Nest

Negotiating Experiences in Shared Thresholds

by
Diya Maria Menezes

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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

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

As architects, we cannot resist the opportunity to build good houses on generous budgets to accommodate happy families. We could use this opportunity, however, to reconfigure the detached single-family house for a group of people that are not yet family, let alone happy.

These are distressed times for a growing margin of society: seniors are lonely, young families struggle with little household help and middle-aged couples continue to pay large mortgages on their "empty nest" homes. We live in a society that copes. Seniors move into annexes of their children's homes, two young families share daily chores, and middle-aged couples invest in a property with friends. It is happening all around us, and much can be done to provide the infrastructure to both accommodate and encourage the shift.

This work builds the case for a house: a shared house for the emerging demographic of non-autonomous households that fall outside the conventions of the nuclear family. The project is a social experiment that investigates, probes and predicts the dynamics between 7-12 occupants who may be family, friend or stranger. It promises not only to test current proclivities, needs and desires for domesticity and privacy, but begs to be considered as an acceptable, and even preferable, way of living.

During this time of great curiosity and learning, I have become indebted to many people for their guidance, their patience and most important, their laughter:

to my supervisor Dr. Anne Bordeleau for her invaluable knowledge, careful criticism and continuous support; to Professor Valerio Rynnimeri and Professor Donald McKay for their guidance and encouragement through this process; to my external, John Shnier, for his honesty; to my family from 39 Water Street and 26 Harris Street, for sharing each day with me for so many years; to Room 3021 for its relentless patience and good cheer despite the invasion of trace-paper; to Angie Ng, Sabrina Keichinger, Soheil Ghazi-Zadeh, Jessica Liefl, Carmen Lau, Ashley Snell, and Stacie Chan for many cups of tea; to Aneil D'Lima for being my motivation; to Katie Gardon, for still believing I can be an Architect one day;

and last, but certainly not least, to my parents Michael and Lita, grandmothers Viola and Nina, brother Jaidev and sister Tarika for their loudly articulated contributions to this work and for reminding me to see the joy in life:
they teach me each day to "rest in Reason and to move in Passion"[1].

This thesis is dedicated to my family.

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OCCUPANT

ARCHITECT

NEGOTIATION

A FAMILY OF FIVE is having dinner around the kitchen table on a Monday night in a house in Toronto. The oldest child has returned for a week from Dubai and the youngest is preparing to move to London for another year at university. I am the middle child, and the only one who still spends half her week at her family's home. This is a South Asian family used to large numbers of people living in close proximity: two grandmothers stay for six months of the year and far-flung relatives are regular house-guests. Living with the extended family is a welcomed idea. However, having immigrated to Canada in the last ten years we simply haven't had any – it has been "just the five of us". With all three children now living in transition, the seven-bedroom house is relatively empty and expensive. My parents have two options: sell the house and move into a smaller apartment, or maintain the house despite its inconveniences, in the hope that eventually, grandchildren will visit. This dilemma they have in common with several of their friends. How do you live in the house you love when family moves away?

Perhaps the answer is simple: make new variations of family.

It was my mother – a happy woman who thrives on efficiency, convenience and good company – who first entertained the idea of asking two couples, good friends, to move into our house. She leapt up from the kitchen table in excitement and began to describe how she could split the house into suites for each couple. What followed was a three hour heated discussion around the table on the practicalities and the discomforts that might come with sharing a house.

This is a conversation most families should have.

The detached single-family house in Toronto is designed by an Italian architect who was familiar with the transparency of family life which is directly reflected in the floor plan: one open staircase connecting three floors creating a central sky-lit atrium with very little acoustic and visual privacy. There are no

corridors and no corners. Such a house is designed for one closely related family, comfortable with a high degree of intimacy. While the size of the house allows for generous living space for an expanding family, the architecture of the house in its current form does not have the flexibility to readily adapt to the social needs of various other household combinations. There is no particular attempt in its design to choreograph individual confrontations which are inevitable with the addition of non-related occupants. Such is the case for most single-family houses. While the practicalities of communal living are undeniable and even attractive to some, the large compromises to privacy, freedom and custom overshadow the acceptance of what may be a favourable way of living.

In 2005, I tip-toed into Utopian ideals of communal living in the *Township of Auroville* in South India. I learned that any friction caused by varying lifestyle choices among a group living together, when approached appropriately, can strengthen relationships rather then dissolve them. Endorsed by UNESCO in 1968, *Auroville* was dedicated to developing sustainable research in sociology and the applied sciences, and more importantly, it was designed to observe the social dynamics of a commune at the scale of 2000 people from 50 nations. An acceptance into the community required a significant shift in my mentality from a defensive North-American attitude toward privacy to a nonchalant acceptance of *karma.* An interview process at the beginning of my stay established three modes of appropriate behaviour:

1. Expect the intrusion of the group into the privacy of individuals
2. Distribute all existing and future resources evenly
3. Share overall efforts and costs needed for maintenance

Through daily interaction, what began as a short list of expectations grew to become a far more complicated set of relationships riddled with intricacies that were negotiated over time. With formalities put aside, each day developed deeper relationships, with which came trust, gossip and explanations until eventually strangers became family. I returned to Canada – a country of great distances both between people and places – to look for a medium to trigger the vibrant sense of attachment that I had found in *Auroville*.

There is a distinctly disheartening view of shared accommodation in our society that largely tends to associate a communal way of living with low-cost housing and the dreary effects of the economic recession. The current forms of shared accommodation are often depicted as undesirable options, driven by necessity rather than choice. Almost immediately, concerns are raised about property ownership as well as the amount and quality of space. However, even if these are satisfied, there remains a continued resistance to the notion of dealing with 'other' people in an intimate setting on a daily basis. However, the growing

popularity of North American classic sitcoms that foster co-dependent households, such as *Three's Company, F.r.i.e.n.d.s* and *The Golden Girls*, indicates a social desire for the vitality found in unconventional families living together. While communal living seems attractive in pop culture, in reality, the transition is yet to be made.

One reason why this is so, is perhaps because most of the documentation promoting cooperative housing presents a glossy vision[1] of cheerful camaraderie and effortless agreement among people who share space, which strays far from the lived truth. (Having delighted in the same inviting 'sales-pitch' which led me to live in *Auroville*, I recognize that this optimistic facade is only to be expected.) However, the present document does not follow suit. The underlying premise here is that shared households are not the norm and to admit that they are often not the most pleasant of experiences. The work offers an approach of equal value which accepts the complications and awkward confrontation inevitable in shared households, approaching them as its **most** effective benefit.

My research drew me to the striking social phenomenon of the Soviet *kommunalia*, the communal apartments instituted after the Bolshevik Revolution that forced residents of different ethnicities, educations, attitudes and habits to live together in equilibrium. Fulfilling their obligation to share living space that fell beyond the prescribed norm of 4.5sqm per person, residents adopted *samouplotnenie*, or the right to choose whom to live with, in order to avoid living with strangers[2]. Today, about 20% of the population of St. Petersburg still lives in communal apartments[3]. Interviews of residents compiled by Professor Ilya Utekhin revealed that some found more comfort living together with people they **chose** than the families they were born into[4]. Despite the changes made as late as the 1980s to improve living conditions with the goal to provide each family with their own private apartments, the current residents having lived in the same configurations for most of their lifetime shared a common sentiment: "they hardly can agree to substitute their communal home with something else"[5].

Utekhin's documentation reveals that this deep attachment and commitment among the residents to the people they lived with and to the apartment itself is the product of a variety of self-governing strategies negotiated among the residents to control shared space and to defend personal space. Initially, the term 'communal apartment' was intended to mean "an apartment without a shareholder" and depended on a system of mutual responsibility[6]. However, the communal apartment became much more than that. The class conflicts and the lack of 'niceties' in every-day domestic interaction made the shared environment into "a place of old fashioned story-telling and myth-making, where the now-vanishing Soviet folklore was preserved and cherished"[7]. An ideal stage for the theatrics of daily behaviour, the communal apartment owed the 'thickness' of its social dynamics to the minimal partitions that separated personal spaces.

This intensity is not easily relatable to North Americans who live markedly independent lives that are scattered over a vast amount of land. So how is this example relevant? During my reading of Svetlana Boym's account of the Soviet communal apartments in *Common Places*, I immediately identified with a comment he made in passing:

> *"Embarrassment is the most characteristic feature of communal life: it does not happen in solitude (...) the consequences of ritual embarrassment (...) could lead to establishing communal tolerance."* [8]

The phenomena, which he refers to as a 'performance disruption'[9], reflects a reality that is inescapable in the interactions among any group of individuals with markedly different levels of comfort with proximity. (An experience that is perhaps quite common in a multicultural society like the one that makes up Canada). Very little recognition is given to the strengths of the marginal spaces in society that encourage cultural 'misunderstandings' found at the boundaries between opposing cultural values. It is here that there is the greatest potential to express, discuss and develop a new type of growth and coexistence.That is why, in the case of the house 'built' in this work, spaces in a house that confront the new definition of domesticity are the mediums chosen to explore and strengthen social interaction.

In this collection of text and drawings, consider yourself to be both the architect and the occupant of such a house – building continuously on experiences that combine

part exploration , part fiction, part construction.

When designing for a shared environment at the scale of a single-family house, the architecture itself becomes an active participant in staging social confrontation; at times it is subtle and guides the occupant through, and at times it is abrupt and stubborn, driving the occupant forward.

Can its character be articulated in methods of architectural representation?

Delighting in the imagination, the following set of plates suggest that the house cannot be represented without its vivid fiction. Drifting between the real and the fantastic, they are a portrait of the prescriptive role of architecture in social dynamics. Constituting their own discourse, they stand alone, caught between the architect and the occupant.

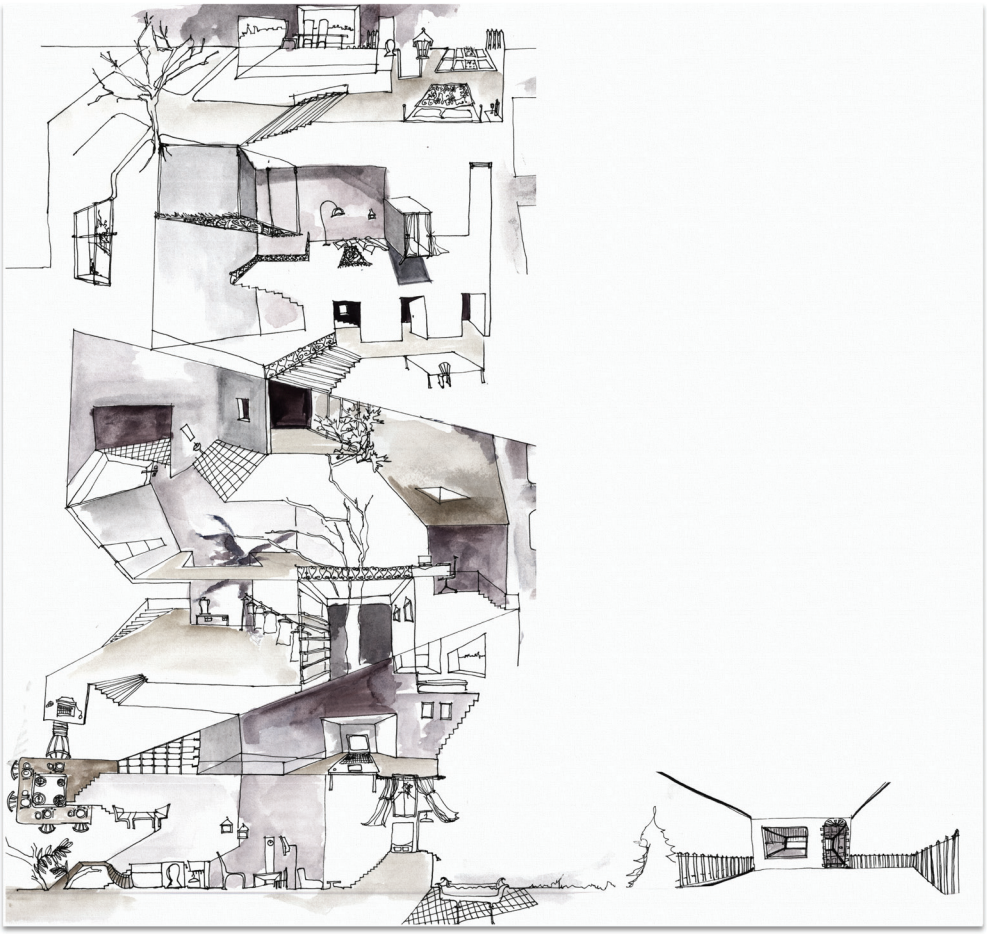
interpreting the single-family house

Disrupting Her Morning Schedule

“

07.00	The mother gets up and goes to get breakfast in the	KITCHEN
07.15	The child gets up and goes into the	BATHROOM
07.30	The father goes up and goes into the	BATHROOM
07.45	The father and the child have their breakfast in the	KITCHEN
08.00	The child takes his coat from the and off to school	ENTRANCE-HALL
08.15	The father takes his coat from the and goes to his office	ENTRANCE-HALL
08.30	The mother goes into the	BATHROOM
08.45	The mother takes the vacuum cleaner from the and does the house work (she then goes through all the rooms of the apartment but I refrain from listing them)	BROOM CLOSET
08.35 The mother logs onto PURSEFORUM.COM		
09.30	The mother fetches her shopping basket from the and her coat from the and goes to do the shopping. ” [1]	KITCHEN ENTRANCE-HALL

Plate 1.0
Ink and watercolour on paper
18” x 24” (46cm x 61cm)



The Parlour

It is driven by a desire for regularity, convenience and politeness that is expressed in its stiff 1½′ x 2 ½′ x 4″ form. The structure takes the form of a typical residential facade and adopts exaggerated symbols of surface treatment and material thickness. Each element is slightly warped and exaggerated to identify with society's impatience with formality: the skewed frame of the doll's house teeters on one leg, the large scale of the brick on the gabled roof, the combination of inverted Colonial windows, and the culturally vague Palladian entryway.

Plate 2.0
Mixed media on paper
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

Plate 2.1
Detail

The Kitchen

Framed by 2′ x 2′x 2′ concrete box, it contains an organic form made out of mesh and net that can be stuffed, torn, pushed, pulled and peered into. Left among a series of solid and translucent spaces, a child is encouraged to construct rooms and pockets to hide, demanding invention and creation.

Plate 3.0
Mixed media on paper
18” x 24” (46cm x 61cm)

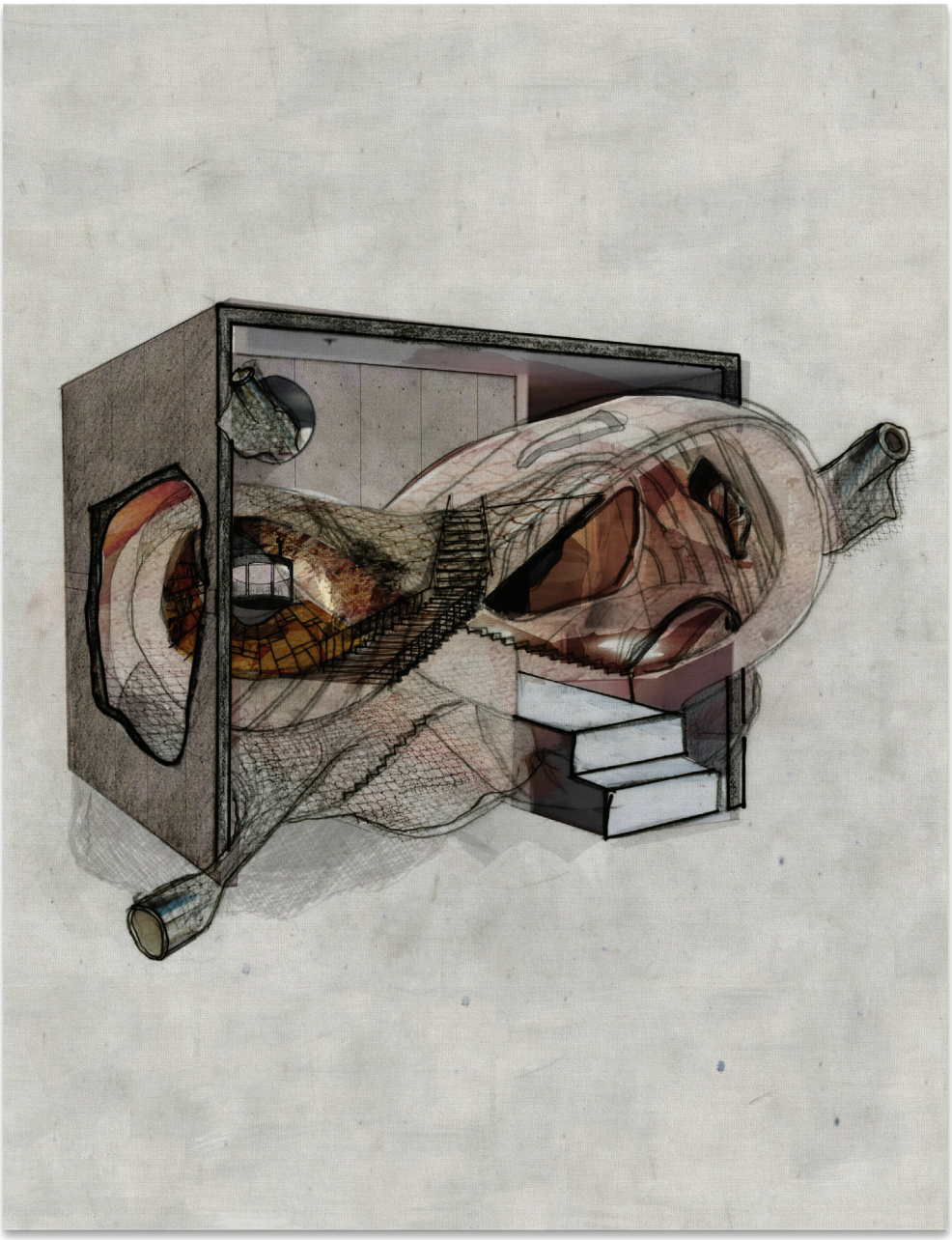


Plate 3.1
Detail

The Bedroom

Standing 6 ½ feet high, this 2′ x 2′ box is built to represent the tower of a castle—a place where a small child can climb in and close the wall behind them. A deeply rooted foundation reveals hidden levels where secrets are hidden. The walls are surfaced with a two-way mirror so the interior creates a sense of repetition and duplicity while from the outside the house is completely visually penetrable. The top hatch can be lowered to enclose the bed into a room of its own that is inaccessible.

