

considering the surface

writings on people, occasion, space and place

by
Jonas Chin

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

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2019

© Jonas Chin 2019

author's declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the final thesis, which will include any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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

abstract

The following collection of writings reflects on *people, occasion, space* and *place*. Together, the writings explore how we might respond to and design for human presence. The human figure, as used in architectural representation, is employed within speculative sketches of urban life to consider the ways in which human presence might be revisited as a driving factor in design. By depicting figures in relation to their surrounding surfaces while engaged in eminently human routines such as dining, these writings aim to reimagine the ways in which we inhabit space.

The human body is a familiar measure for communicating a space's purpose in architectural design. In architectural representation, human scale figures provide a referential spatial scale, but also convey the architect's intentions regarding how a space should be inhabited. The affective dimensions of human scale figures can be conceptualized through the attributes of persona, form, movement and presence: the components which shape how we occupy space as individuals or as a collective. Drawings of human expressivity that isolate these four attributes evoke radically different understandings of the same space.

A series of recollections from my own dining experiences—at a range of scales and settings—explore the portrayal of human presence within architectural space. As one of the most fundamental ways in which we come together, dining is a globally shared experience necessary to life and culture. This archetypal experience can reveal consistent patterns in the affective connections between objects, humans and space. I

describe the spaces where such shared experiences take place through the occasions and objects which create these moments, to give form to the otherwise intangible dimensions of architecture.

By proposing a speculative alternative to the typology of inhabitation, I question the relationship between the definitions of space in architecture and its availability for pragmatic needs. In this alternative, the affective representations of occasions create opportunities for people to reclaim space in a city of strictly regulated uses. The adaptation of their everyday lives to drastically different spatial conditions suggests how we can define spaces beyond mere dimensions and boundaries, speculating on the allowances, flexibilities and intensities of space as formed by our inhabitation.

When components of space are removed from their prescribed functions, they become formal gestures that provoke unique interpretation. These formal gestures of place-making invite the human attributes of persona, form, movement and presence to define the functions of space. Descriptions of the occasions examine how these formal gestures accommodate the perspectives of distinct human attributes. The resulting language of place distills an architecture defined through human presence.

This collection of writings forms a theoretical framework for human-centered place-making, opening new dialogues between the representation of architectural space and its imagined occupation.

acknowledgements

Throughout the long journey of this thesis I was blessed with the companionship and support of wonderful people both from within and outside of the Waterloo Architecture community. I would like to take this opportunity to humbly express my gratitude.

To my supervisor, Dereck Revington, for indulging in my curiosity in many things and pushing me in my numerous attempts to use my words to the best of my ability. The knowledge and resources you shared with me formed the foundation of this thesis, and continuously challenged me to refine my work. I could not have accomplished this without your patient guidance, and for that I am grateful.

To my committee member, David Correa, for your enthusiasm and investment in my exploration. You were the voice of reason which countered my most stubborn ideas and that of encouragement in my moments of doubt.

To Donald McKay, for advising me to pursue what intrigues me, no matter how small. To Robert Jan van Pelt and David Lieberman, for joining the discussion with thoughtful criticisms and stories of your own.

To my housemates, with whom I am fortunate to have shared the routines of everyday life: Daniel, for being there since the very beginning to exchange thoughts on anything that came to mind, a process through which we collaborated, disagreed and matured. Michelle, for your care in all things that often go unnoticed, and for sharing with us the small pleasures of life. Ammar, for your lighthearted kindness and spontaneous adventures, and for making time to listen.

To Alex, Christine, Emma, Emmy, Fion, Hillary, Iryna, Jason, Julia, Matthew, Osman and Wesley for inspiring me through our conversations and for your feedback on my writings. To my friends in room 3002, for your comradery through difficult yet memorable times. To the class of 2022, for showing me glimpses of worlds unknown.

To my family, for your unconditional love and support, despite the distances that separate us.

To Natalie, for always being there for me through the ups and downs, at once the most critical and supportive of everything I do.

to those who taught me the pleasures of eating together.

table of contents

iii	author's declaration
v	abstract
ix	acknowledgements
xvii	list of figures
	<i>prologue</i>
3	finding space
7	introduction
	<i>people</i>
31	the human figure
43	a catalogue of figures
	<i>occasions</i>
103	a script for an occasion
135	memories of dining
	<i>spaces</i>
215	the utopian speculations
225	the City and the Surface
	<i>place</i>
281	the affordances of forms
293	making place
	<i>epilogue</i>
321	conclusion
325	bibliography

list of figures

all images and figures by author unless noted otherwise.

- Fig. 1.1. curiosity and the virtue of inexperience
- Fig. 1.2. the voluntary prisoner of boundaries
- Fig. 1.3. questions of space
Benard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 54. modified from original.
- Fig. 1.4. occasions and movements
Benard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts (London: Academy Editions, 1994), 46. modified from original.
- Fig. 1.5. drawing of a defaced Parisian apartment
Saul Steinberg, Doubling Up, 1946. Digital Image. Available from: <http://www.theplanjournal.com/article/act-and-art-architectural-critique-drawing-house-and-sign> (Accessed June 16, 2018). modified from original.
- Fig. 2.1. portraits of people
David Hockney, My Parents, 1977. Digital Image. Available from: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hockney-my-parents-t03255> (Accessed September 25, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 2.2. Saves the day!
Teodor Javanaud Emdén, MAD Architects, 2017. Digital Image. Available from: <https://skaljubbar.se/2017/07/20/mad-architects/> (Accessed November 1, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 2.3. standards for sitting
Julius Panero and Martin Željuk, Human Dimensions and Interior Space: A Source Book of Design Reference Standards (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1979), 126. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.4. the subtle presence of the human figure
- Fig. 2.5. Archizoom Associati, Habitable Closet
Archizoom Associati, Habitable Closet, 1970 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 70. modified from original.

- Fig. 2.6. Atelier Bow-Wow, Machiya Guest House**
Atelier Bow-Wow, Machiya Guest House, in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 87. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.7. Marcel Breuer, Hunter College of the City of New York**
Marcel Breuer, Hunter College of the City of New York, 1955-1959 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 182. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.8. Cero9, TRP**
Cero9, TRP, 2002 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 211. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.9. First Office, PS1 Dolmen**
First Office, PS1 Dolmen, 2016 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 318. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.10. Steven Holl, Chapel of St. Ignatius**
Steven Holl, Chapel of St. Ignatius, 1994-1997 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 476. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.11. Höweler + Yoon, White Out**
Höweler + Yoon, White Out, 2009 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 500. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.12. Bjarke Ingels, VMCP Hotel**
Bjarke Ingels, VMCP Hotel, 2010 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 508. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.13. Le Corbusier, Wanner Project**
Le Corbusier, Wanner Project, in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 621. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.14. John Portman, Tomorrow Square**
John Portman, Tomorrow Square, 1996-2002 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 876. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.15. Philippe Rahm, Jade Meteo Park Climatorium**
Philippe Rahm, Jade Metro Park Climatorium, 2003 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 902. modified from original.

- Fig. 2.16. Superstudio, Continuous Monument**
Superstudio, Continuous Monument, 2010 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1083. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.17. Raimund Abraham, Transplantational Cities**
Raimund Abraham, Transplantational Cities, 1966 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 11. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.18. Bolles+Wilson, LB Dom North Neighbourhood**
Bolles+Wilson, LB Dom North Neighbourhood, 2015 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 160. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.19. Yona Friedman, L'Architecture Mobile**
Yona Friedman, L'Architecture Mobile, 1959 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 338. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.20. Go Hasegawa, House in a Forest**
Go Hasegawa, House in a Forest, in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 428. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.21. Frederick Kiesler, Study for "Blood Flames" Exhibition**
Frederick Kiesler, Study for "Blood Flames" Exhibition, 1947 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 569. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.22. Léon Krier, Untitled**
Léon Krier, Untitled, in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 579. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.23. Le Corbusier, Le Modulor**
Le Corbusier, Le Modulor, 1948 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 616. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.24. Konstantin Melnikov, Leningrad Pravda Building**
Konstantin Melnikov, Leningrad Pravda Building, 1924 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 692. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.25. Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Fabric Pavilion**
Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Fabric Pavilion, 2009 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 849. modified from original.

- Fig. 2.26. Smiljan Radić, Home for All**
Smiljan Radić, Home for All, 2011 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 900. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.27. Bernardo Rudofsky, We Don't Need a New Way to Build**
Bernardo Rudofsky, We Don't Need a New Way to Build, 1938 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 947. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.28. Wang Shu, Imagining the House**
Wang Shu, Imagining the House, 2012 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1154. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.29. Shigeru Ban, Singapore Biennale Exhibition**
Shigeru Ban, Singapore Biennale Exhibition, 2006 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 98. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.30. Brodsky and Utkin, Crystal Palace**
Brodsky and Utkin, Crystal Palace, 1989-1990 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 187. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.31. Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Slow House**
Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Slow House, 1991 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 255. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.32. Peter Eisenman, Madison Components Plant**
Peter Eisenman, Madison Components Plant, 1981-1982 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 286. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.33. Louis Kahn, Mill Creek Housing**
Louis Kahn, Mill Creek Housing, 1952-1962 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 559. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.34. Jimenez Lai, Citizens of No Place**
Jimenez Lai, Citizens of No Place, 2012 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 598-599. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.35. El Lissitzky, Ilya Ehrenburg Vitron Illustration**
El Lissitzky, Ilya Ehrenburg Vitron Illustration, 2012 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 633. modified from original.

- Fig. 2.36. NL Architects, Leerpark**
NL Architects, Leerpark, 2004-2007 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 788. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.37. Ralph Rapson, Design of a House for Cheerful Living**
Ralph Rapson, Design of a House for Cheerful Living, 1945 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 905. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.38. Carlo Scarpa**
Carlo Scarpa in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 985. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.39. Mario Tedeschi, Molded Plywood Chair and Rocking Chair**
Mario Tedeschi, Molded Plywood Chair and Rocking Chair, 1954 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1097. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.40. Bernard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts**
Bernard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts, 1978 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1107. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.41. Luis Barragán, Gardens for the Hotel Pierre Marques**
Luis Barragán, Gardens for the Hotel Pierre Marques, 1955 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 103. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.42. Alberto Campo Baeza, Editorial SM Headquarters**
Alberto Campo Baeza, Editorial SM Headquarters, 2001 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 201. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.43. Sverre Fehn, Nordic Pavilion**
Sverre Fehn, Nordic Pavilion, 1962 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 313. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.44. Future Systems, Selfridges**
Future Systems, Selfridges, 2003 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 363. modified from original.
- Fig. 2.45. Frank O. Gehry, Walt Disney Concert Hall**
Frank O. Gehry, Walt Disney Concert Hall, 1988 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 372. modified from original.

Fig. 2.46. LAN, Urban Renovation

LAN, Urban Renovation, 2009-2014 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 604. modified from original.

Fig. 2.47. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Brick Country House

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Brick Country House, 1923 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 713. modified from original.

Fig. 2.48. Frei Otto, Study for a Tent City

Frei Otto, Study for a Tent City, 1967 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 816. modified from original.

Fig. 2.49. Eduardo Souto de Moura, Physic Garden 3 Laboratory Building

Eduardo Souto de Moura, Physic Garden 3 Laboratory Building, 2005-2011 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1057. modified from original.

Fig. 2.50. Roger Taillibert, Nantes Convention Center

Roger Taillibert, Nantes Convention Center, in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1088. modified from original.

Fig. 2.51. Giuseppe Terragni, Casa del Fascio

Giuseppe Terragni, Casa del Fascio, 1932-1936 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1098. modified from original.

Fig. 2.52. UN Studio, Mediatheque

UN Studio, Mediatheque, 2006 in Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample and MOS, An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 1115. modified from original.

Terunobu Fujimori, Design, 2010. Digital Image. Available from: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1243629/design-terunobu-fujimori/> (Accessed Aug 27, 2019). modified from original.

Fig. 3.1. designing a teahouse

Fig. 3.2. recipes: ingredients and processes

Fig. 3.3. table: before, during and after

Sarah Wigglesworth, Increasing Disorder in a Dining Table, 1997 in Paulette Singley and Jamie Horwitz, Eating Architecture (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 12-13. modified from original.

- Fig. 3.4. reclamation of space
Ozan Kose, Yeryüzü Sofrası, 2013. Photograph. Available from: <http://www.warscapes.com/blog/insurgent-citizenship-3rd-anniversary-gezi-park-protests> (Accessed January 16, 2018). modified from original.
- Fig. 3.5. movement i, point
- Fig. 3.6. movement ii, line
- Fig. 3.7. movement iii, plane
- Fig. 3.8. movement iv, surface
- Fig. 3.9. a tool for the emphasis of hands
Ponsawan Vuthisatkul, The New Normal, 2018. Photograph. Available from: <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/07/29/ponsawan-vuthisatkul-creates-serving-tools-combat-obesity-design/> (Accessed October 10, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 3.10. a tool for the restriction of hands
Marije Vogelzang, Grazing City Scapes, 2016. Photograph. Available from: https://marijevogelzang.nl/portfolio_page/grazing-city-scapes/ (Accessed October 10, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 3.11. measurements of action
- Fig. 3.12. measurements of temperature
- Fig. 3.13. measurements of size
- Fig. 3.14. measurements of distance
- Fig. 3.15. a moving dining surface
Atelier Bow-Wow, White Limousine Yatai , 2003. Photograph. <https://architizer.com/projects/white-limousine-yatai/> (Accessed June 18 , 2018). modified from original.
- Fig. 3.16. learning to cook with my mother
- Fig. 3.17. fighting for space with my brother
- Fig. 3.18. sharing the table with my father
- Fig. 3.19. dividing the table
- Fig. 3.20. establishing my boundaries
- Fig. 3.21. space and occupation at the teahouse

- Fig 3.22. setting the table
- Fig 3.23. reach, gather, compress, eat
- Fig 3.24. a map of movements at the table
- Fig 3.25. gathering in front of the television
- Fig 3.26. concealing the identity of objects
- Fig 3.27. composition of the table
- Fig 3.28. choreography between A & B
- Fig 3.29. a script for knife sharpening
- Fig 3.30. choreography in the kitchen space
- Fig 3.31. steps of the chef's preparation
- Fig 3.32. served by a conveyor belt
- Fig 3.33. an alternative setting
- Fig 3.34. a labyrinth of dining booths
- Fig 3.35. implied presence of disembodied hands
- Fig 3.36. around the orange beacon
- Fig 3.37. setting i
- Fig 3.38. setting ii
- Fig 3.39. setting iii
- Fig 3.40. setting iv
- Fig 3.41. setting v
- Fig 4.1. the authoritative architect
- Fig 4.2. a vision for the city

Le Corbusier, Ville Contemporaine in Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, Collage City (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983), 3. modified from original.

- Fig. 4.3. snowfall in the city
Aldo Van Eyck, Amsterdam in the Snow. Digital Image. Available from: <http://blog.yalebooks.com/2015/01/16/sneak-peek-aldo-van-eyck/> (Accessed September 16, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 4.4. a speculative utopia
Superstudio, Canyon, Superstudio & Radicals (Tokyo: Interia Shuppan, 1982), 137. modified from original.
- Fig. 4.5. the composition of the City
- Fig. 4.6. spaces in the City
Dimensions Guide, DouHuman Figures, 2019. Available from: <https://www.dimensions.guide/browse/humans> (Accessed October 25, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig. 4.7. a guide to proper living
- Fig. 4.8. standardized playscapes
- Fig. 4.9. a city of destinations
- Fig. 4.10. a catalogue for the ideal dwelling
- Fig. 4.11. gatherings on surfaces
- Fig. 4.12. transformation of residual spaces
- Fig. 4.13. the infiltration of surfaces—day 1
- Fig. 4.14. the infiltration of surfaces—day 17
- Fig. 4.15. sharing space with strangers
- Fig. 4.16. the human figure as a measurement of function
- Fig. 4.17. the facilitating role of the obstructing objects
- Fig. 4.18. the nomadic occupation of amphibious beings
- Fig. 4.19. the rigid development of the City
- Fig. 4.20. the non-hierarchical sprawl of surfaces
- Fig. 4.21. fading gaps as the surfaces merged
- Fig. 4.22. a blanket of snow

- Fig 4.23. gathering around a large table
- Fig 4.24. the memories of sitting
- Fig 4.25. the temporality of occasions without objects
- Fig 4.26. scalelessness and placelessness
- Fig 4.27. scanning the horizon for an entrance
- Fig 5.1. Dijkstraat Playground
- Fig 5.2. site comparison: abandoned space
Aldo Van Eyck, Dijkstraat Playground. Photograph. Available from: <https://www.thepolisblog.org/2012/06/ethic-of-care-in-urban-interventions.html> (Accessed September 28, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig 5.3. site comparison: playground
Aldo Van Eyck, Dijkstraat Playground. Photograph. Available from: <https://www.thepolisblog.org/2012/06/ethic-of-care-in-urban-interventions.html> (Accessed September 28, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig 5.4. Noguchi's play mountain
Isamu Noguchi, Model for Contoured Playground, 1941. Photograph. Available from: <https://www.noguchi.org/museum/calendar/event/2019-11-02-1600-curators-tour-in-search-of-contoured-playground/> (Accessed September 28, 2019). modified from original.
- Fig 5.5. occasions at the table
Alexandre Dumas, La Table d'hote in Le Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine (Torino: SITG, 1978). modified from original.
- Fig 5.6. thin outlines of separation
- Fig 5.7. sharing beneath the tree canopy
- Fig 5.8. distances of intimacy
- Fig 5.9. the embracing surfaces
- Fig 5.10. playscapes
- Fig 5.11. playsculptures
- Fig 5.12. cracks in the Surface
- Fig 5.13. solitude among crowds

prologue



Fig 1.1. curiosity and the virtue of inexperience

finding space

The animal gave the fence another tug with his teeth. A piece fell off to reveal a hole just wide enough for him to squeeze through. For a moment he froze and stared at the inviting opening, hesitant to make a move; among the list of gestures and movements he had acquired over the course of maturing, following his instincts to leave the cage wasn't one of them. The animal was brought into the fenced space when he was a pup and he had spent his entire life gradually outgrowing his home on the wrong side of the fence. It must have been a long time coming, for when he felt the sudden desire for the extra bit of space, it was accompanied by the moment of realization that unmasked the space as a cage that held him prisoner. The animal had been working on the fence for months, maybe years—he couldn't properly keep track of the repetitive days; the cycles of his teeth sharpening and dulling was the only measurement of his days left behind the fence, as they had gradually thinned the fence to failure. The animal was reborn the moment he crawled through the opening. He looked back and saw clearly the prescribed life he left behind him inside the cage. Every day he had moved between the same spaces of eating, exercising and sleeping; he had longed for the scheduled meals and routine visits; he had encountered the same uninspired creatures within an unchanging setting.

The other side of the fence welcomed him with the warmth of the sun, the gentle rustling of leaves, the sounds of water moving in a nearby creek at varying speeds, and a mixture of colours the animal had never seen before. It was a promising start to a new beginning. No agendas, no boundaries, no limitations. Slightly overwhelmed by the amount of information, he counted his first steps in the new environment



Fig 1.2. the voluntary prisoner of boundaries

as he made his way towards the water; he had never before been able to take that many steps without arriving at a fence, and the excitement prompted him to imagine the numerous journeys without end that awaited him. He noticed a number of sets of footprints that suggested the possibility of encountering different beings. He sniffed the grass, the flowers, the plants, and they all returned different sensory treats. The animal was alone in an unfamiliar environment, but he was optimistic amid the temporary uncertainty that he would soon settle and be integrated into the larger environment.

The sun set below the horizon, replaced by the new moon. There was no light, no shelter, no destination. Freedom wasn't what the animal had ever expected. The years spent in the fenced space had conditioned him to follow a prescribed lifestyle that provided comfort and stability, but which also disconnected him from the basic instincts of survival. The animal was not prepared to make its own way within the unprogrammed space. It was difficult to find cues for orientation in a highly undefined environment, and the animal had never had to search for directions in a space of his own. The stimulations that he had initially found so pleasing and exciting all demanded attention and caused him confusion when they overlapped. Perplexed by the lack of guidance in the new environment, the animal came to an eventual halt with no reference point to tell him where he was or where he should be headed next.

It didn't take long for him to miss his life in the cage. Indeed, it was small, but he knew every corner of the cage well and had covered every inch of it countless times over the years. He knew which rock was the most comfortable to lie on, and that beneath the same rock was the best place to hide from the sun. He knew that several times a day he would be fed his favourite food and have his hair brushed. He knew that despite the lack of surprise and excitement that he could find within the cage, he was also well protected within it from the dangers of the unknown. He knew he must continue the search for another space contained within a boundary, so that he could once again be safe within the comfort of certainty.

introduction

I would like to open this introductory discussion with a poetic statement on place and occasion by architect Aldo Van Eyck:

“There is a garden in her face.”

Thomas Campion¹

¹ Van Eyck headed the statement with a verse by poet Thomas Campion, the entire verse reads:

There is a garden in her face,
Where Roses and white Lilies grow;
A heav'nly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits doe flow.
There Cherries grow, which none may buy
Till Cherry ripe themselves doe cry.

Space has no room, time not a moment for man.

He is excluded.

In order to 'include' him—help his homecoming—he must be gathered into their meaning.

(Man is the subject as well as the object of architecture.)

Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more.

For space in the image of man is place and time in the image of man is occasion.

Today space and what it should coincide with in order to become 'space'—man at home with himself—are lost. Both search for the same place, but cannot find it.

Provide that place.

Is man able to penetrate the material he organizes into hard shape between one man and another, between what is here and what is there, between this and a following movement?

Is he able to find the right place for the right occasion?

No—So start with this: make
a welcome of each door and
a countenance of each window.

Make of each a place, a bunch of places of each house and each city, for a house is a tiny city, a city a huge house.

Get closer to the center of human reality and build its counterform—for each man and all men, since they no longer do it themselves.

Whoever attempts to solve the riddle of space in the abstract, will construct the outline of emptiness and call it space.

Whoever attempts to meet man in the abstract will speak with its echo and call this a dialogue.

Man still breathes both in and out. When is architecture going to do the same?²

2 Aldo van Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, ed. Vincent Ligtelijn and Francis Strauven (Amsterdam: SUN, 2008), 293.

What does it mean to make place for people in architecture, or as Aldo Van Eyck poetically puts it, to prevent us from suffocating by allowing architecture to breathe in and out like people do for whom it is designed?³

My search for an answer begins with a contentious claim that architects have forgotten how to design for people. I must clarify that my comment does not intend to generalize about current architectural practice because of its lack of intentions and gestures to providing spaces that enable people to be present; any space is inevitably occupied by programs that cannot be planned, as with, for example, spaces like parks, sidewalks, libraries, and dwellings. The creation of spaces—whether inside or outside (of architecture, although the distinctions between the two are not entirely clear)—consistently straddle different conflicting priorities that analogously speaking reduce human presence to a background constant rather than foregrounding it as a central, ever-changing dynamic.

The practices and theories of architecture have become streamlined for convenience from simplifying the diverse plurality of people into standardized, undifferentiated beings identified by numbers—populations rather than communities of individuals. The relentless developments that have characterized the evolution of the contemporary city create monuments displaying the economic aspirations and power dynamics of governing bodies, while discussions among the elites of architecture generally focus on both ends of a spectrum: on one end, the micro scales of progressive technologies and formal speculations, and on the other the never-ending issues of urbanism and environmental responsibilities.

The standardization of the human can be traced back to postwar modernist developments. The radical proposals of large-scale architecture had ambitions to develop organized infrastructural cities, and machines for living that disregarded any considerations for the occupants' less quantifiable needs.⁴ The oversimplification of the human

3 Ibid., 296.

4 Bernard Leupen, *Design and Analysis* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1997), 91.

presence in architecture limited the architects' tools for design, as they make no reference to the distances between people in space, and are not built to differentiate a group of disparate individuals from a connected community.⁵

The paradigm that continues to influence us assumes a cause-and-effect relationship between the intentions and the occasions of space, granting architects responsibilities as choreographers that mould occupants to certain lifestyles.

This collection of writings is a dialogue that explores an alternative relationship between architecture and the occupants of the spaces it designs. The aim is to arrive at a design process inspired by the shifting dynamics of human presence; a distilled architecture that remains undefined unless it is being occupied. When occupants are freed from the constraints than require performed gestures of various prescribed rhythms within the surrounding environment, they may see new, mutually beneficial relationships emerge between architecture and the individual, and between space and society. Reconceiving our use (and misuse) of space could therefore challenge the currently restricted paradigms that limit architecture.⁶ If we could appropriate different lifestyles into an architecture without definite programs, could this enable people to reintegrate into the city as active participants, rather than as the passive onlookers they are currently reduced to?⁷

5 Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 299.

6 Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

7 Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 108–11.

- 1 . 4 If, etymologically, “defining” space is both making space distinct and stating the precise nature of space, is this an essential paradox of space?
- 1 . 5 Architecturally, if defining space is making space distinct, does making space distinct define space?
- 1 . 5 1 If architecture is the art of making space distincy, is it also the art of stating the precise nature of space?
- 1 . 6 Is architecture the concept of space, the space, and the definition of space?
- 1 . 6 1 If the concept of space is not a space, is the materialization of the concept of space a space?
- 1 . 6 1 1 Is the conceptual space then the space of which material is the concept?
- 1 . 6 1 2 Incidentally, is the experience of the materialization of the concept of space the experience of space?

Questions of Space

Fig 1.3. questions of space

Space is a deceptive term with a wide range of interpretations; the word can mean everything and nothing at the same time. Concepts of space were not a significant part of architectural discussions until the early twentieth century, but have since dominated conversations within the field.⁸

Ideologically-speaking, space is the surrounding environment that contains and dominates the senses of the body, and it is materialized by our attempts to compose what we know as felt space into continuums that form the built world. We make space distinct through determining the boundaries of space.⁹ Architects have been obsessed with using tangible boundaries as tools for the ‘creation of space,’ while the spaces that were made distinct remained simplistic, amorphous, or even undetermined emptiness framed within arbitrary lines.¹⁰ In *Architecture and Disjunction*, Bernard Tschumi proposed a series of questions on the different interpretations of space—the definitions of space, the materialization of space, the languages of space, etc.—and their different implications for approaches to design.¹¹ He believes that the concepts of space and the events of space should not be considered to have a cause-and-effect relationship; however, discussions and critiques of architecture showed otherwise. There was too much focus on the tangible qualities of forms, dimensions and aesthetics with little consideration of the occasions that take place within the architecture.¹² Architects adapted linguistic syntaxes to assign functions to different spatial conditions, ignoring the fact that the occurrences of the socioeconomic spaces preceded the language, irrespective to the forms of the spaces.¹³ The occasions of space reflect the unprescribed dynamics of the people. How could the interpretations of space, then, be represented through a unified language of architecture

8 Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 16.

9 Ibid., 28–51.

10 Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 295.

11 Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 52–62.

12 Ibid., 16.

13 Ibid., 50.

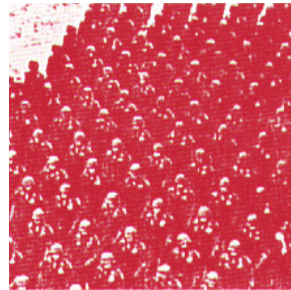
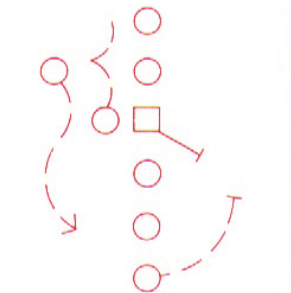
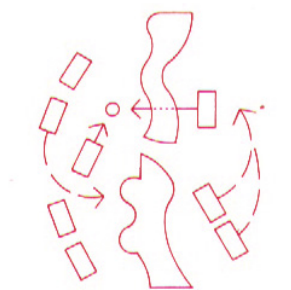
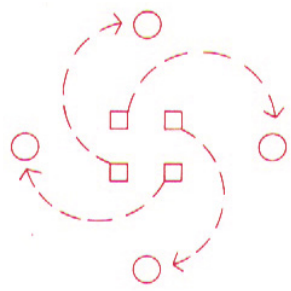
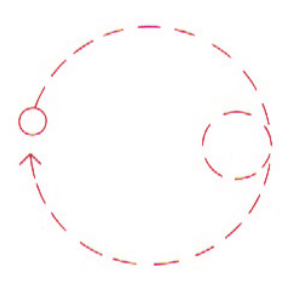
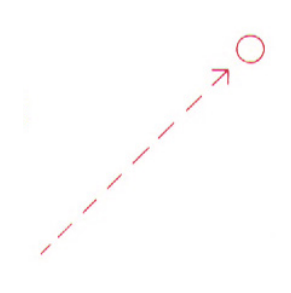
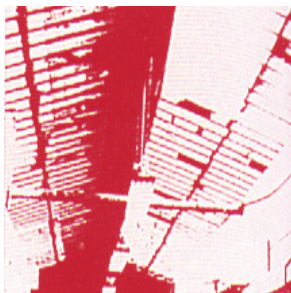
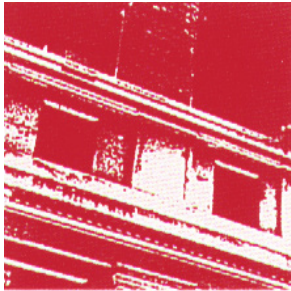
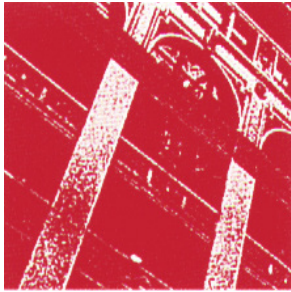


Fig. 1.4. occasions and movements

to address the realities of different occupants?

Tschumi's explorations in *The Manhattan Transcripts* attempt to document the event space that breaks open the language of its surrounding architectural forms and gestures. The occasions within the event space demonstrated that the linguistic allocations of space do not reflect or govern the use of space. Space is ultimately a void that exists within the boundaries we establish, and the occasions of space could exist without them. The components of Euclidean space—the point, the line, and the plane—could be translated into the presence, movements and occasions that define an architectural space in our image; and indeed there is no architecture without them.¹⁴ If architecture cannot prescribe functions to an intangible space, could everchanging events suggest different forms for amorphous space?

There is a reciprocal relationship inherent to the different roles people play in architecture, as the provider (object) and the recipient (subject) of architecture. To prompt a paradigm shift in the architectural language, discussions and critiques of architecture should focus on the occasions of everyday life. Correspondingly, architecture should then provide for and respond to occupants. It is not enough for architecture to simply make space available without any consideration of human presence within that space.

Aldo Van Eyck considers both time and space to be abstract concepts that are inaccurately used to describe the relationship between human presence and the environments that stage everyday life. He proposed that if the distinct boundaries of intangible spaces are to have a bearing on the immeasurable experiences of real people, the abstract concepts of time and space should be replaced by occasion and place.¹⁵

The waves of postwar developments in Europe favoured large-scale architecture and reduced the occupants of architecture to values in numbers. Van Eyck proposed an architecture of the in-between in

¹⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵ Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 296.

response, to reconcile architecture with the locus of the human being.¹⁶ The in-between bridges the polarities of the house and the city, the outside and the inside, the individual and the collective, to prompt changes to the hard boundaries used for the distinction of space in architecture.¹⁷ Van Eyck referred to the ‘in-between’ as the spaces of dialogue between architecture, as an act of encircling space and conceiving architecture as a platform to stage occasions. As opposed to treating people as recipients of prescribed standardizations, the spaces acknowledge the roles of the human presence in defining the functions and identities of space¹⁸—in other words, they provide the place for people’s occasions. Van Eyck proposed that acts of place-making through architecture should introduce non-uniform spaces that can break the mould of the monotoned city.¹⁹ His approach was best exemplified by his playground projects scattered throughout Amsterdam to reactivate unused spaces in the postwar city, transforming them into meeting places for everyone from children to adults alike.²⁰

Aside from their function of activating the city’s spaces as event grounds, the playgrounds also exhibit multiple rhythms—implying that the playgrounds must be designed in such a way that they are able to be absorbed by the city even when not occupied for specific purposes.²¹ The playground utilized a collection of primitive forms to activate the imagination of the users by suggesting a whole spectrum of functions in response to different spatial conditions.²² The forms perform as objects of reference for people to engage in playing, one of the most creative and primitive acts, without limiting to specific modes of interactions. Van Eyck’s efforts of place-making through primitive forms is an example of the opposite of a standardized architecture, where the objects’

16 Ibid., 108.

17 Ibid., 126.

18 Ibid., 295–301.

19 Ibid., 64.

20 Ibid., 113.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 103.

allowances for their occupants overshadow the concerns for the correct dimensions and aesthetics. Referencing to the roles of primitive forms in place-making, this thesis explores the possibility for spaces to not be defined through the distinction of boundaries but described only by the occasions that take place.

This thesis is a collection of writings of architecture.²³ There has always been a tension between approaching architecture through visualizations or through writing: the former allows designers to frame the design true to their visions, while the latter stretches the extents of time and space to explore more possibilities. In this work, I connect multiple events in space into a narrative through conceptual writings the same way as architecture more traditionally communicates through the tangible mediums of drawings, models and buildings; words communicate the abstract ideas of space, while the inclusion of the human presence in the descriptions grounds its reality.

The approach in this thesis echoes the work of visionary architects prominent in the dialogues of the 1960s and 1970s, who were better-known not for their built artifacts but for the critical provocations their proposals generated. Speculative projects by the likes of Archizoom, Archigram, Superstudio, Yona Friedman and Rem Koolhaas emphasized that architecture should never be confined to a focus on the buildings themselves.²⁴ Ultimately the buildings are ideas of how we can occupy our surrounding space. As an analogy, Will Steacy edited a book called “Photographs not Taken” that doesn’t contain a single photo, but is instead a collection of essays describing photographs that do not exist; for different reasons that are both controllable and otherwise.²⁵ Whatever the nature of the circumstances, the photographers’ anecdotes present the moments in the photographs that would have been lost if they were

23 “They are not writing *about* architecture. They are architecture in themselves.” Bernard Tschumi, “Modes of Inscription,” (*ANY: Architecture New York*, 1993), 50–53.

24 Martin van Schaik et al., eds., *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956 - 76* (München: Prestel, 2005), 8–9.

25 Will Steacy, ed., *Photographs Not Taken: A Collection of Photographers' Essays* (Hillsborough: Daylight Community Arts Foundation, 2012).

captured in an artifact.

Can descriptions of the occasions of a space, then, provide a more accurate representation of its reality than the details of its physical makeup? We talk about space, we talk about the occasions in space, but we rarely talk about space through the descriptions of the occasions. Our perceptions of space limit us from experiencing space in its entirety at once,²⁶ yet we are under the impression that the holistic approach to designing space involves putting together fragments of our perceptions. In one of the excerpts in *Species of Spaces*, George Perec referenced a drawing of a rooming-house for his proposal of a novel.²⁷ The drawing portrayed the rooming-house with three quarters of its façade removed, displaying the everyday activities of the tenants, their different approaches to occupying the units of similar dimensions, and removing the physical separations to string together the narratives in the units. The proposed novel was a detailed list of observations, no matter how small, that he observed in the drawing. Whether or not the narratives Perec assigned to the simultaneous occasions in the drawings were true to Steinberg's intentions was unknown, but he transformed the two-dimensional projections into well-occupied spaces defined with depth, using only words.

The descriptions in this thesis are heavily influenced by Perec's writings about the miniscule details he drew from his observations. The occasions of our everyday lives introduce a language in which we can communicate the compositions of space through the familiar acts with which anyone can intuitively relate. Our simple presence in space, no matter how gentle and subtle, intrudes on the order of the architectural space we occupy.²⁸ By bringing the dialogues in architecture to a more accessible platform of discussion, the occupants of architecture (or the readers of this thesis) are given the opportunity to re-evaluate their role in the making of place, and observe as space metamorphoses as

26 Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 40–41.

27 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 40–44.

28 Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 123–25.

they perform even the most mundane acts. This repositions the lens of architecture to bring into focus the human presence and to observe the immeasurable dimensions of space, which would not exist without the occasions (rather than the boundaries) that define that space. To allude to Van Eyck once more, we should be creating architecture within which time and space would be undefined if it were not for the presence of people.

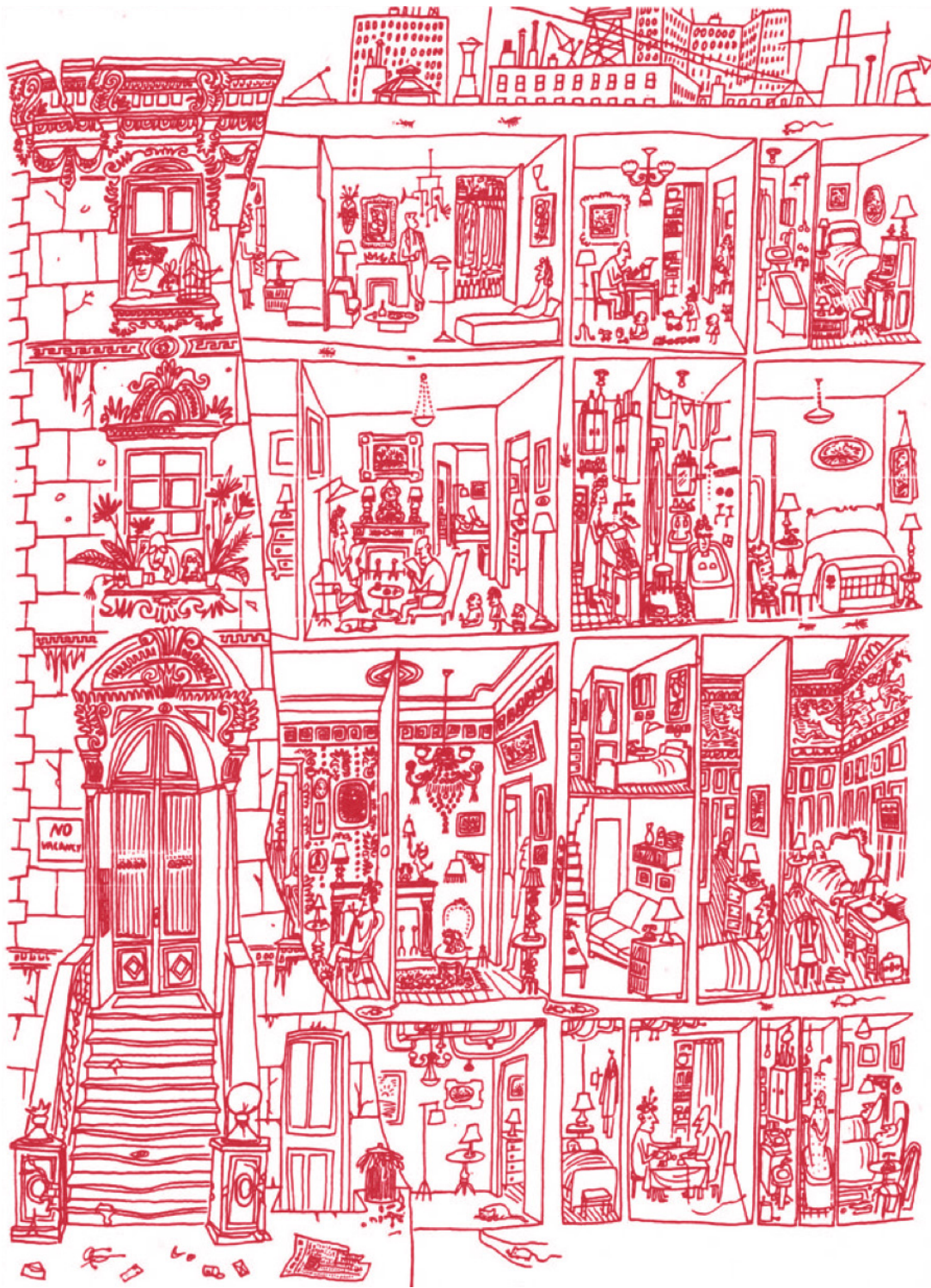


Fig 1.5. drawing of a defaced Parisian apartment

- 3 bathrooms. The one on the third floor is empty, in the one on the second, a woman is taking a bath; in the one on the ground floor, a man is having a shower.
- 3 fireplaces, varying greatly in size, but all on the one axis.
None of them is working (no one has lit a fire in them, if you prefer).
The ones on the first and second floors are equipped with fire-dogs; the one on the first floor is split into two by a partition which also divides the mouldings and the ceiling rose.
- 6 candelabra and one Calder-style mobile
- 5 telephones
- 1 upright piano with stool
- 10 adult individuals of the male sex, of whom
 - 1 is having a drink
 - 1 is typing
 - 2 are reading the newspaper, one sitting in an armchair, the other stretched out on a divan
 - 3 are asleep
 - 1 is having a shower
 - 1 is eating toast
 - 1 is coming through the doorway into a room where there is a dog
- 10 adult individuals of the female sex, of whom
 - 1 is doing her chores
 - 1 is sitting down
 - 1 is holding a baby in her arms
 - 2 are reading, one, sitting down, the newspaper, the other, lying down, a novel
 - 1 is doing the washing up
 - 1 is having a bath
 - 1 is knitting
 - 1 is eating toast
 - 1 is sleeping

- 6 young children, 2 of whom are certainly little girls
and 2 certainly little boys
- 2 dogs
- 2 cats
- 1 bear on wheels
- 1 small horse on wheels
- 1 toy train
- 1 doll in a pram
- 6 rats or mice
a fair number of termites (it's not certain they are termites;
the sorts of animals in any case that live in floorboards and walls)
at least 38 pictures or framed engravings
- 1 negro mask
- 29 lights (over and above the candelabra)
- 10 beds
- 1 child's cot
- 3 divans, once of which serves uncomfortably as a bed
- 4 kitchens or rather kitchenettes
- 7 rooms with parquet flooring
- 1 carpet
- 2 bedside rugs or mats
- 9 rooms where the floor is no doubt covered with moquette
- 3 rooms with tiled floors
- 1 interior staircase
- 8 pedestal tables
- 5 coffee tables
- 5 small bookcases
- 1 shelf full of books
- 2 clocks
- 5 chest of drawers
- 2 tables
- 1 desk with drawers with blotting-pad and inkwell
- 2 pairs of shoes

- 1 bathroom stool
- 11 upright chairs
- 2 armchairs
- 1 leather briefcase
- 1 dressing gown
- 1 hanging cupboard
- 1 alarm clock
- 1 pair of bathroom scales
- 1 pedal bin
- 1 hat hanging on a peg
- 1 suit hanging on a hanger
- 1 jacket hanging on the back of a chair washing drying
- 3 small bathroom cabinets
 - several bottles and flasks
 - numerous objects hard to identify (carriage clocks, ashtrays, spectacles, glasses, saucers full of peanuts, for example)

This thesis comprises writings on *people*, *occasion*, *space* and *place*. Together, the writings propose an architectural language that provides for and responds to the human presence.

on people

Human scale figures compliment architectural representations by providing reference points for scale, depth and intent, ultimately allowing architects to communicate their interpretations of spatial occupation and build a bridge between their design gestures and the occupants of architecture. The various design standards in architecture are based on the dimensions of the human being, yet there are no single, predetermined dimensions for the human, for the occasions they introduce, or for the intangible proportions of architecture that are found in the in-between spaces formed by human presence—between here and there, between inside and outside, and between one moment and another.²⁹ Once we remove the scale figures from their spatial context, they remain a tool of understanding the intentions of the architecture but are distilled to simply represent their interpretations of a human being's presence in space and what they chose to accommodate in the designs. It is the reverse implications of these stand-alone scale figures that I am interested in, and the opportunities they provide for us to shift the one-directional design process. By breaking down a collection of human scale figures into different attributes—persona, form, movement, presence—we can find an alternative use of the scale figures as lenses to interpret space. Each attribute of the scale figures describes the surrounding space in an abstracted language to generate an image of space, which, when layered, produces an amalgamation that distinctly addresses the human presence. As I dive into exploring the designs of *occasions*, *spaces* and *places*, the four lenses of interpreting the human presence remain relevant to frame the perceptions.

²⁹ Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 298.

on occasion

Dining is an essential part of our everyday life, and it is where we can observe human presence in space in its most raw and diverse forms. It doesn't matter if we are alone or in the company of many, no matter the scale, culture, or setting—we are always within architecture when we dine; even if there are no proper settings around us, we create our own. The occasions of dining we introduce to an architectural space assign that space's identity and, creating a place of dining without it being prescribed by design intentions. During any acts of dining, we engage with other people and objects within the space, and through the lenses of the broken-down human attributes—persona, form, movement, presence—those interactions are abstracted to forms that will produce drastically different places of dining. To connect the occasions of dining with the accommodating space, I recount my own personal dining experiences to focus on different spatial qualities of the occasions. In each instance, I describe the figures' participations in the occasion through a certain attribute of a human being. The distilled figures act in reference to the single property to morph the surrounding space to facilitate certain interactions with space while completely omitting some others. In dining events, people play an essential role, and the objects in-between likewise play a role in grounding the interactions within the space, demarcating the defined void further into bounded and unbounded spaces. The abstract descriptions of space and the supplementary illustrations that represent the dynamics of the space, introduce a language for us to describe space's intangible dimensions.

on space

In a fictional exploration, the city has no space for its people, and when the people retaliate through efforts to reclaim space in the image of the human being, they create a surface that blanketed over the cityscape and served as an alternative inhabitation for the people freed from

architecture. The city and the surface are elements of an architectural fiction, but this concept is also a polemic that mirrors the contemporary city and what we are unable to notice underneath the layers of aesthetics and development. The city with strict spatial regulations resembles a collection of spaces rather than a community, and the surface is endless, scaleless, and ultimately impossible to inhabit. The utopic aesthetics and ambitions might have the tendency for others to adapt absurdist gestures as sincere proposals for the future, but my intentions are for it to explore the roles of architects, as both critics and revolutionaries, to create ‘counterdesigns’³⁰ that denounce the city. As Tschumi pointed out, the notions of space and the programs within have a relationship defined by uncertainties. The former establishes the rituals of space to reflect stability, only to be disrupted by the unpredictable programs that eventually take place.³¹ The availability of space measured in physical dimensions is different from providing spaces that correspond to the reality of the human presence in architecture. Architects often create idealized settings for people while keeping a comfortable distance; it doesn’t matter if their projects reduce lives on the streets and public space to nothing more than pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Through the fiction, I question the relationship between the definitions of space in architecture and the availability of space for existential needs, especially when different attributes of the human presence demand spaces to respond in different manners.

on place

The human presence in space, when explored through different attributes that we associate the human being with, demand unique responses from their surrounding space in a non-limiting manner. When the components of space are removed from their identifiers that assign them distinct purposes, they are reduced to formal gestures that could

30 Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 10–11.

31 *Ibid.*, 18–23.

be interpreted in many ways. Building upon the previous examples of how the descriptions of space through the lenses of human presence might alter the composition and perceptions of space, I explore how the affordances of primitive forms shape them as exceptional tools of place-making. Affordances, as explained by psychologist James J. Gibson in *the Theory of Affordances*, are the provisions of objects in relation to the users' unique interpretations; while the affordances inherently belong to the objects, they only surface when they are being interacted with. Similar to how the occasions brought forth by the human presence provides tangibility to the concept of space—that it is no longer only an emptiness framed by a boundary—the primitive forms introduce a place to the space they are positioned within by suggesting possibilities of being defined by the interactions with people. The forms also suggest a different relationship between people and the space they occupy, as suggested by Van Eyck's Architecture of the in-between. In opposition to a cause-and-effect relationship where the formal gestures of space determine specific modes of occupation and thus limit the functions of space, the inviting gestures of the primitive forms could only exist when imagined with the descriptions of the occasions, and will only remain in the specific form over the duration of the occupants' presence.

The parts interweave to form a distillation of architecture into humanized gestures and a theoretical framework of place-making, within which pertinent and stimulating dialogues could develop between architecture and its occupants.

people

The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of the space.

My body carries in itself spatial properties and spatial determination: up, down, right, left, symmetry, dissymmetry.

It hears as much as it sees.

Bernard Tschumi | Questions of Space

the human figure

In November 2018, David Hockney's *Portrait of an Artist* broke the record as the most expensive auctioned artwork by a living artist, having been bought for 90.3 million USD.¹ When the young British painter first crossed the Atlantic to arrive at the beaches of California, in a state of weariness after his education at the Royal College of Art, he fell in love with the fantasy composed of vibrant colours, modernist architecture, and swimming pools. His passion for the 'everyday life' was centred on the intoxicating image sculpted by Hollywood movies, and this fascination is reflected in his paintings of people and their relationship with immaterial space. However, Hockney's portrait paintings, often close to life-size, capture detailed narratives of their subjects while implying his own inclusion in the paintings through the artist's personal connections with the subjects.² *Portrait of an Artist* is a combination of both, and possibly the artist's best work, that exemplifies what he could do. While Hockney is far from a household name for those not involved in art, the figures in his paintings have been making more frequent appearances in architectural representations as the profession finds itself in the 'post-digital' age.³

The surging collections of Hockney's works used in architecture graphics bear similarities to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1929 collages for the Barcelona Pavilion. They both incorporate a combination of narratives, art history references, and a retaliation against the over-

- 1 "David Hockney's Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)," Christie's, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://www.christies.com/features/David-Hockney-Portrait-of-an-Artist-Pool-with-Two-Figures-9372-3.aspx>.
- 2 "David Hockney 80 Years in 8 Works," Tate, accessed September 18, 2019, <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/david-hockney/80-years-8-works>.
- 3 Samuel Medina, "The Website Behind the 'Post-Digital' Drawing Revolution," Metropolis, March 28, 2017, <https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/inside-digital-platform-championing-post-digital-drawing/pic/22594/>.



