appropriately then with Walter Benjamin’s Mimesis and Theodor W. Adorno’s Sensuous Correspondence—both culturally orientated works. He quickly distils from the writing of these and a host of recent theorists including Giles Deleuze; Judith Butler; and Jacques Lacan what can be seen as the implication toward aesthetics of their work. It is vital to note that he looks upon Camouflage in a positive sense. Camouflage in this case has little to do with concealment. Leach defines the term Camouflage as a means of connectivity with the other: with the external environment; society; outside the self. It is a form of representation,² which is a vital differentiation in his work. Camouflage, the theory, offers a mechanism through which one might relate to the environment. This mechanism, or relationship, between us and the environment is what might constitute human identity.³ As is to be discussed here, Leach goes on to sketch out what may become an aesthetic sensibility toward architectural design. The sensibility is outlined as the form that this relationship might take. The fact that it is not a defined image is appropriate due to the temporal manner of the relationship describing Place–identity.

Camouflage as a theory and a sensibility operates in an extremely visual culture. Leach’s theory is posited as a ‘corrective to critiques of postmodernity’.⁴ This is where it differs from others, as rather than simply critiquing the status quo he offers a way to adapt to it

and use it beneficially. He suggests that the representation, which such critiques fear hide reality, may in fact be where identity is forged. Therefore, the concept of focussing on the relationship between us and our environment is significant to this research. For this relationship is the mechanism or process facilitating identity with Place. Camouflage is looking to grasp the importance of representation in contemporary culture. With this being the case, defining the context this relationship is working within is also important.

Narcissus

At the water’s edge
Golden Narcissus lies,
Hand propped under his chin,
Bees at his thighs,
His mind afloat on stillness
Where his image lies.
O Echo, Echo.⁵

The story of Narcissus revolves around his image suspended in a pool. The fable is the epitomy of our relationship with the environment in an overtly visual culture. The re–reading of Narcissus presented throughout this work is illustrated by Alistair Campbell’s poem. Above is the first stanza of Campbell’s Narcissus, written in 1948. Narcissism is a central theme of ‘Camouflage’. Consistent with Leach’s reading of Narcissus, Campbell’s poem provides a beautiful illustration of this. Alistair Campbell (1925—2009) was a writer who despite keeping a good awareness of international trends, wrote locally. Of Polynesian and European descent, he spent most of his life in New Zealand. However, he was not amongst those writers searching out a Nationalist view. He was described as a romantic writer who had a strong relationship with the landscape.⁶ The poem Narcissus appropriately inhabits the water’s edge. What is significant is that, as Narcissus found, with such a representation identity may be discovered. The idea of fertility moving forward by growth and repetition can be developed. This comes from the contemplation of a representation, or an image. These concepts are analogous with Neil Leach’s architectural theory. It is relevant though to appropriate a New Zealand poet’s work to help illustrate the theory. With respect to a discussion of Camouflage within a New Zealand context, his writing is more directly in tune with this work.

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Part 1

The arts in New Zealand have thoroughly explored the idea of Nationalism as a mode of identity. Francis Pound's 'The Invention of New Zealand' offers a comprehensive view of the New Zealand arts from 1930 through 1970. This is when Nationalism as a mode of identity was most prevalent. The general conclusion of his work, however, is that Nationalism was an ideal sought for too strongly. Nationalism presented a New Zealand 'invented'. While not all of their ideals are forgotten, Pound summates that 'the new artists simply grew wary of the invented New Zealand of their predecessors'.⁷ The fact that Nationalism is not seen to be the way forward makes New Zealand an appropriate context for this study. One of the main aims of 'The Invention of New Zealand' is to displace the view of New Zealand as an 'isolate isle'. This is one view those looking for a Nationalist identity held on to.⁸ The decisive search and subsequent summation of the period of Nationalism was echoed within New Zealand architecture. This was partially due to

the lingering desire for pragmatic qualities, form and materiality as design drivers. However, with the defined period of identity hunting coming to an end, space opened for other modes to be discussed.

There has been a cultural shift, amongst the post-modernist arts, to an image dominated society. This coupled with the decline of more traditional structures of identity and, as mentioned above, Nationalism fading away leads to new structures of identity. On a broad social level Leach sees the 'family, the home town, the local church, and so on, no longer [carrying] much weight in a society where factors such as divorce, social fragmentation, and a waning of religious interest have undercut their authority'.⁹ Locally, Pound describes the void background against which Nationalist artists sought to invent an identity as having now filled. This presents a context to respond against, rather than present a singular identity to, which brings a certain expiration to McCahon's 'I am' phrase.



Echo and Narcissus by John William Waterhouse, 1903.



Given that New Zealand is now seen as bi cultural and given that it has further fissured into homosexual and heterosexual, male and female, and into innumerable ethnic groups, each determined to display and to maintain a newly defined “identity”, it is no longer possible to assert a single “I” for all New Zealanders, as McCahon and his peers tried to do.¹⁰

Individual desires for identity will always remain. Despite differing appearances, the desire to feel at *home* and to be able to relate to the surrounding environment, are constants. They are base social desires. The role design plays, facilitating that relationship, is to connect us to Place. Camouflage looks at the question of our temporal perception of buildings and space. This is while fitting into an architectural discourse predominantly focussed on the material form of buildings. Using Camouflage in this fashion makes it possible to see architecture as a tool, looking toward an expression based on a more fluid or dynamic aesthetic. This concept makes investigating Camouflage important: especially as the New Zealand theoretical context is itself on this path. There is a strong retention of a poetic notion of environment in New Zealand, which is rather intriguing. Looking at the individual relationship and the cultural climate gives the research impetus.

The basis for Neil Leach’s theory of Camouflage is largely literary theory. This is despite the recent theoretical shift away from literary based philosophies toward more performance orientated thinking. He has been a strong part of this shift. What is important, however, is that Leach’s theory of Camouflage holds on to existing theory and uses it to re-think the processes of this relationship. What is not given up by this shift is our will to relate to our environment. Unfortunately the resultant theory is offered with little built architectural justification.

Camouflage, the theory, asks the reader to reconsider exactly what architecture’s purpose is. This research will use the design of a new home for the International Institute of Modern Letters in Wellington as a test. It will do so with the aim of architecturally testing the application of Leach’s theory of Camouflage. The conclusions drawn from this aim will add to the current discourse of Place–identity.

AESTHETIC MODELLING

The problem of testing the application of Camouflage is that the work will not be built and experienced. This brings into question the validity of *architecturally testing* the theory. However, Leach offers within Camouflage itself the concept of modelling. Derived from the idea of Sympathetic Magic, the architectural drawing may be seen as an invocatory object.¹¹ In a similar fashion to the shaman conjuring an apparition the drawing may invoke a building. “Through the process of mimesis—an imaginary identification with a representation of an object—the original object may be invoked.”¹² It is hoped that in this ilk, the drawings presented allow discussion of both the image and the somatic sensations of the building therein.

APPROACH

A research by design and critique method is used to achieve the aim of testing Camouflage. Section One lays out the context and conditions—the parameters for the architectural testing presented in Section Two. The concluding chapter, presented as a theory of Place, will be the addition to the Place–identity discourse.

As a prequel the chapter on Camouflage first looks at the myth of Narcissus. Freudian, and perhaps more importantly Marcusean, narcissism is a descriptive element within Camouflage. But the re-reading of the myth is in tune with the mode of thinking Leach takes up. This is followed by a discussion of the parameters of Camouflage. This is Leach’s Camouflage theory. However, it is elaborated on and illustrated as required. Importantly, distinct implications toward architectural design are drawn out. At that point, with the problem contextualised, a ground within which to explore this is needed.

Having a context for Camouflage defined, the theory needs to be placed into a recognised environment. New Zealand as Place is introduced. However, such a task could consider a multitude of variables and outcomes. There are successful ‘scientific’ histories of New Zealand available, as well as writing on all fields of local architecture. The aim of this chapter is to present a view of the Place to be used as a test ground for Leach’s theory. A brief cultural and architectural history, providing a basis for the current conditions is given. An investigation of the site for the test design is presented.



Before the brief a discussion of an art work, *Perigee #11* by Maddie Leach, is put forth to illustrate what is being delved into.

Part one defined a context and grounding for this project. To achieve the aims laid down, the design project of the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) is presented in part two. The first of the four chapters, *Representation*, explores the predominantly visual relationship with Place. The aim of this chapter is to establish the beginnings of a relationship with it. The ideals are discussed within a theoretical construct based on Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno's writing. Local Place is also mentioned via the 'Man Alone' image. The outcomes of this chapter come through a design investigation for the skin of the IIML building. The work presented in this chapter really opens the door for the architectural realisation of Leach's *Camouflage*.

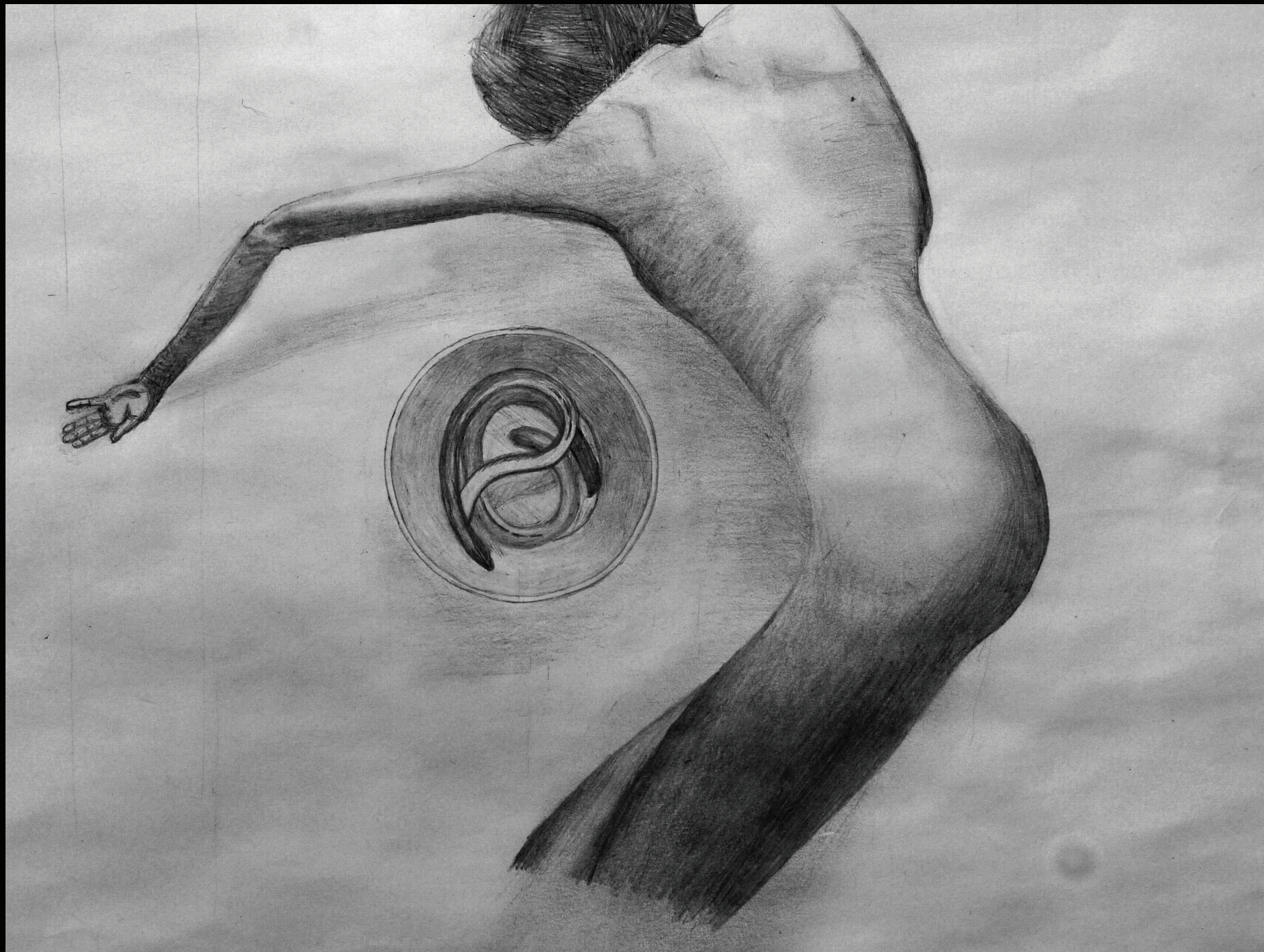
The chapter on engagement takes the rather abstract ideas of representation and realises them. Still testing within the visual portion of *Camouflage* the design focuses on that. However, it allows the representation an amount of corporality. The engagement is investigated through the design of the space within the building—the planning, without concentrating on form. This chapter is based largely on Leach's reading of Lacan's writing on mirroring and building identity as an assemblage of individual identifications.

The second half of Leach's *Camouflage* is more strategic. Looking at Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guáttari's ideas of *Becoming* and Judith Butler's writing on performativity Leach looks at architecture as a device of Place-identity. The chapter *Becoming Other*, by design of a writers studio and the theatre, explores this relationship. This investigation emphasises Leach's definition of architecture as a tool in this model of identification, rather than an object.

Interfacing between self and Place is the heart of *Camouflage*. The last design investigation returns to the shell of the building with a strategic eye. The testing of the final part of *Camouflage* is based firstly on the idea of paranoia as a primitive mode of relating to the environment. But, within that there must be a balance between a melancholic withdrawal into the self and a completely ecstatic sacrifice to the environment. *Camouflage* defines a balanced relationship between self and Place, this design tests the ability of architecture to facilitate that.

To be of the most benefit this research must offer a critical view of *Camouflage* architecture. The final section and concluding chapter is presented as a theory of Place. The aim of this is to critique the design against the conditions laid out in Part Two. It is presented as a theory of Place as an attempt to finish on a positive note, looking forward. In this case more than a summation is required. The hope is that what is learnt by the application of Leach's *Camouflage* theory may be helpful for future Place-identity conversation.

Sketched from an untitled photograph - part of Francesca Woodman's *Eel* series, 1977-8. The image, including the eel, is representative of both her and her body suffering or desiring to relate.





CAMOUFLAGE

Leach's theory of Camouflage is fascinating in the breadth of its underlying thought. Writing on the array of socially based topics that Camouflage deals with, Leach draws upon a wide variety of predominantly literary theory. While it could be argued some of these writers are loosely grouped around their ideals, Camouflage succinctly brings the breadth of theory together putting it to work within aesthetics. The details of Camouflage need to be looked into before it can be applied architecturally. As introduced the aim of this work is to test this particular application. So, before getting to that in part two, a definition of what is being tested is important.

The aim of this chapter is, however, twofold. Firstly, it will explain Leach's Camouflage theory, placing it within a theoretical context. Secondly, it will define parameters through which this research may approach the theory. There is a need to flesh out an understanding of Camouflage as an architectural model.

The chapter then will begin with a look at the myth of Narcissus. Leach's reading of it is based on Freud, Lacan and Marcuse. This offers an especially interesting rethink of what is perhaps a widely misread myth. It discusses the inherent possibility of aesthetics—the image in particular—to facilitate identity. It is also a good preview of Leach's Camouflage theory. It aims to be direct and explanatory. This is followed by a discussion of the consequences for an architectural design, of what is not explicitly an architectural theory. The chapter is summated by parameters through which the design of the International Institute of Modern Letters project may approach Camouflage.

Narcissus

At the water's edge
Golden Narcissus lies,
Hand propped under his chin,
Bees at his thighs,
His mind afloat on stillness
Where his image lies.
O Echo, Echo.¹

As it is used as one of the central explanation models of Camouflage in Leach's book, the story of Narcissus also sits well here. It is useful as it outlines some of the concepts essential to Camouflage. Importantly, it also forces the process of re-thinking something known. Narcissus is a young man who eventually fades, dies, turns to marble and becomes a flower having been transfixed by his own image reflected in a pool of water. This demise is despite pleas from Echo, his pursuing yet distant lover. Rather than the traditional view of the myth of Narcissus Leach develops a model from the thoughts of Herbert Marcuse.

The myth of Narcissus is a myth not about sameness but about difference, not about stratification but about transformation... Narcissus appears to turn to marble and dies. After his death, his body vanishes and a flower springs up where he died. Like the caterpillar cocooned in its chrysalis, only to re-emerge as a butterfly, Narcissus is trapped within his own aesthetic realm, only to metamorphose into a flower. In these moments of identification, then, the mirror has to serve as a vehicle for a form of metamorphosis. Rather than reflect the given it has to *reconfigure* the given.²

This is a differing, and altogether more positive, take on the myth. It becomes an important way of thinking about identifying with an other. The first point to be picked up is the relationship to the image. In a contemporary society, so dominated by the image, this re-reading of the myth of Narcissus offers a more constructive method of using the image in this relationship. It brings into question the importance of the image as a mode of representation, of what is real and the repercussions of such. Narcissus, peering into the pool, takes the image he sees to be an individual reality. Of course it is not. What can be learnt from this though is that Narcissus' reality is seen to be acted out through the image.

Leach later makes the comparison with Lewis Carroll's character Alice stepping through the looking glass. Alice is enticed beyond the reflection, into the world contained by it. As she does this 'we might glimpse the mirrors potential to act as a portal into another world, to reveal, in an inverted fashion, the potentialities of our own'.³ When Narcissus identifies with a representation—an image in which something of himself is projected, he is going beyond a simple reflection. The ability Narcissus has to engage with the image,

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which could otherwise be considered a purely aesthetic object, is important. The representation in the pool engages Narcissus. This has the ability to produce a real affect, in this case keeping him spellbound. It is hereby argued that the efficacy of an image's aesthetics define the relationship between the image its viewer. This holds especially true when the image is given spatiality. Whether this is to allow Alice to enter another world for example, or, in the application to architecture, this engagement is vital.

This reading of the myth of Narcissus sees him identifying with an other. This is opposed to the concept of him falling in love with his own image as commonly perceived. Narcissus did not recognise the image as anything more than beauty. The identity Narcissus bases on the image is external. Leach comments that a 'literal reflection of the self would establish a closed—and ultimately nihilistic—system of self replication, a doubling up that could descend into some introverted spiral of melancholia'.⁴ He also discusses Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of becoming other. When discussing identity within the framework of becoming other, balance is vital. Identity is found within a Gestalt pairing of complete withdrawal into the self and, complete openness. Narcissus then, finding beauty in the image without spiralling into introverted melancholia, nor loosing himself completely within another world, finds balance.

The thought that something can grow out of this, a concept of renewal, is fascinating. It breathes new meaning into the architectural quality of Narcissus becoming marble, as well as the new life of the flower. It recalls his dismissal of Echo's love and what became of her. Along with her wasting away to exist as a voice, her bones suffer a similar fate of turning to stone. These can be seen as physical proponents of the same relationship. They are the remnant or metamorphosed mediator between Narcissus and the world. As noted by Leach, Ovid published the myth of Narcissus within his series *Metamorphoses*. The aesthetics and beauty of the representation—the image—in the pool act as a masquerade. Narcissus identifying with this image is using the pool as a vehicle for interfacing. Retaining his self, identification lets Narcissus open up and relate to the world. What is seen by others of this was the beautiful flower Narcissus (also known as daffodils). On one side of the mirror Narcissus is searching for beauty and identity. On the other, he is perceived as a beautiful flower. This moment of identification in between is due largely to the mirror's facilitation.

CAMOUFLAGE

Neil Leach wrote *Camouflage* as an aesthetic theory. It concerns the mechanisms of Place—identity in contemporary society. As mentioned in the introduction it was offered as a response to the critiques of postmodernism's overtly visual aesthetic. Camouflage embraces the representative nature of modern society. The trend toward a greater importance being placed in and on the image is one which Leach seems to be reacting to. The reaction Camouflage offers is not one of rejection or denial, rather one of embracement and connection. It is perhaps one of employment to its own end.

The theory itself is brief. It is constructed of a set of visual operations followed by a set of strategic operations. However, the theory is the conclusion of an investigation by Leach into a range of host theory. This is largely literary, illustrated with a selection of mythology. This approach has two benefits. Firstly, it places Camouflage within an established theoretical ground. Secondly, it offers an image of what is being outlined. This is especially important as the book is aimed at a wide audience. While it does allow literary concepts a more visual outlet, and insights for architectural design, this is not the main concern.⁵

The book is exquisitely illustrated which is not a task Leach has taken up without thought. The book's only visual imagery is courtesy of the late Francesca Woodman's photographs. These photographs are thoughtfully selected to illustrate each chapter. Their ability to communicate in tune with Leach, pushes home the point of the book. The aesthetic domain—the image—used appropriately lets the viewer identify with the true meaning behind the physical image itself. Woodman's photos often show herself as the model. Many of them show her blending in with the background or with a blurred face. This strong openness to her environment and the questioning of identity so evidently important to her photography are also the main themes of *Camouflage*.

VISUAL OPERATIONS

Relating to something visually is important. It is a process we are quite at ease with. However, Camouflage is not considered to be solely a visual process. Other senses offer very powerful connections with the environment. Be these smell; sound; touch or taste, as the need



or desire arises, offer connection. Relating to what in contemporary time has become an image-driven culture,⁶ Camouflage does however prioritise the visual. This is an aspect of the theory engaging directly with Post Modernity. The imagery of this is effectively critiqued and alternatives for how we relate to these are offered. This differs from the generally dim view of the Post Modern and contemporary emphasis on the image stemming from over-use and superficiality.⁷ The mode of representation discussed is a temporal one. This lets it identify with the contemporary environment—with contemporary Place—and cope with the constantly growing and evolving culture.

Representation

Writing for an image based society, Leach took a concept of representation as a grounding. He wrote for people adept at absorbing the masses of representation around them. He sees the imagery of representation as something of a catch 22: both a problem and the solution. The idea that an image represents what its' maker originally wanted it to is understandable. What differs is the step beyond the viewer's initial superficial acceptance. Viewing an image does not define whether it is a representation or a misrepresentation. Advertisements are the obvious example of this uncertainty. However, when looking at the pictorial representation of a building the same situation can occur. False columns adorning a bank's facade speak of strength and plastic weather boards might still embody a colonial cottage. Such false representation, though, do little to let the building and its users relate comfortably to the surrounding environment.

Camouflage should be looked upon positively as a form of self expression. This is where the concept of Camouflage is equated with the importance of representation in the constitution of identity.⁸ Following psychoanalytic thinking, Leach suggests that 'it is precisely through the imaginary realm of representation that so-called "reality" is acted out'.⁹ This is where his argument finds cracks in those afraid that identity is being drowned by the surface imagery of contemporary culture. Taking the representation to be the forum through which reality is communicated is a far more constructive and approachable idea within a society drawn toward such domains.