Plate 4.0
Mixed media on paper
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

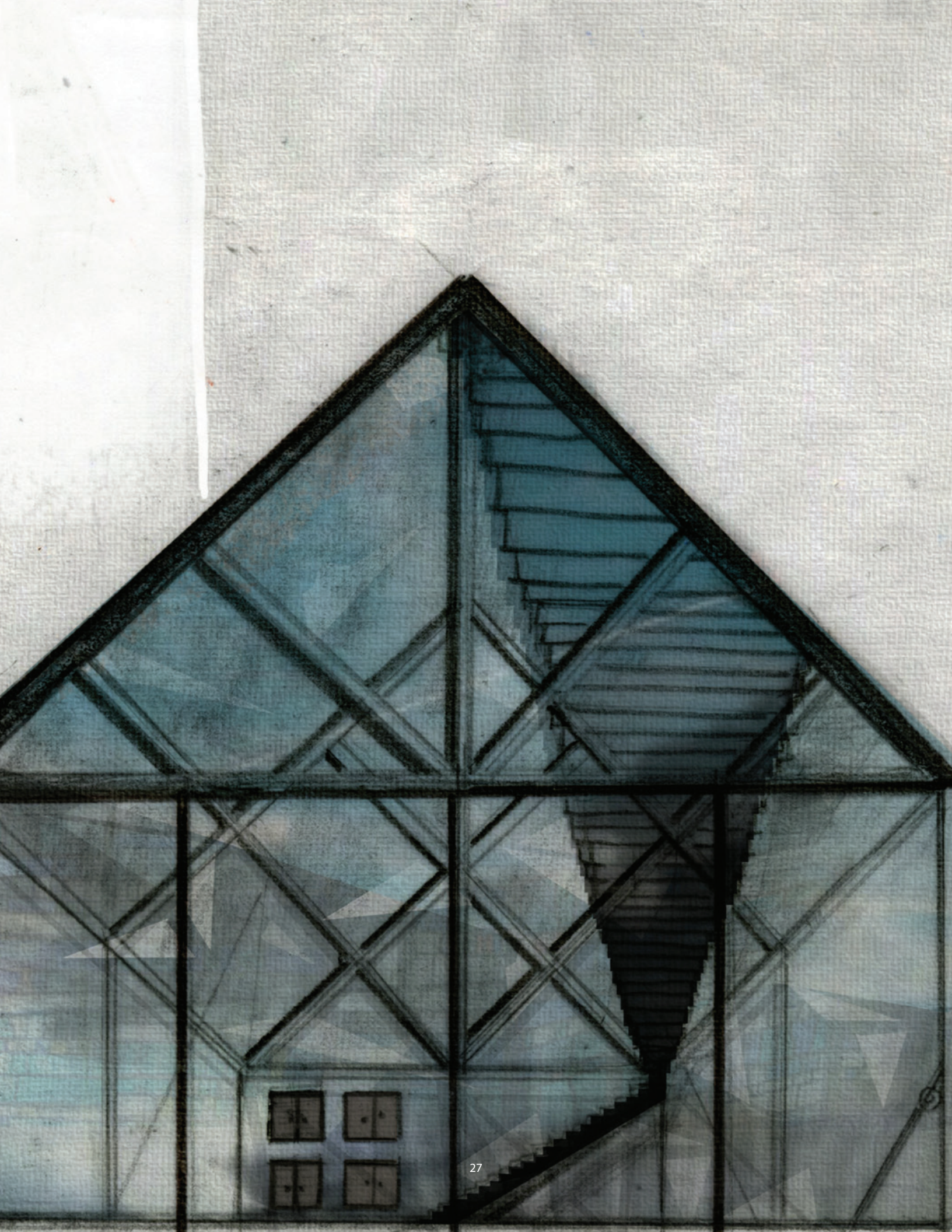
Plate 4.1
Detail

The Bathroom

This 1ft x 1ft x 4 ft house is concealed by a light-weight cream plastered box that is made to fit into the corner of a room. It is a pure form that can be easily mistaken as being part of the wall. The box swings open to reveal a second layer of structure made up of removable blue glass walls and roof. A third layer of walls nested inside is made of plaster in the form of a suspended human body. Linking nudity to shame is an obsolete idea in a world that celebrates the curiosities of the naked body. Each level is connected by a continuous staircase and carries through "the body" to create hidden chambers and concealed rooms. These worlds of fantasy are lined with fabric and scattered with unrelated objects to create a world of curiosity and discovery.

Plate 5.0
Mixed media on paper
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

Plate 5.1
Detail

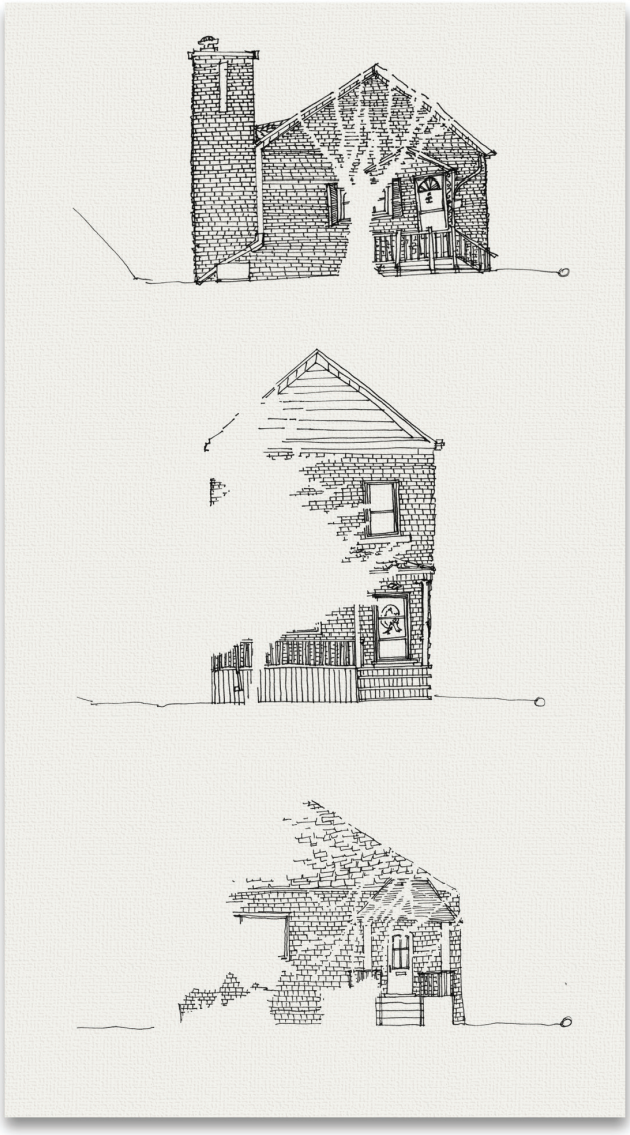


Bring Your Street Face

Our facial expressions
determine how
comfortable we are in a
space:

dart eyes, hide smile,
twitch nose and chin up.

Plate 6.0
Ink on paper
6" x 11" (15cm x 28cm)



Wall Games

Plate 7.0
Watercolour on paper
16” x 22” (41cm x 56cm)

Apartment 101

11.30 am, Wednesday

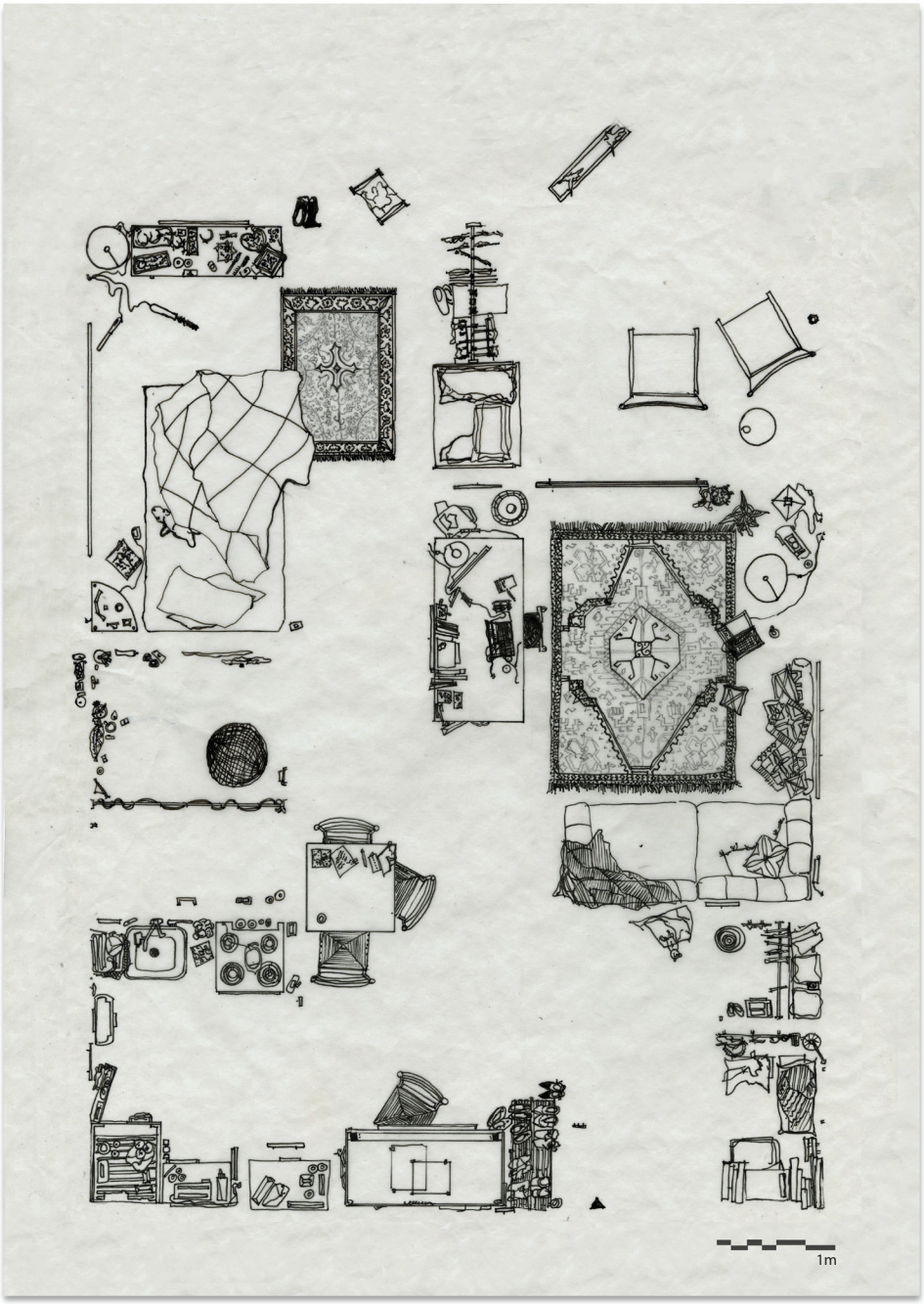
Casual Flatmates
for 1 year

Age: 25 years
Age: 24 years

Inventory of things

2 Persian rugs
2 floor lamps
1 desk lamp
2 laptops
1 pull-out couch
7 cushions
1 blanket
2 duvets
3 pillows
1 air mattress
4 dining chairs
1 dining table
2 patio chairs
1 yoga ball
1 ergonomic chair
1 drafting board
2 side tables
1 dresser
3 tooth brushes
1 footstool
1 planter
42 wire hangers
2 shoe racks
1 book shelf
8 bottles of perfume
1 bath math
2 bottles of soya sauce
1 bag of rice
1 yellow bolster
3 plants
6 plates
2 tea light candles
4 plastic cartons
28 pairs of shoes
2 bottles of Advil ©
1 Internet modem
1 power extension
2 bottles of detergent
1 hair drier
1 shower curtain
3 crucifixes
2 vases
5 bottles of shampoo and conditioner
1 bottle of contact lens solution
4 rolls of trace paper
8 Vogue magazines
3 garbage bins
5 pairs of sunglasses
3 silk cushion covers
1 stuffed animal

Plate 8.0
Ink on paper
11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)


1m

Apartment 103

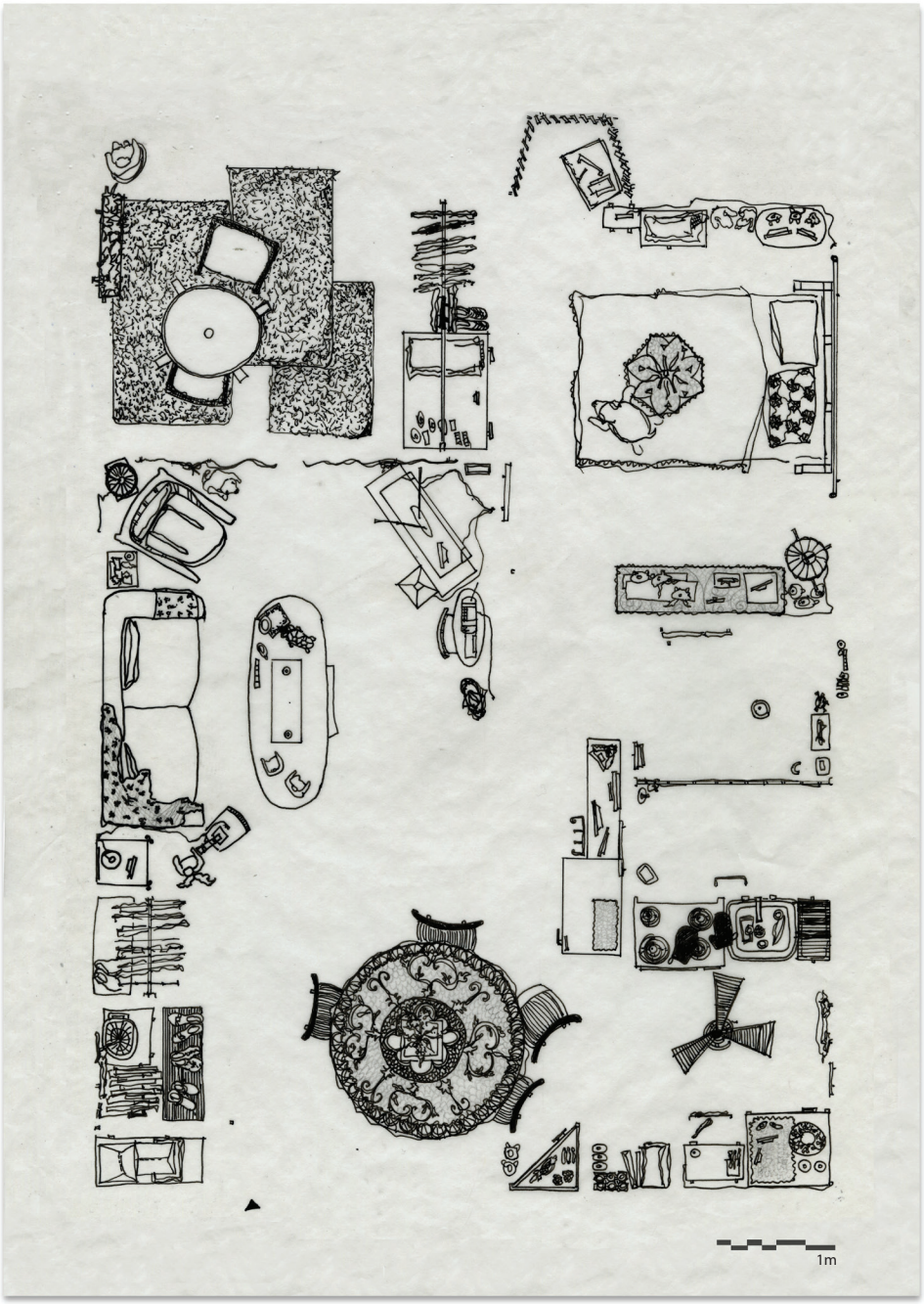
5.30 pm, Friday

Married
for 51 years

Age: 75 years
Age: Deceased
3 weeks ago

5 hanging frames
2 paintings
1 dish rack
6 posters of Jesus
4 lamps
3 pieces of synthetic grass
1 rocking chair
1 pipe
43 porcelain cups
4 photograph frames
1 TV
2 irons
1 extra freezer
2 tablecloths
1 vacuum cleaner
1 toaster
1 inherited bamboo ceiling fan
2 side tables
1 glass coffee table
1 corner glass cabinet
1 large stuffed animal
3 crochet quilts
1 VCR
4 pairs of shoes
12 books
1 angel statue
2 owl statues
1 glass patio table
5 fake plants
6 framed certificates
1 wooden jar
1 tube of toothpaste
2 pairs of borrowed window blinds
1 telephone
1 pair of oven mitts
4 dining chairs
14 hangers
2 pillows
4-drawer dressing table
5 remote controls
1 side dresser
2 coasters
3 walking sticks
2 miniature cat statues
1 radio alarm clock
2 suit bags
1 sewing machine
2 pairs of dentures
1 bottle of shampoo
1 hair brush
2 combs
4 wooden spoons
3 sketchbooks that belong to granddaughter
6 crayons
2 suitcases
1 table fan
1 pair of bedroom slippers
1 iron grate for potted plants
3 cushions
1 bath scrub
1 blender
2 Canada flags
45 National Geographic magazines
1 wall clock
2 glass rosaries
1 silver plate
1 glass vase
1 toy ship
4 bamboo place mats
1 hummingbird feeder
3 spare towels
6 mugs
1 writing pad
1 ironing board
1 spray bottle
3 empty hooks
1 sheepskin blanket
4 lace pillow cases
12 curtain rings

Plate 8.1
Ink on paper
11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)