Fig 2.1. portraits of people

saturated hyper-realistic renders. The illustrations aim to instigate dialogues within the narrative space rather than the accurate representations of scale, materials, and shadows; and it is the sculpting of the narrative space that made Hockney's painting style and the people he depicted sought-after architectural references. Architects' fascination with portraying the human figure in different styles of architectural representation can be traced back throughout history, since humans first became tied to the act of creating space.

Architecture, or the making of shelter and places of inhabitation, inevitably references and reflects both the physical and spiritual presence of the space's occupants, and scale figures enable architecture to reflect a society's understanding of the role and nature of humans in its time.⁴ An architect's rendering of human scale figures shows more than just scale and depth when used in orthographic drawings and perspective renders; the tangible measurements of space could just as easily be indicated with graphic scales and numerical notations; but the scale figures communicate an understanding of scale that we intuitively connect with our own presence in space. In the early sixteenth century, human bodies were employed as a reference point for assessing form, order and proportion, and figures were used to make arguments for the corresponding design gestures; when linear perspective was first introduced in the Renaissance, figures were crucial in clarifying confusion arising from the unfamiliar graphical representations of space.

Scale figures engage issues central to dialogues in contemporary architecture extending beyond the simple existence of the human body in space.⁵ When architects capitalize on scale figures, either through the careful curation or creating of unique figures that reference certain human attributes, their depiction of the figures indicate their interpretations of spatial occupation. The scale figures project a range of

4 Alex T. Anderson, "On the Human Figure in Architectural Representation," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 55, no. 4 (2002): 238–46.

5 Martino Stierli, "Fare Buona Figure: Some Remarks on the Scale Figure in Architectural Representation," in *An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture*, ed. Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample, and MOS (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), xi–xxii.

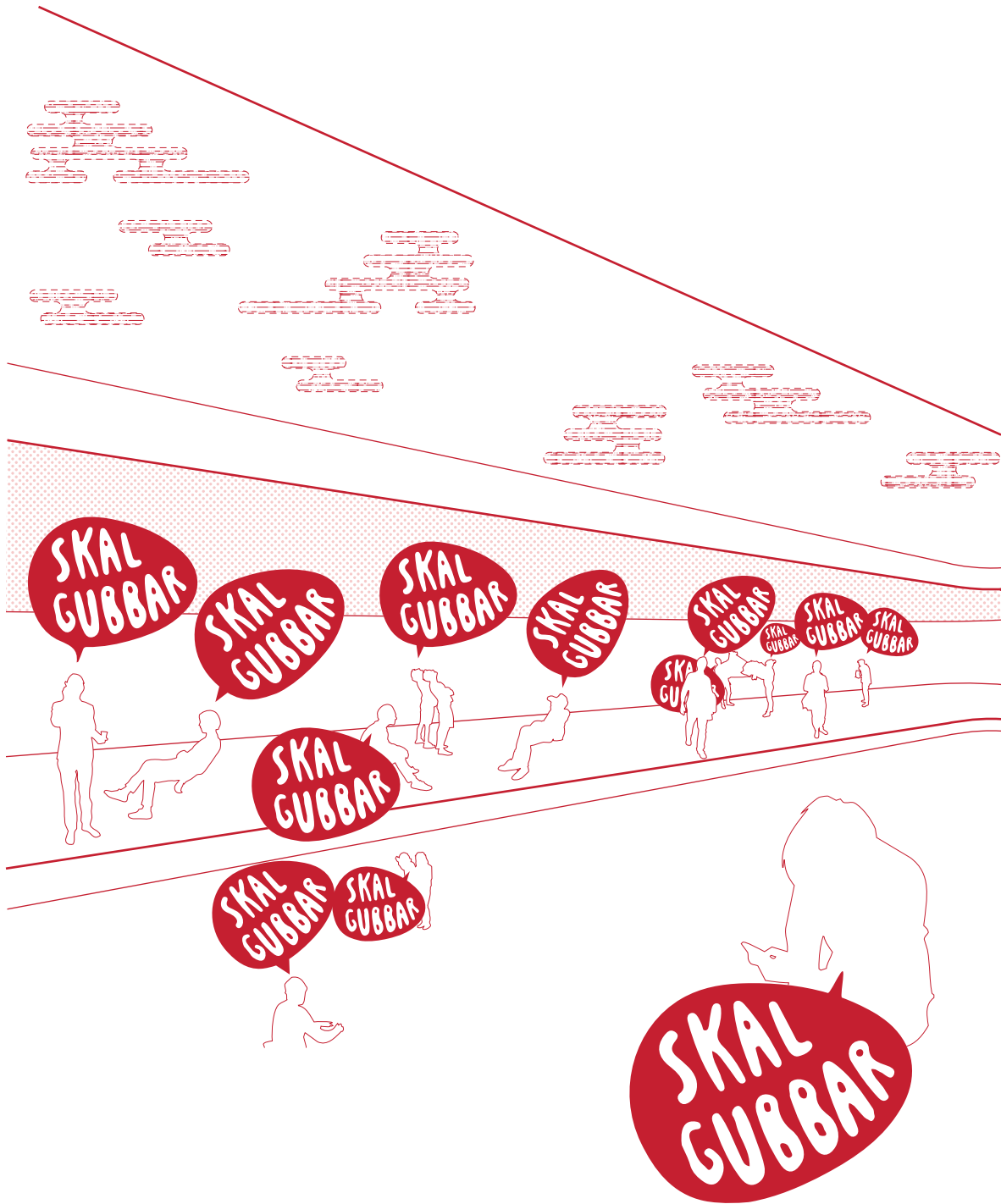


Fig 2.2. Saves the day!

experiences and patterns that correspond to the architects' speculations about how their designs accommodate human dynamics. They also allow people to identify themselves with occupying the space through the intuitive understanding of scale and purpose that would be impossible to communicate through dimensions.

The human scale figures mediate perceptions of human presence as the makers of space and the occupants of space, yet that role is diluted by the ubiquitous standardized figures that populate architectural representations in recent years. Following the reconceptualization of architecture for some as the simple distinctions of space with boundaries, the human being is accounted for by abstract definitions that are subsequently fed into the formulation of architecture through abstract principles; the standardized human scale figures are portrayals of the abstract beings.⁶ The popular online entourage database *Skalgubbar* provides cut out people to architecture practices and students alike without cost, and has propelled the prominence of certain human scale figures that we could all recognize. On the website there is a blog titled *Saves the day!*,⁷ a tongue in cheek collection of renders where figures from the site were populated throughout as simple indications that “indeed there will be people occupying the project and they will be doing things that people do.”

It is telling of contemporary architectural practice that the same figures—usually well dressed, expressing excitement, and nonchalantly not-interacting with the space—are repeatedly used in architectural representations in the final stages of production to indicate the human presence in architecture. Unfortunately, the figures are frozen in time and space as their surrounding environment shifts from one project to another, yet it is an acceptable ‘get out of jail free’ card for most architecture practices. The many readily available human scale figures enabled by the technological advancements of the profession raise questions for

6 Ibid.

7 “Saves the Day!,” *Skalgubbar*, accessed September 15, 2019, <https://skalgunbar.se/category/savestheday/>.

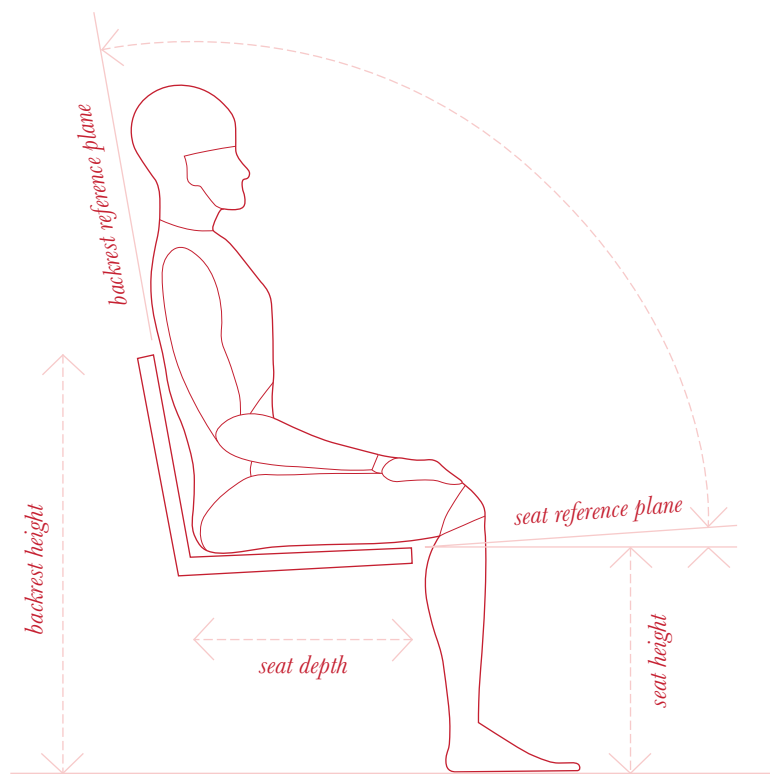


Fig 2.3. standards for sitting

their effectiveness in communicating the architects' interpretations of human presence in architecture--that is, if the architects even designed with specific occupants in mind.⁸ The standardized figures are adequate reference points for communicating the scales and intentions of designs without engaging with the architecture—which seems to be nothing more than a picturesque background—while acting as placeholders for the human presence that the architects are unable to (or do not care to) account for. Their frequent appearances in prominent projects highlight the tendency of architects to propose theoretically formulized spaces for the ideal being—or the non-presence of real people—derived from a set of prescribed needs, movements, and functions of the human.⁹ The figures are scaled and pasted into architectural spaces to show that they are enjoying themselves, as every person should. In a discourse that focuses on how architecture can improve occupants' lives and experiences, architects speak as if they are designing for the idea of a human being, or a ghost that could occupy a space without no consequences for its presence.¹⁰ If we understand modernity as the post-humanist age, it seems only consequential that the human figure would no longer play a defining role in modern architectural thinking and representation.

The use of human scale figures, even standardized ones, to create architectural narratives reminds us that architecture could not be properly represented without including the human.¹¹ It is curious to think that some architects choose not to include the human in their drawings—when it takes no effort to copy and past stock figures of their choosing. Perhaps in doing so they are offering a statement against a post-human architecture, or suggesting that the figures would change the perception of space (which implies that the space would be different once it is built

8 Stierli, "Fare Buona Figure: Some Remarks on the Scale Figure in Architectural Representation."

9 Raymund Ryan, "Go Figure!," in *An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture*, ed. Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample, and MOS (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), xxiii–xxxvi.

10 Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, *Are We Human? Notes on an Archaeology of Design* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016), 127.

11 Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample, "Architects Draw People," in *An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture*, ed. Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample, and MOS (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), vii–x.



Fig 2.4. the subtle presence of the human figure

and occupied); either way, the absence of human figures inevitably points to a one-way relationship between the space and its occupants.¹²

As human beings, we perceive the world through the capacities and limitations of the body. Our interactions with the space and objects around us change with our perceptions of their meanings and capabilities: the practice of design is the materialization of the indeterminacy of the human presence. This relationship is exemplified in the works of Carlo Scarpa. The human figures in Scarpa's architecture are both the subjects that define the space and the objects that create the space; their presence and subtle habits evidently influence the design decisions that will regulate how they actively occupy the space. After reading Anderson's text on the drawings of the Brion Cemetery, we cannot help but think that Scarpa's designs are moving and breathing spaces that interact with their occupants. As Anderson writes, "The concrete of the ground platform steps up to accommodate the seated posture of the figure, while the canopy hangs lower over her bowed back and head. The seated figure seems to carve a space of contemplation for herself in which she feels the volume of the canopy resting protectively over her on slender pillars."¹³ Carlo Scarpa's architecture could only be described in the language of a humanized architecture in an increasingly dehumanized world.

What happens then, when we remove the scale figures from their context and place them on an empty canvas? Even when the human presence is intentionally left out or reduced to faceless sets of measurements, it haunts architecture in its absence.¹⁴ The standardized figures introduced by Ernst Neufert pursue the ideal human dimensions, using data collection to generalize architecture into a tool to create a hyper-functional world.¹⁵ Many other architects have recently represented

12 Ibid.

13 Anderson, "On the Human Figure in Architectural Representation."

14 Meredith and Sample, "Architects Draw People."

15 Ernst Neufert, *Architects' Data*, 4th ed (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Ames, Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

scale figures in different mediums to make political statements, to focus on the mechanics of human movement, or to exhibit nothing more than the mundane. Architects' portrayals of human scale figures indicate their desires to have the architectural interventions respond to specific human attributes and expectations for how the occupants would interact with the components of space. The scale figures viewed out of context allow us to speculate on the intentions of their architects and inversely suggest the architectural gestures that would accommodate the figures accordingly.

In this chapter, I organized the human scale figures of different architects into four human attributes. *Persona* portrays the interactions and boundaries between figures that are recognized as people with identities, agendas and existential needs; *form* reimagines how the human physique can be shaped to represent both tangible and immeasurable extents and limitations of the body; *movement* describes the occupants actively interacting with space; *presence* reduces people to static objects whose only value is in their presence. The figures' implications of space gain clarity when they are distilled to represent only one facet of the dynamic human being. When we analyze occasions through the lens of the abstracted human scale figures and their spatial implications, we can take a large step towards making place by centering people's occasions as a principle of design.

a catalogue of figures

MOS Architects principals Michael Meredith and Hillary Sample curated a collection of human scale figures with the simple idea of placing the various architects' representations of people in a volume, side by side, without any context or hierarchy. The implications of the collection were not limited to that single idea. Within the 1256 page book, some would compare the presentation styles and medium of different architects, while others speculate on the political and social motives at the time the projects were produced.

I categorized the figures in the book into four categories, and extracted a small collection of exemplary images that communicate their distinct purposes in the respective project proposals. With the figures I invite you; the reader, the designer, the dweller, to experience how space changes when you replace yourself with a certain attribute of yours.

persona



Fig. 2.5. Archizoom Associati, Habitable Closet



Fig 2.6. Atelier Bow-Wow, Machiya Guest House



Fig. 2.7. Marcel Breuer, Hunter College of the City of New York

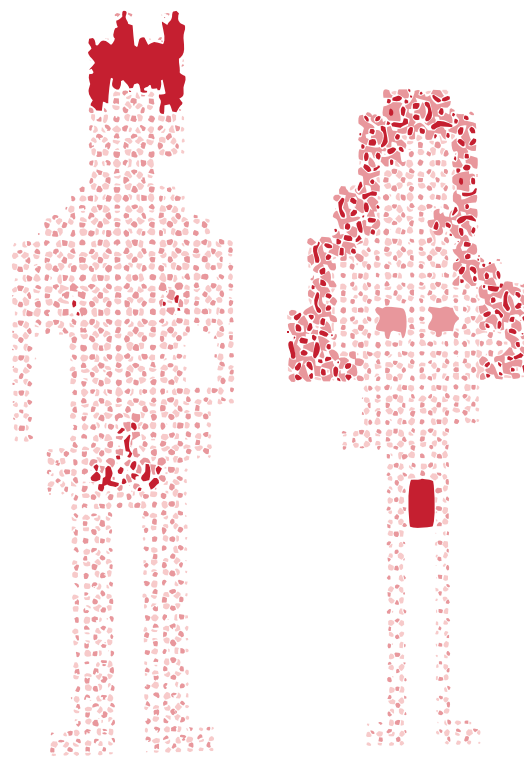


Fig 2.8. Cerro9, TRP



Fig 2.9. First Office, PS1 Dolmen



Fig 2.10. Steven Holl, Chapel of St. Ignatius



Fig. 2.11. Höweler + Yoon, White Out



Fig 2.12. Bjarke Ingels, VMCP Hotel



Fig 2.13. Le Corbusier, Wanner Project



Fig. 2.14. John Portman, Tomorrow Square

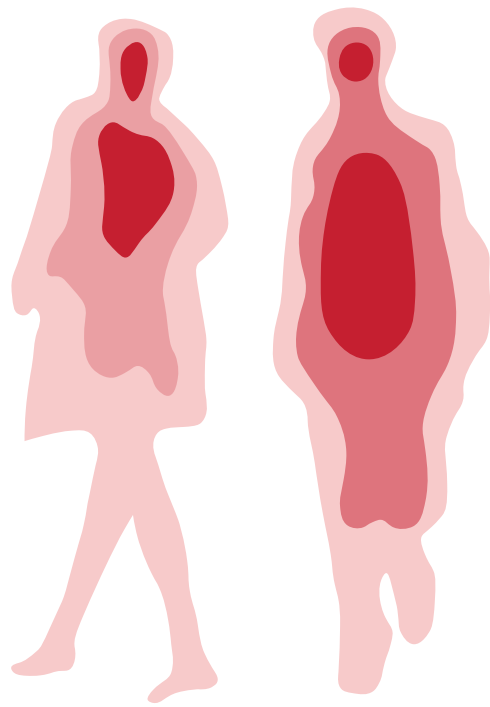


Fig 2.15. Philippe Rahm, Jade Meteo Park Climatorium



Fig 2.16. Superstudio, Continuous Monument

form

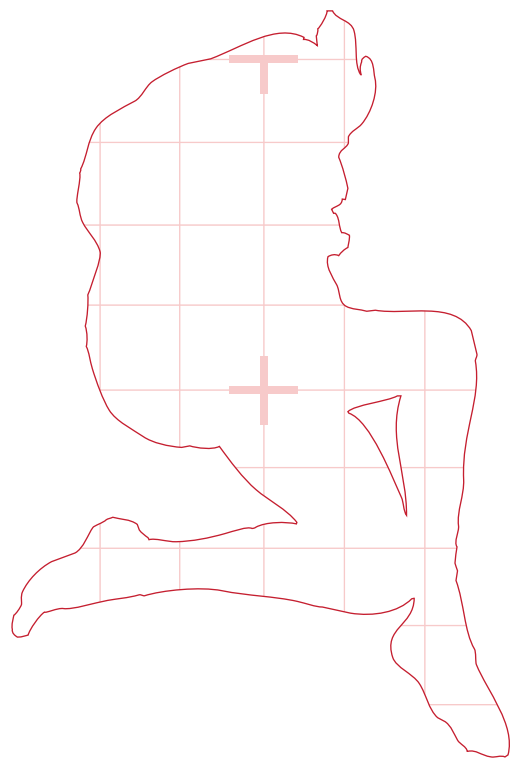


Fig 2.17. Raimund Abraham, Transplantational Cities

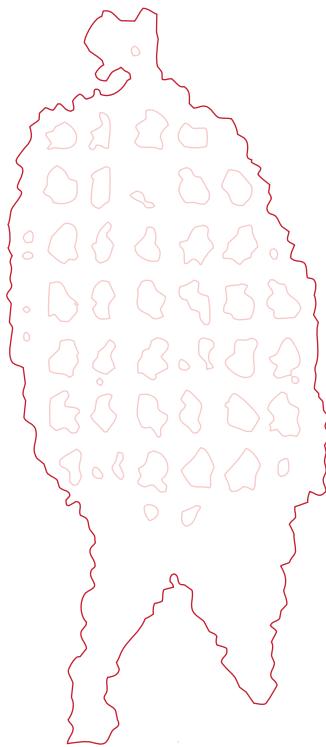


Fig 2.18. Bolles+Wilson, LB Dom North Neighbourhood

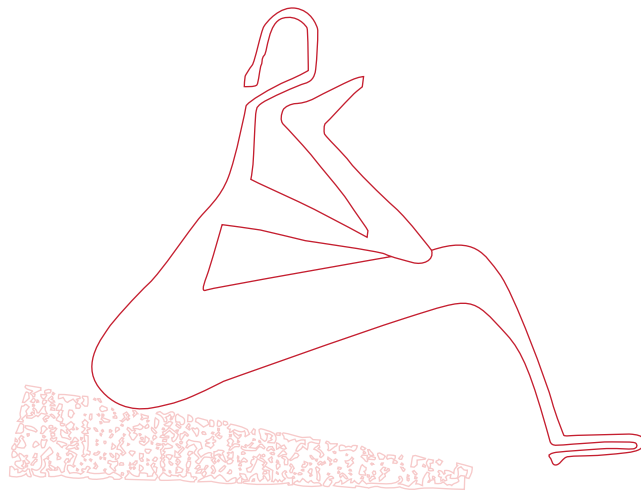


Fig 2.19. Yona Friedman, L'Architecture Mobile

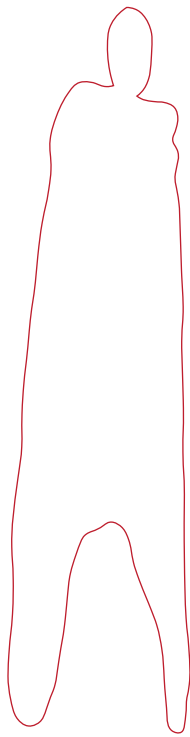


Fig. 2.20. Go Hasegawa, House in a Forest

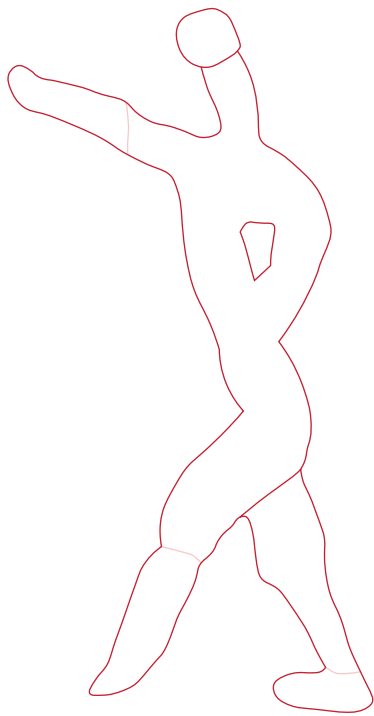


Fig 2.21. Frederick Kiesler, Study for “Blood Flames” Exhibition



Fig 2.22. Léon Krier, Untitled

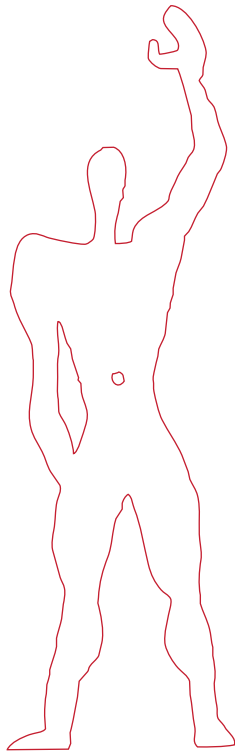


Fig 2.23. Le Corbusier, Le Modulor

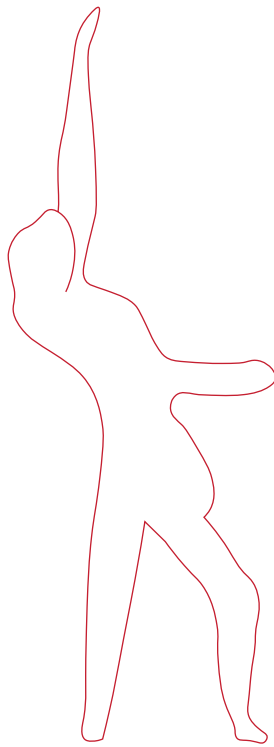


Fig 2.24. Konstantin Melnikov, Leningrad Pravda Building

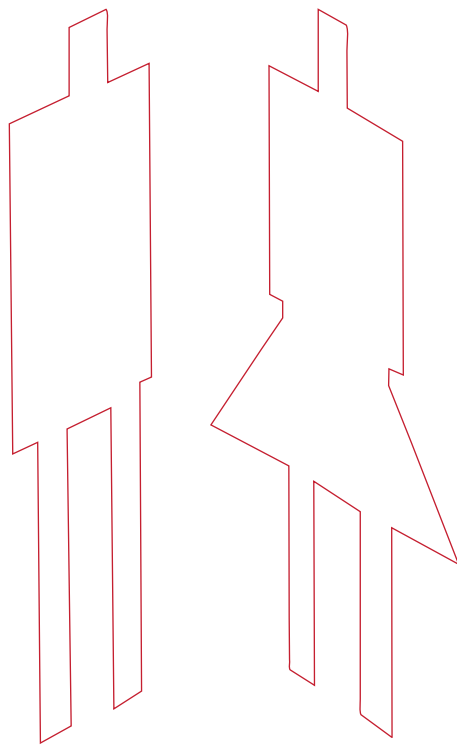


Fig. 2.25. Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Fabric Pavilion

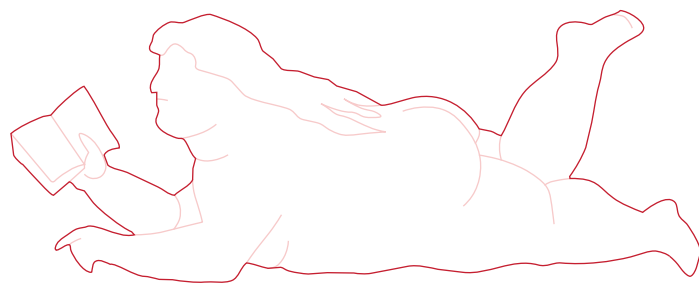


Fig 2.26. Smiljan Radić, Home for All



Fig. 2.27. Bernardo Rudofsky, *We Don't Need a New Way to Build*

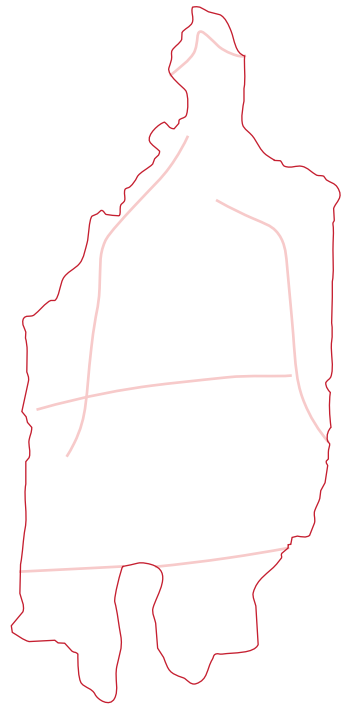


Fig 2.28. Wang Shu, Imagining the House

movement

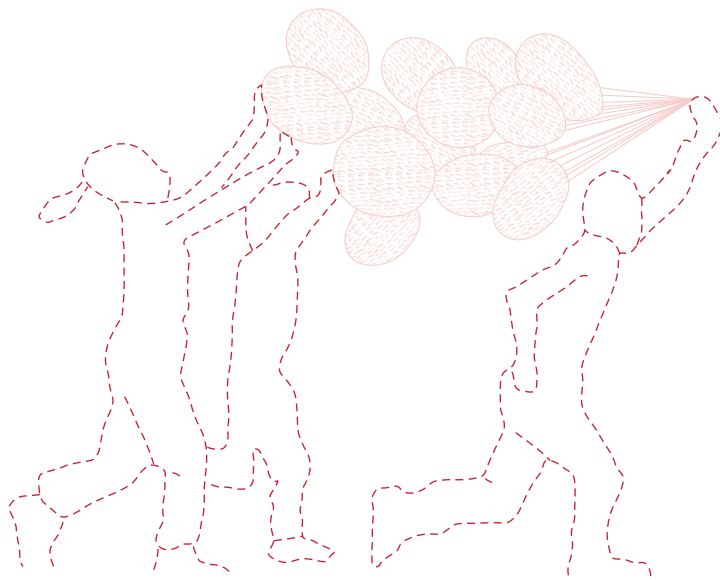


Fig. 2.29. Shigeru Ban, Singapore Biennale Exhibition

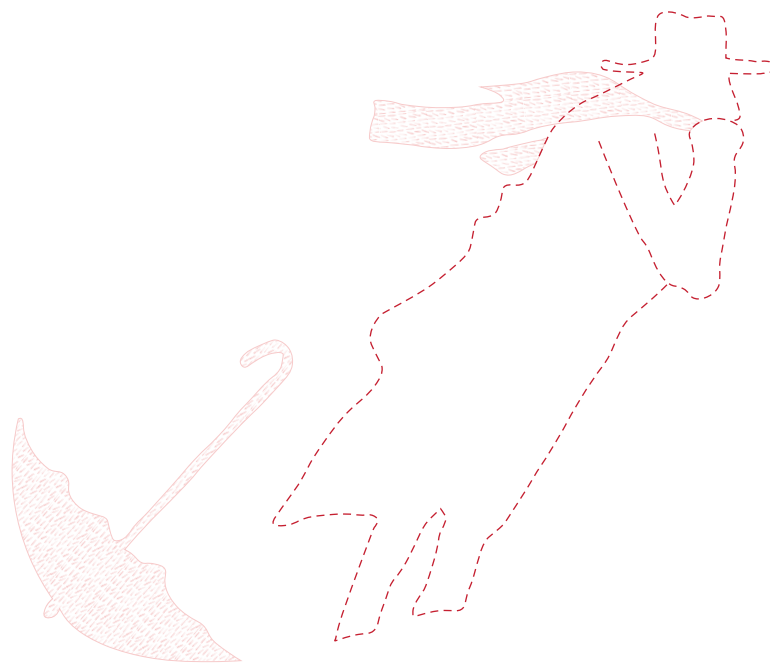


Fig 2.30. Brodsky and Utkin, Crystal Palace

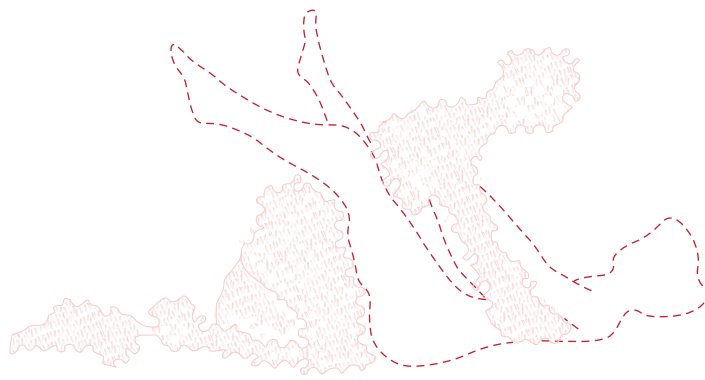


Fig 2.31. Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Slow House

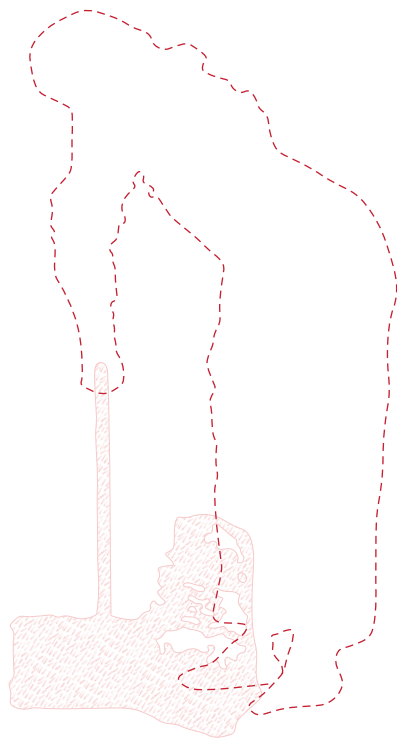


Fig 2.32. Peter Eisenman, Madison Components Plant

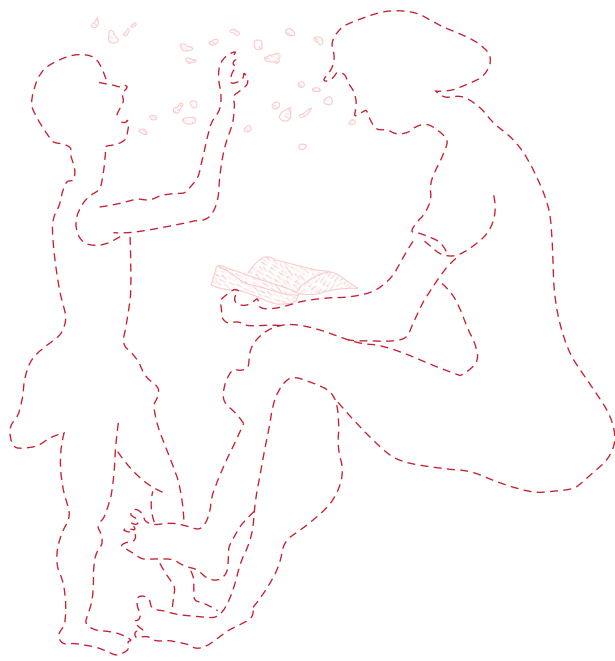


Fig 2.33. Louis Kahn, Mill Creek Housing



Fig 2.34. Jimenez Lai, Citizens of No Place

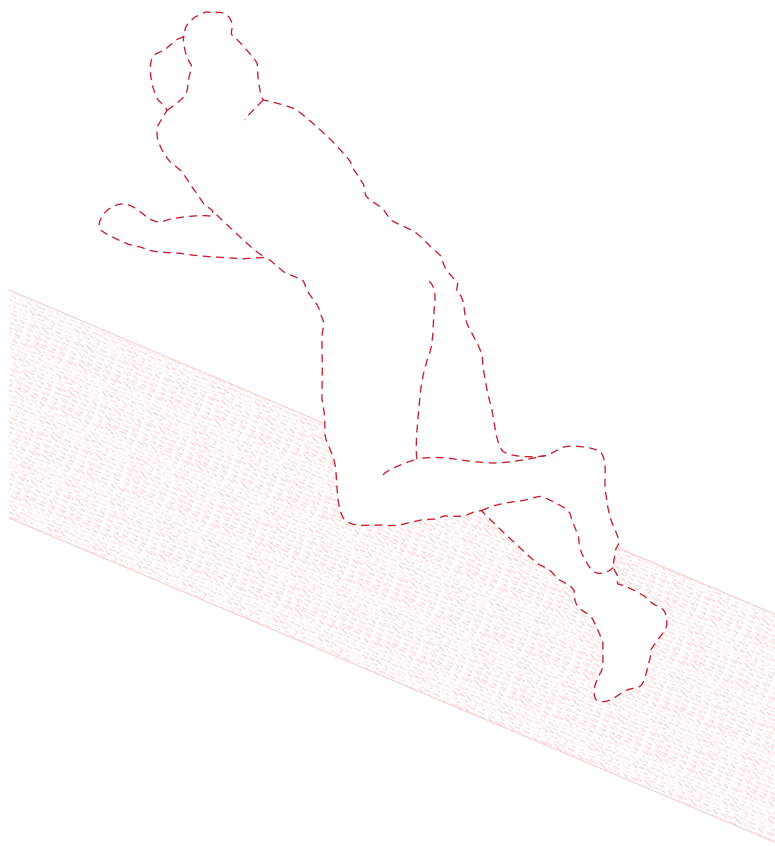


Fig 2.35. El Lissitzky, Ilya Ehrenburg Vitruvian Illustration

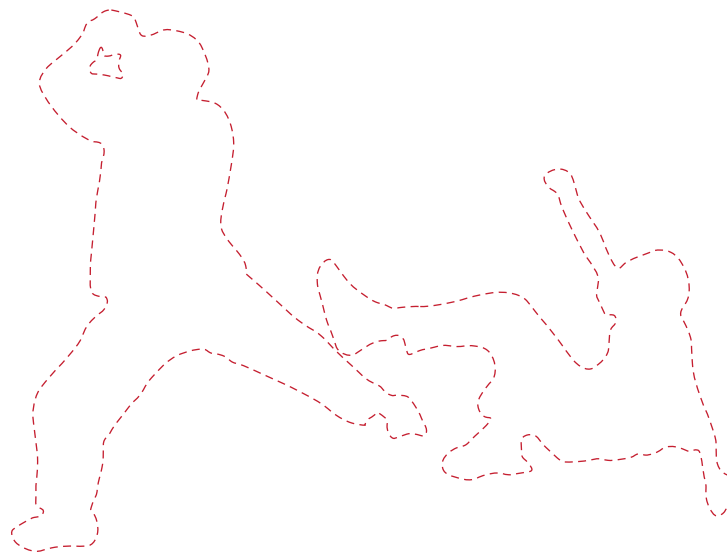


Fig 2.36. NL Architects, Leerpark

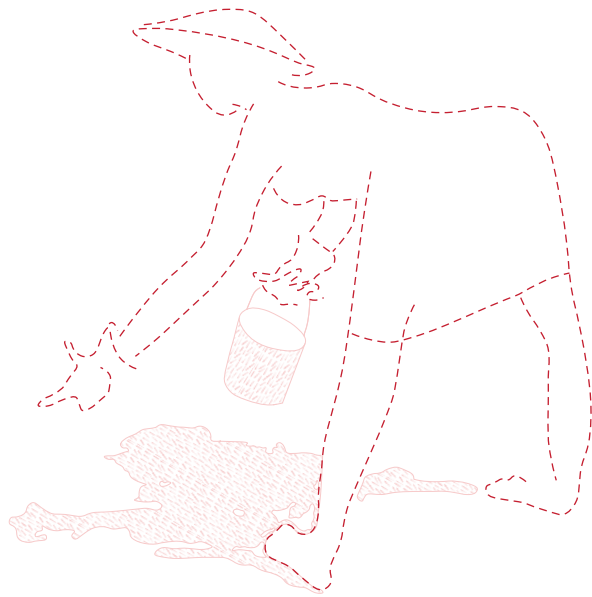


Fig 2.37. Ralph Rapson, Design of a House for Cheerful Living

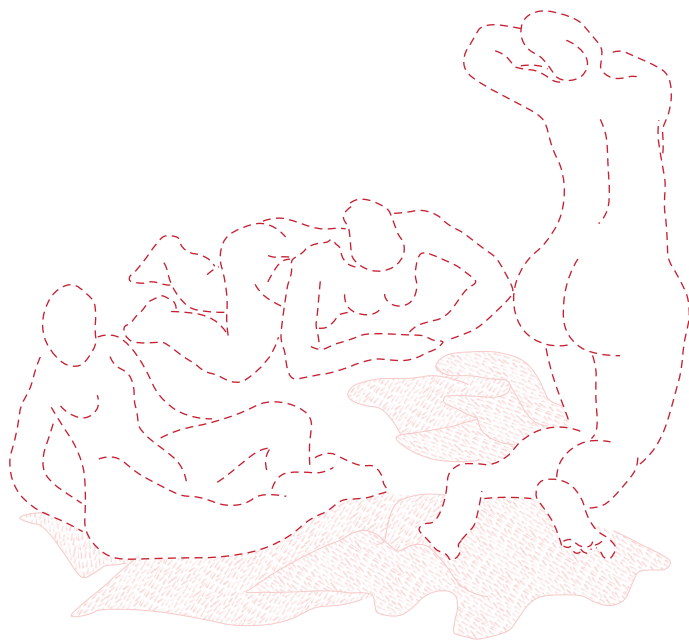


Fig 2.38. Carlo Scarpa

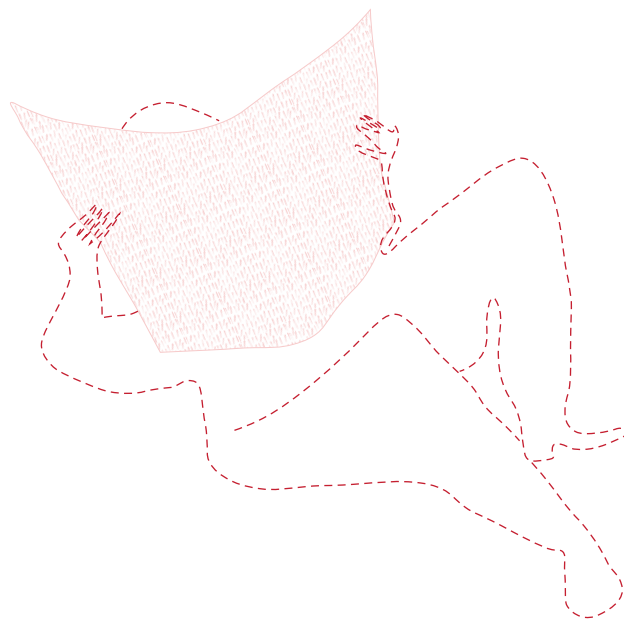


Fig 2.39. Mario Tedeschi, Molded Plywood Chair and Rocking Chair

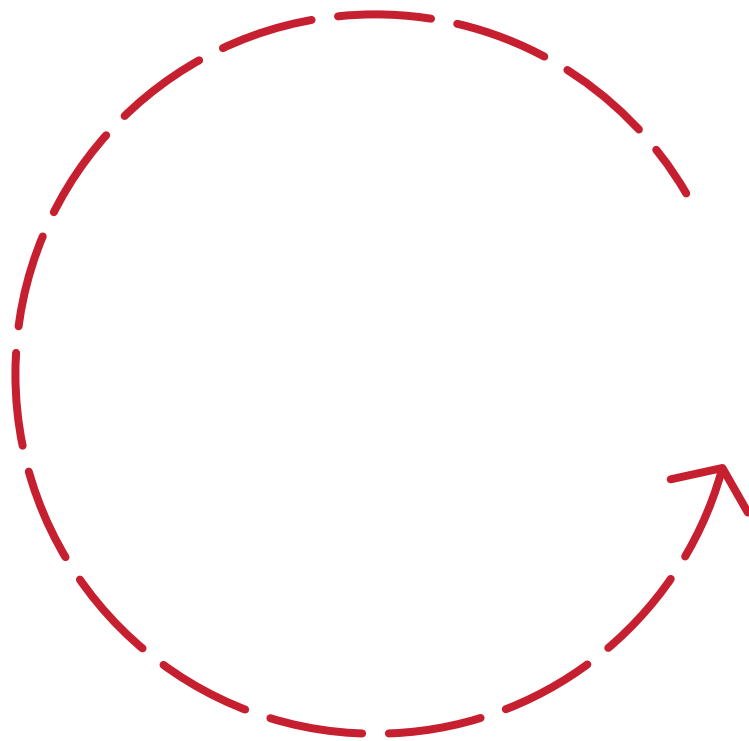


Fig 2.40. Bernard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts

presence

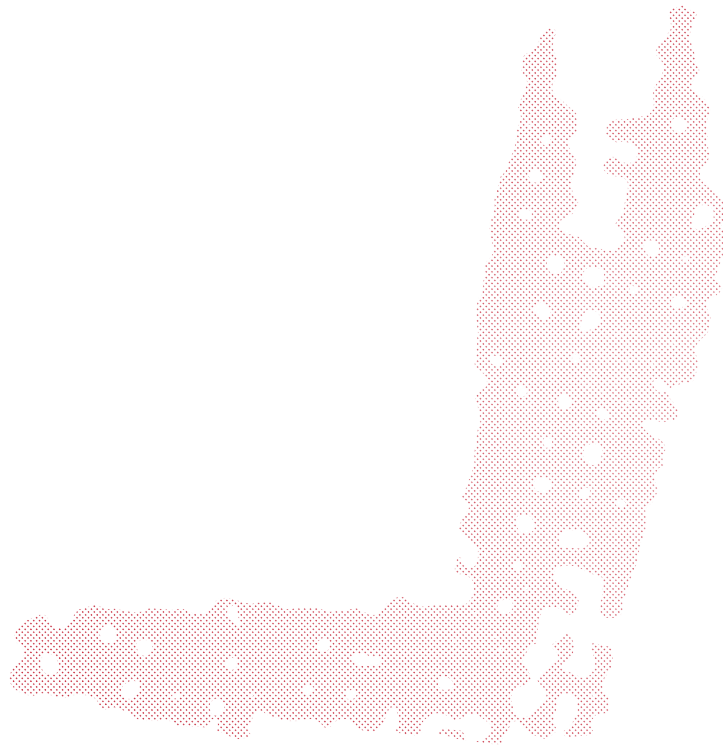


Fig 2.41. Luis Barragán, Gardens for the Hotel Pierre Marques

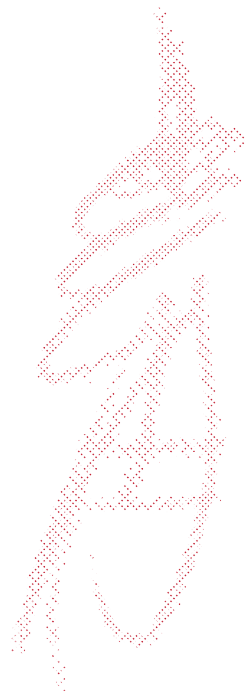


Fig. 2.42. Alberto Campo Baeza, Editorial SM Headquarters

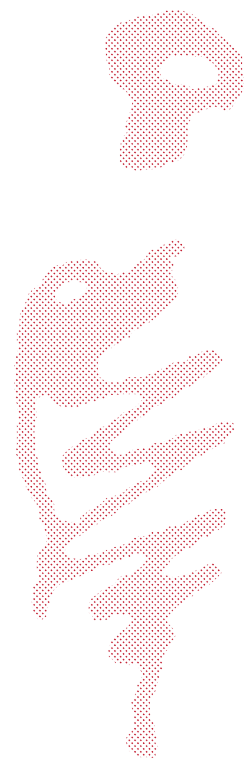


Fig 2.43. Sverre Fehn, Nordic Pavilion

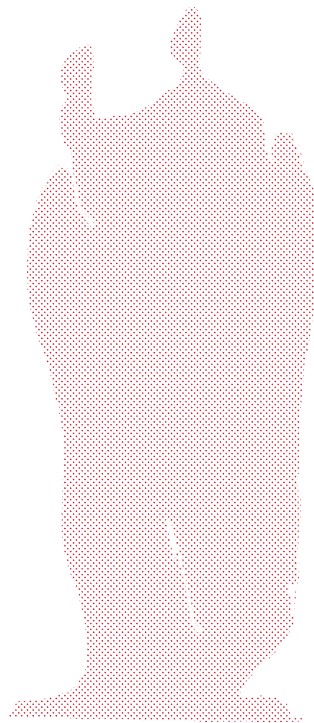


Fig 2.44. Future Systems, Selfridges

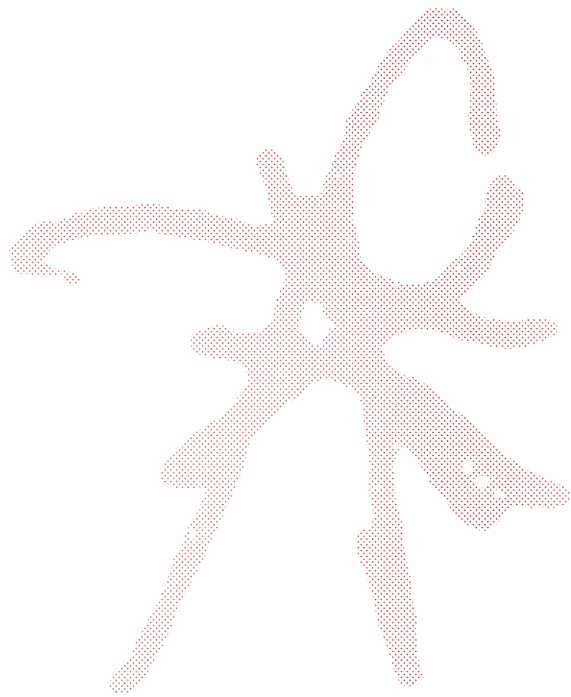


Fig 2.45. Frank O. Gehry, Walt Disney Concert Hall

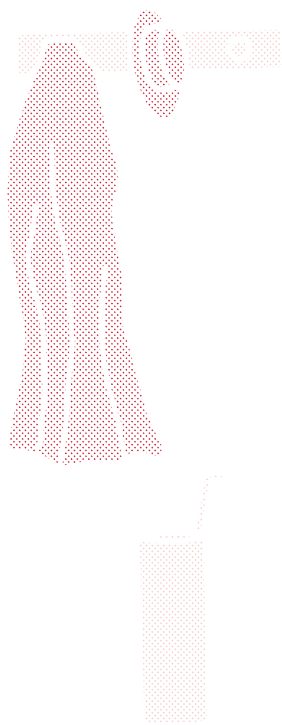


Fig 2.46. LAN, Urban Renovation

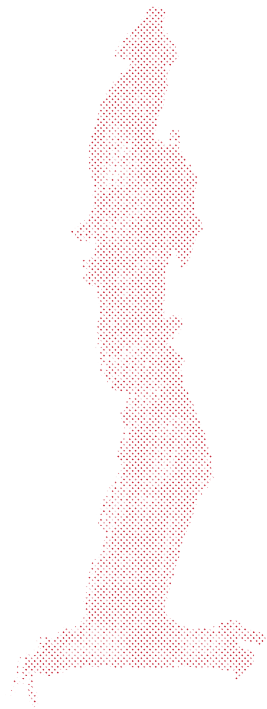


Fig. 2.47. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Brick Country House

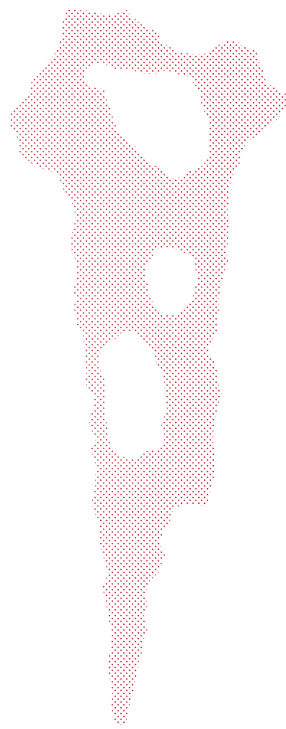


Fig 2.48. Frei Otto, Study for a Tent City

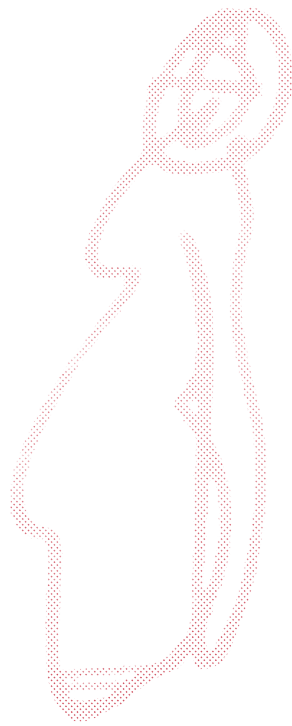


Fig 2.49. Eduardo Souto de Moura, Physic Garden 3 Laboratory Building

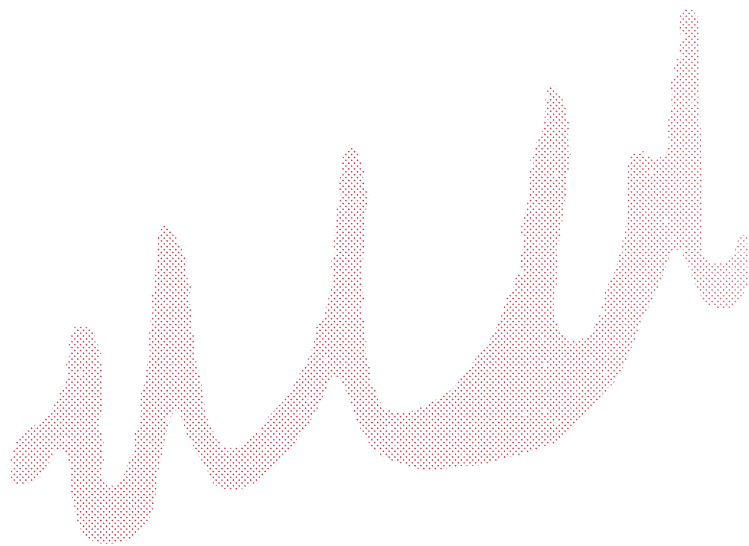


Fig. 2.50. Roger Taillibert, Nantes Convention Center

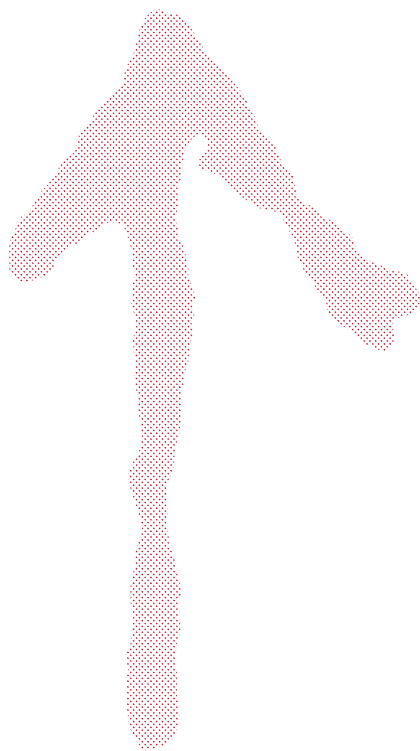


Fig 2.51. Giuseppe Terragni, Casa del Fascio

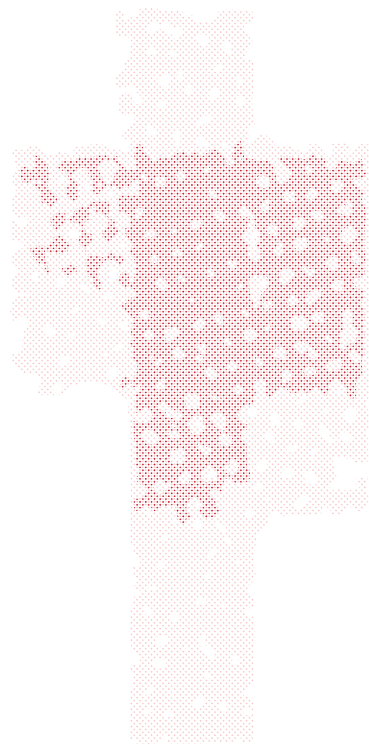


Fig 2.52. UN Studio, Mediatheque

occasions

How can one choose words that are true, natural, and vibrant enough to make felt the weight of the body, the joyfulness or weariness, the tenderness or irritation that takes hold of you in the face of this continually repeated task where the better the result (a stuffed chicken, a pear tart), the faster it is devoured, so that before a meal is completely over, one already has to think about the next.