'Dependent on the efficacy of its aesthetic expression'¹⁰ Camouflage focuses on this fluid representation, rather than the static image.

This is due to Leach's rethinking of the homogenous view of imagery within our image-based society.¹¹ Leach uses Camouflage as an alternate model, allowing for differentiation and expression of individuality. This is an important element of aesthetic representation. It is, however, dependant on how it is engaged with.

Engagement

The engagement Camouflage offers with the world can be evident on any level. It might be seen as purely two dimensional; three dimensional; real or immaterial and ideational. A visual element, however, will always be present. Irrespective of any or all pragmatic processes in the realisation of the Camouflage relationship, it is the 'very corporality of the aesthetic process that points toward the bond that might be established between an individual and the world'.¹²

Camouflage, working as a process where one is assimilating to an other, can be based on the aforementioned idea of representation. Leach derives from the thinking of Frederic Jameson the concept of assimilation based on aesthetic modelling. Whether this be to model oneself on an other, or to assimilate to an other through modelling is unimportant.¹³ Leach takes from it the concept of aesthetic engagement through cognitive mapping. This stance is in place of a static spatial definition. Within aesthetic process based on the modelling: the engagement is what is important. This is where Leach's positive stance on engagement through aesthetics is based.

It is the source of many of our problems, in a culture in which everything is coopted into images and commodities, and also potentially the way out. It offers a mechanism of locating the self within the otherwise homogenizing placelessness of contemporary existence.¹⁴

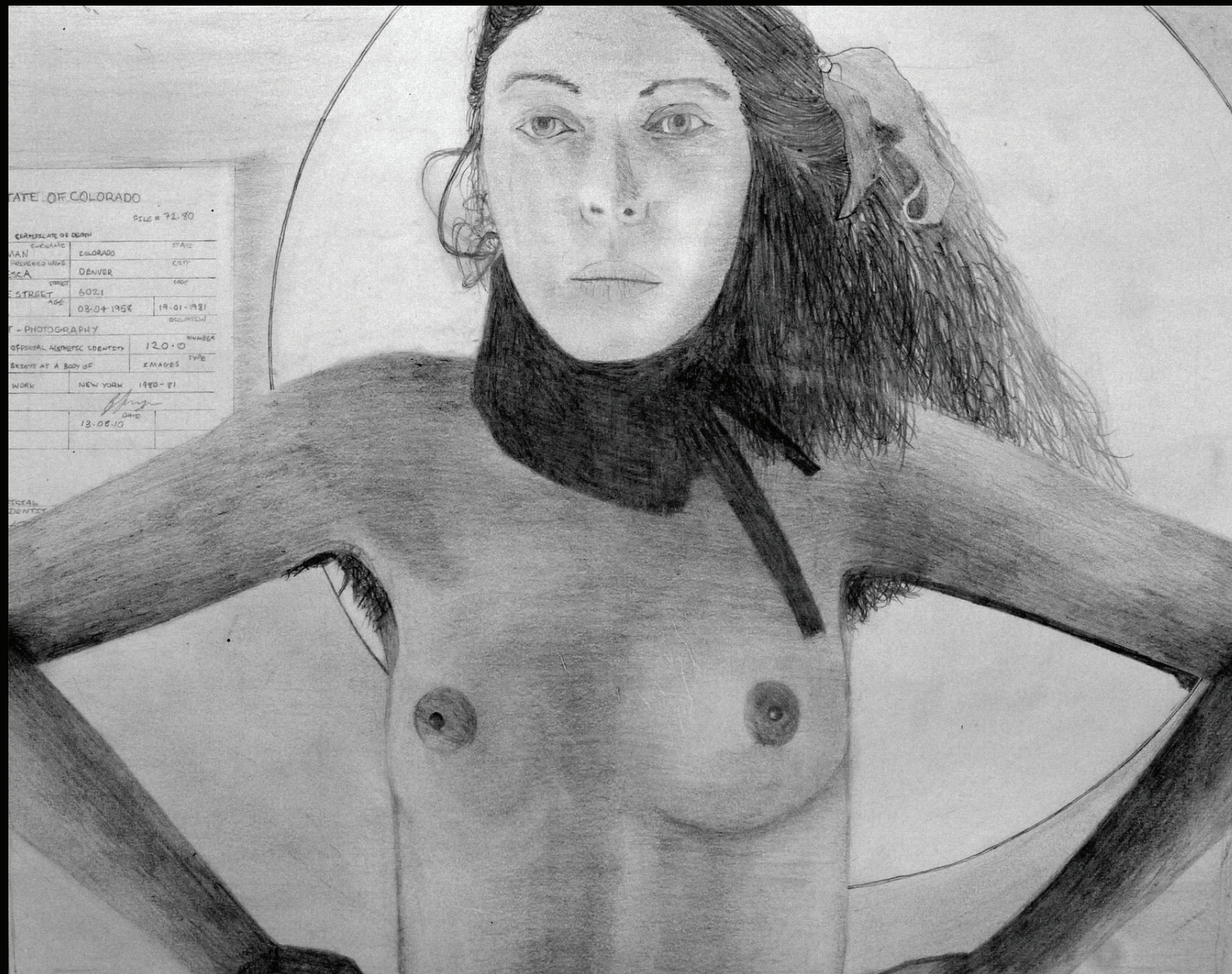
The engagement is a dynamic relationship, rather than a defined or static condition. This is an important aspect of Leach's theory of Camouflage: what should be seen as a dynamic and sensuous relationship between self and Place is facilitated by aesthetics.

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

Leach's titling of the second half of the 'theory of Camouflage'

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The sketch from one of Francesca Woodman's photographs, opposite, shows her standing in front of a mirror. It becomes at once the narcissistic pool and Alice's mirror. She also has her formal identity pinned on the wall, however, she is shunning both the mirror and it. She is preferring to let her true self relate through the image as it will.





as Strategic Operations is as two sided as the process of aesthetic engagement. It immediately recalls ideas of military camouflage which he goes to great length to dispel as a small component of the word. Camouflage reveals as much as it conceals, it is a description of relating. What is needed, however, is to take the visual operations of Camouflage and outline a strategy through which they might be applied.

Becoming Other

Camouflage does not have to be looked at as a process of concealment. As already discussed, it can be seen as a representation, relating one to the environment. Leach states that ‘Camouflage therefore acts as a device for us to define the self against a given cultural setting through the medium of representation—either by becoming part of that setting, or by distinguishing ourselves from it’.¹⁵ This is the act of ‘becoming other’. Becoming is a deeply strategic connection with the world. There is a balance of identity required to both ‘become’ something and distinguish ourselves from it.

The maintenance of this balance is what forces Camouflage toward a performative state. Having Camouflage’s central operation based on a relationship, the performing of this is of the most interest. As one moves from a state of being connected, to a state of being distinct, even the possibility of change makes for a fluid condition. The two states live as a gestalt pair. The fluidity between them allows repetition causing familiarization. Ultimately this finds identity within the context of Place.

Interface

If camouflage, as a term, was to be taken in its common sense of concealment, it is still of interest. The concealment of camouflage is for the end goal of self preservation. The concealment is a sacrifice of outward presentation which in turn gives survival. This can be looked at metaphorically in terms of a death giving life. Here ‘the desire for life or death is ultimately grounded in the opposite’.¹⁶ This concept of the first layer, an apparent sacrifice or loss, leading to an eventual gain can be further played out. Camouflage operates as an interaction between a latent and a manifest level. ‘Like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, the latent level may be disguised by the manifest

level’.¹⁷ This masquerade that is the manifest level may, however, come to reveal a true identity. Rather than simply hiding a true identity, as it is influenced it may come to express it. Representations of the self and responses will act as influencing communication. This interaction between the two is where identity can be sought.

It is perhaps by turning to the figure of the actor that we might illustrate the complexities of this operation. The actor, whether or not she or he adopts a physical “disguise,” subscribes to the logic of camouflage. Yet it is not as though there is some originary self concealed beneath the assumed self. What has been concealed is itself an amalgam of previous assumed selves, which have left their mark on the subsequent self as positions that have been either rejected or embraced. The actor will always be conditioned to some extent by the roles that she or he has played.¹⁸

Leach follows this with a comment based in performative logic and on the basis that we are all actors. He says simply, that we are always performing. The masquerading operates in stasis between the extremes of melancholic withdrawal, and ecstatic loss of self to the other.¹⁹ Again it is a balance of the two that facilitate Place–identity through this model of representation.

Camouflage models a relationship between us and our environment. Working within the aesthetic realm Camouflage allows us to relate: it allows us to possess and constitute an identity. The visual and strategic operations give fluid parameters to the relationship.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURE

Camouflage speaks rather broadly. However, rather than presenting a prescriptivism, Leach takes his analysis and forms the above framework. It is through this framework that camouflage architecture may be drawn.

Being based on the prenotion that humans will adapt to their environment, Camouflage extends an unlimited view of identity. It takes an alternate view, for example, to that derived from Heidegger’s concept of dwelling. Time as an architectural element has been considered in terms of the building. However, Camouflage calls for



such concern to be put into the structure through which we perceive architecture, and, in turn how they might become representative of our identity. To find the desired balance within society an architecture of Camouflage must work with it. Our ability to adapt extends within architectural discussion also. Even the strangest and most radical designs become acceptable and understood over time. ‘Individually designed “object buildings” should give way to marginal landscapes more readily suited to their eventual role as part of some background horizon of consciousness.’²⁰ This is not a slant toward sameness, rather, to embrace the ability within the process of assimilation to facilitate an identifying relationship.

To apply the theory, Camouflage will form a set of parameters. Working within the four sections the theory is broken into here makes it a manageable framework for the design process. The fascination is the meeting of these parameters with those defined by Place. Each of the following four chapters takes one of these portions of Camouflage and does this. Designing the building, with these parameters guiding the development of the relationships between self and Place, will be how the design tests the theory. These parameters will work in this case to help define how the building’s aesthetic works for this goal, rather than the static image of that aesthetic. As Manuel DeLanda put it, the most interesting and emergent work might come from delicately balancing the proportion of homogenous parameters correctly against what heterogeneous effects come from them.²¹

SENSE AND PERCEPTION

The possibility of expanding upon the ideas and methods hinted at in the previous chapter is interesting. Camouflage as a model builds upon itself. This allows a fuller picture of the relationship one has with Place to accumulate. Working up this aesthetic understanding is the foundation within Leach’s theory. It develops into a method of identity, to be investigated in the following chapters.

The concept of how we belong in the world is a big question. If we did not sense or perceive our relationship would be somewhat drier. Understanding our aesthetic engagement with the world becomes of vital importance. The aim of this chapter is to, within the context of Leach’s theory: present a site investigation defining the parameters for design. This is based on the primal, historical and social qualities of the site. Such an investigation, before looking at the design, is important as it begins to offer a sense of the processes by which we identify with Place.

Sensing and perceiving requires going both into and beyond the theoretical. Therefore, a theoretical context is discussed as a matter of need. After which, this chapter presents and discusses a foray into the artistic. A brief for the site investigation is drawn out of this discussion, and the work itself presented. The conclusions drawn are based around the aesthetic relationship. How this relationship is facilitated is important, as it becomes the basis for development in the following design.

MAKE YOUR MIND A BLANK

Sickened by petrol fumes,
Stunned by grinding gears
And the shouting of children
Laying siege to a school,
I steady myself on a stone
Under a critical tree,
High above the sea.

My senses wince, ambushed
By a sudden stench
From weeds in the ditch.

Tears fall on my hands—
And I stare helplessly
At an outcrop of rock
Unmoored by a choppy sea.

I know nothing can be gained
By staying here, confused
By a wind glittering with knives—
But if I sit quite still
And make my mind a blank
At least nothing too terrible
Can happen to me.

Alistair Campbell 1967.¹

Alistair Campbell wrote on varying topics. What he was consistent with however, was the application of a powerfully conventional imagery. He does not tell his story through highly convoluted language. Campbell was one of the New Zealand poets who strove for originality, rather than doing the ‘New Zealand thing’. Although he was well aware of what was happening internationally, he took literary ideas and focussed them on what was of interest to him.² This is important, as they gave him a model through which to explore his own history and place in the world.

The point that Campbell draws out in this particular poem is prior to defining a relationship. With the aim of relating to Place—both environmentally and socially—a complete understanding of such is vital. The identity a relationship with Place produces can not be based internally. This is especially true when looking at identity as a flexible notion. This poem sees Campbell with an empty mind. Being in this state allows him to simply sense and perceive his surroundings. This is a beautiful notion: to pare away the glittering knives and take in only what is necessary. To look at this idea architecturally is cause for avoidance of standard concepts. Set styles of design and discussion based on historic principals is not a valid basis. The sense and perception of ‘base’ parameters from the environment and within culture is. While a lot of Campbell’s poetry has a darkness, it is typically projected into the landscape.³ Leach posits that ‘the role of design is not to forge a link between ourselves and our immediate environment but, rather to allow us to feel “connected” with the lifeworld in general’.⁴ To achieve this, these base parameters defining the lifeworld need to be drawn onto an empty sheet.





ARCHITECTURAL PLACE

If the foreign historical context was to be removed New Zealand architecture would be left wanting. While many cultures hold a deservedly long winded and prestigious architectural wealth, the local does not have the luxury of such a fully established tradition. There are beginnings based logically, and correctly, on the house. This makes sense in a young country where the pragmatic—primal—need of dwelling should influence its architecture. Recent criticism of this, misplaced though most of it may be, can be seen as a call for further development to happen. The error occurs when this criticism is taken to heart, and the past discounted as unworthy.

The beginning of inhabitation, and so architecture in New Zealand, was by the Māori toward the end of the second century A.D. While ‘ethnographic evidence indicates that Māori architecture was extremely diverse, despite the limitations imposed by stone tools and available materials’,⁵ a certain ‘style’ developed over time. This diversity is largely through the influence of the environment on buildings, rather than desire. This is true of both siting and materiality. The society developed ‘and, though they always kept a respect for the environment, their major architecture changed from the natural construction to a more decorative one’.⁶ This is effectively the Māori architecture as we know it today: planned and crafted with significant cultural meaning.

The arrival of Europeans to New Zealand, initially as a whaling colony and eventually a civilian settlement brought radical change to the built environment. The ‘pioneering beginning meant that with very few exceptions there was no architecture in the narrow sense of stylism but in its place a direct answer to circumstances that resulted in character.’⁷ What developed was an offering of primitive huts and more or less an adaptation of generic plans brought by the settlers from their homelands. Constructed largely from materials available were simple buildings that were in response to, but not necessarily in harmony with the environment. The features that have become synonymous with early New Zealand building are the likes of:

- Steep roofing; due to waterproofing needs
- Dormer window; to light roof spaces
- Lean-to; as simple additions to simple boxes
- Veranda
- Central Hallway

As these colonials settled in and their style of building developed, it became grounded and more permanent looking structures were built. They still built what the environment allowed them to: whether still in timber; stone where practical; or, brick where the earth allowed. It seems it is here however when things came a little unstuck. Rather than a coming of age of the colony and development of the building style that they had been through so much hardship developing, design and architecture stepped in. Means and time allowed a step further than a needs based: more primordial to something too considered.

The Church in New Zealand has built some fine buildings and operates within its own traditions. However, when the rest of architecture is examined the list of styles trailed in this country would fill pages. This is mainly evident when looking at domestic architecture, simply because New Zealand does not demand a large amount of public building. It is obvious though that when New Zealand came into prosperity in the early twentieth century it sought to show the world so. Numerous classical, gothic, etcetera public buildings sprung up. But the curing of insecurities does not explain the need to take every form of villa and bungalow, import and roughly copy it.

To learn from both general architectural history and what is currently happening outside New Zealand is of the utmost importance. But the synthesis of what is learnt there, and, more importantly what has been learnt here in New Zealand over our short history would be more beneficial. Before all this began Samuel Hurst Seager, who worked at adapting ideas to suit New Zealand, had the opinion that ‘only the most gifted architects would be equal to the task of creating a truly national architecture.’⁸

It was not until the second post-war period that any true sense of a New Zealand architecture was formed. In terms of writing at least ‘there has been no comparable period since for such an array of interesting, productive and polemically charged documents’.⁹ The outcome of Nationalism within architecture came to a head with the publishing of the ‘Planning’ journal by the Group in Auckland and the ‘Design Review’ by the Architectural Centre in Wellington. The financial situation caused obvious constraints on building, however this enthusiasm found an opening. Pragmatics saw this opening appear in the housing sector, adding to New Zealand’s image as a nation of ‘house builders’. The likes of Brown; Pascoe; Firth



and co; who boldly moved away from those who had been New Zealand's established and respected architects of the time, made this possible. While they worked at opposite ends of the country 'Pascoe refused to copy International Modernist detailing....[and he] arrived at a very similar solution to the same problems Vernon Brown had set himself in forging a New Zealand style of domestic architecture'.¹⁰ Indeed Vernon Brown's influence spread further as he took over the School of Architecture in Auckland. His message was taken on, and may be epitomized by the Group Architects, who formed in 1946 while the members were students there. They continued under different guises eventually building very successful houses characterised by a low pitched roof, weatherboards, an open plan and exposed detailing. These designs were influenced a lot by Scandinavian and Japanese architecture, but also a lot of homage was paid to the barn and the Māori whare. By the time they disbanded to pursue individual practice in 1958 they had gone a long way in *attempting to define a vernacular*.

Gerald Melling has written extensively on New Zealand architecture. His writing, as with his architecture, is opinionated and colourful but to the point. His is the most apt description of the 'terrible twins' Athfield and Walker and their reasoning:

Preceding generations of architects – as earnest and obedient as the sheep they shared the land with, looked far beyond New Zealand shores to see their ship come in. Recognising, however, that New Zealand architecture was still emerging from the bush, Athfield and Walker (landlubbers both) drank the spirit of pioneers, the whiskey-in-the-jar, 'she'll be right', No.8 wire dictum of larrikins and fencing contractors, chased down by the innate irreverence of their cultural peerage. As students, while showing signs of a casual education (Athfields juxtaposition of Mies Van der Rohe with Gaudi, and Walker's Japanese Metabolism), they were seriously indigenous. The signposts, like themselves, were in New Zealand. What more a magical place to lead the way?¹¹

This lets both Athfield and Walker take up a special place in New Zealand architecture. They worked to weld together all the elements: New Zealand's history; culture; environment; as well as their personal influences. It is little wonder that they came to international

attention, something the serious business of architecture had failed to manage in New Zealand. What let them stand apart, however, was that this did not lead to a desire to design a vernacular. The parameters they found were simply put to work.

Melling's buildings themselves are of particular interest. The houses by the firm Melling:Morse are designed with an abrupt honesty. This has led to a style of design that is closer to the primal vernacular. Rather than clone other styles of architecture, he has continued both Athfield and Walker's relaxed and cheerful approach to architecture. The fact the buildings are simple and refined has let them, especially the houses, stand out.

Other simple forms of building have been looked at in New Zealand for inspiration. The Elegant Shed by Peter Mitchel in 1984 for example, worked to identify New Zealand in New Zealand. He did this with reference to, more so than along, the pragmatic lines he discussed. What he achieved was perhaps an inquiry into purity. For, in Mitchel's image of New Zealand there is definitely no Modernism, 'not merely a washout version of some other peoples' histories, and with that he provided a form of cultural foundation upon which other local mythologies could be properly built'.¹²

But, more proliferate at the time, the number of analyses of the 'kiwi bach'. Many architects in New Zealand pay homage to the simple bach. Likely the honesty and romance the image the kiwi bach conveys, draws them in. As identified by Robin Skinner in his piece 'The Whare in the Bush' the bach as we know it is a home grown construct. It is one that suits New Zealand beautifully in both environment and culture. The bach has transformed from a single person's dwelling to a place to holiday and relax. Baches now wait patiently gathering memories and experiences here and there when there is time allowed to 'get back to the real New Zealand'.

These bits and pieces and the baches that keep them are not 'the high point of architectural cuisine, though one or two may have been in their day, yet neither are they raw or without sophistication. They are in fact uncooked'.¹³ Pip Cheshire's book, 'Architecture Uncooked', encapsulates the scope and romance of the kiwi bach perfectly. This is perhaps timely given the influx of thoroughly overcooked baches being built. 'Somewhere in the 1980s the idea had been planted that the vernacular forms of New Zealand architecture developed by architects such as Vernon Brown and the Group Architects had



been inspired by the bach. They hadn't... In the end it didn't matter. The mythical architectural bach proved an ideal point of reference from which to develop the new consciousness'.¹⁴ It is not that there is anything wrong with this development; a lot of them are beautiful. They are simply from a different kitchen.

Wandering about the country in the early eighties 'The Elegant Shed' probed New Zealand's fascination with simple buildings and their relationship with architecture. It managed to provide a 'form of cultural foundation upon which other local mythologies could be properly built'.¹⁵ This is the ideal that makes these studies so relevant in the development of New Zealand architecture. It is what New Zealand works upon.

In her essay 'Architecture As Stage' Dorita Hannah examined the ridiculous relationship between New Zealand's '100% Pure' image and its architecture. The reality being far that the architecture diverges from Place; however that is kept quiet. This is especially true of the architectural interaction with the environment and landscape, which is such a definitive element of life either side of the front door. She makes a call for 'a more complex identity; that of a hybrid culture, in motion enacted by a dynamic experimental and visceral architecture'.¹⁶

This also becomes clear from a broader – cultural studies view point, when the base relationship is examined. 'Our identity as New Zealanders, in other words, seems to remain closely tied to images of the natural landscape'.¹⁷ Here Nigel Clarke, who also questions the '100% Pure' image, has explored the relationship between the idealised view of the New Zealand landscape, and what real effect the environment has upon us. 'You can see this in the enthusiasm we have for getting away from the cities—where the vast majority of us live and work—and getting into the countryside and the wilderness. In 'getting away from it all' we also remind ourselves what the country is *really* like—and who *we* really are'.¹⁸

This more complex identity will manifest in its truest form as a maturing of the work of the true architectural pioneers who have been few and far between. The desire for and foundations of an interactive mode of identity are in place—and importantly so. They are indigenous to New Zealand. It is not, however, a concept of the vernacular. Nor, as seen above, is the primitive the basis for a New Zealand identity. However, as with the development of any identity,

bits and pieces are assembled from all sources along the way. The development of an architecture within a framework laid out by the likes of Vernon Brown; Athfield; Walker; and Melling amongst others is entirely possible. These are examples of architects who saw and continue to see the value of education and inspiration from all sources, worldwide. However, working in New Zealand, they do just that—they design buildings that allow identifications with New Zealand to accumulate.

