

S P R E Z Z A T U R A

by  
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A Thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture



I HEREBY DECLARE that I am the sole author of this  
thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis,  
including any required final revisions,  
as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made  
electronically available to the public.



# ABSTRACT

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THIS IS A catalogue of seductive experiences in architecture. Seductive building creates enrichment and invitation for exploration. In my experience working with architectural design, many projects lack choreography. This thesis intends to forge a language of seduction. The goals are to create literacy and detect narratives in architecture.

REFLECTING ON MY previous experiences in architecture served as the basis for my research. In forging a new language, the goal is to create a new method of analysis. As I probed further into my memories and experiences, a correlation became clear. I found myself seduced by specific motifs in architecture.

I INVITE THE reader to see the experiences as described. With this thesis, I hope for readers to analyse building with a fluency in this language. In seeing these elements, readers will understand and desire seduction in architecture with their built environment.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LAST FALL, I took an elective named Books and the Bones of Saints, studying rare books from the library. One featured an author who penned a loving tribute. Written for his patron and king, the creator praised his intellect and greatness. Not replicating such an accolade, however, the sentiment remains. To this, I thank Robert Jan van Pelt for his support and humour. His guidance allowed me to find my own footing in the process, and most important is his faith in me.

---

TO MY COMMITTEE members I give my gratitude. I thank Anne Bordeleau for her support from outlandish proposals to her unending patience. I also thank Donald McKay for his encouragement and tips for making me a better writer.

I WOULD LIKE to thank my classmates and friends.  
Our experiences of passionate curiosities made this  
experience colourful and fulfilling.

.....

I ALSO NEED to thank my Mum for listening to my  
weary ramblings. Even with admitting her lack of  
understanding, she tried her best to comprehend.

.....

FINALLY, I HAVE to thank my boyfriend  
Derrick Lovell. His outlook, optimism, and assistance  
were a guiding light in the journey. Derrick unlocked  
doors to a world of travels otherwise unseen.  
Nevertheless, most important is his everlasting  
patience. He tolerated the emotional rollercoaster  
known as my thesis. His help was endless, even if  
my selfishness concealed the appreciation at times.

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ALL THESE BLOOD, sweat, and tears would have been  
in vain; I give my sincerest gratitude.

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*... to practise in all things a certain nonchalance which  
conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem  
uncontrived and effortless.*

*—On Sprezzatura, Baldesar Castiglione*



# FOREWORD

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THIS THESIS RESPECTS the tradition of architectural discourse whilst aiming to disrupt it. The traditions are important in creating new generations of architects. Despite this, they are predictable and fixed. These customs do not allow for a qualitative response in architecture.

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THIS THESIS PLAYS with the rules of architecture. Akin to *Archetypes in Architecture* by Thomas Thiis-Evensen, this thesis is a guide. His book is a set of fixed rules, with Thiis-Evensen arguing all architecture exists as a sum of its parts. The intent of *Sprezzatura* is to raise literacy in the architecture of seduction.

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AT FIRST GLANCE, outlining a set of rules may be the best approach for achieving such a result. This thesis, however, will not do so. Instead, *Sprezzatura* seeks to investigate dimensions of an emotive vision of architecture. This particular approach is not new. Francesco Colonna's *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* is a precursor of this attempt. It sought and explored the seductiveness within building told through a love story in which architecture embodies the beloved.

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MY EDUCATION AT the University Of Waterloo School Of Architecture provided a skeletal framework to my understanding of architecture. The education provided a set of skills for students to design buildings with intelligence. I believe my

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education taught me a complete understanding of architecture. Courses ranged from design studios and lectures. Topics ranged from cultural history to technology. The problem laid in its unforgiving systemisation, rather than its diverse set of topics.

LECTURES INDOCTRINATE STUDENTS into a specific way of thinking. Within the University's technical courses, students learn a 'correct method' of building. Cultural history courses also follow this rigid pattern. The history lectures teach the importance of architecture as societal devices. Despite this, a Western European lens concentrates students' perspectives into a singular view. The lecturer, in essence, is an orator. They feed their understanding of architecture to generations of designers who continue this cycle.

STUDIO COURSES FURTHER these rigid implementations, though its methods are implicit in comparison. Adjunct professors encourage students to expand their horizons and tastes. However, the weight of the course causes them to follow every word of the faculty. This action results in students encouraged to, or discouraged from pursuing specific methods and aesthetics. The faculty controls the deliverables as well. Its main purpose is a tool for grading, but its consequence is uniformity within the class.

THIS CRITICISM, HOWEVER, is difficult to balance. The formative years of a student's journey require this structure. The latter years do not. The difficulty lies in where this shift of a rigid structure to a fluid one occurs.

SCHOOLS GROOM ITS students to seek this uniformity. Despite this, the most success I have with my work is when I rebel against the curriculum. Many times, the bending of the given rules provided

the greatest success. This manipulation created the beginnings of what gave the thesis its namesake. At times, the rigour of my work fought against the expectations of the faculty. This inconsistency created the enticement in my projects.

*SPREZZATURA* IN ITS most limited terms is a form of magic: a trickery of the eye and mind. Similar to a well-crafted trick, it is fine in detail, and delivered with nonchalance. For any reveal of the inner machinations of this deception will ruin the illusion. *Sprezzatura* is to see architecture in an oblique way, different from the established method.

THIS THESIS EXPLORES a form of grace. It is a qualitative aspect of architecture undefined in the binds of disciplined discourse. The following texts outline a set of steps, but by no means a complete list. The intent is to create a fathomable language, identifying a seductive architecture. This seduction utilises these steps in its choreography. A mischievous spirit lives within it to break the rules of architecture.



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## AN AUDIENCE SITS...

... BEFORE A sparse, dim stage. Unseen, an emcee announces the next performer, cuing a racy tune accentuating the performance. In an elaborate costume, the dancer steps onto the stage. Cheers erupt from the audience, welcoming her into her act. Following her cues, the performer begins her dance. Her dance has a mischievous tone as she peels away her layers. Seducing her admirers, she graces her suppleness with the garments. The dancer then tosses the clothing aside with playfulness.

AS THE SONG progresses, she exposes glimpses of her flesh. Soon, she reveals her final layer of lingerie. Cheers increase despite her guarded nudity from the eyes of the audience. Watching one undress is taboo. It is an intimate act, veiled through layers of dazzling garment. With coyness, the dancer entices the audience into the grand finale.

A WELL-EXECUTED AND produced design exudes sensuality. It invites the user, known as a Spectator, to explore. The Spectator embarks on a journey through enticing cues.

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THE PERFORMANCE IS an illusion. With its drama, the rousing dance never gives everything away. The control by the dancer is constant, and the audience is drunk on the spectacle. They care little about the truth beyond the sparkle. The illusion is the most crucial aspect of the dance.

WITH THIS INVITATION, the spectator assists in completing a dialogue with the dancer. The *sprezzatura* goes wasted if the dancer has no audience to perform to; this is a tacit relationship.

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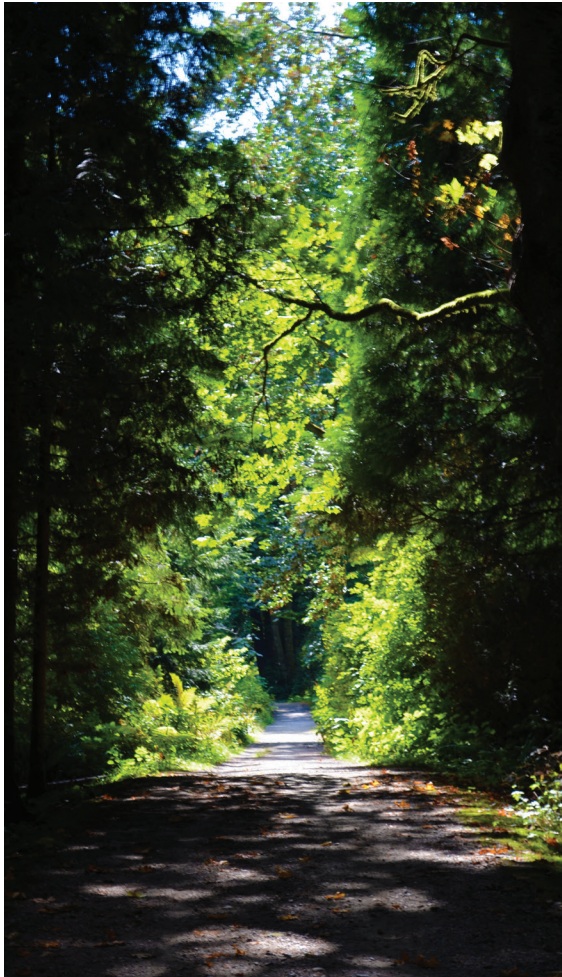
THE SPECTATOR IS a user and viewer of architecture. For the purpose of this work, I am the Spectator. Authoring an ulterior persona is not viable; such action would prove to be disingenuous. For this reason, I never consulted others of alternative interpretations of seductive building. It proves difficult to forge a new language without defining it as I have through this exercise.

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THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES a founding of a language in architecture. Tectonics expresses the language, the combinations of which create its speech. The Spectator then experiences the language as a form of choreography within the architecture. This is a new way of analysing and perceiving it.

THIS THESIS IS unique to others, as it is explorative. It excavates the language with built works, instead of creating with new proposals. This is to ensure to language exists in reality and not in theory. The attempt of this thesis is not to create a design manifesto. Despite this, new architecture can employ the language to embody its ideals.

THE THESIS IS amorphous and prone to evolution. Like language, the understanding of seduction transforms over time. This work is an ignition to a new understanding and reading of architecture. It utilises seduction to create nuanced spaces to encourage exploration and delight.



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AS ESTABLISHED, I am the Spectator. In my role, the language I create is something of a love letter to the University Of Waterloo School Of Architecture. My understanding of architecture relied on the teachings and methods from the university.

THE HISTORIC AND poetic reading of architecture is an established practice. I understand poetic interpretations will continue beyond this thesis. However, this particular allegory is new: the nonchalant seduction of architecture. This work seeks to inspire readers to assume the role of the Spectator and to use this language. Their role invites them to describe this powerful and overlooked aspect of our surroundings. A journey lies ahead. Experiential fragments will uncover the language.

Fig.1.001 - (Previous Spread)  
*The Conversion of St. Paul* by Caravaggio,  
1601. *Wikipedia Commons*.

Fig.1.002 - (Overleaf)  
UBC Endowment Lands, 2013.  
*Author's Photo*.



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WHEN VISITING BERGEN in July, I stayed with my friend Camilla for a few days. Having arrived on Monday evening, I rested on the first night. The next morning, we took a trip up the fjord after a quick tour of the town.

ASIDE FROM ITALY, I have never been to any other parts of Europe. I noticed Bergen's sublime setting. Despite the natural beauty of the city, it remained disorienting during my visit.

BERGEN WAS ORDERLY in comparison to Venice. My lack of understanding of the city, however, left a labyrinthine impression. The exaggerated slopes perpetuated my confusion. Orthographic streets existed, but only in areas along the edge of the harbour. These blocks were never perfect squares, many of which bent to conform to the ruthless topography. Nevertheless, Camilla was a fantastic guide.