1m

Apartment 105

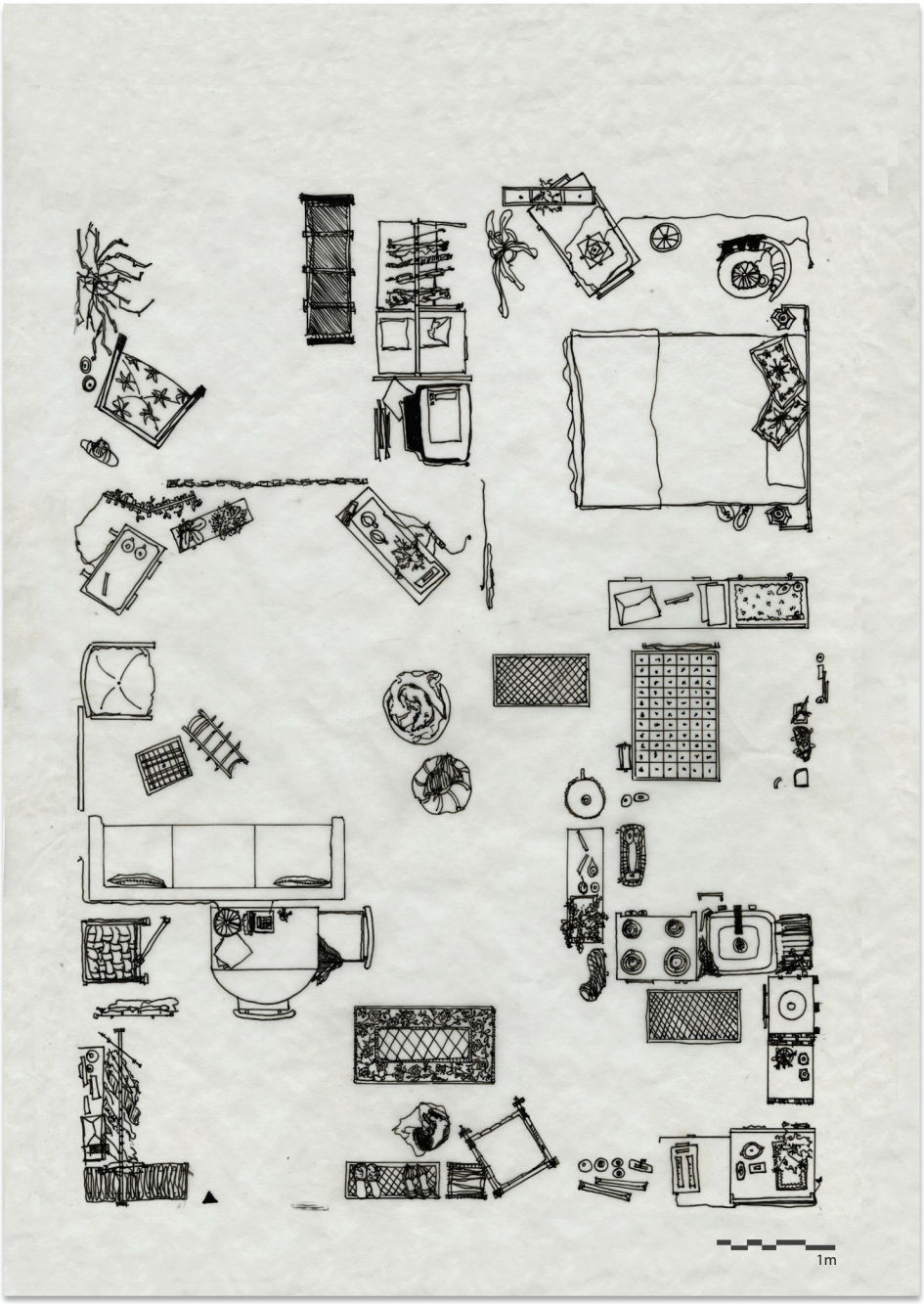
6.15 pm, Saturday

In a relationship
for 8 months

Age: 44 years
Age: 31 years

1 microwave
2 napkin rings
1 chess board
4 wicker chairs
2 cushions
4 pillows
1 wooden truck
1 TV in closet
1 TV in living room
9 plants
1 sweet-pea creeper
3 ash trays
4 floor lamps
1 hanging chandelier
2 terriers
2 dog beds
4 floor maps
1 sofa
1 desk
1 phone
4 pencil stands
34 framed photographs
1 upholstered chair
3 pairs of slippers
2 bottles of perfume
5 sticks of lipstick
3 dog leashes
1 vintage barrel
1 ceramic jar
12 plates
6 pairs of shoes
2 pairs of skis
1 record player
1 bicycle helmet
2 wine racks
1 quilted blanket
5 down jackets
6 cushions
2 silk cushion covers
2 hanging bookshelves
3 glass vases
6 stacked plastic chairs
1 laptop
1 non-functional space heater
7 pots of herbs
11 bottles of spices on 1 rack
2 drinking bowls of dogs
2 shoe racks
1 shoe mat
2 oil paintings
1 Eiffel- Tower-shaped cheese grater
3 jewellery boxes
1 velvet blanket
2 pasta strainers
4 pairs of sneakers
2 razors
1 wall covered with black patterned wallpaper
2 dvd players
4 speakers
3 books on photography
1 tie rack
8 ceramic mugs
1 dishwasher
3 empty drawers in fridge
2 candle stands
1 silver bowl
1 hanging carpet
1 framed fern leaf
3 bottles of shampoo
1 wicker basket in washroom
1 closet organizer
2 cardboard boxes of books
4 dvds
1 iPOD
2 phone chargers
3 embroidered guest towels
1 antique chair from Halifax
1 canoe paddle leaning in corner
2 handbags

Plate 8.2
Ink on paper
11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)


1m

1 briefcase on chair
1 stainglass lamp
1 plastic vine
4 chiffon curtains
14 framed paintings by occupant
1 desktop computer
1 antique study table
1 bicycle
5 framed photographs
8 pairs of shoes
4 pairs of chopsticks
2 ergonomic chairs
1 hand-quilted rug
6 plants
1 patio chair
2 ballerina statues
1 lace tablecloth under panel of glass
1 antique oak dining table
32 collector's silver spoons
1 Chinese brush painting set
2 floor lamps
1 large wicker armchair
1 umbrella
2 shoe racks
1 TV
2 pairs of glasses

Apartment 107

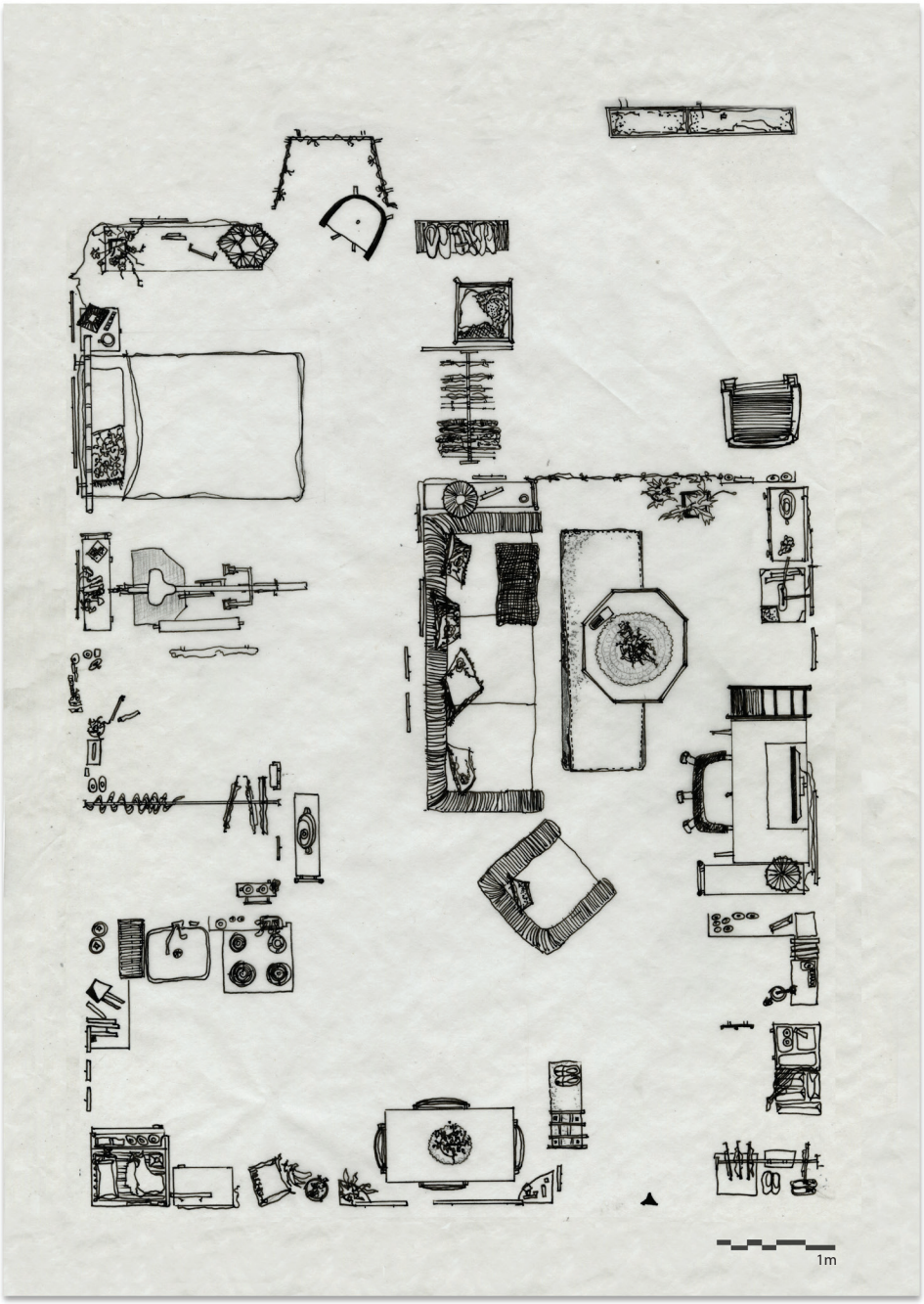
Inventory of things

10.00 am, Monday

Widow
for 15 years

Age: 60 years

Plate 8.3
Ink on paper
11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)


1m

This is a Chosen-Family House

on a 148′ x 36′ property at 55 Lowell Street in Cambridge, Ontario.

for eleven occupants who currently live six households on neighbouring properties.

The following set of drawings define the characters of the eleven occupants chosen for this proposal by describing the way they inhabit the houses they live in today.

Occupant who does not participate

+A is a 27 year old graduate student who lives alone, 9146 km away from his family home, and likes it that way. He sleeps all day during Ramadan and works all night in the company of Pink Floyd and Porcupine Tree. His evenings are spent reading in a chair at the corner of his room under a strong light. He rents one level of the house for the last 5 years and has no intention of moving out.

Plate 9.0
Mixed media on paper
15" x 24" (38cm x 61cm)


3m

Plate 9.1
Detail

Occupant who builds

+B1 is a professor who lives with her husband (**+B2**) and their 10-year-old daughter (**+B3**). Both adults work 9am-5pm jobs in Kitchener and Cambridge and spend most of their evenings driving their daughter to after-school activities. This is an energetic and young family who has just moved into the neighbourhood and is making a point to get involved with the local farmer's market. They are especially proud of being the only house on the street to participate in a province-wide initiative of growing produce in their own backyard.

Plate 10.0
Mixed media on paper
15" x 24" (38cm x 61cm)

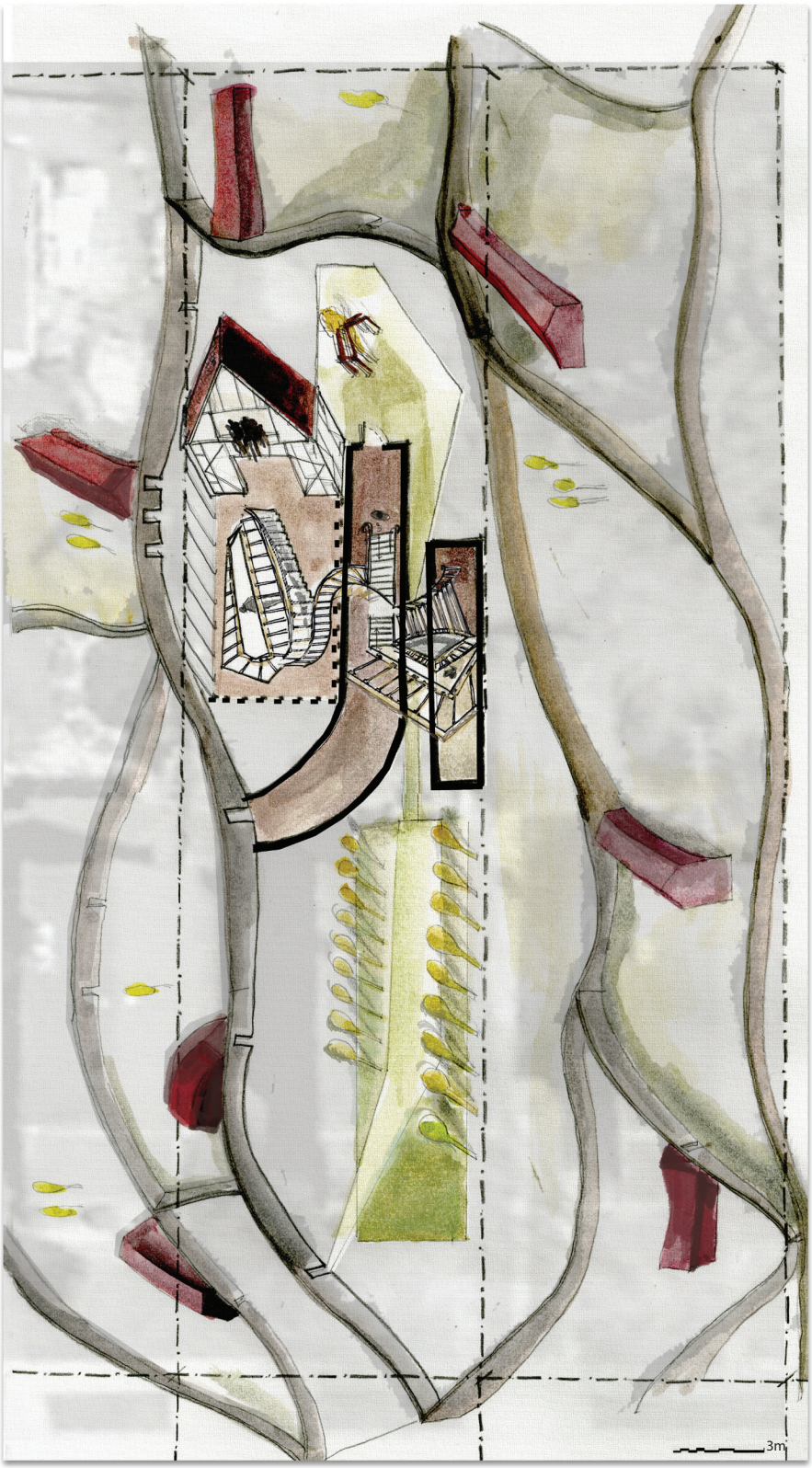

3m

Plate 10.1
Detail

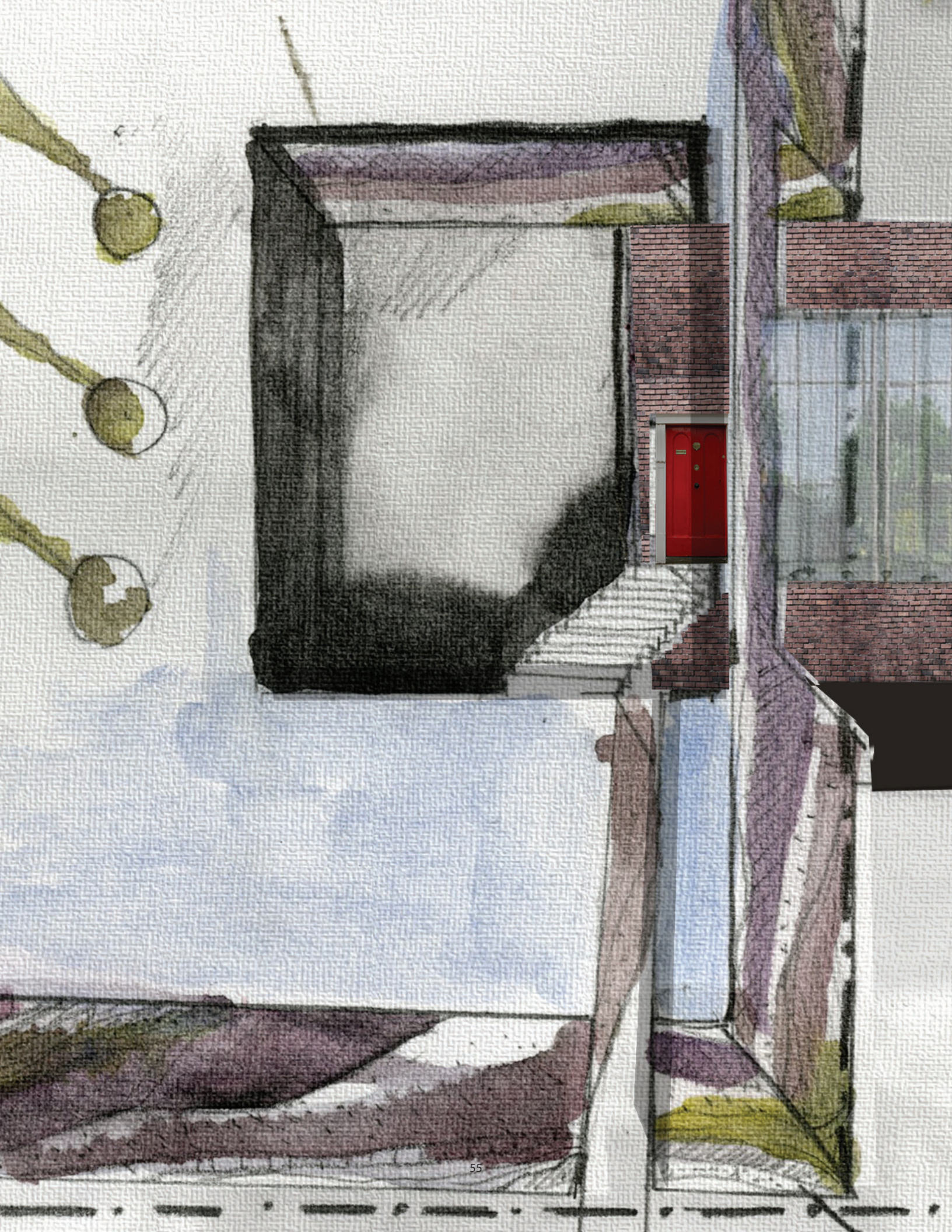
Occupant who knows

+C1 and **+C2** are a middle aged couple who are tenure professors at the University of Waterloo and live in Cambridge for four days of the week while spending their weekends in Toronto. It has proved more convenient to buy two homes. Their Cambridge home has been remodelled to remove all the interior walls and doors and the bathroom has been enclosed in glass. Instead of having children, this couple has chosen to share their lives with a museum-worthy collection of pottery from East Asia.

Plate 11.0
Mixed media on paper
15” x 24” (38cm x 61cm)


3m

Plate 11.1
Detail



Occupant who is cautious

+D is a 28-year-old who moved to Cambridge during the recession to find work in a local law firm, and has invested her life savings into this three-storey house. Having grown up on a farm in rural Alberta and having never lived away from her family, she is slowly adjusting to living with three students who are leasing the three available bedrooms. She struggles to be both friend and landlady.