IDENTITY

New Zealand identity has been a kaleidoscopic and elusive idea. Architecture, with its temporal relationship to New Zealand, both environmentally and culturally, is a similar proposition. This is evident in the sporadic display of architecture considered *of New Zealand*. Those works that have come to be looked upon as vernacular are predominantly buildings of necessity. As a comparatively young country this is logical. However, with necessity being perhaps the greatest of all design drivers, New Zealand architecture has only sporadically found the opportunity to leave these parameters. This poses difficulties for the development of a complete architectural identity. As Nationalist ideals have come and gone in many fields, they have shown that the development of 'an' identity is perhaps not the best practice. Indeed, as expressed in the previous chapter, Neil Leach sees architecture being *used to express identity* rather than a building itself being an object, or a singular identity itself. Certainly, influence must be taken from all sources and New Zealand architecture should relate to world-wide dialogue. However, to stand out in that discussion, prominence should be given to the country's own sense of Place.

Every attempt is made to avoid this work simply arguing for a return to the primitive. More importantly it avoids simply reducing architecture to an 'essence'. Given our singular position in time it would be naive to seek a definition of any vernacular: any New Zealand architecture. A vernacular can be defined as the unconscious craftwork found outside the bounds of considered architectural design. What is discussed here is the idea that base principals of Place may become parameters for design.

Francis Pound wrote *The Invention of New Zealand* (2009) as an investigation into Nationalism from the 1930's until recently. It



serves as a great history of New Zealand art during this period. More importantly, it achieves its goal of investigating, discussing and eventually describing the downfall of attempts at Nationalism within the arts. No great image of nationality is required to express the identity of the artists he presented. A conscious effort is made to step over the dialectic stumbling block that Pound identified within Nationalist art. Pound puts poet Allen Curnow and painter Colin McCahon forth, as they themselves have done in the past, as leaders of the *Invention of New Zealand pack*. They are artists who actively sought a vernacular aesthetic. While others—poet Charles Brasch for example—take a differing view. Pound observes Brasch’s opinion that ‘the relation between “discovery” (as of something already there) and “creation” (as if out of a void) remains for him in a perpetually fertile state of ambiguity’.¹⁹

The beauty of architecture is its ability to act as an intermediary and translate the identity New Zealand possesses. It can discover place. This has been successfully pursued through the more superficial aspects of building, such as form and materiality. They are the discussions that form the dialogue of the vernacular in the traditional sense of the word. However, this does not provide a complete image of a primordial response to Place, beyond the idea of dwelling. It tends to lead to a chain reaction of like for like design. This work aims to test, by application within the New Zealand environment, Leach’s assertion that identity, having an integral relationship with Place, may be assimilated through the discourse of Camouflage.

Communicate with stones, trees, water
If you must vent a heart too full.
Who will hear you now, your words falling
As foreign bird-tongue
On ears attuned to different vibrations?
Trees, water, stones:
Let these answer a gaze contemplative
Of all things that flow out of them
And back to enter them again

Ambulando Charles Brasch²⁰

The first line from another of Charles Brasch’s poems ‘Home Ground’: ‘I tramp my streets into recognition’²¹ bares a will to know. It shows a will to relate to his home—to his sense of place. Importantly though, it shows a want to discover this place, rather

than invent it. This he wrote after returning to New Zealand from a period in England. Brasch, while away, discovered that ‘It was New Zealand I discovered, not England, because New Zealand lived in me as no other country could live, part of myself as I was part of it, the world I breathed and wore from birth, my seeing and my language’.²² While we are adaptable, some primal memories and desires remain embedded within us.

THE PRIMORDIAL

The primordial, as opposed to the primal, must refer to that which is original or primary; from first principles. This definition is analogous to what Francis Pound wrote of in his commentary on New Zealand art. He set aside the idea that the ‘sense of ‘primitive’ art as synonymous with ‘tribal’ art is a strictly twentieth-century phenomenon’.²² While some discussion may appear similar, there is no need in New Zealand’s context, especially within the scope of this research, to discuss ‘primal humanity’ as, for example, Joseph Rykwert has done. From the very first onwards, inhabitants here have been of educated society with a broad array of building knowledge. The primordial then: is a relationship of primal affinity with Place.

David Mitchell wrote ‘The Elegant Shed’ concentrating on simple and unpretentious buildings. He summated that the preferred, and most beneficial response to New Zealand, is to concentrate not solely on the interpretation of their form but their ideas as well. There is little to be gained by continually regenerating their styling. To take the image of the primitive and create from it a widely adaptable architectural language, superficial concepts such as form or materiality alone will not do. Taking the emotive and unseen qualities of primordial buildings, irrelevant of time or cultural significance, provides a translatable language. They will be characteristic of and fundamental to the ever beginning idea of a primitive response to Place.

To tap into the emotive spirit of this primitive as an approach to forming identity is not new. Many architects have done, or continue to do so. It has been identified in reaction to the Placelessness of modernism by the likes of Kenneth Frampton, as Critical Regionalism. In a slightly differing vein it is currently exemplified, for example, by Glenn Murcutt’s buildings, based on his concept of ‘analogous inspiration’ (analogous with past builders). However, the





ideas and emotional experiences generated can only have meaning to New Zealand should their image be furnished by somatic sensations.²³

The concept that ‘architecture is the physical embodiment of feeling’²⁴ is not foreign to New Zealand architects. Perhaps this is also due to the culture’s affinity with a natural environment. This remains, at least in part or in spirit, wild and primitive itself. What is needed, therefore, is for the somatic qualities of the lurking primitive and New Zealand’s analogous inspiration to come together. This allows the creation of a basis and integrity for future *New Zealand Architecture*. It is through these channels that a primal understanding of identity with Place can form.

PERIGEE #11

Maddie Leach is an artist who has lived and worked in Wellington since 1995. Her work focuses on ideas of site specificity and sociality. The relationships’ these concepts cause through interactions with the viewer are vital to her work.²⁵ The work, *Perigee #11*, was commissioned as part of the One Day Sculpture programme in 2008. The initiative from Massey University College of Creative Arts, School of Fine Arts and Litmus was curated by Claire Doherty. The works were spread across New Zealand and each on show for only twenty–four hours. The exhibition explored ideas of both Place and duration.²⁶ However, with a very open brief the artists were able to critically explore how sculpture could navigate, and activate, these ideas within the public²⁷. *Perigee #11* itself, was a project that offered viewers a chance to explore the primordial relationship with the environment mentioned above. The work did not present any identity, however, it allowed for a contemplation of such to take place.

Perigee #11 was sited in an old boat shed in Breaker Bay on the south coast of Wellington. Critic Martin Patrick responded by describing the work as an ‘open framework’²⁸ rather than labelling the work under any particular category. Maddie Leach built *Perigee #11* largely from a collection of ready–made components. The boatshed and the Wellington weather (as a predicted storm) were re–presented. Maddie Leach relined the boat shed with timber,

The object window of *Perigee #11*

replaced the window and refurbished the door. She then offered it as a sheltered bunker or viewing platform²⁹ through which the predicted storm could be experienced. Knowledge of the work was spread by newspaper advertising and rumour. All these elements built up to what was to be a large event. In fact the storm did not materialise, however, that is not relevant. As the name suggests, perhaps giving the viewer the opportunity to contemplate passing the closest point with their environment is most important. *Perigee #11* was a minimal setup: the cedar demarcating interior and exterior, the storm, a radio picking up local VHF traffic, a stool and the viewers themselves. Martin Patrick also notes the importance of the performance element of the work which centred on the viewers themselves. This is rooted in Maddie Leach’s interest in the films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton³⁰.

If *Perigee #11* as a work is accommodating to the notion of performance, it would be solely the performance of its visitors in response to the site, as Maddie Leach after a complex series of preparations has left the building to its own devices... In addition, the emphasis on the gaze is intriguing and significant here, as the spectator enters a closed chamber, almost a surrogate camera in order to look outwards, into the unknown to discover things only partially revealed or visible. The space subsequently becomes, as a public location, a context for social exchange and interaction between individuals.³¹

Perigee #11 operates as a framework. The work offers participants a moment of considered correspondence with the world. The aesthetic relationship *Perigee #11* facilitates is mimetic. Maddie Leach was not constructing a work imitating the sea or the weather. Rather, she set up a narrative between the viewer, as a part of the sculpture, and the environment. Patrick picks out the ‘notable reciprocity between Maddie Leach as artist and viewers in the space, for whom she both makes the work but is dependent upon for the work to fully exist’.³² The multi–sensual nature of the work: with the sounds of the sea and the radio; the temperature and light of the passing day and night; the smells of the timber and ocean; and the other people are in keeping with Adorno’s concept of ‘sensuous correspondence’. This way this relationship functions is approaching the idea of a love. ‘Like love, it involves a kind of surrender, and like love, it is not born of resistance but of a sense of yielding to the other.’³³ *Perigee #11* allowed that opening of the self to the environment, and



sensuous correspondence with it. The project is rather embodying of the Camouflage model beyond this correspondence. However, this is the basis of its dialogue.

Neil Leach is an architect and writer of theory. While Camouflage speaks of a general aesthetic relationship, it must avoid being labelled as having defined what such an identity might look like. This is something Camouflage actively avoids. Similar to that identified in Leach's theory of Camouflage, the connectivity that may be accessed by an aesthetic mechanism is evident in Perigee #11. The work by Maddie Leach is a useful way of beginning to give life and understanding to Camouflage. It is also useful beyond its initial 'One Day Sculpture' time frame, because, while it had form it does not now. It exists temporally: presently as a text and image based representation. Understanding these parallels helps to understand the reasoning behind Camouflage.

Like the neck of the swan
In the tumescent stream
The other hand trails;
Sleek as cream
Are his dimpled cheeks;
His plump mouth dreams.
O Echo, Echo³⁴

In this second verse of Narcissus Campbell takes a turn. After

introducing the idea of fertilisation and regeneration in the opening of his poem Campbell begins to break these down in this second verse. What was seen as a serene water's edge, becomes tumescent. The swan implies an image of duality. While this sets up a series of oppositions to follow, it shows a side of narcissus important to this discussion. Perigee #11 works a lot on the play between inside and outside, a duality or relationship obvious within architecture. It also becomes important later in the drawing out of camouflage theory. Before breaking out in the next verse, a readiness is made here. Cheeks are plumped and dreams allowed.



Perigee #11 boatshed



Refitted interior

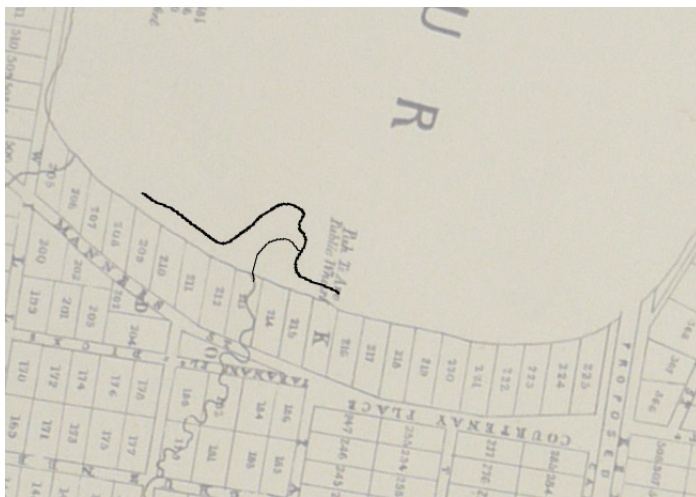


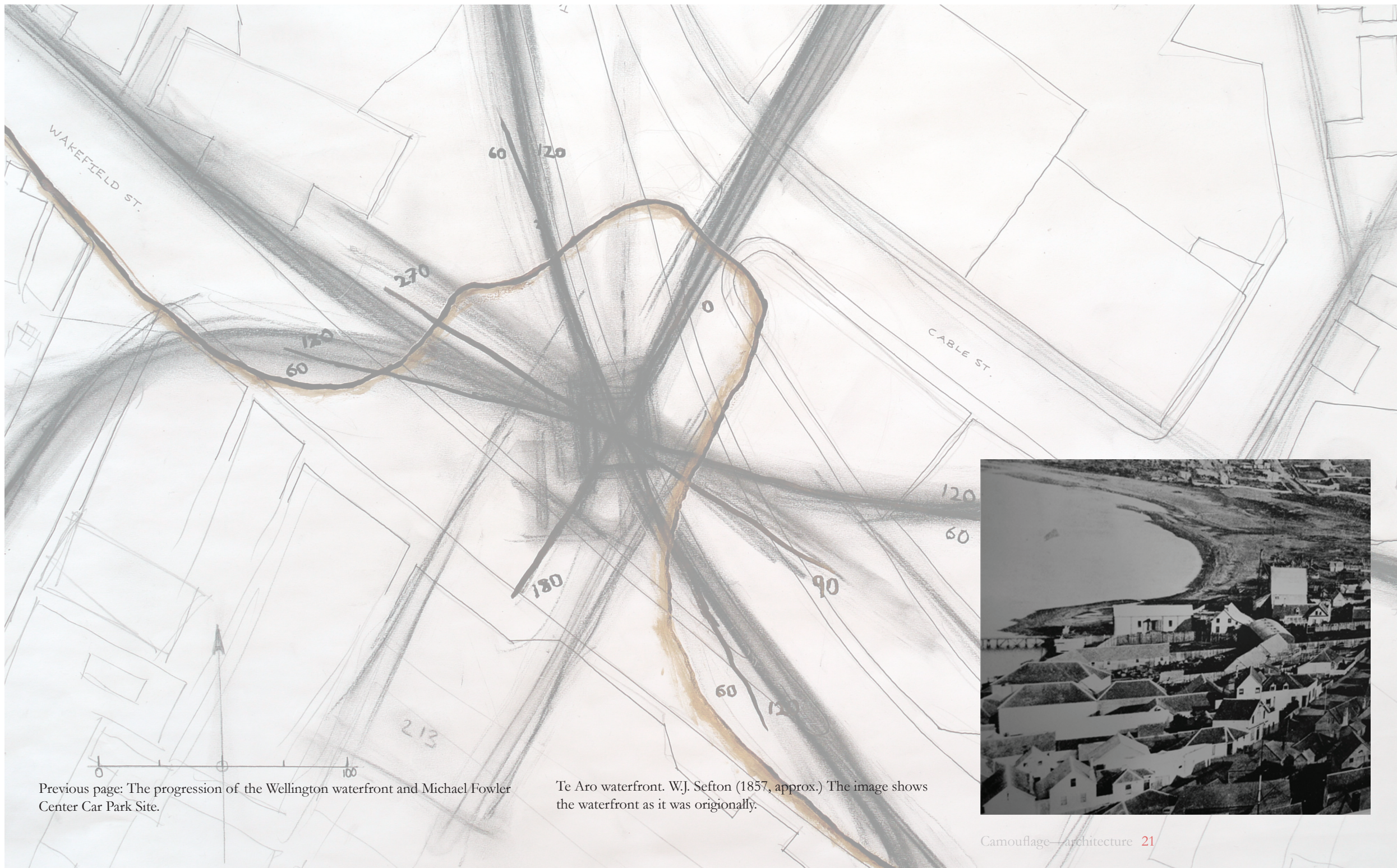
Radio, giving weather updates



Sketched from an untitled Francesca Woodman photograph. The swan becomes symbolic of love and purity, which Woodman is moving towards and embracing in an effort to relate.





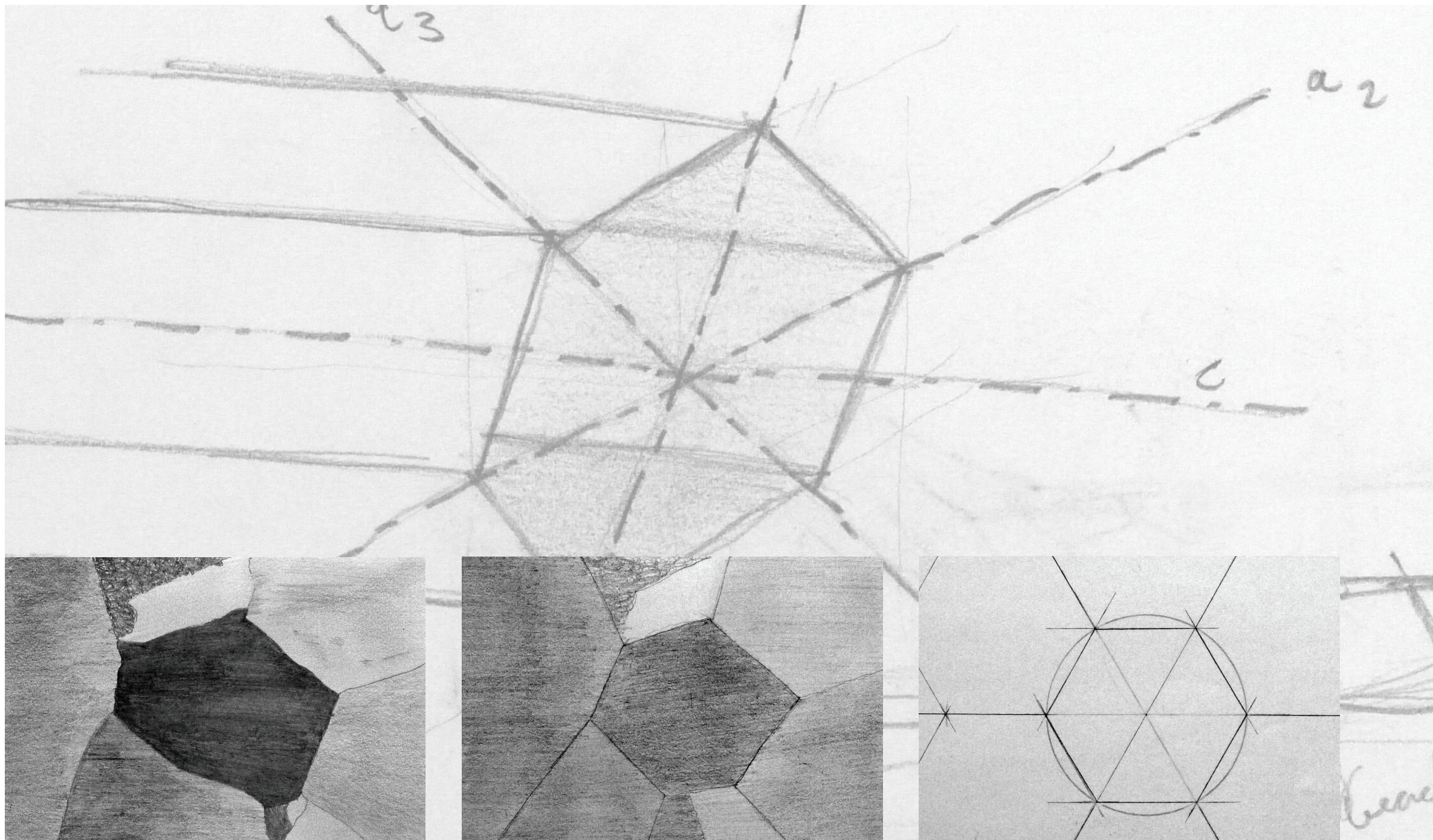


Previous page: The progression of the Wellington waterfront and Michael Fowler Center Car Park Site.

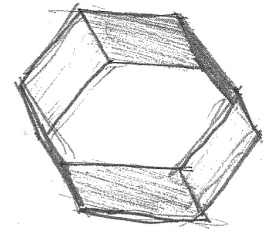
Te Aro waterfront. W.J. Sefton (1857, approx.) The image shows the waterfront as it was originally.