Luce Giard | The Practice of Everyday Life

a script for an occasion

“Have you eaten yet?”

Many of us are familiar with this simple question, which is used for a range of expressions, from a casual greeting to a heartfelt concern, in interactions close to mealtime or ones in no suitable context. Food is always on our mind. Eating is a necessary act that fulfills our alimentary needs for nourishment and mental gratifications. When this basic physical fulfillment is combined with food’s cultural significance, eating is ultimately what defines us as human. Our everyday lives are planned around the timetables of food related activities.¹ Regardless of our surrounding company and context, we gather, prepare, share, consume, and appropriate the space to accommodate the occasions of dining. We spend hours of each day preparing meals and cleaning up the aftermath; we consume a feast in the matter of minutes; we break bread with the company of friends and family;² we walk past scenes of people dining on the streets. The occasions of everyday life are unique and mundane, but the performative spaces of dining are where food and architecture intersect. They are reference points for us to define the space around us instead of following the architecturally prescribed programs of space. In the following two passages, architect Terunobu Fujimori describes the house for drinking tea, the *chashitsu*, designed by the artist Sen no Rikyu four hundred years ago.³ The hosts and the guests spend hours talking

1 Xavier Monteys, ed., “The Architecture of Food,” in *Quaderns 271: About Buildings & Food*, vol. 271 (Barcelona: Col.d’Arquitectes de Catalunya, 2019), 9–18.

2 The term ‘company’ comprised the Latin roots ‘cum’ and ‘panis’, referring the convivial communion of individuals to break bread together.

3 Terunobu Fujimori, “Why build a place just for tea?,” in *FOOD dal cucchiaio al mondo*, ed. Pippo Ciorra e Alessio Rosati (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2015), 89–90.

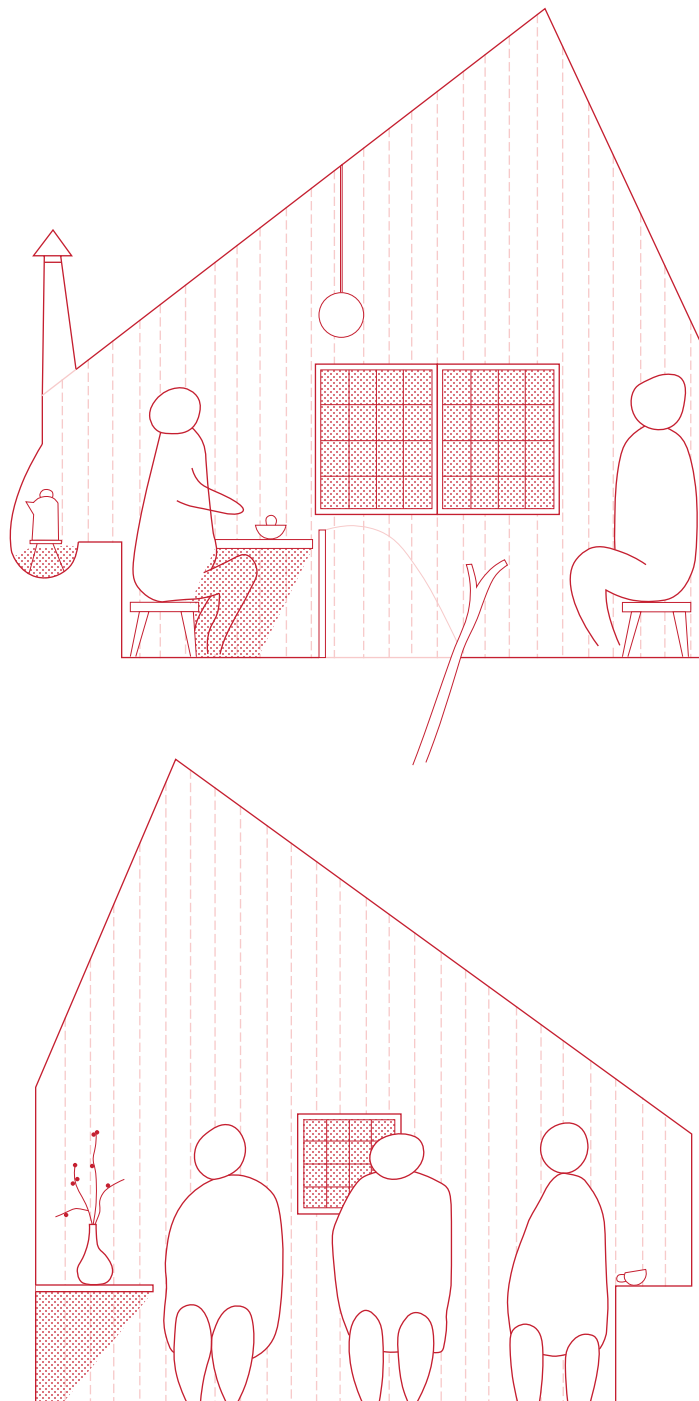


Fig 3.1. designing a teahouse

through the steps of kindling fire, boiling water, and carefully preparing the tea inside. Fujimori uses the typology of the teahouse to explain why the small, isolated space with a sole purpose embodies the essence of architecture for people.

First, the specific parameters of the space are described, along with the more ephemeral effect the space has on its occupants:

“The singular thing about this architecture was how very little it was, at its largest only big enough to hold 4 tatami mats (something around 2.7 meters by 2.7 meters) and at its smallest a mere 2 mats (1.8 meters on a side). Perhaps three or four people at most could enter those larger spaces; the host could only sit with a sole guest in the smallest... [the teahouse] feels unexpectedly spacious; even as you linger, it will continue to captivate. The rich variety of materials and forms and the splendid beauty of even the smallest detail result in a space that is complete perfection.”

Then, the significance of the teahouse to architecture, and the way a space can transform its occupants and their relationships is described:

“Rikyu brought Hideyoshi into his tiny teahouse and it embodied all that was important about architecture. And he served the warrior tea in a bowl—and not just any bowl, but a bowl that had not even been shaped on a pottery wheel, a rough bowl made by pressing clay between thumb and palm. And Rikyu’s stature in the tiny teahouse grew larger while Hideyoshi’s shrank. We don’t know the reason for certain, but perhaps that is why Hideyoshi

ultimately commanded Rikyu to take his own life,
slitting open his belly.”

In the first passage, Fujimori describes the boundaries that define the teahouse and its spatial limitations, to contrast his promise of a spacious interior experience. However, from the descriptions we could only perceive the teahouse through its prescribed function for tea drinking and the dimensions in *tatami* mats⁴ or meters. The teahouse is, for all intents and purposes, an empty box when unoccupied. The second is a story of the meeting between Rikyu and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of Japan’s greatest warriors in the Sengoku period who was known for his lust for extravagance. Fujimori only mentioned that the meeting took place in the teahouse without offering any additional details of the space. The teahouse’s sole purpose allows us to visualize the meeting by understanding the conventions of tea drinking that constitute the space. Rikyu, the host, makes tea in a setting that, while providing comfort for the guest, stages the intimate interactions between the two. When the tea is served, our focus is drawn to the bowl with its noticeable roughness that exhibits the artist’s personal touch but meets with the disapproval of the warrior. The tension grows in the meeting, as we can only speculate that Hideyoshi felt threatened and humiliated as the space shrinks around him, leading to the suicide of Rikyu. Fujimori’s descriptions place the teahouse in a limbo; its existence is defined by the temporal and intangible occasion, as the composition of the space is slowly revealed to the reader. The meal, setting, tool and narrative in the story combine to form a holistic description of the simple teahouse that constitutes a place without definite boundaries.

4 Traditional Japanese straw mats used for flooring. The sizes of *tatami* mats are standardized to be twice as long as they are wide, about 910mm by 1820m. A measurement system is developed referencing the dimensions of the *tatami mats*.

In the opening montage of Ang Lee's *Eat Drink Man Woman* we see an old man working alone in the kitchen. The camera follows him through a series of careful maneuvers: he sticks a pair of chopsticks down the throat of a fish before gutting and filleting it into pieces; he tilts the sliced daikon with the wide face of his meat cleaver and finely chops the layered pieces; he rolls out thin pieces of dough and encloses a dollop of minced meat within. The old man carries himself in the space with composure and displays the skills of a seasoned chef. His preparation for the collection of dishes he makes defines the functions of glimpses of sections of the kitchen, layered upon a space that is never shown in its entirety. Lee favours the narrative composition of the space over an accurate presentation. An overview of the kitchen would clearly illustrate the space for the audiences: the limitations or possibilities of the kitchen due to its size, the organization of cooking equipment, and the relationships with the extension into the backyard. The montage in that case would show the old man's ability to maneuver the space. However, when we look through the lens of the old man's movements that shape the surrounding space, we understand deeply the ties that form the relationship between him and the kitchen—that in that space he is at ease, and he perceives the kitchen through the dishes he creates. The kitchen is the old man's entire world. When the scene reveals his larger purpose, his attempt to reconnect with his daughters, we understand that he is communicating his emotions with the only language he knows. The meal is the script that orchestrates the occasions of dining, and we are the instruments that perform the piece.

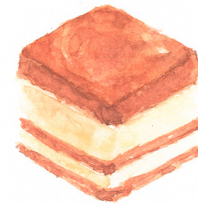
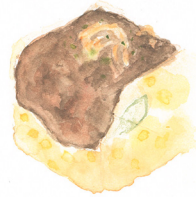
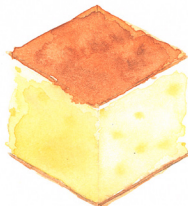
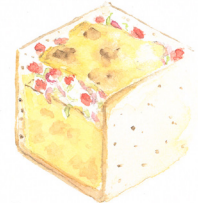
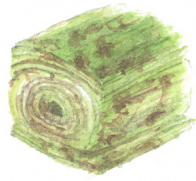
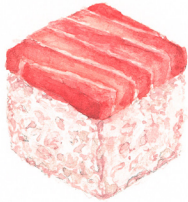


Fig 3.2. recipes: ingredients and processes

Start first begin take
put chop roughly chop
finely chop prepare
cut ready boil remove
float drain singe sear

cube dice peel peel
off mash strain heat
make surround press
melt separate beat tip
tap reserve set aside

off evaporate spread
stick grate refrigerate
double run a knife
core scoop scrape
substitute repeat

hang grab snip angle
a blade crack start
lift lower make sure
test taste top dollop
uncover draw away

fill adjust stew blitz
discard top up line
bake blind press
down pat dry par-boil
shred spoon spoon

slice trim snip tie
cook overcook steam
broil soak grill char
chargrill fry deep-fry
flash-fry pan-fry cover

roll up roll out unroll
cover drain bring to
a boil shell put aside
set aside pound wet
moisten smoke singe

mould unmould shape
plait ice fold brush
squeeze shave score
whisk cool chill form
halve scatter pipe

tilt transfer butter
scramble combine
allow to cool drizzle
make a well quarter
split tear rip pile toss

over trickle blacken
incorporate knock-
up check shuck sizzle
sit fillet pickle store
thread twist up stone

sprinkle splash reduce
mix plunge knead stir
thicken place preheat
steep sieve wash add
blanch whip chill put

roast poach bake bone
crush grind layer oil
grease flatten shake
flip beat toast skin flour
paint marinate wipe

crumble dot pulse
pulp return warm
dissolve cream rinse
bring together work
caramelize coat wrap

griddle barbecue lay
soften turn turn on
turn up turn down
turn over turn out
turn off microwave

seed load seal liquidize
prick glaze deglaze
dress heap present
plate up arrange
stack accompany dust

to decorate flavour
braise season clean
empty pour dry pour
over skewer brown
skim simmer purée

keep break scramble
inject pluck stuff blend
allow to cool snare salt
baste sift form wrap
divide drain drain

measure sweat process
open wait pull scald
smear rub throw in
pop tap empty whiz
sew slash scale gut

defrost freeze rest dip
break ladle swirl sauté
flambé top and tail
dry-roast pick invert
shake reheat continue

garnish finish serve.⁵

5 Susannah Worth, *Digesting Recipes: The Art of Culinary Notation* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2015), 4.

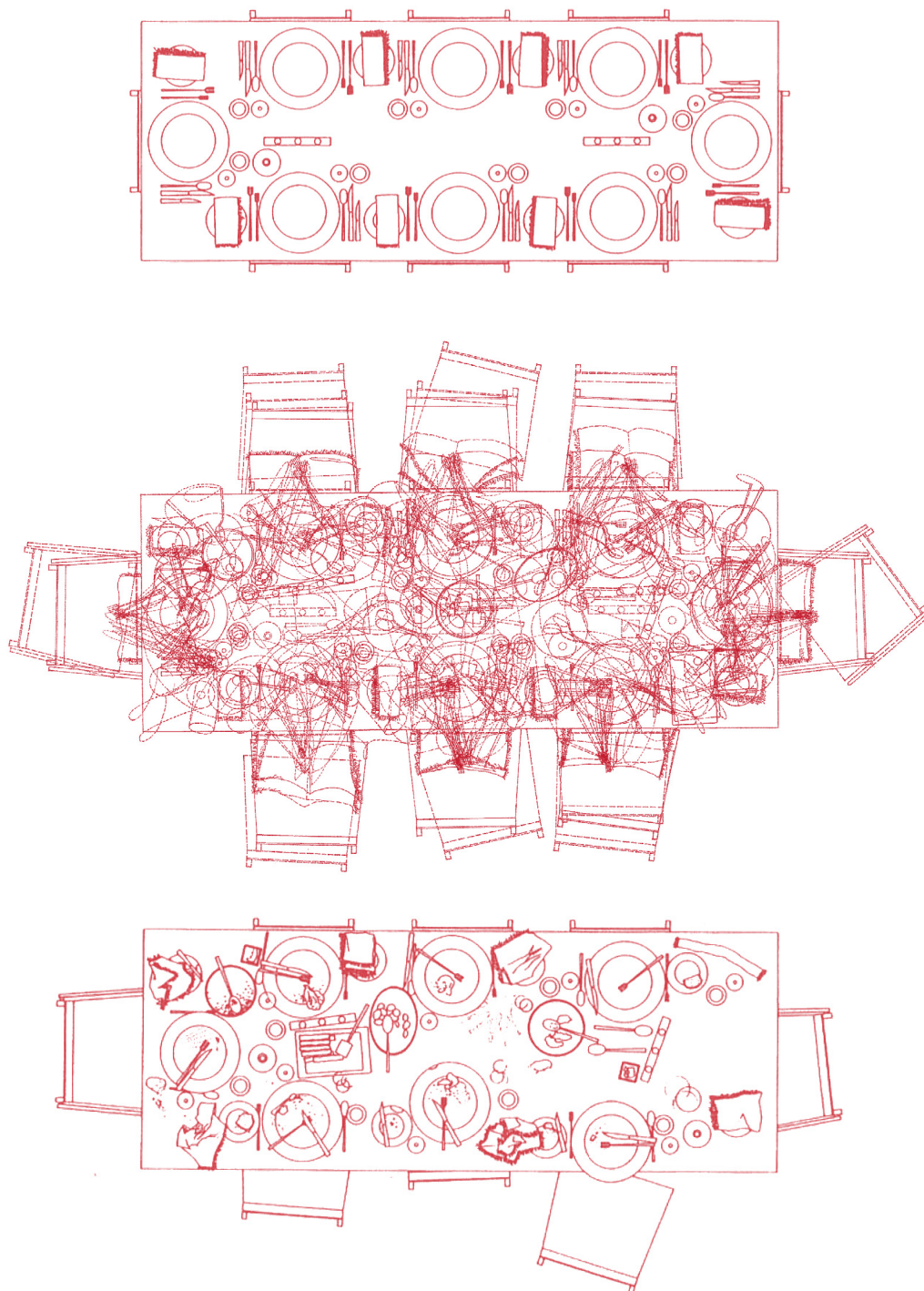


Fig 3.3. table: before, during and after

The occasions of dining always take place in an architectural setting, whether or not they are intentionally staged as such.⁶ A multi-course feast in a banquet hall with all the tableware neatly displayed has a similar relationship between occasion and space to a takeout lunchbox shared with other solo diners along a riverbank crowded with pigeons. Our presence inadvertently transforms an architecturally defined space into the place where we eat.

Sarah Wigglesworth's *The increasing disorder at the dining table* is a sequence of illustrations that maps human presence over the course of a meal. She presents the plan view of the dinner table in three occasions—before, during and after the meal—and recalls the events of the meal without drawing the diners. The table is initially set for a group of eight, each seat is identified by the plates, cutlery and pushed in chairs. The diners move the chairs to seat themselves and unfold their napkins on their laps. Once they settle in, the meal erupts with overlapping events that shuffle the table setting. Someone reaches across the table for a small plate, someone rotates themselves to chime in on a conversation, someone leaves and returns to the meal; every movement is traced atop the canvas of the tabletop. Satisfied, the diners leave the meal one by one, or together as they take the convivial meal to another setting. The table is left unoccupied once more, but traces of the meal tell much about the diners who gathered and how they carry themselves. Like everything that exists in-between, the setting of the meal mediates those who gather around as it stages the dynamics, tensions and negotiations that choreograph the movements in space.

6 Fritz Neumeyer, "The Homely Hearth," in *The Architect, the Cook and Good Taste*, ed. Petra Hagen Hodgson and Rolf Toyka (New York: Birkhäuser Verlag AG, 2007), 50–59.



Fig 3.4. reclamation of space

Building upon this powerful significance of the act of dining, during the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in 2013, the protestors brought tables onto the street and assembled the objects to reclaim spaces of the city and speak out against the developers.⁷ The table structure extended along the streets and overtook the transportation infrastructure, available to protestors and onlookers alike. As the protestors broke their fast, they shared the moment and food together at the ever-extending public space that was once a table.

⁷ Yasemin Tarhan, "The Intimacy Of the Table," in *Log 34: The Food Issue*, ed. Cynthia C Davidson, 2015, 72–74.

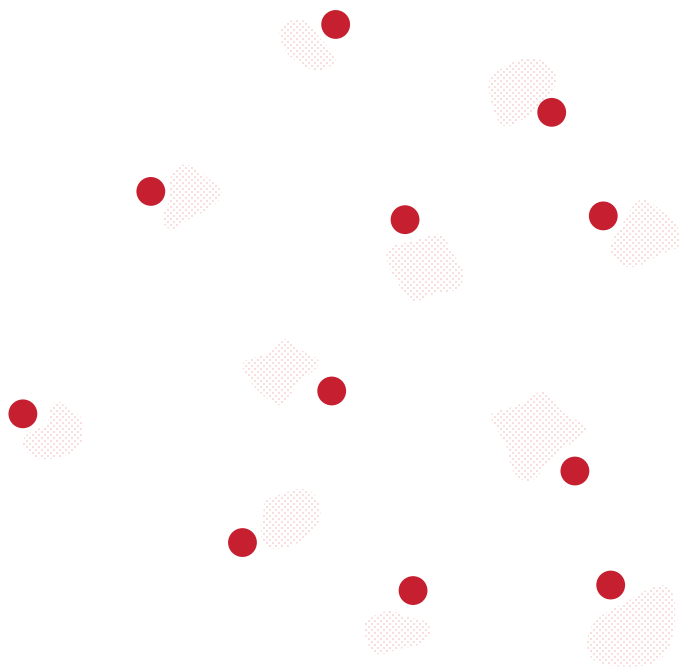


Fig 3.5. movement i, point

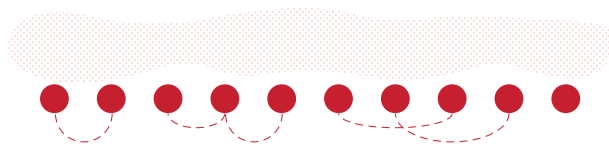


Fig 3.6. movement ii, line

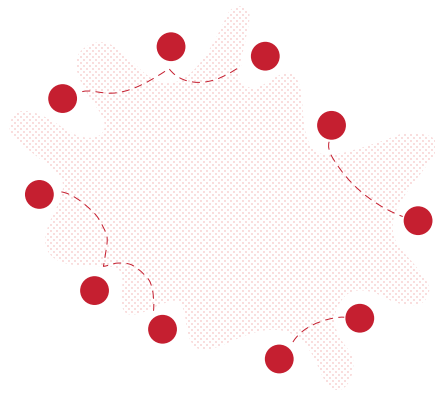


Fig 3.7. movement iii, plane

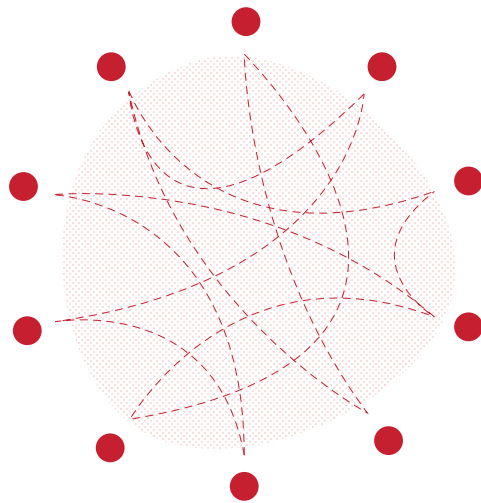


Fig 3.8. movement iv, surface

Our relationship with eating is shaped by the human body. Eating is fundamentally a utilitarian act for nourishment, which requires only our minimal participation. However, the occasions of dining relate to food for more than its nutritional value. When we eat, we enjoy the creation of something beautiful and we share the company of other people. We are affected by food both physically and mentally; our body is fueled by the foods we eat, which prompt responses from our various sensory organs, and are prepared by the tools we are given. We engage with the tools at the scale of the human body. They influence our intimate movements in the occasion and shape our experiences in space. For example, drinking soup with a spoon requires only one hand, while cutting a piece of steak means extending both arms.

The new normal is a collection of food serving tools designed by Ponsawan Vuthisatkul to change how we consume food. She shaped the different-sized pieces to the shape of the hands, to allow users to understand the portions intuitively. Through the grasp of the fist, the pinch with the fingers, the cupping of two hands, the tools serve as extensions of the users' bodies when they eat. Dining utensils and tableware are not the only tools that change how we eat; we explore the possibilities of different body parts—our arms, fingers, tongue, teeth—to engage with the food, and the surfaces where we sit around, stand on, and lie upon. The tools engage us in specific movements that alter our perceptions of space in relation to our body dimensions.

Artist Marije Vogelzang reimagines the tools of dining that confront people through different relationships with food. In the installation *Grazing city scapes*, the artist creates a landscape of inverted glassware that resembles a skyline across a high long table. Small portions of food are placed on the glass platforms, at a height close to the mouth, nose and eyes of the diners; the food is only to be consumed without using hands. Vogelzang shortens the distance between the diners and the food by forcing them to eat with unfamiliar tools. She simultaneously restricts all other movements during the meal, and suddenly the eating surface becomes the only space that matters.



Fig 3.9. a tool for the emphasis of hands



Fig 3.10. a tool for the restriction of hands

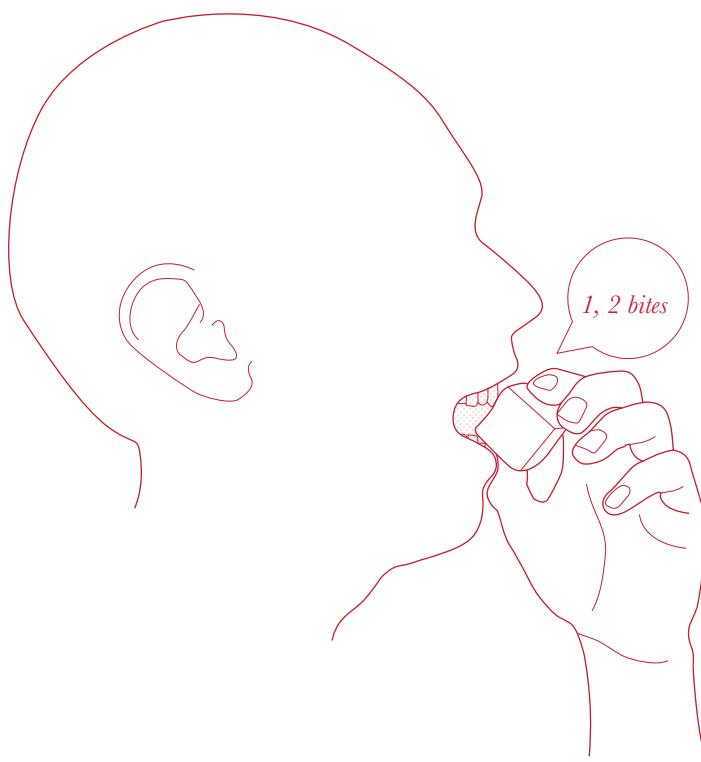


Fig 3.11. measurements of action

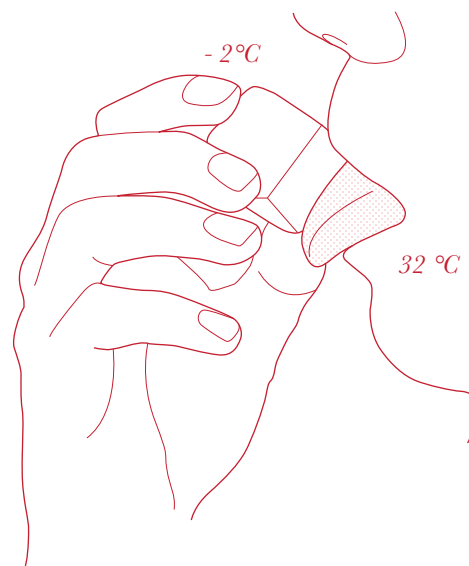


Fig 3.12. measurements of temperature

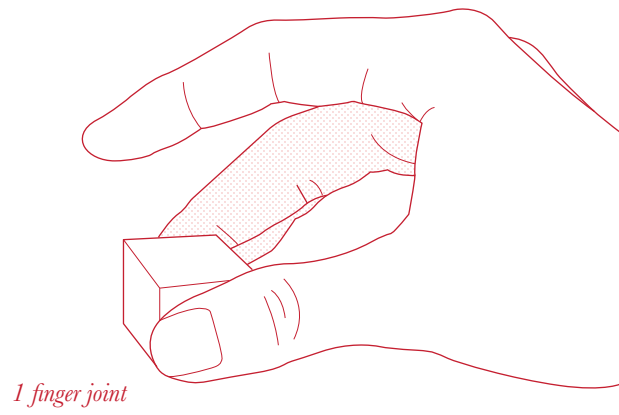


Fig 3.13. measurements of size

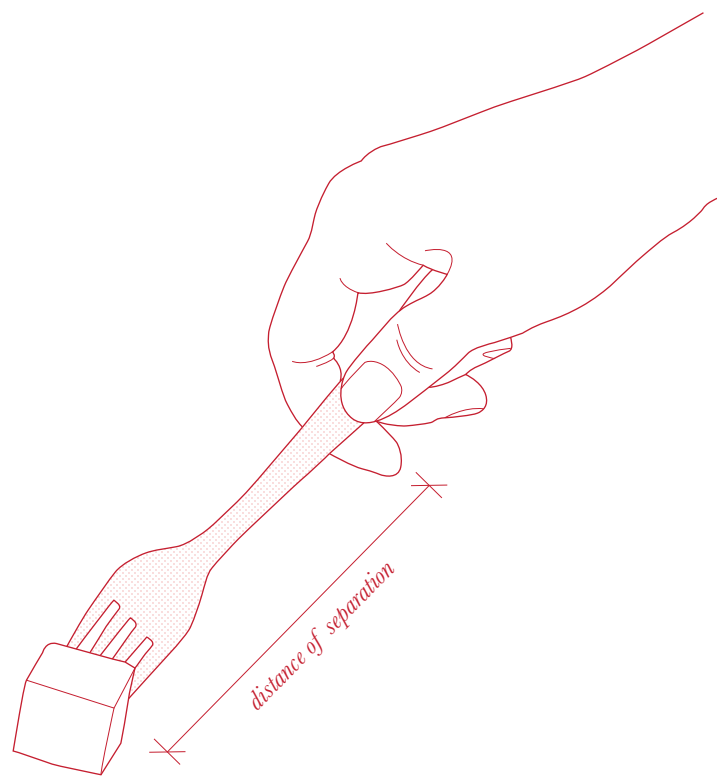


Fig 3.14. measurements of distance

Architecture works through the composition of built forms into a continuum, which can also be interpreted as compiling narratives that inhabit the collection of spaces. The narratives of an occasion are not tangible measurements, but the background, hierarchy and relationships are examples of affective qualities that influence the spatial dynamics and even the creation of space. George Baird's *Dining Position* was inspired by the discussions at a project critique panel. The questions about the seating arrangements of a summer dining pavilion served as the introduction to his exploration of the roles of 'langue' and 'parole' on the practice and perception of architecture. Baird used the debate over whether or not the table should be rectilinear or circular, seemingly preferences on design aesthetics, to question how much influence the seating arrangements have on the diners' interactions, and if architecture as a language of communication should be able to choreograph design and restrictions. The language that establishes the norm is reflected in the occasions of dining commenced in different dynamics of people enabled by the settings.

The occasions of dining are also often used in film to stage pivotal moments. Although dining scenes in film are usually mundane and seemingly take place in passing, they set the scene for the characters to interact in moments of vulnerability, to build upon relationships and to show that they are not fictitious movie-beings—no matter what the setting and what plot is unfolding, they need to eat just like anyone. Every piece of furniture, tableware, clothing, accessory, music and lighting are essential to craft a space that exemplifies our real-life experiences. The interactions displayed in the dining scenes could represent repetitive behaviour that translates to the norm of the characters, or stage uncanny interactions that pull the characters out of their normal routine. A scene in Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* illustrates both qualities of the dining occasion. The arrested mob members are kept in a comfortable setting because of their powerful influence; instead of being held in separate cells, they are in a large room with tables and chairs, a kitchen, and they are dressed in bathrobes. The extravagant dinner complete with wine

shows the certainty of their eventual release, and that for the time being they carry out their normal routine in a completely different setting, in complete harmony. Such scenes shape and reflect the characters' realities just as our dining scenes shape and reflect our own. The careful curation of space to convey our narratives translates to the effect of dining occasions on the spaces we occupy.

Cut to: Int. Dormitory—Lewisburg Federal Prison

Close up—garlic, being sliced razor thin.

Henry (v.o.) Dinner was always a big thing. We had a pasta course and then meat or fish. Paulie did the prep work. He was doing a year for contempt and he had a system for doing garlic. He used a razor and he sliced it so thin it used to liquify in the pan with a little oil.

Cut to: hot plate, with a pot full of tomato sauce and meatballs being stirred.

Henry (v.o.) Vinnie was in charge of the tomato sauce. I felt he put in too many onions, but it was a good sauce anyway.

Cut to: frying pan, with smoking steaks.

Henry (v.o.) Johnny Dio did the meat. He didn't have a broiler, so Johnny did everything in pans. He smelled up the joint something awful and the hacks used to die.

Cut to: Hot flat, hooked up by long extension cord to an electric outlet in the toilet. There are huge kitchen knives, a block of ice in a tin pail covered with a cloth and large pots and colanders necessary for cooking pasta dishes.

Pull back to a large dorm with four beds separated by shoulder-height partitions. The room does not look like a prison. There are curtains over the bars. The room is filled with smoke from the pan-fried steak.

Henry (v.o.) Everybody else in the joint was doing real time, all mixed together, living like pigs.

Cut to: Henry, in a grey prison garb, carrying a heavy canvas mail sack marked "Lewisburg Prison." He dumps the sacks on one of the beds.

Henry (v.o.) We lived alone, we owned the joint. Even those hacks
who we couldn't bribe would never rat on the guys
who did.

Cut to: Henry, opens the sack on his bed and pulls out bottles of wine, scotch, and brandy, and holds them aloft.

Henry (looking for a praise) Nice? Good?

Vario (looking up from his garlic surgery) Okay. What else?

We see Henry reach in the sack and pull out cheeses, dried sausages, a large jar of vinegar peppers and dried mushrooms.

Vario (beaming with pride) Now we eat.⁸

8 An excerpt from the script of Goodfellas



Fig 3.15. a moving dining surface

Atelier Bow-Wow's *Mobile Yatai* is a project that exemplifies how the narrative of space is defined by the dining surface. The long cart moves from crowded streets to parks, and from parks to empty lots. Its surrounding context does not matter, but when it occupies a space it automatically transforms into a place for dining. I describe several occasions of dining from my experience through the lenses of the different human attributes portrayed by human scale figures. The abstraction of events through these frames of reference allows me to focus only on specific details of the space as I recall my experiences and sculpt the places of dining accordingly.

When we share a meal with others with whom we have differences, and who have different relationships with each other, we are aware of the mannerisms and boundaries we establish with our social gestures. The awareness subconsciously changes the dynamics of a meal and how we space ourselves out within the space in which dining takes place. Certain modes of dining require us to use our body more than others, just as some settings position us with other people and objects in space in ways that make us more aware of our bodies, and reimagine the extents of our physical self in relation to the surroundings. In the different stages of a meal—preparation, eating, cleaning—we constantly move around in choreographies that involve collaborations with everything that occupies the space; we populate certain portions of space while barely touching others.

Given this, the dynamics of occasions should thus directly inform the design of space. In each set of scenarios, the select human attributes determine the interactions between people and space, which take place within a space without indicating their position within the space. The table settings allocate specific areas for each diner to move within; whether we move beyond the space is beyond the control of the setting, but the reference is important in the orchestration of the occasions of dining. It could be at a formal meal where the tableware for all the courses are laid out, or on the street where the movements and pauses of urban activity surround the acts of dining; our simple presence in a

space effects its design as well. The comparison between the descriptions with and without mentioning the setting, highlights the importance of the surfaces of dining—tables, platforms, picnic blankets—in providing reference for us to properly determine how we should occupy a space, and to stage the occasions that transform spaces into places.

memories of dining

persona

It's the kind of dish that people say is the first thing they learned to cook, that fed them when they left home, that inspires sudden and irresistible cravings. But when my hunger struck, I had no idea how to make it. I looked in my Chinese cookbooks, but it appeared in exactly none of them. Calling up my mother to ask her, I knew, would be like asking her to describe how to tie shoelaces: almost impossible to articulate, buried so deep in her muscle memory.

In Chinese cooking, this dish is like air, present and invisible.

Francis Lam | The New York Times

scrambled eggs with tomatoes

What I missed the most about home was my mum's cooking. The food itself was irreplaceable in my heart, and I knew I would never be able to cook like her. What lingered in my memory, however, was our family being brought together by the mundane activities of daily life, and the unspoken intimacy captured in those moments. In my memory, and sometimes even in my dreams, I recalled the same scene repeatedly. It was a scene from my childhood, where I saw things from a lower height, and through a much simpler perspective. I couldn't be certain how much of my interpretations were manufactured by my memory, flawed and fickle in nature, but the feelings drawn were undeniably real.

In my memory, I walked into the kitchen while my mum was preparing dinner. I timed my visits so I could observe how she worked her magic in the tight space, but my keen interest was also prompted by my search for something to snack on. I was never patient enough to wait until the dishes were assembled together, much to my mum's frustration, and took bites out of the ingredients. She recognized the sound of my dragging feet, and without looking away from her task, she asked if I could beat together a few eggs. It wasn't really a question. With great caution and balance, I had squeeze past her to grab a bowl from below the stove, before passing between her and the wall once more to reach the eggs. One, two, three eggs were cracked into a metal bowl with a pinch of salt and a few slivers of eggshells (I was insistent on mastering the technique with one hand), before I whisked them together with a pair of chopsticks. Everything I knew about cooking, I learned from watching my mum up close. My head fit just below her elbow. Without interrupting her work, I watched as she masterfully stirred in the eggs with tomatoes



Fig 3.16. learning to cook with my mother

in a heated wok, turned the fire off, and scooped out the steaming hot mixture onto a china dish (the kind distinguished by its brilliant blue and white patterns). It took almost no time for the steam and smell of the food to fill the modestly sized apartment, followed by an announcement that dinner was served.

Scrambled eggs with tomatoes was my brother's favourite dish, which meant that naturally, me being the younger sibling, would dislike the dish. I was relatively indifferent about my food and never opposed to trying new things; my brother, on the other hand, was very particular about what he ate. I adjusted my preferences so I could be different than him. Maybe it attributed to us having similar appearances, attending the same school, or simply because we shared a small room and could no longer stand each other, but I've always wanted to be different. We always fought over the smallest issues, but come dinner time, we would sit next to each other as if nothing ever happened. Despite our constant disagreements, deep down we shared similar interests in many things, and cared a lot about each other. We could not be further apart since I moved abroad, separated by the distance of half the world, and I haven't had the dish since.

The apartment was small. The dining table doubled as the common space where all the activities unfolded, other than sleeping. My dad sat calmly at the table with his tea every morning, which contrasted to my brother and I racing to finish our breakfast and rush out the door. Whenever my dad brought his work home, he would scatter the documents across the table, and any unoccupied surface was left for us to do our homework. On the weekends we would gather around my dad and wait for him to distribute different sections of the newspaper he finished reading. Instead of dividing the already limited space into smaller pockets, we each superimposed our own functions and needs for the space atop the same table surface. Preparing the table for dinner meant we had to find spaces to temporarily store the traces of our activities: the teacups, the trace paper rolls and magazines, the newspaper clippings, our homework

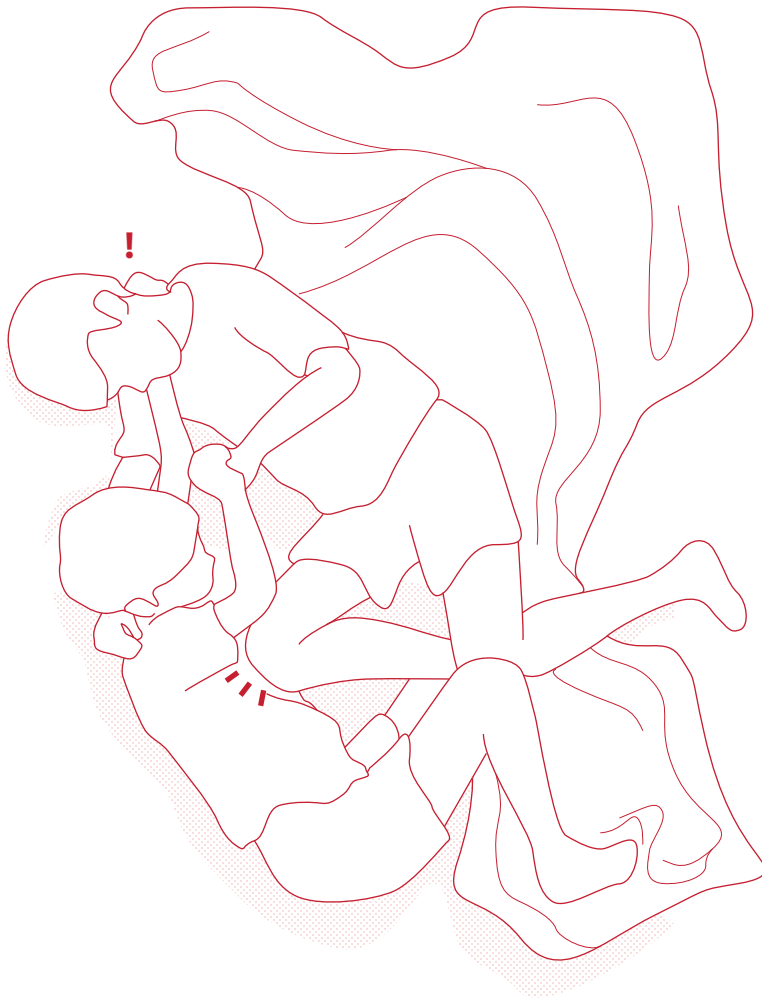


Fig 3.17. fighting for space with my brother

and toys, and replaced with tableware and a variety of dishes. Dinner was one of the few occasions where we all gathered at the table for the same purpose.

During dinner we each sat on one side of the table (it was circular thus it only had one side). We focused our occupied minds on the meal, straightened our utensils, and broke the stillness by inviting everyone to eat. The table was not large enough for four, and we bunched up around the surface that was fully occupied by dishes and bowls. We sat so close that we didn't have to dissect the table into separate portions for each person, instead our movements overlapped, and we were connected through the single table surface. On my right, my brother was thoroughly enjoying his meal, momentarily forgetting our fight five minutes prior about who should sit closer to the window. To my left, my dad ate without speaking much, as he usually did, but he wore a subtle smile that showed he cherished our company. Sitting across from me, my mum continuously checked if we had enough to eat, while her bowl remained mostly untouched. Our dinners usually started late due to my dad's work schedule, and by the time we finished, it was too late to start any serious work. We always lingered a little longer at the table after we ate, and the dinners transitioned into small gatherings where we shared updates of the day, made plans for the weekend, and wound down before we eventually retreated into our separated rooms.

As a child I was constantly reminded of the differences between the way we interacted as a family, and how we addressed non-family members. We perceive the space we occupy through the understanding of our body dimensions, limitations, and acceptable behaviours. When we are in public, we find ourselves in the presence of other people with different habits and interpretations space, and we establish an unspoken agreement to respect our respective boundaries. While a handful of design principles would not stand if we didn't share the same perceptions of space, there were many instances where the variations contribute to the life of the space. We are social beings that require distinct separations

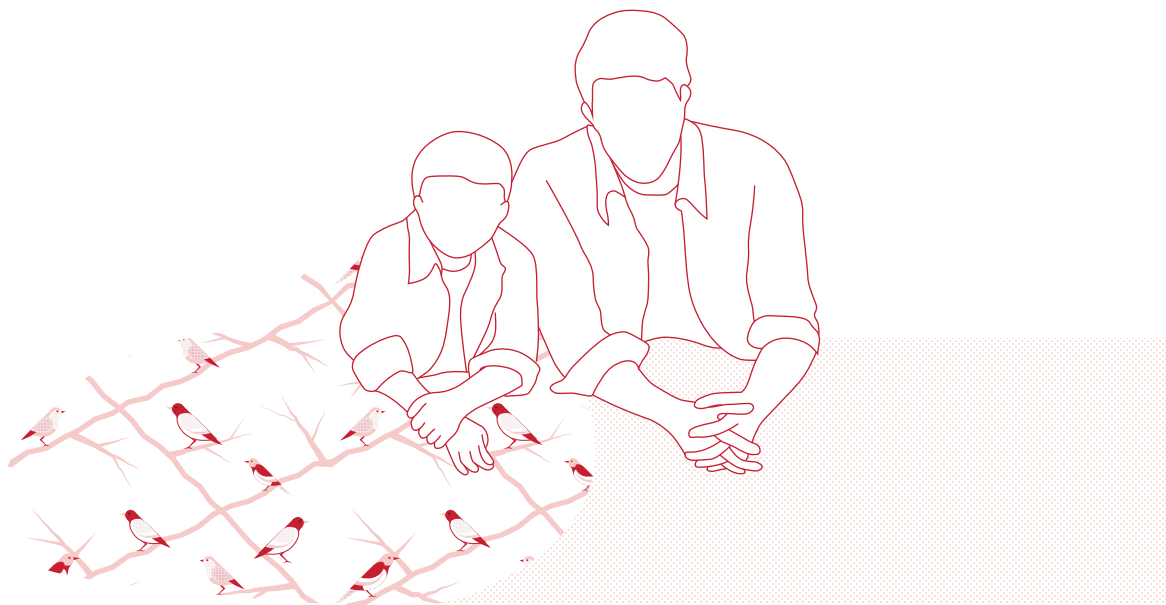


Fig 3.18. sharing the table with my father

between spaces of privacy and spaces of sharing, and we couldn't live without either of them. When I was with my family, we had a close relationship that allowed our personal boundaries to constantly touch, merge and overlap, creating a new boundary that enveloped all of us; not that it was impossible with non-family members, but even our relationships with close friends and lovers were distinct than the family ties we were born into.

The conversation falters as we nibble dainty dumplings filled with shrimp peeping pale and pink through their translucent wrappers. We dive into plaes of soy-sauce-scented rice noodles, unwrap bamboo leaves to reveal triangles of sticky rice, sink our teeth into golden egg custard tarts and watch the pastry flake into our laps.

Ann Mah | Kitchen Chinese

yum cha

As the boy reached for the teapot on his left, his elbow grazed the woman next to him.

“Sorry.”

The tone of his apology averted any further conversations, and he immediately looked away. Similar episodes were happening at a few other tables; most of them unnoticed, drowned out with the noise and activities at the teahouse. Our table was divided between five groups of people, each with different habits and expectations that displayed how we occupied the shared space. The boy, who was careful not to repeat the incident, analyzed the surroundings before every movement and calibrated his body accordingly; he seemed very uncomfortable in the tight setting. The old man sitting next to the boy seemed much more relaxed, and took up more space than he morally should to spread out his newspaper. He held his position and barely moved at all, aside from when he occasionally reached for his teacup or flipped over to the next page; he isolated himself from the rest of the teahouse and surely, he acted as if he didn't care. A family of three were constantly juggling between the many items they spread out on the table, trying to feed their young child who didn't want to sit still at the table. The woman, who the boy briefly touched, meticulously placed the objects in her space and openly expressed her displeasure in the disorganized table setting. I sat and observed the strangers' interactions at the same table as their worlds briefly intersected.