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THROUGH QUIETER STREETS away from the town, I noticed the geography of Bergen. Many addresses opened onto alleyways winding upward the landscape. Not accessible by car, they led to many front doors of houses lived in by families for generations. The alleyways were narrow and perceivable as one continuous façade. Intimate kisses of the edges only part when I looked into the chasm.

DUE TO THE shifting topography of this Scandinavian city, there are few thoroughfares. The formation leaves rows of houses to embrace one another. Bergen felt intimate and concealed. The architecture had a kinship, a rapport foreigners could never comprehend. The closeness of the city left me intrigued. Bends in the road shifted the perspective of the buildings. The North American grid could never duplicate such a sense of familiarity between buildings.

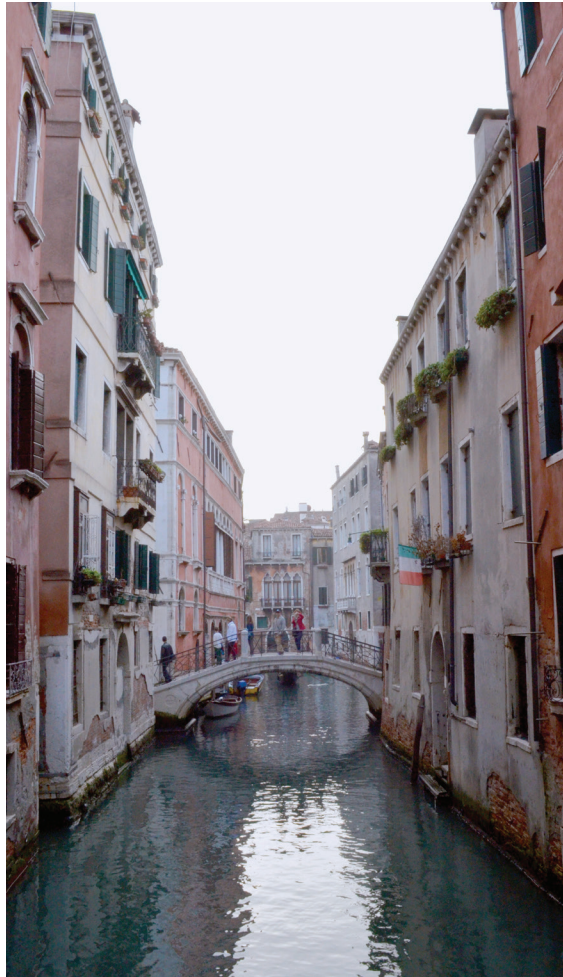


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BERGEN HAD A certain magic to its misty climate. The intimacy between buildings never ceases. Under the silence of the midnight sun, buildings in the port city were always communicating. Caressing and nestling under the howl of the arctic wind.

Fig.2.003 - (Page 9)  
Vetridsallmenningen, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.2.004 - (Overleaf)  
Alley off the Lille Øvregaten, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*





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WE SPENT A couple of days in Venice. It rained little during our stay. When we arrived, our search for the hostel left us disoriented. Finding our way around was impossible, as contradictions of the mind built Venice. Every road resulted in some sort of dead end. As a group, we managed to interpret the cryptic map, and settled into our lodging.

THE NEXT DAY, we decided where we should explore over breakfast. Our class, splintered into small groups, roamed the city on our own.

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VENICE WAS INTRIGUING despite its disorienting construction. Deception was at every turn, and façades embraced with no end. Every surface appeared conjoined, only to reveal an alley. The deep embrace of two lovers parted into a chasm, where a destination may or may not exist.

AT TIMES, THESE alleys were not dead ends. Some were narrow and opened to the sky. Some bridged over Spectators like conjoined deities. Those straddling entities funnelled light and weighed on its Spectators. Crossing the tunnel promised release to the next space.

Fig.3.005 - (Previous Spread)  
Palazzo Molin, 2013. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.3.006 - (Overleaf)  
Unnamed Alley, 2013. *Author's Photo.*





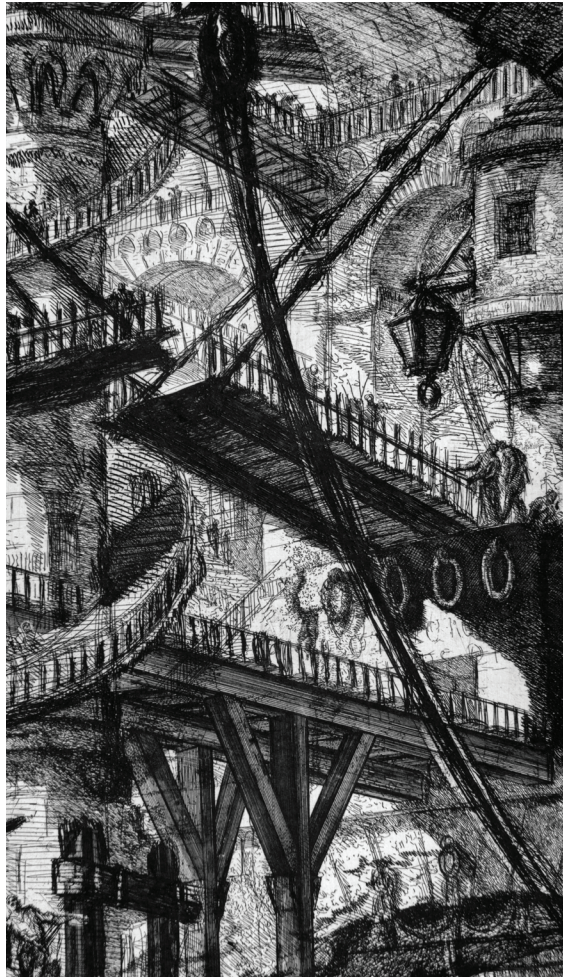
THIS RELEASE TENDED to result in a courtyard. The building's campo lunged itself into the sky. Alleviation came immediately. The wide-open sky releases the bind of the shadows, despite the finitude of its expansiveness. The contrast of darkness against the amplified light seemed too perfected to be accidental.

FROM ONE LANDMARK to another, one must traverse through chains of kisses. Through the canals, the shifting walls of lovers are always touching and embracing. It is an elaborate maze. For brief moments, the city parts, torn by jolts from the heavens. Venice is an intimate puzzle, placing itself in a disarray of jumbled pieces.

Fig.3.007 - (Overleaf)  
Unnamed Canal, 2013. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.3.008 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Skywell, 2013. *Author's Photo.*









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THE MAZE IS a puzzling fortress, confusing Spectators who traverse through. Often, it gives the appearance of a nestled architecture. Many surfaces appear joined until a Spectator approaches them. Understanding the Maze requires exploration. It invites Spectators to solve its riddle.

Fig.4.009 - (Overleaf)  
This etching, Piranesi's *Carceri, Plate VII*, shows the drawbridge. It depicts a monumental space. The drawing is a maze-like puzzle, portraying passages leading to nowhere, or so it seems. The image is an invitation, a contradictory view enticing Spectators to explore the world beyond its shifting planes.  
*Wikipedia Commons.*

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WE WOKE UP at dawn for an early morning trip into Capri. The ferry ride along the Amalfi Coast was an unforgettable experience. With the sun rising, it peered through the rocky landscape. The slow benevolent natural forces began to rise, and created a sublime moment.

AS THE SUN climbed, rays of light pierced the landscape between careening edges. With rolling caresses, cloud and fog dragged along the stony earth. Beams bore through and created a rhythm of illumination. It created an articulated symphony of chiaroscuro. The sounds of light and dark were the stage for dancing clouds, twirling along the crust of the earth. The clouds pulled against the coast like a feathered fan, concealing the eye from the contours of land erupting out of the ocean. The landscape, vapour, and the demure rays danced with the ferry in a pas des quatre. They concealed and revealed one another in a free-flowing concerto.

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AT ONCE, I felt the waves of the water and the heaviness of the atmosphere as she caressed the rugged landscape. The ferry on its course directed me. Being amidst this maelstrom felt like an ambition architecture yearned to achieve for millennia. The idealised alignment of all forces coming together created a natural architecture. A formation which was difficult to master. Nevertheless, the pieces of meaningful space were present.

NEVER WAS THERE a full reveal in any part of this magnificent landscape. Shimmering light was relentless in obstructing the earth and sea. With each turning corner, the encounter regenerated and echoed. Every new dance, however, performed different from the last.

Fig.5.010 - (Previous Spread)  
Napoli Coast, towards Capri, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.5.011 - (Overleaf)  
Napoli Coast, towards Capri, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*



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IN CAMBRIDGE, THE weather was warm, but once arriving in Chicago, a fog was quick to roll in. Heavy and opaque, it enveloped all features of the city. For the next few days, the rain was perpetual.

THE DAY I visited the Illinois Institute of Technology, the weather had cleared. The sun was beaming and the clouds had parted. It was not summery, but the elements felt refreshing in comparison.

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AFTER ARRIVING, I wandered with my class before reaching Crown Hall. Lectured on the ingenuity in construction methods, I stood outside listening. From my memory, we were never granted formal permission to enter. Instead we took photos outside. A classmate then walked towards the front door and pulled; it was unlocked, and we shuffled into the hall.

I WAS A mere second year student at the time, and had yet to honed my sensibilities to the poetics of space. Back then, I adored Mies for his aesthetic rigour alone.

Fig.6.012 - (Previous Spread)  
Chicago River, towards the Kirkland &  
Ellis Building, 2011. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.6.013 - (Overleaf)  
Interior, Crown Hall, 2011.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.6.014 - (Page 36, 37)  
Frosted Glass Wall, Crown Hall, 2011.  
*Author's Photo.*



CROWN HALL

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THE EXPERIENCE AT Crown Hall was my awakening to a seductive architecture. Despite its openness as an integral part of the design, it conveyed effortlessness. The congregation space managed to entice me with its formation. The choreography was subtle. The wooden partitions withdrew from the chamber, but still provided direction. Us Spectators continued to follow its mild instruction.

THE GENTLE CONTROL of the space directed me toward the west wall. It was then I discovered something; I saw architecture in a new light. I stopped. The glassy hall had its lower panes sandblasted with a frosted finish. I was fixated on the glass. The obscuring material caught shadows of

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neighbouring trees whilst blurring its surroundings beyond. The polished floor continued this image, extending it into infinity. It was a floating gem. It mattered not what the surroundings were, the hall was calm, barricaded from the clamour of the campus. The glass became a canvas, stroked by the shadows of dancing leaves and twigs. Over blurred colours, they combined to create a dynamic painting.

I STARED, ENTRANCED by the performance. Pulled back to reality, heard the muffled sounds of classmates. Muttering, they cawed over drawings in an exhibition. I only heard them, but did not listen. Instead, I longed for to the symphony to accompany this dance of leaves and colour.







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THE VISIT TO Palazzo Barberini was by accident. Wandering Rome, the palace's stately façade caught my eye. It was taller than all other buildings in its surroundings. At three floors, the proportions were absurd compared to its urban counterparts. It was a grandiose attempt, but the result bordered on hilarity and arrogance.

THE HYPERBOLIC EXTERIOR was not the only peculiar aspect of the palazzo. Palazzo Barberini stood close to the street without reference to its context. Turned at an awkward angle, its obliqueness felt jarring.