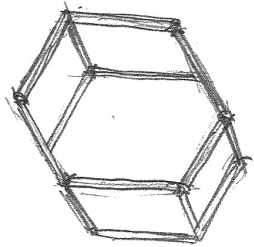
Camouflage—architecture 21



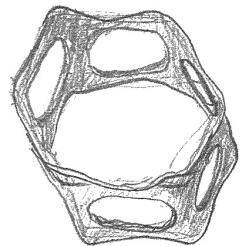




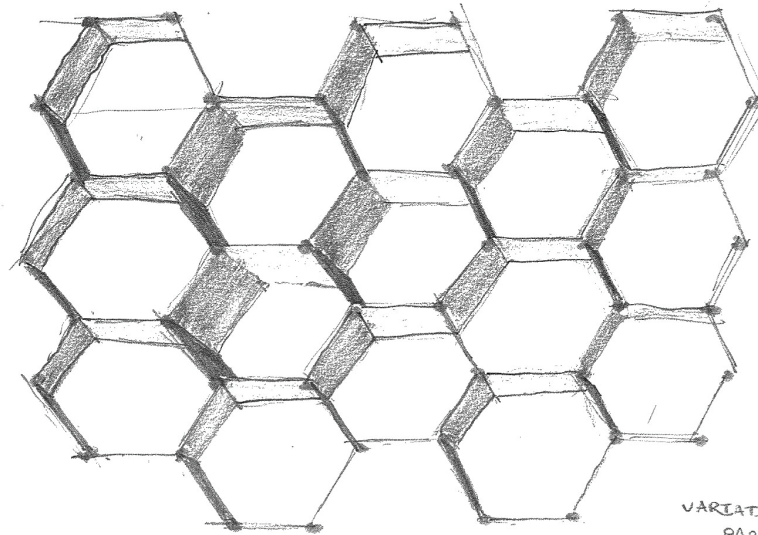
VARIABLE DEPTH
PANELS



VARIABLE TRUSS

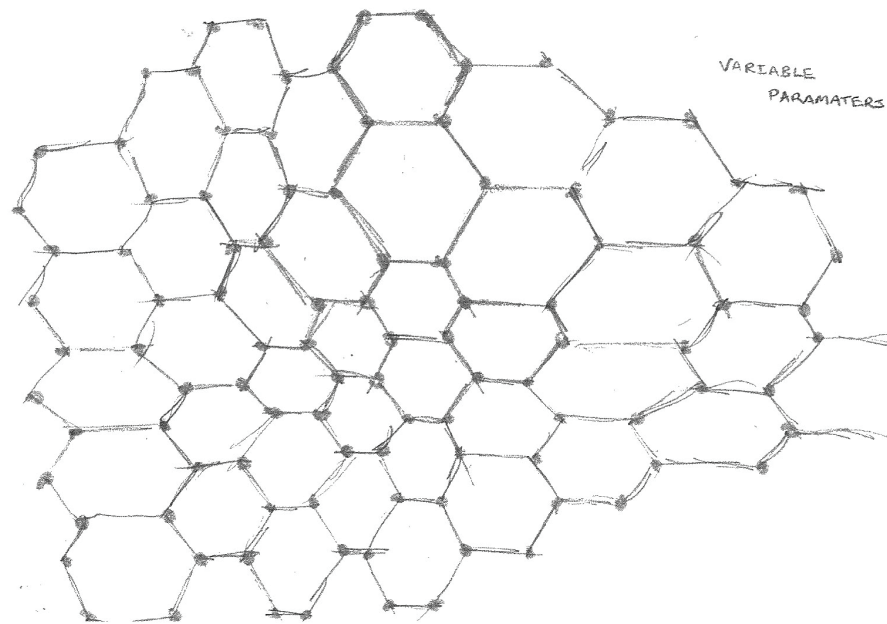


VARIABLE VOLUME
OF STRUCTURAL
MATERIAL

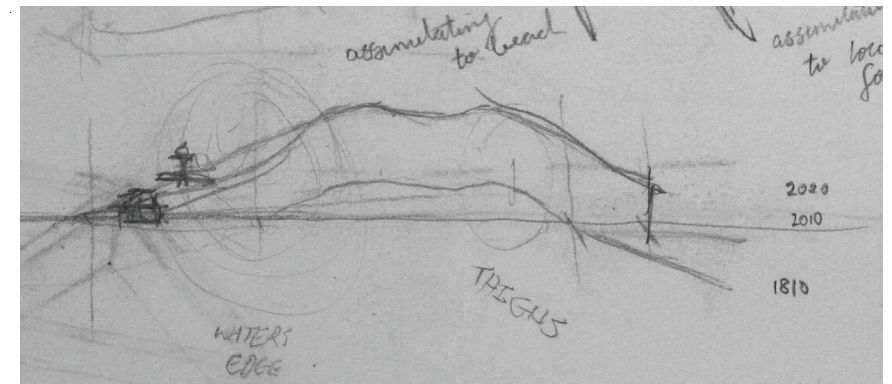
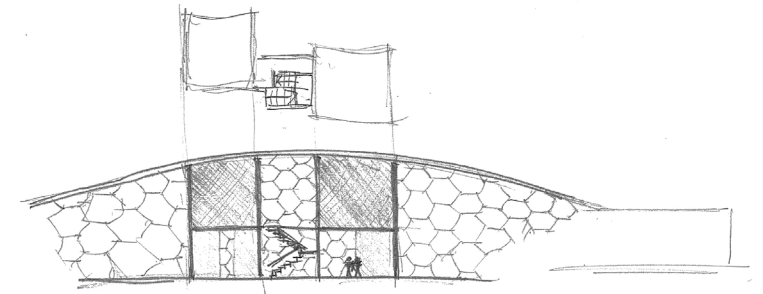
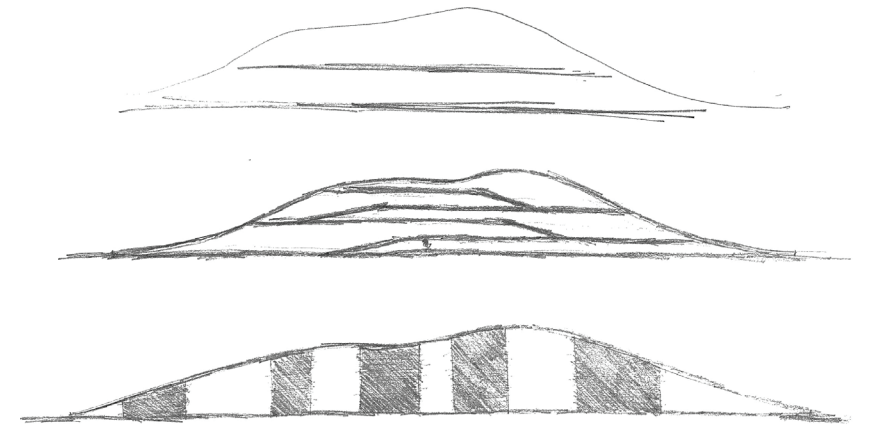


VARIATION WITHIN
PARAMETERS

— POINTS OF HIGH
STRUCTURAL STRESS

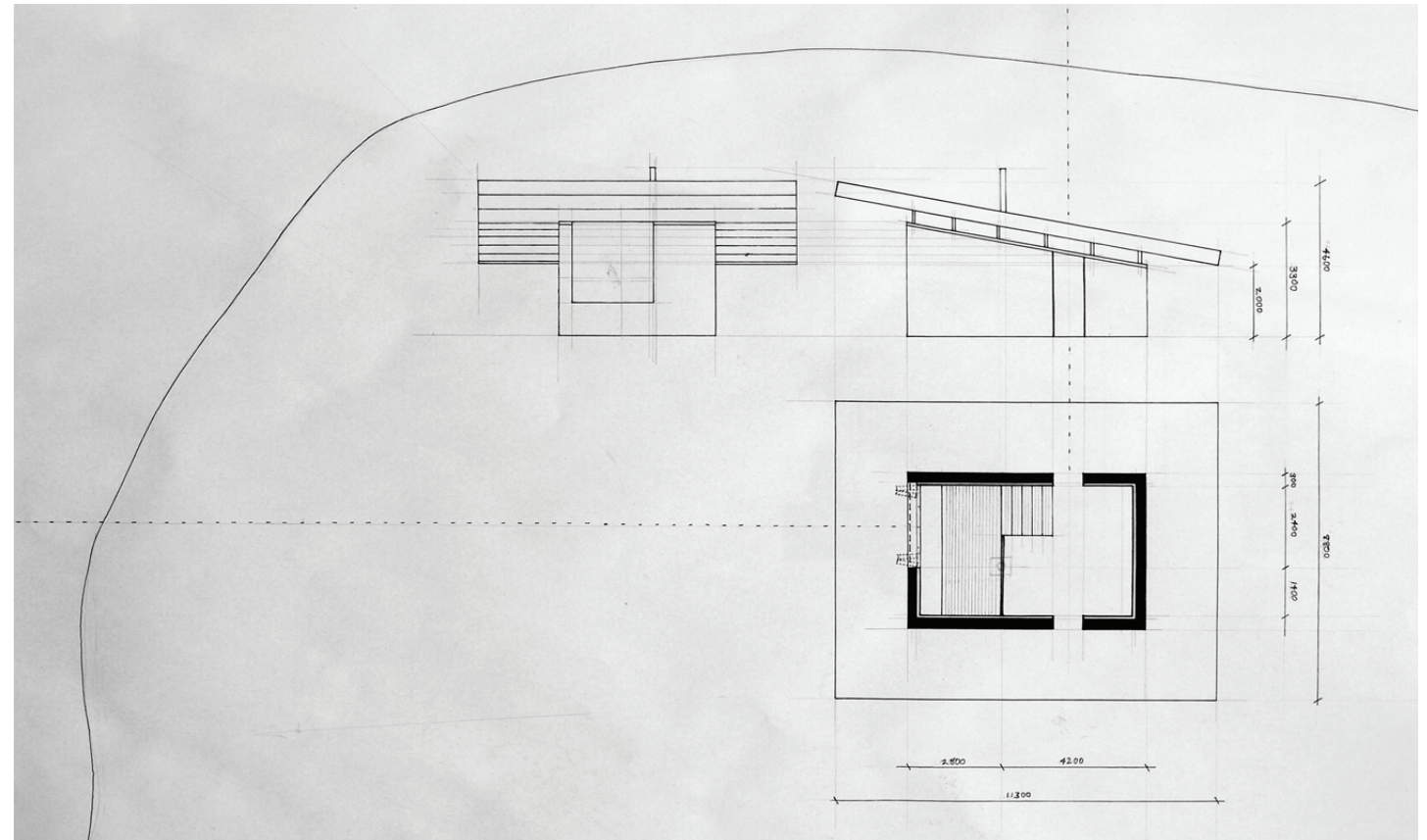


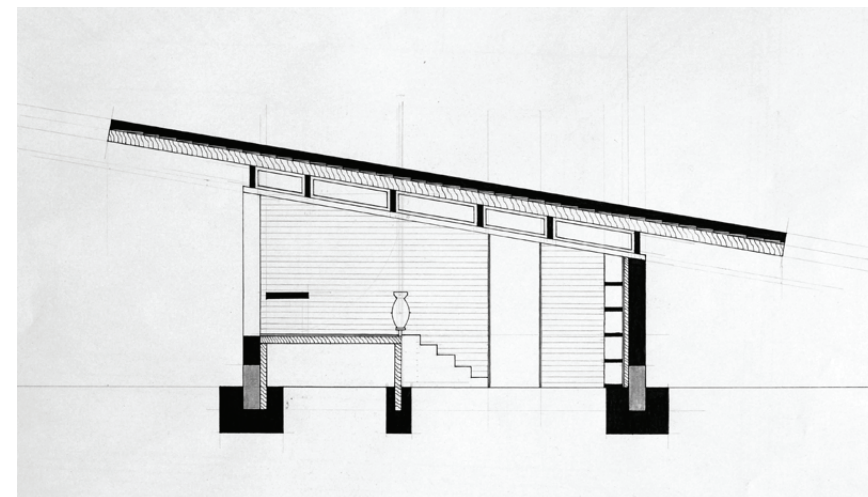
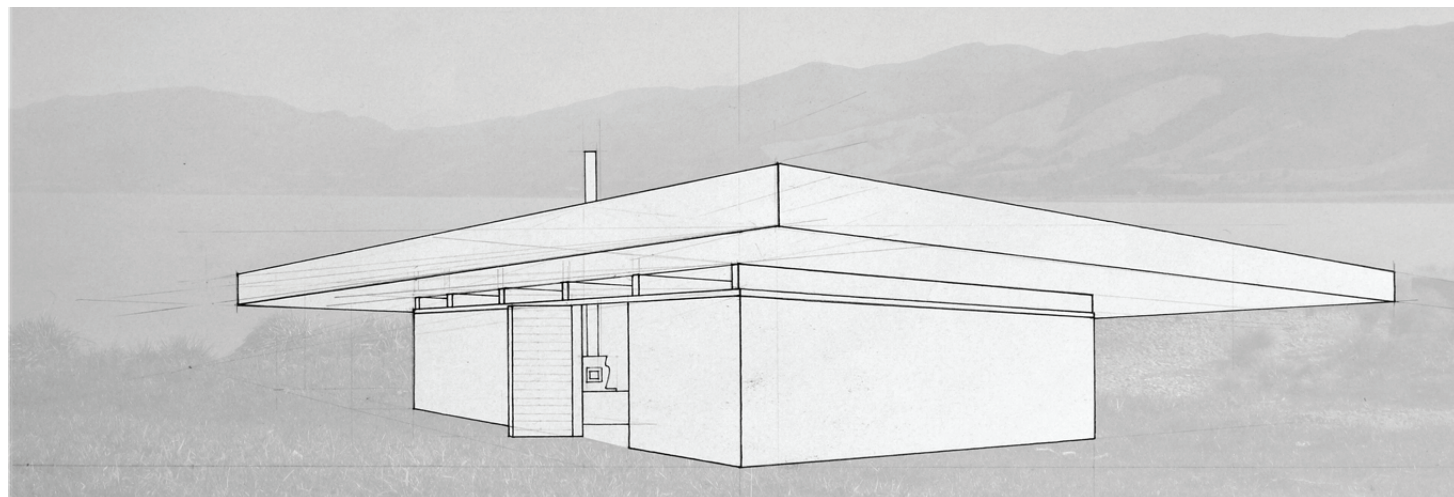
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PARAMETERS

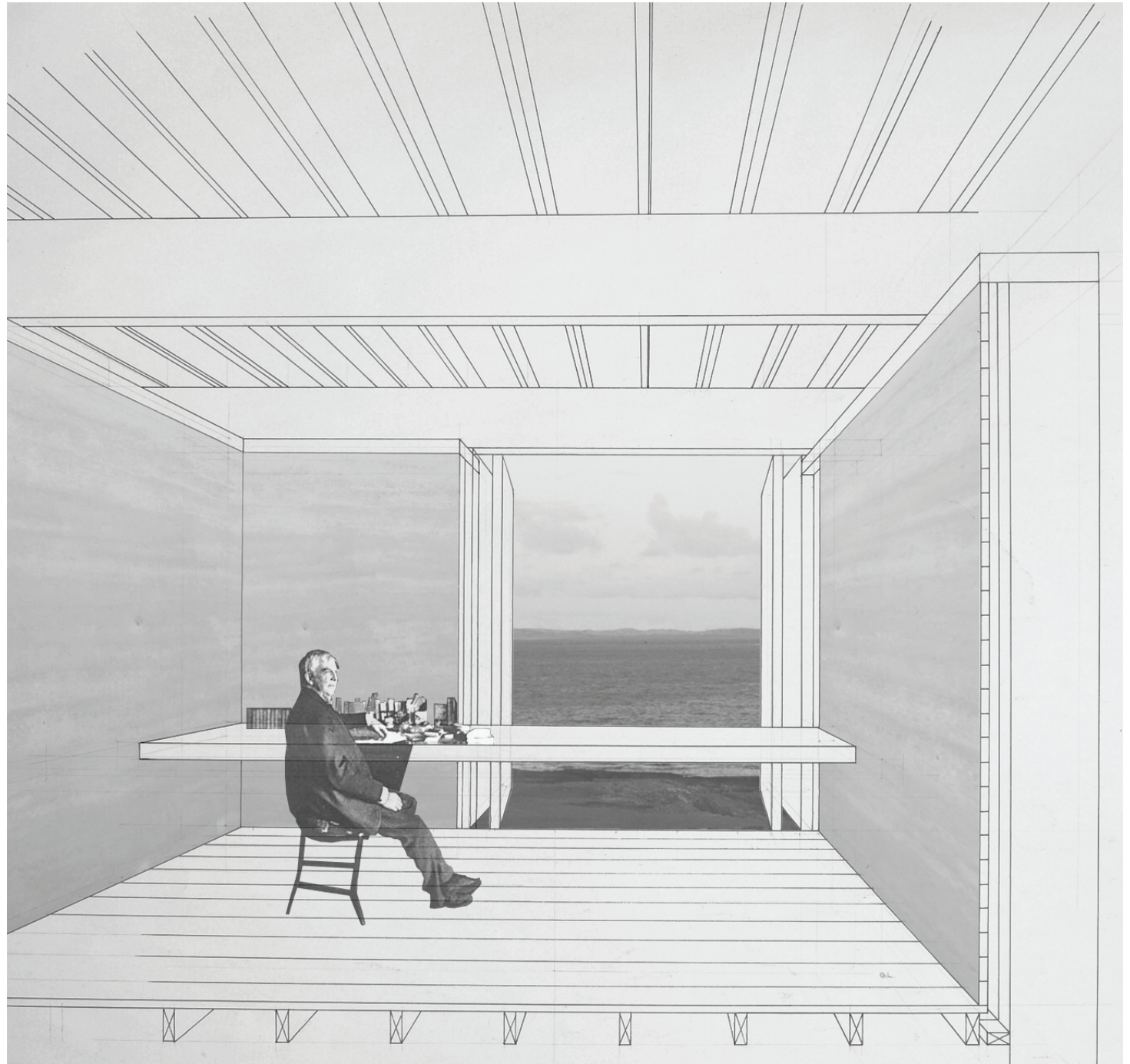




The hut described in these drawings is designed for a writer. It is sited in the Michael Fowler Center's carpark, however in the early nineteenth century, prior to any European settlement and alteration of the shoreline. The hut is simple, with a small reading room to the back and a raised office to the front looking over the harbour. The book shelves; the desk and a fire place are the only fixed furniture. The hut is built of earth on dry stone foundations, with rough sawn timber framing for the roof. Timber shutters are constructed to forego the need for glass, these would be placed in the clerestory openings between the rafters as well.









REPRESENTATION

PART 2

Designing a building for the International Institute of Modern Letters allows the ideas looked at in the previous chapter to come to life. While building on the work of the previous chapter, it still operates within the framework the theory of Camouflage provides. This chapter, however, is able to begin delving deeper into the aesthetic base of Camouflage. The following chapters of part two can then build on this through an identical process. Flowing through Leach's theory so logically allows the design to be read in a similar manner. It is from this first chapter that the beginnings of an aesthetic relationship between self and Place will be looked into.

This chapter presents the beginning of the design for the International Institute of Modern Letters. Specifically, the skin of the building is the focus of this chapter. Leach's position is that Camouflage offers a mode of visual representation through which a reality may be acted out. The aim of this chapter is to test this view, through the design of the building's skin.

Designing a building for the IIML is a sizable project. The focus on representation through designing the skin of the IIML building has similarities to branding. It is based on the predominantly visual aesthetic relationships within contemporary culture. A base for Leach's thoughts forming the idea of branding are discussed first. Following that the design of the skin of the IIML building is presented, testing this aspect of Camouflage.

The bruised flower of his mouth
The honey-bee stings;
Rain in his small delicious ears
Like a dragonfly sings
At noon; between his toes
The grasshopper springs.
O Echo, Echo.¹

Here Campbell's dragonfly can sensibly be seen as an image of renewal—in tune with the myth of Narcissus. Narcissus did not dance for his supper. In recalling Aesop's fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper, perhaps it is clear that preparations could have been made for Narcissus' downfall. He could have continued with his



hunting and satisfied Echo's desires. However, the bee stings rather than pollinates the flower of his mouth. Springing from his toes, the grasshopper also carries an image of an animal of great camouflage. This verse also presents a pair of dialectical representations. Firstly Narcissus' soundless mouth is opposed to the singing dragonfly and secondly his limp toes are opposed to the springing grasshopper. These representations are, however, the sources of renewal. This is relative to Walter Benjamin's model of mimesis: the representative elements allow communication between Narcissus' life and the *renewed* life to appear after his demise.

MIMESIS

Neil Leach takes a direct approach to discussing culture. In contemporary society he identifies a growing need for new modes of identification.² This is in response to our dynamic and constantly evolving society. The increasingly image based nature of our relationship with the environment also requires a different approach to designing for it. This, just as vital to note, is in an era when technology is becoming increasingly important and common. On the other hand, traditional structures of belonging: the family; the home town; the church as examples hold less authority.³ Given this situation, 'far from being a source of alienation, aesthetics can be interpreted as an effective realm for forging identity'.⁴ The problem identified, especially by critics of the Post-Modern, is of the falseness of the representation within our 'image-based society'. There is a persistently negative view of this visual culture.⁵ It is this opinion that can be seen to look upon design as a process of branding, rather than identifying. Leach, following a psychoanalytic thought structure, visualises this in a more positive light. What is important within Camouflage is that it offers a mode of finding identity through aesthetic representation. 'In a culture of branding, identities are themselves formed through that domain'.⁶ Camouflage, especially the elements of aesthetic representation, offers a framework for finding this identity.

As outlined in chapter two, Neil Leach offers a positive aesthetic model of Camouflage. The identity being sought can be found in the representation that is experienced. Leach bases these ideas on a theory of aesthetic creativity.⁷ He distils this from Walter Benjamin's literarily based theory of mimesis and Theodor W. Adorno's extension of it. Both of these base themselves on the discovery

of similarities between ourselves and the environment. This is attributed to a process of modelling. The difference between the two is the passivity of Benjamin's Mimesis compared to Adorno's more active theory.

When investigating an architectural relationship with the Place, it could well be argued that there is no need to deal in image and representation. However, it is Neil Leach's writing on Mimesis, stemming from Benjamin's linguistic theory that highlights the importance of this. This is especially the case considering the current state of affairs; where culturally the image and representation are hugely important. Culture has adapted to the quantity of representation. He writes that now we are not overwhelmed by imagery, 'it is through the imaginary realm of representation that "reality" is acted out'.⁸ It is through the reading of ourselves into these representations that we can identify with the environment. This is a concept that will be expanded later to include the sensuous correspondence of it, allowing the relationship to manifest architecturally.

Walter Benjamin wrote on the literary theory of mimesis, largely to satisfy his want to identify with the external world.⁹ 'For Benjamin, mimesis alludes to a constructive reinterpretation of an original, which becomes a creative act in itself'.¹⁰ This is quite different to a simple imitation of something. Leach uses the idea of a model to explain the concept succinctly. When you interact with a model of something, you 'engage with that model, and the model becomes the vehicle for identifying with the original object'.¹¹ Identifying with the original object by mimesis is a process involving both the artist and the person experiencing it. The model is not an exact mirroring of the original, rather, for a moment it evokes a similarity that can be identified with. Being receptive to the aesthetic imagination of these representations is very important.¹² Leach discusses the beauty of child-like imagination. This is the type of imagination that is exhibited when playing hide and seek or make-believe. However, it is the learning of language that explains mimesis the most succinctly. 'The child "absorbs" an external language by a process of imitation, then uses it creatively for its own purposes'.¹³ This is the type of imagination that allows the reading of oneself into aesthetic representations.

The process of mimesis then is one of assimilating to the other. As in the theory of Camouflage itself it concerns assimilation to either,



or both, the animate and the inanimate worlds. Benjamin's mimesis sees assimilating to the inanimate world as exposing a moment of death. It is a sacrifice toward a final survival though. This is also what opens mimesis up to architecture.¹⁴

The play between the animate and the inanimate, between life and death, is important for understanding the force of mimesis. The origins of this process lie in the instinctual mechanisms of self-preservation. Animals when trapped in potentially life-threatening situations, will often freeze into a seemingly lifeless forms, rather than run away.¹⁵

This talks of the subordination of the self to the environment, however, also overcoming it. It relates well to the discussion of the child-like ability to read oneself into an image as it deals directly with the concept of the aesthetic relationship. 'We have to imagine ourselves in the painting—either by identifying with a character already depicted, or by projecting ourselves into its fictional landscape.'¹⁶ The process of identifying with an image therefore is dependent on recalling fragments of imagination. Leach cites Benjamin's example based on the fable of the elderly Chinese painter disappearing into his completed painting. However, he also sees a direct link between Benjamin's description and architectural drawings or models.¹⁷

While mimesis is an aesthetic theory, derived from Benjamin's linguistic base, Neil Leach goes on to place mimesis in a theoretical context opposing modernism. For example: Adolf Loos famously believed ornament to be a form of crime. Leach, on the other hand, takes Adorno's position that within aesthetics—and thereby architecture—the functional and the aesthetic may be fused by mimesis.¹⁸ As a base for the concept for Camouflage being an aesthetic sensibility Leach states

There is, then, no aesthetic of mimesis, since mimesis transcends the limitations of the merely aesthetic to become the sedimentation of a series of social concerns. Moreover, the aesthetic expressions in which mimesis is embodied operate as a form of symbolization, and necessarily change from one era to the next. Rather than attempt to describe forms of mimesis, it might therefore be more appropriate to articulate a certain sensibility in the mind of the architect, which could be described as

a sensitivity, an openness, a responsiveness, a sense of empathy, but equally an alertness to a certain "critical dissonance".¹⁹

The additions Adorno made to the theory of mimesis revolve around basing it in aesthetics rather than language. He also gave mimesis a more active role in which an art work might seek out our place in the world and the body a more sensuous, rather than conceptual part in the relationship.²⁰ It is from Adorno's writing that Leach is able to generate the concept of 'Sensuous Correspondence'. Adorno's view of mimesis, importantly, 'seems to refer to a vital moment of assimilation to be found in aesthetic expression'.²¹ This is how it is relevant and may be applied to architecture. The creative aesthetic that is the foundation of Adorno's mimetic relationship becomes something of a self generating tool with respect to the task of providing its own sensuous forum. The purpose of the relationship, via the aesthetics, and so architecture, remains to assimilate the self and Place. 'Such an architecture might therefore act as a lens or mechanism through which those who experience it might inscribe themselves in the world, and learn to live more productively.'²²

SOCIETY ALONE

The model of representation can, perhaps, easily be explained by referring to what has become known as simply the 'Man Alone Image'. A theme introduced earlier in the discussion of Perigee #11 and other New Zealand projects is that of the primitive being a constant. This is on the basis that, although it is not now the primary mode of operations, it is available to be recalled from a deeper level of memory at will. This becomes both apparent and important to the model of Camouflage. As a society we are technologically capable of building glorious structures in the harshest of climates. However, we do not. This is done under many guises; cost; site; access and so on, all of which are overcome to get far more mundane projects built. Many simple projects are built with no inherent desire to be based on anything more than what in contemporary times can be seen as a primitive base. It can be argued that man will always need the primitive. Perhaps this is just to satisfy desires, or more importantly, as a point of reference.