Plate 12.0
Mixed media on paper
15" x 24" (38cm x 61cm)

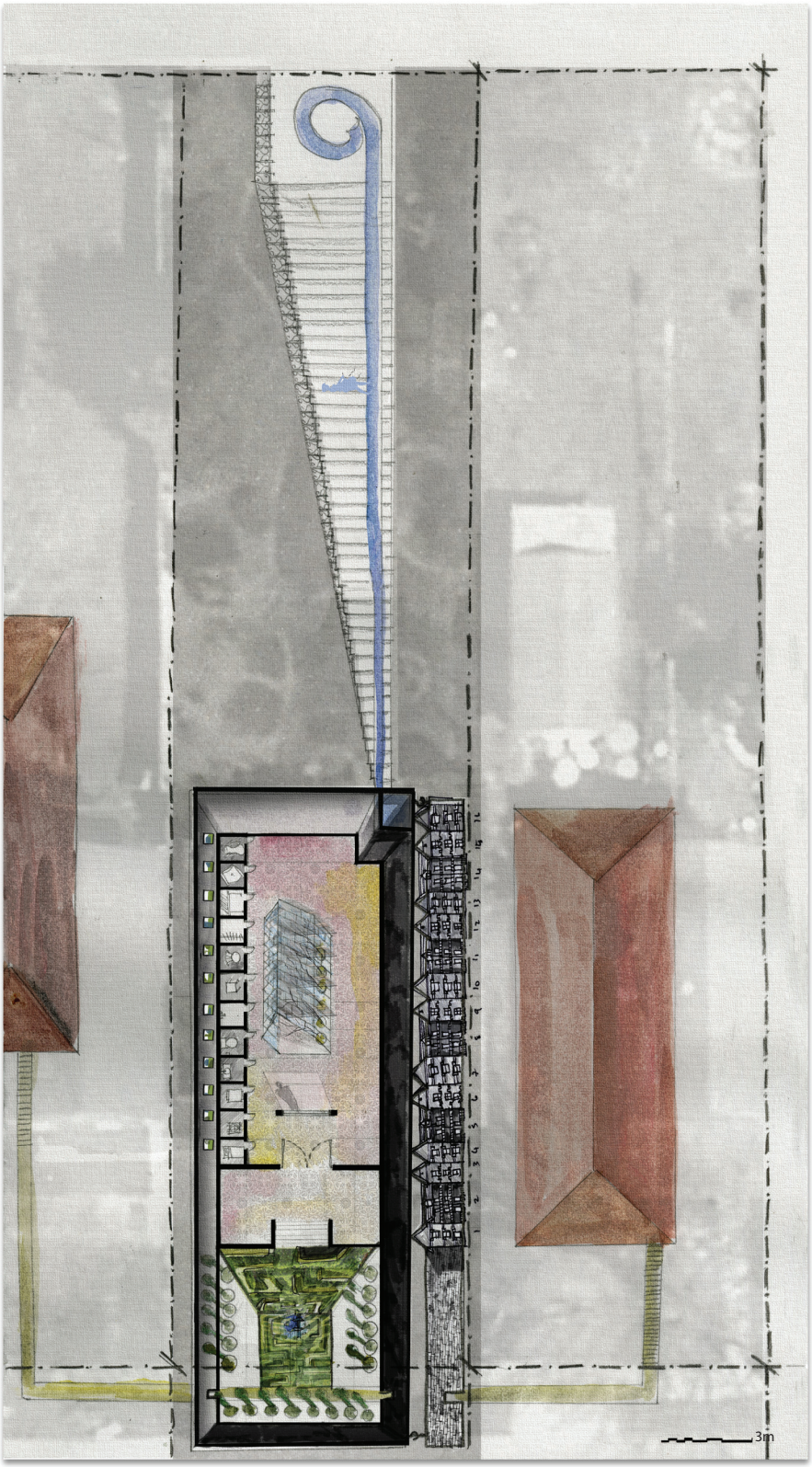
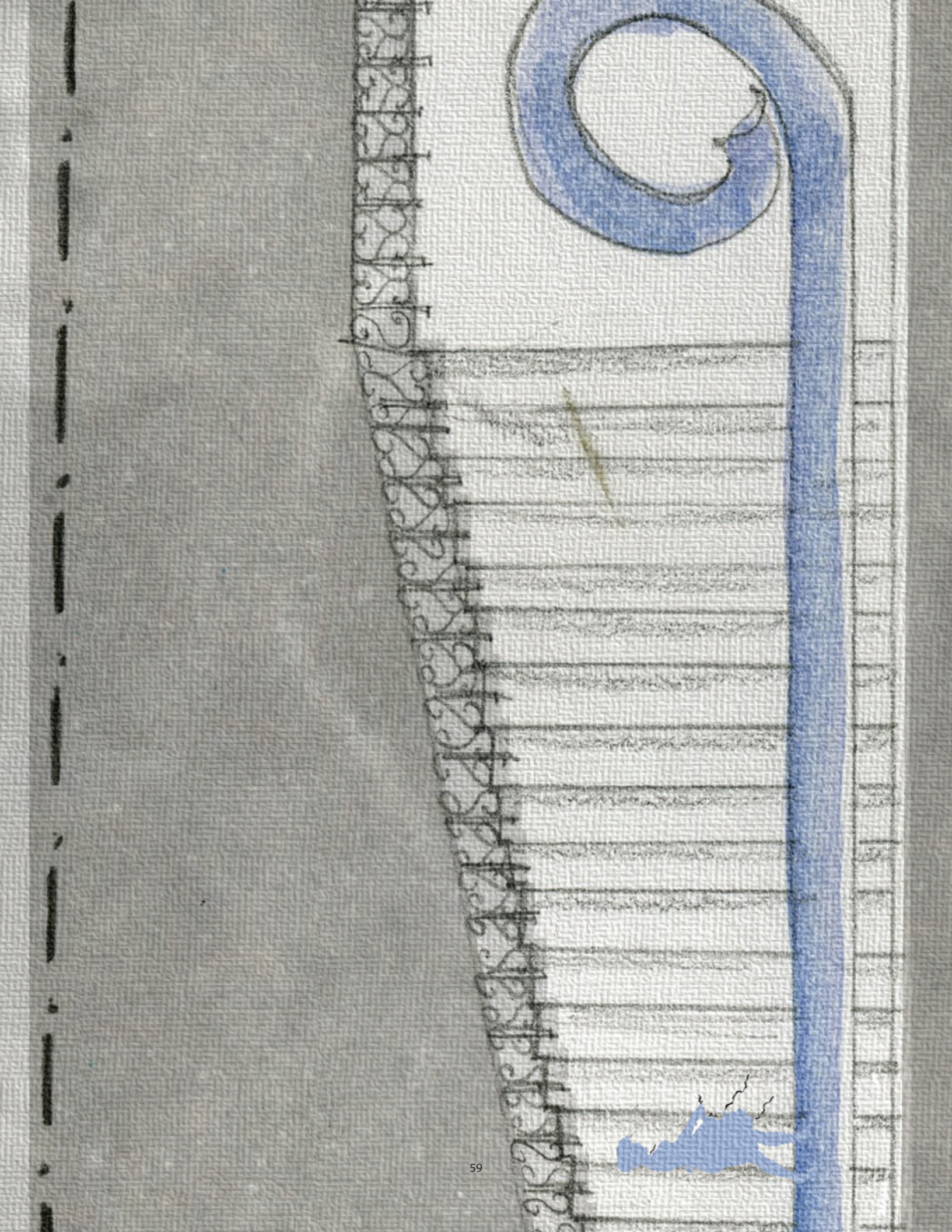

3m

Plate 12.1
Detail



Occupant who obeys

+E1 is an elderly widow from Newfoundland who has lived in this house for 35 years, and can talk for hours about the people in the neighbourhood. A year ago, she had a slight stroke and her daughter (**+E2**) moved from Vancouver to look after her. What began as a temporary living arrangement has carried on for 2 years with **+E1**'s periodic ailments. **+E2** is a single middle-age woman who has found work in Kitchener but is looking forward to returning to British Columbia to her own life. Having lost her independence under her mother's claustrophobic presence she finds comfort in the company of her two terriers and the photographs of mountain-biking expeditions that cover her bedroom wall. She cannot stand her mother's obsession with collecting porcelain animals.

Plate 13.0
Mixed media on paper
15" x 24" (38cm x 61cm)


3m

Plate 13.1
Detail

Occupant who morphs

+F1 used to live here with her 7-year-old daughter (**+F2**) before she decided to move to Toronto to be closer to her partner who currently resides in Montreal. A part-time professor in Cambridge with her own firm in Toronto, **+F1** juggles the responsibilities of being a parent on her own and commuting between two cities three times a week.

Plate 14.0
Mixed media on paper
15" x 24" (38cm x 61cm)

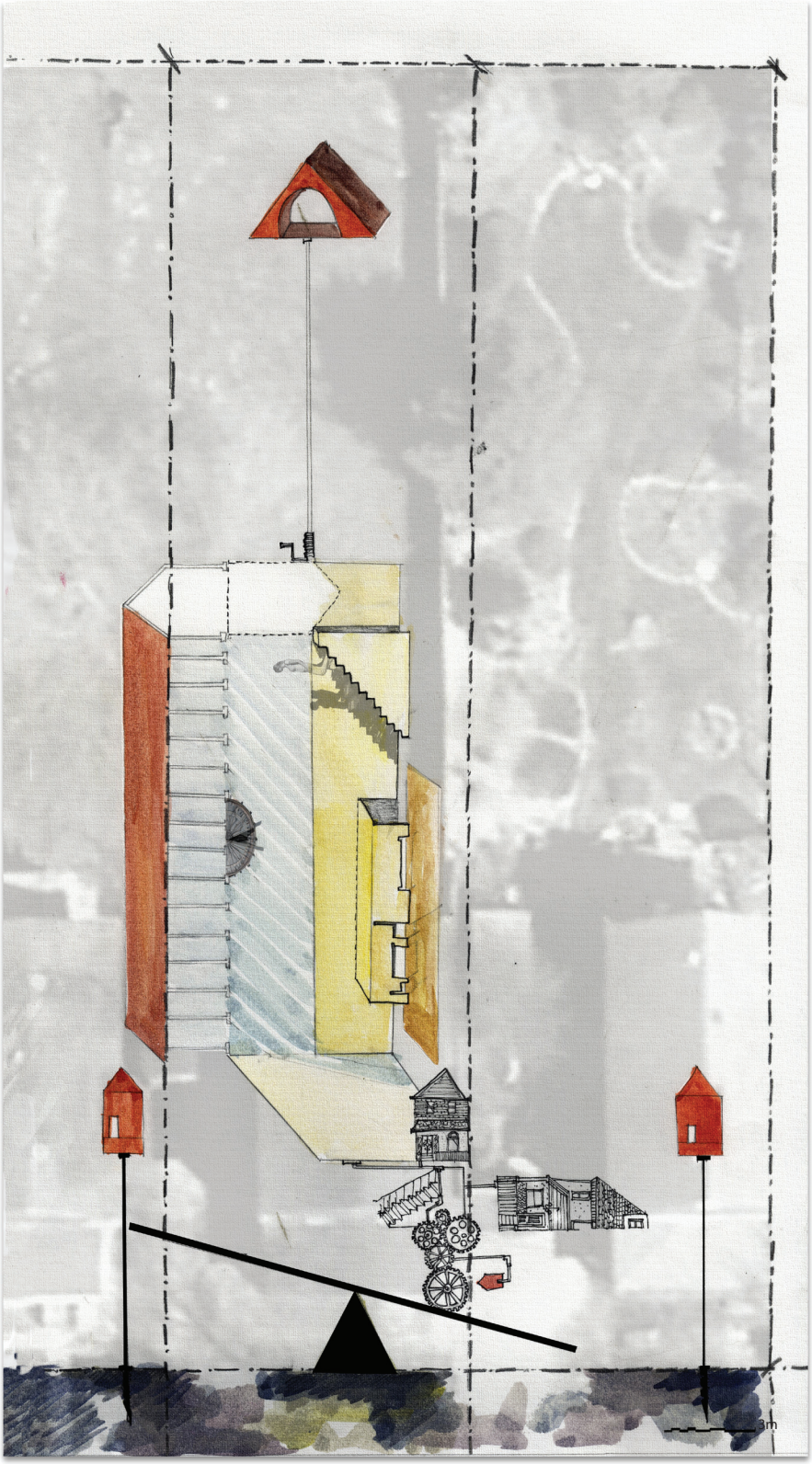
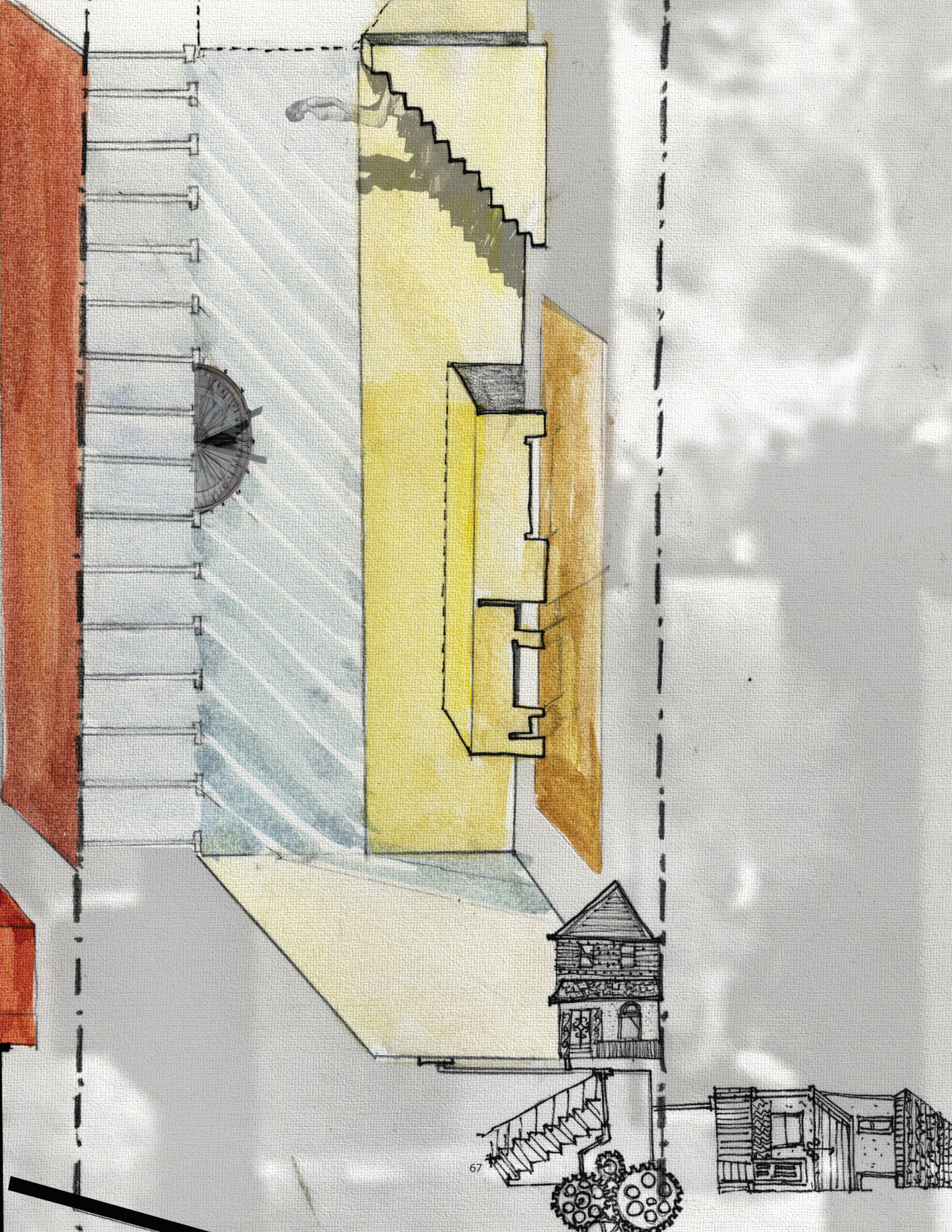


Plate 14.1
Detail



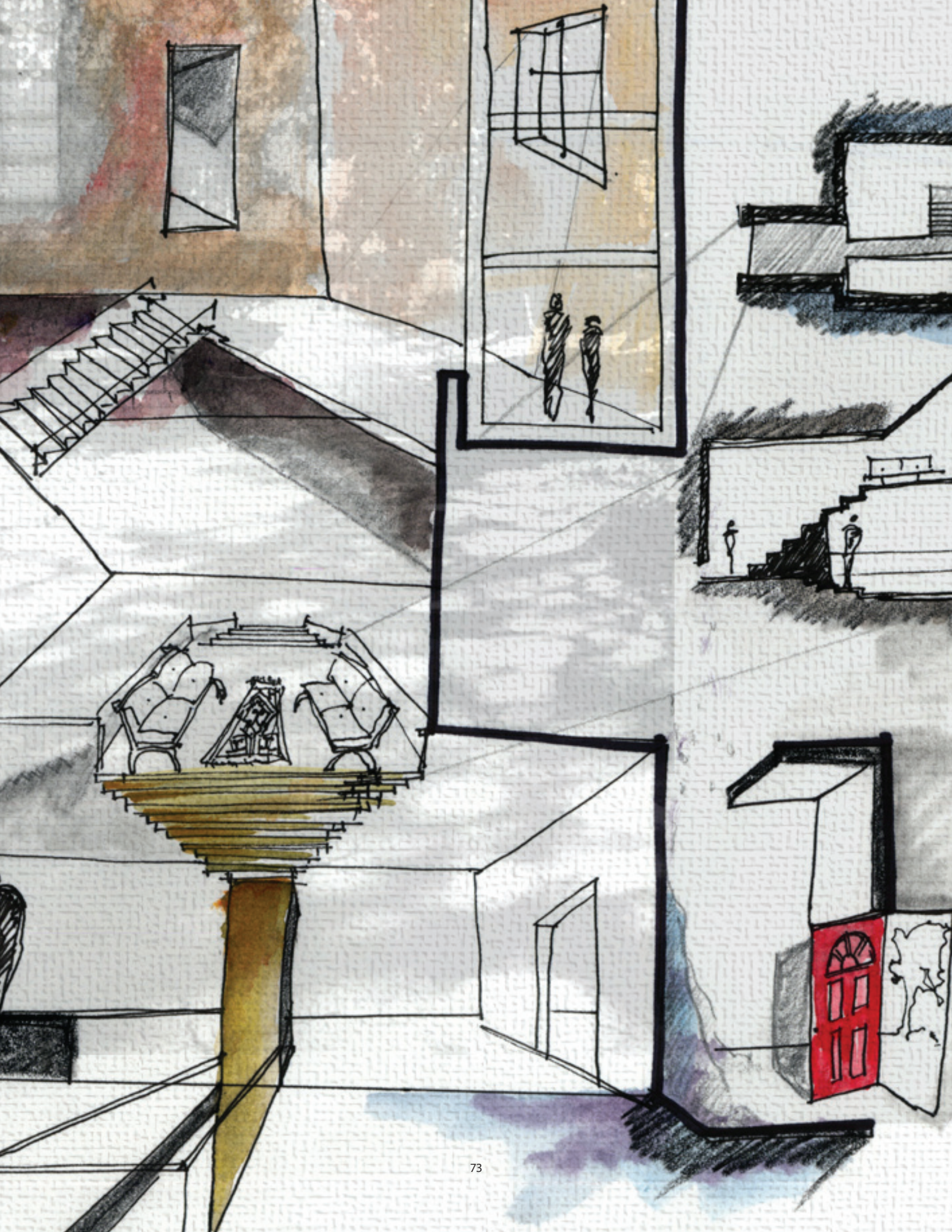
The following set of drawings are the design plans of the Chosen-Family House for the same eleven occupants.