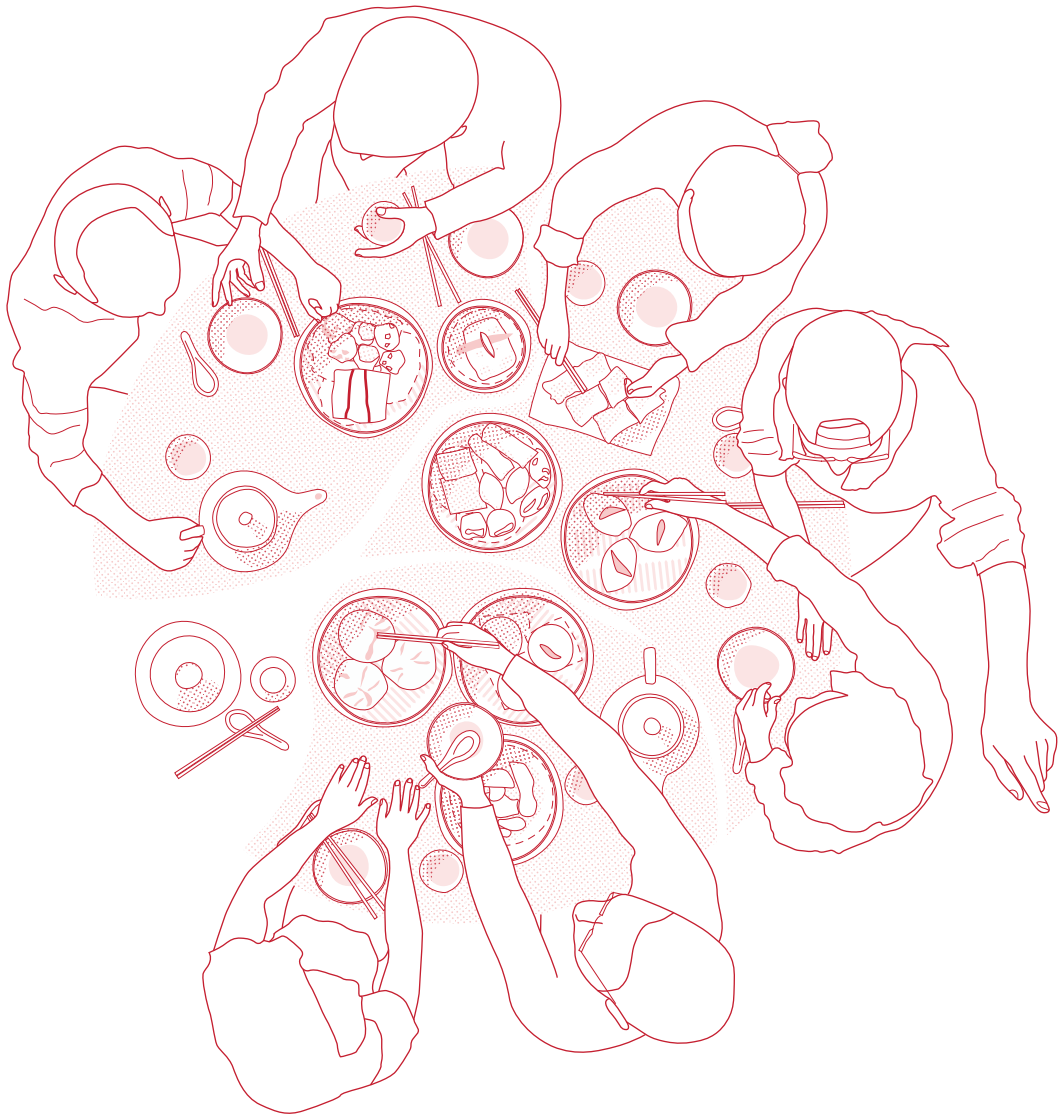


Fig 3.19. dividing the table

The cultural and spatial demands required us to negotiate our relationships within the limited space, but we all had different interpretations of personal boundaries that resulted in contrasting expectations of how we would interact with one another. When I arrived at the teahouse, I was directed by the staff to find myself a seat at any available table. There was a constant flux of people entering and leaving the space. They shoved their way through the moving bodies in opposite directions like salmon swimming upstream against the current, while maneuvering around the tables that were organized randomly within the space. Then there were the servers pushing dining carts from table to table, cautioning the crowd to clear the paths and followed by a flock of diners who were desperately fighting to be in the position for the cream of the crop; once the carts were emptied, the diners had to wait for the next round to be fed. Amid all the commotion, a server walked around with a kettle of boiling water and headphones in his ears, with a complete disregard of his surroundings. It was no less than a chaos. I eventually spotted an empty seat tucked into the corner of the space. It was slightly tight and uncomfortable, but better than nothing. Before I sat down, the mother in the family of three shuffled a few objects to make room for me. She nodded gently at me to briefly acknowledge my added presence at the table and turned back to attend her child. My parents used to take me to the teahouse in my younger years; we would probably resemble the family at the table, huddled close to each other while maintaining a respectable distance between our cluster and the rest of the diners.

My frequent visits to the teahouse as a child solidified my thinking that sharing tables was a common practice to counter the lack of space in the city. To share the table with strangers meant that we had to draw imaginary boundaries to allocate appropriate spaces on the table for each person. We had little control over who we would eventually dine with, and there were no set standards of how we were supposed to interact under every circumstance; it was a constant negotiation of space between the people involved. Table sharing was not considered proper dining etiquette by many people and some restaurants would turn down

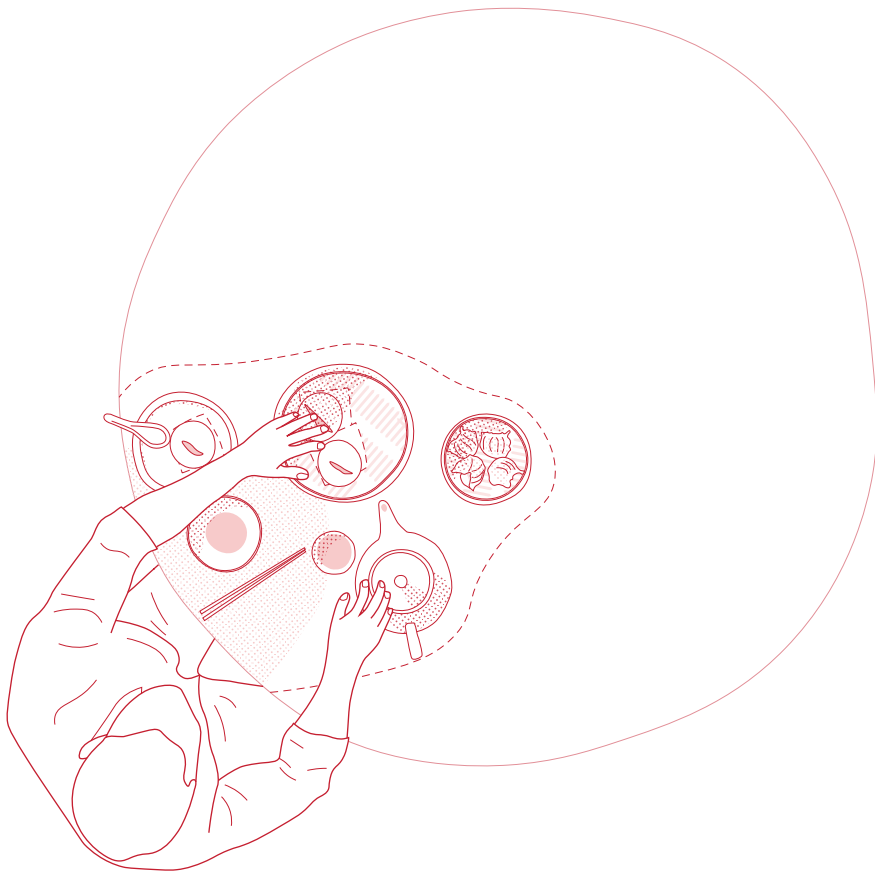


Fig 3.20. establishing my boundaries

their customers if they had no vacant tables, but the teahouse owners welcomed every person until the space was completely saturated; its popularity eventually outgrew the capacity of its humble space it originated from. The teahouse had a long history that spanned several generations and enjoyed success in preserving the traditions of tea drinking, also known locally as yum cha. The practice originated in rest stops and small establishments that served small treats along with tea, usually portions of two pieces. It gradually developed into a dining practice referred to as dim sum, where people gathered between breakfast and lunch, and people reversed the roles of the tea and the treats; the treats were served as a meal, in bamboo steamers that contained anywhere from two to four pieces, and the tea was served on the side.

A server passed by and left me a set of tableware. I laid out the items to my preference: a dish with a bowl place on top, a cup on the side, a pair of chopsticks further to the right, and a spoon inside the bowl—it didn't occur to me that I was using the place setting to establish the boundaries of my slice of the table. The circular table we shared was not shaped to suggest how we could move around it. The dimensions were slightly too small to fit all of us, but it served to mediate between us strangers who were fortunate enough to share each others' presence. The invisible divisions of the table surface were dependent on the size of our group, our respective dining experiences, and our perception of our body proportions. I dove into the crowd and returned with a few bamboo steamers. With the teapot on the left and the steamers organized on the right, I had enough space to comfortable move while I eat, and respect the space of my neighbours as well.

The teahouse recently closed its doors for the last time; its termination was mourned by its loyal customers who had been regulars for more than half a decade, and the morning routine had been an essential part of their lives. In the early mornings, groups of people in their seventies would show up and each claim a table to themselves, which they proceeded to spread out their belongings. The diners were spaced out

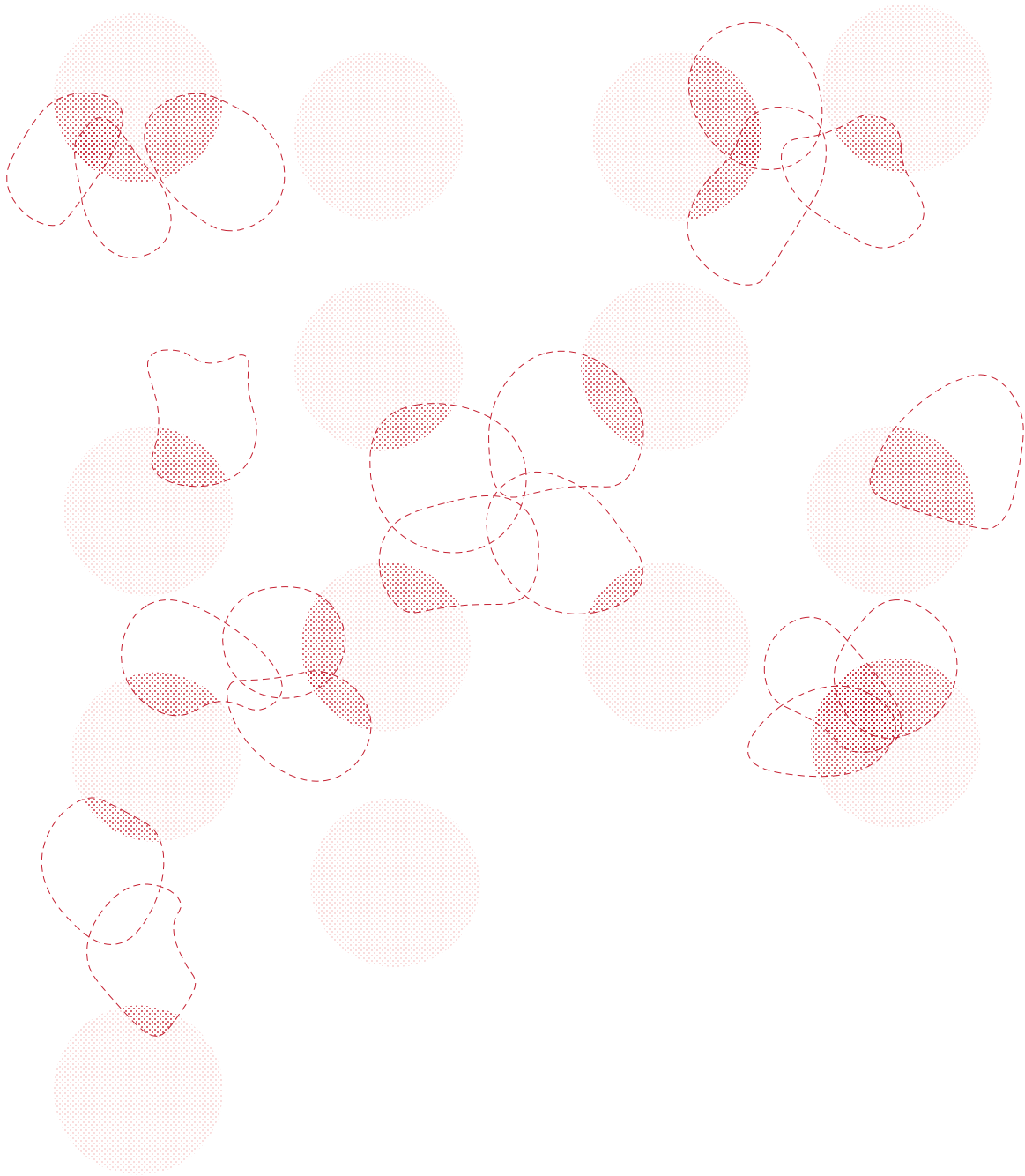


Fig 3.21. space and occupation at the teahouse

much more generously. Some people brought their birds in cages and suspended them on hooks from the ceiling; others flipped through the newspaper and made notes on the stock market on weekdays, and on Saturday horse races. Despite each person having a space of their own, they turned away from the tables to engage in conversations with their friends. For a short period before lunch every day, the acquaintances they made at the teahouse were more important than the tea and food they ordered.

form

Some basic kamayan guidelines:

- This should go without saying, but, wash your hands.
- Try to eat mostly with one hand, keeping the second hand clean for drinking.
- When taking food, use your fingers to pinch the food into a clump at your fingertips (don't let it settle onto your palm).
- After taking a bit of ulam (the meat or vegetables) and rice with your fingers and thumb, use your thumb to push the food into your mouth.

Celeste Noche

kamayan

The waiter was cleaning large pieces of banana leaves when we entered the restaurant. He promptly dropped his task to seat our group along a long table, and we watched as he laid down a few banana leaves to conceal the entire table surface. Moments later he returned with a bucket of rice in one arm and a wooden spatula in the other hand. He placed a generous serving of rice, enough for multiple servings, on the banana leaves and formed a soft bed along the centre. On his next appearance he placed on the surface, in order of sizes: four whole pieces of grilled fish, two calamari tubes sliced into rings, a couple prawns for each of us, a handful of mussels, roasted eggplants and okras, cherry tomatoes and some lime wedges. He also placed in front of every person, a fruit salad consisted mainly of shredded mangoes and orange slices. The landscape of food resembled a Jackson Pollock painting—a graphically tasteful organization with the additional step of making sure each person had a well-balanced portion of food before them. “The skewers and pork bellies would be a couple of minutes,” said the waiter, as he left us to admire the cross between an artwork and a meal, with which we weren’t sure where to begin.

There wasn’t a lot of space at the table. We were sitting elbow to elbow along its edge while the food occupied most of its surface. The lack of a clearly allocated place setting (there was none) and the proposition to eat with our hands (without the extra layer of plastic gloves I might add) connected us with our primal instincts, namely a heightened awareness of our body’s functions as tools of dining. The thoughts that occupied our minds displayed a similar simplicity.



Fig 3.22. setting the table

How far could an arm reach? How much food could a finger pinch hold? When would the meat arrive? The steam from the rice escaped from below the landscape of food, gently reminding us to start eating while it was at a desirable temperature. We squared our shoulders to face the table, sitting shoulder to shoulder, straightened our backs, and dug our fingers into the food.

There was no room for hesitation, and I kept my eyes on the prize. I tore off a small piece of fish and rolled it onto the tiny bed of rice I had held in my palm. Slowly I angled my wrist to shift the tiny work of art to my fingertips and slid it into my mouth. I couldn't tell if it was the combination of the crispy skin and the juicy flesh, my part in putting together the pieces, or the intimacy between my body and what I ate, but there was something extremely satisfying about that piece. I was careful not to make a mess by letting the food slip past my fingers onto the table or myself. But even so, I didn't have the level of dexterity required to keep my area of the table spotless. It is interesting to note that once I got my hands dirty, it freed up the possibilities of my actions. On the other hand, after many years of practice, I acquired the skills to peel prawns quite efficiently. I held the prawn with my right hand and twisted the head off with my left—the head was a treat to be consumed later—then I ran my left thumb along the gap between the shell until it could be unwrapped to reveal the flesh, leaving the tail intact in the process. There were moments where I had to stand up and lean over the table, crossing multiple arms in the process, before I could reach the small piece of eggplant or tomato on the far edge of the table. I had several things to keep in mind during the complex set of movements: to not dirty my clothing, to not drop food on other people, to not elbow the people around me... they were mostly restrictions.

My companions and I interacted with the food in a similar manner. One person buried his fingers in the food and retrieved small pieces with a pinch, tilted his head upwards and lifted his arms even higher, before lowering the food into his mouth. Another person preferred to build a

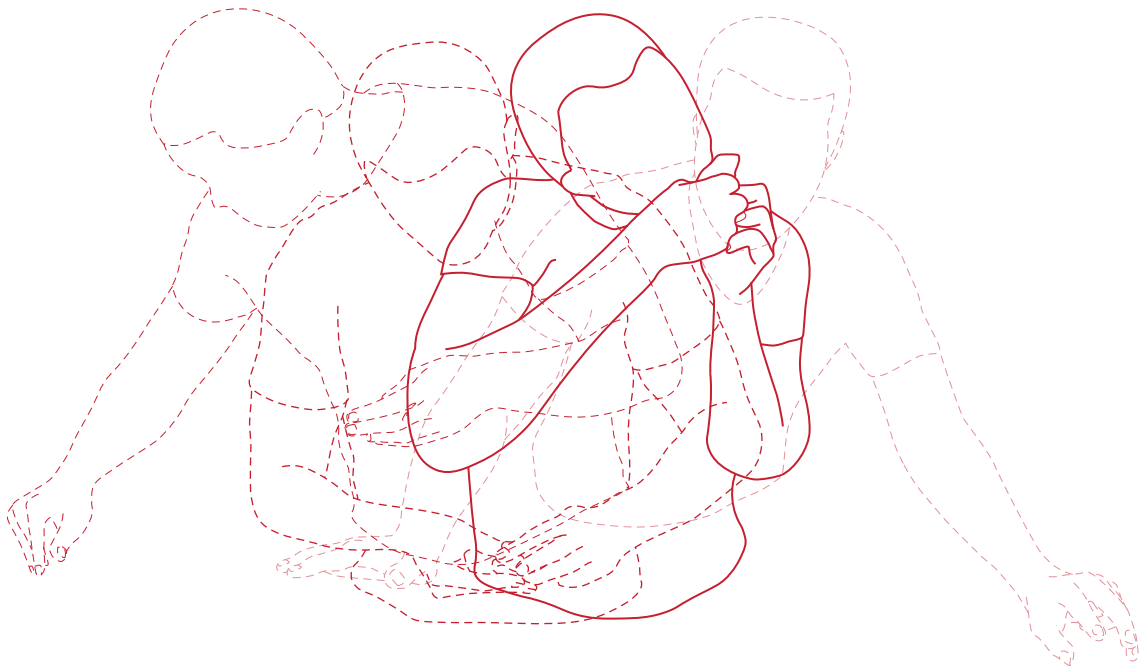


Fig 3.23. reach, gather, compress, eat

nest of food, before consuming it at her own pace without engaging the others' movements. We repeated the phrases "excuse me" and "could you pass the _____", as we swayed our bodies from side to side and extended our arms to reach for different parts of the surface. The changing landscape of the table was a mapping of the positioning of our bodies in relation to the others and the surrounding space, which we referenced and influenced alternately as we maneuvered about each others' movements. It was considered impolite to cross the paths of others at the dinner table; our setting, however, replaced the table with the meal shared by the single serving meal shared by us all, which saw our significance highlighted by our figure rather than the person we are, and we communicated our respect and appreciation with each other with our body gestures. The waiter returned with the promised skewers and pork bellies, but by then the pieces he so carefully put together had already been demolished. For a moment we all remained still and watched his performance: he neatly arranged the pieces on the remains of our meal to form another well-crafted artwork.

Near the of the meal, the chef walked over to see if the night had been going well for our group. She asked what we liked most among the offerings, to which I replied with the same question. Without any hesitation, she took a pinch of rice and continued to collect small bits of food with her fingers. "this one, this one, this one, and that one," she said, as she worked her way through the entire landscape of food. She then turned to me and gestured at my mouth. Before I could lift my hand and receive the food, she already fed it to me like a mother to a child. I was slightly confused, but it was also heartwarming. The act of eating with hands could be considered barbaric, and it probably still is for some people, but for those who grew up with the type of cuisine, it was how they shared the tradition, connected with their family, and communicated the intimacy of a dining setting.

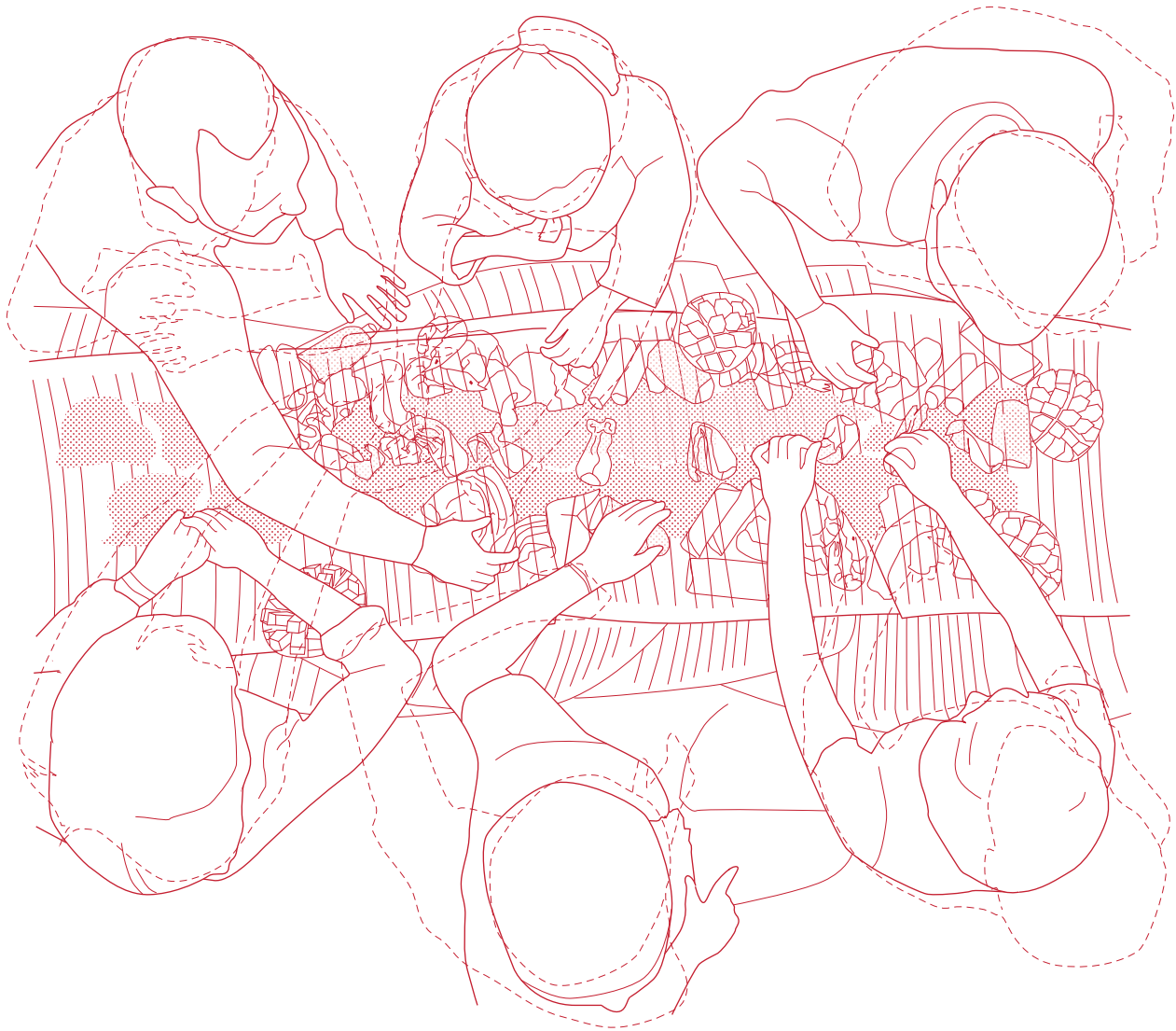


Fig 3.24. a map of movements at the table

“If cooking feijão is an exercise in loading the beans with whatever flavour you can summon, then feijoada is about overkill,” he drools.

“Every mouthful is different and the dark, glossy sauce is enriched by every dried, salted, fresh, or smoked cut you throw in ... from the new cuts—smoked pork sausages, loin chops and belly, jerked and salted beef, salt pork—to the old cuts ... ears, tails, trotters.”

After a lunch like that,
incest must seem positively tame.

James Scudamore | Heliopolis

feijoada

They told me that feijoada was the dish of the poor in Brazil. They told me the story of slaves gathering leftover meat and unwanted parts of a pig from their owners' meals, and they would mix everything together into a black bean based stew (the less romanticized story traced the origins of the dish to Portuguese traditions). They briefly mentioned the three variations of feijoada that developed after the dish was widely adapted: the traditional stew that included pig ears, trotters and intestines; the middle-class attempt that replaced the innards with sausages, and a gourmet feijoada that used fine cuts of pork bellies and smoked ribs. They said that every Brazilian family had their own recipe for the perfect Feijoada. The stew required half a day of work and some ingredients had to be prepared a day ahead; a lot of time was spent cooking in Brazil, since every Wednesday and Saturday was Feijoada day. They were a family of twenty-six people who invited me to their gathering.

It was the day when Brazil played Mexico in a World Cup group stage fixture. Brazil hosted the games that year and had a reasonable chance to claim the trophy on home soil. Meanwhile the entire country was in a celebratory mood, especially after they won the opening fixture. The entire office took half a day off work whenever Brazil played, and on that day, we travelled to a house that belonged to our colleague's family. The house looked spacious from the outside, but it seemed much smaller when everyone gathered in front of the small television set. My colleague's parents and grandparents were there, joined by her uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, and nephews. I briefly learned all their names before they escaped my mind. They weren't all deeply interested in football, but it was the catalyst that brought the family together; you could never have too many reasons for that.



Fig 3.25. gathering in front of the television

The score was tied 0:0 at the half. The game was noneventful for much of that duration, with scattered moments that triggered the family members to snap out of relaxation to briefly focus on the game. The couch was only large enough to fit four people, and there were only a handful of chairs available in the room. Members of the family were used to the large gatherings, and they weren't held back by the lack of chairs. Some people sat on the floor in front of the couch for a better vantage point, the small children sat on their grandparents' laps, and the remaining people either rested on tables and windowsills, or stood at the back for the entire half of the game; the way they easily adapted to their surrounding opportunities almost made the furniture in the room seem unnecessary. Once the whistle was blown to signal the break, everyone evacuated the room to grab a bite within fifteen minutes. The vacant room was restored to its previous state, with one couch, and handful of chairs, and a small television set.

Their table was not designed with the intention to serve a group of our size, but they already knew that. They were pit in a race against time, and the family members reconfigured the objects in the space with a series of seamlessly interweaved movements, criss-crossing between bodies and objects to put together a larger surface. A few people lifted the corners of the table and shuffled it to the side. The others went around the house to gather stools, night tables, and paper boxes—anything that approximated the height of the table and could be used a surface. I stood as close to the wall as possible, afraid that I would disturb the flow of movements with my uncoordinated self. After the hustle, they draped a tablecloth over the objects to conceal the identities of the respective objects, and distilled them into an assemblage of surfaces for dining. The irregular forms invited the family members to interact in different positions. Some people were able to remain either sitting or standing, while others had to crouch, kneel, or lie down, to really test the flexibility of their body to accommodate the surface. In the center of the surface was a large clay pot with the steaming hot feijoada, accompanied by small plates of spinach, lettuce, fruits and salsa. We each received a plate,

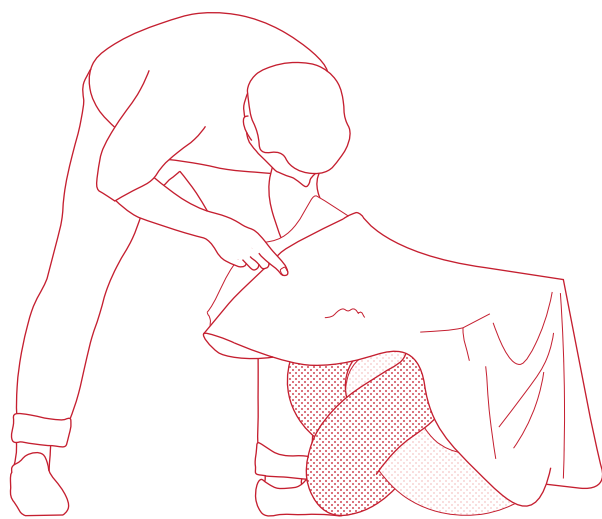


Fig. 3.26. concealing the identity of objects

or a bowl, or any vessel that was available at their disposal, and gathered around the pot to serve ourselves. The rich, black stew was served on a bed of farofa mixed with bacon bits, and steamed rice if we'd like. The vegetables and the rest went on top, and we weren't allowed to leave the table without a drink in hand. One by one, the family members took their food and resumed their position around the television set, just in time for the kick-off of the second half.

The intensity of the game turned up a few notches in the second half. Both teams went close to scoring on several occasions in succession, leaving no room for the audience to even catch a breath. Some people rested their plates on their knees or on the floor as the game was more important than eating, but with the heightened focus they lost the awareness of their body and threatened to knock over their plates when they moved. The grandparents had their eye glued on the screen and inched forward on the couch, while the children curled up in their own space to eat without making a mess. The hierarchies and positioning in the room were loosened after the consumption of food and a few drinks; instead of slotting into spaces next to one another, they carved out spaces with their bodies and adjusted the relationship with the other members constantly. The taller cousins sat up straight with their chests open, arms wide, and took up the space of people around them, and the shorter aunts and uncles moved from side to side to better see the game. Two uncles engaged in heated conversations about the tactics of the game, while my colleagues and I didn't feel like we were in the position to join the conversations and enjoyed both the spectacle of the game and the gathering.

Brazil never scored in the goalless game, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the family, who celebrated until late in the night and contributed to the joyous mood that echoed in the neighbourhood.

We were all well-fed when we left.

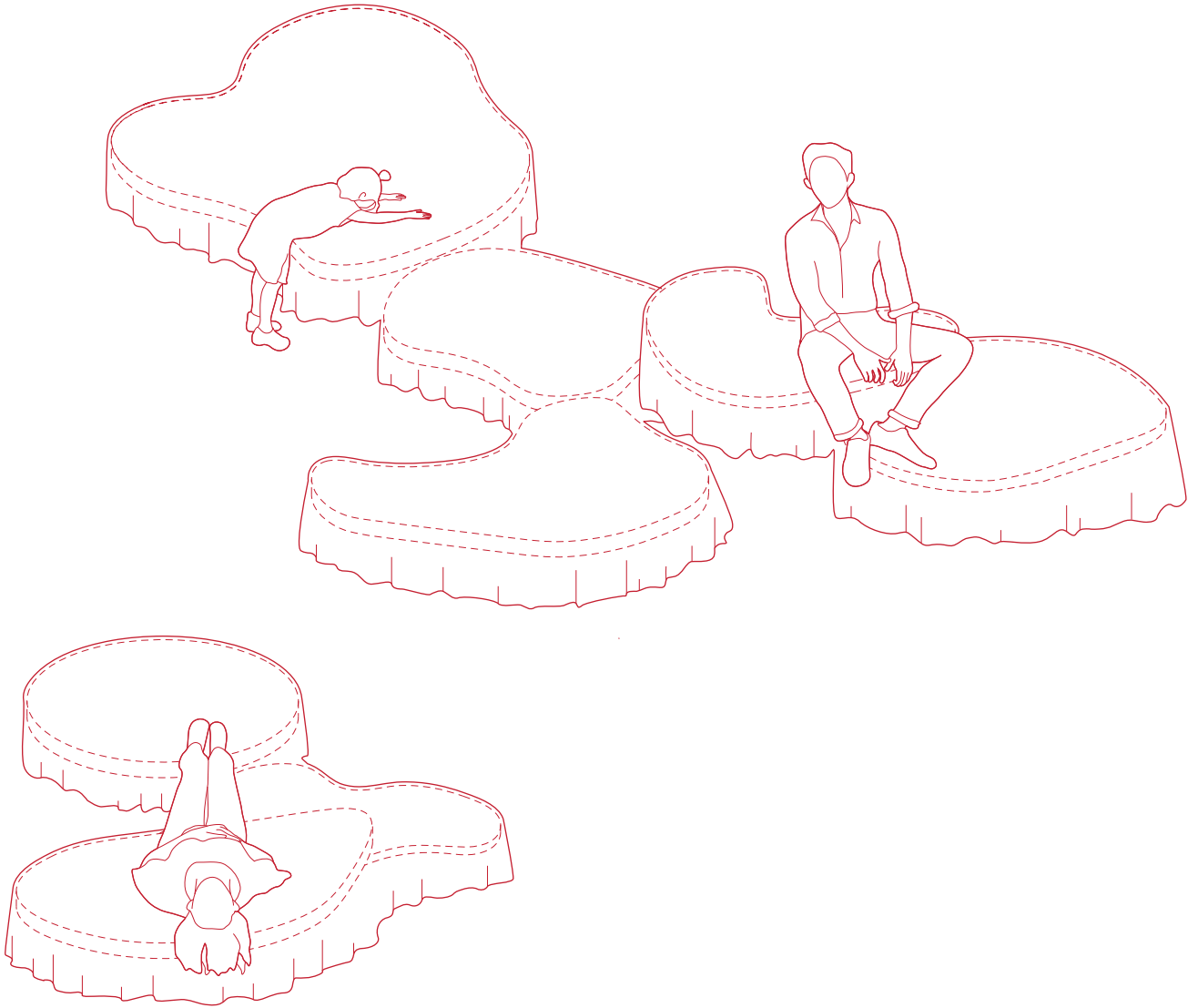


Fig 3.27. composition of the table

movement

I believe that consuming food in such a context allows us to read the territory that hosts us more clearly. As we move among the street vendors' stalls and kiosks we experience the street as a place where we can perceive cultural, historical and identity-related attitudes at a pure state, rather unlike what we experience when sitting at a table in a restaurant.

It is unthinkable, therefore, to bring "street food" outside of such a context.

Antonio Tubelli | The street and the food

stuffed calamari

I pushed my way through the crowd that occupied the narrow passage between the market stalls. Some of the market people inspected each stall as they walked by slowly, some were setting up stalls for selling herbs in the middle of the passage, and some others simply stood there. The congestions were common in fresh markets, along with the grittiness of blood and dirt, but there was something charming about the snippets of life and interactions demonstrated in the setting where people of different walks of life interacted. I proposed to prepare a dinner for the office I was working in, which ended up being a meal for sixteen people. In hindsight I might have chewed off more than I could swallow, and I only managed to put a small dent in the long list of ingredients so far. Some items were harder to source than others, specifically sized calamari for example, while there were others I hoped to stumble upon before the end of their season (the changing offerings in different seasons and locations highlight the flawed beauty of the fresh market). I moved past the vegetable stalls that lined both sides of the main artery, stocked with ill-looking produces, and approached the lady in a small space around the corner; her asparagus looked fresh and the lady was friendly. While I took a breather before rejoining the crowd, I noticed a queue so long that it led to somewhere I couldn't see, but my nose was tingling with excitement.

It was a sandwich stand with two people working in a tight space, and they moved around with such precision that compared a dance performance. For the sake of simplicity, I named them A and B (I didn't ask for their names), so I could better illustrate their routine. Once a customer placed an order from the single item menu, A sliced open

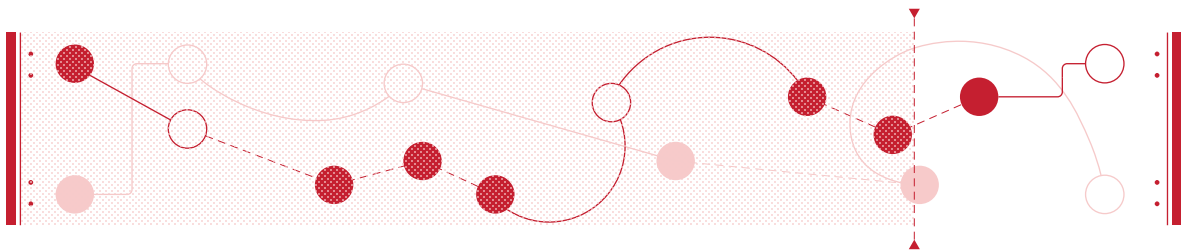
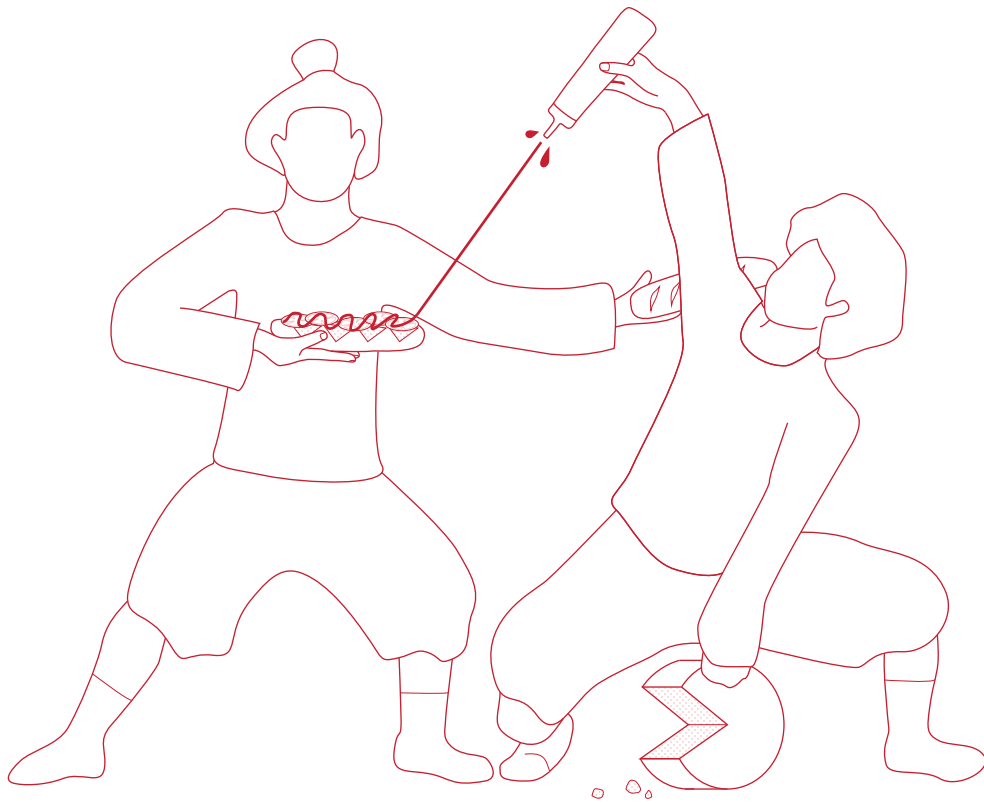


Fig 3.28. choreography between A & B

a sourdough and arranged layers of spinach, prosciutto and tomatoes, before moving to the side to prepare the next sandwich. B, who stood behind A with a half wheel of parmesan in one hand, moved forward and sliced a few hefty slices of cheese onto the sandwich. A sidestepped back into position and, after a few sprinkles of spices, placed the sandwich in a panini press for half a minute. Rinse and repeat. I was fascinated and tempted to join the back of the line, but I am proud to claim I wasn't easily swayed, and I didn't forget the purpose of my visit. When I left the market both my shoulders were weighed down from the ridiculous amount of ingredients, and foretold the hurdle of tasks that awaited me the next day.

I arrived early in the day for preparation so I could work comfortably and allowed time for mistakes. My colleague's partner, C, was there to welcome me to their apartment, which they kindly offered for hosting the meal, and the other guests wouldn't arrive until much later. She gave me a brief tour of the apartment: the open kitchen was lined on all sides by a concrete countertop, one of which extended into the dining room to act as the dining table. I had to put on a decent performance somehow. I retrieved a package from my bag and unrolled it on the countertop to reveal a set of four knives. I didn't consider myself a skilled chef to justify being particular about my knives, it was nice, however, to know the tools I used were well maintained. I also had with me three different coloured whetstones with distinct grits of 400, 1000, 4000; if I ran my fingertips across their surfaces, I could tell them apart by the slight variations in texture.

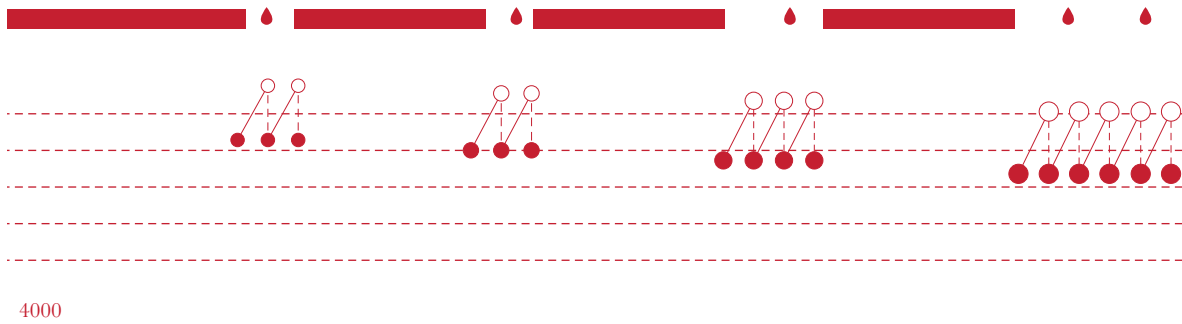
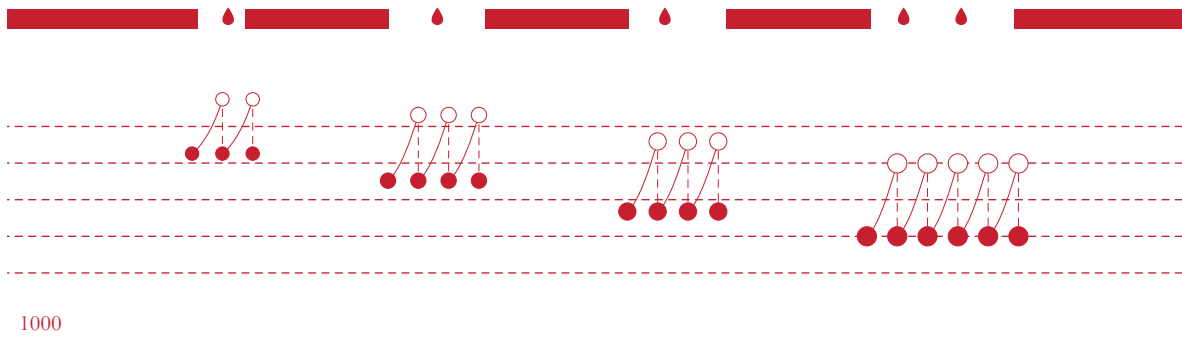
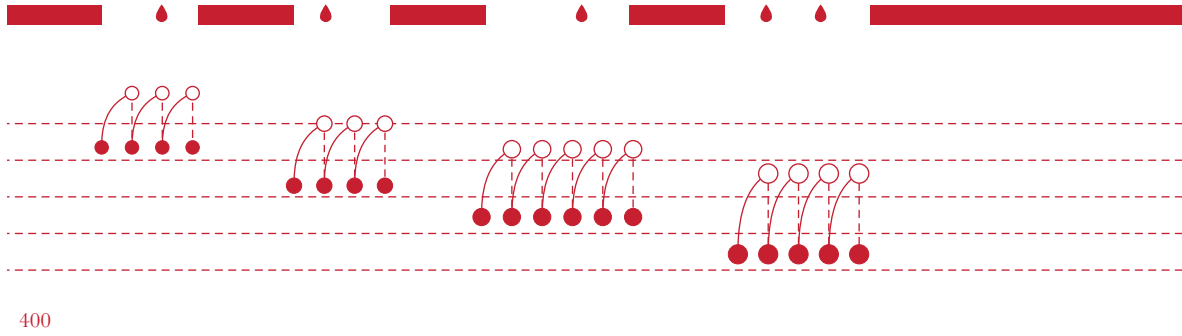


Fig 3.29. a script for knife sharpening

I had with me:

A pairing knife

A slightly larger pairing knife

A chef's knife

A cleaver

I sharpened the knives with a smooth and familiar motion, from 1 to 4, and from 400 to 4000. I removed the nicks on the blades, worked a gentle curve on the edges, and gave the bevels a slight polish. The process of sharpening introduced a sense of familiarity that helped me adjust to the environment. The rhythmic sound when the blade struck the stone performed as a metronome that I used to pace all my movements.

I was given access to everything in the kitchen, and an extra pair of hands offered by C. While I was grateful for the help, we don't speak a common language, her and I; since the best we could do were simple phrases and body gestures, we replaced words with our movements in the kitchen. To begin, I finely diced half a tomato and asked if she could do the same for the rest. While she occupied a section of the countertop for her task, I stood next to her and placed a pot of rice on the stove to simmer. On my way to the fridge I dropped off a head of garlic and two onions next to her cutting board, before heading to the opposite corner of the kitchen to remove the spines of the calamari. She organized the prepared ingredients in separate bowls for me, and I created a list of tasks that an increase in complexity as we developed a better understanding of our partnership's dynamics. Once the calamari were stuffed with rice and placed inside the oven, we took a moment to reset the kitchen space, and divided it once more through our choreography for the next dish. Our respective lists of tasks and stations occasionally saw us overlap each other's movements, but after a while we were able to offset the paths to prevent them from intersecting. It was as if we carved out two separate spaces through our interpretations of the relationship between our body movements and the kitchen.

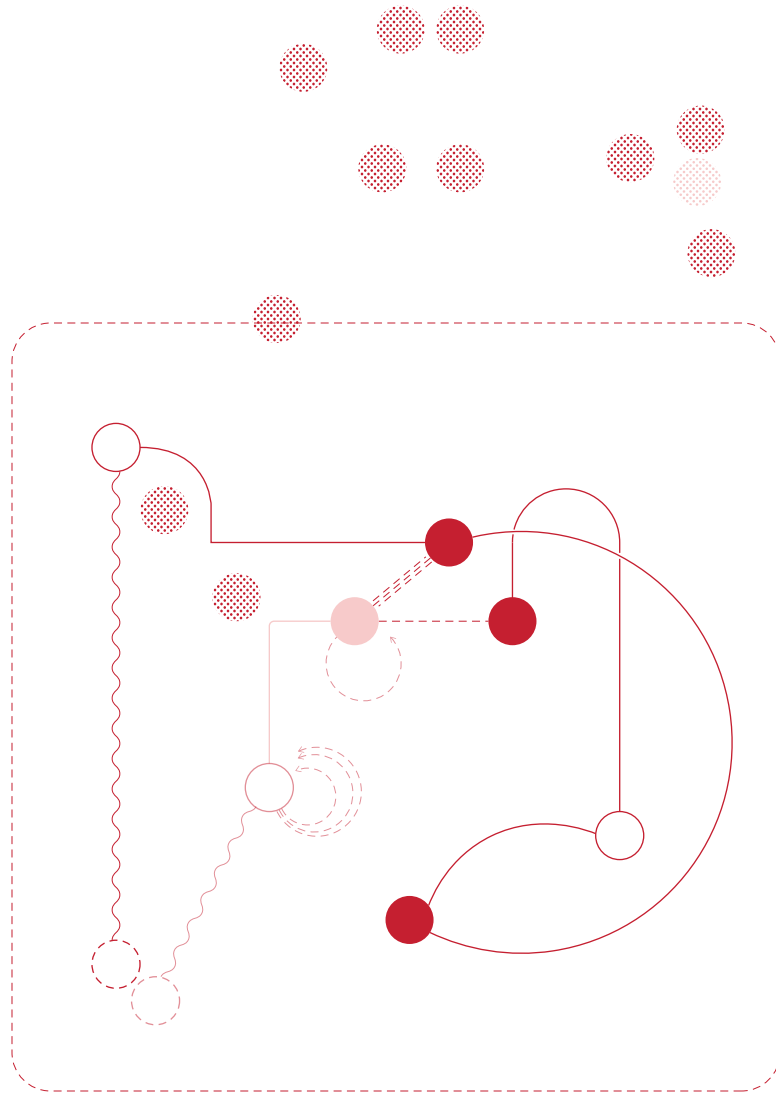


Fig 3.30. choreography in the kitchen space

The guests arrived closer to dinner time: my boss and his family, my colleague the host, my other colleagues and their respective friends and partners, the office dog. Their arrival caused a slight turbulence to the carefully established balance of the space. In different intervals they moved in and out of the kitchen, intrigued by the preparation processes, and interfered with our free-flowing choreography of movements. We had to maneuver around the extra bodies that changed constantly, while making sure our paths didn't clash. The obstacles slowed our pace down slightly, but luckily, we had the dog to draw our guest's attentions for a while. For each course we served, I prepared the dishes and she brought them to the dining table. She then collected the plates emptied by our guests, rinsed and dried them, before I plated the next course, and so on. I limited my movement within the kitchen, and she went back and forth across the boundary; the guests were too occupied to move around the space. After dessert was served, we finally joined the gathering at the table, where our guests made each of us a cocktail to start the second half of the night.