What has become known as the 'Man Alone Image', has acquired 'unique status in New Zealand architectural culture.'²³ The image



The drawing up of the surface



shows Hans Peter Knutzen sitting on the deck of his whare in the bush at the Piha saw mill around 1916. It is pleasing that such an image and its subject could have such influence, especially the time it spent hanging in the Auckland school of Architecture. However, after Robin Skinner developed a fuller picture it would seem the effect it had may have been on somewhat shaky morals.²⁴ The fact is that this hut was that of a well to do mill manager in the heart of a commercial operation. Nevertheless it can be seen as a desire for the primitive representation within the architectural community. The photograph, due to its openness to interpretation, took on many roles. A whare in the bush; a hut; a bach—dependant on the viewers desires.

Viewed as a hut, the photo of Mr. Knutzen can be taken as the definitive example for primitivism. It has not the romanticism attached to it that the bach does, nor the cultural implications of the whare. The hut falls into a slightly different slot, being a more transitory residence. However, it does allow for the fleeting glimpse of the primal that was so readily drawn out of the 'Man Alone Image'. This fleeting primal is the purpose of the hut designed in the previous exploratory chapter.

Society alone is a more appropriate way to look at the concept brought up by the image of Mr. Knutzen. It let viewers identify with what they perceived to be the primitive nature of the scene. While it may discount the tough-bloke-in-the-bush image, it gives a glimpse into a recollection of the primal to all of New Zealand. The mimetic assimilation of the many who viewed the image to the scene is an important example. The impact that the moment of identification had upon viewers was widespread. Vitally, the wide range of impressions of the image is evidence of the breadth of individual identifications. Conversely, the relationship worked in the other direction at the same time and the varying interpretations placed different realities into the image. The interpretation that was applied to the 'Man Alone Image' can be pushed and thereby further inspire design. If such a relationship to an environment can be sought out in the aesthetic relationship offered by architecture, Place—identity can begin to build.

ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

The aim of this chapter is to test Leach's concept of visual

representation via the design of the skin of the IIML building. The design is to be drawn out of the above discussion. It focuses on the skin as an image. In doing this, however, it is essential that the focus does not regress to the building as a visual object. It must maintain its integrity as a 'mechanism' through which Place—identity might be related.

The cell that forms the roof of the building acts as a component in a system that forms the 'lens'. This is one of the mechanisms through which identity can be related. Its form, as seen in the previous chapter, is drawn out of the quartz crystal prevalent in the local landscape. While this is not obvious to anyone who has not happened to have studied mineralogy, it offers a shape that is not altogether foreign and unnatural. In function the cell operates with similarities to the skin of the chameleon. Leach uses the chameleon as an example of Camouflage. He points out that it does not use its ability to change colour simply to hide as has been commonly believed. Rather, the chameleon alters its outward appearance in tune with its mood. If it is angry it might display red; if it is too hot it will fade to a pale colour; if it is excited or wanting to attract a mate it will display its most bright and flamboyant colours, and so on. The chameleon's skin, to have this ability, consists of a series of layers. The outer layer is clear and protective. The second has chemical properties allowing the colours red and yellow to form. The third reflects the blue light from outside and below these is a dark layer absorbing any transmitted light. The cell of the IIML roof is similarly constructed. The outer translucent layer is a protective weatherproofing skin. In the building this skin is also given a further, passive, task of harvesting energy, being made of a translucent photovoltaic glass. The second layer is more active, to the point of being interactive. It is constructed of a web of RGB LEDs. The technology to build this is borrowed from that which has been developing for use as media facades. This technology, both the physical and the programming, has progressed to the point that it has gone beyond being a novelty to something very useable. It has applications both artistically and commercially as advertising and branding. The web inside the cell of the IIML design has the lights placed at one hundred millimetre centres which as a screen gives a resolution high enough to display images both day and night. This also leaves the cell transparent when the lights are not on. The third layer, which is the lower layer of glass in the cell is a sheet of 'digital glass' (known under many names) capable of changing transparency on demand due to a current passing through it. The purpose of this



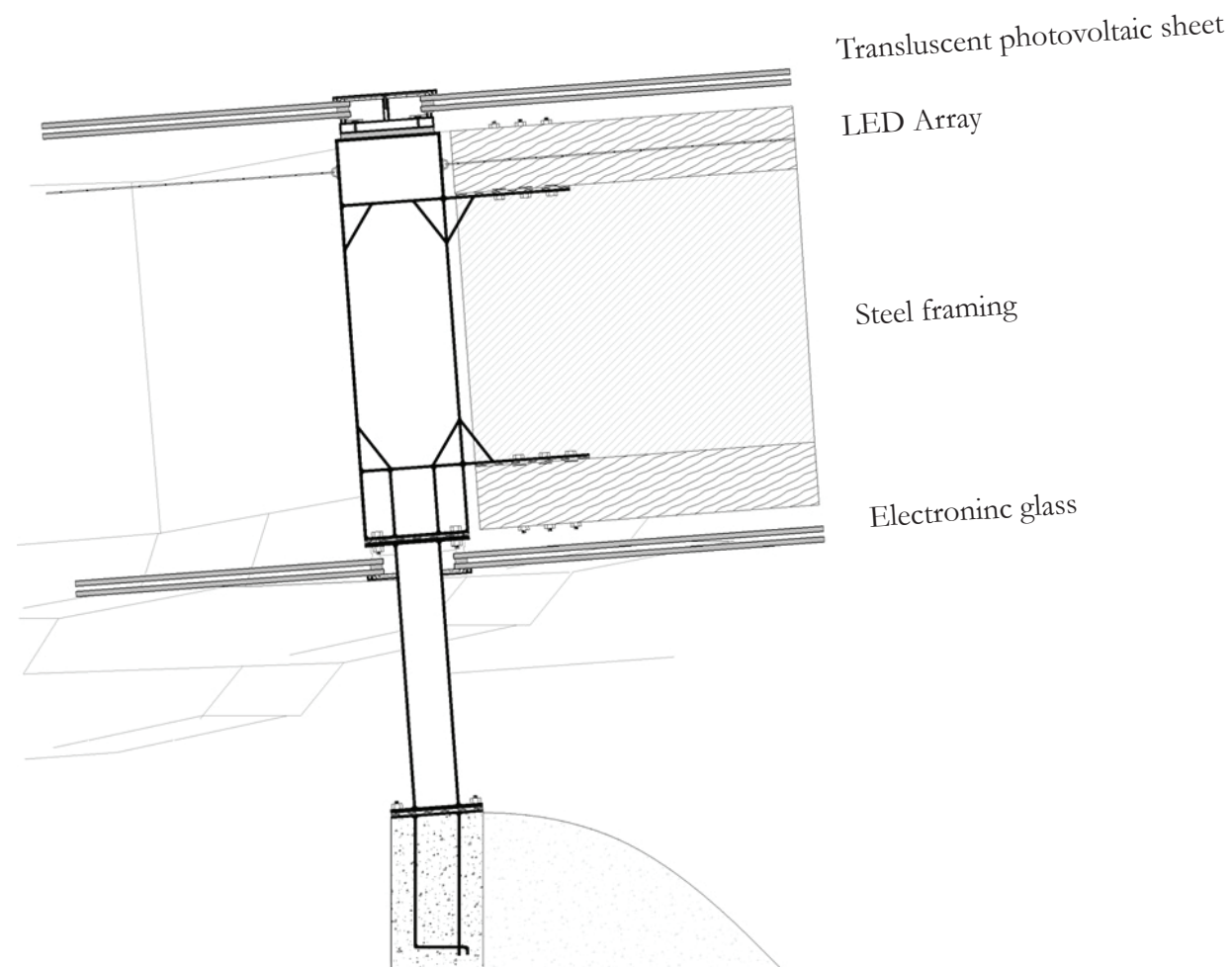
is to give the building occupants control over both the amount of incident daylight and the image from the screen above. Within this system is also the absorbing interior of the building, parallel to the dark inner layer of the chameleon.

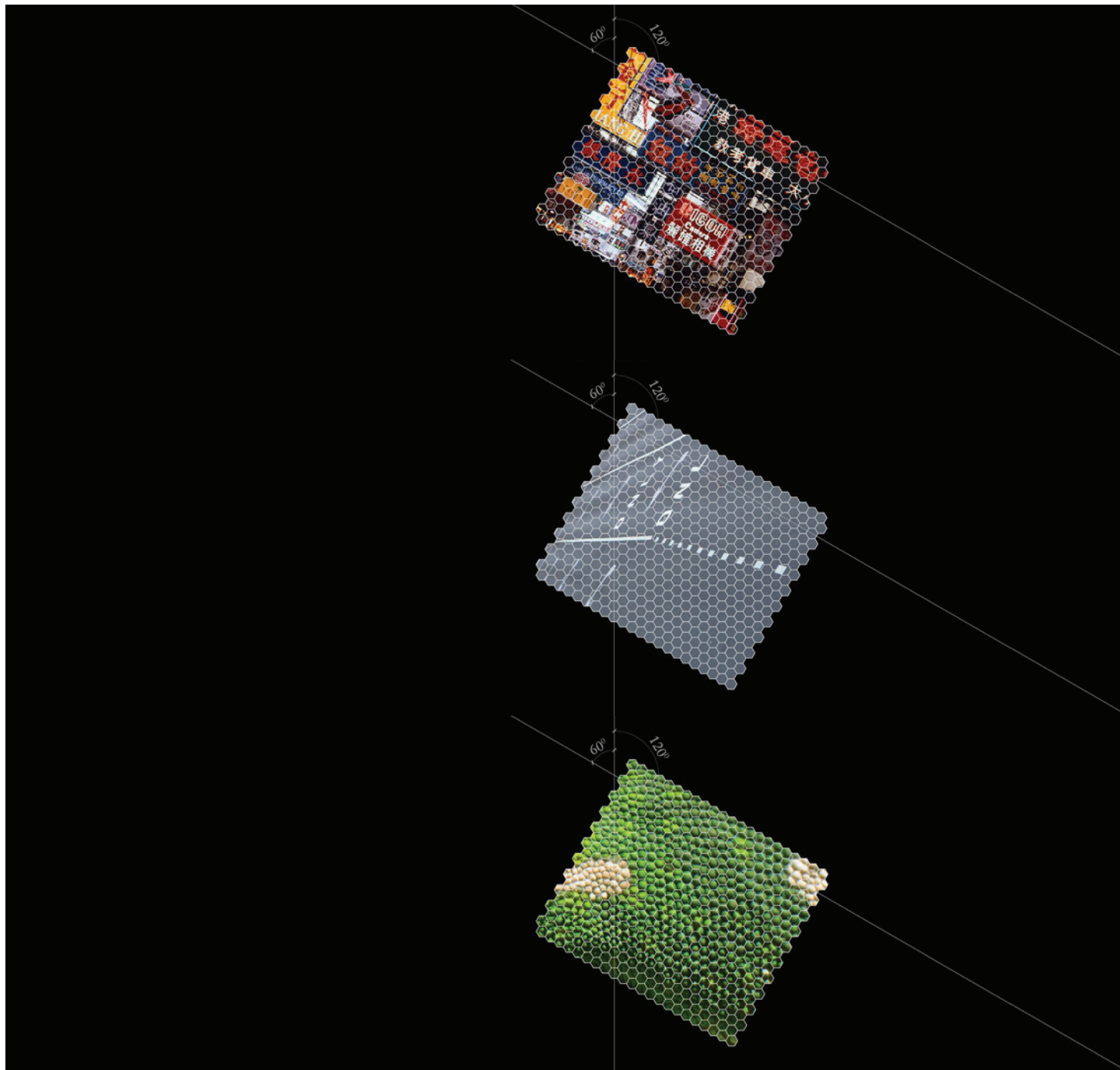
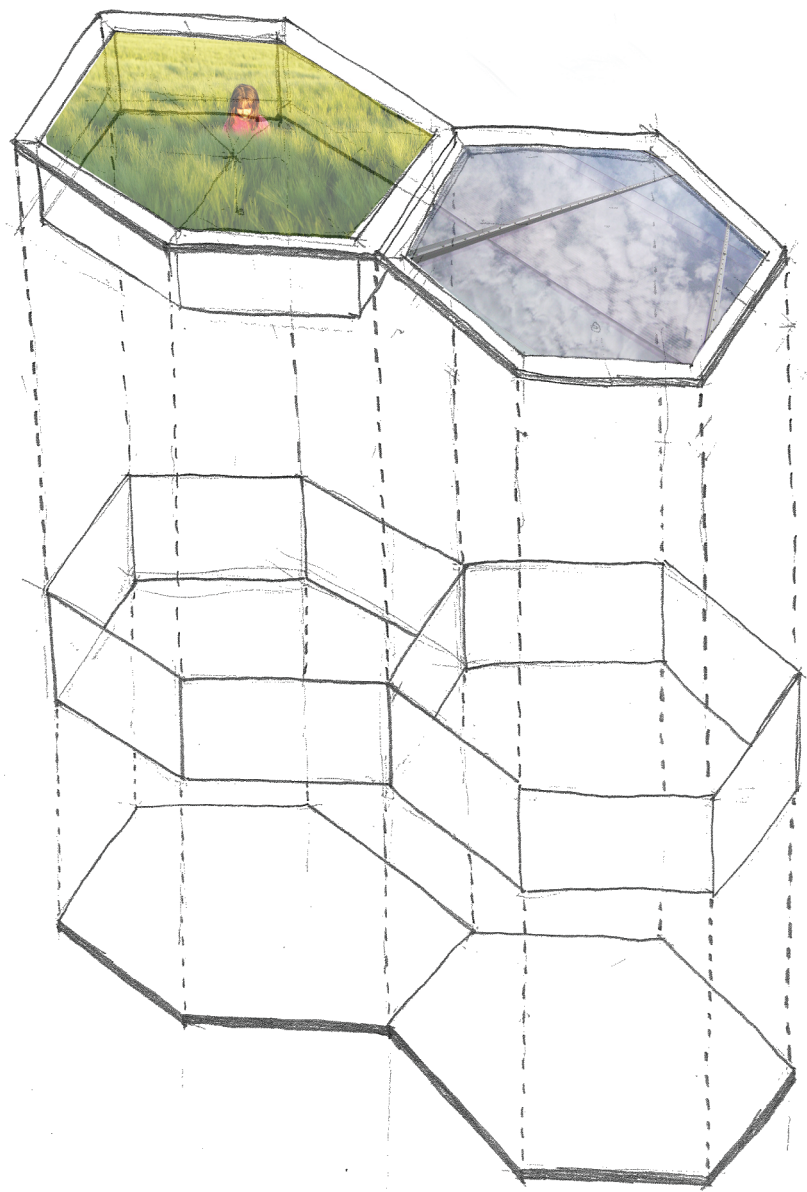
In terms of performance the roof cell is designed to function for the benefit of the building climate. Thermally the cell offers a multi-layered barrier; the outer layer of glass, as well as being the weatherproofing, is double glazed to enclose the photovoltaic units which offers a good thermal boundary. This also works with the sealed lower layer of glass, enclosing the entire cell. Further climatic control is achievable through adjusting the amount of daylight allowed to pass through the cell. This control over the amount of natural light will allow for a much lower requirement for artificial light. The interior will be more reliant on the outside daylight conditions, giving occupants a more pleasant environment to work or visit in.

The outer walls of the building are constructed of a mixture of three materials. The long south wall and the service areas are walled with bare concrete. The predominant material however, is glass. All of the public and private areas are glass walled, with some of the private areas and the entries using 'digital glass'. The purpose of specifying the use of this controllable surface in the private areas is to give the users full regulation of their level of privacy. In the entries it provides a surface that can alternate between one that is transparent and one that can display a projected image. It could, for example, display welcome signs or programs.

The purpose of these design solutions is to change the skin of the building from a static element into an interactive tool. The design does not directly impose an aesthetic. The exception perhaps being the transparency imposed by the amount of glass, however no truer image could be offered and this is controllable where necessary. The changeable media of the roof and walls let the users of the building present themselves through it as they wish. Anything from a static satellite image of the surrounding streets to make the building somewhat inconspicuous, through to a student's poem, or a film advertising an upcoming event could be shown. The other side of this relationship is that the outside environment has a large impact on the internal climate. Although controllable the sunlight especially would have an influence on the interior and the media images. Also, the reception of the building and its imagery from the outside

gives the public a chance to read themselves into it. The aesthetic engagement offers them a chance to engage and identify with the IIML before stepping through what has become the 'looking glass' and entering the building.







The entrance with an image displayed on both the roof and the walls



A section through the library showing the spaces created by the roof and its structure - explored in the next chapter

ENGAGEMENT

It has already become a theme of this study that Camouflage is a model of engagement. However, after the previous chapter testing the methods of representation within Camouflage it is appropriate to further develop the visual model of Camouflage. Chapters five and six will develop this into a strategic model. However, a complete understanding of the process’ by which Camouflage lets one assimilate visually with the environment is first necessary.

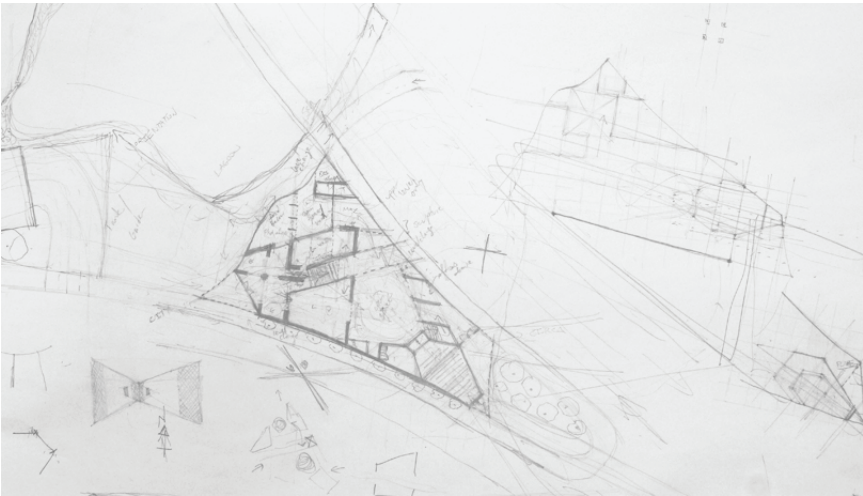
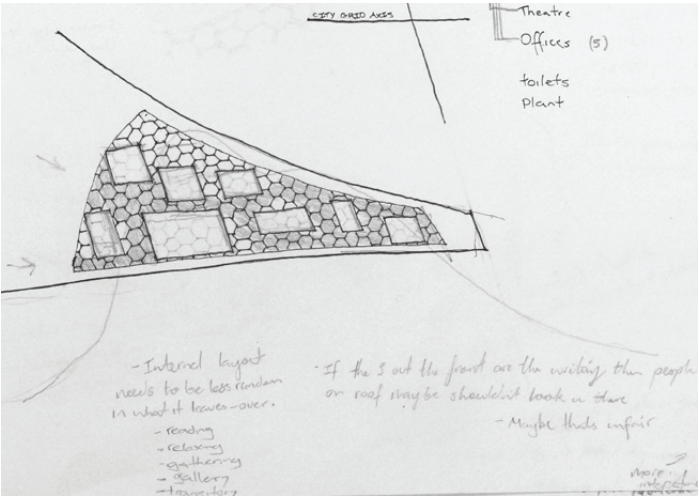
The design presented in the previous chapter investigated the idea of contemporary societies ‘image’ being put to work within architecture. What engagement deals with can be seen as an extension of this. Camouflage considers that engagement with the aesthetic affects the viewer. Given the control over the aesthetic already looked at, designing for the corporality of the representation can provide a model of engagement. The aim of this chapter then is to test the application of the notion of engagement which is put forth in a positive sense by Leach. The test will be based on the planning of the IIML building. Especially important is the efficacy of the representation through the creation of space and environment.

The idea of engagement is to be discussed largely in the context of Jacques Lacan’s writing on mirroring. Lacan’s ‘Mirror stage’ is

based rather heavily on Henri Wallon’s writing on the concept, and through his process of tying that to Freudian thought.¹ It has been questioned as a psychoanalytic theory, however, its adaptation into aesthetics by Leach is useful. Mirroring looks at a give and take relationship between the self and other, which is seen as necessary for the formation of identity. This is supported by reference to Kim Dovey’s writing on the idea of assemblage. His thoughts back up the need for accumulating a series of real sensual identifications to form a sense of identity. These ideas are then put to work in the planning design of the IIML.