In-Between Houses

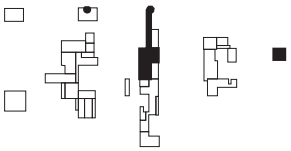
Translating social relationships into built form that breach property lines.

Plate 15.0
Mixed media on paper
36” x 24” (91cm x 61cm)

Plate 15.1
Detail



Occupant who does not participate



-1/2 +0 +1/2 +1 +1 1/2

+A1 lives in a small room in the middle of the house.

5:03am He sits on the roof waiting for the sun to rise.

3:00pm He leaves from the back door and scuttles across the neighbour's lawn to meet +D for lunch in town.

+F2 watches him
4:00pm when she crawls into window with a book.
She waits for him to come home every evening.

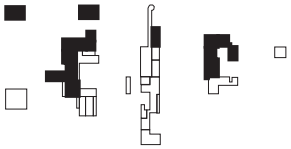
+B3 hears him mumble
11:00pm the crack between the wall is 4 inches wide and she can see the light creep across the floor of her bedroom. She should be asleep.

Plate 16.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

Plate 16.1
Detail


3m

Occupant who builds



-1/2 +0 +1/2 +1 +1 1/2

+B1, +B2 and **+B3** live in the largest section of the house.

7:30am *+B3 gets ready for school humming to +A1's music coming through the walls.*

1:00pm Every second Saturday, it is +B2's turn to bbq on the neighbour's shared deck.

+F1 is in the kitchen
1:30pm *taking up most of the counter space while she makes a packed lunch for work.*

4:00pm +B2 plays with +F2 in the front room after school.

+E2 has a shower
7:30pm *can see the water run down the wall, "she must be home early today".*

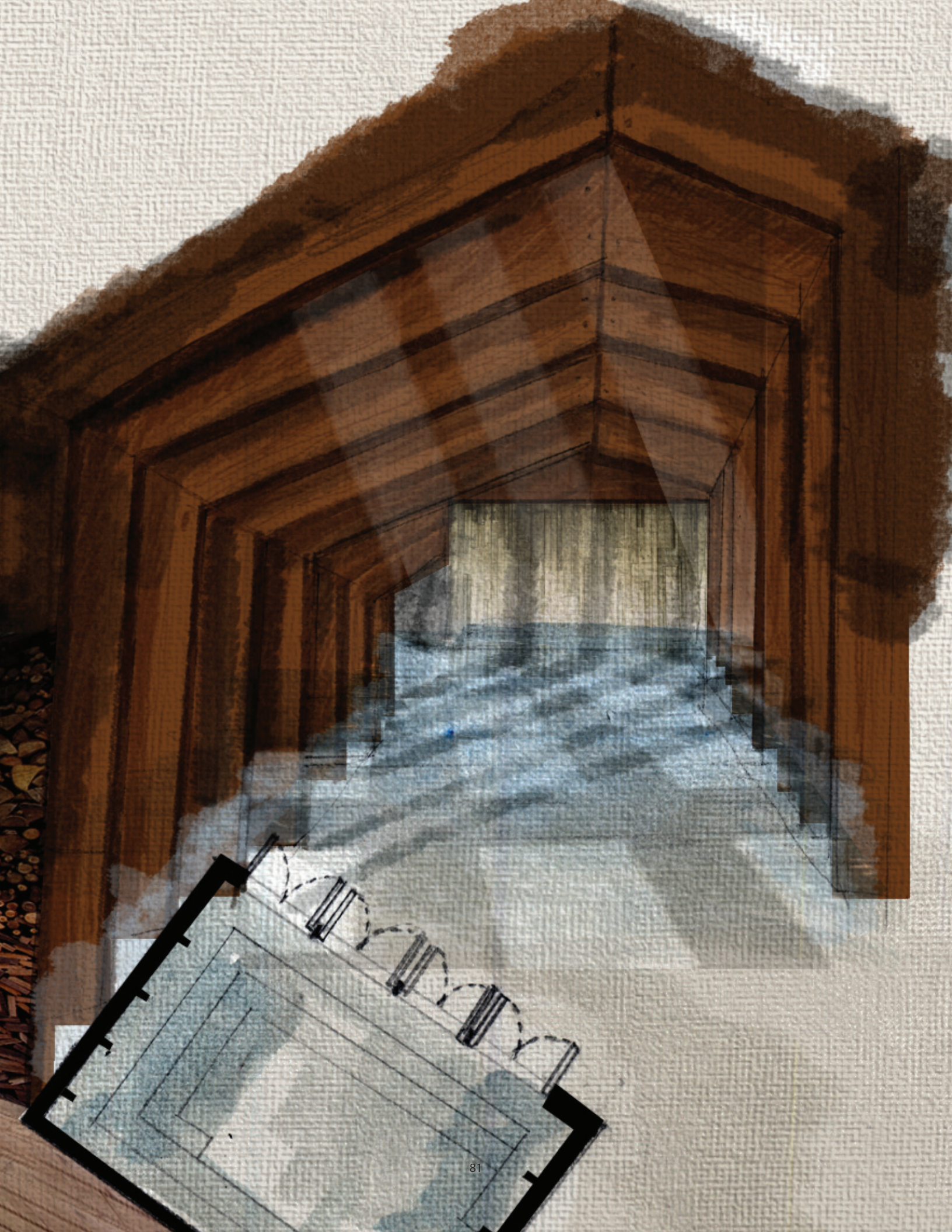
8:00pm +B1, +B2 and +F1 have a drink after work in the living room.

10:00pm +B2 relaxes in the shared hottub with the neighbour's husband and his friend.

Plate 17.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

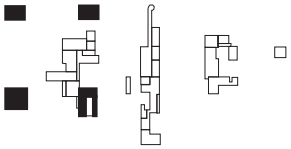
Plate 17.1
Detail


3m



Occupant who knows

+C1 and **+C2** are willing to live in a part of the house which is also a guest suite in their absence. However, they insist on taking sole responsibility for the front garden.



-1/2 +0 +1/2 +1 +1 1/2

12.30am +C1 and +C2 drive down from Toronto late every Sunday night.

9.30am They have breakfast together before +C1 goes to work.

12.30pm +C2 has brunch with +E1 in the garden before driving her to the mall to pick up groceries.

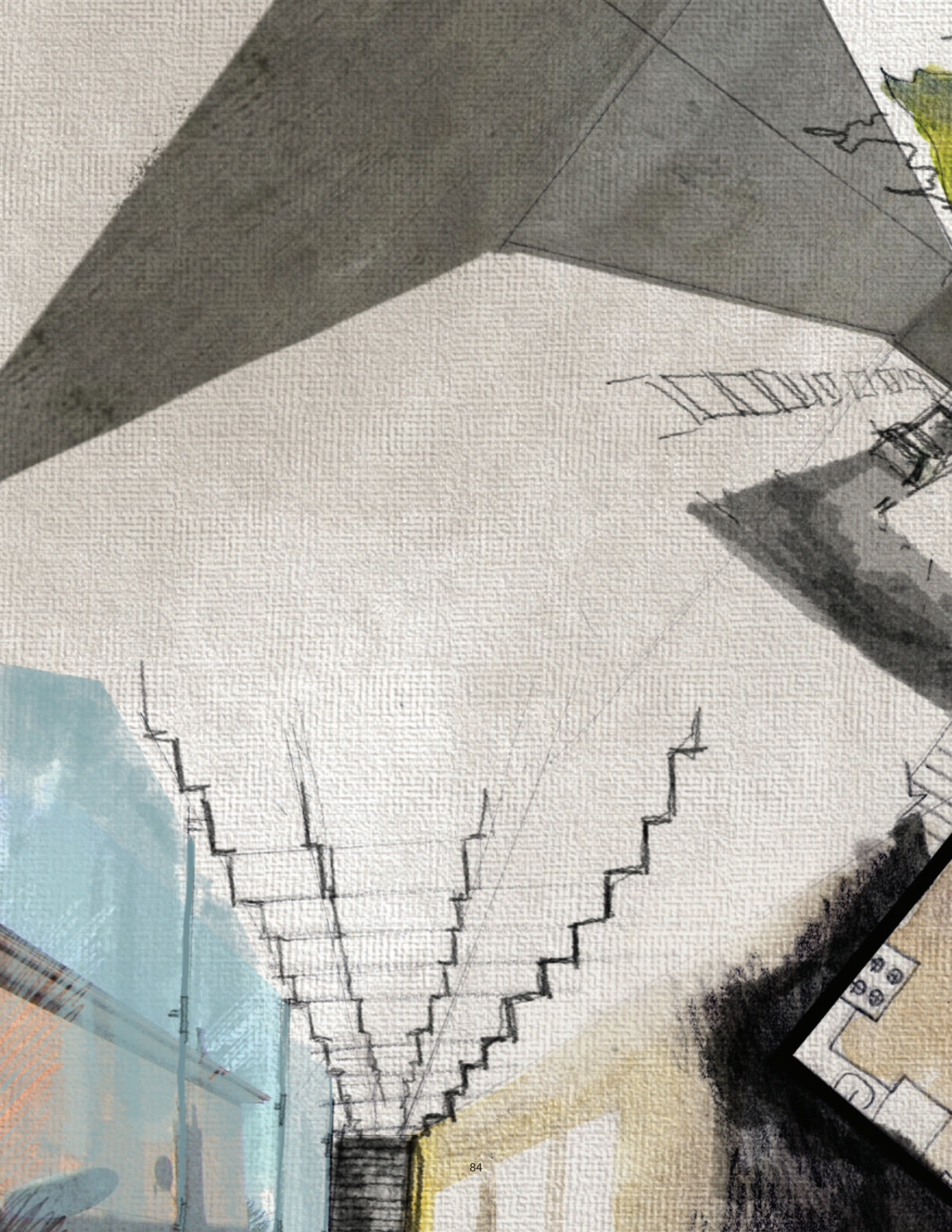
4.30pm +C2 enjoys the hot tub before everyone comes home from work.

5.30pm +C1 meets with +D for a 20-minute thesis meeting. They sit at a small table.

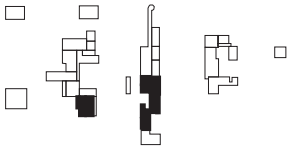
Plate 18.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

Plate 18.1
Detail


3m



Occupant who is cautious



-1/2 +0 +1/2 +1 +1 1/2

+D has her own room on a different level in the house but she shares a bathroom and a kitchen.

11.15am She goes to class.

1.30pm She falls asleep in the reading corner while she reads.

4. 30pm She walks +E2's dogs three times a week.
7.30pm She eats dinner with +F1 on Thursdays.

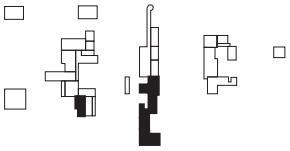
The Passer-By watches
9. 30pm while she is practicing playing the guitar sitting on her bed.
There is no way he can reach her.

Plate 19.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

Plate 19.1
Detail


3m

Occupant who obeys



-1/2 +0 +1/2 +1 +1 1/2

+E1 and **+E2** live at the front of the house.

+D patiently waits for
7:30am +E2 to finish bathing.

8.30 am +E2 drives to work.
9.00 am +E1 sits in her chair with a cup of tea watching the neighbours leave for work.

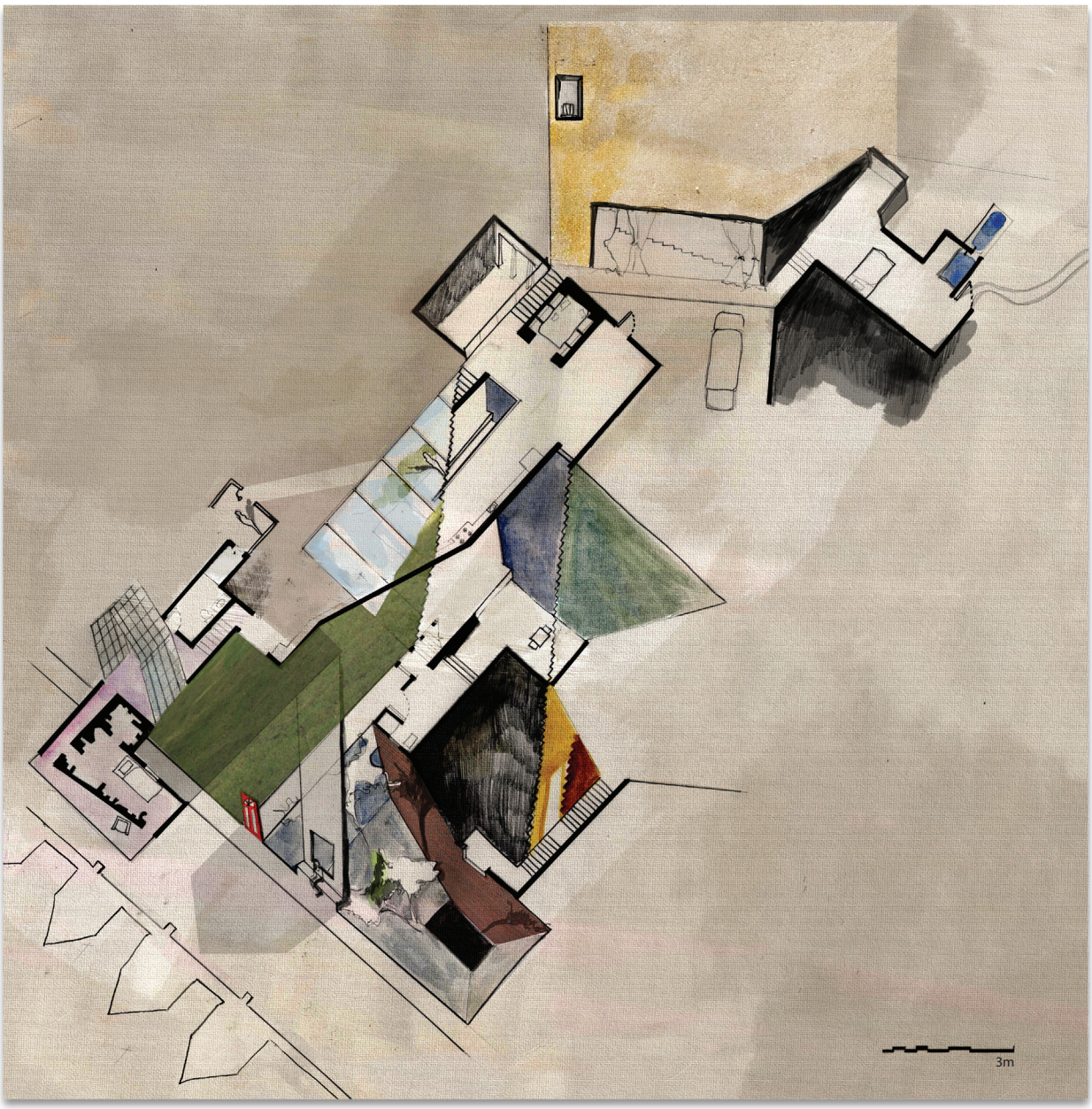
3.30 pm +E1 babysits +F2 until her mother comes back from work. Though she doesn't like to help with homework.

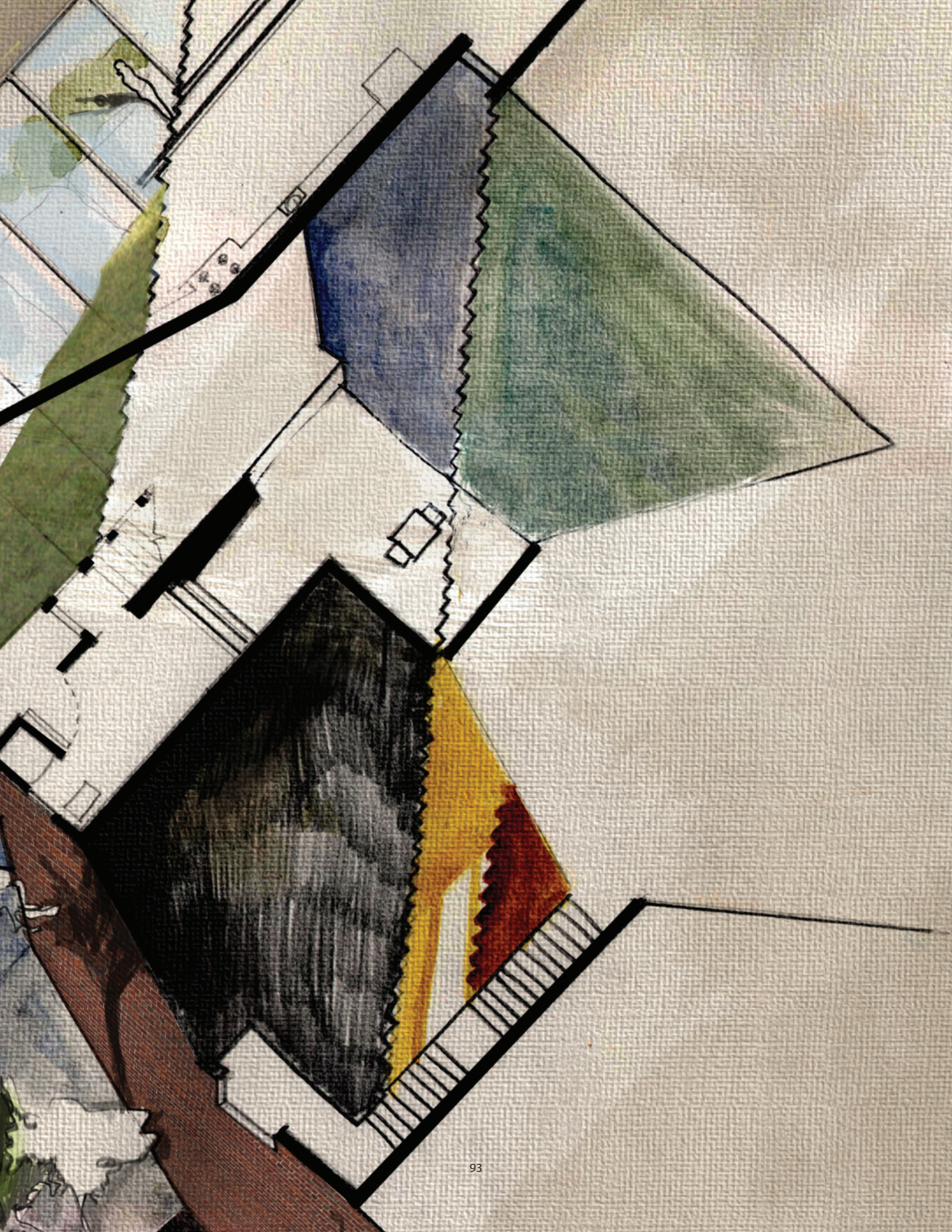
7.00 pm +E2's boyfriend picks her up to go out for dinner.