The most important part of making good sushi is this: creating a union between the rice and the fish. If they are not in complete harmony, the sushi won't taste good. The order is also important. In traditional Japanese cuisine there is a progression in how the dishes are served. Heavier flavors are served later in the course.

There is an ebb and flow to the menu. When I ate the sushi, I felt like I was listening to music. Jiro's sushi course is like a concerto. There are dynamics in the way the sushi is served, just like music.

You're consuming Jiro's philosophy with every bite.

David Gelb | Jiro dreams of sushi

sushi

I was seventeen years old when I had sushi for the first time—The type of cuisine featured heavily in my surroundings when I grew up, since both my dad and brother loved it, but my irrational fear of raw fish held me back. It was five in the morning when my friends and I boarded on the train to a fish wholesale market in Tokyo. Upon our arrival we walked into a tuna auction going underway; hundreds of frozen tunas, larger than the size of a child, were laid out neatly in lines of fifteen across the green floor of the chilled warehouse. A round section was cut off from the tail end of each fish to display the colour and quality of the meat. The bidders, each equipped with a flashlight and a hook, wandered around the space. They occasionally lifted open a sliced section of the fish to inspect the meat and fiddled with a small cube of meat in their hands to examine the texture. Time froze within the space as the auctioneer stood up on a short stool, with a clipboard in hand, and announced at the top of his lungs—the start of the auction. The bidders indicated their interest with a slight lift of fingers and wrote in their notebooks simultaneously. Their paths interweaved, but never intersecting, as they paced back and forth between the fish and other bidders; the movements of the living contrasted the lifelessness of the dead. The crowd breezed past the bidding process in no time. After watching the event unfold in the market, I couldn't refuse the opportunity to try the fish myself. We left the warehouse and walked into the first restaurant around the corner.

The restaurant was minuscule without exaggeration. The door opened to a line of four stools that faced a tabletop, which happened to be the perfect number for our group. 'Welcome!' Said the chef the moment we walked in, and he greeted us once more with a smile when we sat

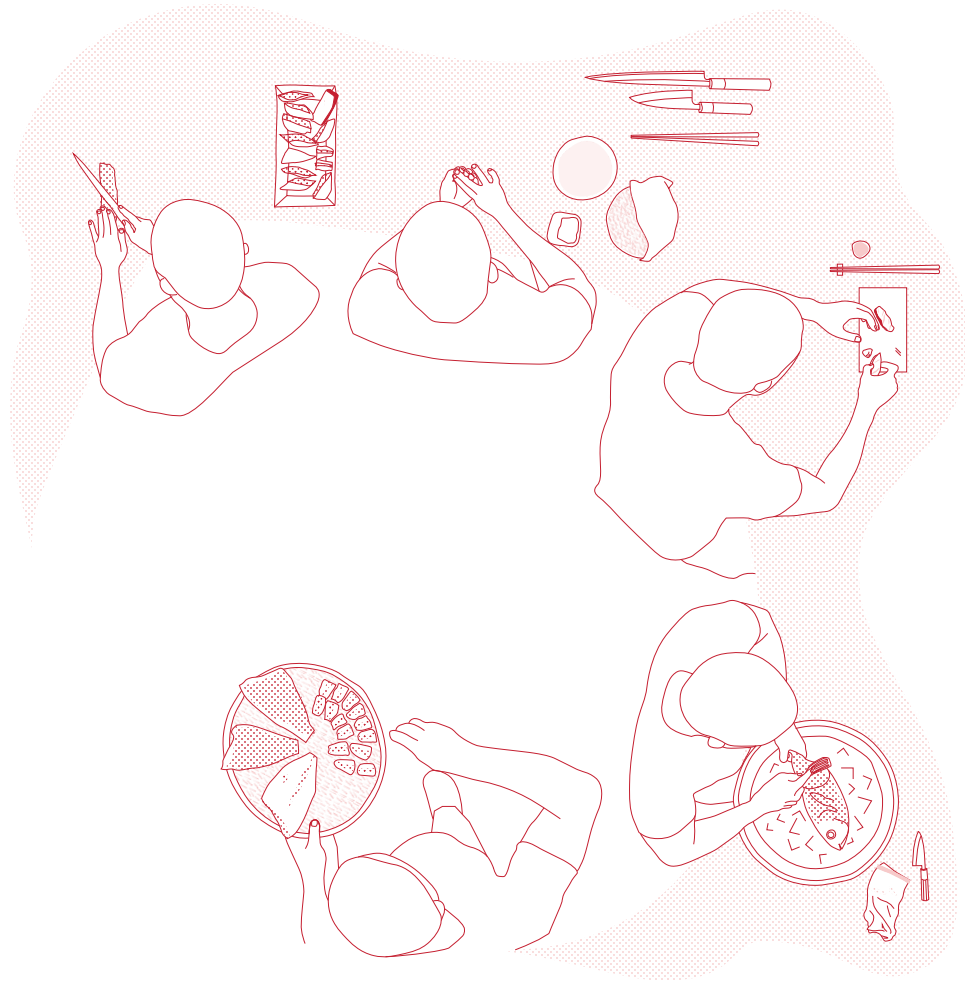


Fig 3.31. steps of the chef's preparation

down before him. It wasn't the perfunctory smile that workers in the service industry were obligated to provide, his smile expressed a sincere delightfulness in being able to serve us that morning. My friends and I shared the same sentiment for his company as well. The space on the other side of the tabletop was occupied by the chef and another person, whom I assumed to be his assistant. It was slightly more spacious than the front of the restaurant, but not quite enough considering the movements required in the preparation process. The chef subtly studied us while we were deciding on what to order. His hands never stopped moving, from cleaning his tools to wiping down the worksurface, but I caught him observing the small details such as the way we sat, or the placement of our cups. After we placed our orders, the chef carefully placed a plate in front of each of us, and a pinch of pickled ginger apiece.

The chef carefully retrieved a piece of fish from a wooden tray, and gently aligning a long knife to the piece, he cut a thin slice in a single smooth stroke. He then moved to the right and lifted the corner of a cloth to reveal a shallow wooden bucket of rice. With the fingers of his left hand, he took a small ball of rice and cupped it with his right hand to form a solid base. Again, with the index and middle fingers of his left hand, he smeared a dollop of wasabi on the rice, placed the thinly sliced fish on top, and formed the sushi with a gentle press. He placed the carefully crafted piece on my plate, slightly to the side of the plate to adjust for my right hand. The series of actions were performed without any unnecessary movements, and it was repeated three more times for our different orders. The chef waited until we finished the first piece before he proceeded to prepare the next. The freshness of the food was essential to the craft. The assistant never stopped moving in the background. He responded promptly when the towel needed replacing, when pieces from a different tray were required to be retrieved, or when our cups were empty. The tabletop divided the restaurant into two parts: the half was a static space which we, the customers, sat and admired the process, and the other half was a fluid space where the chef and the assistant performed their well-choreographed duet. Within the close distance we

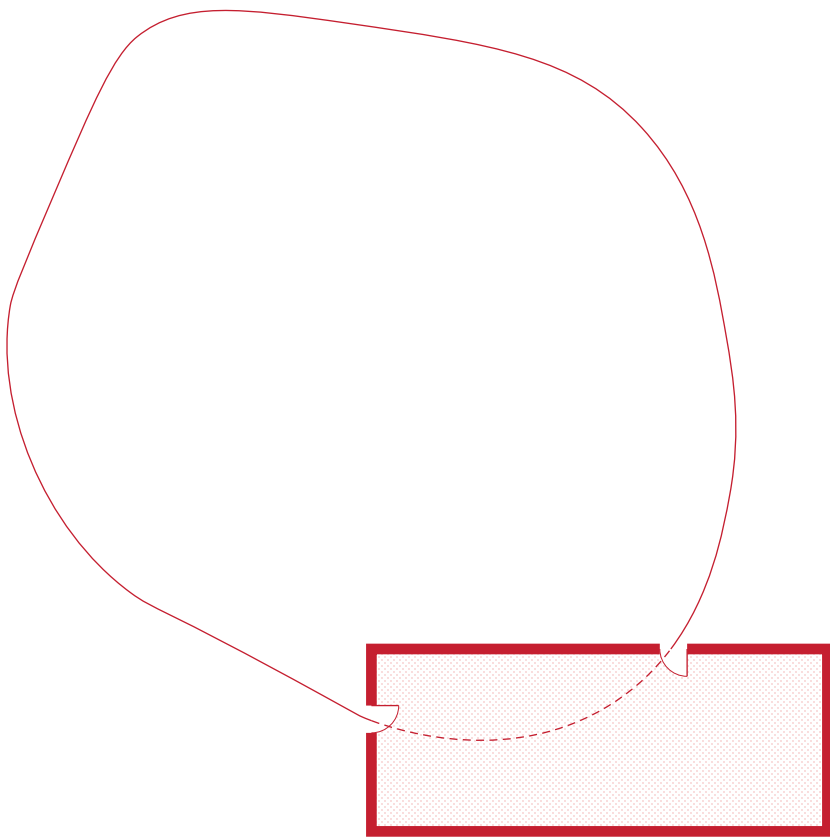


Fig 3.32. served by a conveyor belt

were able to catch every detail of the act, while the chef referenced our positioning as nodes he had to include in his movements. Unknowingly, we became part of the performance that deeply intrigued us.

Years later I found myself in another sushi restaurant, except the food was served on a conveyor belt. The setting was simple; I took a seat at the long table along a conveyor belt, and there was no chef on the other side of the table. I didn't have to order, I simply waited for my desired option to appear before me.

No.

No.

No. No.

Yes.

I reached out and grabbed the dish with two pieces of tuna sushi and placed it on the table. It didn't look quite as fresh as the one I tasted in Japan, but it was also much cheaper. I wasn't treated with the chef's masterful technique in slicing the fish, nor the free-flowing movements between the chef and his assistant within the limited space. The performance was replaced by the ever-moving conveyor belt, continuously introducing different options to feed my anticipation. I didn't have to move much, nor did I think much. If I liked something I saw, it would end up on my table. The perfectly shaped pieces could possibly be made through an automated process and I wouldn't know better. However, I felt that I was able to learn a thing or two about the other diners. The conveyor belt connected every person along the table in the single direction of its movement. Being seated near the end of the belt meant that the options were limited, but from the options available to me I could deduce that the people before me didn't like tuna, or that they

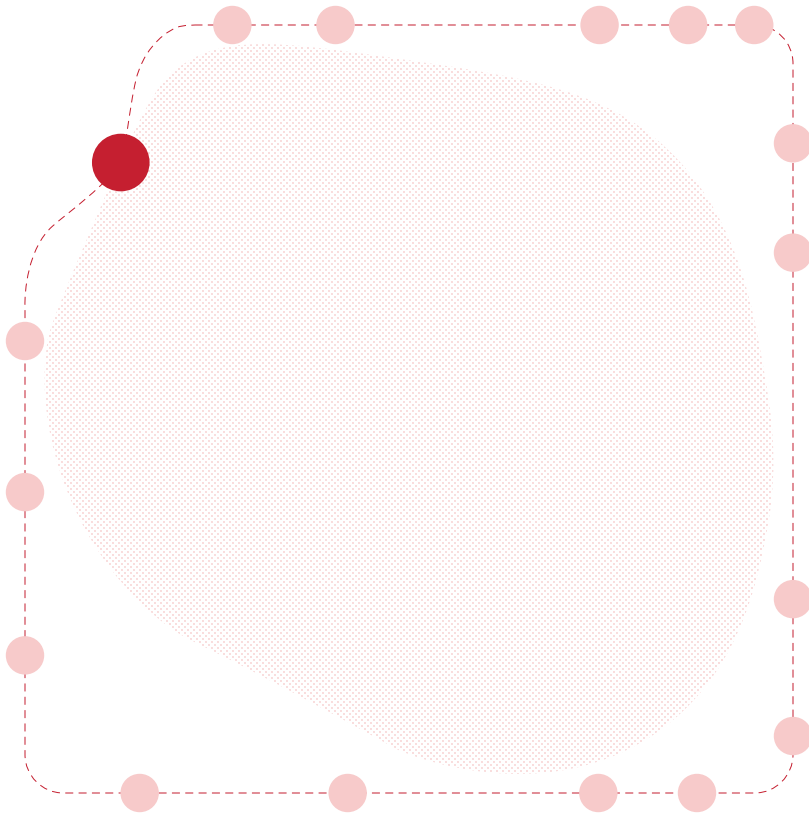


Fig 3.33. an alternative setting

already had their share for the night. I couldn't tell what the person after me would choose, but I had the control of what he couldn't have. When the leftovers cycled back to the sushi chef behind the wall, they would know what was well-received and could adjust accordingly, without ever directly observing the habits of the diners.

If the surface didn't move, the chef had his set up in the center, and the diners rotated around the space on a conveyor belt, would that still create the same experience for us?

presence

Finally start eating, the noodles first.

While slurping the noodles, look at the pork. Eye it affectionately.

The old man bit some shinachiku root and chewed it awhile. Then he took some noodles.

Still chewing noodles, he took some more shinachiku. Then he sipped some soup.

Three times.

He sat up, sighed, picked up one slice of pork as if making a major decision in life... and lightly tapped it on the side of the bowl.

Tsutomu Yamazaki | Tampopo

ramen

I had been in line for half an hour, more than that if anything, but I was committed to find out the reasons for the restaurant's unwavering popularity. The long queue mostly consisted of couples or groups of more, there weren't a lot of people who arrived to dine alone; it was too late to catch the first wave of diners who avoided the crowds, but not late enough in the night for the appearance of people who made quick stops to eat on the way home. After a long day of work without eating much, I was overjoyed when they moved me closer to the front of the queue because I was a group of one. Oh, the pleasures of dining alone! Once I made it past the main entrance, I joined yet another line, instead of being seated as I expected. It was much shorter than the first, limited by the length of the room, but it was a queue nonetheless. I shouldn't have been surprised when the wait was followed by another waiting room with a row of chairs; I felt like a package being slowly processed and received into the restaurant.

The guide walked me around the corner, and I found myself confronted by a long hallway lined with partitioned spaces on both sides. She gestured for me to take a seat in the partition labelled '26', before she disappeared back into the same way we came. The space resembled a poll station, or a stable, rather than a restaurant. As I made my way further down the hallway, I caught glimpses of movements behind the partitions that suggested I wasn't alone, but the space was oddly still. I arrive at my allocated space. Partition 26. It was quite spacious for the body of a single person, even in the highly possible scenario where I had to extend my elbow while eating the noodles, I wouldn't knock on the walls of my neighbours. Partition 25. While the views to my sides were

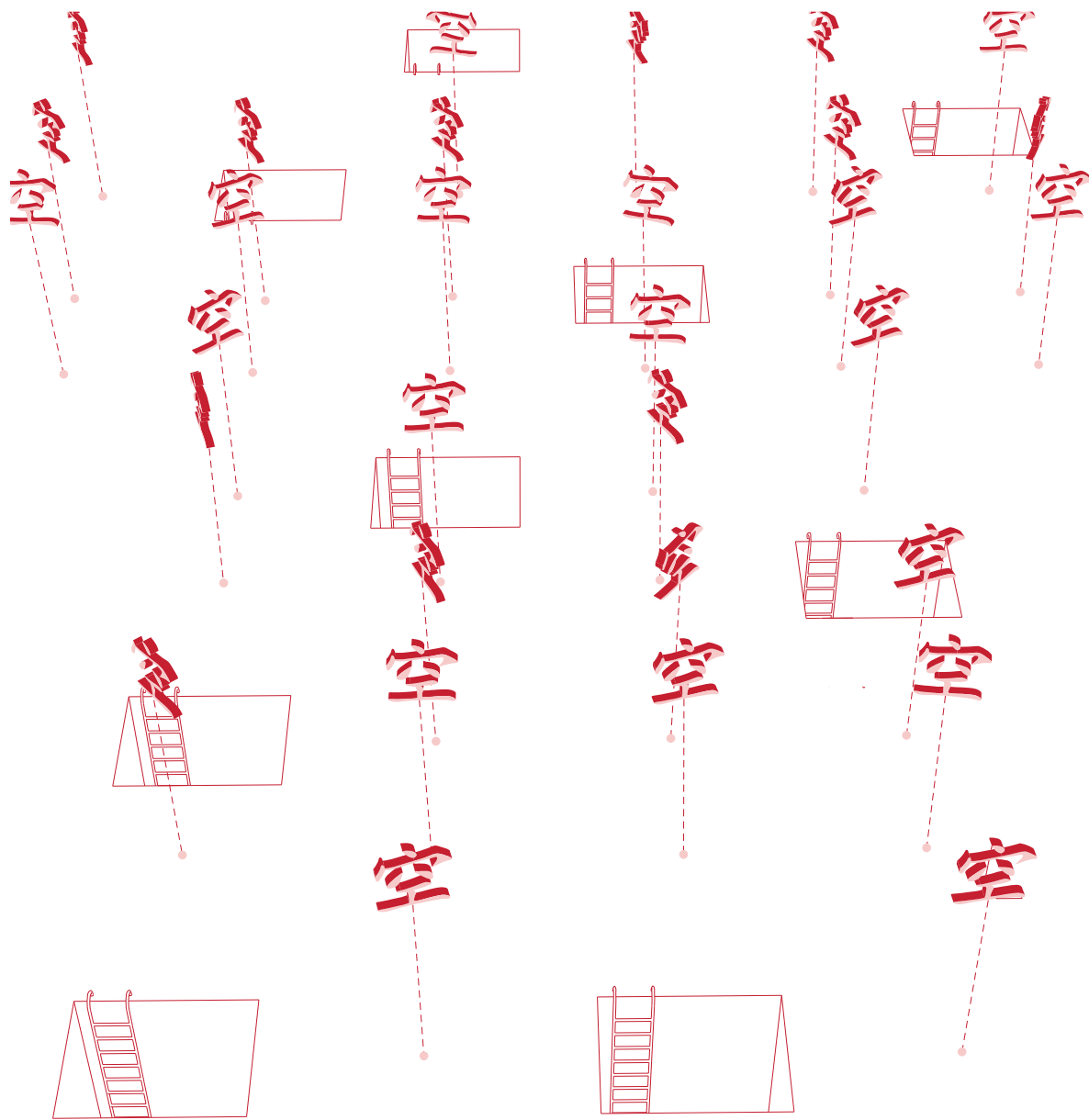


Fig 3.34. a labyrinth of dining booths

blocked, my back was completely exposed to the passersby, similarly I could see quite clearly the back of the people who sat in a line behind me. Partition 18.

The space was equipped with amenities that replaced the needs for a server: a cylinder filled with chopsticks, a clipboard with an ordering sheet attached, and a self-serving water tap. I faced an opening that was covered by a set of shades. I could see several moving shadows through the narrow spacings if I focused intently. I filled in the order for the simplest bowl of noodles, with additional noodles, and pressed the button to signal I was ready. In a few moments the shades rolled up to reveal a pair of disembodied hands to take my order, and a voice repeated my order to me. Without being able to see a whole person, it was disorienting to consider where the voice came from. Taking no time to wait for a confirmation, the hands folded the order sheet in half and slotted it into the wall on my right. It didn't matter that I was a person who sat in partition 26. If I was a robot, a cat, or a potted plant that occupied the seat with a prefilled order sheet, my request would still be processed without questions asked. Then, all that was left was to wait.

The design of the space didn't suggest the need for interactions between the diners, let alone facilitation of the connections; it did, however, accommodate a certain number of people of a certain size, with certain projected movements. There was no one to talk to, and I didn't want to scroll through unnecessary information on my phone. Suddenly I had a lot of time to dedicate solely to myself (a few minutes was more than I've had the entire day). I forgot what I usually thought about when I was alone, they simply come to my mind and I couldn't deliberately think of something on the spot. Where did thoughts come from anyways? I wondered how the couple and groups in the queue would interact during the meals. Would they simply not talk for half an hour, and reconvene outside the restaurant as if they weren't sitting next to each other the entire time? Were the customers all reduced to objects that occupied the space, defined by the check marks on the order sheets and the amount we were expected to pay in the end? I also thought about how nice it was to



Fig 3.35. implied presence of disembodied hands

have a moment to myself without thinking about much at all.

The shades rolled up again, and a pair of hands placed a bowl of noodles before me. It was a different pair of hands, which remained disembodied, but they didn't speak so I couldn't tell if they had the same voice as the previous pair. The ingredients of the noodles were arranged inside the bowl with so much artistry, it made me feel guilty for having to destroy it. I lifted the bowl to take a sip of the soup, then I took a bite of bamboo shoots and slurped on the noodles. Some people believed that there was a strict sequence to properly eat a bowl of noodles, and there were others who despised the slightest noise made while eating. I didn't have to follow any strict dining rituals or care for any noise; all my actions were safely concealed within the partitioned space. I felt like I was the only person that existed in the entire restaurant, until the illusion was broken by the pair of hands that brought me the extra serving of noodles.

I dove into the familiar sensation of being within a crowd once I exited the restaurant onto the streets. I didn't know the people who walked past me, nor connect with them in any way, but at least I was not alone. I was easily distracted by the smell of the street food stall as I passed by. I had a full meal only ten minutes prior, but I couldn't resist the urge to grab small bite of something. With a small bowl of fishballs in my hand, I proceeded to the nearest garbage bin—I wasn't the only person who had the idea. There were ten of us standing next to the bright orange bin, each with a small bowl in our hands and faced different directions. We all wanted to stay within a certain radius from the bin so we could eat and toss without a hassle, but the last thing we wanted, other than staining our white shirts, was to make eye contact with or stand too close to a stranger. We kept our eyes fixed on the bowl, angled our bodies towards the road and kept our separations from each other by an arm's length. The space around the bin was in an equilibrium between the shared (the space round the bin) and the contained (our respective personal spaces).

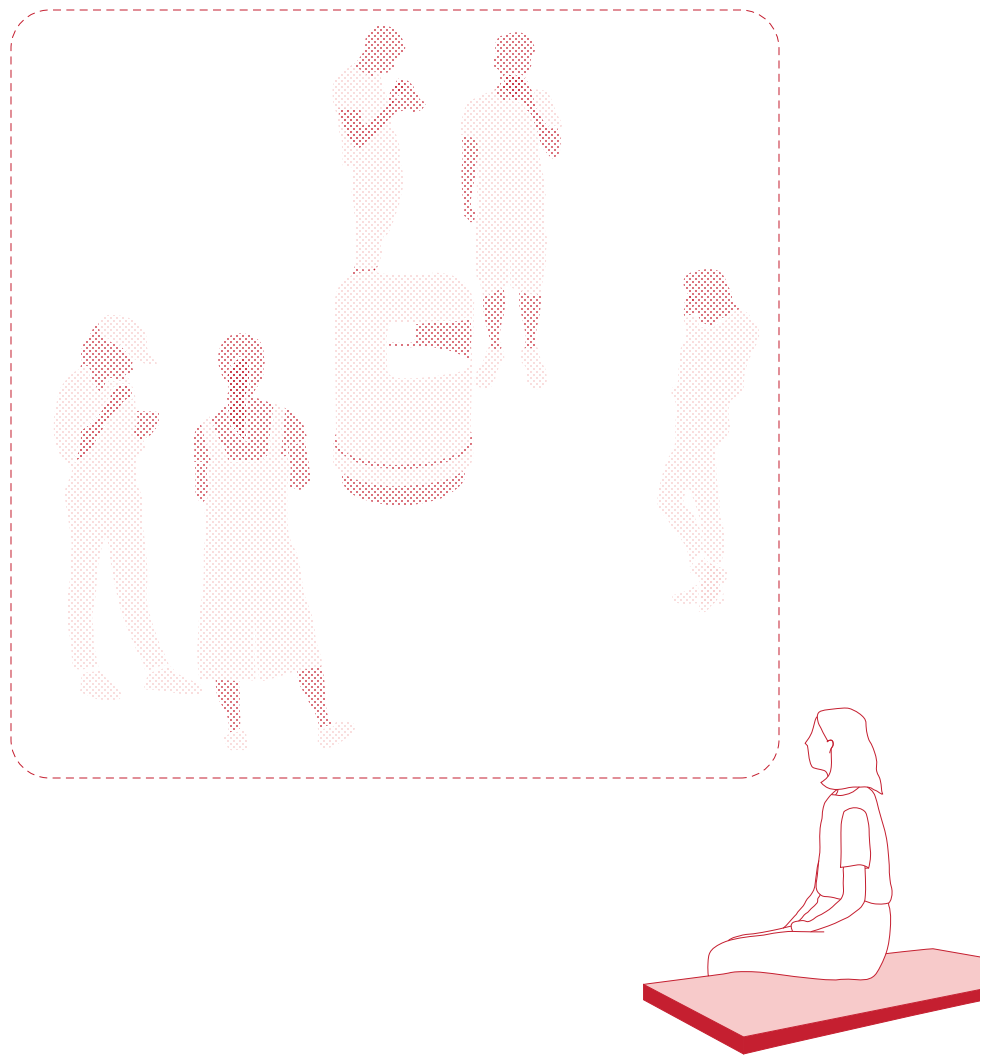


Fig 3.36. around the orange beacon

The others on the streets simply walked between us without paying much attention, as if we were sculptures from a scenario of modern dining for single people.

To be sure, the men living there can always be expected to bring to a built setting more kinds of activity and paraphernalia than any designer can possibly anticipate in advance. The point is that their doing so reflects no discredit upon him either.

George Baird | The dining position

table settings

Ever since the beginning of my thesis I have been wanting to prepare a meal for my eventual defense. I pictured it being an exhibition for my writings and illustrations; instead of a presentation, I could engage the people in a casual conversation, similar to those you would have at the dinner table after a few drinks. Through the rituals of breaking bread together, I wanted to bring the dining experiences described in the text to life and transform the exhibition space through the interpretations of the guests. If dining is indeed a performance that brings people together to share their commonalities and negotiate their differences, then it should be reflected how we define the identity of the space. My initial thought was to design a table large enough to seat all the guests, which I could divide into any number of seats and each would be slightly different than the others in height and orientation, at the very least. The parameters invited the guests to explore the possibilities of each division of space, and how they could connect with the others with different seating conditions.

I was intrigued to see how the table would turn out, but I also wanted to create the same effect without ever introducing the table; in my thesis I proposed that the acts of dining could be situated in any surface that affords similar functions of the table, with an additional layer of ambiguity, so people wouldn't default to the familiar interactions prompted by the table. Another thought involved a large piece of fabric that could be draped over the entire room and frame the space for people to occupy over the course of the meal. It was a fascinating idea that distilled the identity of the surface, albeit taking my thesis in a slightly different direction. I wanted to engage the guests in the choreography of movement within the space, and stimulate the awareness of their

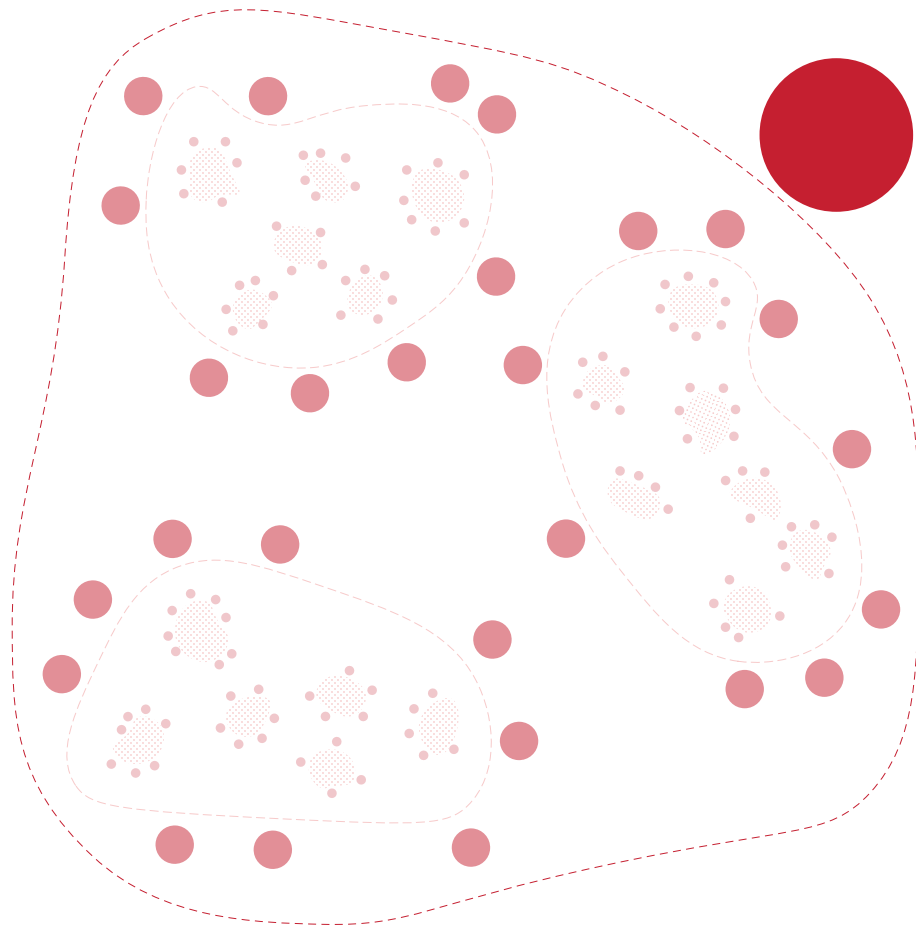


Fig 3.37. setting i

functions as figures to provide scale references for the space; it should be done through the acts of dining, without becoming a kitsch installation. I had since developed several proposals, some more realistic than others, and I have yet to decide.

one

I would lay out a number (a lot) of plates, bowls and cups of different sizes on the floor. The tableware were interconnected through their placement and relative proportions, but their relationships to the guests remained unknown until the food was served. If servings were placed in the bowls, that would imply that the much smaller bowls were for drinks and the plates held portions intended for sharing. If the guests were to eat out of the cups, on the other hand, it would suggest that each person should receive a small sample of food, while the purposes of the bowls and plate remain undetermined. The understanding of the objects' functions provided guidance for the guests to interpret the scales of the setting, and they could organize themselves within the installation of tableware.

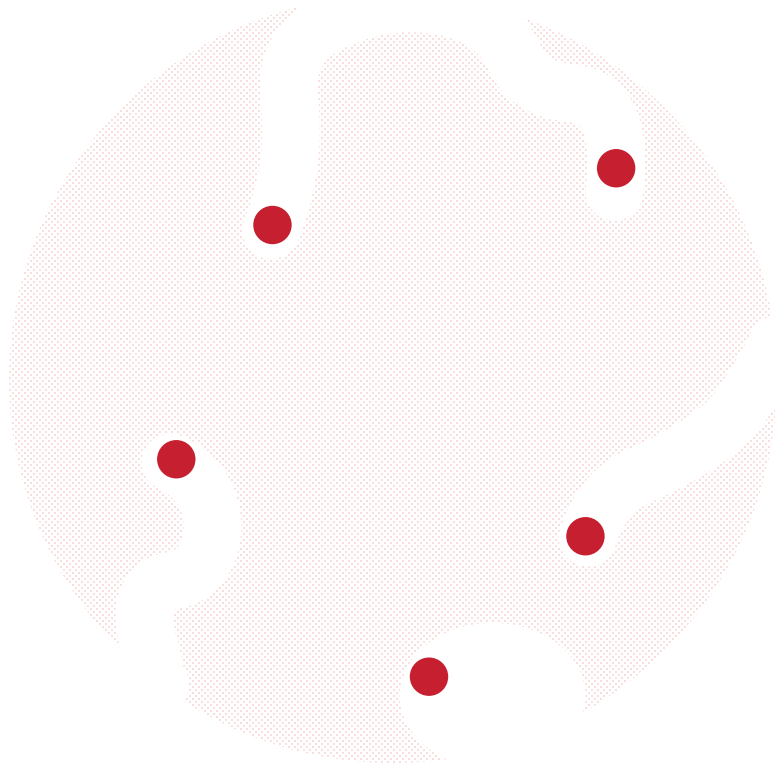


Fig 3.38. setting ii

two

The meal could be served in an edible dish the size of a table, which would imitate the role of the injera bread in Ethiopian cuisine. The guests would gather around the dish as they would around a table, except the table was part of the meal itself and would shrink over the duration of the meal until there was nothing left. If there were several dishes of the same scale in the space, it would suggest that the dish was supposed to be shared by multiple people, and the floor served as the table where the dishes were arranged.

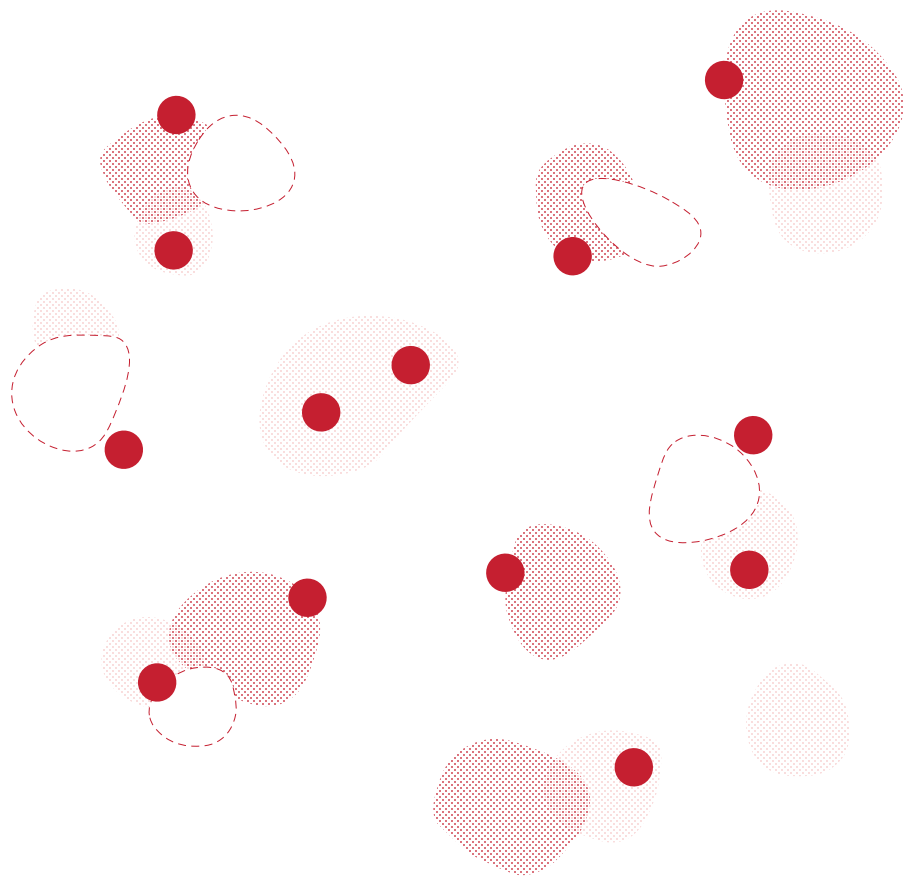


Fig 3.39. setting iii

three

Instead of supplying everything for the meal, I could ask the guests to bring their own dishes and utensils. All the chairs in the space would be replaced by adjustable table, and the guests were given the freedom to adjust the tables' heights and organization. During the gathering they would all sit on the tables instead of the floor and had to arrive at an arrangement to have everyone seated. The relationship between the guests would no longer be established by the surfaces they were accustomed to sharing between them (the tables), but the surfaces that they rested upon (the tables); the tables would then, by definition, be regarded as chairs.

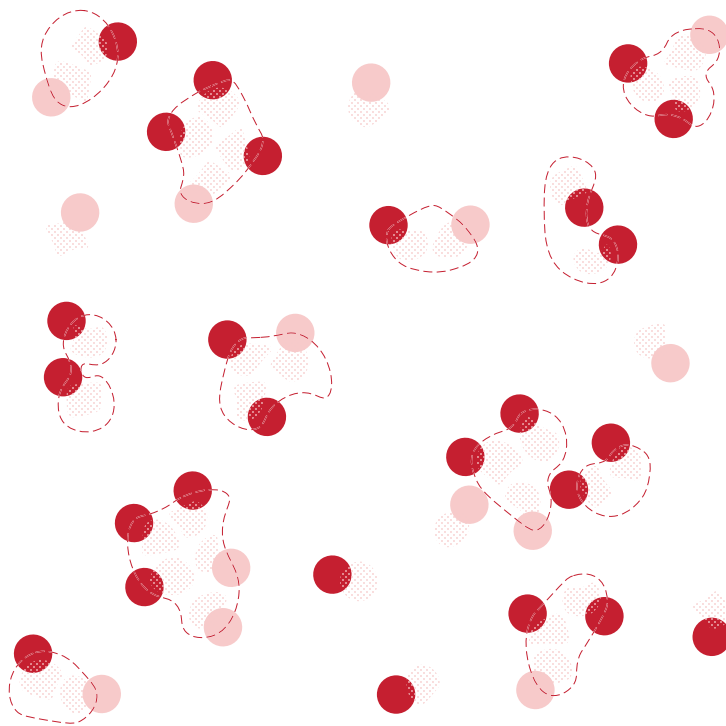


Fig 3.40. setting iv

four

I could organize the chairs with fold out tables to form a large cluster of randomized placements. Each guest would occupy a seat and act within the constraints of the chair: the orientation of the seat, the spacing between adjacent chairs, and if the table connected to other tables to form a larger surface. The guests might find themselves in an isolated chair that faced the outside of the cluster, or having to share a table that was only large enough for one person. Every single chair was identical to the others, but when they were assessed as an assemblage of objects, they facilitated modes of occupation that exceeded the limitations of the chair.

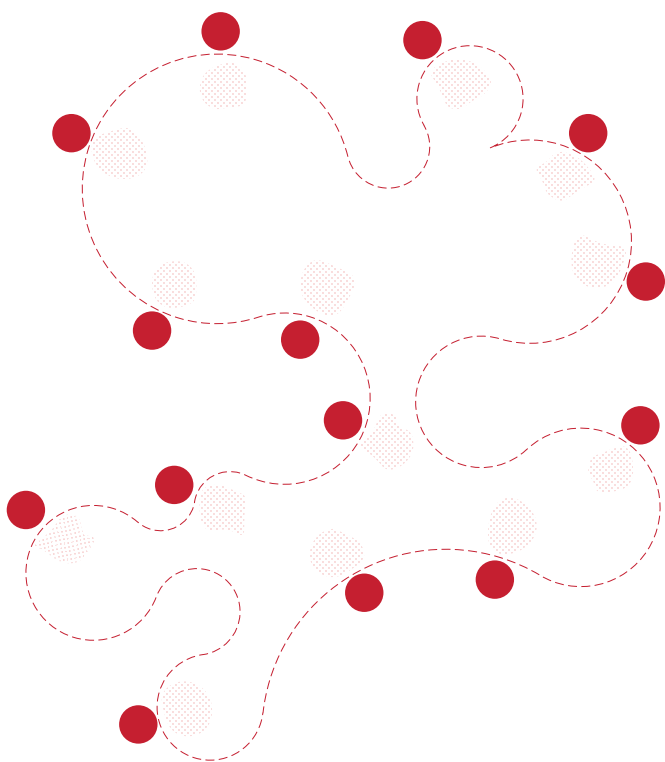


Fig 3.41. setting v

five

Before the arrival of the guests, I would set up place settings for dining at different locations in the space, and several dishes in the space between the place settings. The space would resemble an imaginary table that negated the need for physical tables. The imaginary table would be formless, scaleless, materialless; the possibilities of its design were unlimited, the only restriction was that it had to contain all the objects in the space within its boundary. Each guest would have a different interpretation for the image of the table and position themselves accordingly; it would be interesting to see how their movements would intersect, and the range of possible tables created in the process.

In all the above proposals, the guests performed roles in suggesting the scales and dynamics of the space. For the ease of justifying my design theories, however, I simplified the guests' significances to simply being objects in space, and assumed that their thoughts and desires were inconsequential in the outcomes of the above proposals.

spaces

If design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois models of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities... until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs.

Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture...

Adolfo Natalini | Lecture at Architectural Association

the utopian speculations

I grew up roaming the streets of Hong Kong. The city has two contrasting identities, with which I developed a love-hate relationship. Its streets were always bustling late into the night; meandering paths and stairs lead to hidden pockets of space, interweaving overpasses and tunnels sew together the urban fabric. These tightly woven spaces interact vibrantly, albeit always under the shadows of the concrete jungle. High-density developments that exemplify the city's aesthetics stand among shopping malls, infrastructural networks and landscape projects layered upon small site allowances. The pragmatic minds behind the masterplanning of the city created a growing, three-dimensional landscape that fragmented existing urban networks. In the contemporary city, the new layers are so efficiently connected that people can go about their everyday lives without leaving the prescribed spaces of their necessary daily routines, transforming Hong Kong into a city without grounds.¹

My family's apartment in Hong Kong was buried among the numerous units nested within the homogenous residential towers. A compact living style, which sees the complex curation of events and networks orchestrate the changing rhythms of the city, was therefore ingrained in my mind. The top-down approach, which favours developers and economic growth, caused any existing spaces that allowed for unprescribed occasions to fall into a state of neglect. Events that once occupied the city have now been evicted into abandoned lots and industrial buildings, while diverse streetscapes have been replaced with omnipresent images of capitalist brands. By improving the city's living conditions, developers inevitably cleared out identities of the city's

¹ Adam Frampton, Clara Wong, and Jonathan Solomon, *Cities without Ground: A Hong Kong Guidebook* (Rafael: Oro editions, 2012), 6–9.

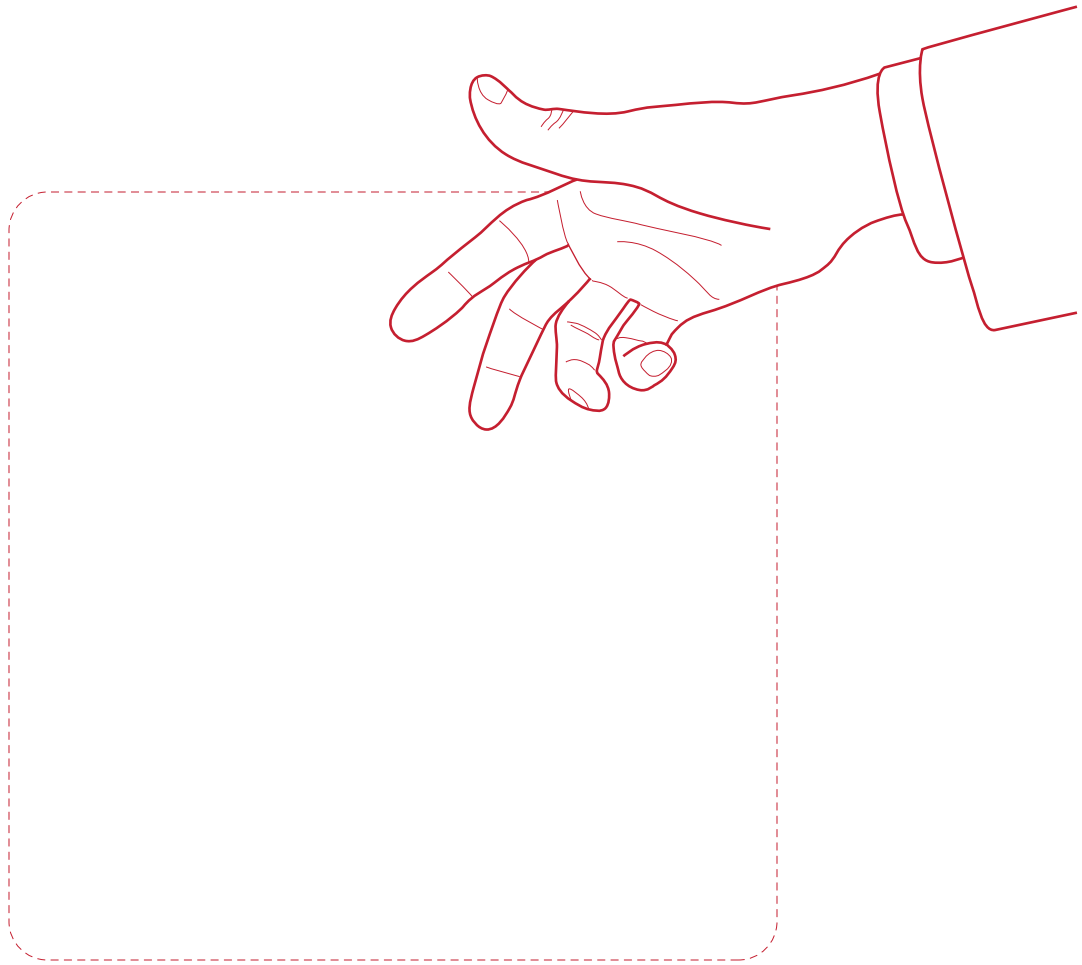


Fig 4.1. the authoritative architect

once vibrant urban fabric.

Hong Kong represents one of many cities haunted by the radical proposals of functionalist architecture, often attributed to Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*. The precedents inspired my descriptions of the fictional city in this chapter, referred to simply as the City. The City is not Hong Kong, unless the forces behind Hong Kong's development ultimately prove reluctant to shift their agendas and design spaces for its people. The City I depict, which remains unnamed, is a *demonstration per absurdum* that speculates the future of cities, when architectural practices default to design for readily available stock human scale figures. The scale figures are copied and pasted into projects of different programs, scales, locations. As discussed in my previous chapter, these figures are widely prevalent within contemporary architectural representations, and their impeccable fit within the representations seem to make a strong case for a standardized architecture. Architects of the City design for people who only engage with the environment through prescribed movements; prefabricated spaces are supplied for a non-existence of authentic human presence. The framework for a posthuman architecture envisions homogenous aesthetics, form, and organizations that adhere to design standards established through repetition.

A black and white photograph depicted a disembodied hand, which gestured at a model of a masterplan, impersonal and removed. The hand belonged to Le Corbusier, when he presented the plans for the controversial *Ville Radieuse* during the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) meetings in 1930. The powerful message of his presentation was that the architect has the power and responsibility to push for radical changes. He proposed the project to emerge from a *tabula rasa* that came at the cost of existing cities, which embodied the modernist ideal of abandoning tradition in favour of progress. The blank canvas enables the systematic reformation of the city into a standardized arrangement of functional parts that prioritized symmetry and order. The masterplan was divided by zonings for business, commercial, and residential spaces

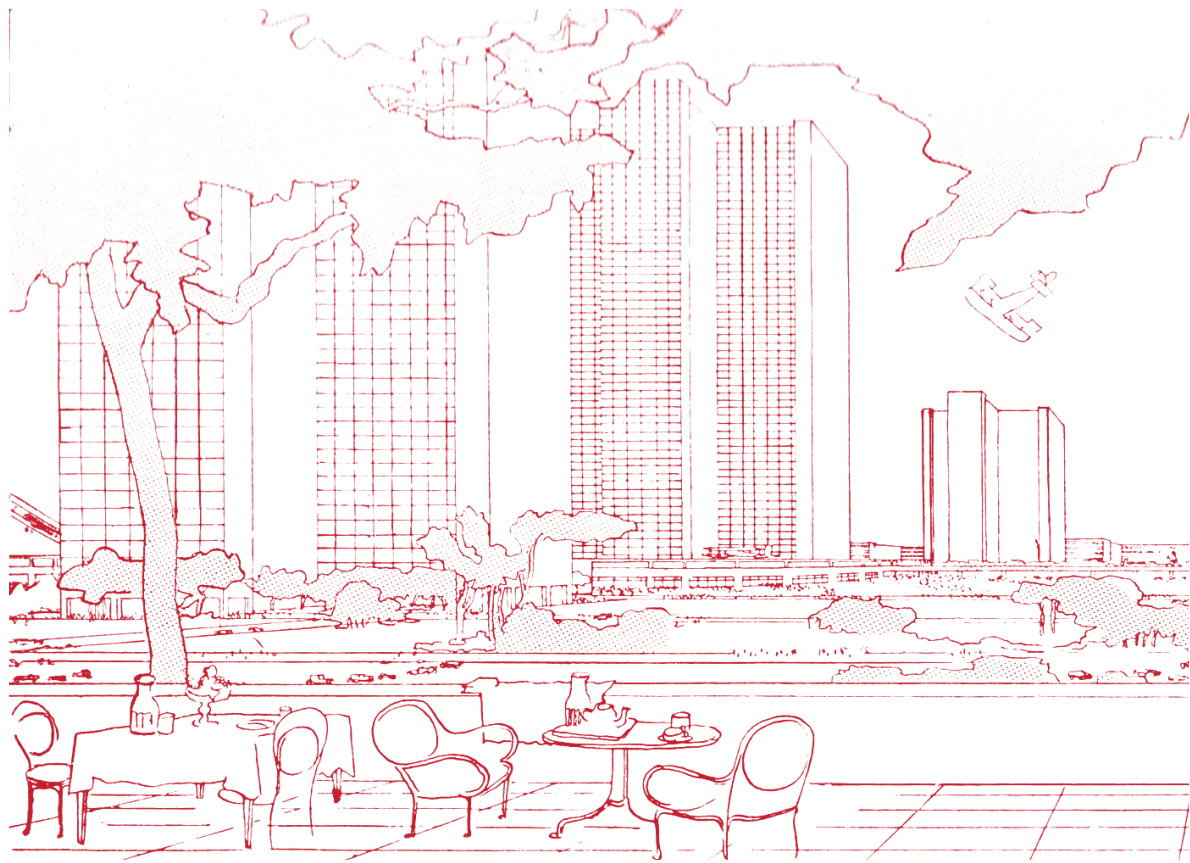


Fig 4.2. a vision for the city

in a Cartesian grid, characterized by high-density towers that stood within horizontal sprawls of greenery. Within this plan, self-sufficient residential buildings—or vertical villages—contain amenities such as laundry, grocery and daycare to compliment dwelling units. Pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation, and vehicles occupy separate networks to free up space on ground-level. Components of the city perform within a hierarchical system. The approach has gone on to have a broad influence on city planners and architects alike.²

Ville Radieuse was met with both praise and critiques. Le Corbusier intended to use the free-standing buildings to define the surrounding space; instead, they occupied the space, isolated from their surrounding context, while the residents looked onto the city from a distance.³ Le Corbusier famously proposed that “a house is a machine for living in.”⁴ His manifesto of architecture saw the rise of sterile, anonymous spaces determined by a top-down architecture.⁵ His vision was never about providing finely-appointed living environments for either the public or the private individual. As observed in *Ville Radieuse*, Le Corbusier was preoccupied with an organized society based upon an ideological model of human, stripped of any connotations beyond the physical attributes.⁶

Van Eyck recognized the significance of CIAM’s functionalist proposals under Le Corbusier’s lead. The top-down approach enabled architects to propose radical reformations to move beyond traditions. He also noted obsessions with organization and standardization that disassociated architecture with its intended audience.⁷ Le Corbusier portrayed human scale figures engaging in various activities in the otherwise indistinguishable, oppressive spaces. His use of these figures in his drawings suggested that the presence of occupants develops and

2 Alex Kerr, “Isamu Noguchi’s Playground,” in *Play Mountain: Isamu Noguchi + Louis Kahn*, ed. Shizuko Watari (Tokyo: Watari-Um, 1996), 132–34.