Closes a blue-veined lid
Upon velvet eyes;
Falls the spent head, falls
The hand from the thighs;
From the brimming mirror dim
The image flies.
O Echo, Echo.²

Narcissus’ eyes have closed and the moment has come that his body has failed him. As such, the image in the pool can stand on its own no longer. Despite this Campbell has let the relationship between Narcissus and his surroundings flow on. As well as Echo consistently making herself heard, as per the norm, his image flies away. This is

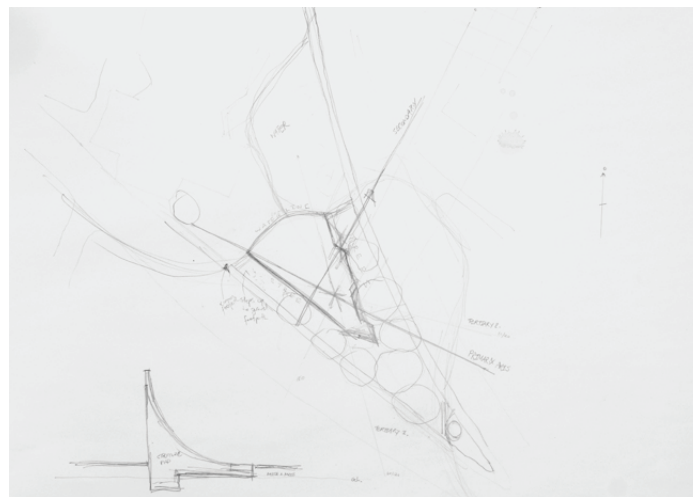




opposed to it simply fading into oblivion. While Narcissus himself is disappearing he, through his image, still causes an effect. This is analogous to what Leach is proposing: the corporality of the aesthetic expression is important. The pool itself is vital only in that it bears the image. The effect and the affecting image, or in this case representation applied through architecture and its effect, are what are of interest. They are actively engaging with the aesthetic.

MIRRORING

Jacques Lacan drew a lot from the concept of mirroring. It has its roots in the definition of the moment an infant is able to identify itself in a mirror. However, as is obvious in the myth of Narcissus, this is not one of life's forgotten lessons. Via relating the ego to the body, Lacan is able to extend this to the relationship between the real and the unreal. These are perhaps more easily classifiable as the concealed and the manifest. Here the idea that architecture can act as the mirror is being put to the test. Architecture being placed between a real and an imaginary level is both possible and necessary. It is important, however, to bear in mind that architecture itself possessing identity is not a goal. It is posited as a tool to facilitate the interaction between the self and Place. This process of identification within Camouflage can in fact be drawn from Jacques Lacan's extension of the myth of Narcissus. His work is, by his own claim, an extension of Freud's work on the topic, which without Lacan's thinking does not seem as useful to Camouflage theory.



Freud developed the idea of a primary and a secondary Narcissism.³ He defined primary Narcissism as the stage in an infant's life prior to being able to distinguish itself from its surroundings. This is due to being unaware of any possibility of separation from the mother. Although a child grows out of this stage, it is never forgotten. Secondary Narcissism, on the other hand, comes about once the child is able to recognise itself and distinguish itself from the surroundings. Within secondary Narcissism Freud defined two modes of love toward an other: anacletic, or narcissistic. Anacletic love Freud defined as either love of 'the woman who feeds him', or, 'the man who protects him'. Narcissistic love on the other hand is based on the self, what he is; what he was; would like to be; or, someone who was once part of himself⁴. It is the transition between primary and secondary Narcissism that Lacan picked up on, and is now known as the mirror stage.

The broad definition of the mirror stage describing the point at which a child first recognises itself in an image is important to Lacan. It is largely from this point that his concept of identity, the one relevant here, is drawn. It is Lacan's view that primary identification, the norm prior to the mirror stage, is a constant throughout our lives. He argues that primary identification with its basis in sensation is always available as a regression, especially in moments of creative identification. The ability to draw upon this inherent ability and thereby read ourselves into representations is important. This is the point looked at in the previous chapter. However, there are two main additions within Lacan's writing. Firstly, he sees this as an opportunity for the individual to go beyond becoming one with the representation. It is a chance to interact and identify with the underlying influence of that representation. This relates back to Lacan's own explanation (or Freud's) of the infant's reliance on the mother as a source of sensation from the outside. Secondly and even more importantly, Lacan introduces the environment into the discussion. This is on the basis that during every interaction, all perception occurs on some ground or in some field.

Leach borrows from film theory as a stepping stone in the process of giving this an aesthetic basis. It condenses into two processes. The similarities to film discussion in his adaptation are apparent.

These processes would themselves be dependant on the "introjection" of the external world into the self, and the "projection" of the self into the external world, such that



there is an equivalence – the one “reflects” the other – and identification may take place.⁵

In line with Frederick Jameson’s assertion that: to have any meaning, an object must be *invested* with meaning. Identification with Place is therefore extended to be ‘perceived as a mirroring between the subject and the environment over time’.⁶ It is here that Leach makes the argument for the built environment forming a ‘background’ element to life. As an object, a building is something that is invested with meaning over time. It slowly accumulates it. On the other hand we receive what we will in return, over time. This process of identification is built on repetition.

ASSEMBLAGE

An assemblage may be seen as a perceived whole. It is constructed though, of interacting and communicating parts. Kim Dovey described the Deleuzian and De Landian use of the concept of assemblage as:

an attempt to avoid all forms of reductionism – both the reduction to essences and the reduction to text. It is empirical without the essentialism of empirical science; it gives priority to experience and sensation without the idealism of phenomenology; and it seeks to understand the social construction of reality without the reduction to discourse.⁷

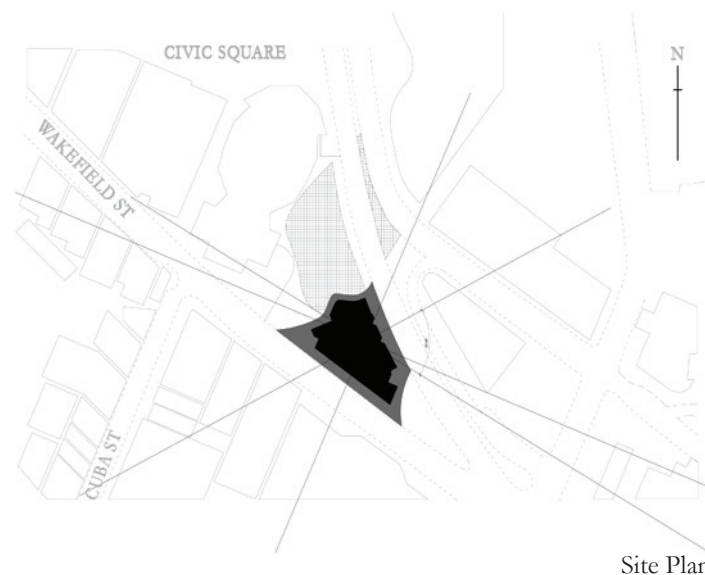
This is an important addition in the test of such theoretical work as Camouflage. The reduction to essences or text would be something of a failure. The process of mirroring concerns quantifiable sensations.

Leach also stresses the importance of loss or differentiation. ‘Identity, although born of identifications, is consolidated precisely when those identifications come under threat’.⁸ Within the assemblage of an identity some loss must be experienced to confirm its formation. Effectively, in terms of the identity, a negative is needed to balance the positive and provide an outside point of reference. Dovey stated that the ‘sense of place always involves consistency and coherence, often misrecognised as uniformity and regularity’.⁹ The presence of differentiation or loss allows this consistent assemblage to build.

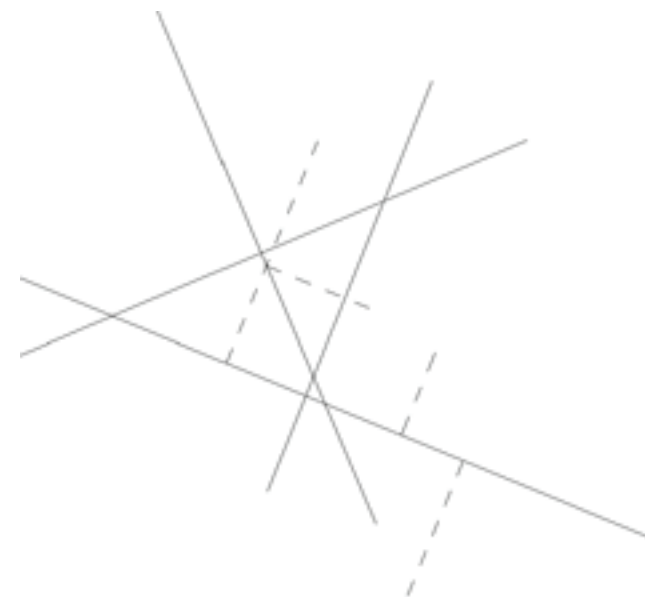
ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

The planning of the IIML building is an opportunity to design for experiential identity. The space formed by the building is a chance to give corporality to the aesthetic discussed in the previous chapter. It is not focussing on the formation of built elements as such. Rather, it is focussing on the effect of the built form on the users relationship with Place. This work has its focus solely on testing the idea of design for engagement between the self and Place. Continuing Dovey’s thought, ‘a “sense of place” is a phenomenon that connects or spans this materiality/expression dimension; it cannot be reduced to an essence nor to a social construction’.¹⁰ The design should allow for this engagement to assemble a sense of Place–identity. To achieve this, a give and take relationship of mirroring must be allowed to form between self and Place.

The large scale planning is largely drawn from two sources, which in turn define the entire built form. The sourcing of these was presented earlier under the sense and perception title. The first is the historical land form. The site for the IIML design, the Michael Fowler Centre car park, sits on the original Wellington waterfront. Specifically it straddles a small point that jutted out, breaking the Te Aro shore line. The second is the use of the contemporary axes



Site Plan

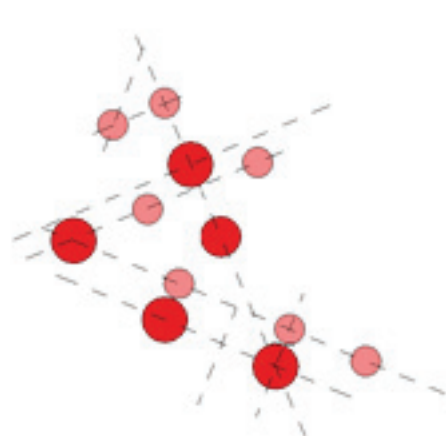


Pathways

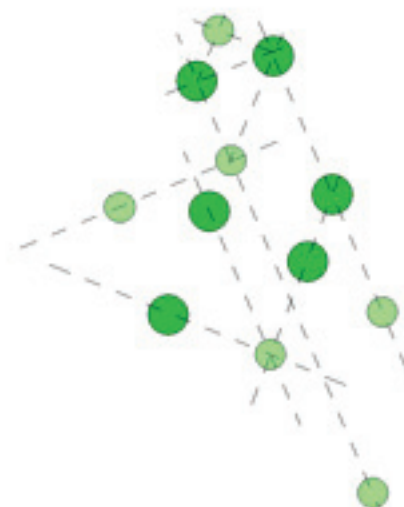


through this site. It sits at the convergence of several important cultural landmarks. Cuba Street and Courtney Place are to the south. The Michael Fowler Centre is next door and Civic Square further to the west. The waterfront is directly north and Te Papa further east. Rather than simply drawing these axes and planting the design within them, the pathways and routes people take through the area are more important. The major external elements of the planning beyond the pathways are the shape of the building, with the east and west walls tracing the historic landform as well as the solid south wall slicing through it; and the water being brought back into the small park created between the IIML building and the Michael Fowler Centre.

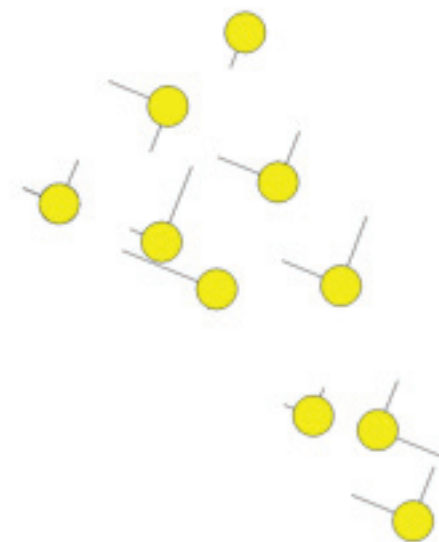
The smaller scale planning for the interior of the building is on the same basis. The interior is very open and porous with the inserted elements forming their own space and the space between. The space between creates the pathways and stationary nodes—the use of these may vary from passing through; stopping to talk; eating; reading; to finding a quiet spot to sit and think or write. With respect to the construction, the interior of the building is relative to its openness and porosity, it is potentially adaptable. Only the concrete walls are



- Public Space
- Open Public Space



- Open Private Space
- Private Space



Structural Nodes





structural, therefore, if future adaptation was required the building would be changeable, albeit at a slower rate than the representative roof cells.

The building has been planned to work as a ground. Within this people use the functions of the IIML and both experience as well as build impressions of Place. There is no restraint placed on people within the building. As they flow through, move within the building, or use the internal spaces they can slowly discover their own impression of Place. This is based solely on the idea of identification with Place being accumulated over time. This process should be effective in all spaces, however, the planning of the space in the IIML building is

explicitly designed as a 'background' element to life. Leach suggests within Camouflage to avoid defining, or attempting to make sense of Place. The space within the IIML building allows for a more fluid and natural. As Dovey stated: any such reduction to the built form, for example implying a sense of Place, would be an impossible task.¹¹ As the people using the building slowly read themselves into the environment they will reach the point of identifying with it. An architectural mirror stage and an identity with Place will ensue.





BECOMING OTHER

Becoming other moves into the strategic section of *Camouflage*. It directs its focus toward a more direct model of the relationship between self and Place. The previous two chapters have tested aesthetic components of the theory. Neil Leach discusses the concept of ‘becoming other’ as a strategy for this relationship. It is necessary to understand this before looking for the facilitation of identity in the next chapter.

The strategy of assimilation within *Camouflage* is based predominantly on Leach’s adaptation of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guáttari’s theory of becoming and Judith Butler’s notion of belonging. It looks at finding a balance in the alternation between utter withdrawal into the self and complete sacrifice to an other. The idea of Becoming is based on the notion of a need to actually *become one* with the object hoping to be identified with. Within *Camouflage* Leach looks at finding this balance, with aesthetics helping to create a sense of belonging. The aim of this chapter is to test *Camouflage*’s strategic model of becoming other, by architectural design. The test is presented through the design of two interior components of the building. Firstly, the writing studio for the resident writer is looked at as an inward private space, and secondly, the theatre as a projecting public space.

A similar approach to the previous chapters is again taken. The concept of becoming other is explained prior to it being tested. This is done in accordance with its component muses. First, Leach’s interpretation of Deleuze’s theory of becoming is presented. This is followed by a look at Butler’s writing on performativity. The two parts of the building are then presented in parallel.

In his sweet golden helmet
The small wren builds;
To the bee his rotten rich mouth
Sweet honey yields;
This proud young man like a stag
Once trod these fields.
O Echo, Echo.¹

For Narcissus, the point in time described here is one of transition.

His body is still whole, despite his death. However he is fostering new life: a nesting bird and the collection of honey. It is a sad demise, but Narcissus is becoming one with his place of death. This is a good time to mention the refrain, which appears to talk of love lost. Narcissus calls out to Echo. Or, at face value it can be seen as a repeating image. Perhaps this is Narcissus becoming Echo as he finally moves from denial to calling for her in a moment of love. Narcissus calling to her also offers Echo her long desired opportunity to ‘become’ Narcissus, as he finally speaks loving words first as her curse demands. The irony, is that in death, her refrain might be expected in a rather distressed tone.

BECOMING

The theory of becoming is written by Deleuze and Guáttari as an account of a digger wasp and a fly orchid. Put simply: the orchid is reminiscent of a female wasp. The male wasp happily lands on the orchid engaging in a form of pseudocopulation. The result is that the unsatisfied wasp moves on, unaware or unconcerned with the pollen newly attached to it. This process continues, and the wasp lands on another orchid thinking once again it has found a receptive female wasp. The relationship is somewhat reciprocal as the wasp pollinates the orchids and the orchid acts as a sexual partner for the wasp. They both gain from the short encounter. Deleuze and Guáttari note the apparent adaption of each to the other. The wasp has adapted its behaviour to the orchid, while the orchid has adapted attributes of the wasp.² Leach defines the representation prevalent in this relationship as being not as important as the effect it causes.

The logic then is one of “becoming.” It is not a question of imitating some entity, so much as entering into its logic. It is a matter not of representation, but of affect.³

The important concept of this story is the notion that for the relationship to work the wasp becomes the orchid and the orchid becomes the wasp. Leach also stresses the dynamic nature of the relationship. Becoming is a process that necessitates an apparent and measurable corporality. It naturally involves both parties participating wholly. However due to the reciprocal and creative nature of the relationship it chiefly concerns the ‘space between various entities’.⁴ The space between is substitution for either one or the other or the relationships being the focus. This is how becoming is able to be



separated from simple mimicry. The relationship between the wasp and the orchid is one that has evolved for mutual benefit over a long time. There is the obvious drawback that within design this historical timeframe can easily be removed. Therefore, the processes that pairings might go through to ‘become’ one another are necessarily limited. There is, however, no reason this element can not be brought into the design process. As an application of Deleuze and Guáttari’s work within aesthetics, Leach sees this as an opportunity to describe an idealised relationship between self and building:

Thus a building could be perceived as an ever-changing fabric of occupation which is moulded by human activities, in much the same way as the bed sheets are rearranged by the body’s movement during sleep. In its most advanced mode it would be an architecture that is open to those processes themselves, an adaptive, responsive environment that does not crystallize into a single, inflexible form but is able to reconfigure itself over time, and adjust to the multiple permutations of programmatic use that might be expected of it. The “becoming-inhabitant” of the building might then be compared to the becoming-wasp of the orchid.⁵

In this architectural adaption of Deleuze and Guáttari’s writing Leach does make mention of the space between self and environment. However, a lot of his thought on becoming is with respect to the relationship of ‘becoming-building’. To make becoming work as it is spoken of in the theory of Camouflage and in the formation of Place—identity it must be pushed further. To do so, the idea of architecture inhabiting the middle ground of a *becoming-Place* relationship must be explored. As in the above extract, the desire is to design for the processes of an adaptive and responsive environment. This can be achieved in a rhizomatic manner. The rhizomatic relationship, based on a horizontal model, may continuously take multiple inputs from all sources. Deleuze and Guáttari wrote of this, describing a rhizome as a relationship that ‘ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles’.⁶ This horizontal model operates on a ‘plane of consistency’ on which, by definition, all points may interact or interlink. For the model of becoming-Place to be considered architecturally it must operate on this plane. The design can be considered as placing itself in the middle ground of this plane, where all inputs may flow in and out from it.

PERFORMATIVITY

The concept of performativity is also necessary when looking into the Strategic component of Camouflage. It discusses a method by which becoming, as it is discussed above, might form identity. It has parallels with, and is therefore relevant to the idea of an assemblage spoken of in the visual chapter Engagement. Leach takes on performativity from Judith Butler’s thought under the title of belonging. He uses it to provide a model of application for the above relationship. Butler said that she guessed ‘performativity is the vehicle through which ontological effects are established’.⁷ This is analogous to architecture occupying the middle ground of becoming Place. With such an addition, the ontological effects can be considered somatic inputs to the model of becoming. This is built from Leach’s assertion that performativity can provide an architectural grounding. Butler is herself a theorist within gender studies and ethics. She looks at gender and identity as conditions which can in fact be taken as behaviours—they are performatively produced⁸.

Butler figures identity not as something interior – an essentializing “given” – but, rather, as something exterior, a discursive external effect. It is born of “acts, gestures and enactments” that are “performative”... Importantly this relates not just to lesbian sexuality but to all sexualities⁹

These behaviours being ‘acted out’ become mechanisms, by mimicry, for relating to an other. To look at all sexuality as a form of mimicry is to assign a different cultural framework to it. In much the same way that Camouflage offers a differing model of relating to Place, Butler’s thought lets us rethink the make up of our individual identity. Leach takes performativity as a framework which ‘extends beyond questions of appearance into modalities of behaviour, and modes of perception and expression’.¹⁰ Before coming back to how he develops Butler’s thinking into an aesthetic model, the visual operations of Camouflage need to be recalled.

Camouflage is, as a matter of course, concerned with more than simply the visual domain. This is made clear by the importance of the concepts of performativity and fluidity. Both of these are implanted within Butler’s work. The ideas of representation and engagement discussed in previous chapters are visually based. The outcome of their application is, however, a framework or a facilitation—a mode



of relating with Place. They take what is known, in terms of the prevalent visual aesthetic and work it by design for the advantage of Place-identity. The relevance of Butler's thought, however, is the temporal perspectives that are able to give an architectural credence to Deleuze and Guattari's work as a Place-identity concept. This is a more strategic application of the design process.

Butler's concept of identity revolves around the idea that it is performed. By this logic a space, to have an identity, must have it given to it. Architecture is usually considered to hold the power of expressing identity at will. However, taking on a performative role, architecture will instead be seen as having identity performed upon and in it. 'The performative is thus one domain in which power acts as discourse'.¹¹ This need to act out the identifications to form identity and continually appropriate a space is a base for the more strategic side of Camouflage. The process mentioned leads to the idea of an assemblage. An assemblage as a formation of identity is seen to be the continual accumulation of individual identifications, balanced dialectically against a sense of loss. Identity is built up. Leach discussing this as 'belonging' after Vikki Bell's work, focuses on just that: Place-identity being continually performed and a sense of belonging slowly established. As a model it is very temporal and adaptable. Not only does it add further breadth to the idea of assemblage discussed in the previous chapter; it refutes the contemporary ideas of non-Place as well as the more distant views of Heidegger's condition of dwelling. 'For just as identity is no longer a fixed condition but an ever-renegotiable site of individual expression, so "belonging" offers an equally flexible concept that can accommodate the transitory nature of contemporary existence'.¹²

ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

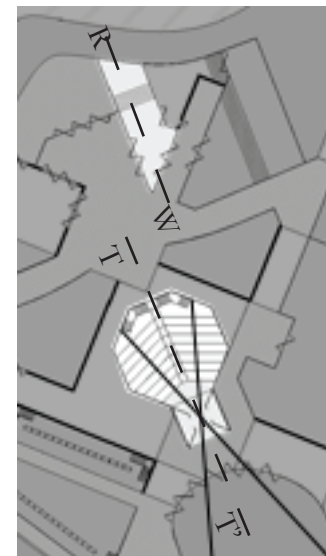
The important element in the design of these two spaces is how they allow people to operate. They are designed to provide the opportunity for the user to relate by a strategy of becoming their environment. As 'spaces' they occupy or create the role of a framework for becoming other. They themselves are devoid of identity. However, they are designed to occupy the middle ground between self and Place. They are not expected to take on an identity themselves, rather, to facilitate the identity of the self-Place relationship to be performatively accumulated. This appropriation of the spaces will inevitably give them a sense of identity. However, this is as adaptable and temporal as the Place-identity relationship itself.