7:30pm They make dinner together three times a week and +D makes it a point to be home to join them.

Plate 20.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

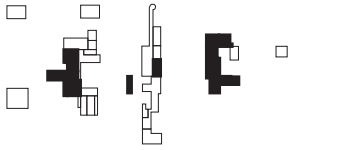
Plate 20.1
Detail


3m



Occupant who morphs

+F1 and **+F2** live in rooms that are connected to every section of the house.



7.00am +F1 packs lunches for both +F2 and +B3 in the kitchen before +B1 drives them to school.

5:30pm +F1 sits at her desk marking papers. She can see right through the whole house without anyone disturbing her. The space allows her to think clearly.

6:00pm +F2 and +B3 play in their adjacent rooms after they finish their homework.

8:15pm +F2 loves sitting at the window watching the snow fall through the middle of the house. She can't reach that place, but is convinced that +A1 is her best friend.

Plate 21.0
Mixed media on paper
36" x 24" (91cm x 61cm)

Plate 21.1
Detail

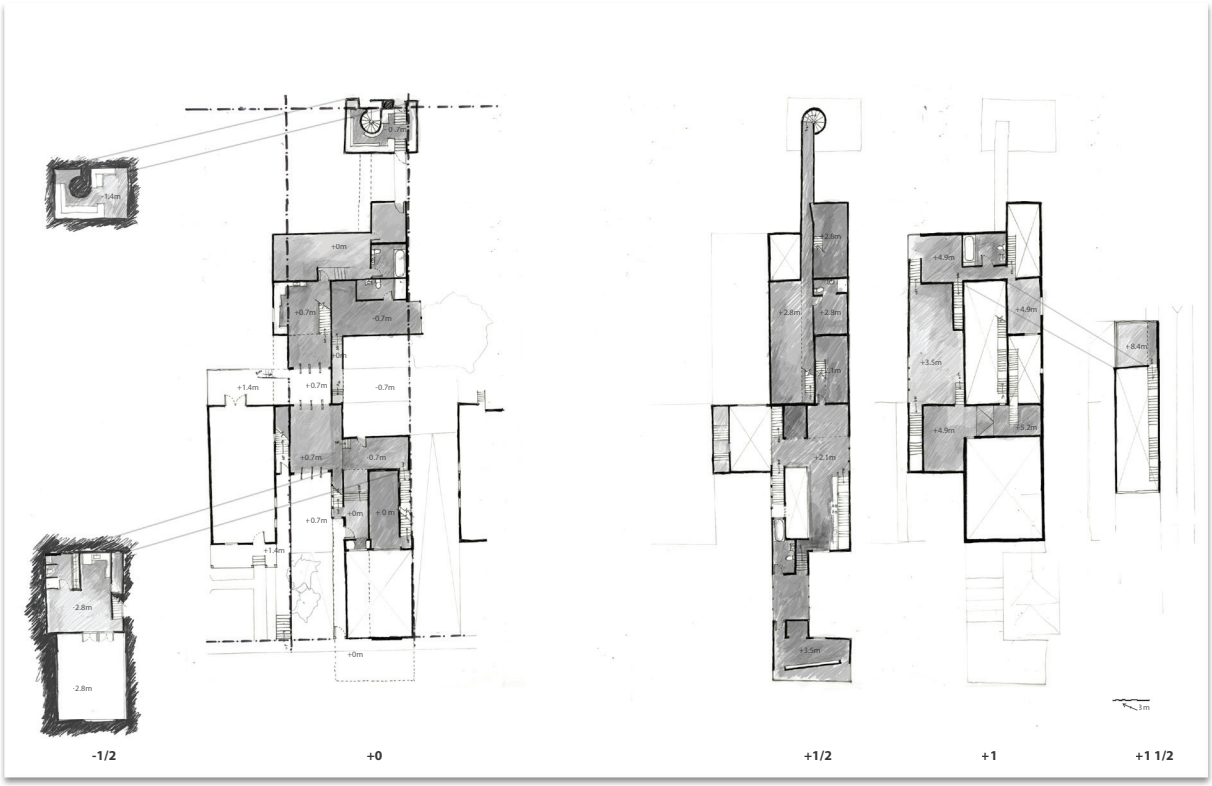

3m

The Reference

The original document
as provided by the
architect.

Long since discarded.

Plate 22.0
Mixed media on paper
48" x 24" (122cm x 61cm)


-1.4m
+0m
+0.7m
-0.7m
+1.4m
+0.7m
-0.7m
+0.7m
-0.7m
+0m
+0.7m
+0m
+0.7m
+1.4m
-2.8m
-2.8m
+0m
+2.8m
+2.8m
-2.8m
+2.1m
+2.1m
+3.5m
+4.9m
+4.9m
+4.9m
+5.2m
+8.4m
1m

-1/2 **+0** **+1/2** **+1** **+1 1/2**

I am now a Canadian citizen, having spent the last two and a half decades growing up in Mumbai, Muscat and Toronto. I have had three homes in Canada alone: one that I shared with my immigrant family of grandmother, parents and siblings, another where I lived with six students, once strangers now friends, with backgrounds from Trinidad, the Philippines, small town Ontario, Israel, Shanghai, and El-Salvador, and lastly an apartment which I occasionally share with a friend. Each came about from a form of necessity. No one else lives in this identical configuration, yet this is the norm. If you pause for a moment to recall your own housing story, it will be equally fragmented.

This is a world that lives haphazardly: we live transient lifestyles in makeshift families. Our lives are no longer prescribed to a conventional version of domesticity. The dictionary's definitions for the 'house', 'family' and 'lifestyle' are hardly satisfying, let alone universal. We are using generalized terms in an era of particularities and peculiarities. This is a globalized nation of different cultures, ethnicities and languages that celebrate the individual, with his unique knowledge, memories, customs and histories. The wealth of personalities and the cornucopia of choices available to contemporary society have transformed who we are and how we think.

But where do we live?

Changing family structures, demographic shifts, technological developments and markedly different lifestyles evident in North American culture have made the familiar form of the traditional single-family house obsolete. The strengths of the shared dwelling place are in its ability to configure, compose and choreograph an arena for social confrontation and growth. However, the variety of cultural perceptions of public and private space and the varying interpretations of ownership and responsibility make living closely with one another a challenge. This section examines the redefinition of domesticity and the shifting lines between "yours and mine" in Canada's multicultural society.

The house is the domain of its inhabitants where their desires and fantasies, even more than the architect's intentions, are centred.

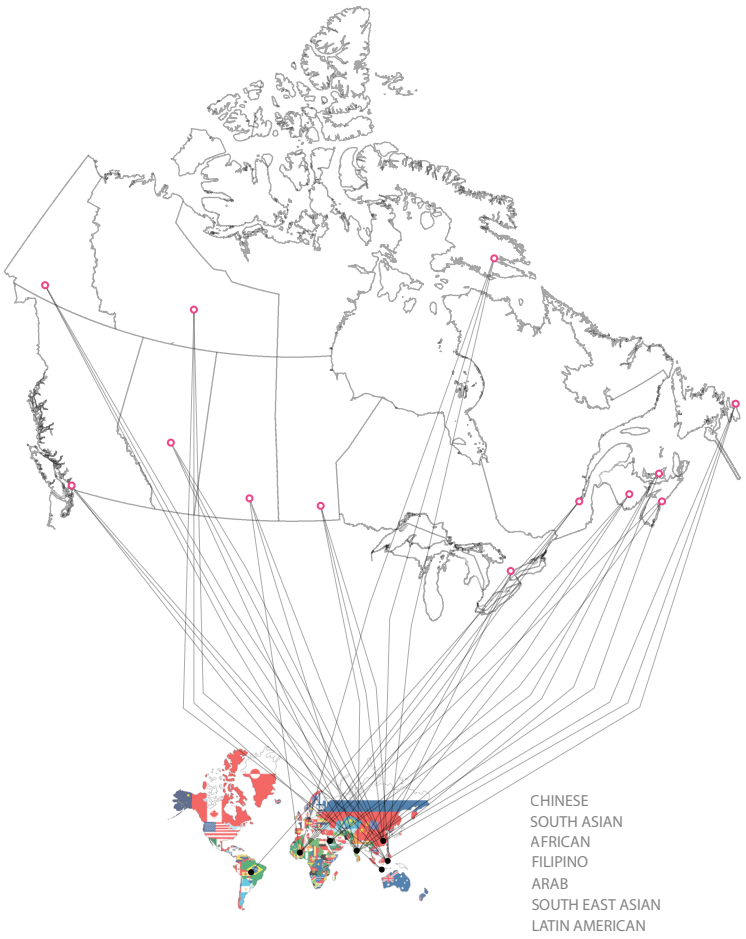
In the latter half of the 18th century, Leo Tolstoy, in the opening lines of his novel Anna Karenina wrote, "All happy families are like one another" [1]. Tolstoy's precise choice of words reflects an eerie truth that suggest that all happy families were the same because that is what society wished them to become[2]. By the 19th century, radical changes in the concept of privacy and home were paralleled by the transformation and development of the family both in terms of scope and pace. While the struggle to balance gender dichotomies within the family has reached an equilibrium over the last fifty years, we now face a new crisis in the identity of the family. You and I have grown up using the term 'family' in its conventional sense, across cultures, in literature and the arts as "a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit"[3]. Husbands are fathers, wives are mothers and children are siblings. The family unit is commonly accepted as a heterosexual lifelong couple rearing children. This is an understandable definition given that until as recently as the 1970s, four out of five households were families while only the last fifth was classified as non-family[4]. However the proportion has since shifted to two families to every one non-family, and the definition of "family" itself is currently being put under acute scrutiny. The conventional family is rapidly losing ground and its position as the only fundamental building block of society is subject to serious challenge.

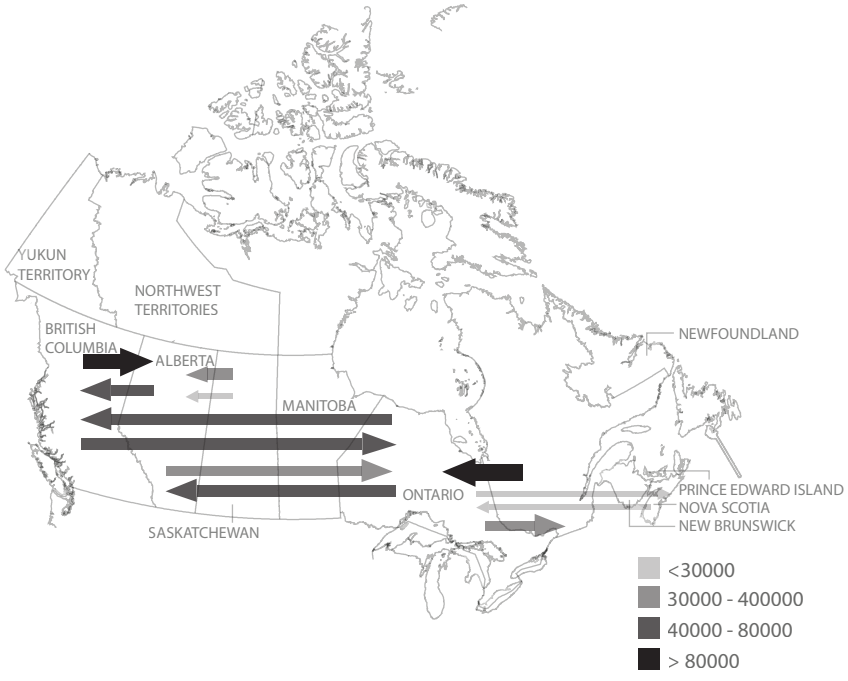
There is an abundant amount of research on what is wrong with contemporary family. From the writings of Durkheim and Simmell to Toenies and Mannheim, they have been many discussions concerned with the wellbeing of family life in 20th century industrialized Europe. Much has also been written on what is right with contemporary family. The purpose of this study is to examine the families that do not feature largely in specific studies but rather, those whom we come across often in our everyday lives.

Nuclear families appear to function best in the context of an established support system that encourages self-identity and reduces alienation. A working precedent for the structure of this system is found in the extended-family which is adopted by most third world countries, notably Asia. The basic organization of this familial unit is very similar to tribe-culture which is made of a number of nuclear families where each individual plays a defined role that is allocated by the group. The isolation of the nuclear family is broken to include families of procreation (parents and siblings) and families of affinal relations (in-laws) bound by cultural or legally enforced norms[5]. Abraham Maslow, in *Motivation and Personality,* and James Wilson, in *The Moral Sense,* discuss the benefits of the multigenerational and joint-family living to be a superior alternative to the nuclear family in many cultures, notably for its economic security and its broader foundation for raising children[6]. Taking it a step further, *The Cleveland Studies of 1959* suggest that the relationships built between families who are kin are more fulfilling than the relationships between individuals within the nuclear family itself [7].

In North America, extended families do not necessarily live in the same household and a close relationship is primarily determined by choice rather than

Fig.1.0 A fictitious village with its inhabitants


CHINESE
SOUTH ASIAN
AFRICAN
FILIPINO
ARAB
SOUTH EAST ASIAN
LATIN AMERICAN
Flow of visible minority immigration: 2006
Provincial capitals


YUKUN TERRITORY
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
MANITOBA
SASKATCHEWAN
ONTARIO
NEWFOUNDLAND
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
NOVA SCOTIA
NEW BRUNSWICK
<30000
30000 - 400000
40000 - 80000
> 80000

custom, whether it be economic support or residential proximity. However, in this transient world where families are scattered across continents, very few households have the luxury of having extended family at hand. Most contemporary nuclear families in North America are bred in an environment that supports an "each-to-their-own" attitude and have developed relationships with each other for personal gain. This is neither right nor wrong, but simply an inevitable method of reconstructing a support system. Therefore, individuals replace severed extended-family ties by reaching out to friends and strangers with whom they share lifestyle characteristics.

The 'household' which has conventionally taken the form of a single family is innately restrictive when discussing relationships that are outside kinship. Levi-Strauss's term 'house-societies', reverting to the structure of tribal households, is a mediating concept of descent and alliance, of lineage and longevity in a residence[8]. The groups of people outlined in the present work form similar symbiotic relationships. Even though they are of equal value to those in traditional extended families, they remain harder to categorize in their lack of clear definition. In the absence of a commonly accepted moniker, households made up of kin, friends and strangers living together for mutual benefit will be termed 'Chosen-Family'.

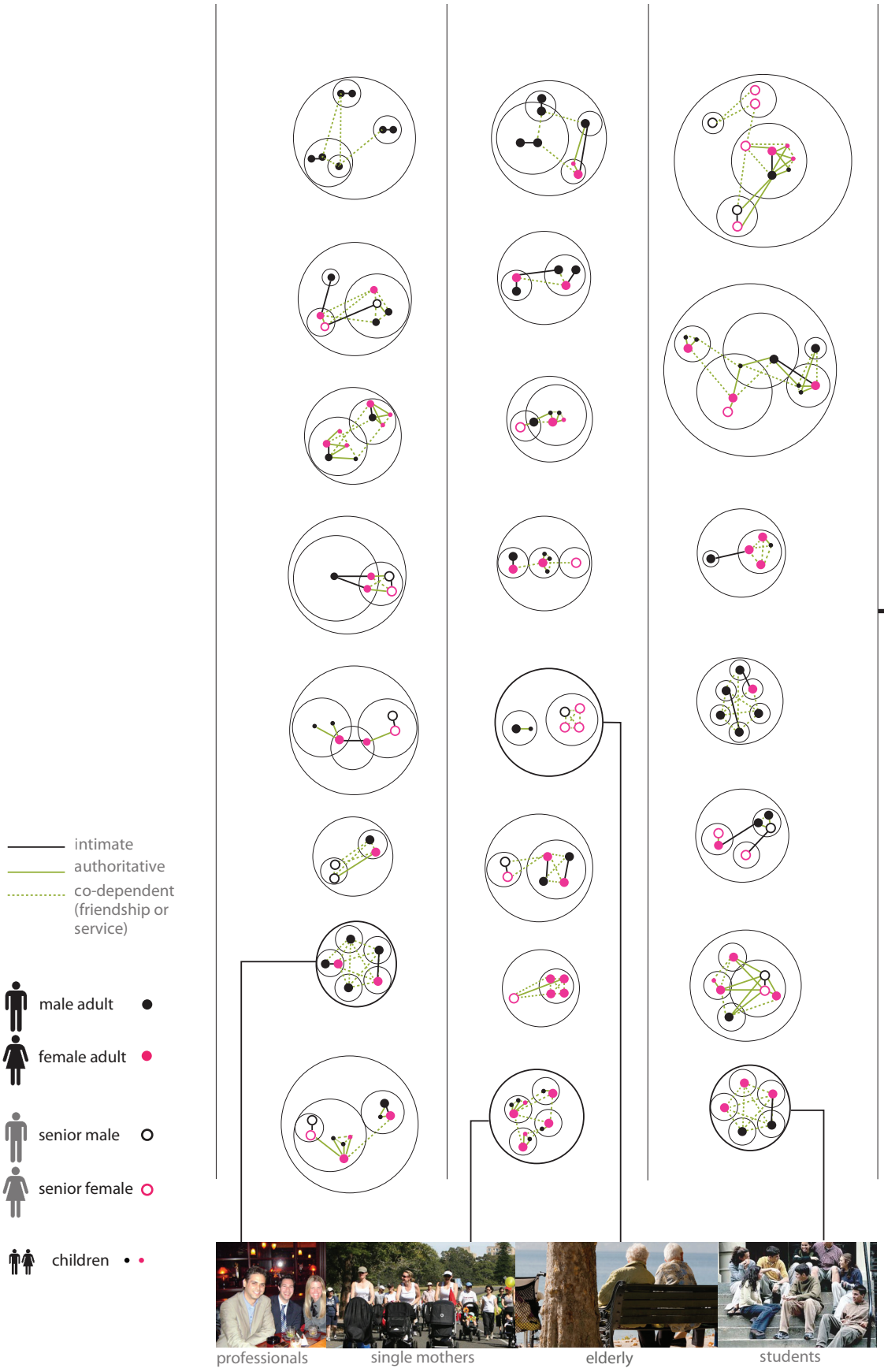
The Chosen-Family is given a quantifiable form in contemporary North American society of more than 110 million households growing at a rate of one million per year, this is who they are[9] …

single . married . divorced . common-law . widowed . single-parents . couples . children . teenagers . students . seniors . grandparents living at home . children growing up but not moving away .