THROUGH THE GATE, its main frontage sat atop a cinema. The theatre sliced its rear to appease the elliptical forecourt of the palazzo. This ham-fisted formation felt ironic given the pompous proportions of its fenestration. One would have expected a promenade presenting the palace. Instead, the high iron fence surrounded a cramped lawn.

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TOWARDS THE PALAZZO, I noticed the ground floor was completely open. Creeping into the main floor, I noticed other tourists. I entered the portico. I soon noticed the extensive barrage of columns. Standing under an archway, I saw vaults intersecting and playing. The ground plane opened through the depth of the palazzo, and light poured into the dark aching forest.

THE RHYTHM OF this portico was deceptive. What seemed to be orderly and static at first, became jumbled and frantic. Vaults leaped over one another concealed by a series of rigid arches. The light brought me to a path: an extended ramp topped by a lush roof garden. The garden was a pleasant surprise

Fig.7.015 - (Previous Spread)  
Palazzo Barberini Portico, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*



THE OBLIQUE PLACEMENT of the palazzo felt like a wink. By the time I had turned around and left for my next stop, I realised the palazzo was playing a game all along.

THE APPROACH WAS particularly ingenious. Looking back, the tilted shift of the palace required a slanted approach to the portico. The frontispiece of the entryway was decorative, designed to appease a symmetrical order. The intention was for the Spectator to see a sliver of light from the end of the covered archways. The light beckoned them to its heavenly oasis.

I NEVER DID end up viewing the gallery hosted by Palazzo Barberini. The collection would not have enticed me as much as this experience. Palazzo Barberini performed a dance of the veils.



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THE VEIL IS an obscuring artifice. It protects and shrouds what lies beyond its curtain. Light penetrates the Veil, creating an aura of enticement. This beckons Spectators to look closer. The Veil suggests an incomplete image. Passing through the Veil leads Spectators to an unseen world.

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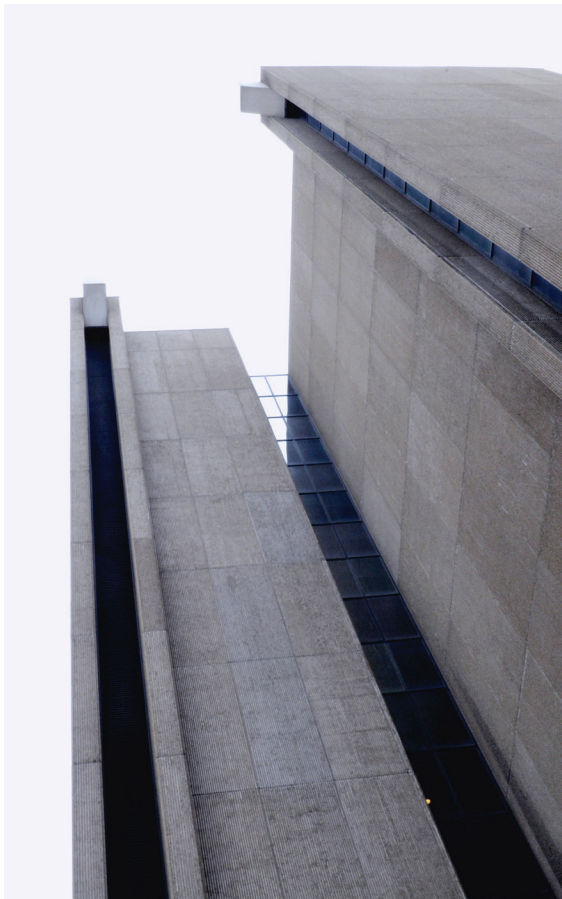


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IT WAS A brisk May afternoon when we arrived in Buffalo. It was also a Saturday; many buildings closed for the weekend. Instead, we explored the downtown streets taking photographs. One building in particular grabbed my attention. Jutting out of the skyline with force, a concrete pillar extended into the sky. The monolith stood amidst Gilded Age towers. Every plane contained implicit reveals. They were cuts into a uniform surface.

APPROACHING THE BUILDING, I noticed the ground floor flared outward, forming a solid base. The root broadened as if it required reinforcement. This expanded foundation exaggerated the mass of this fortress, beckoning me inside. Knowing it was Saturday, however, access was impossible. The exterior attracted me enough; I needed no entry.

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THE HEAVINESS OF the building left little openings in the façade. The slabs sang whole notes spliced with quick rests within the cuts. It was a contrasting rhythm, oscillating between crawling and skipping. The agile slits were set deep into the face. So deep, the edges caressed with kisses. The entire exterior was a dance well choreographed. The tower was strict and concealed. It paid little attention to the ornate skyline around it. Expressing a sense of gravitas, this monument assured its own identity.

THE CITY COURTHOUSE stood with pride, but without obnoxiousness. The surroundings sang fluttering songs in contrast to the hum of the tower. The pillar stood with dignity without the need to advertise. Its simple palette expressed effortlessness and showed a sense of clarity. All the while, it displayed authority.

Fig.9.016 - (Previous Spread)  
City Courthouse Kiss, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.9.017 - (Overleaf)  
City Courthouse, Upwards, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.9.018 - (Proceeding Spread)  
City Courthouse & City Hall, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

I CONTINUED TO circle the perimeter of the building. The background felt noisy. As I contoured the reveals, the building appeared to contemplate to itself. Its sober demeanour was a brute benevolence. The City Courthouse crooned its low, legato song amidst superficial trills. I appreciated the attention to detail in varying scales. The expressions opened with subtlety, dancing through the proportioned slits. Up close, the texture of the precast was pulsing with roughness. Afar, it smoothed with the blurring of the eye.

THE BUILDING WAS subtle yet severe. It stood out against the opulent skyline forgotten with Buffalo's industrial expansion.

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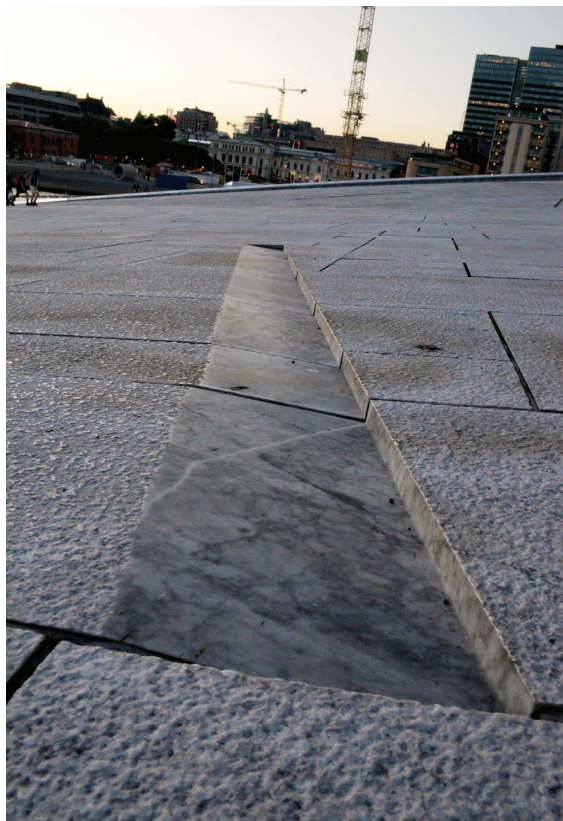
THE COURTHOUSE REMAINS an enigma. Only a small description exists on the popular web encyclopaedia. No interior photos surfaced. Its deep slits concealed its truth, keeping the story partial. Its allure would diminish if the gaps tore open.

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CITY COURTHOUSE





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OSLO OPERA HOUSE is an iceberg rising above the water. During a stopover, I decided to visit. I crossed the road onto the entry footbridge, hoping to take a closer look. Unfortunately, the midnight sun deceived me. The auditorium was closed, as it was already eleven o'clock.

DESPITE ITS POPULARITY, I knew little of the opera house. I was unaware of its subtle qualities. The white marble carved exquisite cuts and lifted its surface. They were indiscernible at first. When I approached its raised path however, I saw the textural differences.

IN EVERY CUT of the Carrara marble, the finish shifted from its raw origins to a polished refinement. The indentation of the hill was a reveal. Subtle and slow, it was clever and camouflaged. Lifts along the slope were similar. Each disclosed vertical face is smooth, creating textural reveals. The entire sloping surface was a game of changing smoothness and understated shifts.

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WHILE THE RAMP performed a quick-change act, the mass played a game of perspective. The opera house disorients Spectators. All its main facets were misaligned with any perspectival understanding. The theatre performed an opera of its own, a comedy cloaked in seriousness. Fanciful schisms and viewpoint manipulation disguised by its severe material palette. The form was a maze under a cloak of reveals.

THE COMEDIC SHOW had a tense dialogue. Lighthearted manoeuvres conformed to datum lines and axes. These were signs of an architecture built with the utmost craft. The uneven dimensions of every slab extended a defined rhythm. The laser-like precision was present in every aspect of the landmark.

THE PLAYFUL TENSION continued onto the rooftop. Braille-like textures of the mechanical housing exposed themselves up close. Its slight shadows taunted the uneven ground. The pearlescent surfaces counterpointed the stony terrain with their gaps.

Fig.10.019 - (Previous Spread)  
Ramp Cut, 2016. *Author's Photo.*

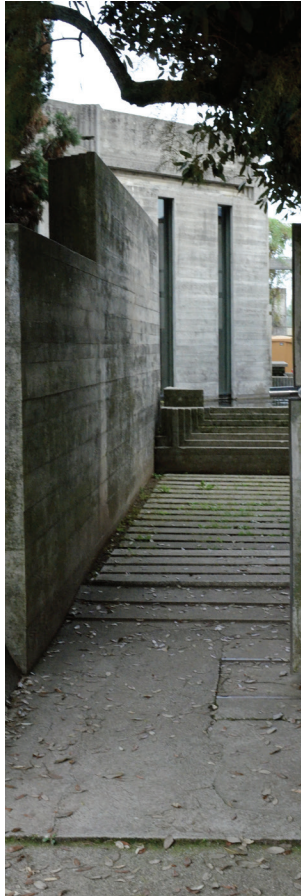
Fig.10.020 - (Overleaf)  
Opera House Front Entry, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.10.021 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Barrier along Entrance Bridge, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*



OSLO OPERA HOUSE teetered on a seesaw of robust practicality and sensuality. The theatre rose up from the water and slid back down. Its surfaces split like sheets of ice, contrasted by the stillness of the stone. The marble even imitated the appearance of a halted iceberg. It extended into the bay of frigid waters.

WHEN THE SUN finally set, it was time to go. I returned to the hotel before my flight next morn. The opera house was definitely worth the visit. Although it was just an exterior introduction, it was an unforgettable greeting. Shifting slits of stone contrasted the shimmering glass, as it slid back into the deep.





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IT WAS THE last stop on my trip from Vicenza. It was a gloomy day. The entrance driveway alone possessed charm with cypresses lining the driveway. Pacing, they extended into the distance like a columnar arcade. The trees set the tempo for the sombre song of the necropolis.

THE MAINTENANCE STAFF unlocked the doors to the tomb, and I entered. Before reaching its front gates, it felt like foraying into an unexplored galaxy. Passing through a graveyard, the endeavour felt ritualistic. The hushed songs of life were almost numbing. In other settings, the graveyard was the final destination. The trip to La Tomba Brion transformed the resting place into a threshold.