The resident writer's studio lets the writer move freely between different modes of social interaction. The writing space itself is elevated, pushed forward and quieter. It is also against the outer wall of the building and in a different light to the lounge. Although it is only protected from the outside by one large window, the roof flying above forms a large eave. The daylighting through the window is therefore diffuse, reflected off the water, and by controllable means through the roof cells. The lounge to the rear of the studio is at ground level. It sits between the public cafe on one side and the writer's courtyard on the other. The position it has lets it as a space facilitate the writers interaction, or not, with these two 'others'. The doors in the walls bounding these spaces are similar to the rest of the building; rather than conventional hole-in-the-wall doors they offer any amount of interaction from rotating one section of wall a fraction to sliding them in their tracks completely to the side.

The writer's studio is a space emanating from a sense of differentiation. Especially working at the desk looking over the lagoon outside, the writer has the opportunity to withdraw. However, the rest of the room, both the window to the outside and the adaptability of the translucent or transparent walls, lets the writer have their input into the relationship between themselves and Place. This, along with the somewhat more uncontrollable inputs from the outside, forms the relationship on which identifications are built. It becomes a balanced model of performativity.

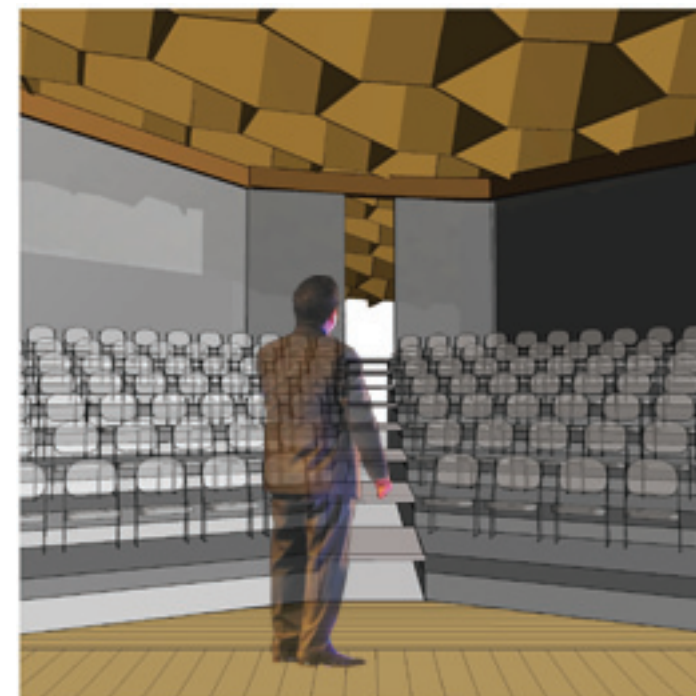
The theatre too is designed very much as a tool. As a central space in the building it offers a place where people can meet and share. It is not enclosed; in fact the central axis of it is open straight through. As opposed to the studio, the theatre is more a space of true becoming. The stage also has the possibility of acting in two directions. Firstly, into the theatre if lecturing students or presenting a small reading for example. Or, secondly, into the large public courtyard for use during larger readings or functions.

The performativity of identity is an inherent trait of a theatre. However, the openness and adaptability of the IIML theatre allows users to have their input to the relationship between themselves and others as they desire. This design brings out the concept and importance of the space between self and other. This is on both the level of the speaker and the audience; and more broadly, those in attendance and Place beyond the theatre.



Resident Writer (top) and Theatre

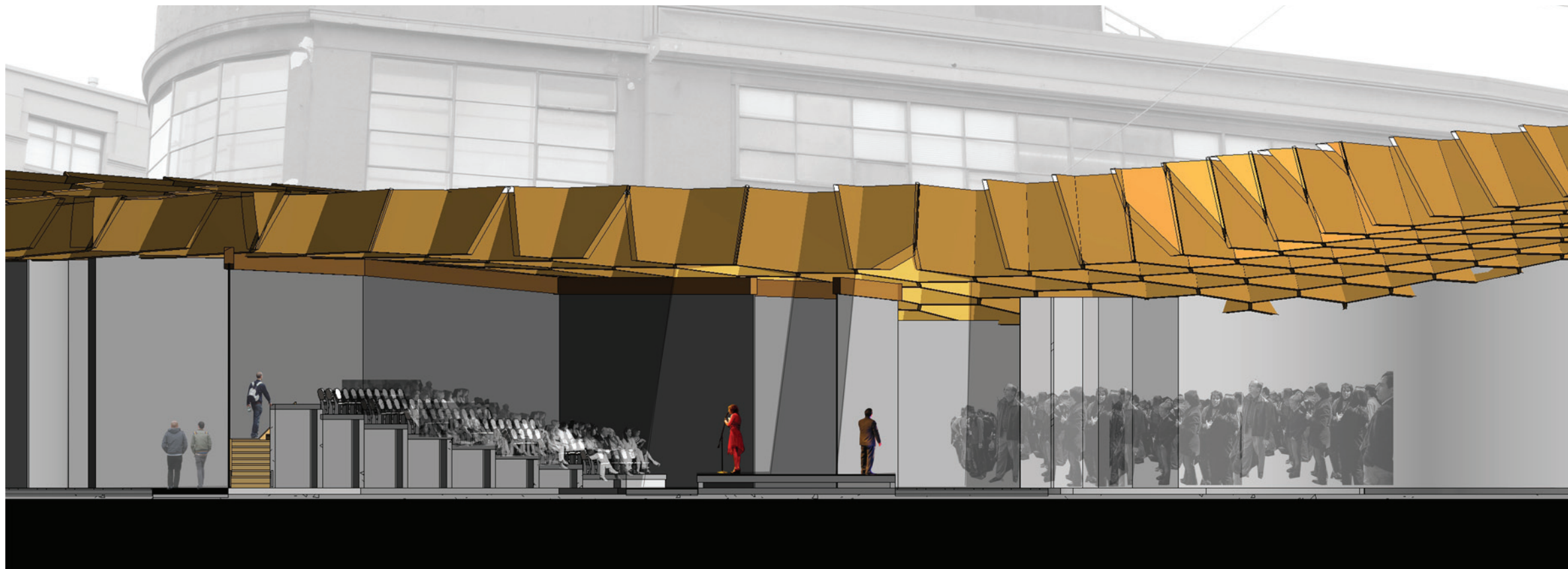
The concept of 'giving' ones self on stage.

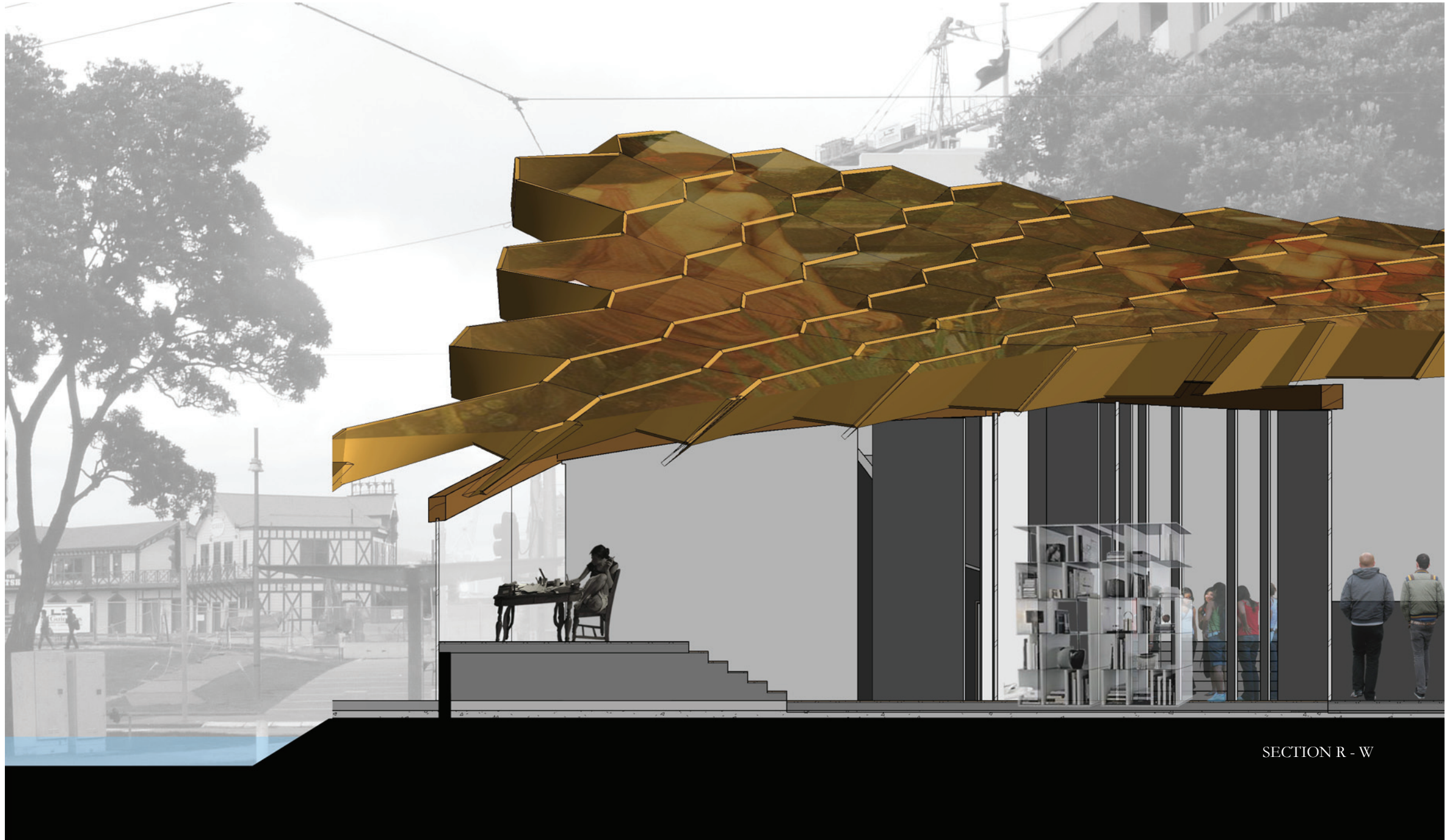




What is evident in the design of these two spaces in the building is the eventual balance they offer. The writer's studio is a space that embodies becoming other's notion of differentiating the self from Place. The theatre on the other hand is essentially a space of nihilistic becoming—of giving one self. Starting from either position, and working within the pragmatic requirements of the IIML, they both return to function at a point where the users have the opportunity to 'become other'. Once again it is this relationship that has driven the design. The architectural application of becoming other is a successful design strategy. It forces, rather than a resultant form, an aesthetic device through which Place-identity can be performed.

SECTION T - T'



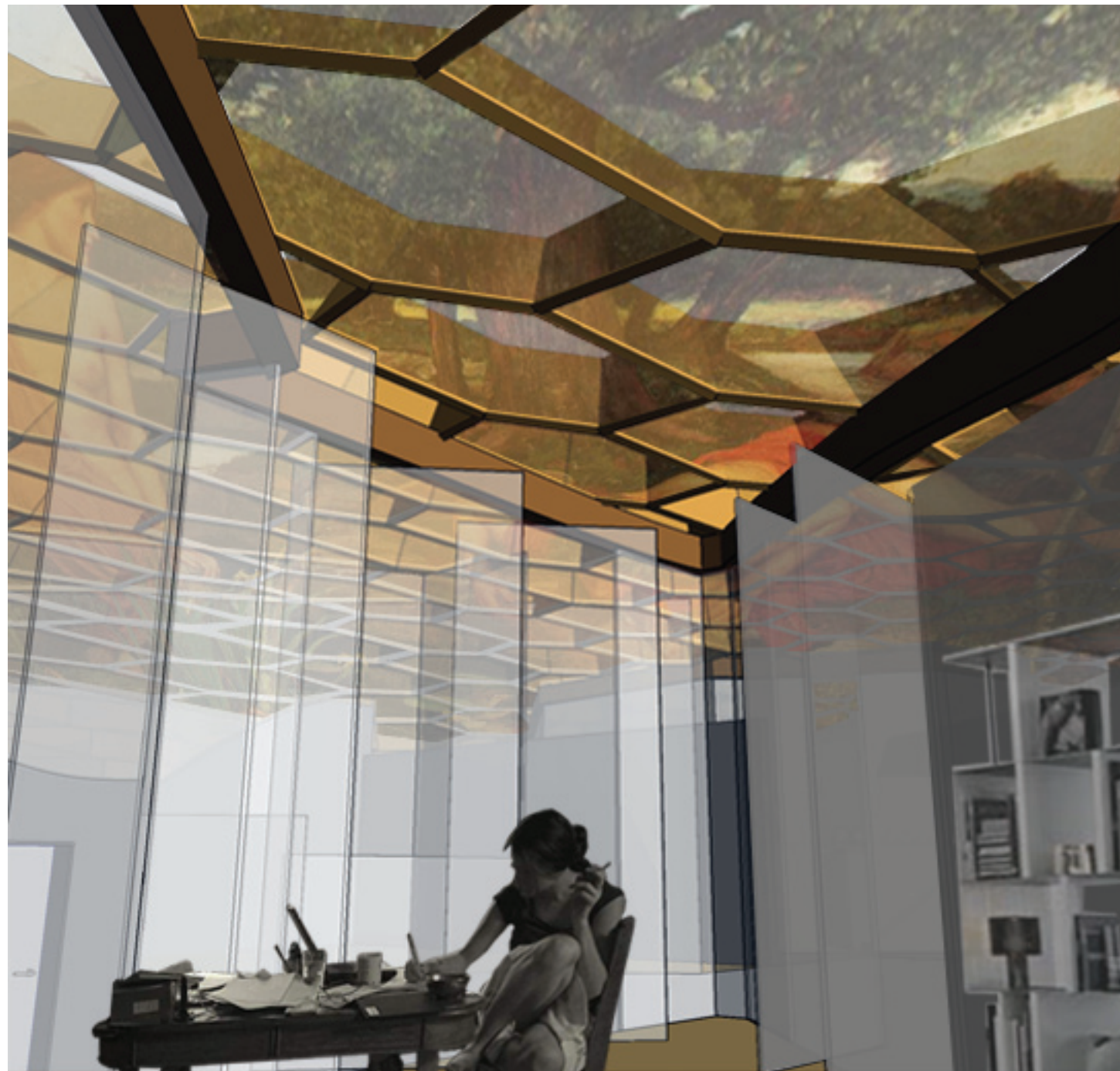


SECTION R - W





RESIDENT WRITERS STUDIO



Camouflage—architecture 47





INTERFACE

Acting within the Gestalt relationship of becoming other, identity finds a balance. The effective balance between introspection and extroversion explored in the previous chapter is a model of personal identity. This double moment has a temporal element. To become other, to form identity, is a process. For architecture to offer a true background and aid a model of full Place—identity it has to interface with everything. It must allow communication. The concept of interfacing in this chapter is taken as the second of the strategic operations in the theory of Camouflage.

Returning to the roof of the building allows the completion of a circle. The earlier chapter, representation, dealt with the skin of the building simply as visual strata. What Leach aims for with the strategic operations in Camouflage is a basis and reasoning for those visual models. As discussed in the previous chapters, identity is a construct between self and other. The notion is that architecture should be seen as a tool to help foster the feeling of identity with Place. The aim of this chapter is to explore the idea of interfacing through the detailing of the roof and associated structure. This provides an opportunity to see both sides of the relationship between the latent interior of the building and the manifest exterior. What is of specific interest is the influence they have upon one another, and what is eventually perceived by an outside viewer. The intention of applying an Interface is not to express the identity of, for example, a writer inside the IIML. Rather, it is to act as a lens through which identity might filter, in a similar fashion to the pool in the myth of Narcissus.

The interface strategy affords a return to the source of the re-reading of the myth of Narcissus. Freud wrote on paranoia present in both early child and societal development. It is from this and Lacan's writing on Narcissism that links are drawn between it and the Interface relationship. Leach's strategy of interfacing could be considered busy, or volatile. It necessarily requires inputs from a broad range of sources. Their ability to come together as a system facilitating identity, ranging from melancholic introspection to ecstatic release, requires a strong sense of balance. These topics are addressed and added to the framework for design. The IIML roof design, then, is to be presented after this discussion.

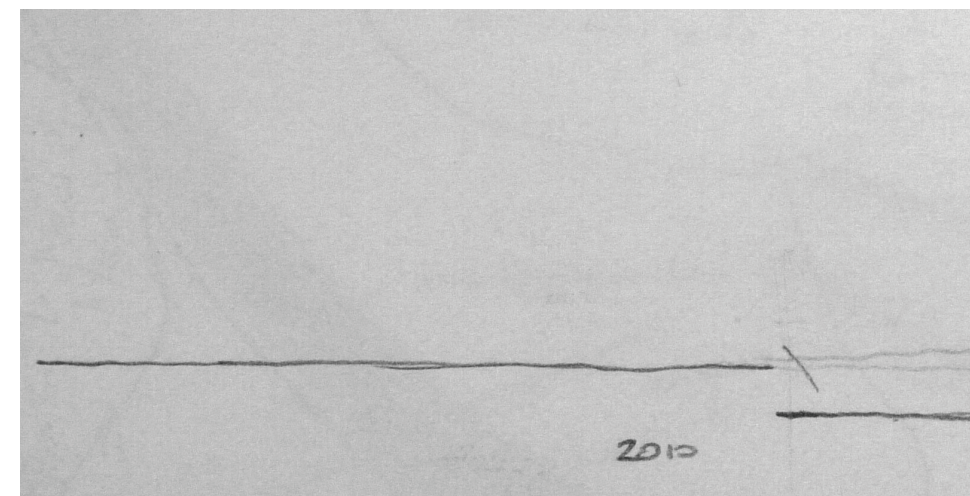
For this is great Narcissus
Who moulders here;
Watercress grows from his eyes
And grass from his ears;
From his thighs a honey-sleek flower
At its image stares.
O Echo, Echo.¹

The last verse of Campbell's Narcissus is something of an epilogue. Not only does it describe the coming of life from Narcissus' death, but it places this in a larger construct. Before the final refrain 'O Echo, Echo' the young flower itself is staring into the mirror. This continuous cycle of sacrifice, identification and growth is the relationship that can arguably be translated into aesthetics. In this case architecture can provide a context within which one may identify with—interface with—society and the environment.

PARANOIA

Leach traces through Freud and Lacan a discussion of animation. This is with the purpose of revisiting how we equate ourselves with the world. Freud's thought on the topic can be summated by the well known concept that magic is only made possible by people desiring it to be. This is an extension of Freud's concept of the primitive child and its hallucinatory manner. Animism itself is the first stage of societal, as opposed to individual, development. It can be equated, however, to Freud's first stage in the development of the individual: autoeroticism—come narcissism.² As the immature child has no point of reference beyond its own ego, an animate society has no concept of a world beyond their control. In this situation, to exist, the society must animate previously inanimate structures,³ whatever these may be. This is usually the task of spiritual beings implanted into nature by man. The individual progresses through the object-choice phase, where it learns to fixate its attention on an external object, to maturity at which point the external world may be taken in and comprehended. Civilization similarly can be seen to progress from animism to religion, when the focus is on an external being, to belief in the scientific process where the external world may be taken in and understood.

What is important in Freud's discussion of development is that progression is not cause for any loss of the prior phase. The mature





individual, as well as civilization, will find cause to recall primitive lessons. Leach finds importance in the fact that ‘memories of this earlier state may be deployed, in other words, to help overcome the alienation of later life’.⁴ He draws this from Lacan’s express thought on paranoia. Lacan wrote of a ‘paranoid knowledge’. This system takes everything outside the self to be a perceivable and identifiable object, however, Leach draws the connection that it ‘can be seen as that which seeks to animate the inanimate’.⁵

The significance of this is that ‘paranoia can play a positive role in a culture of modernity which could be characterized not only by a persuasive sense of alienation, but also an objectifying form of social petrification’.⁶ There is of course the need for balance between animation and petrification. The interfacing that Camouflage implies calls for surrendering oneself to the other and a subsequent overcoming of this. The balance is between an utter melancholic state and an ecstatic release. There is a metaphorical masquerading happening that is based on this balance. The latent melancholic level on the inside of the masquerade, seemingly cut off, operates in harmony with the ecstatic exterior. Without each other they become a meaningless image and identity is lost.

MELANCHOLIA

In defiance of the capacity to recall primitive abilities to animate objects, as discussed above, melancholia describes a withdrawal. A melancholic individual by definition has a ‘failure on the part of the subject to form a relationship with the object. Instead, the subject seizes upon sadness itself’.⁷ This sets sadness as the object of fixation. A melancholic state, Leach argues, may be overcome by artistic expression. The symbolic artistic process required is analogous to mimesis. They are both models of relating with the outside world. On the other hand, the ‘incarcerated’ melancholic can be seen to lose identity. As they withdraw, they seek to conform to society—to drift into the background.

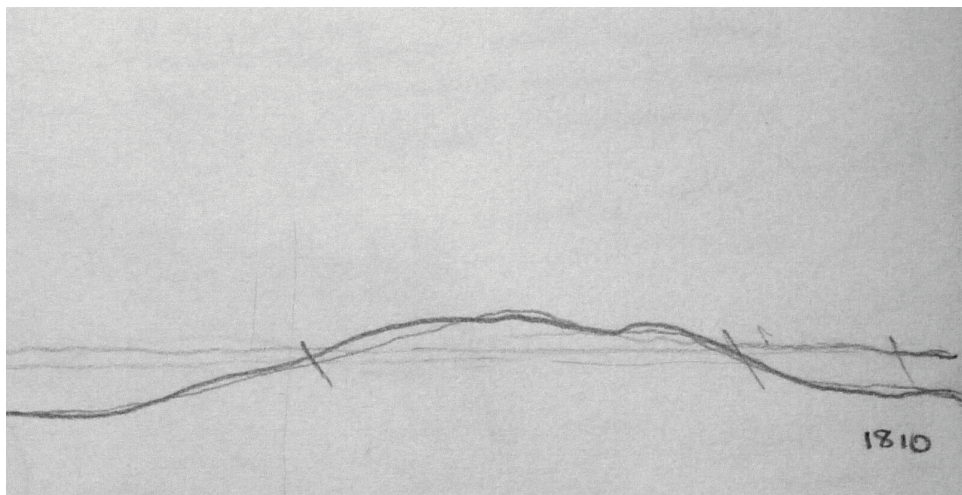
Leach describes an architecture of melancholia as a ‘closed architecture’. He cites Daedalus’ labyrinth, the first building by the first architect, as an architectural work of death. The idea of architecture providing an enclosing tomb, rather than an artistic expression of love and openness is purely melancholic. Somewhat paradoxically, ‘if tombs themselves are always forms of architecture,

so too is the womb, the very cradle of life’.⁸ Leach’s logic here is similar in some respects to Narcissus’ eventual re-coming as a flower. If the needs of the self are fulfilled, an architecture of openness can be designed to replace any sense of pure enclosure. This would be an architecture ‘not of imprisonment but of free expression, not of melancholia but of love’.⁹ The facility this architectural expression offers would be extruded from the enclosing womb. Rather than defying melancholia itself, it would be a site for ‘artistic expression’ to emanate from.