3 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge: MIT Pr, 1983), 60.

4 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, (Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2014).

5 Liane Lefaivre, “Space, Place and Play,” in *Aldo van Eyck: The Playgrounds and the City*, ed. Liane Lefaivre and Rudi Fuchs (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002), 16–57.

6 Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City*, 16.

7 Ingeborg de Roode, “Neglected Pearls in the Fabric of the City,” in *Aldo van Eyck: The Playgrounds and the City*, ed. Liane Lefaivre and Rudi Fuchs (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002), 66–83.



Fig 4.3. snowfall in the city

contributes to the character of the standard dwellings.⁸ On the other hand, Van Eyck's proposals for an architecture of the in-between is a bottom-up response to CIAM's fixated approach; architecture itself should respond actively to human gestures. Van Eyck used the city after snowfall as an analogy for a *tabula rasa*. In the snow blanketed city, children rule the streets with untainted creativity, while adults find themselves lost without clear distinctions between spaces. The snow temporarily removes the city's identity and transforms it into another place, or what Michel Foucault referred to as a heterotopia.

Foucault introduced the concept of a heterotopia that draws parallels to but is ultimately distinct from a utopia. A utopia is the placeless ideal that is a fundamentally unreal reflection of the world, whereas a heterotopia is the otherworld that exist in the real world and mirrors its norms. He identified a heterotopia through six principles:⁹

1. It can exist in every single culture despite taking various forms.
2. It responds specifically to the societies of different times and cultures.
3. It merges multiple spaces that are unrelated or even incompatible to create spaces of 'otherness.'
4. It functions in a definition of time different from our understanding, which is one-directional and continuously flowing.
5. It is accessed through a system of opening and closing that responds to the performance of certain acts.
6. It functions in relation to real spaces, either to reflect the illusory real spaces we inhabit, or to contrast the flawed realities as an ideal.

8 Alex T. Anderson, "On the Human Figure in Architectural Representation," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 55, no. 4 (2002): 238-46.

9 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-27.

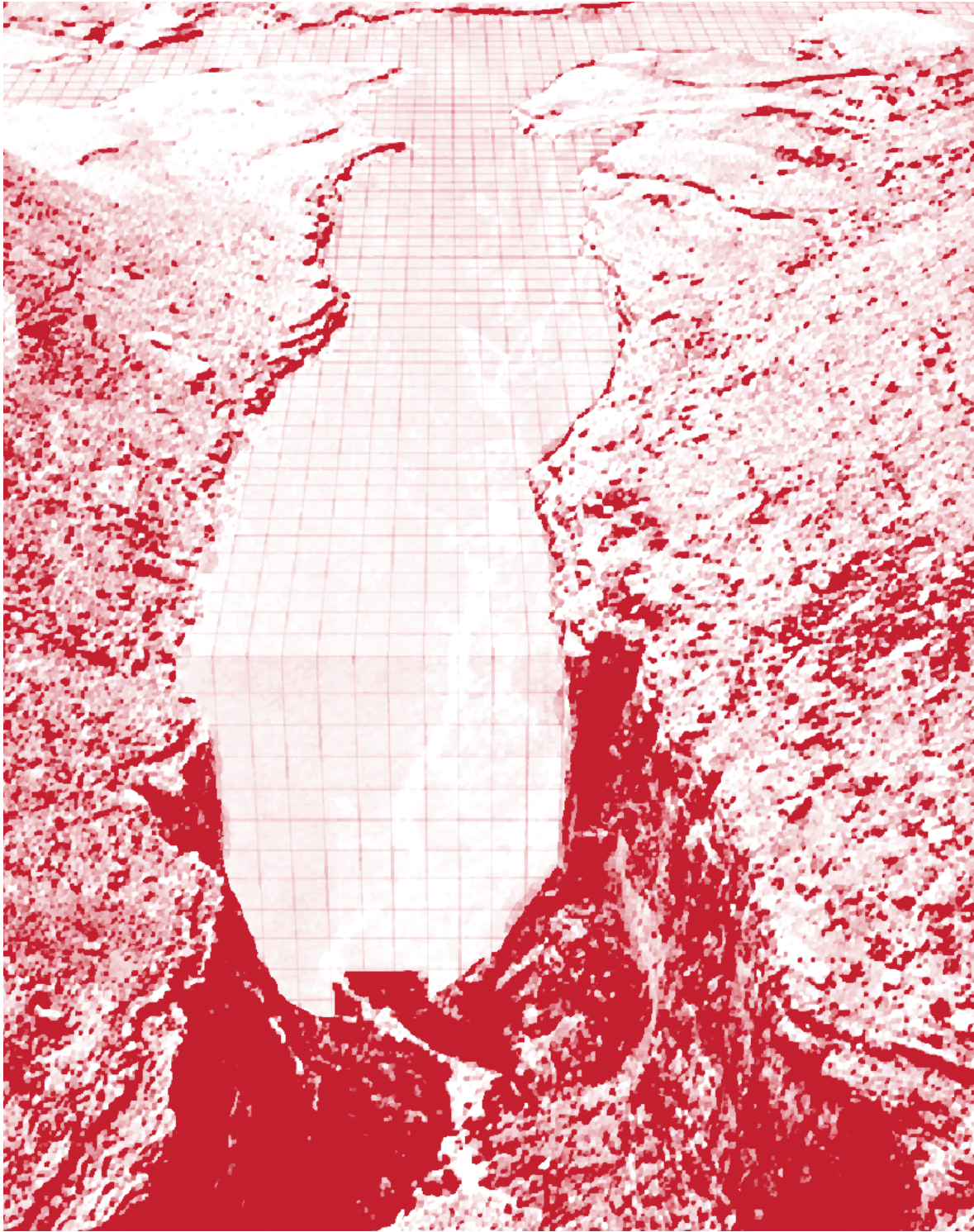


Fig 4.4. a speculative utopia

Foucault's heterotopia disrupts the norm of everyday places by breaking down boundaries within and between spaces. When the snow melts, people return from the spaces of 'otherness' to an endless search for a similar experience. What if there were a permanent intervention that replaced the city with an 'otherworld?' A paradigm of speculative architecture emerged in the 60s and 70s, exemplified by the likes of Archizoom, Superstudio, and Rem Koolhaas, all of whom designed to challenge the status quo of the time. Their alternative solutions presented ideal spaces that could never be built; through a language of irony mixed with sincere speculations, the projects critique received beliefs about architecture and society.¹⁰ It is with the same intentions that I introduced the Surface as a speculation for an alternate habitation. The Surface is an ideal rendered by merging an archipelago of in-between spaces. Instead of waiting for the next radical approach to transform the City, the people rallied for a bottom-up architecture that was effective immediately. The Surface is a proposal that could never be built, but the people are naïve enough to believe that it would one day comprise their reality.

The City and the Surface are two extreme conditions of space that contrast each other. The City creates distinctions between spaces through Cartesian grids, zoning regulations, and large building blocks. Strict boundaries and prescribed functions define the non-negotiable spaces that form a consistent rhythm throughout the City. The Surface is either an ever-extending singular space or an amalgamation of infinite spaces. There are no distinctions between spaces, no references for scales and programs, and they are only materialized when occupied. The availability of space is not a direct result of the presence of space. The fiction presents the search for space through the perspectives of the different human attributes. Each desires a different set of spatial conditions, but something more than a blank canvas to build upon. It is a search for a heterotopia that exists between the City and the Surface—one with intangible boundaries that become visible only when defined by durations of occasions.

¹⁰ Franziska Bollerey, "Sixties Revisited," in *Exil Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956 - 76*, ed. Martin van Schaik and Otakar Mácel (München: Prestel, 2005), 6–7.

the City and the Surface

The paradox is not about the impossibility of perceiving both architectural concept (the six faces of the cube) and real space at the same time, but about the impossibility of questioning the nature of space and at the same time making or experiencing a real space....

The concept of space is not in space.

Bernard Tschumi | Questions of Space

the City

The City was not kind to its people.

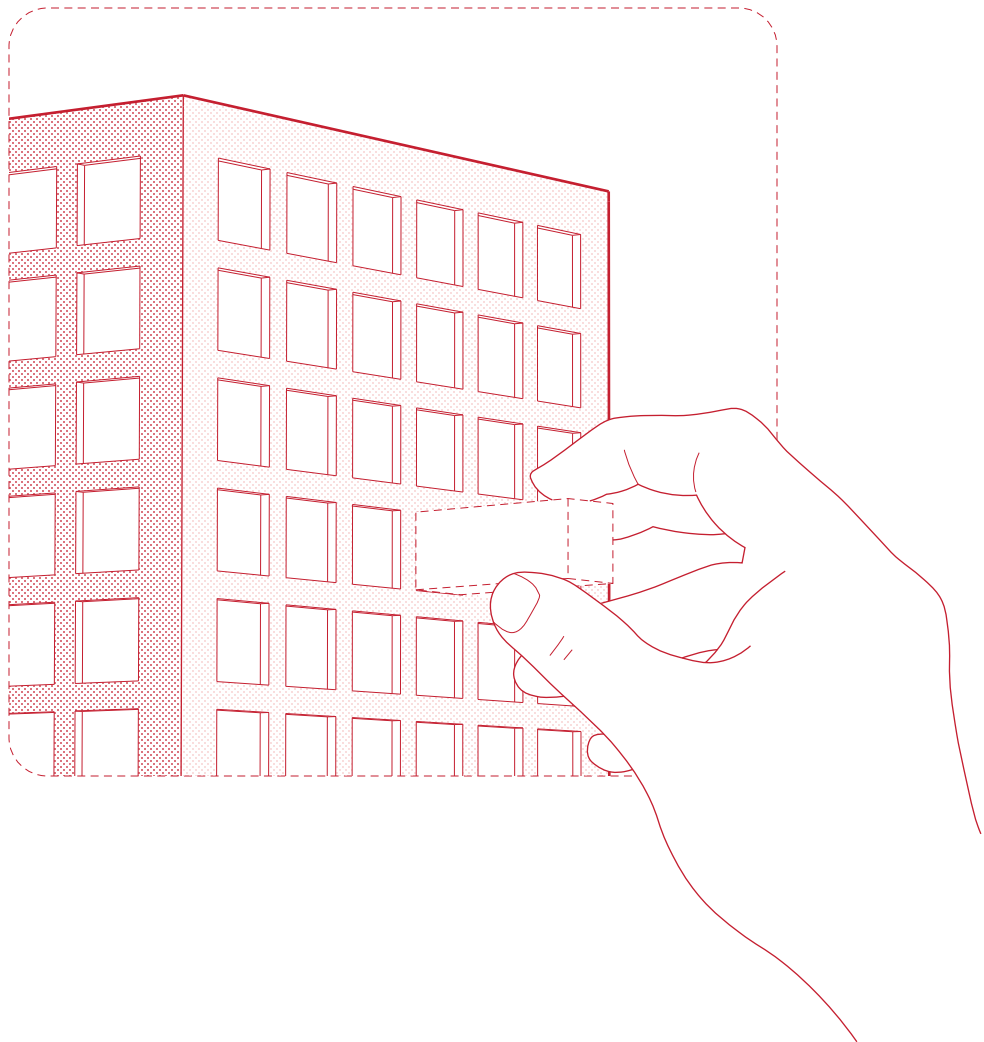


Fig 4.5. the composition of the City

Those were not exactly the words one would expect to describe the city widely regarded as the model for the future. The much-anticipated project was built upon a desert to avoid any conflicts with the site's history. It sat comfortably with the embrace of a picturesque landscape, that of frosted peaks emerging from lush forests, and valleys with continuously flowing streams.

The City's composition was simple. Upon the blank canvas, the architects laid down a grid that was uniform in both axes. Wide avenues and streets followed the gridlines to partition the fabric into square blocks, each measuring one unit by one unit. Each city block had the same level of hierarchy in the planning and zoning, as the architects believed that every single element of the City contributed to the overall balance of systems. The blocks were grouped together and assigned zones of business, commercial, residential and institutional. Each zone required a minimum number of blocks to differentiate from the other zones, while being in a modest size so the blocks remained connected to the diverse network of the City. A strategic zoning plan ensured that the residential blocks were serviced by the commercial blocks, and that the business and institutional zones neighbored residential zones to provide sufficient accommodations. Each city block was comprised of similar elements that provide healthy and dynamic spaces. Even in height and homogenous in appearance, vertical towers extended towards the sky to occupy a limited footprint in the block. The remaining space were divided among parks, gardens, squares and courtyards.

The city blocks repeated themselves in an uncanny manner. The elements were arranged differently within each block, forming microcities where the residents could live their lives without ever leaving the boundaries of the block. The towers were self-sufficient, complete with the amenities and facilities operated by government owned businesses. The horizontal sprawl of open spaces balanced the vertical extensions towards the sky, which could accommodate the existing population along with the projected growth through the next decade. The private pockets opened to public spaces, and the overwhelming built forms balanced by

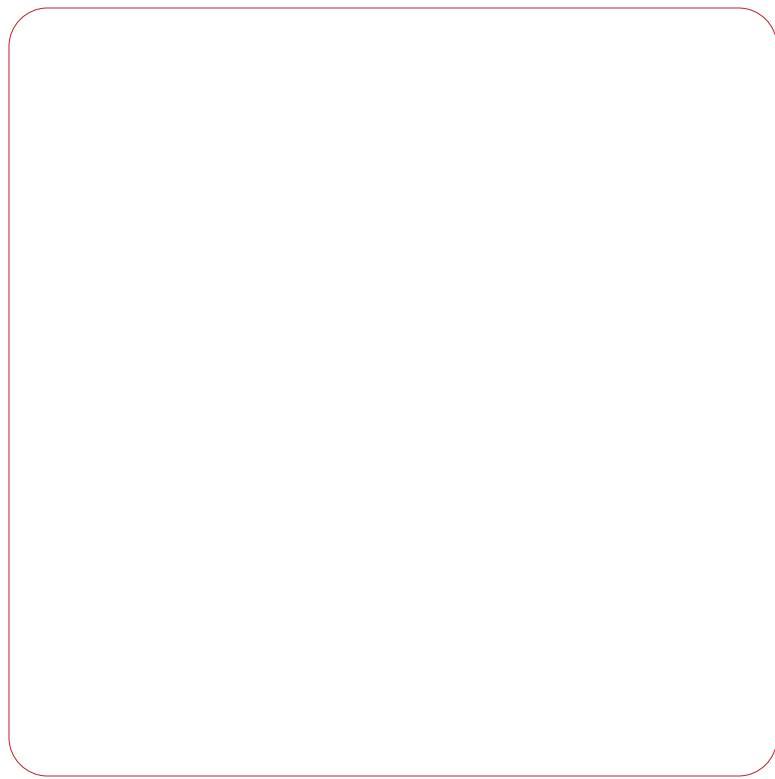


Fig 4.6. spaces in the City

the subtle interventions. The City proposed a model backed by years of research and standards on the habits and dimensions of the average human being. The architects believed that the City would provide the basic framework of spaces, and the people would adapt in ways that make them comfortable.

But the City had no space for its people.

Ask anyone in the City, and they would endorse the City's efforts in keeping everyone satisfied, after all it was modelled to maintain the highest living standards for the people. People from various social statuses moved into the City with drastically different agendas. They voluntarily uprooted their previous lives to transition to a desert in the middle of nowhere, with the promise of a smooth-sailing life in the City; no one needed more convincing beyond that. For the greater good of the collective, the people contributed large portions of their income to the development of different social programs and scheduled their lives according to the assigned timetables. The City was a machine for living, and the people were the cogs that moved its parts. Without the people's contribution the City would not function, and the People would not play their role if they were not enjoying their life.

It seemed that the architects cracked the code for happiness. First, the City ensured that the people had an appropriate work-life balance. The workspaces were sterile and populated with cubicles, with standardized layouts that accommodated different businesses. Before work, between breaks and after work, people were encouraged to participate in team bonding initiatives or to socialize within the office premises. They connected with others who shared similar working schedules and interests, whom they continued to develop relationships with day after day. Next, the people were assigned to dwelling units that neighboured their close family members and friends. Their intimate networks of connection were within reach without ever extending beyond the single degree of separation. The people could remain in their comfort zone and close to

Jo



a Dimensions.Guide guide

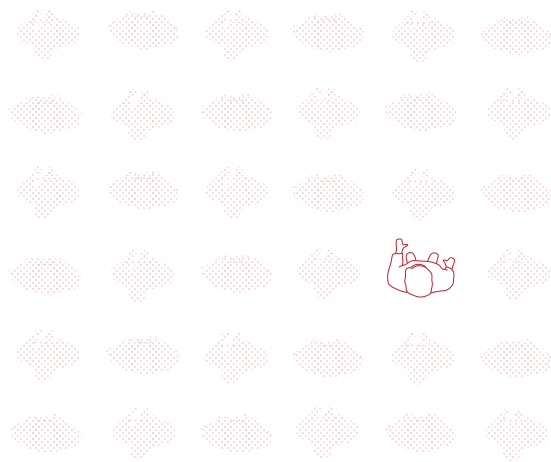
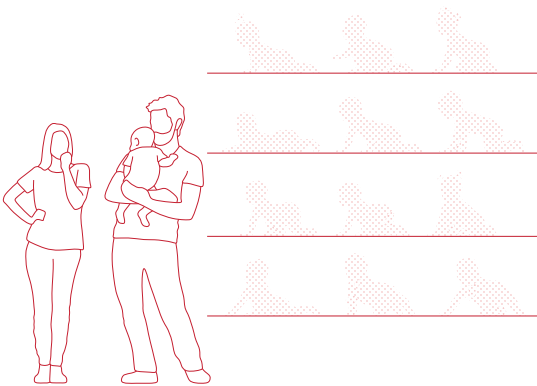
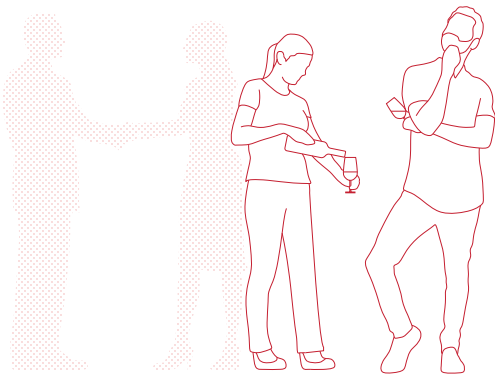
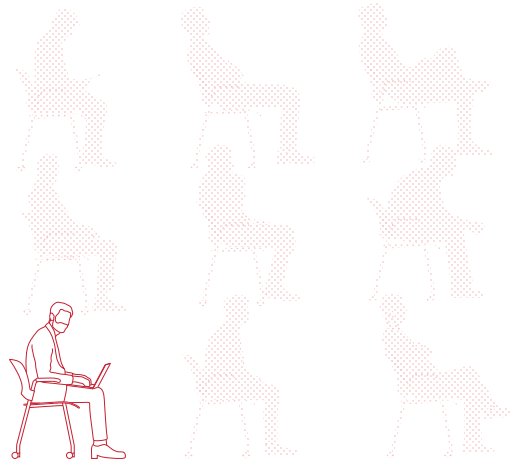


Fig 4.7. a guide to proper living

their loved ones. Finally, the City provided a compulsory match-making counselling service for the people. The complex algorithm analyzed the datasets collected from the people's everyday lives. Their browsing history, purchasing habits and conversational topics were all used to help them connect with the perfect match. The guaranteed successful program helped the people build meaningful and lasting relationships, all without having to face the unnecessary anxiety of meeting new people.

The City's extensive measures for social engagement kept the people on well-scripted lives. The irrelevant skills for social interactions atrophied as they didn't have to think for themselves. Instead, they could develop other skills that make them better contributors to the City's system. When the people encounter other strangers, either enroute to work or chance encounters in the public spaces, they nodded appropriately without disturbing the other person from carrying on with their day. They both knew that the City had a plan to connect them with the only people that mattered.

There was nothing more that the City cared about than the well-being of the people, both in public and private spaces. The message was clear when the spaces were populated with user-friendly equipment, upkeep by owners of private properties, and clear distinctions between different zones. They wielded tools that guided the people to properly use the spaces. The public spaces were designed to facilitate specific programs, following an idealized human model as to provide the best experiences possible. The model suggested dimensions and spatial functions that removed any possible ambiguities of the spaces. The people were properly led to gather at the right places at the right time, where they could comfortably participate in the programs.

The standardized spaces were accompanied by usage guidelines based on the ergonomics of the human body. The play equipment introduced series of movements that taught the children at an early age. The playgrounds also had clearly indicated areas for parents and guardians to watch over their children without being obstacles to

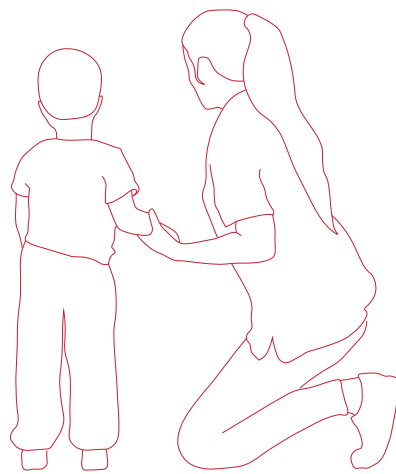
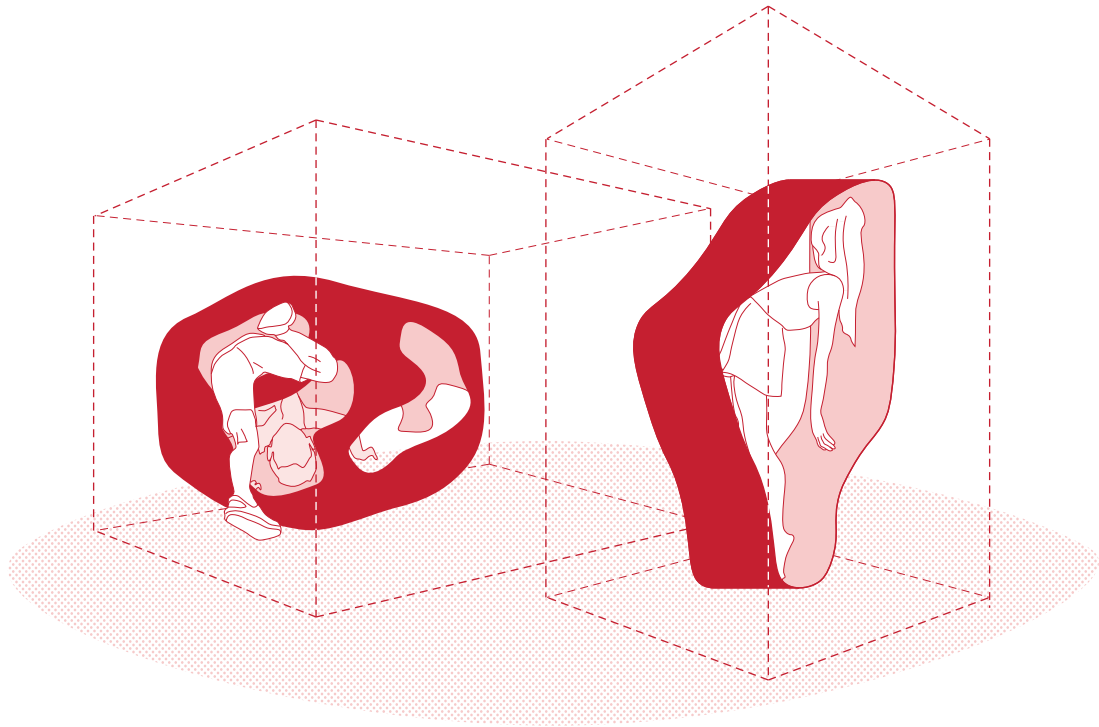


Fig 4.8. standardized playscapes

their play. Plazas and open areas are dedicated as passages for people to efficiently move between blocks without having to go around the long, impenetrable walls. They were never obstructed by unwarranted gatherings, street stalls or busking performances. The furniture designs also eliminate loitering in the parks to provide safe environments for everyone, in conjunction with the bans for drinking, smoking and the usage of other substances in public.

The public spaces provided safe and clutter free environment for people of all ages and purposes. Security guards were occasionally present at certain sites to ensure the proper usage of the facilities, but most of the time they remained idle. The people were already well educated and knew how to use the equipment without injuring themselves. Occasionally the public spaces would be reserved for political campaigns or City owned businesses. It was part of their mandate to make sure the people were exposed to the most updated information, products and services, and the public spaces served as the best settings for such forums.

The City dedicated distinct circulation networks for vehicular traffic, railway transportation, bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways. Each network had their respective speed and variance, which saw peaks of movements at different hours of the day. The complex networks were created through the additions of bridges, highways, tunnels and overpasses that range in scale, rhythm and elevation. The underlying structures interweaved and layered in the three-dimensional space.

The City's ground level was reserved for the pedestrians and the public spaces that coexist in the same plane without intersecting. Cyclists travelled on paths that followed the City grids, below the crisscrossing bridges that carried pedestrians from one block to another. Public transportation moved on tracks between nodes that connected the different zones. Each transportation node serviced all the buildings in the zone, so the commuters never had to travel on the ground level. Personal vehicles, if necessary, were removed from the visible City fabric. The City pushed the roads below ground level, and the vehicles travelled to

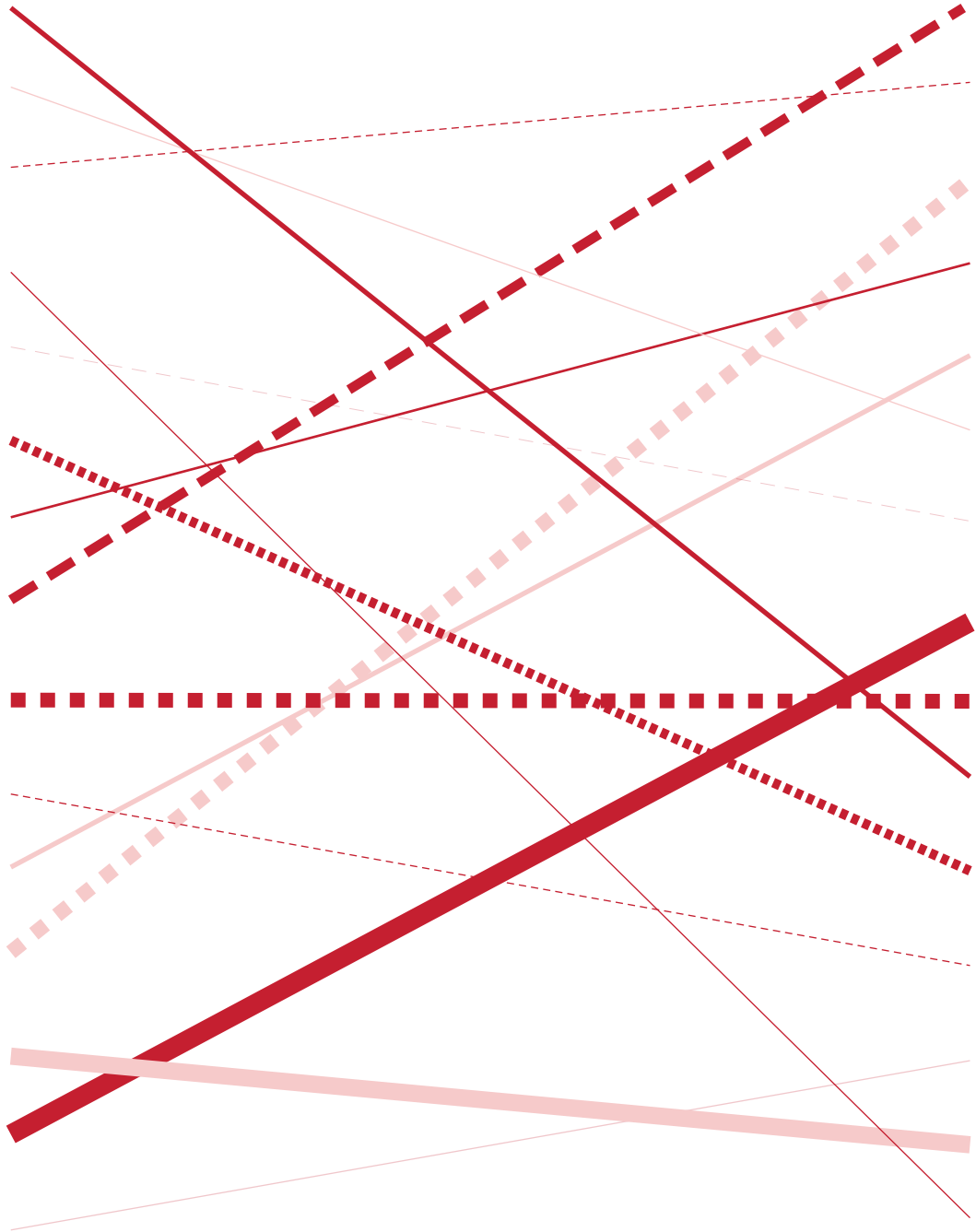


Fig 4.9. a city of destinations

parking spots that led to the building blocks above ground. Far too much precious time had been spent on commuting in the history of human civilization, and the City suggested an alternative to the existing modes of urban planning.

Their approach was to create a city of destinations. People moved from one point to another without being interrupted or slowed down in their journey. The clear directions in the City also prevented the people from wandering into dead ends or unauthorized entries. The streets discouraged any sort of repose that interrupted the flow of people, while the access to parks were restricted after sunset. The circulation networks were brought to life as if there was a metronome monitoring their respective paces, and the people followed clear indications for the appropriate space where certain programs could take place. The City's spaces existed in perfect balance. The spaces of activity are in perfect harmony with the spaces of movement, each playing their roles in the composition of a smooth collective.

The residential buildings comprise units that were assigned to the people as individuals or small families. Behind the solid boundaries that separated the interior and exterior, as well as one dwelling unit and another, the people were confronted by their magnified presence in space. They only had to consider their own needs and comfort after contributing so much to the collective. The units were dimensioned to accommodate the essential spaces of the people's everyday lives, while balancing the overall spatial consumption of the City.

A sample of standards, layouts and fixtures were rearranged to generate a database of permutations, and assigned to the unit plans in repetition. Each unit was presented with the basic elements in place—structural partitions, plumbing fixtures, lighting, heating systems—but they were otherwise blank canvases that provided utmost flexibility for the people to furnish. Each unit came with a catalogue of objects that range from essentials to novelty items, which were updated every season. The objects in the catalogues were presented as tailor-made curations for

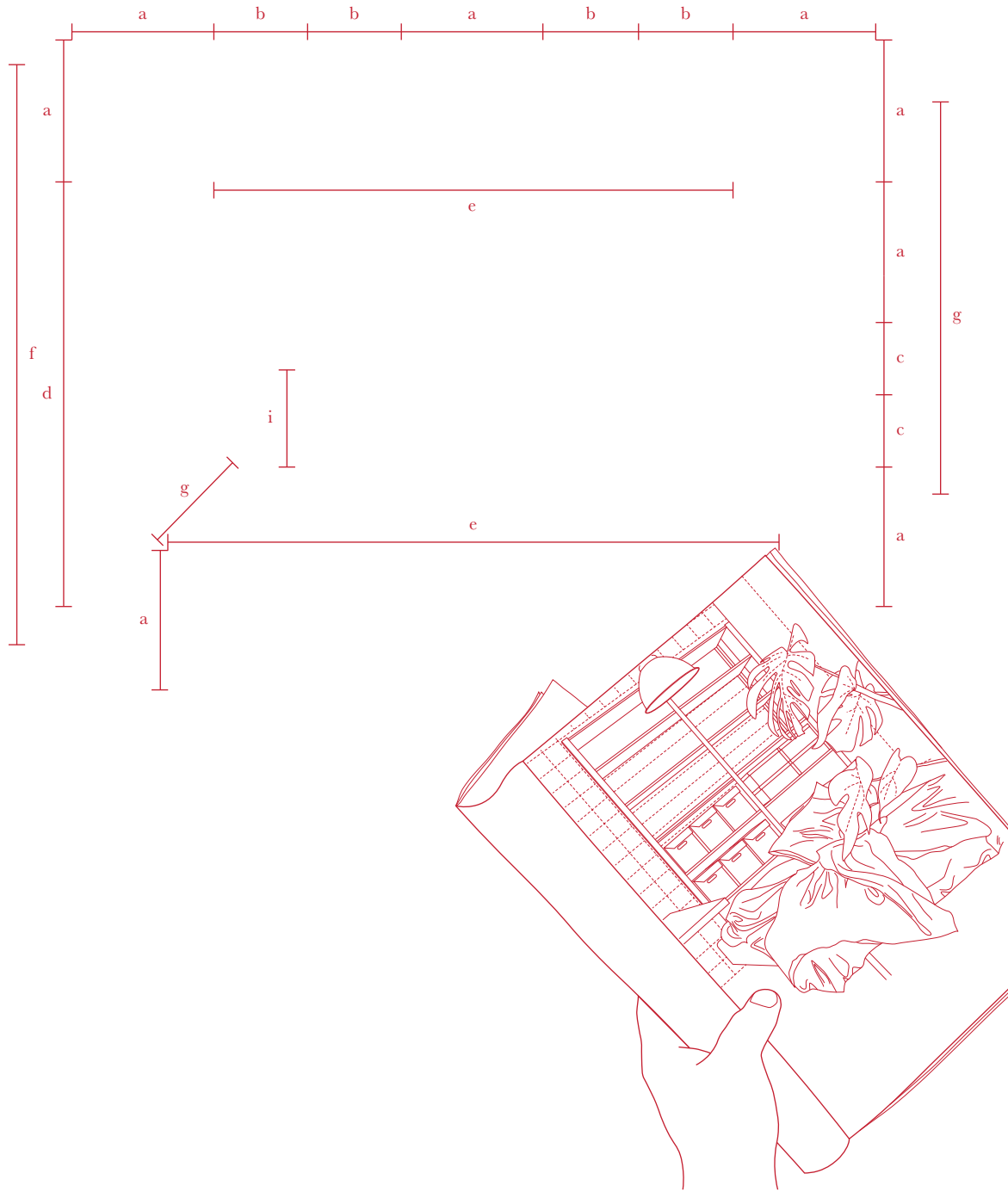


Fig 4.10. a catalogue for the ideal dwelling

the different individuals, as personalized kit of parts labelled with their identification numbers. The people pictured their units transforming into the unique dwellings presented in the catalogues, painted with picturesque strokes and rarely described in use. The people were also encouraged to keep pets as companions for prolonged stays within the dwellings, preferably animals that could be contained in small spaces. Rodents, reptiles and fish could be all be kept in units where an ideal habitation could be created, and eventually they would adapt the unit as their only habitat. The animals were fuss-free while providing necessary company.

The people flipped through the catalogues with much excitement, while anticipating their minimal units to flourish into something. Entranced by the sophistication channeled through the catalogue, the people spent their excess time and resources in pursuing the perfect space. They searched for an ideal that communicated their repertoire of personalities, oblivious to the repeated featuring of the same daily routines in identical units across different buildings. Numerous openings on the facades of the homogenous buildings provided glimpses into the lives of the people. Highlighted by lights of different tones and decorative elements, they were essentially identical to their counterparts left, right, above and below.

Not everyone in the City conformed to the prescribed life. In small groups, people convened in the residual spaces hidden in the cracks of the built forms, driven by the inherent desires to communicate with others, and to acknowledge that they weren't alone in their existence. Through the repetition of trial and error, the people created niches using practices similar to those performed by their ancestors in the wilderness; they used the scale of their bodies to carve out pockets of space from within the City. Instead of inhabiting caves and constructing primitive huts, they found refuge in overgrown plots with misshapen geometries, vacancies beneath highways and bridges, and alleyways between building blocks. The people adapted to the unconventional conditions, and through

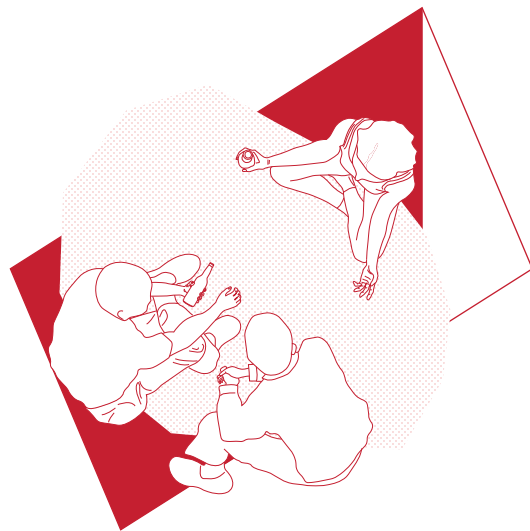


Fig 4.11. gatherings on surfaces

minor interventions, transformed the prosaic spaces to hold informal gatherings. After surveying the sites, they anchored down thin sheets of fabric with building fragments and found objects: rocks, bottles, bricks, shoes, concrete blocks, etc.

The fabric introduced a surface onto the once purposeless residual space, creating a new paradigm of space that existed in tangent to large scale architecture and the alienation from public spaces; spaces for occupation in the human scale. The simple boundaries established by the surface framed the space of gathering that transcended the limitations of the City. The people occupied the surface as they desired, without having to respond to the assigned functions of the space. From their bags they retrieved loaves of bread, fruits and bottles of wine; the familiar acts of dining connected the strangers, who came together to exchange whispers in the night. The term surface was defined as the following:

- An apparatus to suggest a specific area within a space
- A plane of mediation between the people who shared the space
- A democratic space for the free interpretations of the collective
- A territorial device that redefined the relationships between itself and its bounded context
- A boundary which is found in the isolation or separation of spaces

The people arrived in the dead of night and disappeared before the crack of dawn. They set up the gatherings unnoticed like experienced street hawkers and packed up swiftly without leaving a trace. It was of an uttermost importance to carefully restore the residual spaces to their pre-existing states of purposelessness. The gatherings were dependent on the City's negligence to scrutinize the residual spaces; the activities ceased to exist at a certain location once it drew too much unwanted

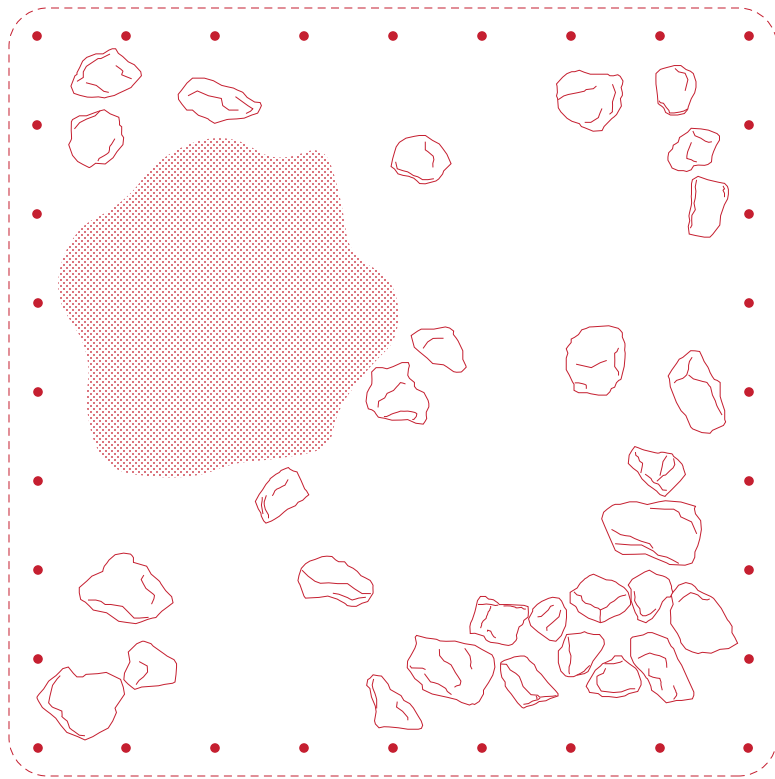


Fig 4.12. transformation of residual spaces

attention. In the long term, the temporary interventions were ruled out as possible strategies for the people to reclaim their share of the public spaces. The people were content with the hidden spaces which they could freely adapt, and had no need to upset the relationship between the developing city and its forgotten spaces—until even the residual spaces were developed by the City, one by one, into smaller, odd-sized lots. Confronted once again by the expulsion from the City, the people felt the urgency to transition the occupations of space from the shadows to the light.

Imagine you are put upon a desert plain, a space that is so vast and blank that only your initiative can make of it a place.

Imagine it is swept by fearsome winds and scorching temperatures, and only by your effort can you make of it a home.

Imagine you're surrounded by thousands of other people, that together you form a city . . .

Larry Harvey | Burning Man

the archipelago

The City was eventually taken over by its people.

||:

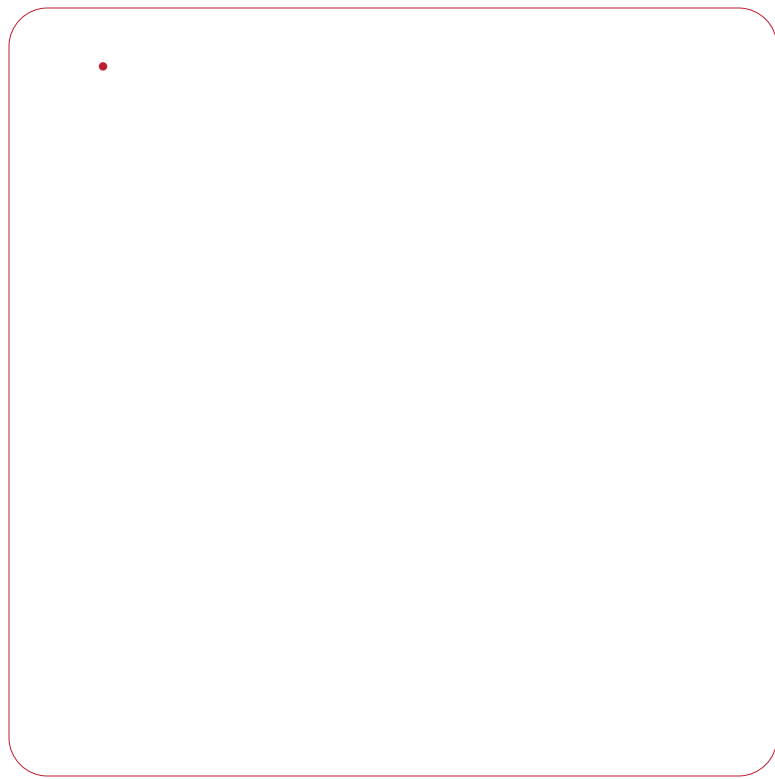


Fig 4.13. the infiltration of surfaces—day 1

A table appeared in the depths of one night and remained onto the next day. The banal object was sighted in various locations: the landing of a long set of stairs that extended from within the building clusters to the street, a spot in a fully occupied parking lot, next to a lamp post on the sidewalk of a low traffic road, a patch of grass in the middle of a park. Out of place, but unobtrusive, the familiarity of the commonplace object was its best disguise.

Several people visited the tables over the course of the night, although it wasn't certain which of the tables were deliberately placed to challenge the city authorities; the table as an installation could very well be either a piece of discarded furniture, or vice versa. The table served the same purpose as the sheets of fabric in the hidden gatherings, it invited people to settle in spaces that were otherwise inhabitable. From providing a platform to rest upon, to subdividing the site into pockets that were freed from the prescribed functions, its function constantly shifted to adapt to its surroundings and occupants. The presence of the table defined the dynamics between object and space in the functionless spaces of the City; an introduction to a typology that would continue to redefine the urban landscape.

The positive response of the people instigated the appearance of more tables scattered around the City, each placement more aggressive than the last. The new additions occupied rooftops, plazas, and streets. In large numbers, the tables made their presence known and toppled the prescribed balance between built forms and negative spaces. The tables mystified the City. The city officials reacted to the temporal acts of rebellion and had the offending objects promptly removed; the tables returned twofold overnight. The number of tables grew exponentially, and they spread across the city like a virus. No longer presented as stand-alone objects that existed in isolation, the tables were interconnected to form a growing network of urban spaces.

Despite the City's efforts to condemn the movement, labelling them the disruptions of order, the tables infiltrated the urban fabric and firmly planted their roots. The tables suggested an alternative for

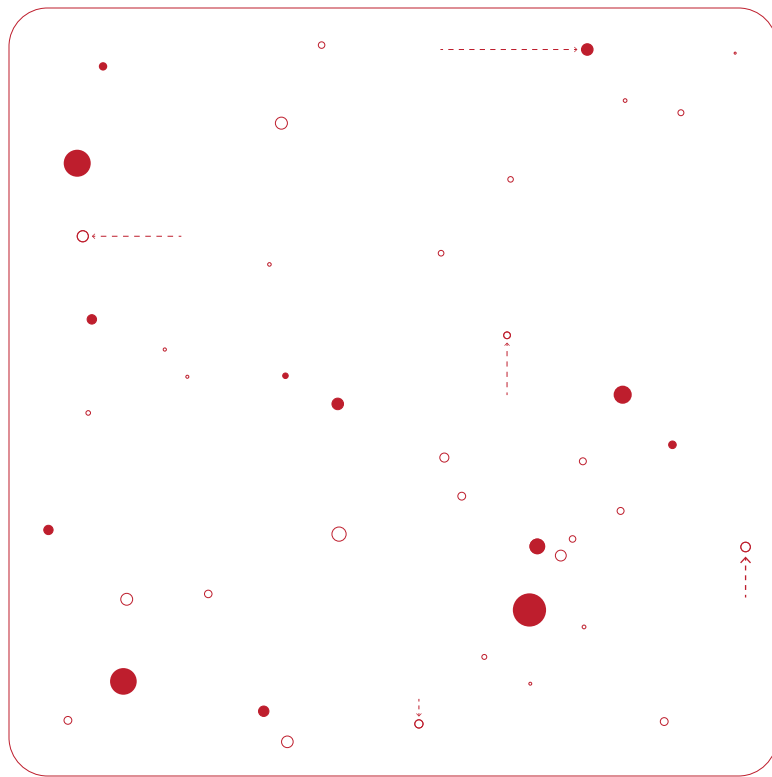


Fig 4.14. the infiltration of surfaces—day 17

how the people could situate themselves in the City. Some people were enlightened by the suggested possibilities, while others begrudgingly accepted their presence. Either way, it seemed that the tables were not going anywhere soon.

Having overcome the initial skepticism, people adopted the tables as part of the City's composition. They saw the tables as familiar objects present in the other contexts of their daily lives: in their living room, in the office pantry, at the restaurant, and they assumed the tables to perform similar functions despite the change in context. They occupied the tables as they would with their coffee and morning papers, or when they were waiting for a meal to be joined by unexpected company, or a chess game set up as an invitation to challengers. The silhouettes of individuals occupied briefly without leaving any trace, as the tables were adopted as their personal spaces. Then there were the groups that once gathered in the residual spaces in the dead of night, who resumed their activities in the light of day. It was part of their routine to bring their offerings to share with the others, but the format of the meetings yet to settle to the changing conditions of the tables. The table surface indicated the surfaces of gathering, but the people organized themselves around the surfaces rather than resting upon them. They initiated their communion through the sharing of meals, as the rituals of dining were rooted in their essence of being across different cultures and beliefs. From their baskets they pulled out bread, sausages and wine, but also tea sets, books and boardgames. The contextual conditions observed at the tables invited gatherings of different dynamics. The occasions transformed the tables and their surroundings into vibrant social spaces, while others observed from a distance. Nameless neighbours discretely studied the happenings around them, nothing went unnoticed in the spaces of close proximities.