3/5 of young adults aged 20 to 29 still live with their parents
2.6 is the average household size which has decreased from 2.9 in 1980
15% of seniors live with their children which has doubled from 1980
1/10 of the population lives alone
16% of couples are in common-law relationships
1/3 of women remain unwed by their thirties
4/10 children do not live with their biological fathers
1/4 of preschool children are in day-care
15% of the population are seniors
7/10 mothers leave home for work every day
16% of families are lone-parent families
30% of private households are made up of 'non-families'
41% of all families have no children living at home
14% of seniors live with their children, 12% live with only their grandchildren [10]

Fig.1.1 Immigration Patterns in Canada (2006)

Fig.1.2 A country on the move: Twelve important flows between provinces (1996-2001)


intimate
authoritative
co-dependent (friendship or service)
male adult
female adult
senior male
senior female
children
professionals
single mothers
elderly
students

"If, for instance, you are currently married, have three children, and the wife stays at home looking after the kids while the husband goes out to work, if you were married young and have never been separated or divorced, and all the people you know have similar lives, with no younger children in daycare or children in the mid-twenties living at home, then perhaps our statistical picture appears far-fetched. If, on the other hand, you have been married more than once, or you have never been married and you live alone or with parents, and you have only one or two children or siblings or none at all, or you are a single parent or you live on weekdays with one parent and on weekends with the other, then you are aware that what we are outlining here is not a fabrication." [11]

Fig. 1.3 Integrated lives lived across conventional household boundaries

No. 53
No. 55
No. 57
No. 59
No. 61
No. 63
No. 65
No. 67
No. 69

Lowell St. N
Cambridge, ON
Canada

occupant +A
house for sale
occupant +B1, +B2, +B3
occupant +C1, +C2
occupant +D1
occupant +E1, +E2
occupant +F1, +F2
occupant +D1
occupant +B1, +B2, +B3

permanent
occassional

intimate
authoratative
co-dependent (friendship or service)

male adult
female adult
senior male
senior female
children

The site chosen for this proposal stretches over nine private properties on a non-descript street in the residential neighbourhood of Lincoln Oaks in the City of Cambridge. With a population of 4580 people, Lincoln Oaks accurately represents the comfortable median of other residential neighbourhoods in growing mid-size towns: an average income salary, a reasonable turnover of tenure among residents, a proportionally growing rate of visible minorities, and an increase in the number of seniors and lone parents, all living in an equal proportion of owner-renter occupied dwellings.

The purpose of this study is to reveal a need for co-dependent living that is not easily recognizable and to provide a place that can generate these relationships.

These are the people who live on your street ...

Designing for : 7 – 12 occupants

Family (Fa) = +4 occupant
Friend (Fr) = +2 occupant
Stranger (S) = +1 occupant

Fa + Fa + Fa
Fa + Fa + Fr
Fa + Fa + S
Fa + S + S + S
Fa + Fr + S
Fr + Fr + S + S + S
S + S + S + S + S + S + S

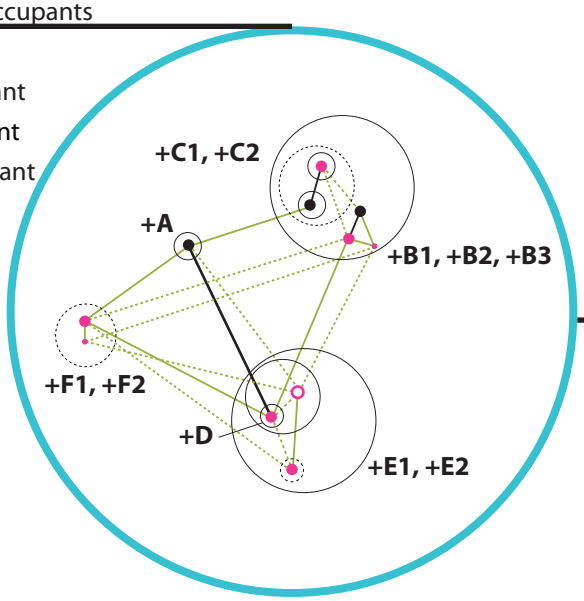
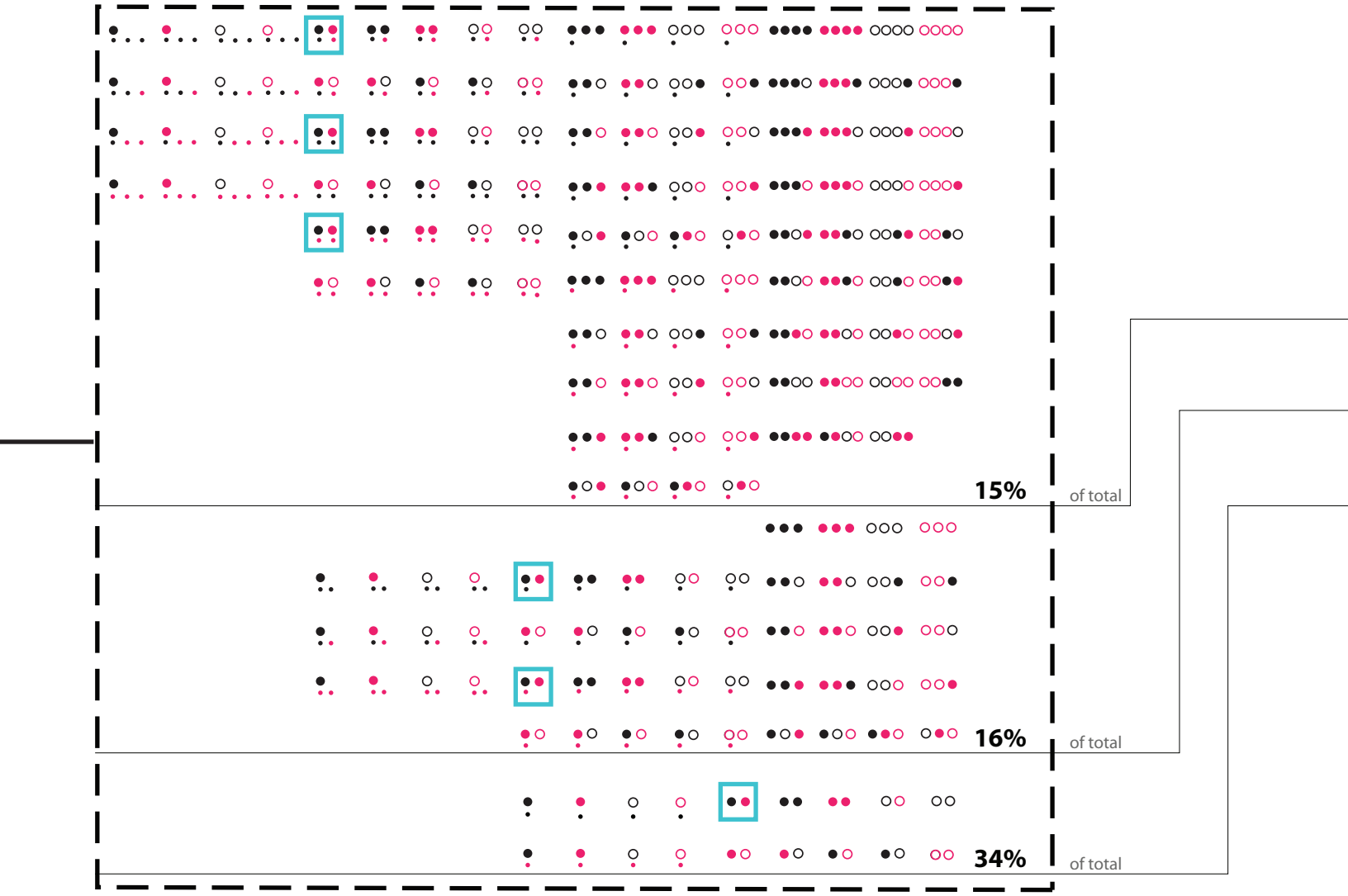
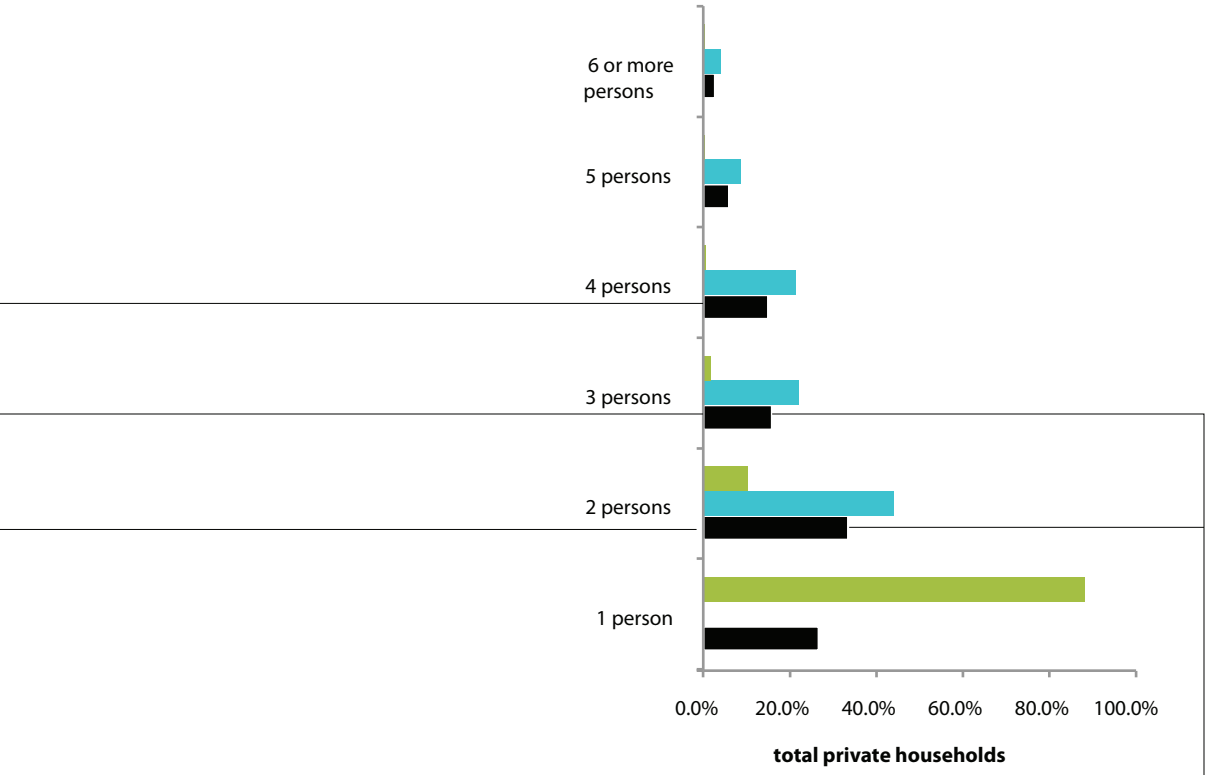


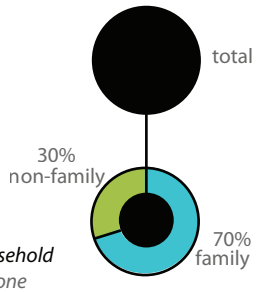
Fig.1.4 The Chosen Family


15%
of total
16%
of total
34%
of total



50% OF THE POPULATION OF CANADA LIVES IN 2-3 MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS



*A **non-family household** consists either of one person living alone or of two or more persons who share a dwelling, but do not constitute a family*

*A **family household** consists of a single family or multiple families occupying the same dwelling*

conventional family

male adult

female adult

senior male

senior female

children

Fig. 1.5 Household Combinations in Canada

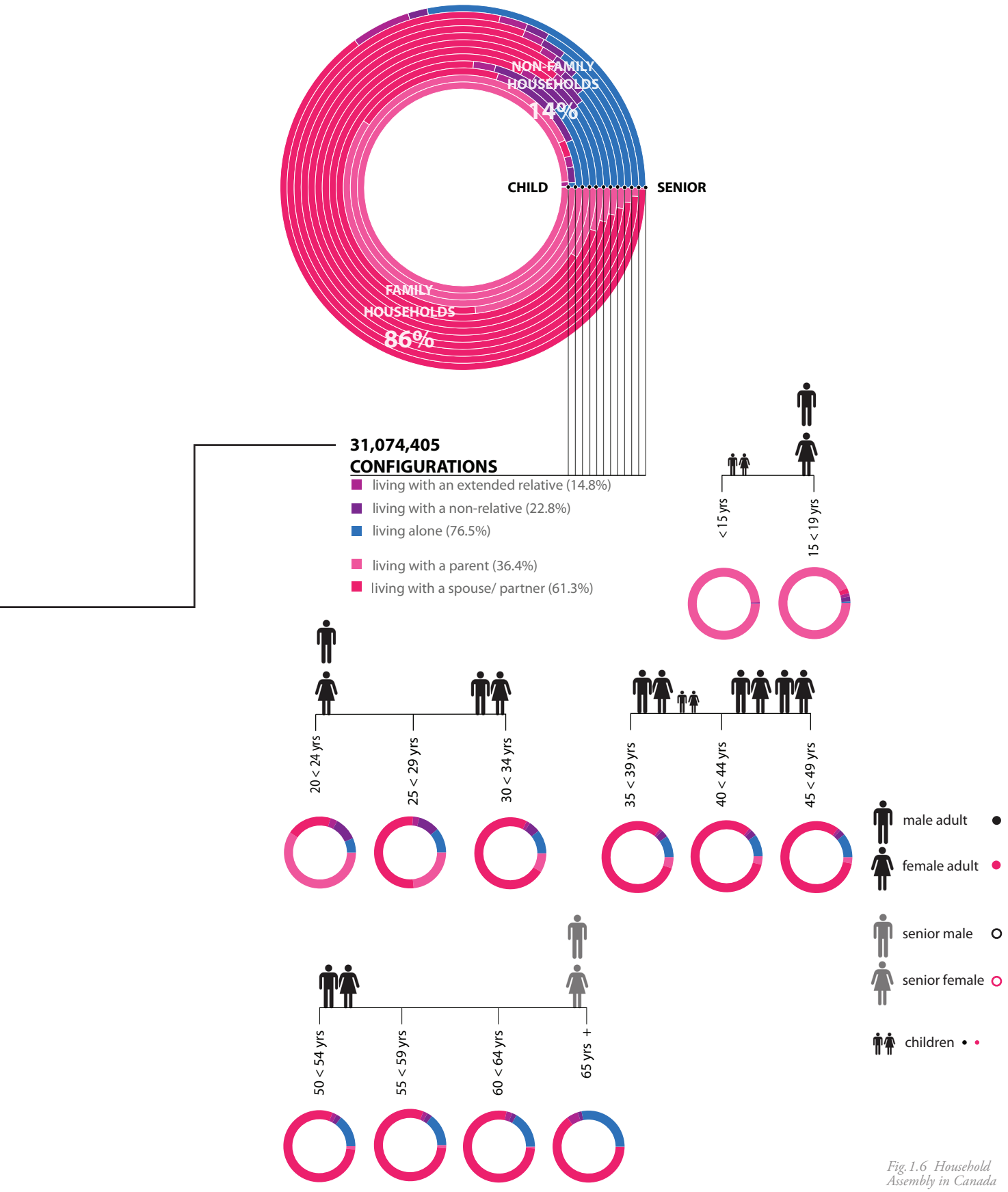
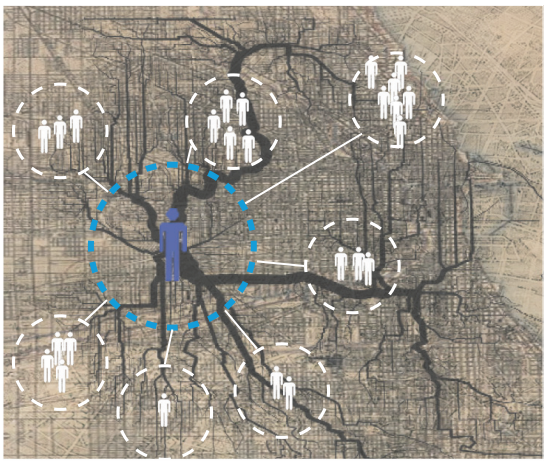
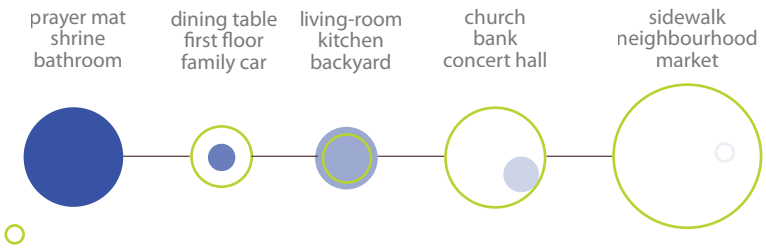
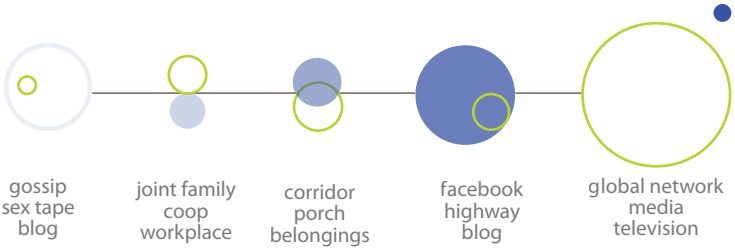


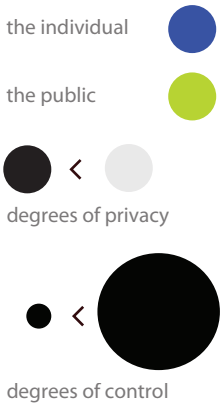
Fig. 1.6 Household Assembly in Canada

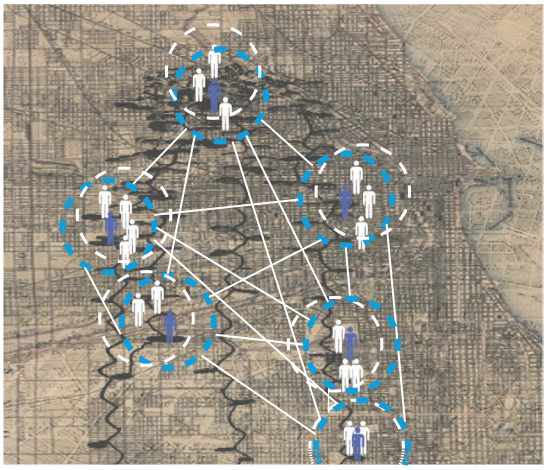




1	2	3	4	5
self	**household**	**interface**	**function specific**	**universal**







Turning to the lessons of multigenerational houses, the Chosen-Family House focuses on developing an attitude of co-dependency that is fostered by the growing immigration demographic in Canada. Most of us are foreigners in this land. A recent study by *Statistics Canada* reveal that 25 percent of Canada's population will be born outside Canada by 2031[12]. With the integration of immigrants into Canadian society comes a wealth and variety of attitudes toward the dynamics of living situations. Each culture has its own perceptions of privacy and its own rules for prescribing and maintaining public and private space. These differences, perhaps less relevant in their native homogenous societies, become growing concerns for an integrated society that wishes to claim multicultural status. Among the 200 cultures in Canada, *Statistics Canada* reveals that recent immigrants born in Asia are the most prominent presence in Canadian society by being the largest proportion of newcomers to Canada in 2006 at 58.3%[13]. Along with this badge of diversity also comes the burden of providing seamless integration.