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I COULD ONLY experience the tomb in slivers. The gate was a layered portrait. A passageway led me to a separation between worlds. The tunnel is dark and intimate. A thin reveal opened to the water, but its narrowness denied light to penetrate. The threshold was only a primer.

THE GARDEN, DESPITE its contemplative nature, was playful as well. The demure dance between architecture and Spectator was constant. Contraptions littered throughout the garden; they invited us to solve the puzzle.

Fig.11.022 - (Previous Spread)  
Alternate Gate, 2013. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.11.023 - (Overleaf)  
Main Corridor, 2013. *Author's Photo.*

THE INSIDE OF the chapel was dark. Slits exposed the enclosed garden beyond its solid walls. The darkness of the space intensified the hue of grass. Towards the corner, a pair of skirt-level panels revealed the fountain. Light flooded the dark hall, but only to the waistline. The liveliness of the koi pond filtered sounds of water and life into the altar.

ALL THE SPACES compressed into one, linked by implicit reveals. The gaps appeared to look at nothing, but perhaps were thresholds to worlds beyond. Space, time, and light collapsed into one nonlinear experience.

Fig.11.024 - (Overleaf)  
Chapel Slit Window, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.11.025 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Brioni Garden, 2013. *Author's Photo.*



THE INSULAR WORLD glimpsed through its concrete veils, into the world of the living. Distanced, a trench contoured the inward tilting boundary. It was a constant reminder of the frontier dividing the dead from the living. The stasis of memory hosted within the confines of this concrete Eden.

THE EXPERIENCE WAS awash with melancholy. Perhaps it was because we were strangers in this family's tomb. Perhaps it was the gloomy weather, or even the brutal palette of the project. Whatever the case, this performance was too compelling. Its playful use of light and sound felt almost too deliberate. It seemed supernatural, like it penetrated from an alternate realm. As it may be, motifs and reveals were not for us, the living, but rather, the afterlife.







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THE SLIT AND Reveal are thin openings. The Slit is vertical and entices forces to enter, like the knife-edged beam of light carving into a space. The Reveal, in contrast, is horizontal. It is a squint, controlling the aperture of vision. The edges of a Slit oscillate with a Spectator's passing. In contrast, a Reveal remains static. What lies beyond the parted lines is a mystery. The adjacent edges frame a yearning tension.

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I HAD RECENTLY arrived in Rome, and was exploring the city in the September heat. Reaching Piazza Venezia, an obnoxious white glow was bore into my vision. I saw the towering Altare della Patria, a bloated altar dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele. It stood much brighter than the ruddiness of surrounding antiquities. Its position centred on the piazza separated it from the rest. Sitting atop an artificial mound exaggerated the overbearing whiteness.

FROM AN OBJECTIVE standpoint, the construction of the Altare is something I admired. It was provocative, offensive, and flashy. However, I always had a dislike for the Neoclassic. I thought it was a crude imitation of the classics.

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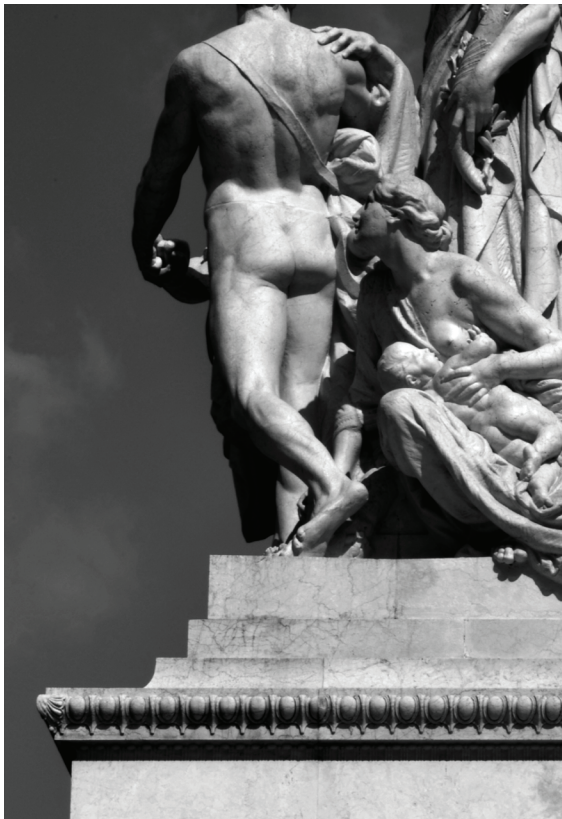
I VENTURED UP the structure, through the dramatic staircase. As I entered the building, I encountered a staircase. The interior continued its ornate language. What drew my attention was not the designated path; an illustrious niche displayed the statue of Victory and her four horses. A set of windows lit her from behind, creating an adoring vista. Her presence took me by surprise; it felt almost taboo. I realised this was a view reserved for those descending the staircase. The sight was a parting image. I had ruptured the strict choreography.

EVEN WITH THE break in the performance, the statue lacked allure. The victorious marble was a tell-all image. The staged illumination poured from the rear and side windows. The light lifted her to the heavens with drama; her chariot gracing her down to reality. The scene sat atop a useless set of steps.

Fig.13.026 - (Previous Spread)  
Altare overlooking Trees, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

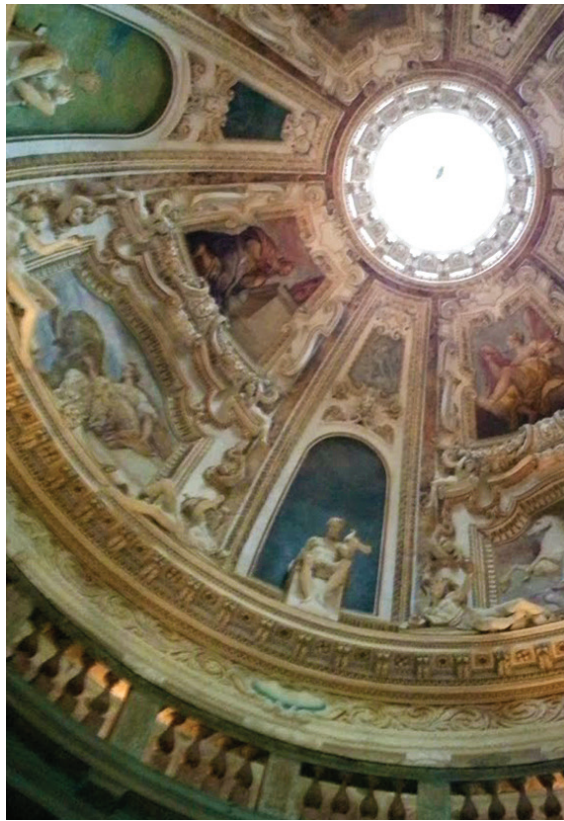
Fig.13.027 - (Overleaf)  
Altar of Victory, 2013. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.13.028 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Terrace Statuary, 2013. *Author's Photo.*



ALTARE DELLA PATRIA was an explosion of a cannon. As a quick shot, its lustre of grandeur is fleeting. The exterior of the structure is nothing less of a centrefold. Its intentions are loud and displayed for the world to see. Even through its meticulous choreography, the interior expresses desperation. The entire endeavour felt contrived and reeked of effort.

PERHAPS IMPLICIT CUTS into the architecture would create winks obscuring its treasures. Elongating thresholds with tunnels may assist in the Altare in obtaining some coyness. The whole journey felt exasperated by an overbearing sense of exhibitionism.





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VICENZA WAS MY last stop before heading to Venice. When I arrived, I waited outside the walls. The iron gate with its wide openings was easy to peek through. Immediately, I saw the famous elevation. Presented with perfection, it stood atop the driveway into the property.

VILLA ROTONDA WAS beautiful and attuned with divine proportions. The unforgiving symmetry, however, restricted its spaces. This constraint diminished the dance between architecture and Spectator. Each of the rooms was hardly discernible from one another due to its rigid plan.

THE EPONYMOUS MAIN hall enveloped me in a celestial panorama. Its oculus invited the heavens into the building. Through the Greek porticoes, the spirit extended to the outside world. Despite this, the effect of the dome is superficial at best. The progression was lacking, resulting in a diminished sense of drama.

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AT EVERY TURN, the building presented a splaying image. The lack of tension shrunk the release; the Rotonda felt somewhat cheapened.

NEVERTHELESS, INTRIGUING MOMENTS still existed. Under the Greek porticoes of the four faces, arches ran through them. These were entrances into service quarters for the villa. Their lowered status eliminated a need for fenestration, thereby collecting shadows within its orifices. The aligned openings created a double-stacked portrait frame. The accumulated darkness acted as an elongation, concentrating the rolling landscape beyond.

Fig.14.029 - (Previous Spread)  
Rotonda Oculus, 2013. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.14.030 - (Overleaf)  
Through the Ground Floor Tunnel,  
2013. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.14.031 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Toward the Entry, 2013. *Author's Photo.*



BY THE LATE afternoon, it was time to leave the summer home. Villa Rotonda is four portraits and a centrefold. Linked by a series of frames, it is an unbreakable mirror. As gorgeous as the villa was, it gave too much away too soon.



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THE RAIN WAS sporadic during our day trip. I spent the morning at the Baths of Caracalla, admiring the grandeur of the ruins. The stateliness charmed me, conjuring dreams of glory. The baths were too bare to present any more coquettish behaviour. After a rainy lecture on the lawn of the bath, I left for the Santo Stefano Rotondo. When I arrived, I huddled under the porch from the rain.

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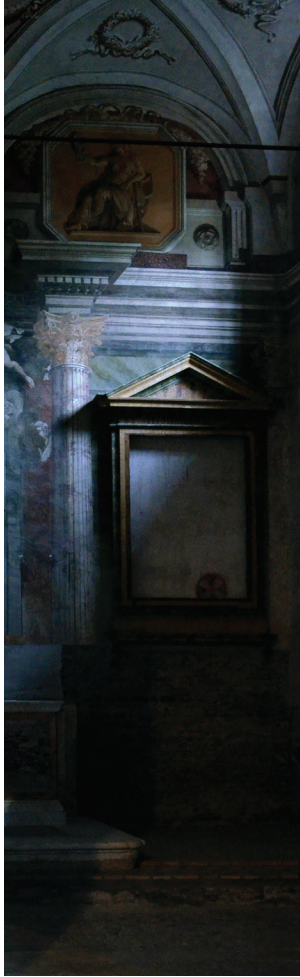


THE FORMATION OF the church splayed its round altar immediately upon arrival. The collection of Roman columns was impressive but lacked build up. Despite this, the light quality of the basilica expressed a masterful stage setting. Small aperture windows surrounded the congregation spaces, leaving them in the dark. The upper cylinder hid the gaping windows, which produced beams descending from the heavens.

I LONGED FOR a palatial build up from the front door to the main stage. Even the jumble of columns could not create a veil. Ease of access diminished the heavenly light. For a church withholding such drama, it lacked chastity in its divine effect.