The people who were yet to be convinced by the role of the tables in the agenda of the City, found it difficult to carry on with their scripted lives without being confronted by the tables; something familiar to their lives but alien to the urban fabric. Annoyed, they joined the

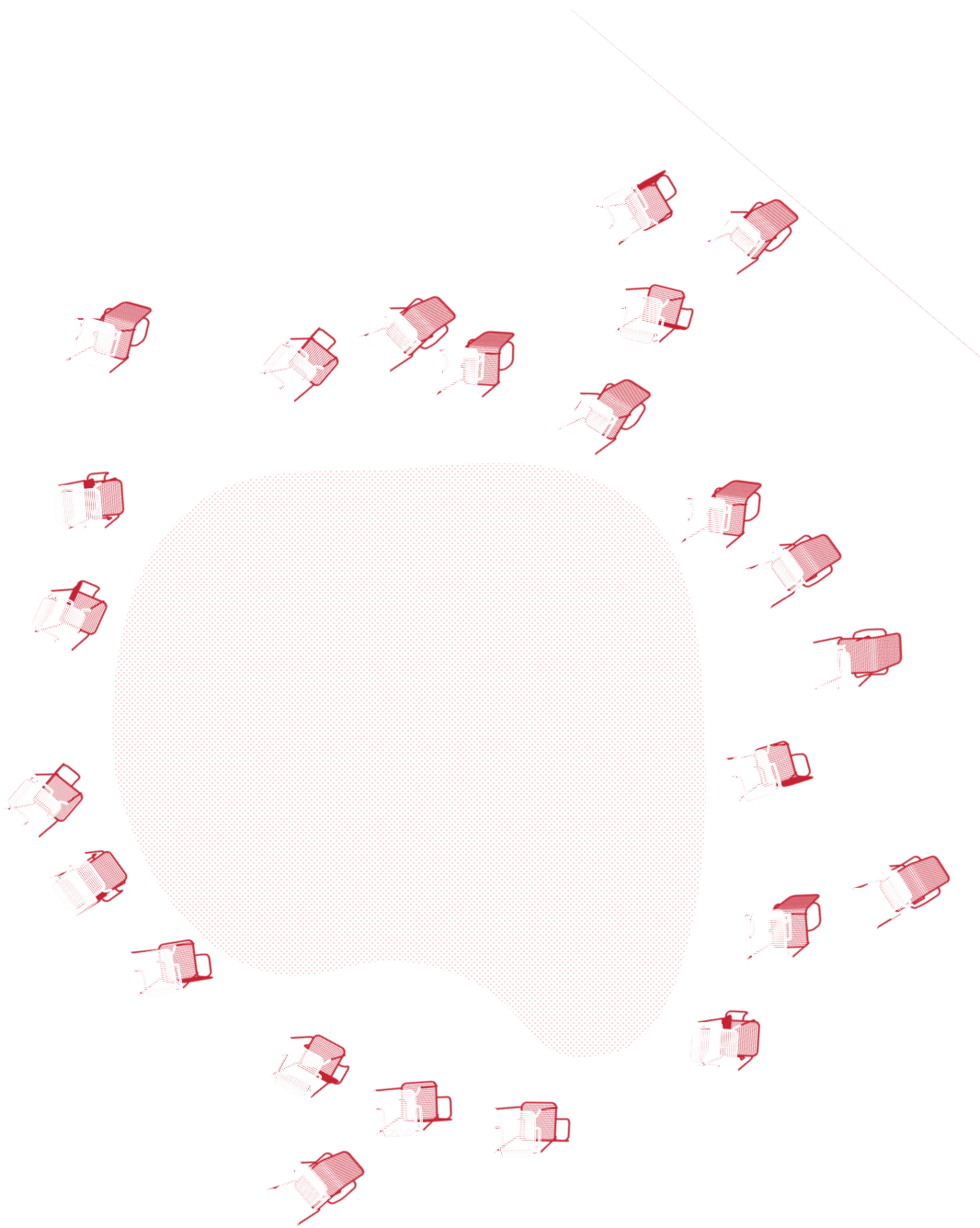


Fig 4.15. sharing space with strangers

gatherings to seek out answers: What was the purpose of the tables? There were no proposed interactions, programs or organization at the tables. The City had been providing the people with the necessary connections and scripts to keep them connected within small circles. They were conditioned to interact with others in a prescribed manner. Once at the tables, they need not interact directly with the others but even their subtlest movements would affect those who shared the same space. The people had to formulate the appropriate approaches to navigate the careful negotiations of space between their respective boundaries. Some people were friends, families, while others were complete strangers. It had been a long time since the people had the opportunities for unprescribed sharing of space with others. There were dining events that were hosted from dawn till night. There were impromptu meetings solely to complain about the tables that plagued the City. At certain times of the day the tables would get so crowded that it required great fortune for anyone to stumble upon an empty space. The occasions transformed the tables into pop-up installations that presented alternatives to the fixed programs in the homogenous city.

After years in the City, the people had been slowly conditioned everywhere they went, and in everything they did. In their everyday lives they moulded themselves to adapt to the City's standardized spaces, and there was only themselves to blame if they couldn't fit in. They stumbled upon the ambiguously defined tables. The tables were all created with the same function, but each varied slightly in design. The people didn't understand how all the tables could be tables when they were each so different from one another. For so long, they had been shown standards of tables, and they were certain they knew the definition of a table based on its height, proportion and setting. Certain tables were quite table-like, and cause the least amount of confusion to the people. But most didn't fit the criteria, and therefore could not all be tables. And yet somehow, they were used as tables.

The people came to realize through their interactions with

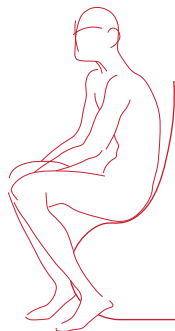
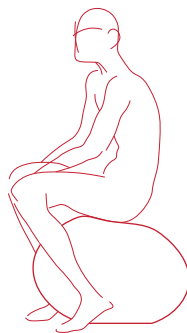
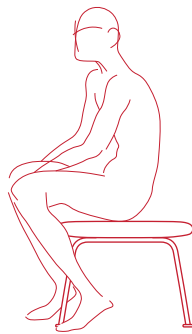
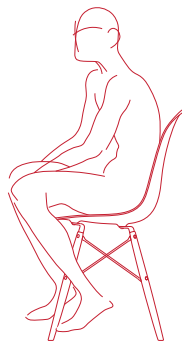


Fig 4.16. the human figure as a measurement of function

the tables that the 'tables' were simply labels assigned to the pieces of furniture that served different purposes depending on their users. The prescribed functions included considerations for every scenario of use, and the people were happy to conform. Why was a park a park, or a garden a garden? Surely the spaces were composed of different elements to not bear the same labels, but the limits of their functions were not restricted by the simplified perceptions. Without the constraints of definite functions or forms, the furniture introduced an endless diversity to the uniform spaces of the City. Previously uninhabitable spaces were made available by the people's willingness to explore different options. The slow realization that it was the people themselves that created tables from the furniture began the shift into a new era of life in the City; why confine themselves to fixed spaces when there was such a vast possibility that surrounded them? The city fabric transformed into collections of complex, ambiguous and amorphous spaces that were activated by the presence of the furniture. The people exploited the typological paradigm shift and anticipated the furniture to eventually replace the City's limiting spaces.

Picture a large-scale exposition that occupied the City. The furniture was part of the exhibition objects, so were the people. The exhibits were not carefully curated art pieces or installations, rather the unorganized day-to-day routines of the people. The appearances of the furniture were constantly in flux without fixed locations. Wanderers of the City could stumble upon a surface around a corner, atop a flight of stairs, or through an unplanned exit. The furniture were objects that created obstacles in the smooth flowing streaming movements in the City's interstitial spaces.

The objects interrupted the directness. They appeared in the middle of alleyways or empty plazas to suggest alternatives to the directional movement from one point to another. Their role as obstacles disrupted the rhythmic flow of the ever-consistent networks, whose guiding metronomes stuttered at each surface. The people didn't choose what to display in the exposition. The objects had unique gravitational



Fig 4.17. the facilitating role of the obstructing objects

forces that caused people to move towards them, interested, or to recoil, appalled. The objects paved the path to explore different spatial conditions within the City through unlimited possibilities, repurposing the abandoned spaces so they could be sprinkled with life once more. People had impromptu meals in the barely lit backstreets, away from all the commotion. They staged performances and workshops at their own will, to tempt the passersby to pause and share a moment together. They repurposed empty lots as gardens and playscapes for families to let their children and dogs be.

The people's combined reactions to the objects was something that rarely occurred in the City on the accord of the people. Before that, they could not even fathom the possibility of moving in a different direction in a space that was straight. What was once a City of destinations transformed into one of pleasant surprises. The people don't know what to expect from the spaces they headed to, or what they would stumble upon on their way, but those were part of their journeys and ignited their desires to explore. Their movements layered upon one another to weave together a tapestry of simultaneous events. In the unique blending of experiences that formed the exhibition, every person was allowed to discover their own pace and desire from the space.

A glance into the activities at the objects revealed a very different definition of a place of belonging. Before that, the people spent most of their extra time and savings on perfecting the limited space within the dwelling units. The freedom for the people to furnish their units masked the reality that they were physical boundaries that limited how the people move and think. If the people were happily occupied by their ownership of something, they would not seek for change.

The objects that occupied the City's spaces on the other hand represented surfaces where multiple occasions could take place. The presence of the surfaces provided scale references to spaces that seemed completely out of place for the human figure. Suddenly, the airport runways and abandoned warehouses became spaces comparable to

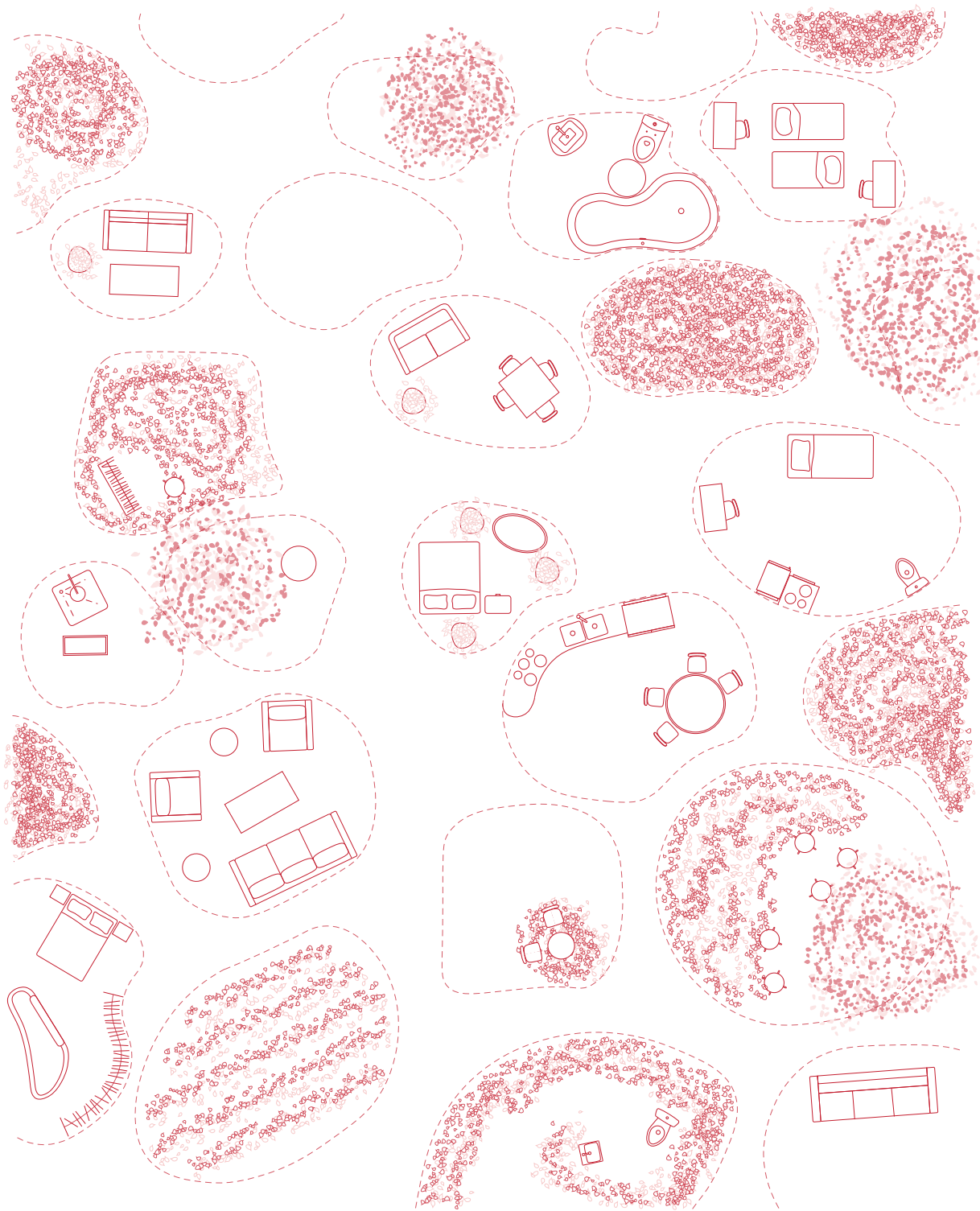


Fig 4.18. the nomadic occupation of amphibious beings

the homely dwellings, and the people made themselves at home. The surfaces' presence extended beyond that of its physical attributes, but the idea of transformations being layered upon the City. They represented a family of nomadic spaces in stark contrast to the rigidity of the City, whose developments were strictly managed by its plethora of rules. The people didn't claim ownership of any single surface, like amphibious creatures they inhabited the in-between. They moved between surfaces depending on the different occasions they proposed, or they interpreted the same surface as many different identities. Their sense of belonging was attributed to the nomadic network that contained a coalition of surfaces. The people's attachment to the surfaces were temporary; unlike the permanent dwelling units, the occasions the people brought to the surfaces were unique without the need of additional objects. It only needed one person to walk past and sit down, and the simple act prompted more and more to follow.

The surfaces introduced to the City as acts of rebellion eventually settled down as the norm for most people. The City furiously introduced buildings to control the growth of the surfaces, but the restraint and rationality that embodied the ethos of the city hampered its own progress. The new additions were restricted by the rigidity of the grid and they struggled to locate vacancies within the established built environment. The built forms were introduced to the urban fabric in planned phases after strong consideration for budget constraints, political momentum and maintaining consistency of the City's underlying narrative. The design language that contributed to the City's uniformity undoubtedly controlled the wide avenues and large building blocks. The organization of the surfaces, on the contrary, were comparable to the sprawling branches of a tree. Loosely positioned within the negatives of the city, the surfaces were non-hierarchical. Two systems operated within the same dimension of the City's fabric; the people who remain conformed to their prescribed lives, and the people who contributed to the canvas with their performances.

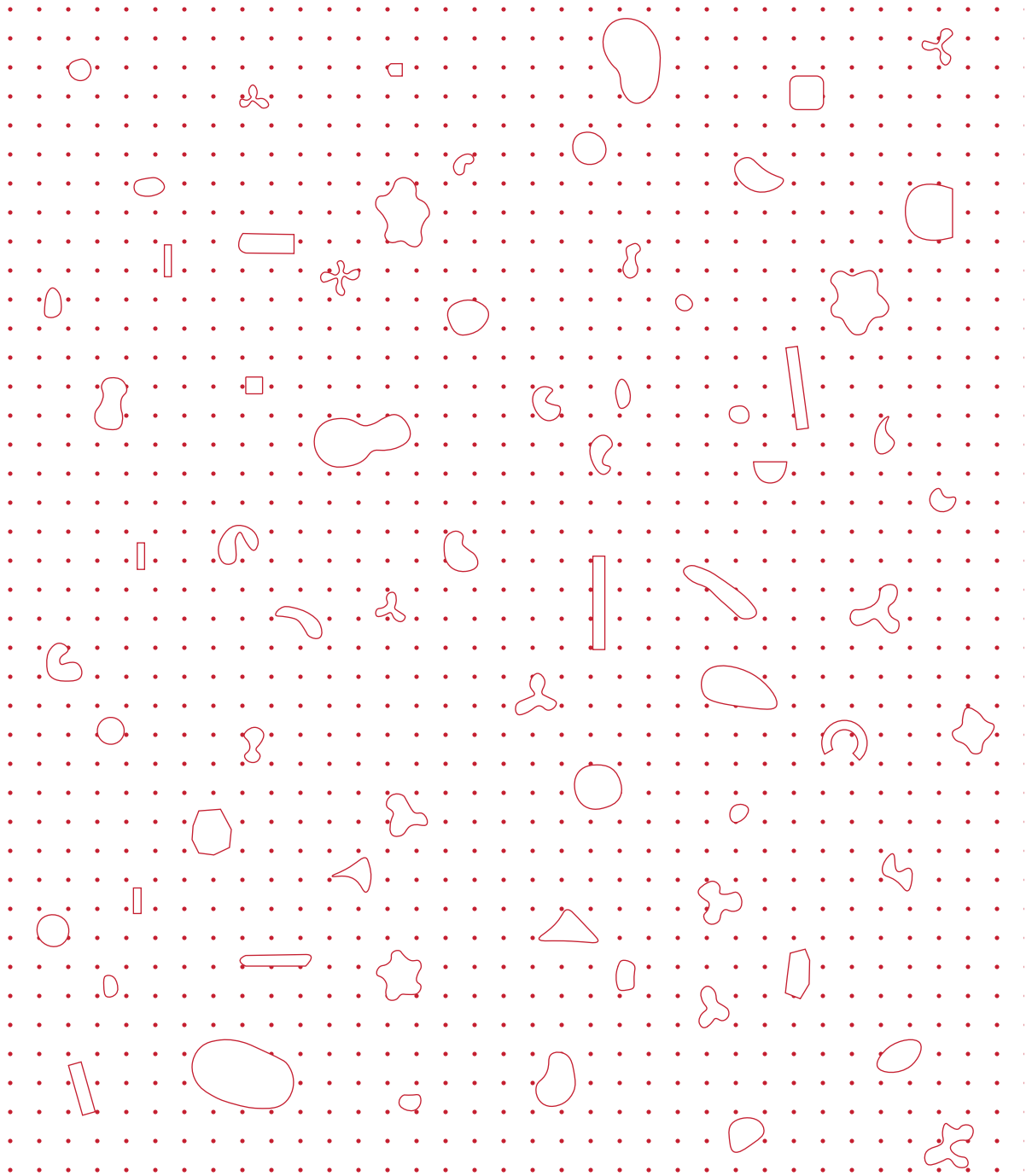


Fig 4.20. the non-hierarchical sprawl of surfaces

To fall in the void as I fell:
none of you knows what that means.

For you, to fall means to plunge perhaps from the twenty-sixth floor of a skyscraper, or from an airplane which breaks down in flight: to fall headlong, grope in the air a moment, and then the Earth is immediately there, and you get a big bump.

But I'm talking about the time when there wasn't any Earth underneath or anything else solid, not even a celestial body in the distance capable of attracting you into its orbit.

You simply fell,
indefinitely,
for an indefinite length of time.

Italo Calvino | Cosmicomics

the Surface

The people took over the city.



Fig 4.21. fading gaps as the surfaces merged

As if a heavy snowfall came and left in the middle of the summer night, every soul in the City woke up to the disappearance of the archipelago of surfaces. What welcomed the people, most of whom were barely awake, was the sight of a homogenous surface best described as nothing. How could someone use the absence of any identifiers to describe the presence of something that very clearly occupied the physical space of the City? It was difficult for the people to find the right words, as what was presented before them was extremely difficult to comprehend. Asking for a clear definition of it would be like asking someone to describe a colour that they have seen for the first time.

There is an irresistible charm in the first snowfall in winter. It symbolized the beginning of a different season, despite winter having arrived long before; it created a different experience layered upon the familiar environment. It invited the people's imagination by concealing some of the elements that suggested or restricted the occupations of space. People longed to leave the warmth of their dwellings to leave the first mark on the untainted layer that gave in to the gentlest touch. The beauty of the snow lies not only in the desire for people to embrace the change, but also the fact that it was temporary. Nothing was supposed to last; not the white that represented pureness, the people's creations and interventions, nor the snow that blanketed everything. What if the snowfall was permanent?

The people had numerous speculations to explain the sudden change in their surroundings. It was possible that the collective all fell for some temporary illusion, but even more plausible that the growing population of surfaces outgrew the limited space in the City over time. As the gaps between distinct surfaces gradually narrowed, they were joined to form larger surfaces to better utilize the spatial scarcity. One by one, the larger surfaces engulfed their smaller neighbours, until there were no separations left. The remaining Surface was a singular entity, ever extending and indifferent to the surrounding context; it was the hyperbolic counterpart of the City. The monumental architecture loomed over the City to symbolize the peoples' disassociation from the

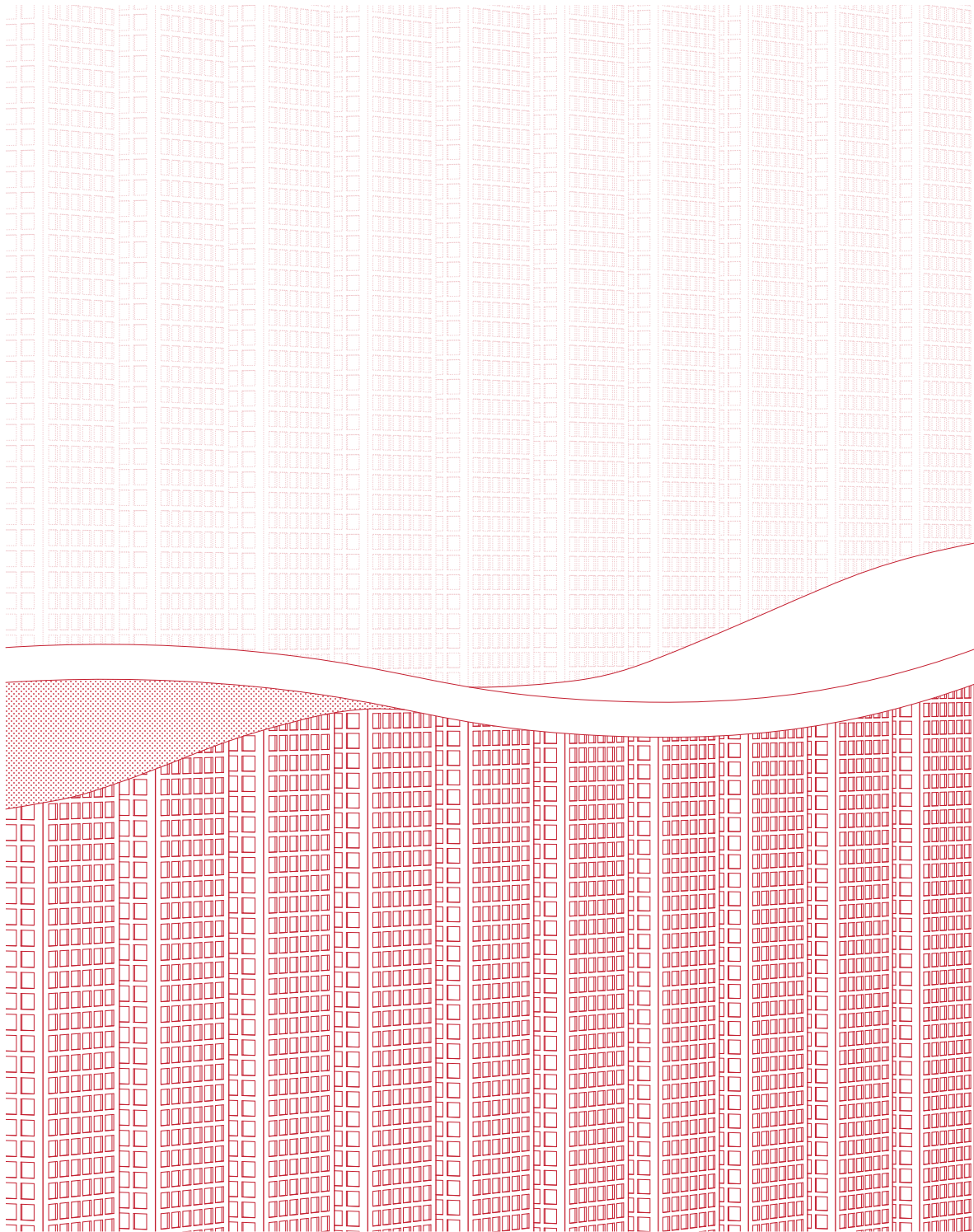


Fig 4.22. a blanket of snow

prescribed boundaries and functions of space.

The Surface presented an image of an ideal habitation that echoed the people's newfound understanding of space. Ever since the people adapted to living among a typology introduced by the surfaces, a veil was lifted to reveal the City's agenda and the architects that contributed to the restrictive spaces. When divided, the people could only respond in changing their own actions; together, the collective reclaimed their rights as owners of the City. The rebellion was initiated by a single table, and now they arrived at a single Surface in a scale that redefined the entire city fabric. It wasn't what the people expected in the beginning of the movement—they had little idea of its course and destination—but the habitation in the form of the Surface was truly designed for the people, by the people.

People itched to leave their dwellings and mark their presence with fresh sets of footprints, to be the first to explore unknown spaces. The sidewalks, roads, planters that served as boundaries of space were nowhere to be seen. The parks and plazas, stairs and ramps could not be differentiated from one another. They were all presented in a formless state and dawned the same shade of white. The city blocks were all connected regardless of their respective zonings, as well as the transportation networks that were compressed into a single layer.

The street signs that populated the city referenced a non-existent grid, the cardinal directions were only relevant to the location of the sun, and the figure-ground relationships were incommensurate among a space without any built forms. The only relevant units of measurements were the human figures, and the distinction of spaces were indicated by the changing occasions. There was no common language for the space and occasions. They moved between the crowds to search for their partners, family, friends, colleagues, people they were supposed to meet in a specific location and time; there was no way to accurately identify their position. Occasionally the people might think they were close, but when the surroundings began to shift, they were left searching for directions

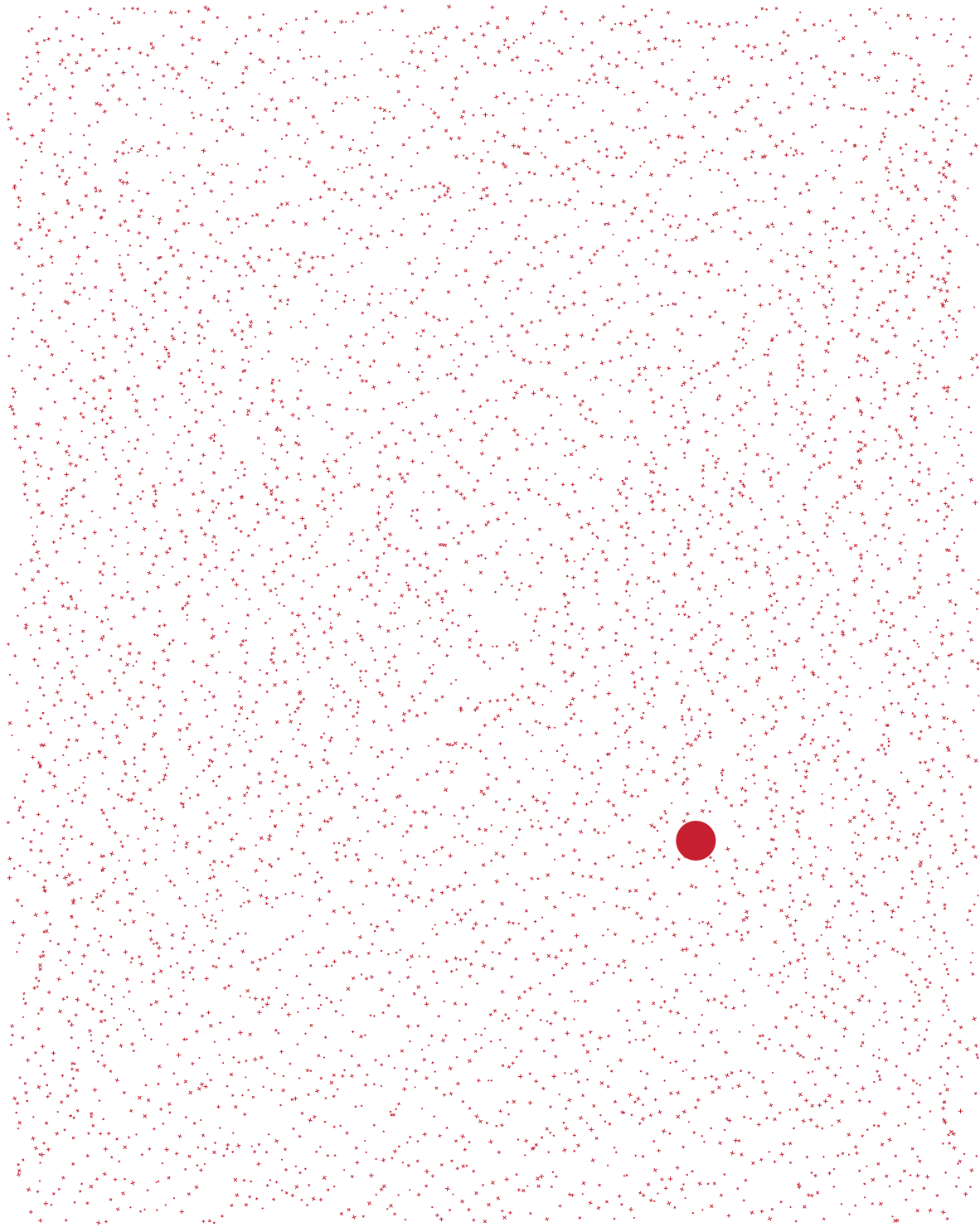


Fig 4.23. gathering around a large table

once again. The familiarity yet distancing environment compared to people gathering for a meal around a table that didn't exist.

Having received the same set of invitations, the guests all showed up at different times; they were all at some place at the right time. As there were no distinctions between the right place and the remainder of the Surface, they all arrived at another guest's right space at the wrong time. Some were so early that the meal had yet to be set, and others showed up at the end of the meal, only to be welcomed by the aftermath of a feast. It could also be the other way. The guests might have arrived so early that the traces from the previous meal were still scattered across the unorganized space, and the latecomers were so oblivious of the time that they even missed the clean up. For the people who showed up on time, they were confronted by a different set of problems. Without any references of their positioning, the people had to organize themselves in reference to the others. Some sat too close for anyone to move comfortably, while some were so far apart, they could hardly hold a conversation. It was difficult for them to negotiate the space and engage in the occasion without addressing the intersecting boundaries. They would describe the gathering as a large picnic where they were free to sit anywhere. Except the blanket was so large that it was impossible to tell who was invited to the party and who got lost on the way to another dinner.

It took around twelve months for the people to learn how to walk when they were infants, and twelve more before they uttered the first words. They weren't quite sure when they had their first thought or began understanding their actions. The people never thought that they would one day re-educate themselves from an empty state, given that the certainties in their everyday norms were all deemed irrelevant.

They crawled through the doorways on all fours until they were released from their dwellings. They didn't know where to begin. They could remain standing still until something struck their troubled minds, or pace around until they stumbled upon something different. They could also choose between sitting and leaning back, testing different positions

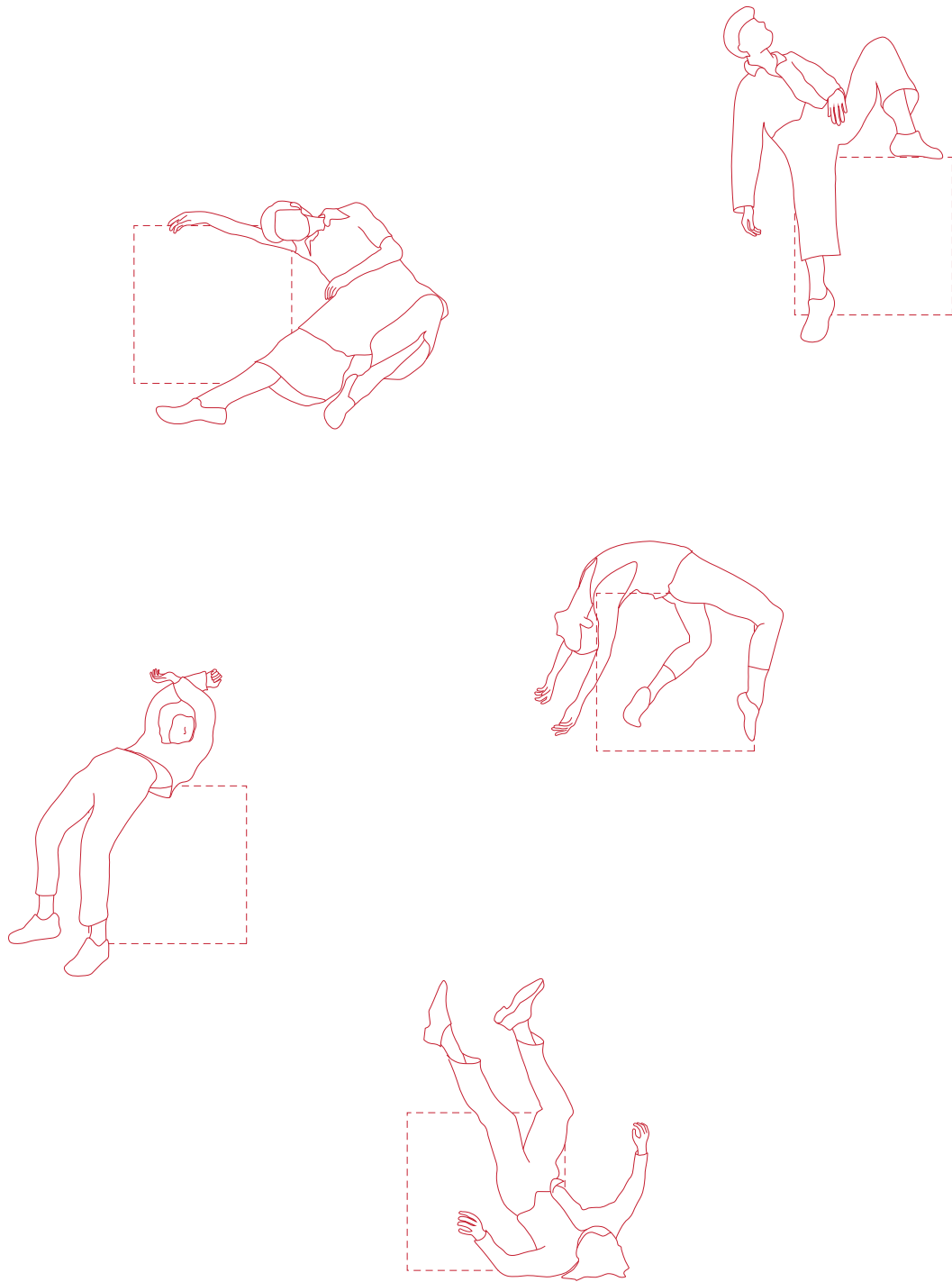


Fig 4.24. the memories of sitting

for one that they could settle on. In their minds they were probably circling the space without an end. The people were able to recognise or assign functions to unprescribed spaces. They observed how the provisions of the archipelago of surfaces expanded when they rejected the assigned labels and explored the usages with their bodies. When the surfaces no longer existed, however, they had to inversely recreate the occupations of space with only their actions, and define the purpose of the surrounding context.

As if their minds were transposed into the body of a stranger, or an entirely different species, the people bent and stretched, knelt and jumped, contorted their bodies in ways that were previously unthinkable. Unfortunately, it seemed that the people had forgotten how to sit, to play, or simply to move in any manner that seemed right. They were caught searching for an ideal when none of their interpretations remained long enough to be a certainty they could reference back to. Their bodies only remembered the relationship with something else. The relationship with the floor when they walked, with the wall when they leaned on, with the bed when they slept. Having failed in their first attempt, the people resorted to the next solution; that is to recreate a human standard that once indicated how they should occupy any space. It all came a bit too late as the people had to go through the same struggles to create a common language, and the outcome shouldn't come as a surprise.

A book of standards illustrated three people lying atop one another and labeled it sleeping. The interlocking means seemed to allow them to support the arrangement without the need of external interference. Another instance illustrated a person, with his back bent backwards so much that his head could touch the ground, and that would be leaning against the wall. Next was a person sitting on a hollowed shadow of a spherical volume. The human body does not have any flat surfaces. The people could not recreate the manufactured flatness that they relied on to rest upon, to hold things, to organize. The patterns of movements made no sense at all. The people could be lying down in one moment, and restless in another. They expected the book of standards to

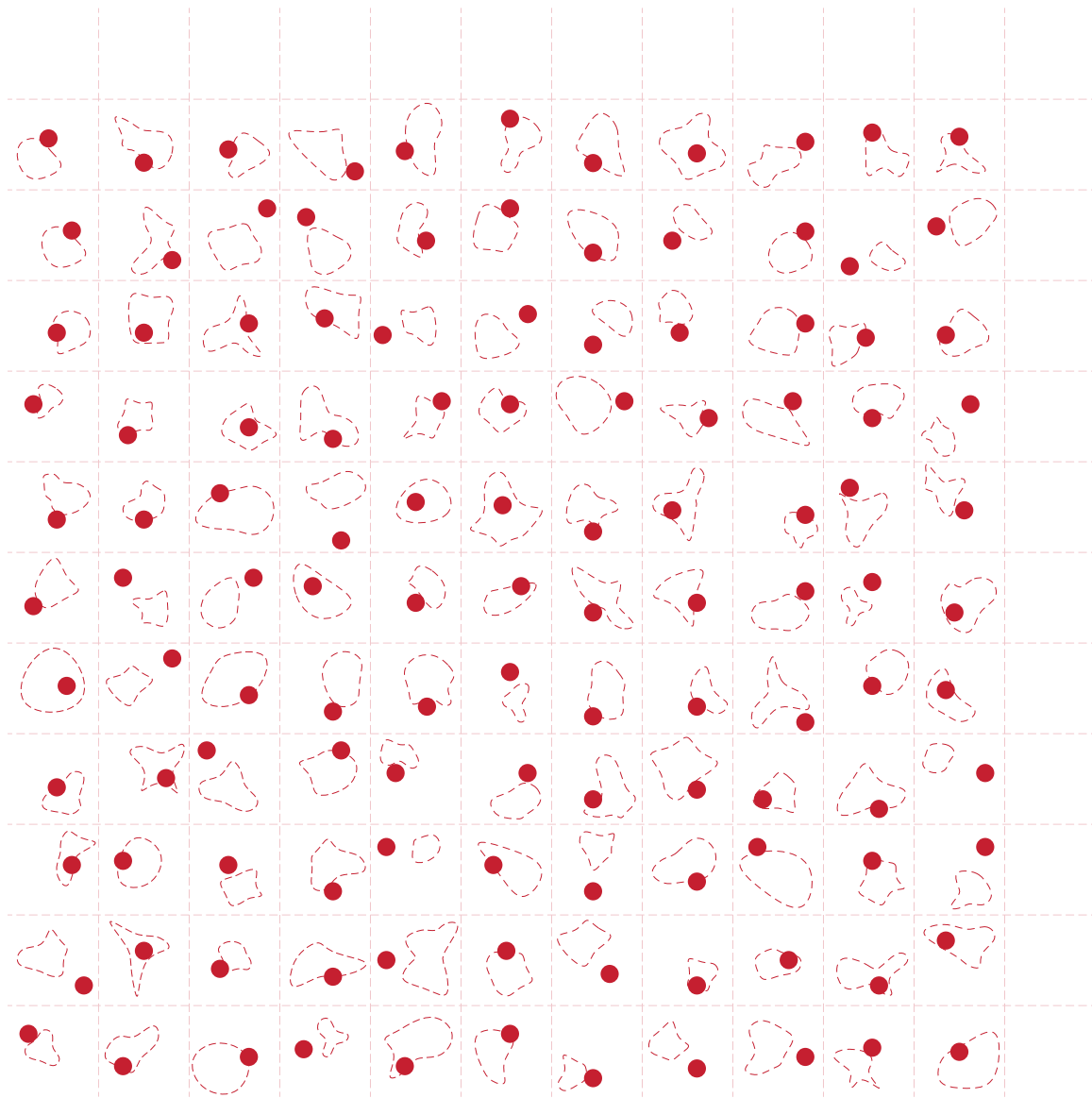


Fig 4.25. the temporality of occasions without objects

display clear purposes in response to the abilities of the human body, but they were confronted by the lack of reference to mould the body towards.

The people wondered how they would move differently in the new habitation, with occasions and functions in mind but nothing for them to reference their actions. They were now surveyors of an unexplored territory, and before occupying it they had to first measure it. They proceeded with the following:

An imaginary square grid was drawn, with an equal number of rows and columns. The people formed small groups equipped with only the essentials of ropes, chalk and their own bodies. They measured the variances of the squares by referencing an ideal blank canvas (the variances were extremely minimal, if they even existed at all), and considered how the specific conditions could accommodate their habits and routines. The ropes were used to trace the movements of the people as they navigated each square, repeatedly introducing different occasions to the site that barely responded. They marked their intertwined paths with chalk—whether they were straight lines, curves, or zig-zags—to measure the vectors of their movements that exemplified the program.

In a repeated fashion, they wrote down a) all the programs of space they could conceive, or any programs logically conceivable. When all the options were exhausted, they proceeded to b) indulge in the search of a finite number of imaginary functions and noted everything, as ridiculous and improbable they seemed ($b=\infty-a$). When all the squares in the grid had been surveyed and documented, they added another row and column, and the group ventured forward into uncharted territory to begin the process again. After a group finished with surveying one square, another group would take over and review the results of the previous group of people. The radii of the curves were double-checked, the zig-zags deemed aimless enough, and the rotation at the correct speed. The program of the square was adjusted slightly according to this reassessment. The process was repeated until the collective arrived at a point from which they could no longer move forward.



Fig 4.26. scalelessness and placelessness

The surveying could end in two ways: the group could run out of resources and time before they managed to cover every inch of the infinite space. Or, they could also arrive at a space without a use—not one that was functionless, not one unused—but one that was unable to be occupied by any conceivable program, and the square would remain vacant. The ongoing documentation contributed to a database of drawings comparable to an archipelago of islands: clusters of isolated programs that each had a gravitational pull. The compiled sets of drawings began to resemble something of a map, which could potentially be used for navigation by locating the charted program of the respective islands.

However, the people's efforts soon proved to be futile. The programs illustrated in the drawings were specific to the instances in which the groups surveyed the squares. They traced the movements while they occupied the space and arrived at the appropriate program in relation to their bodies. The islands' existence only lasted briefly before the groups moved on to their next destination. The temporality of the objectless spaces made it impossible for the people to settle. When a person showed up at a square with the drawing that indicated its charted program, he would be tracing the steps and memories of a ghost.

The people embarked on their journeys in search of their places of belonging long before the first glimpse of the sun. By sunset, it was almost certain that they ended the day with hardly any progress. The landscape promised nothing more than the repeated view of nothingness. Glimpses of familiar silhouettes and mirages of oases teased the people with the idea of arriving somewhere that whispered a different tone. Upon arrival, they would look back at their journey, and look towards the next destination; the two would not be too different.

The countless footsteps that trailed behind them were constant reminders of their insignificance in the scale of their environment. How could they, amidst the uncertainty, be convinced that there was an end to their search? Their never-ending movements led them nowhere else

but here, and no one else but themselves. The people were trapped in a perpetual cycle as if their lives were scripted in the loop of a musical box. Day after day they traveled aimlessly among the blank canvas, and whatever progress they made was reset at the day's end. They still struggled to identify the intended programs of their surroundings, and how they could position themselves in the middle of it all. They remained hopeful—what else should one do in a situation like that—that it wasn't certain the space is entirely the same. After all, they were limited to a certain perspective, and a small change in the language or their understanding of their surroundings might open new doors.

Everything was equally distant to them as they were close. Shrouded in an endless stretch of nothingness, the only reference were the specks of lights emitted by stars thousands of lightyears away. It was ironic that their presence in space was confirmed by objects that ceased to exist thousands of years ago. One step at a time, they willed their body closer to somewhere, with no notion of how much further and how much longer it would take. They might have even walked past their destination, without having the slightest idea. The people before them spent decades charting maps to depict the environment. Those who travelled west would eventually end up east, so there had to be an end. Even the endless horizon presented before their eyes would appear as curves of different magnitudes when viewed at different scales.

The scale of the Surface—or the lack of—suggests that it was designed for giants. In a single step they could cover the distance travelled by the people in a week. They must have hands the size of mountains and sightlines that extended to both past and future. When thirsty they dried up entire lakes, and moved between worlds every day. To the giants, the people would appear as tiny dots under a magnifying glass. The absurd proposition was the only way for the people to comprehend the Surface. Nothing the people achieved would leave a mark. They could dedicate the rest of their days constructing the tallest possible structure, and it wouldn't be noticed before it eventually decomposed into dust. It wasn't unbelievable as the people studied the ants that share the same space. An

ant would spend its entire life exploring the long hallways of a chateau without realizing the unfortunate truth of its size. It would wonder why it hasn't stumbled upon a chamber to rest in or a kitchen to replenish, and never find the answer. It was more likely that the ant would attempt to create its own space to identify with the relevant scale. Either that, or it shall forever be lost in the landscape of nothingness.

The table appeared in the middle of the night.

:||

The people cycled through the progressions of tables, furniture, objects and surfaces; they would repeatedly arrive at the single Surface that disoriented the people. The Surface at the end of each cycle layered upon its predecessor, and gradually brought the people within reach of the sky. It would mark the end when the people had no other options to turn towards. What if in order to break the cycle, the table had to be introduced from the Surface itself? On the blank canvas the people created markings that indicate different gestures—solid lines for folding, hairlines for scoring and hidden lines for cutting—and folded parts of the Surface to replicate the role of the table. The forms introduced references for scale and positioning across the Surface with a permanence that was lacking in the movements of the people. There were no indications for specific programs, while the forms were flexible envelopes that accommodate different occasions. The typology allowed the squatters to communicate the design of space through their experiences, and brought the human scale to the ever-extending monumental Surface.

place

A hand-held tool of enormous importance is one that, when applied to a surface, leaves traces and thus affords *trace-making*.

The tool may be a *stylus, brush, crayon, pen, or pencil*, but if it marks the surface it can be used to depict and to write, to represent scenes and to specify words.

James J. Gibson | The theory of affordances

the affordances of forms

In 1947, Aldo Van Eyck started work on his famous playgrounds in Amsterdam. By 1978 there were 700 such playground projects scattered throughout the city, enough to reinvent the city's urban fabric.¹ Van Eyck envisioned this archipelago of primitive forms as a means of reviving the city's forgotten spaces by encouraging the occupants to play and in turns define the spaces as playgrounds. The *children* (that refers to any person playing) encountering these spaces would recognize the primitive forms as play structures, but had to discover unique movements or interpretations for the forms without the guidance of any prescribed instructions; they were encouraged to stretch the possibilities of the forms or even break the conventions of play.

The relationship between the forms' possible uses and the children's interpretations of their use are referred to by psychologist James J. Gibson as 'affordances.'² He uses the term to describe the intrinsic possibilities of the environment (and all the objects that exist within it) that are only realized by the capabilities of the user. Thus, 'affordances' is a metric to measure the environment where users double as units of measurement. The ground affords a surface for people to stand upon, the wall affords the separation between one space and another, the door affords a way for a person to pass through the separations of spaces. The children's movements in Van Eyck's playgrounds measure the capabilities and spatial extents of the spaces defined as playgrounds, which lead to the distinction of space through a language of architectural forms. Play structures were inserted into the forgotten sites of the city without

1 Liane Lefaiivre and Rudi Fuchs, eds., *Aldo van Eyck: The Playgrounds and the City* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002).

2 James J. Gibson, "The Theory of Affordances," in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Psychology Press, 2011), 119–35.

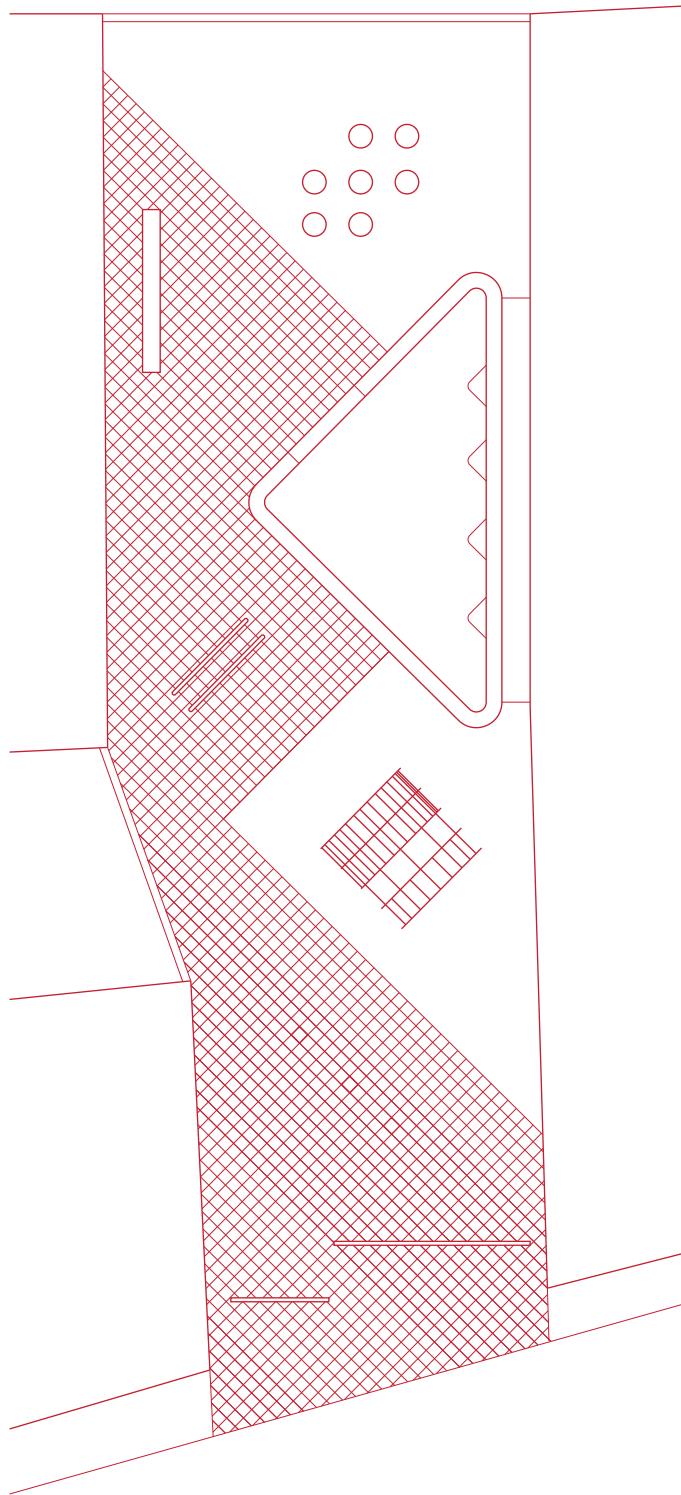


Fig. 5.1. Dijkstraat Playground

establishing hard edges to demarcate the pockets of space, allowing the playgrounds to function as nodes in the city's network. Amsterdam's city center was opened as a result. Children played on sidewalks next to vehicular traffic; pedestrians walked through the playgrounds without any obligation to stop and engage; the primitive forms remained as sculptures when unoccupied. Van Eyck's intentions were to translate the children's discovery of play through movements to the city itself as an extended play space, opening possibilities for functions of the cityscape reimagined as playgrounds. His proposal of an architecture for everyday life was materialized by allowing every mundane act to define the creation of space, erasing arbitrary separations between play (the creative act) and everything else.