ECSTASY

Discussion around ecstasy speaks of experience beyond the body. Contrasting the melancholic state, ecstatic experience involves completely opening up to an other. ‘It would offer a conditional surrender but never a total surrender, a blurring and reworking of boundaries but never a complete dissolution of boundaries’.¹⁰ The two examples Leach uses to illustrate the ecstatic relationship are love and religious devotion. In each case a form of aesthetic engagement is again necessary. Neither faith nor love can be seen as real objects in their own right. Love can be taken as a ‘mirage’ or an ‘image’ to fill the void between two partners. Similarly, faith fills the gap between a worshiper and a God.¹¹ Both rely on self-filtered symbolic traces. Being based outside the self they do not regress to the realm of fantasy. This does nothing to belittle either relationship as an entity, rather it highlights the nature of them.

The purpose of Leach writing about ecstatic relationships is that the same principle may be applied to the relationship with architecture, and therefore Place. ‘We may forge emotional links with that environment – that is, identify, with it – but this identification can be understood only as a symbolic identification that shares the essential characteristics of love and religious devotion’.¹² This is not the sole mode of Place-identity. A completely ecstatic relationship, similar perhaps to that inherent within a cult, would be as destructive as a completely melancholic one. What is most important is the fact that aesthetic representation can in the same way bridge the gap between self and Place, after individual boundaries have been disrupted.







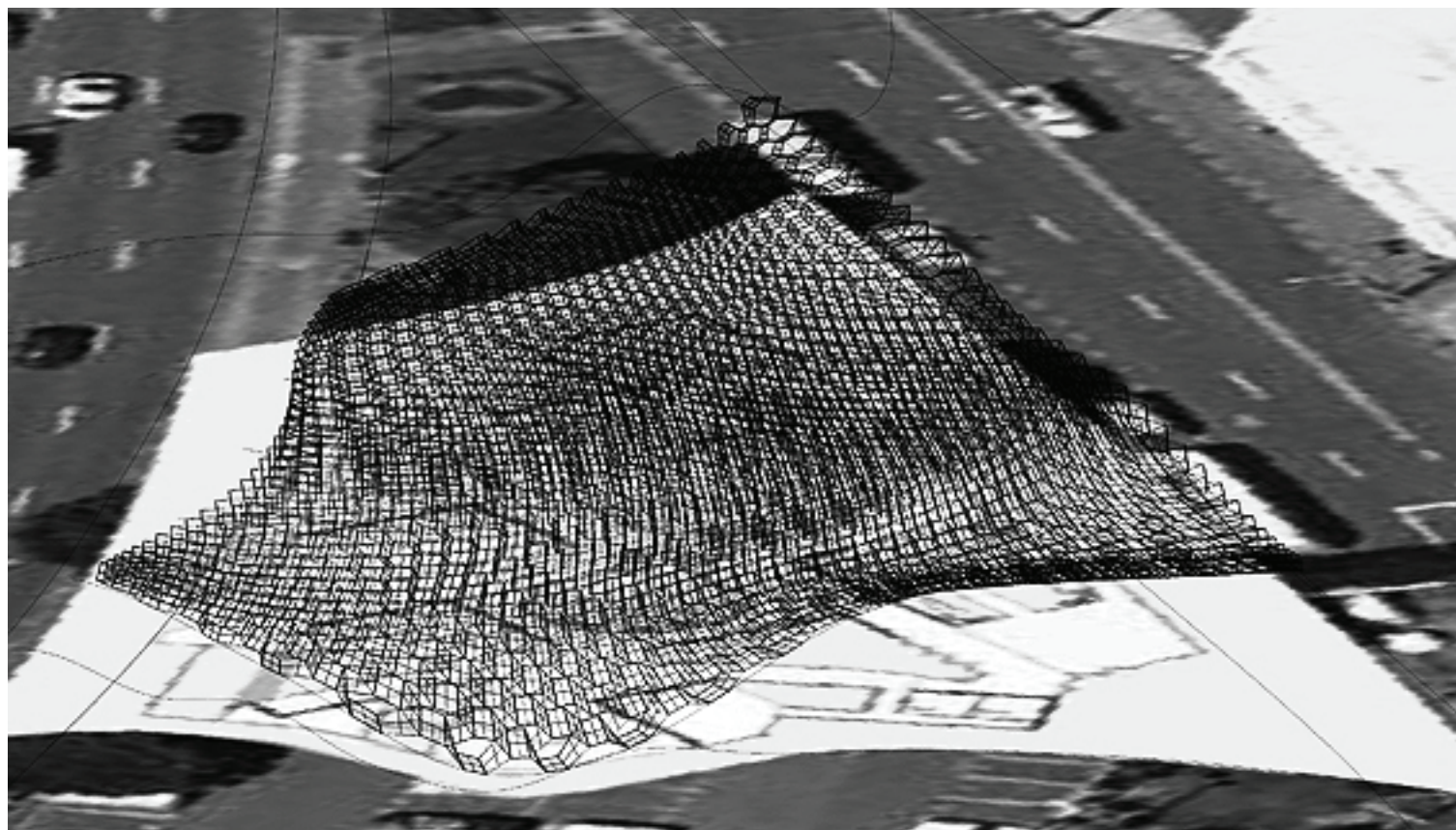
basis for identity, forms the latent level behind any masquerade. This must remain the ‘primary horizon of operations’. However, to avoid this becoming a spiral into melancholia, the aesthetic expression remains indelibly linked to the other—to Place. The masquerade, an aesthetic representation, is more than a simple image. It is there to re-present the self and to interface with Place. What is important for the building of identity is that ‘far from denying any true sense of self beneath, it may actually contribute to a sense of self’.¹³

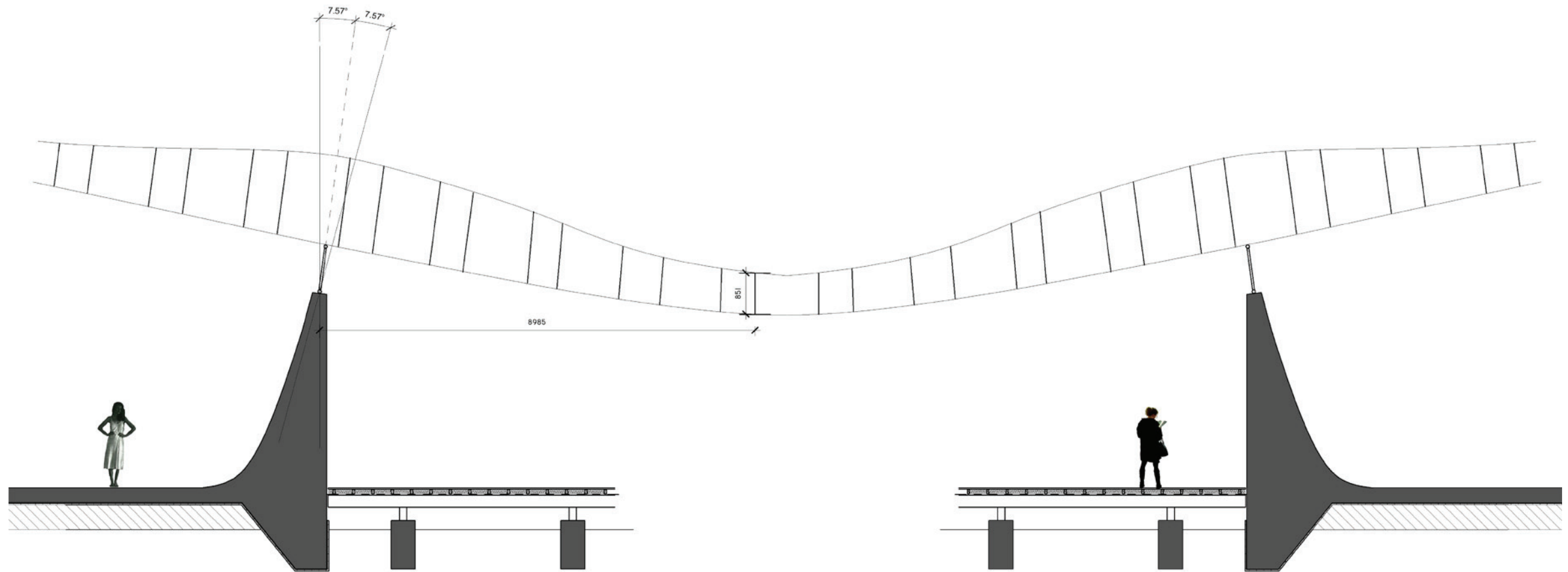
ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

To test the concept of interface found in Camouflage the IIML design shifts back to the roof. The imagery presented by the cell structure of the roof was looked at in chapter four. However, as an

interface the cells must come together as a structure. The concept of the visual strategy defined by the cell structure forming a full system interfacing between self and Place ties together and completes the architectural application of Camouflage.

The mechanism that interface speaks of calls for multiple inputs to come from both the latent interior and the manifest exterior. The generalised equation for this case is that the writers and public visitors inhabiting the building make up the latent interior. They possess their individual identities and, perhaps in the case of the writers, a collective identity of sorts. However, the perceived exterior of the masquerade, that the building represents, is considered to be the other side of the lens through which they relate with Place. There are other smaller scale interactions also of interest, partially covered in the previous chapter. These include the interaction between the







different groups within the building. However the roof offers a great design opportunity to investigate the application of interface in aid of Place-identity.

The parameters for the design initially come from both the pragmatic and the client's needs. The roof needs to shelter the internal space and allow for the function of the school within. Beyond this, the internal spaces provide further guidance to the form. From the outside environment, the same factors that influenced the planning do so here as again. Both the historical and contemporary use of the site have some bearing on Place.

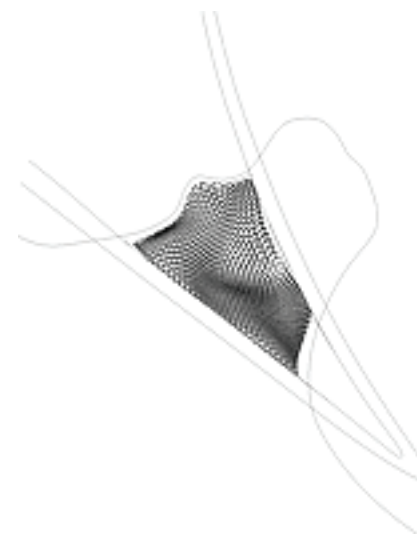
The orthogonal meeting of the internal concrete walls provide the support structure for the roof. The construction of these walls is reminiscent of a plinth. As they support the roof from a point rather than along their length, they grow out of the ground building up to meet the roof. These points are one set of parameters that have been used on the design of the roof. The external form is again reminiscent of the original land form, echoing the plan of the building. However, it is extended where necessary, especially along the west wall of the building beside the water and above the entrances. The topography of the roof is loosely based on the idea of the point jutting out into the harbour as an external input. This is, however, balanced against the push and pull affect of the internal spaces and their needs.

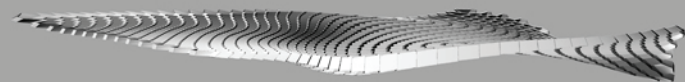
The roof is designed parametrically from the above base. Fitting the desired topography the roof is calculated to be as efficient as possible. The structure decreases in depth as it moves away from each support point, effectively defining a performative honeycomb structure.

The roof is designed with input from several angles. The ecstatic animation of Place outside; the possibility for melancholic interiors are examples. What the result is, however, is a masquerade that makes no attempt to outwardly display these. The roof becomes a more balanced interface. It has the possibilities of latent and manifest identities playing off one another through it.

Parameter layout - - - to solution





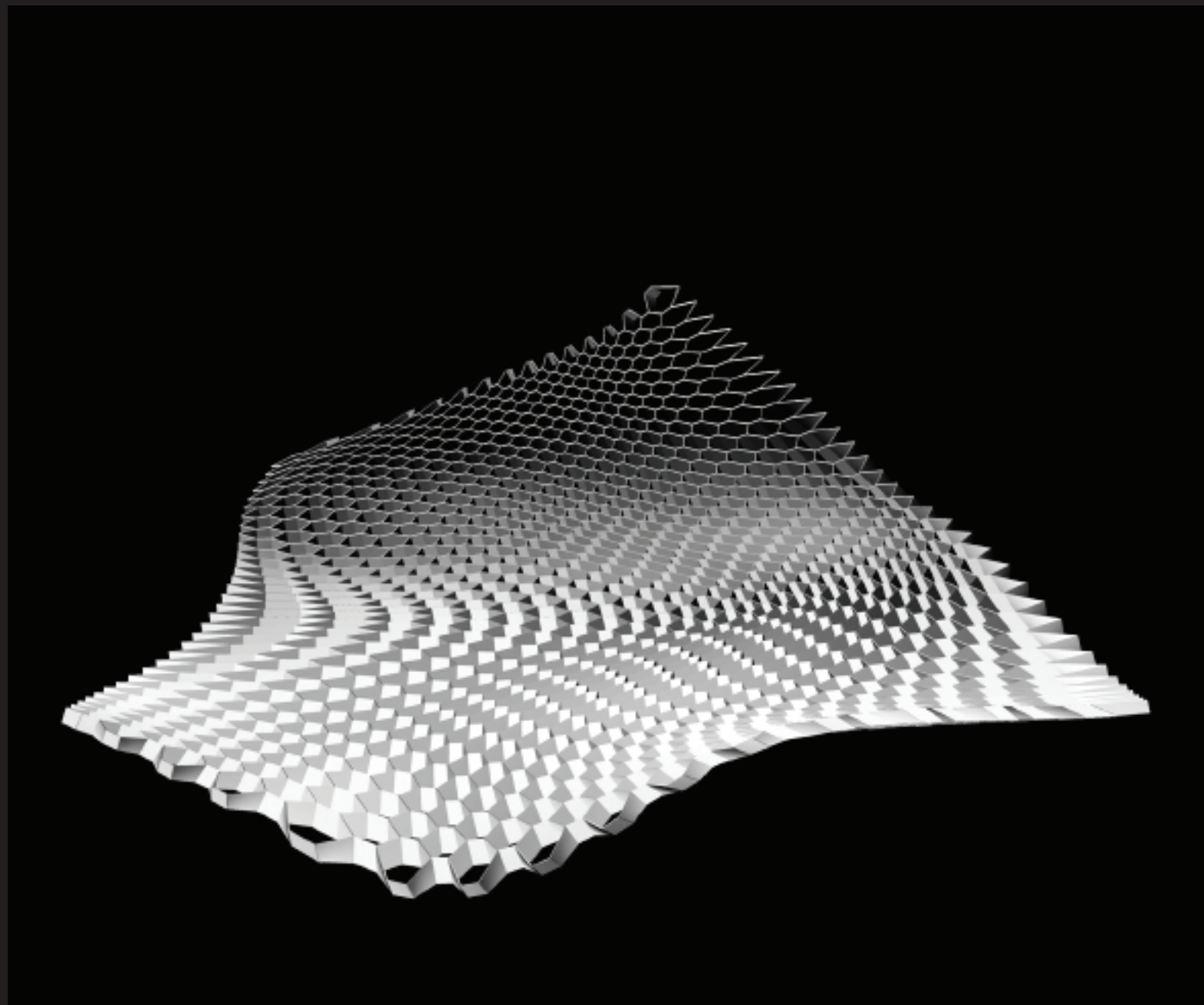


ELEVATION



SECTION







CONCLUSION: A THEORY OF CAMOUFLAGE

Camouflage does indeed call for a reconsideration of exactly what architecture's purpose is. The design of a new home for the International Institute of Modern Letters has shown this. The conclusions drawn from the above architectural testing examines the Place–identity dialogue.

The lessons learned here from the design work are critiqued back against the theory of Camouflage presented in chapter two. Within this basic framework the effect of the application of Camouflage, with respect to facilitating Place–identity, can be assessed. Further, they can be distilled into a doctrine of Place–identity. J.K. Baxter is reflective in his own work, *The Doctrine*. He also queries the place and relevance of the written word in our reality.

Part 3

The Doctrine

It was hope taught us to tell these lies on paper.
Scratch a poet and you will find
A small boy looking at his own face in water
Or an adolescent gripping imaginary lovers.
And the hope became real, not in action but in words,
Since words are more than nine-tenths of life.
We did not believe ourselves. Others believed us
Because they could not bear to live without some
looking–glass.

‘Are they real?’ you ask – ‘Did these things happen?’
My friend, I think of the soul as an amputee,
Sitting in a wheel-chair, perhaps in a sun-room
Reading letters, or in front of an open coal-range
Remembering a shearing gang – the bouts, the fights –
What we remember is never the truth;
And as for the body, what did it ever give us
But pain and limit? Freedom belongs to the mind.

That boy who went out and gazed at his face in the river
Was changed, they say, into a marvellous flower
Perpetually renewed in each Greek summer



Long after his tough companions had become old bones.
To act is to die. We ward off our death
With a murmuring of words.

J K Baxter¹

Baxter's Doctrine has similar themes to Leach's Camouflage. That his words are little more than a looking-glass is no different to architecture forming a background element to life. Reading the artistic expression presented through poetry is akin to reading one's self into Place through architecture. They both exist, not for their own benefit, rather they serve the freedom of expression that might be discovered through them. This is a continual search for identity, contrary to what could be a simple singular description of it. The freedom Baxter presents to us is itself an alternate to his poetic interface. His constant adaptation through writing, his 'warding off of death', is responsive to it. Baxter offered himself as a representation 'not in action but in words', with each reflection from that looking-glass adding to his identity. Even if it was not the truth, it 'became real'.

CAMOUFLAGE

Applying Leach's theory of Camouflage to architectural design has logic. It is clearly written with such a process in mind. The aim of this work has been to test that application in one particular context. It is an attempt to put into architectural practice what was originally literary work, brought into aesthetics by Leach as a model theorising identity. The scope allowed by the design of the IIML building on the selected site has been beneficial. It has allowed the focus to remain on the aesthetic modelling that the design is intended for, rather than as a static object in the city.

The constant change in both society and architecture present a challenge to design. While Place and our relationship with it evolve, our desire for that relationship is constant. The 'ever renegotiable condition' of identity which is inherently representative within that relationship, once drawn out, remains so. The design of the IIML building has shown that perhaps there is no need for the incessant searching for a way to see identity formed through architecture. Camouflage's fluid, parametric approach appears more appropriate

under contemporary conditions of Place. Fear of the impact created by recent advances in technology and the image fascination of the Post-Modern on architecture are also not without basis. However, if these are seen as opportunities and tools, design can continue to negotiate and beneficially move forward.

The IIML design tackled Leach's visual model of representation directly. It does, however, illustrate the possibilities Camouflage presents. The design for representation by imagery, both the real through the transparency of the building and the un-real through the roof cells, provides a medium for connectivity. However, as Leach stresses, despite being a visual model it is not what it looks like, but how the process of engaging with the visual strategies that is important. For the given parameters, the IIML building is planned to allow people to engage with those elements, and importantly—through them. The constant variability of the IIML's visual model in practice responds to what Camouflage outlines. The allowance for future adaptability on a larger scale and slower time frame strengthens this position.

The strategic position Camouflage takes makes it possible for people to relate with the visual operations. Applying the aesthetic sensibilities Leach offers, they have found a balance of their own. The idea that architecture may be designed as an interface between the self and Place, with design inputs coming from both the latent and manifest identities is interesting. Finding an equilibrium between the two is important. They can successfully drive design, and it has proved to be both a sound and applicable method. The strategic model within Camouflage allows for the interface to be designed relative to each project's own parameters. If the architecture is designed to be adaptable and grow as the people using it do, the relationship they are able to build will be stronger for it. This is on the basis that an accumulation of identifications leading to a sense of Place-identity is a continuous process. The architects ability to design the building as a looking-glass, which has the ability to respond to the fluid inputs from both the users and Place strengthen this interface model.

The design of the IIML building shows that the influence of Camouflage upon architectural design is beneficial. The model of design benefits both Place-identity theory and practice. The deeper value that has become evident is that the use of base literary theory to inform contemporary design methods can be successful.



With respect to this image of its application however, further understanding would be gained through a more subtle approach. The application of Camouflage in the design of smaller buildings would yield results of similar importance. The previous comments appear to lend themselves heavily toward the adaptable, bordering on temporary, architectural concept. However, the better result is in the meeting of this and the permanent, accumulating, image of Place. This would be an architecture that might grow with a sense of Place–identity.

PLACE–IDENTITY DOCTRINE

To scratch a building and find, on one hand traces of the people using it, and traces of Place on the other, is true success for architectural design. Beyond pragmatism architecture need have no other goal than facilitating Place–identity. An architecture of Place–identity allows one to inhabit it and be continually renewed through the reciprocatory relationship with the environment.

If the goal of architectural design is to design buildings meeting the needs of both the client and the site, there are obvious practicalities. In fact, they must take priority. However, beyond them, the word ‘site’ is limiting as it is only one aspect of Place. The three elements, the client, Place and the pragmatics required can be seen as parameters for design. It is working within these, and more importantly, forming relationships between them, that design can sit most comfortably.

With parameters for design beyond crafting an object, the process will be considered more important than the picture of the building. This allows the building to become a background element. To shift the focus away from the building itself is not to relinquish the importance it has. The design of buildings that both work for and adapt to the parameters that shift with the client, Place, and their pragmatic needs allow the relationships between the three to keep tune. This is important as it is on these relationships that accumulating identifications building both personal and Place identity base themselves.

As the building object gives way to facilitate the relationship between self and Place, beauty remains necessary. The beauty of form and space created by a building are the product of the sensory reception of people. This sensory reception as a harmonious relationship with

Place, in its fullest sense, can not be greater. Buildings being designed as mechanisms of Place–identity by this model are not champions for a loss of beauty. Rather, it is a change in the source of it. It shifts the origins, as an entity of beauty, to having greater similarities to the love between two people than the beauty of the latest fashion object. The charm of a building designed to facilitate Place–identity comes from the beautiful somatic relationships inherent to it. ‘Architectural beauty’ forms part of the Place–identity goal.

The relationships that designing architecture to this model create between the self and Place are temporal. It is not a unique moment, and the adaptability of buildings to grow with changing relationships is necessary. Identity with Place is accumulated from many identifications—it is performed through architecture as one *becomes Place*. It requires an architecture of the daffodil. Design for Place–identity is a rethinking of design, with an understanding of the relationship Narcissus’ honey-sleek flower now has staring at its own image.





NOTES

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