Fig.15.032 - (Previous Spread)  
Altar, Santo Stefano Rotondo, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.15.033 - (Overleaf)  
Surrounding Hall, 2013. *Author's Photo.*



THE CRUX OF the basilica may lack nuance, but it possessed demure corners nonetheless. Santo Stefano Rotondo had a cruciform plan; the front door assumed the base, with the remaining three extensions as secondary altars. These altars, tucked away from the bright centre, were alluring spaces. Lined with small windows, the shrines remained in shadow. Clouds filtered the light before penetrating the pinched orifices of the high fenestrations. The light wafted into the darkness. It caressed the contours of the church and illuminated minute details. The intense chiaroscuro left me to uncover the mysterious architecture. The result was a dance with the Rotondo, but in a different way than expected.

Fig.15.034 - (Overleaf)  
Side Altar Chiaroscuro, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.15.035 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Parco del Celio Fountain, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

WHEN THE LECTURE ended, I took a walk and made a detour towards the Coliseum. Walking north towards the landmark led me through a small park; one I had never seen. Its pathway framed the amphitheatre whilst shrouding it in the foliage of stone pines. Passing through, I noticed a series of Ancient Roman foundations repurposed into fountains. Perhaps it was the glossiness of the ground left by the rain, but I stared at one particular fountain. The cobblestone shimmered as light bounced through the bowled railings. The fountain and its reflections extended to an endless split. Dancing, it performed a slow, overcast score. As light skated over the water towards infinity, I contemplated the unexpected waltzes.





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THE CENTREFOLD IS endless. Also known as a panorama, it flaunts the crowning jewels to the world. While breathtaking, it can also be exhaustive. Constant exposure of this display wears thin over time, diminishing its drama. Controlling its edges provide dimensionality and maintains its seductiveness. Peering over its edges releases new information to the Spectator. The denial of sight enriches the experience.

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Fig.16.036 - (Previous Spread)  
Everything is understood without much study in this image. Known as *The Virgin with Angels* by Bouguereau, little information is harboured. It is a centrefold, shouting exclamations with little coyness. *Wikipedia Commons*.

Fig.16.037 - (Above)  
While a centrefold may seem to exist as a tell-all, the scope of the view is still controlled and curated. Not everything can be seen, as some mystique must remain in the grandeur of the endless image. Urbino, 2013. *Author's Photo*.



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I WANTED TO visit Piazza Navona. I left early in the morning, venturing through the city across the Tiber from my flat. The labyrinthine streets were disorienting. Despite this, I saw my confusion as an opportunity to explore this foreign city.

WITH SOME MEANDERING, I saw the piazza peeking through a narrow side street. As I crossed the road towards it, I noticed a symmetrical façade on the opposing side. I then realise the building was a palazzo, converted into an art museum like many of its brethren.

INTRIGUED, I PAID the student-rate admission to enter. Flanked by gallery spaces, I strolled through the lofty interior. The main court was abrupt in its confrontation, which caused me to stop. Standing under an arcade, I saw the austere rhythm of the space. The enclosed court sang a rigid song, repeating itself along its perimeter. Every bay was a layered portrait. Stacked, they elongated the statuary and fenestrations. With a steady momentum, I traversed the centre-axis to the other side.

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I STOOD ALONG the opposing front admiring Roman statues of celebrated gods and goddesses. Afterwards, I began my exploration of the palazzo. Ancient figures filled every room. The lack of corridors in Palazzo Altemps connected salons in succession. At times, thresholds stood in succession amongst other framed doorways. Others displayed particular sculptural pieces with their ornate borders.

Fig.17.038 - (Previous Spread)  
Upper Balcony at Altemps, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.17.039 - (Overleaf)  
Altemps Chamber Doorway, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.17.040 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Palazzo Window & Lucite Chair, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

FENESTRATIONS, HOWEVER, WERE less explicit. Standing in chamfered niches, they stood with handsome proportions. As beautiful as they were, the windows were too broad to be slits. Kisses also proved difficult because of the sloped alcoves in which they sat. Nevertheless, they were frames in their own right, albeit implicit ones. Sometimes, a window displayed a lone Lucite chair. Others featured a short staircase leading to an informal Juliet balcony.

WHEN I HAD exhausted every space in the palazzo twice, I decided it was time to go. Crossing the road, I finally reached Piazza Navona. I admired the masterful Bernini fountains as the sky tore open. I ran under a restaurant canopy waiting for the rain to pass. When the storm cleared, calm permeated the piazza. It was a short moment of peace where the emptiness was an inhaled breath. Soon after, vendors and tourists poured back onto its cobblestoned surface. Spectators were conversing with the piazza as I contemplated the portraiture of Palazzo Altemps.







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MY TRIP TO Tivoli began on a crisp, October morning. I recalled the subdued entrance of this grand manor, and its inevitable disappointment. It was a plain doorway adhered to the side of a church. Inside, a frescoed entryway greeted me before leading toward a courtyard resembling a cloister.

THE CLOISTER WAS also underwhelming. Contained within a monotonous palette, the rhythm saw some joy in the upper windows. Even the Fountain of the Sleeping Venus felt weary.

FRESCOES ADORNED EVERY surface of the villa. Intricate in their craft, these paintings created falsified perspectives, extending beyond its physical bounds. The overload of artwork was taxing.

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THE REAR SALON had outward facing openings along its excess of ornamentation. These fenestrations became glowing portraits. Each portal displayed a live painting emanating into the salon. Using dull materials bombarded by exhausting frescoes, apathy would brew in its Spectators. Creating this tension indoors resulted in an exalted reaction to its gardens.

WE THEN DESCENDED the arched portico to the terrace. The garden was brimming with life, a contrast to the imprisoned stasis of the mythic interior.

Fig.18.041 - (Previous Spread)  
Venus Reclining (detail), 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.18.042 - (Overleaf)  
Doorway Overlooking the Gardens,  
2013. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.18.043 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Overlooking Fountain, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*





THE GARDEN SLOPED down the Tivoli hillside with endless alcoves and fountains. Curated symbolic sculpture shielded by veils of tall, naturalised trees wooed Spectators with their charms.

NO MATTER WHERE I was, I stood in front of gates leading to uncharted worlds. It was an amusement park of statuary and sputtering fountainheads.

ONCE WE REACHED the base of the hill, the garden converges to one single path. Here, the control slipped, and the overgrown nature took over. At the rear gate, we stood under a lush trellis. Turning back around, the framing was still apparent. Through the canopy of the translucent vine, the villa stood with dignity. It knew the dance it performed was worth the wait. The trip was worth it after all.



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IT WAS A warm day. Knowing nothing of the city, a few friends and I decided to venture to see the Terme Diocleziano. We trekked to Termini Station in the broiling September heat, and arrived at the main gate.

INSIDE, WE FIRST walked through the Aurelian portion of the structure. Pacing through the former bathing facility, exaggerated windows lined the walls. The Roman spaces were not performing to their full potential. The rooms thrust its grandeur with little build up. The lack of adornment was not the reason allure was missing, but rather the formation of the halls.

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I DECIDED TO explore the converted gallery space. There were countless treasures and ancient artefacts. Built on a monastic plan, the architecture danced, but it performed in little steps. The cloister was rhythmic and the deliberate frames of the doorways expressed poetry between spaces.

RETURNING INSIDE, A symmetrical ascent seduced me. As I climbed it, I saw the steps diverge and realised the staircase played a cruel joke. The staircase forced me to choose one side over another. The rise became tense; I was unable to fulfill the rigid mirror of the classical proportion. It was a merciless gesture, but fuelled the drama of the architecture.

FOR A LONG time, I thought the designer of such a clever staircase was my favourite artist, as Michelangelo designed the cloister during the Renaissance. His intervention led me to believe the scalone was by his hand. This was not the case; a different architect designed a renovation centuries later.

Fig.19.044 - (Previous Spread)  
Cloister, 2013. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.19.045 - (Overleaf)  
Cloister Entryway, 2013. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.19.046 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Scalone, 2013. *Author's Photo.*

AN ARCHITECT BY the name Luigi Vanvitelli was likely the culprit. Despite my dislike of the Neoclassic, I realised this was a persuasive gesture. It followed the discipline of the classical portrait, but shattered it with the Spectator's arrival. A troublemaking designer intended on breaking these constricting orders.

IT COULD BE, perhaps, the investigation for the tense portrait may not exist. The search for the compelling may be reading too far between the lines. For a mischievous Neoclassic architect, however, one may never know for sure.





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THE PORTRAIT IS a frame. It is an image produced by pruning. The depiction exposes an appropriate amount within its bounds. Creating an enticing frontispiece, the Portrait protects the interior from prying Spectators. It is a synopsis, and entices curiosity with just a glance.

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Fig.20.047 - (Previous Spread)  
This portrait, *Saint Sebastian* by Reni, is seductive and alluring, yet tightly cropped to not reveal the entirety of the tale; only a singular facet of the story is told. *Wikipedia Commons*.

Fig.20.048 - (Overleaf)  
The effect exists with a well framed doorway and entry. The detailing of the portrait is 'putting its best foot forward', creating an enticing portrait of the goings-on indoors. Venice, 2013.  
*Author's Photo*.







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THE DEFENSIVENESS OF mediaeval fortresses has long rendered widespread fascination. The need to fend off the undesired resulted in a celibate architecture. With its robust construction, the resulting light quality harnessed a contrasting tone with the interior quality.

SMALL GUN SLIT windows were peppered throughout the towers. The aperture forced my eyes to concentrate on the illuminated pinholes. The darkness of the stairwell intensified; deepening the dramatic chiaroscuro, detailing the texture of the brick. The restricted light intensified such textures but did little to affect the atmosphere.

AS I CLIMBED up to the narrow exterior corridors, I noticed they were more shaded than lit. Crowned with thorns of protection, the crenulations revealed a series of kisses. The masonry merlons deepened them, yet parted them with its girth.

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EVERY OPENING KISSED as I skimmed along its surface, pacing at a constant rhythm. The tempo extended into the outer guard walls. Alternating merlons passed one another, like the strumming of a drum. The repetitive beats of each opening made itself heard as it traced the perimeter of the fortress.

THE CASTLE EXPERIENCED renovations over the centuries, receiving multiple stylistic changes. The latest addition to the Castelvecchio tapestry continued this choreographed and controlled tradition. Poignant moments provided the architecture with rhythmic breaths. Seductive gasps contained within looming pressure points and winking slits. Through implicit breaks, I glanced onto the lawns manicured by the gallery staff. The soft, emerald grass contrasted the armoured building materials.

Fig.21.049 - (Previous Spread)  
Staircase, Castelvecchio, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.21.050 - (Overleaf)  
Upper Corridor, 2013. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.21.051 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Gallery Chamber Window, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*

THE EDGES OF each new column, rail, and canopy sang distinct tunes. These modern hymns harmonised with their barricaded past. The arrangement resulted in a delirious tempo. The reconfigured architecture was a layered song of old and new notes.

THE VARYING TEXTURE of the architectural composition was a controlled mix of styles. It utilised its mediaeval history to harness light and sound. The final coda exploited the reveal. It invited glances into its structural qualities and Castelvecchio's chaste past with this paced symphony.





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I SPENT THE afternoon at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Its collections of gems, fashions, and furniture enticed me to visit. Grand and fabulous, the museum contained a meticulous collection spread across the institution. It was not until I left the gallery where a mysterious building caught my eye.