Playgrounds for children of the city are similar to what Foucault defined as a 'heterotopia,' a space within which behaviours are permitted that are restricted once outside the space. Japanese sculptor Isamu Noguchi was haunted for most of his life by the idea of creating such a space through his work. Aside from being the designer of the oft-reproduced Noguchi Chair, a wooden sculpture with a glass top regarded as one of the emblems of modern industrial design, Noguchi had a desire to design sculptures that offer the affordances of play. He believed that his sculptures should not simply be experienced from a distance, but that they had to be touched, explored, and engaged by the viewers' bodies.³ He conceived of a project that carved out a city block in New York and replaced it with a landscape of steps, slides, and sloping surfaces with which people could interact without any restrictions. The project was Noguchi's *Play Mountain*. It is a response to the desolate playscape he experienced throughout his childhood, and an idea that developed into many other similar attempts in his lifetime.⁴

Noguchi's playground proposals were heavily influenced by

3 Azby Brown, "Notes on the Emergence of Form," in *Play Mountain: Isamu Noguchi + Louis Kahn*, ed. Shizuko Watari (Tokyo: Watari-Um, 1996), 70–71.

4 Alex Kerr, "Isamu Noguchi's Playground," in *Play Mountain: Isamu Noguchi + Louis Kahn*, ed. Shizuko Watari (Tokyo: Watari-Um, 1996), 132–34.



Fig. 5.2. site comparison: abandoned space

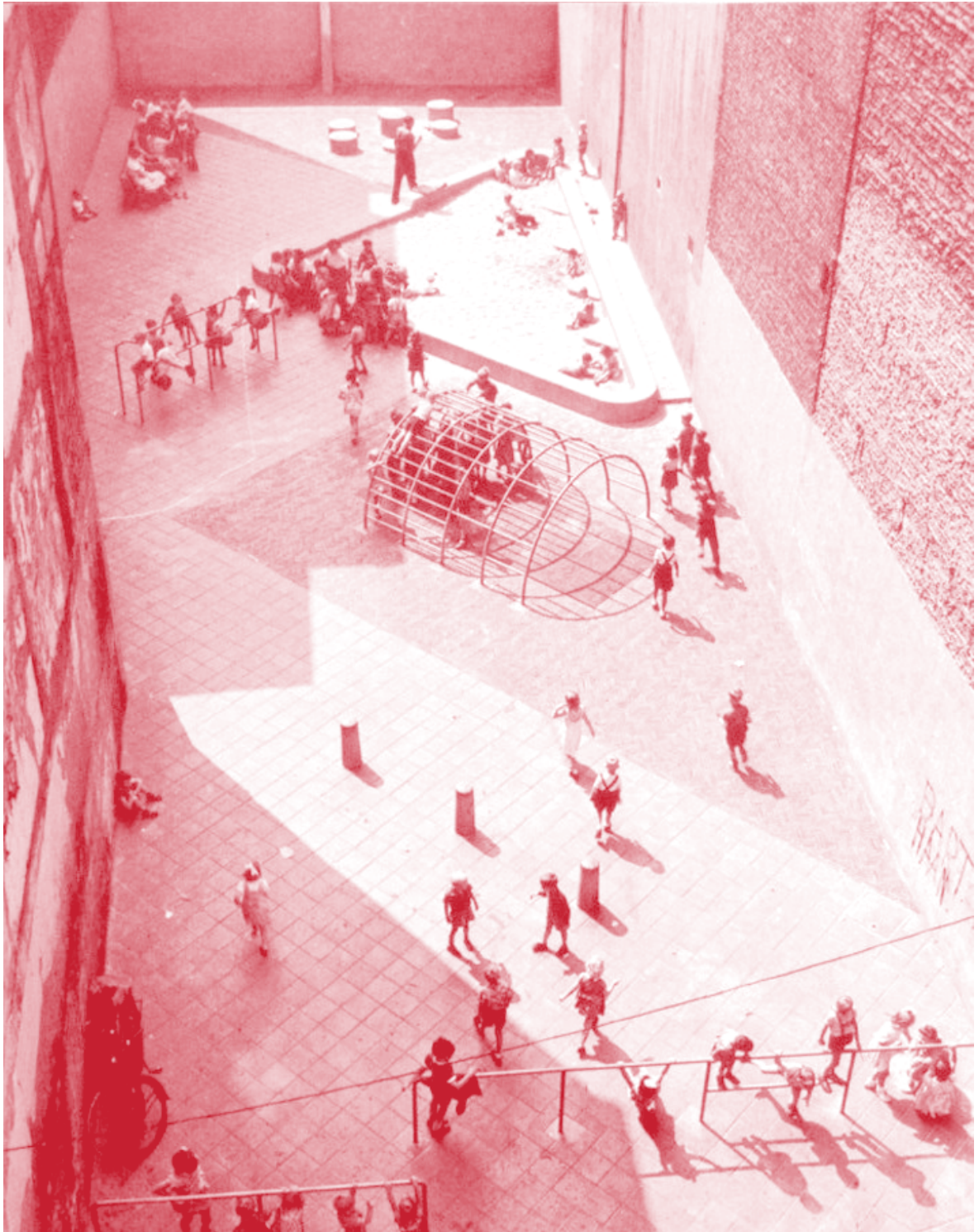


Fig. 5.3. site comparison: playground



Fig 5.4. Noguchi's play mountain

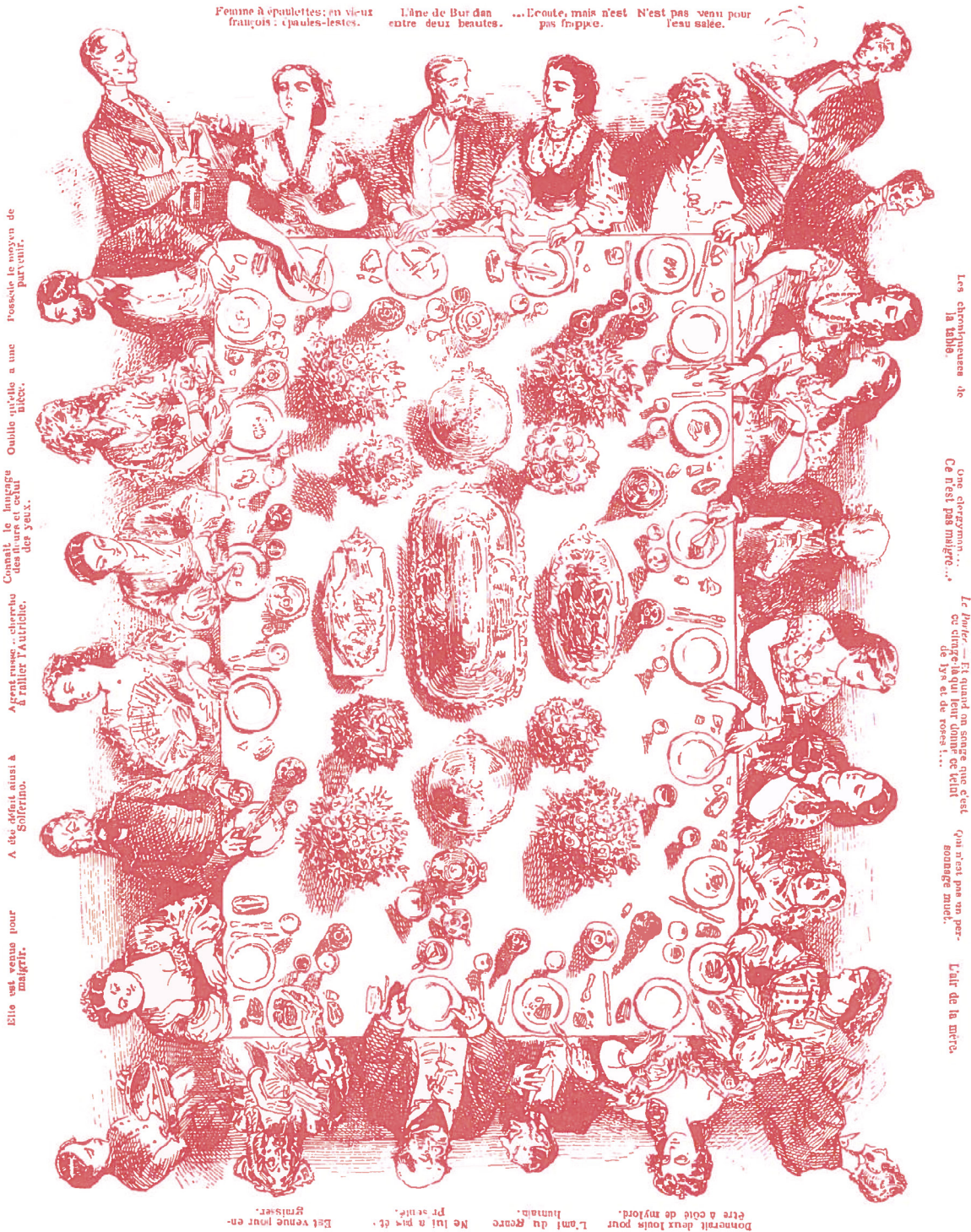
his skills as a sculptor. The playground projects involved sculpting the earth to create unfamiliar landscapes of greenery, meandering paths, terraced steps of different sizes, and bodies of water; as if Noguchi was sculpting a relief tabletop. He focused on human movements in the sculptural masterplans. There include no instructions, rules, or obvious interpretations; they are simply speculations about how occupants might respond instinctively with their bodies. The gentle landscaping gestures always position occupants in a space that affords play; they were always part of a sculpture that could not be visualized in its entirety, and were always part of a journey from one sculpture to another. Noguchi's proposals would have required massive upheavals resembling Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*, except that they suggest how architecture can create places for opportunities and explorations.

Noguchi's sculptures function as objects of reference. Whether they take the form of smaller scaled pieces for placement within gardens, or the landscaping of entire playgrounds, the abstract nature of these sculptures invites viewers to physically engage in attempts to discover the sculptures' affordances. The surfaces that host dining occasions similarly facilitate the occupants' interactions in space. The everyday object is likewise used by Van Eyck to elaborate on his proposed distinctions between space and place. The table itself is not a space. We can position the table in what we identify as a space, and determine what portion of the space the table occupies, determining this through a combination of our placement of the table and our definitions of the boundaries of space. However, we immediately reconcile the tangible object (the table) and the abstract space once we introduce an occasion—an occasion of dining, for example. We eat, gather, share in a place where the table facilitates the space that contains the table.⁵ The space accommodates dining occasions without prior prescriptions of functions, while the table is only identified as a table when being used and is otherwise a space-occupying object. We can deduce that the function of both the table and the space are defined by the occasion.

5 Aldo van Eyck, *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, ed. Vincent Ligtelijn and Francis Strauven (Amsterdam: SUN, 2008), 296–97.

LA TABLE D'HÔTE

Femme à épaulettes; en vieux français: epaules-lestes. L'âne de Bur dan entre deux beautés. ...Écoute, mais n'est pas venu pour l'esu salée.



Illo est venus pour malgrir.
 A die défat ausi à Solferino.
 Agent russe chercho à rallier l'Autriche.
 Connait le langage des yeux.
 Ouillo qu'ello a une pibée.

Les champagneuses de la table.
 Une chertzman... Ce n'est pas malgrir...
 Le parler — Et quand on encre que c'est cu cinquante qui leur donne ce kild de lye et de roses!...
 qui n'est pas un per- sonnage muel.
 L'air de la mère.

Donnerit deux jouis pour être à côté de mylord.
 L'ami du genre humain.
 Ne lui à pas ét. pr servir.
 Est venue pour en- grasser.

Fig 5.5. occasions at the table

The blank canvas is a tempting idea that allows the creation of space upon a clean state. When a space with prescribed functions lack the presence of any objects, such as a table, which afford the occasions in the space, the space cannot be realized. However, the table is but one interpretation of an object that affords the occasion of dining—to stage the dining setting, to mediate different people, to have a physical position in space—and its affordances remain identical if we remove the label of the table; the identification of the object is the cue for us to search for the object’s affordances. What the objects afford accredits the relationship between the forms and our self-awareness as human beings. And by extension, the affordances of the surrounding environment might be limited by the labels we assign to distinguish one from another. The forms and functions of space do not prescribe or restrict the affordances, instead they are defined by the occasions that occur in the space.

Borrowing from Gibson’s theory of affordances, Noguchi’s playscapes and Van Eyck’s architecture of the in-between, I am proposing an approach that disregards the boundaries of space in the architecture of place-making. Instead, descriptions of occasions shape and define a range of possibilities for the places to be interpreted. The narratives describe the affordances of primitive forms by once again referencing the attributes portrayed by the human scale figures. In a speculative architecture with no boundaries, forms are not implemented to establish the boundaries of space. They are in place to suggest how the occasions and places are better visualised when references are present for scale, position and affordances.

It is critical to note, for I cannot emphasize this point enough, that the illustrated forms are my interpretations within the unlimited possibilities of the archipelago of primitive forms. The catalog of forms exists as shared knowledge common to all but which are simultaneously undefined, for we all have different expectations of how stories are accommodated. The same form could invite different interpretations, while the same interpretations could likewise be accommodated by different forms. The architectural space in the descriptions remain amorphous, but this new language of space is one that is interpreted and communicated through the evidence of the human presence in architecture.

making place

a place of gathering

The flower petals fell from the tree canopy and blanketed the surface with a soft pink and white. It was again the time of the year when people across the city were invited to celebrate in beauty of nature. The setting was customary, yet the spectacle never failed to attract the crowds, occupying every single inch of surface shadowed by the trees. In the short duration between the fall of the first and last petal, people took on different roles in the theatrical stage of the celebration; whether it was reliving the traditions they grew up with, or the setting for their first date, the tiny worlds of social interactions were juxtaposed across the surface. Despite the passing of the years, the celebrations somehow remained the same.

The old man recalled the experiences from his younger days. Every year his family returned to the exact same spot, as if they had their names etched into the space. When the falling petals indicated the beginning of the celebrations, his family arrived in the early hours of the day to lay out a large blanket for gathering. Other groups marked the boundaries of their gathering spot in a similar manner: from using thin sheets of fabric to creating barricades with their bags and clothing. Everyone wanted to be close to the trees but at the same time keeping a clear separation from their neighbours. The groups would either spread out, creating useless pockets of space between them, or positioned themselves too close, accidentally overlapping their movements into another space. The scattered objects concealed the layer of flower petals and the impromptu boundaries discouraged exchanges between the people. The celebrations, however, were still fond memories of old man's childhood.

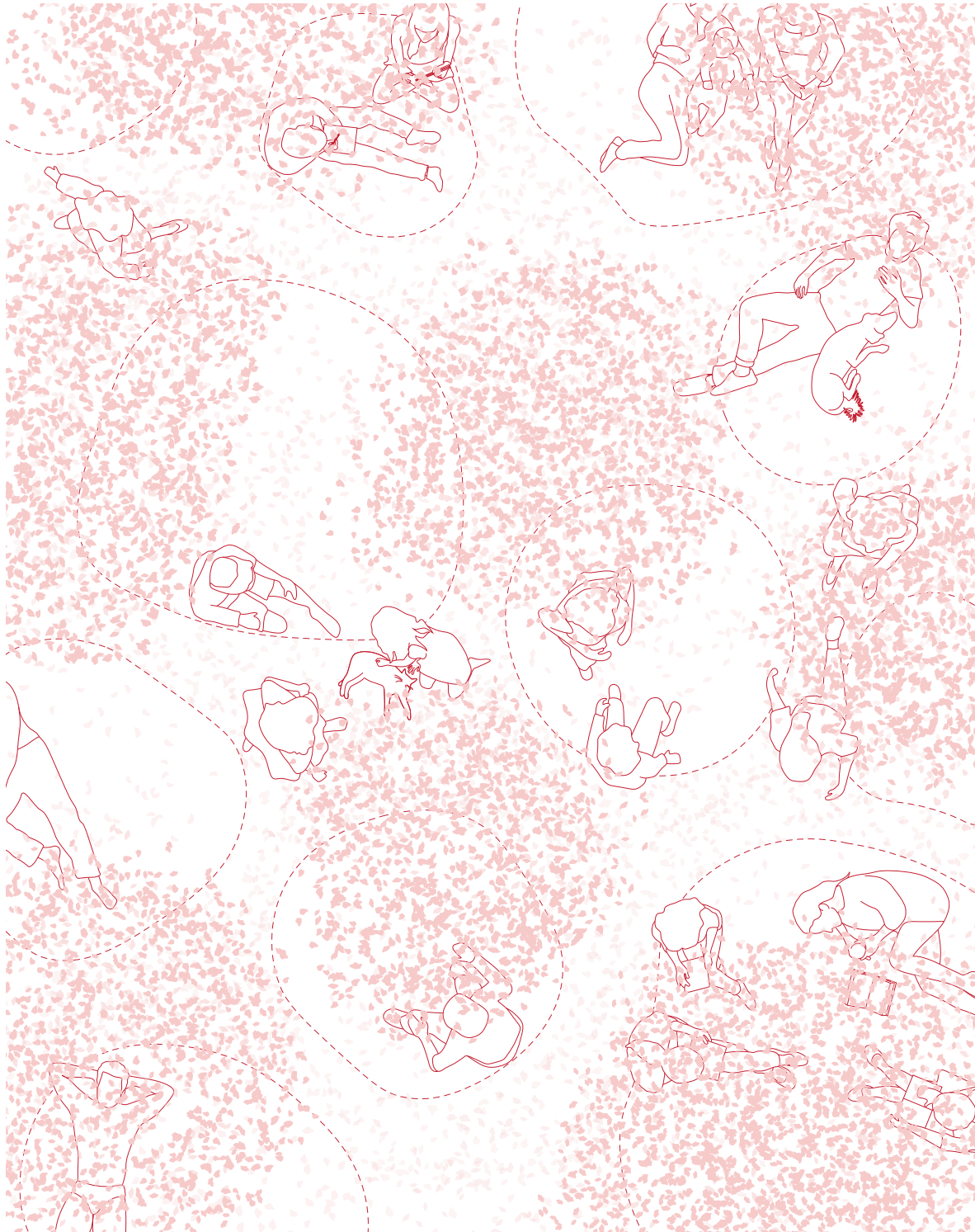


Fig 5.6. thin outlines of separation

Having told his grandchildren multiple stories over the years, they were finally able to visit him while the choreography between nature and the celebrations unfolded. He sat anxiously while other family reunions took place nearby; he wanted the children to share his experience that held such importance, but he also had an irrational fear that the image he had in mind was far prettier than the reality. Such thoughts were buried when he spotted his family in the crowd, he leapt up and waved his arms in the air to attract their attention. The boundaries that used to be established by the peoples' objects were replaced by more subtle gestures. The space was easy to miss among the crowds; a thin outline encircled the space directly beneath a tree, the same spot he knew so well from his past experiences.

The people who gathered for the celebrations created gentle creases across the surface to mark the boundaries of their gatherings. The non-intrusive outlines were so fine that they were easily missed by the human eye. The boundaries were slightly taller than the blanket of flower petals but were easily covered by the additional layers. The old man's family approached the space, occasionally sweeping the petals with their feet to reveal the boundaries; they had to make sure they weren't encroaching on some other groups' privacy. One after the other, they lifted their feet ever so slightly to join the old man inside the boundary. Once they settled down and began to eat, the old man could finally shift his attention to the happenings around. As far as the surface extended, he could see the pink and white petals, the overhanging branches that swayed in the wind, and the groups that were scattered in between without separations.

The grandchildren refused to settle in the unfamiliar setting; there was much to explore. They didn't care for the boundaries and joined the other children from the nearby families. The adults observed the nearby interactions, exchanged friendly glances with their neighbours, and even proceeded to merge into larger spaces. The performance of the celebrations displayed contrasting colours between people and nature, singing and dancing that were initiated in different corners, last but



Fig 5.7. sharing beneath the tree canopy

not least, the food and drinks that enabled the gatherings to run from dawn till dusk. The outlined spaces organized the groups in an orderly manner, but in the brief moments of formed connections, they were all part of a family that shared the space beneath a single canopy. It did not disappoint.

a tango for three

The pair, being nothing more than neighbours in a sub-divided apartment, decided to dine together after discovering their respective lovers were engaged in an affair. It seemed to be the only sensible thing to do when nothing else felt real: memories, time, emotions, space. The physical connection with another individual was the only thing that confirmed their existence. They walked along the surface in synchronized steps. One, two, he reduced his stride so they both moved at the same pace. The two were very different people brought together by an unfortunate event. They arrived at an enclave; the curved surface embraced the two within an arm's reach. It was neither too close nor too far apart, but they weren't sure how to position themselves given the ambiguity of their relationship. They'd have previous conversations, in which they addressed each other with their surnames. With their newfound connection, it wasn't certain if they were friends, neighbours, victims or lovers. What difference would their relationship make in terms of how they interacted with each other? She hadn't thought that far.

She took the first move to make herself comfortable on the surface. Her body leaned backwards, her legs crossed, her eyes looked at him with anticipation. There was a lingering tension in the space that hinged on his move to sit down. The meal had the unspoken intimacy of a married couple, from the nonchalant conversations to how he placed a dab of mustard on her plate in the same way his wife liked it. He sat across from her. The close distance prompted the memories from similar settings, and that made him slightly uneasy. She rested on the gentle curve while she chewed to better observe her partner from a distance. She imagined her reached out thumb wiping off the stain on the corner of his lips, but resisted the urge to do so.

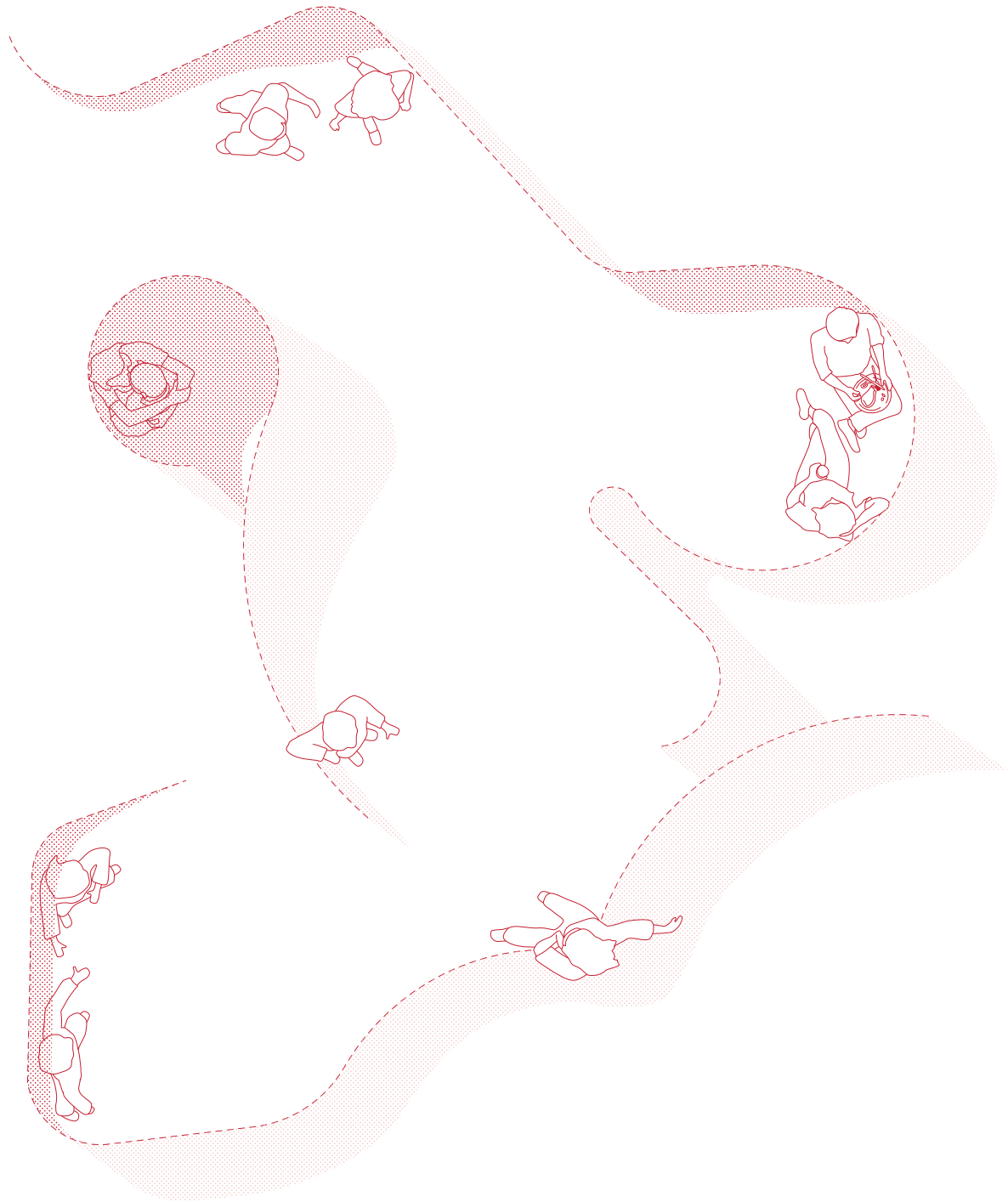


Fig 5.8. distances of intimacy

They were in such a closed and isolated space that it would be the perfect place for any advancements, yet their similar experiences that connected them also kept them apart. She couldn't help but wonder if she was the only one suffocating from the weight of their acquaintanceship.

Flustered by the unspoken tension, they shifted the attention to figuring out how the affair happened. For short periods at a time he was her husband, and she his wife. She draped herself along the surface and dangled her arms; her body language seduced him to join her in lying down. He inched forward, her face moments away from his so she could take a bite off his fork. She pushed him away, claiming that her husband would never approach in such a reckless way. He tucked her head into his chest, comfortably concealed from the passersby through the opening.

The curved shape danced around them as they occupied multiple positions, all the while under the casual judgments of the eyes and ears on the infinite plane.

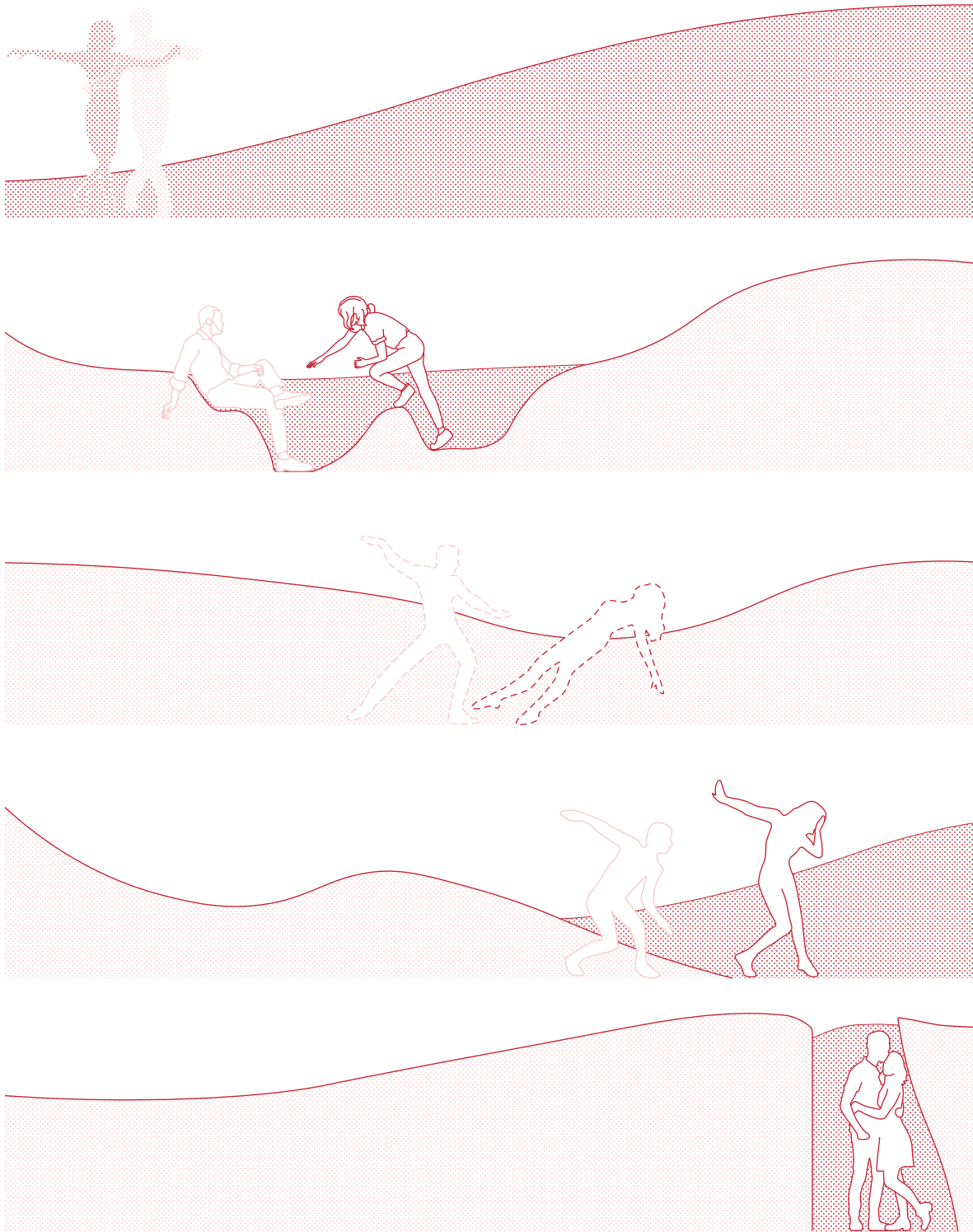


Fig 5.9. the embracing surfaces

an imaginary ground

She wandered around the Surface without a purpose. It was something she did whenever she got tired of sitting around without a purpose. She remembered the views of the streets when she used to walk between the towering building blocks, always with a purpose and destination. How things have changed. Certain things remained the same: she had several routines she followed everyday, she had to remain a punctual person that traveled with pace, and she would only go through paths that didn't require too much effort. But her eyes were exposed to a different scenery when she wasn't confined to scripted movements as if she were the stagehands of a play. The Surface weaved between the narratives of different pockets of space. Countless formal structures emerged from the flat surface that subdivided the ever-extending space. The forms disrupted the flow of movement, and instead invited people to stay and interact, even for just a brief moment.

She stopped in her tracks and sat down on a curved surface; it was oddly comfortable. The curvature of the surface fit her back perfectly, and a nearby bump met the bend in her legs at just the perfect height. In her mind this was clearly a chair. She turned to her right and saw a boy approaching another object that was mostly identical to the one she rested on. The boy knelt and laid out his belongings on the slightly sloped surface, comfortably resting his arms where she had rested her feet. She quickly stood up, embarrassed that she had laid on a children's desk. However more people began to arrive, all assuming unique positions around the object. She watched as her definition of the object changed with every different user. It made her realize, that despite her



Fig 5.10. playscapes

intentions for her designs to be flexible she was only referencing her own understandings of the body, and in the process rejecting the notion of a universal design that benefited from its ambiguity.

A group of children burst into the space and announced their entrance with their laughter. It was lunch time in a kindergarten nearby. The children were released from the classrooms for some much-needed fresh air. After all, why should the children be injected with prescribed notions of space when they have the opportunity to explore what space means to them? The staff looked for somewhere flat and wide enough that resembled a bench so they could enjoy their break in peace. The children on the other hand, dispersed in all directions to occupy the landscape around them. They had been there before, as a matter of fact almost everyday, but each time they explored the ambiguous forms as if it were their first. They ran, crawled and climbed on every possible object, transforming the space into a playground. She had thought it as only a rest stop a moment ago, and couldn't predict its next program when different people show up.

She took note of the activities that occupied the spaces around her. She noticed people who disappeared behind certain objects and never returned. She saw multiple groups engage one another but settle on different forms. She observed couples searching for objects a distance away from the crowd. There was a group organized along a curved object to be shaded from the sun. A few others sat around an object and organized their meal on it. A group of teens waltzed between the forms following the flat path, the negative space between the activities. The seemingly arbitrary spatial relationship between the abstract forms was given clear definitions by the occupants of the space. The objects were references for scale and positioning, while the slightly ambiguous forms of the objects responded differently to the respective bodies of people. The negotiations of space constantly changed depending on the movements and boundaries of different individuals. The objects meant nothing without the people.

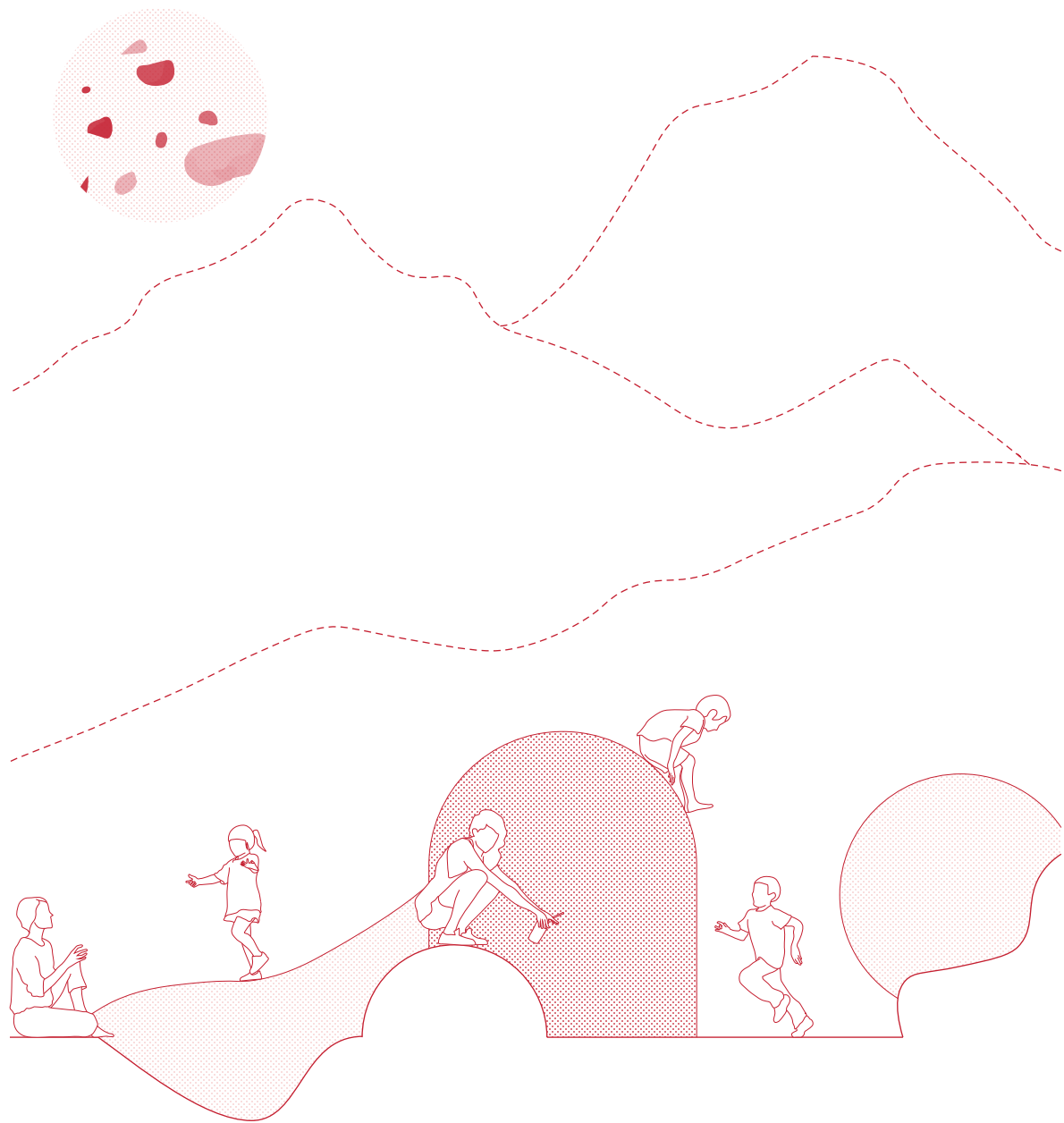


Fig 5.11. playsculptures

She observed the performance without engaging. The layers of events unfolded before her—every person, once on the stage of the surface—had a role to perform in the choreography of the space.

a crack in the wall

She came here to be alone.

She didn't understand the need to constantly be in the company of other people, and why it was a problem that she preferred to be alone. It wasn't that she disliked people; she enjoyed the interactions over meals, conversations, gatherings, but there were things she would only do when she was by herself. The happenings in the spaces across the open surface were constantly displayed in plain sight and it was extremely difficult to obtain a bit of privacy. The space behind the wall offered her an option. It was not a space of isolation nor solitude, but she found comfort in the embrace of the wall. People who passed by regarded the wall as nothing more than another part of the surface—it was difficult to name something out of place in an endless plane. She was well hidden.

Once she settled her belongings, she lay down next to the wall and stayed there for a while. She wasn't there to do anything in particular; she didn't have to answer to anybody but herself, and at that moment the only thing she wanted to do was nothing. It was her escape from the judgment and the need to conform with society's expectations. She put her body to rest, listened to her breathing, but kept her eyes open. A few minutes passed. She got up briefly and folded the surface below her into a gentle slope to better rest her body. She was the only designer of the space, and no one knew her preferences any better. Fifteen minutes passed. She thought about an art project she had planned but never had the time to begin. She recalled hiding in a storage room during hide and seek as a child. An hour passed without her noticing.



Fig 5.12. cracks in the Surface

She could hear the people on the other side of the wall. She bathed in the sunlight and caught the scents offered by the surroundings. She heard the conversations, the laughter, the celebrations; she felt connected to the happenings on the surface even when she wasn't physically present to participate. At the same time, she also noticed the arguments, noise, and protests. When she was within the space, she could shut out the rest of the world if she wanted to, and they were so occupied by their stimulating surrounding that they will never discover what was on the other side of the wall.

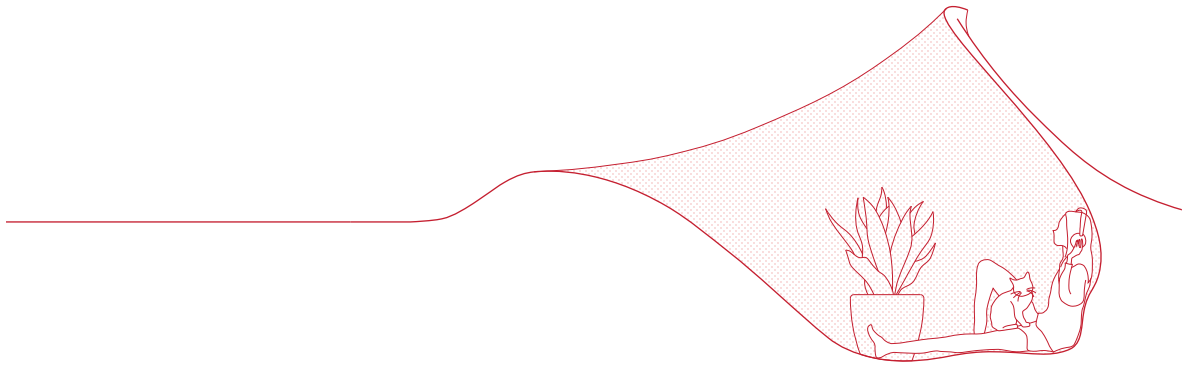


Fig 5.13. solitude among crowds

epilogue

All right.

Explain this to me like I'm a two-year-old, okay?

Because there's an element to this thing that I cannot get through my thick head.

Joe Miller | Philadelphia

conclusion

Plato's *Theory of Forms* famously asserts that the material things we perceive in the world that surrounds us are, at best, imitations of the immaterial ideas that comprise the reality in our minds. The term 'Form' in this case refers to the essence of everything in the material world, which extends beyond the perceptions of forms. Plato's theory prompts a number of questions about our conception of reality and originality as they pertain to this thesis. Is architecture the original representation of the architect's ideas of space, that renders all our interpretations of architecture merely shadows of its reality? Or is architecture a material construct in the perceived world that attempts to realize all its occupants' interpretations of space?

When writing this thesis, I have inevitably found myself questioning the originality of intent and perception, and how we can recreate the ideal space as accurately as possible. It may in the end be possible that the only way to achieve that is to not create anything at all. Through the abstract form of words, I wanted to explore architecture as the tool that mediates two questions above—to investigate the ways in which the built world constrains and limits how we occupy space, while the occasions we introduce are recreations of the ideal space in a layered and tangible manner. I write as though space could assume any form and accommodate any occasion, which reframed the inherent hierarchies, limitations, and differentiations we observe in our surrounding space, qualities that ground them within the material world. The simple premise for the descriptions in this thesis implies that the proposed spaces should remain speculations only.

My proposal is but one version of the reality of the intricate network that connects architecture, space, architects, and occupants, and by virtue of this, the fact that it is one of many infinite possibilities, it could very well be a presumptuous reflection of an ideal space. My reality, as presented in this thesis, is framed by a narrative continuum in several parts: an attempt to diversify the representations of the human figure through attributes of complex individuals; memoirs of instances of dining that do not describe the realities and details of the spaces; a fiction composed by the rivalry between a city and its people, isolated from other ongoing issues within the same context; architecture distilled into primitive forms that are undefined unless occupied by people. Documented by my curated words and illustrations, the narrative could only ever be a simplified representation of both the idea of space and what we call 'real' space.

To that end it sounds quite unsatisfying.

To frame it differently, I started writing to explore how we talk about architecture, and, more specifically, how we occupy our surroundings. The general architectural statement describes 'space' being 'designed' for the 'object' to 'act' within. While the statement is often unsupported by concrete gestures, it outlines the components that must be considered when conceiving of a flexible architecture that engages with its occupants. First, we must understand how the object, the human being, is at once the subject that creates through its spatial perception. Next, we must analyze how the acts of everyday life take place without following prescribed functions of space, which presents the human being consistently acting in a natural way. Then we translate the descriptions of human occupation into the realization of tangible spaces through an intuitive understanding of our spatial presence. Lastly, we must approach the designs of space through a language of occasions, which allows us to break through the limitations of physical boundaries. My work is the needle and thread that sew together the components into a tapestry of spaces.

I did not present a design solution at the end of my research. Its intention is to serve as a theoretical starting place for conversations on how we might perceive, communicate and create spaces.

bibliography

Print

- Anderson, Alex T. "On the Human Figure in Architectural Representation." *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)* 55, no. 4 (2002): 238–46.
- Angelidakis, Andreas, Vittorio Pizzigoni, and Valter Scelsi, eds. *Super Superstudio*. Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Silvana editoriale, 2015.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Translated by John Howe. New York: Verso, 2008.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by M. Jolas. Penguin Classics. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.
- Baird, George. *The Dining Position: A Question of Langue and Parole*. Dutch Forum, 1976.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Collected Fictions*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Bußmann, Klaus, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Catherine Morris, eds. *Food: an exhibition*. Köln: König, 1999.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Translated by William Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

- Calvino, Italo. *The Complete Cosmicomics*. Translated by William Weaver, 2015.
- Ciorra e Alessio Rosati, Pippo, ed. *FOOD dal cucchiaino al mondo*. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2015.
- Colomina, Beatriz, and Mark Wigley. *Are We Human? Notes on an Archaeology of Design*. Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers, 2016.
- Davidson, Cynthia C, ed. *Log 34: The Food Issue*. New York: Anyone Corporation, 2015.
- Dumas, Alexandre. *Le Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine*. Torino: STIG, 1978.
- Eyck, Aldo van. *Collected Articles and Other Writings*. Edited by Vincent Ligtelijn and Francis Strauven. Amsterdam: SUN, 2008.
- Eyck, Aldo van. *The Child, the City and the Artist*. Edited by Vincent Ligtelijn and Francis Strauven. Amsterdam: SUN, 2008.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Translated by Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27.
- Frampton, Adam, Clara Wong, and Jonathan Solomon. *Cities without Ground: A Hong Kong Guidebook*. Rafael: Oro editions, 2012.
- Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010.
- Gibson, James J. "The Theory of Affordances." In *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, 17th pr., 119–35. New York: Psychology Press, 2011.
- Hagen Hodgson, Petra, and Rolf Toyka, eds. *The Architect, the Cook and Good Taste*. New York: Birkhäuser Verlag AG, 2007.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.
- Herdt, Tanja. *The City and the Architecture of Change: The Work and Radical Visions of Cedric Price*. Zürich: Park Books, 2017.

- Horwitz, Jamie, and Paulette Singley. *Eating Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006.
- Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1994.
- Koolhaas, Rem. "Why I Wrote Delirious New York and Other Textual Strategies." *ANY 0: Writing in Architecture*. New York: Anyone Corporation, 1993, 42–43.
- Lai, Jimenez. *Citizens of No Place: An Architectural Graphic Novel*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012.
- Lang, Peter, and William Menking, eds. *Superstudio: Life without Objects*. Milano: Skira, 2003.
- Le Corbusier. *Towards a New Architecture*. Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2014.
- Lefauvre, Liane, and Rudi Fuchs, eds. *Aldo van Eyck: The Playgrounds and the City*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002.
- Leupen, Bernard. *Design and Analysis*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1997.
- Medina, Samuel. "The Website Behind the 'Post-Digital' Drawing Revolution." *Metropolis*, March 28, 2017. <https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/inside-digital-platform-championing-post-digital-drawing/pic/22594/>.
- Meredith, Michael, Hilary Sample, and MOS, eds. *An Unfinished Encyclopedia of Scale Figures without Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018.
- Meystre, Olivier. *Pictures of the Floating Microcosm: New Representations of Japanese Architecture*. Zürich: Park Books, 2017.
- Monteys, Xavier, ed. *Quaderns 271: About Buildings & Food*. Vol. 271. Barcelona: Col.d'Arquitectes de Catalunya, 2019.

- Neufert, Ernst. *Architects' Data*. 4th ed. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Oral History interview with Ismau Noguchi. Transcript, December 7, 1973. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
- Panero, Julius, and Martin Zelnik. *Human Dimension & Interior Space: A Source Book of Design Reference Standards*. New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1979.
- Perec, Georges. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. Translated by John Sturrock. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter. *Collage City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983.
- Schaik, Martin van, Otakar Máčel, eds. *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956 - 76*. München: Prestel, 2005.
- Skalgubbar. "Saves the Day!" Accessed September 15, 2019. <https://skalguubbar.se/category/savestheday/>.
- Stacey, Will, ed. *Photographs Not Taken: A Collection of Photographers' Essays*. Hillsborough: Daylight Community Arts Foundation, 2012.
- Superstudio, and Moriyama Editors Studio, eds. *Superstudio & Radicals*. Tokyo: Interia Shuppan, 1982.
- Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999.
- Tschumi, Bernard. "Modes of Inscription." *ANY 0: Writing in Architecture*. New York: Anyone Corporation, 1993, 50–53.
- Tschumi, Bernard. *The Manhattan Transcripts*. London: New York: Academy Editions ; St. Martin's Press, 1981.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. 7. print. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Visser, Margaret. *Much Depends on Dinner since Eve Ate Apples*. Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Watari, Shizuko, ed. *Play Mountain: Isamu Noguchi + Louis Kahn*. Tokyo: Watari-Um, 1996.

Withagen, Rob, and Simone R. Caljouw. "Aldo van Eyck's Playgrounds: Aesthetics, Affordances, and Creativity." *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (July 4, 2017): 1130. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01130>.

Worth, Susannah. *Digesting Recipes: The Art of Culinary Notation*. Winchester: Zero Books, 2015.

Film

American Beauty. Directed by Sam Mendes. USA: Dreamworks, 1999. DVD.

Eat Drink Man Woman. Directed by Ang Lee. Taiwan: Central Motion Pictures, 1994. DVD.

Goodfellas. Directed by Martin Scorsese. USA: Warner Bros., 1990. DVD.

In the Mood for Love. Directed by Kar Wai Wong. Hong Kong: Block 2 Pictures, 2000. DVD.

Jiro Dreams of Sushi. Directed by David Gelb. USA: Independent Lens, 2011. DVD.

Next Floor. Directed by Denis Villeneuve. Canada: Phi, 2008. Accessed October 19, 2017.

The Big Night. Directed by Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci. USA: Rysler Entertainment, 1996. DVD.

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover. Directed by Peter Greenaway. UK: Allarts, 1989. DVD.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. Directed by Luis Buñuel. France: Greenwich Film Productions, 1972. DVD.