UNAGGRESSIVE, THE STRUCTURE stood respectful of its English surroundings. Similar in height and size, the building blended in with its form. Its strong presence did not rely on a gargantuan figure to do so. The curious construction held its own, despite its proximity to the ornate museum. With no signage nor grand openings, its identity was unknown.

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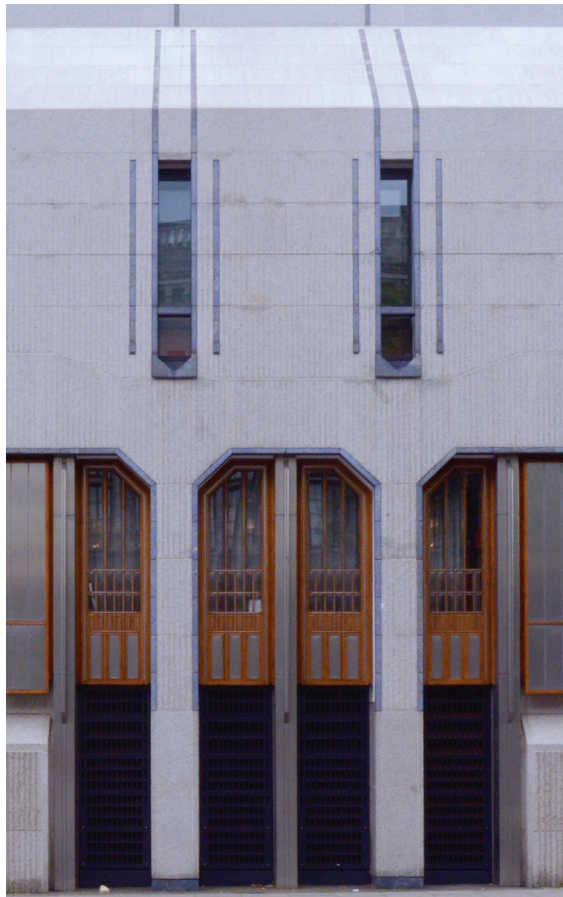
THE ARCHITECTURE HAD a sophisticated rhythm. With intensity, it layered a series of slit windows against broad chamfered arches. The elements worked together to create a choral performance. Arches were clad in well proportioned frosted panels, continuing the motifs of the composition. Gorgeous incisions cut along the façade and articulated a cadence. Thin vertical lines of stone embellished the established tempo.

Fig.22.052 - (Previous Spread)  
Ismaili Centre Façade I, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.22.053 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Ismaili Centre Façade II, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*



ALL COMPONENTS OF the elevation worked together to create harmony. I saw the graphical purity of this enigmatic architecture at every angle. Upwards to a sloping roofline, accoutrements followed its contours. The roof mirrored the exact angle of the chamfered portals. Decorative frames extended upwards into the roof, creating an optical illusion. With its enacted rhythm, it composed a song of playfulness.



LARGER SLITS FOLLOWED the intonations. Spanning multiple storeys, the indents boomed with three light well windows. This unknown construction chanted with delight.

ALONG THE NARROWER elevation, the building faced a small delta park. Thin stone mullions expressed themselves like a veil. The minimal adornment was a bar chime, where its twinkling articulations preserved the privacy of those inside.

I CROSSED THE road, and continued along the arcade. I admired the rigour of this handsome architecture. I noticed a small plaque unveiling the identity of this structure. It was a cultural centre for the Ismaili faith. The centre stood with strength without arrogance. It harboured a sophisticated and nuanced rhythm, like a well-rehearsed string quartet.



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I RETURNED TO London after visiting a friend in Liverpool for a few days. I had some hours to kill before catching my flight. With that time, I decided to visit the British Museum and admire the spoils of their conquests.

THE COLLECTION WAS massive. I explored a small fraction of the building, at best. Despite this, I still sensed theatrical spaces during my time there. I first noted choreography in the King's Library. The rigid symmetry harboured a constant pace. Its steady rhythm allowed Spectators to observe the antiquated collection placed in bookshelves.

AS MENTIONED, I am not a proponent of the Neoclassic. Stylistic disagreements aside, I can appreciate the rigour of conforming to geometric purity. The deep-set window alcoves provided spaces for upper bookshelves and day lighting. They also created a tempo of illuminated kisses along the mezzanine.

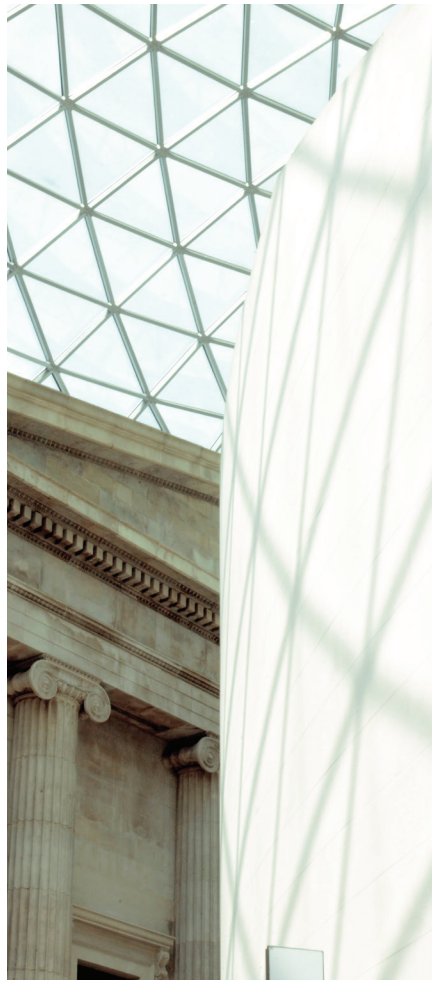
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THE RIGOROUS MEASURES extended beyond the library. It flowed into adjacent halls of Egyptian Statuary of forgotten kings and deserted dynasties. The pilasters and coffered ceiling repeated this rhythm.

GRAND SALONS USED florid portraits to connect with one another. Each led to a new world of mysteries. Dark wood panelling lined every doorway; its deep shade elongated its experience. When I passed through each arch, I felt an atmospheric shift.

THE CONTEMPORARY IMPROVEMENTS

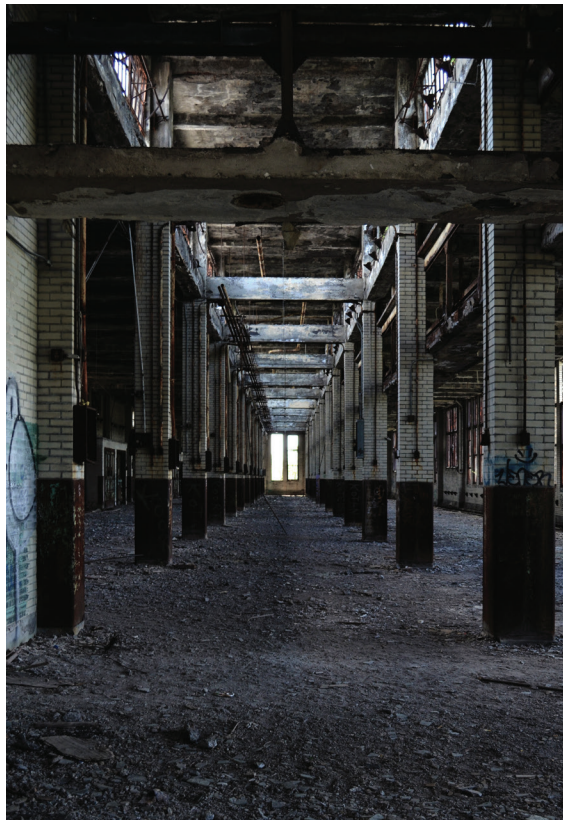
danced with its Spectators also. The glazed canopy by Norman Foster draped over the centre of the former garden. This elegant crown is a combination of a centrefold and a veil. Entering through a dark gallery, the shrouded court confronted me. A flood of light blanketed the open space, which contrasted the rigid halls. The interlaced members of the skylight disoriented the eye, with the veil adhered to the cylindrical reading room. Its form eliminated boundaries in the composition, creating endless song in the Great Court.





I INTENDED TO visit the British Museum to observe artefacts of forgotten worlds; instead, I was pleasantly surprised in the experience. It was more enticing than I would have anticipated. Within the hordes of tourists, this Greek-revival temple managed to dance along with its strict rhythm. Its momentous elements revealed themselves through its gallery halls.

Fig.23.054 - (Page 119)  
King's Library, 2016. *Author's Photo.*  
Fig.23.055 - (Overleaf)  
Great Court Veil, 2016. *Author's Photo.*



.....

I VISITED IT on our last day before returning to Canada. Reaching the terminal required a drive through a more dilapidated part of town. It was a beautiful summer day with only a couple of clouds. As the car drove on the wide, American streets, it was quiet. Before long, I reached the beacon of forsaken ambition. It prodded above its surroundings of stick framed houses.

THE SCALE OF the terminal was breathtaking. Its eerie quietness was a poor fit for the magnitude of the project. The Buffalo Central Terminal was ambitious: a seventeen-storey tower sitting atop a lofty terminal. A row of operative buildings flanked it, whilst overlooking the massive rail yard beyond. The terminal opened on the brink of the Great Depression. Over the following decades, it experienced a rollercoaster of misuse. Now, it sat decayed from violent vandalism.

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THE BUILDING WAS a hollow shell of its former self. The once lively ochre brick dirtied to a soot-coloured grey. Rotten mullions in each fenestration stood alone from smashed windowpanes. I fawned over the handsome proportions of the rhythmic windows.

THE TALL WINDOWS sat on a raised sill. The openings appeared inviting, but one could not see into its spaces. I concluded space could have been a storage facility. I found a doorway and tiptoed in. The act was like peeking behind a curtain into the actor's dressing room before show time. The slim columns ran like measures of staccato eighth notes. They aligned with the svelte windows, and the two groups sang a duet.

WITH ALL THE finishes stripped, this dance lost its shimmering veil. The missing jewels exposed her structure. None of the original tools were at her disposal to perform the choreography. The building had its dignity torn by the ages.

Fig.24.056 - (Previous Spread)  
Abandoned Operational Space, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.24.057 - (Overleaf)  
Abandoned Doorway, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.24.058 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Emptied Windows, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

BUFFALO CENTRAL TERMINAL

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THERE WAS NO control and concealment. Despite this, allure lingered in its stolen walls. The intrigue no longer lied in the aura of ambition, but now in the shadow of inquisition. The terminal acquired the air of a fallen temple.

THE TERMINAL STOOD with a light breeze howling through its concealed openings. The sounds of leaves quivering spilled into the space like a hymn. A new cast of dancers performed a revised song. The skeletal structure expressed enough mystique without its former opulent hull. The architecture continued to entice those who searched for it. The dance transformed from an orchestrated opera to a minimalist solo.





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THE RHYTHM IS a static representation of a dynamic force at play. Architectural elements depict musicality, like the notation of a score. However, a Spectator's exploration can bring Rhythm to life without illustrating it. The Rhythm has no specific form, making it hard to define. Its visual appearance is only half of its identity. To understand Rhythm, one must experience the pacing of architecture as intended. The temporality brings the expressions to life, as in music.

.....



Fig.25.059 - (Left)  
Helen Graham House, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.25.060 - (Overleaf)  
The adorned architecture are comparable to a playful yet orderly Baroque chamber suite. The architectural trills and decorated accoutrements accompanies the musically accented chord progressions and fluttering speed changes in the upper register. *Sonata in E Flat Minor, Suite II*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1774. *Author's Photo.*

Menuetto II ♩ = 112 - 120

5

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Fig.25.061 - (Left)  
Westerdoksplein 4, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.25.062 - (Below)  
This contemporary façade expresses  
simplicity and constance, much like this  
surprisingly modern Edwardian étude.  
The constant and subtle progression  
of the chords expresses a sense of  
consistency in its repetitive nature. by  
Béla Bartók, 1908. *Author's Photo.*

THE RHYTHM

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Handwritten annotations above measure 72: C D P C C C

Handwritten annotations above measure 78: A A D C C C D D B B G F G

Performance markings: *a tempo*, *poco rit.*, *mf*, *dim.*, *8va*, *3*, *sf*

The score consists of two systems of piano music. The first system, starting at measure 72, features a treble clef with a complex, rhythmic chordal texture and a bass clef with a simpler accompaniment. A trill is marked in measure 75. The second system, starting at measure 78, continues the treble clef texture with a *dim.* marking in measure 79. The bass clef accompaniment consists of sustained chords.



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I STAYED IN Toronto after Thanksgiving. I saw the time as an opportunity to study a building in the city, despite my poor impression of Toronto's architectural offerings. Few buildings piqued my interest, and I began to grow wary. I then remembered a building I had not yet visited: the Robarts Library.

AFTER A SHORT subway ride, I walked toward the facility. Greeted by its impressive mass, I readied for my adventure. Its charm soon faded with its hordes of tired students and food trucks lining the road. My determination forced me inside. In the lobby, lamps, seats, and kiosks littered throughout the space. These refits were disasters scattered with obnoxious pendant lights. Kiosks were clad in faux-wood veneer as to salt the building's wounds.

I RUSHED PAST the atrocities and into the escalator hall. Upward, I noticed no dance within the building. In the fourth floor reference hall, I stood in the stacks. The rows provided solace, with their masses acting as kissing pillars.

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I DECIDED TO leave. Exiting, I noticed a darkened threshold leading to the rare book room. Inside, darkness enveloped the chamber. I sat down in this cathedral-like space, and overlooked the glass wall. I noticed a reading chamber below. The lofty height was its crowning jewel. I had no access, so I admired this chapel behind glass. The narrowness of the catwalks pulled the book stacks and pillars into an inhaled breath. The red broadloom flowed like blood in its hexagonal plan. The fluttering walkways pinned to the robust columns. The pillars now linked, caressed one another. The soaring height lifted the ceiling from the walls. A shorn reveal let scarring light into the protected space. I headed outside. The rare book room was the redeeming feature of this odyssey.

Fig.26.063 - (Previous Spread)  
Robarts Library, Huron Street, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.26.064 - (Overleaf)  
Fisher Rare Book Library, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.26.065 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Robarts Winking Portal, 2016.  
*Author's Photo.*







BEFORE I LEFT, I strolled around the block. Robarts was in the form of a triangular prism. The rigour of its geometry was phenomenal. Using hexagonal motifs subdividing its form, the library was a song of acute and obtuse angles. Slits and reveals caressed one another along its façades, which dictated the proportion of its windows. The columnar reveals blew kisses at itself through its portals. The library possessed a godlike scale. The basalt-like expressions led me to an epiphany. The choreography was in its articulations, geometry, and celestial proportions. It was a building in the scale of the immortal.

WHAT MADE ROBARTS jarring was the program it housed. The inconsistencies of human demands had no place in a building of this magnitude. The need for ease of access and unnecessary appliqués nullified the caresses of the library. The Robarts Library was an immortal temple twisted for mortal use.



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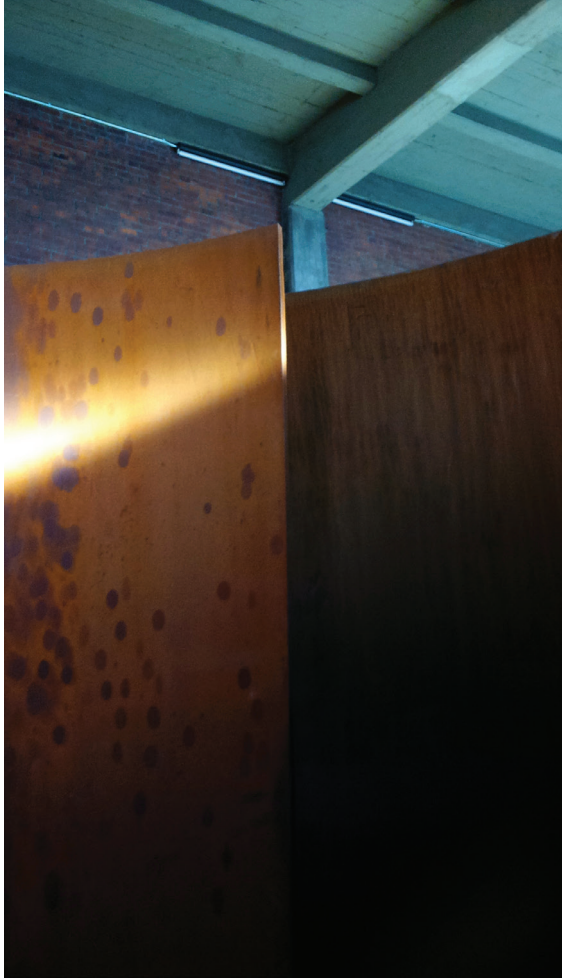
.....

WHEN I LIVED in New York, I read about the Dia: Beacon. After doing some research, I learned the gallery sat outside the city. I purchased train tickets on a crisp November morning and headed off.

LEAVING THE CITY, the railway traced the edge of the Hudson. As it arrived in Beacon, I saw the gallery as the train pulled into the station. Once stopped, I walked towards the building. The Dia was a former box factory. The architecture was sober and utilitarian, and a parking lot sat in its foreground. Not much about its frontal elevation was exciting.

WHAT DREW MY attention was a tall hedge to the right of the main entrance. Parted, it exposed a narrow path. The plantings concentrated light from the river, beckoning me to enter.

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INSTEAD, I PROCEEDED to the gallery through its front doors. The interior presented itself like many contemporary art galleries. White partitions stood with caution against the undisturbed masonry walls. A concrete floor reflected them and remained quiet to refrain from disturbing the art. The collection's showstopper was the room filled with Chamberlain sculptures. The gnarled automotive steel glimmered and posed against the utilitarian wall of the gallery.

AS I MADE my way towards the mezzanine, I walked into a sculpture by mistake. It was a piece by Richard Serra. His sinuous and tectonic forms created volumes and vacuums of space. Sculpted with sheets of metal, his works are large. The light of the hall, in large swathes, graced its rusting surface. The sculpture's curved faces distorted the wide beams. I followed the contours and continued into the sculpture. Inside, I noticed the walls as they hovered over one another. They were two lovers banned from contacting each other's bodies.

Fig.27.066 - (Previous Spread)  
Garden at Dia: Beacon, 2011.  
*Author's Photo.*

Fig.27.067 - (Overleaf)  
Serra Sculpture I, 2011. *Author's Photo.*

Fig.27.068 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Serra Sculpture II, 2011. *Author's Photo.*

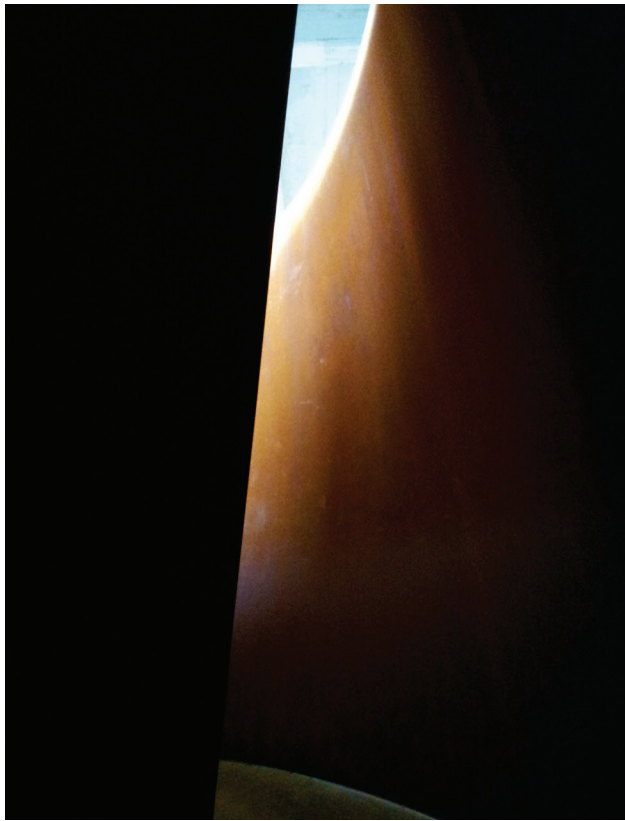
THE INTENSITY OF the chiaroscuro was the anticipating breath before a kiss. The shifting walls oscillated in its circular path. I moved at a slow pace. The experience felt like an eternity.

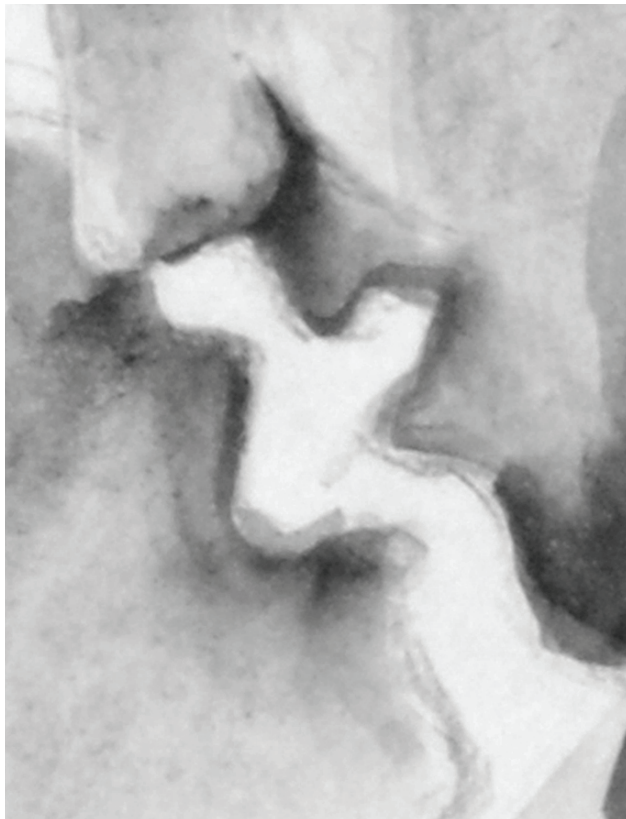
THE PATH ENDED in a barrel-like chamber in the centre of the sculpture. The art had exhaled, but I felt forlorn. The edges spent aeons longing for contact with no avail. I almost wished I met a dead end, so the two lovers could meet.

EXITING THE SCULPTURE, I touched its shifting walls. The cold rusted metal felt electric on my fingers. Contouring its longing skin felt like I a conduit between the two plates.

IT WAS LATE afternoon at this point, and I realised I had not eaten all day. Wanting to return to the city, I walked to the station. The sun was beginning to set, and I boarded. As the train followed its graceful path back to the city, I think of the slow moment I had alone. Inside this quiet sculpture, I was a part of a sensual dance between two entities.







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THE KISS IS intimate; it is the caress of two lovers. It is the oscillation of two edges in space. The Spectator's experience dictates its motion. At an oblique angle, the edges kiss. By approaching, the Spectator tears the lovers apart. This distance is an inhaled breath, the anticipatory moment before caressing. Looking into its cleaved walls, other elements announce themselves. When the Spectator withdraws, the edges contact once more.

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Fig.28.069 - (Previous Spread)

The immediate moment before contact, the milliseconds before two lovers kiss. The contours of their faces are like two edges of a river, forever chasing one another but never meeting.

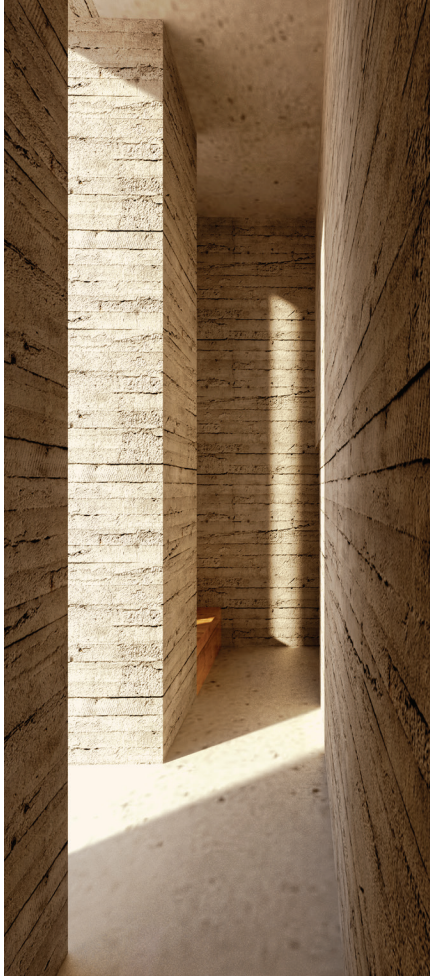
*The Inhaled Kiss* (excerpt), 2016.

*Author's Rendering.*

Fig.28.070 - (Overleaf)

Once the edges part, it allows for light, sound, and spectators to penetrate. The longing lovers now ache to be with one another, but only parted by the caresses of a foreign partner. *Vestibule*, 2014.

*Author's Rendering.*





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AT THE APEX of the performance, the dancer has removed most of her costume. Revealed, she wears nothing but a brassiere and a g-string. The crowd's cheers reach a swelling uproar. With her mischievous smile, the seductress turns around and unhooks the brassiere. She tosses it aside, only to reveal two sparkling pasties.

IN ITS FINALE, the audience cheers louder than ever. The dancer shimmies and twirls for a few more measures. She strikes her last pose and the admirers applaud. The performer bows, and struts off stage. The lights dim, and the entire ritual resets for another enchantress.

EVERY ROUTINE CULMINATES with the nude figure, presenting her panoramic glory. However, this arousing finale is an illusion. The pasties and g-string obscure her most treasured regions. Her corporeal potion has swindled the viewers. With the finale, the seductress only *appears* nude.

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THE SPECTATOR KNOWS of this illusory act, but plays along. This role is a user and viewer of architecture. In this thesis, I was the Spectator, playing along to the allure of its mystery. I completed the tacit relationship with architecture in responding to its seductive tactics. The dance is a push and pull, a constant concealing and revealing to the Spectator. When I arrived at the venue, I longed for the withheld, for the denial is the thrill. Forcing a full exposé not only breaks the illusion but also fractures the tactfulness.

THE PERFORMANCE IS a spectacle of power, with the enchantress cradling it in her hands. The effortlessness of her craft creates an aura of temptation. Her coyness, playfulness, and blasé attitude compels the audience to crave for more. The power of the alluring act is not in what the audience sees; what the dancer conceals from her Spectators is the most important. When viewers receive invitation to fill in the gaps, imaginations run wild. Her dance is a blueprint; a portal for the deepest fantasies completed by the audience.

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UNDERSTANDING THE ETIQUETTE of the theatre welcomes the Spectator to the show. In the contemporary era, such discretion is often somehow lost. The centrefold dominates the built landscape in current times, leaving little to the imagination. The demand of exposure, the infinite image, shatters the decorum of a teasing courtship. A skipped performance denies the ending of its lustre. Because of this, the completion of the untold image becomes obsolete.

THE NOSTALGIC JOURNEY highlighted the fading performance. Every instance expressed a dance between the Spectator and architecture. Enticement was present; there was no denying it. All designers involved, famous or not, choreographed the experience in their buildings. A considered effort of composition channelled through the architect into their work. The coquettish language existed across eras and styles. This is the reason why existing architecture unearthed it. To rediscover the language, rather than to build it, is to prove its existence.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS EXPRESSED

the language, and its combination becomes seductive speech. The Spectator's interaction and experience then transforms the speech into a dance. In recognising the tools of a compelling performance, one sees it in unexpected places. Enticing moments permeate the built world, and notable works are not the only performers. In the process of uncovering this language, I cited famous works as they reach a larger audience. These works encourage new reflection on experiences. With more Spectators knowing these buildings, they can better understand this language and see these often-analysed pieces of architecture in a new and seductive light.

Fig.29.071 - (Overleaf)  
Aura Construction Photo, 2014.  
*UrbanToronto.*

Fig.29.072 - (Proceeding Spread)  
Carve, 2014. *Author's Rendering.*

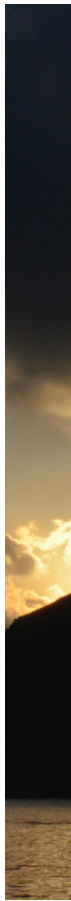
Fig.29.073 - (Page 166)  
Napoli Coast, toward Capri, 2013.  
*Author's Photo.*



NOW, THE LANGUAGE of seduction tasks the reader to encourage its renaissance. Every experience shared was a variant of the same form of dance. Like a line-up of performances, each harnessed a different style of seduction.

REDISCOVERY OF THIS glamorous portrait is important. Seduction is not the denial of a panorama. Due to the bombardment of vistas, however, lethargy contaminates the Spectator. Extending the experience and elongating its build-up results in a satisfying finale.





BOTH ARCHITECTURE AND Spectators have important roles to play. As much as the Spectator should seek temptation, architecture must provide it. Architecture, in comparison, ought to express nonchalance to maintain its mystique. For this play of power draws Spectators to return.

THE SEDUCTIVE DANCE is an incomplete portrait of temptation. This glamorous image is a Striptease performed by architecture.





# AFTERWORD

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THE RIGIDITY OF the architectural system is an important aspect of design and education. One must learn the rules before breaking them. Fundamentals are important in teaching a student what constitutes good architecture. These same fundamentals must exist for *Sprezzatura* as well. Its inherent rebellion is the key to its success. Rebellion's existence is dependent on the establishment of a fixed set of rules. Without rigid pressure, there would be no revolt. This thesis outlined those rebellious glimpses.

THESE RIGID FRAMEWORKS require paring down, but not dismantling. Through this understanding, the rules soften. They transform into a set of guides, adaptable for unique use. Much like *Archetypes in Architecture*, this thesis outlines attributes of seductive architecture. However, not all forms of architecture fall into these categories. As stated, this thesis is prone to metamorphosis. As the art of seduction evolves, so does seductive architecture.

THE COMBINATION OF seductive attributes creates the performance for every Spectator. These mischievous parts exist within the realm of a rigid set of archetypes. Within them, they perform as personified entities of building. The attributes are the Veil, Reveal, and so forth, defined by my personal experiences made over the course of this thesis. The experiences exemplified said tools in action.

BUILT UPON THESE attributes, the architecture of seduction relies on experience. As a Spectator passes through, he may notice the penetrating light or sound. Noticing the series of arranged objects is insufficient. The interaction is what creates the magic of the performance. *Sprezzatura* is a form of a delightful architecture. It can only exist through the interaction between Spectator and architecture. Much like the *Hyperotomachia Poliphili*, the architecture embodies an ideal, which affects her admirer.

THIS LEADS US to the true meaning of *Sprezzatura*. Castiglione coined the term in *The Book of the Courtier*. The text described sprezzatura as a nonchalant attitude when performing tasks of great expertise, to give the artisan the appearance of effortless. In this thesis, the word builds upon Castiglione's idea. On the exterior, *Sprezzatura* must dazzle. It requires a shimmering cloak to draw Spectators. Inside, a surprising element is important. There must exist something unexpected, like a theatrical unveiling at the end of a mystery; the mystery, however, must not be a finished plot. Questions must remain unanswered, to allude and remind Spectators to revisit the site. In essence, *Sprezzatura* is surprising twist presented nonchalantly cloaked with beauty and mystery. Nonchalance is key; as the intent is never to be perceived as contrived or exhaustively forced.

*SPREZZATURA* WAS AN explorative exercise to unearth a world danced with delight. Its designers may not have intended these instances. They embody the elements of seduction, though firmly rooted in the fixed predictability of architectural design. This predictability, combined with its inflexible education, allows seductive elements to dance through buildings. This mischief plays with the rules of a rigid and relentless architecture. They play and entice.

IF ARCHITECTURE IS a mere kit of parts, then *Sprezzatura* is the grace and delight. It is the indelible, which burns into the memory of those who visit.



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---

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# APPENDIX

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## *TRAVEL CHRONOLOGY*

2011.05.06	S. R. Crown Hall; Chicago, Illinois.
2011.11.19	Dia: Beacon; Beacon, New York.
2013.08.12	University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia
2013.09.03	Altare della Patria; Rome, Italy.
2013.09.06	Terme Diocleziano; Rome, Italy.
2013.09.06	Palazzo Barberini; Rome, Italy.
2013.09.08	Palazzo Altemps; Rome, Italy.
2013.09.27	Amalfi Coast; Salerno, Italy.
2013.09.28	Villa dei Misteri; Pompeii, Italy.
2013.10.04	Villa d'Este; Tivoli, Italy.
2013.10.09	Terme di Caracalla; Rome, Italy.



2013.10.09 Santo Stefano Rotondo;  
Rome, Italy.

2013.10.09 Parco del Celio; Rome, Italy.

2013.10.22 Urbino, Italy.

2013.10.25 Castelvecchio; Verona, Italy.

2013.10.26 La Tomba Brion; Treviso, Italy.

2013.10.26 Villa Rotonda; Vicenza, Italy.

2013.10.27 Venezia, Italy.

2016.05.21 City Courthouse; Buffalo, New York.

2016.05.22 Buffalo Central Terminal;  
Buffalo, New York.

2016.07.11 Westerdoksplein 4;  
Amsterdam, Netherlands.

2016.07.13 The Ismaili Centre, London;  
London, England.

2016.07.17 The British Museum;  
London, England.

2016.07.18 Bergen, Norway.

2016.07.20 Oslo Opera House; Oslo, Norway.

2016.10.14 Robarts Library; Toronto, Ontario.