An article published recently in Globe and Mail discusses the *Changing Faces of Toronto* the rising problem of South-Asian ethnic enclaves in the context of the city suburb Brampton, and the fear that Canada may become a country of ethnic silos or parallel communities[14]. Away from their kin, immigrants, upon arrival, naturally look to their own ethnic community to re-establish and control the "extended 'family of Indians'"[15] and as Sunaina Maira quotes in her analysis of an Indian community in another North American city: "It is in this private space that the immigrant bourgeoisie guards what is perceives to be the nation's cultural essence against contamination by dominant Western values. It is here that the immigrant bourgeoisie steadies itself in the face of changes in a foreign country"[16]. Even though South Asians gather in public space for social and cultural events, they transform it into an exclusive 'culturally-private' space that complements the community's norms and sanctions.

The feat ahead for Canadian architects is to prepare a common ground of negotiation that can generate and stimulate cultural interactions between immigrants and local residents. There is much to learn from each other. Case studies from India and Japan present two of the most national stereotypes toward proximity; each offers a distinct rich range of design strategies for shared living spaces that are featured throughout this work as an alternative to the North American view. Before we discuss how different cultures negotiate private and public spaces in a house, it is necessary to reflect on the unusual dichotomy of experiences that is currently occurring at its very thresholds.

When confronted by something one does not completely understand, an immediate reaction is to freeze in embarrassment and to look for the most efficient exit from the uncomfortable situation. Awkwardness stems from the presence of unfamiliar objects, attitudes, customs and comments. Each culture, community and individual has a distinct opinion of the definition of the term 'familiar' and 'unfamiliar'. What is familiar to one person might be bizarre and even offensive

Fig.1.7 Comfortable and Awkward living systems: Five scales of study

to another. This is a stubborn world where cultures choose to stand alone instead of addressing their differences, a world where interaction and integration is avoided since it is assumed to lead to inevitable conflict. Very little recognition is given to the strengths of the marginal spaces in society that encourage cultural 'misunderstandings'. The strengths of living in a multicultural society lie in the ambiguous experiences of in-between spaces that are found at the boundaries between opposing cultural values. It is here that there is the greatest potential to develop a new type of growth and coexistence.

This discussion begins with the fundamental cause of most misunderstandings: the boundary between private and public space. Privacy is a virtue operating at a multiple scales that this generation aggressively strives to defend, value and enlarge. Yet the nature of privacy has changed freely from time to time, place to place, culture to culture, almost as leniently as the term itself is used in the English language[17]. Privacy according to the *Oxford Dictionary* is "A state in which one is not observed or disturbed by other people; the state of being free from public attention" [18]. This may be applied to a person, group or corporation and refers to thoughts, places, experiences and even objects. There are rich associations with the term 'privacy' that are not identically transferable to other Latin languages. In French, *intimité* and *privé*, are associated with intimacy and the individual; in German, *zuruckgezogenheit* and *privatleben* literally mean seclusion and private life; and in Italian, the term has lost most of its nuances[19]. It has been suggested that perhaps there is no definite translation of the meaning of privacy[20]. In the context of this project, it is suggested that contemporary North American culture has evolved into two types of privacy; privacy from and privacy to :

PRIVACY FROM: to retreat from the public; to be secluded
PRIVACY TO: reveal to the public; to be selectively exposed

The importance of having privacy in our lives is undeniable, however its forms are often unrecognizable. The following examines the evolution of privacy through the 19th and 20th centuries and the extent that it affected the negotiation between public and private spaces. Furthermore, it analyzes the effects of the modern attitude of 'overexposure' on our alienated society and its effects on the redefinition of boundary lines.

Let us delve into the most private of all spaces: the house. The desire for privacy in the house reached its height in 19th century Colonial England; it was a fortress of solitude with a warren of rooms, secret staircases and hallways. Privacy in the single-family house grew as the presence of the public world diminished , and continued into the 20th century . Access across the boundary between the intimate domestic setting and the metropolitan was closely monitored; some houses adopted the invention of the intercom in 1920 and many had a designated room for books and art. Frank Lloyd Wright's proposal for *A Home in The Prairie Town (1901)* was a direct response to the growing demand for an architectural

housing typology that would protect the privacy of the individual and ensure him greater independence. Wright's design intentions included recessed entrances, low eaves and relatively small windows placed high above street level that offered 'absolute privacy' with respect to the general public and neighbouring houses[21]. He designed four houses which were set back from the property line and accessed by hidden pathways that led to the entrances so that the occupants could monitor the arrival of visitors without being seen. Taking the embodiment of surveillance into architecture one step further, Le Corbusier built a periscope that could survey all of Paris from his *Beistegui Apartment (1929)*. Strategies that ranged from general site planning to the addition of specific appendages reinforced the debate that the house was a mechanism of categorization that classified the morality of the surrounding landscape[22]. However, had the idealized isolation envisioned by Wright become associated with alienation as much as independence? We often ignore how close the concept of privacy is to isolation and inevitably to loneliness.

Is isolation merely privacy gone sour?

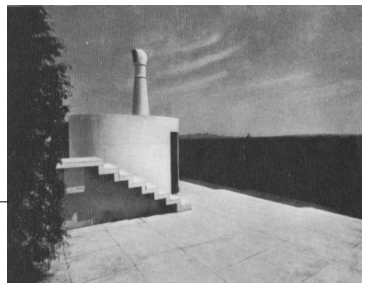


Fig. 1.8 The terrace of the Beistegui Apartment (1929) in Paris by Le Corbusier

Five decades later Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe's would defy the conventions of isolation by providing a completely transparent view into the *Farnsworth House (1951)*, allowing the house and domesticity to become the subject of judgment. Even though the project itself was sited in a secluded location, the strong statement of an apparent transparency evident in modern domesticity carried through to architects and the public, who were both enlightened and slightly unnerved. The intentional invitation to the passerby to look into the house fuelled society's anxiety and was only further aggravated by the alarming predictions in George Orwell's *1984* of a faceless public governed by Big Brother. In her critique *The Threat to the Next America*, Elizabeth Gordon, who like Orwell was concerned about the lack of a clear implementation of boundaries, criticized the house for being a "one-room house that is nothing but a glass cage on stilts"[23]. Perhaps it held some truth, for ultimately Mrs. Farnsworth moved out of the house complaining, "The house is transparent, like an X-ray"[24].

The role of a window which was conventionally used as a device controlled by the occupant to monitor public space began to change drastically to become an inviting opportunity for the public to view into intimate private space. The revelation of the true nature of the window, as an ambiguous and uncanny interface that played with the honour and shame of domesticity, was simultaneously causing a stir in European society. At the beginning of the 19th century, Dutch architecture was noted for its shutter-less windows and the use of so-called "spying" mirrors that were fixed to window frames so that street life could be secretly monitored without the ostentatious image of the woman leaning out of the window [25]. Irene Cieraad in the essay *Dutch Windows* documents the development of the bay window in the 1920s, which allowed the window to become more of a notable presence on the street and gave the occupant of the house the opportunity to use the watering of the potted plants as an excuse to loiter at the windowsill [26]. Leading up to WWII, society witnessed a dramatic violation of the integrity of private life when the window's intended use gradually reversed, transforming the role of the occupant from a shy housewife to the exhibitionistic prostitute. Window prostitution began in the 1930s, with prostitutes seated at the window cordially inviting men in by gently knocking on the windowpane, and grew into an erotic performance space in Amsterdam's infamous Red Light District.

Inevitably becoming a social norm, the transparent relationship between the occupants of the house and the people on the street was adopted by post-modern architecture in its liberal use of glass facades. Jean Baudrillard's analyses the consequences of blurring the boundaries between private and public life for modern man, noting that:

> *What characterizes him is less the loss of the real, the light years of estrangement from the real, the pathos of distance and radical separation, as it is commonly said: but, very much to the contrary, the absolute proximity, the total instantaneity of things, the feeling of no defense, no retreat.*[27]

By giving the public an uninterrupted view into the interiority and intimacies of private life, Baudrillard determines that the individual has lost his sense of self. *The Ecstacy of Communications* is a powerful critique on the extent that information and technology disregarded the conventional interface between the house and the city. Baudrillard is nostalgic of an era when the symbols of this boundary were the 'mirror' and the 'scene' – metaphors for ambiguity and personal interaction that held a provocative spiritual transcendence. According to him, these mysteries are replaced by the 'screen' and the 'network' that flatten the interaction between public and private spaces into a generalized interface where actions are blatantly 'laid out' rather then 'projected' [28].

Baudrillard identifies three culprits of 20th century culture that have led to the extroversion of all interiority – the formal and operational abstraction of elements and functions, the displacement of bodily movements, and lastly, the miniaturization of processes in time and space[29]. The landscape, the body and time are replaced by a series of instances that are governed by the media for instant gratification leaving no place for secret and speculation.

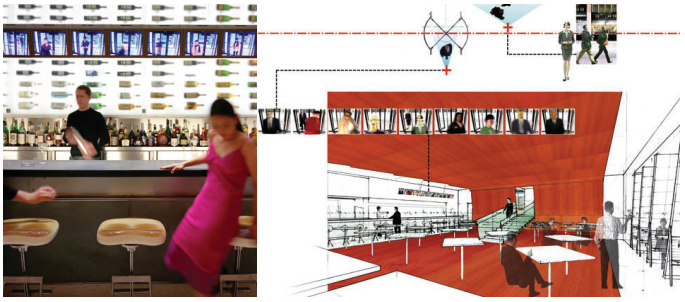
> *"The curtain wall has created an overexposed world which leaves only a few shadow zones of privacy. Today, glass is neither the euphoric arterial that promises to seamlessly connect private and public space, nor the menacing surface defining controller and controlled. The pathologies have inverted: the fear of being watched has transformed into the fear that no one may be watching. The glass has assumed the role of a representational surface, a performance screen."*[30]

We brag about living in an era of complete openness and heightened communication; an era of virtual forums, instant messaging and live broadcasts. Information is being exchanged at a remarkable pace across continents. Stefana Broadbent, a cognitive scientist who has spent decades observing people's use of technology, recently determined that the internet, the text message, the cell phone call – all instruments of instantaneous and constant social interaction – had an immense impact on the development of intimate relationships between people[31]. One architectural example is Diller Scofidio + Renfro's restaurant project *The Brasserie (2000)*. Located in the Seagram Building in New York, the project has allowed virtual boundaries to take precedent over the conventional rules of physical boundaries between private and public space. In the place of windows that connect to the street, the architect installed a large plasma screen over the bar that receives close-up images of people as they walk through a sensor rigged to the revolving front door. The patrons of the restaurant can observe each other at close proximity without ever making direct contact. The video portraits are continuously changing; the most recent assumes the first position and the oldest drops away when all fifteen spots have been filled.

Commenting on the nonchalant permeability of another project, Maas from MVRDV, refers to the floor-to-ceiling front street-facade of the project *Double House (1994)* :

Putting the inside, even your own, on display seems a very modern topic. It might be perverse but it has similarities with the mixture of privacy and publicness these days: walking on the zebra crossing and listening to the love conversation of the neighbour who is phoning his girlfriend, the way people show their privacy on the television in order to attract attention. In such a condition the ancient limitations between privacy and publicity seem to be irrelevant.[32].

Has the possibility of digital exposure constrained or broadened one's sense of self?[33].



00:14 documents are picked up and delivered all day
02:18 no one has entered the frame since he disappeared last Fall
04:37 he centres himself in the frame with his trophies neatly behind him

06:52 she removes an object from a brown paper bag and centres it under her desk light
26:35 at any given time half the office is hidden from the view : the left more than the right
22:07 she uses her hand as an iron to press everything flat

a scripted live video feed of the facade of Moscone Convention Centre West in San Francisco, CA.

The private realm is prodded and poked in a manner that we would have once considered obscene. Today, complete access to the private realm of the house has developed a de-sensitized world where few things 'shock' us. This is a world of reality TV shows, of daily blogs and of sex tapes. In an era of expanding digital technologies, I wonder whether the culture of self-exposure is a function of the subject's willing abdication to the watchful eye or rather the symptom of the need, distorted or deformed as it may be, to be related to others. We have moved so far from each other, that perhaps we now long to observe and watch. Are we witnessing the end of interiority as we know it, or simply a change in how it is conceived – a shift from the notion of spatial depth to the idea of representation?

The modern transformation of the house produces a space that is defined by shifting boundaries – the public space in its traditional forum of a square, a crowd, and an audience is now transmitted via the media into the privacy of the home. Perhaps this explains why Roland Barthes writes: "The age of photography corresponds precisely to the eruption of the private into the public, or rather to the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private: the private is consumed as such, publicly"[34]. The notion of privacy has evolved from being a defensive attitude (privacy FROM) that needs to be protected from 'the other' to becoming permissive (privacy TO). The notion of privacy has not been lost, it has changed its form. That is to say, the world today is so accessible to both private and public spaces that the only way to preserve the individual's privacy is to manage the public's perception of the individual[35]. This deliberate attempt to set up a system of appearances is called 'publicity'. It requires a carefully rehearsed frame of mind.

Christian Metz, a French film critique, describes one way of using the mechanics of voyeurism to establish privacy in the domestic environment:

> *It is essential ... that the actor should behave as though he were not seen (and therefore as though he did not see his voyeur), that he should go about his ordinary business and pursue his existence as foreseen by the fiction of the film, that he should carry on with his antics in a closed room, taking the utmost care not to notice that a glass rectangle has been set into one of the walls, and that he lives in a kind of aquarium.*[36].

Does architecture also manipulate the way we perceive ourselves? The following chapters will explore how the conventions of the single-family house can be reconfigured so that it becomes a playground made up of a series of public and private spaces that stage experience rather than formality. The Chosen-Family House will allow for the construction, the enactment and perhaps even the destruction of hidden boundaries, customary boundaries and tangible boundaries. In the confrontation of differing cultural perceptions of domesticity, will the occupants of this ambiguous territory of 'awkward moments' be able to define, test and realize what it means to have privacy?

Fig. 1.9 The entrance of The Double House (1997) by MVRDV

Fig. 1.10 The digital installation in the Brasserie(2003) by Diller Scofidio + Renfro

Fig. 1.11 The extent of video surveillance from the film Overexposure(1994-2003) by Diller Scofidio + Renfro

But I want to know where the architecture is to enable and to encourage experimentation in different ways of living out what we call the domestic. Where are the spaces for other forms of social relations, other ways of reproducing our lives, different forms of domesticity, different social geographies of domesticity and intimacy? We need an architecture to deal with that. [1]

At the RIBA Architecture Gallery's series *The intimate space: reinventing the house*, the social scientist Doreen Massey demanded that architects step up to the challenge of providing housing that responds directly to the radically changing world of domesticity in contemporary society. Massey quotes the architect Aldo Van Eyck's obituary to remind us of the limitations of treating the house as an isolated form, bereft of unexpected activity. It reads: "a house must be like a small city if it is to be a real home, a city like a large house if it is to be a real home"[2]. Massey argues that the social encounters of the globalized city, a place where different trajectories meet, is very much like the new dynamics of the contemporary household in that they are both controlled by a system of flows that are negotiated, rather than static physical boundaries.

Massey is concerned that domestic architecture (despite the fantastic technological change in this century alone) still only encases "the same utterly conservative social relations"[3]. This same concern is addressed by Terence Ripley in *The un-private house*, a project documenting modern houses that have begun to reconfigure spaces in the house to allow for "non conformist invasions from the outside world"[4]. Both Massey and Ripley tackle the notion of nostalgia stubbornly holding on to familiar sets of relationships – as a key challenge to the evolution of the house. The strengths of nostalgia, in its capacity to enter a remembered or imagined place making a house into a home, should not be completely discarded, but instead, it could be harnessed to build houses that are both recognizable and progressive. The key is to test the limits of familiar building elements, and to re-represent them so that they are experienced in a way that is both provocative and generative of change.

It is time to move on.

What is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body, imagination, and environment. [5]

Architects intend to design buildings that are made for people. The challenge of this profession lies in its ability to tap into a particular need and to provide an infrastructure that encourages, rather than prevents, its growth. This is a seemingly simple task, but has proven to be a difficult one. The following examines precedents and explores ways in which the architect can represent a house that embodies our evolving society. The discussion primarily argues that we need to find a new means of visually portraying the architecture of the house that also illustrate the dynamics involved in domestication.

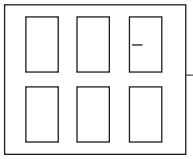
The first responsibility of the architect is to reinforce the importance of the symbiotic relationship between the house and its occupants. No one understands this better than Juhani Pallasma, who, in *The Eyes of the Skin*, argues that architects have lost an intimacy with the buildings they design by responding primarily to architectural theory rather than simple human existential questions. Pallasma criticizes the architect's attitude towards the process of design which is masked by a compulsion to compose plans from above rather than handling the project almost like a pebble in the palm of one's hand. Naked skin strips away the appearance of the material and focuses on the history of the object – why is the pebble smooth?[6]. His description of the time taken in understanding the purpose of the pebble provokes an approach to the process of design that feeds off of the innate rawness of direct contact. Pallasma's sensitivity to the touch of the body, to the shadows of the imagination and to sounds of company or solitude – intangible dimensions of holistic experience that are rarely translated into architectural drawings – can be superimposed onto the conventional form of the house to provoke an enriched version of its possibilities.

In the cultural imagination and in every day life, the image of the house, the feeling of home, and the nostalgia of family are never very far. They are held tightly in the palm of our hands. The single-family house, in its most recognizable form, has been frequently reconsidered over architectural history as the most powerful form to reconfigure the domestic landscape, but perhaps today having become too familiar to the designer, it is undermined and too often neglected. The foolishness of stubbornly following comfortable design rules instead of preparing for social change is best represented in Buster Keaton's 23-minute 1920s movie *One Week* – a story of a young couple's tremendous determination to complete building a prefabricated house, despite having all the right parts and the wrong manual of directions, only to result in a hopeless series of deconstructive and dynamic forms that are uninhabitable.

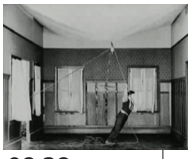
Fig.2.0 The spacing between shadows of the single-family house

06:32

03:48



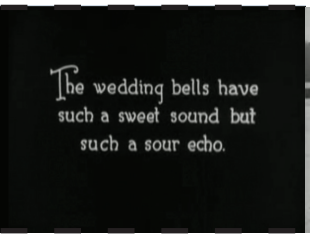
the difference between a window and a door



08:38

elastic floors

00:27 02:58 04:45 05:02



what is the point of the wall ?

ARCHITECT

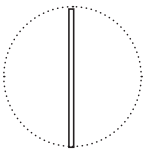
DIRECTIONS

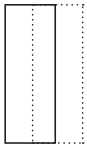
failing to imitate conventional form

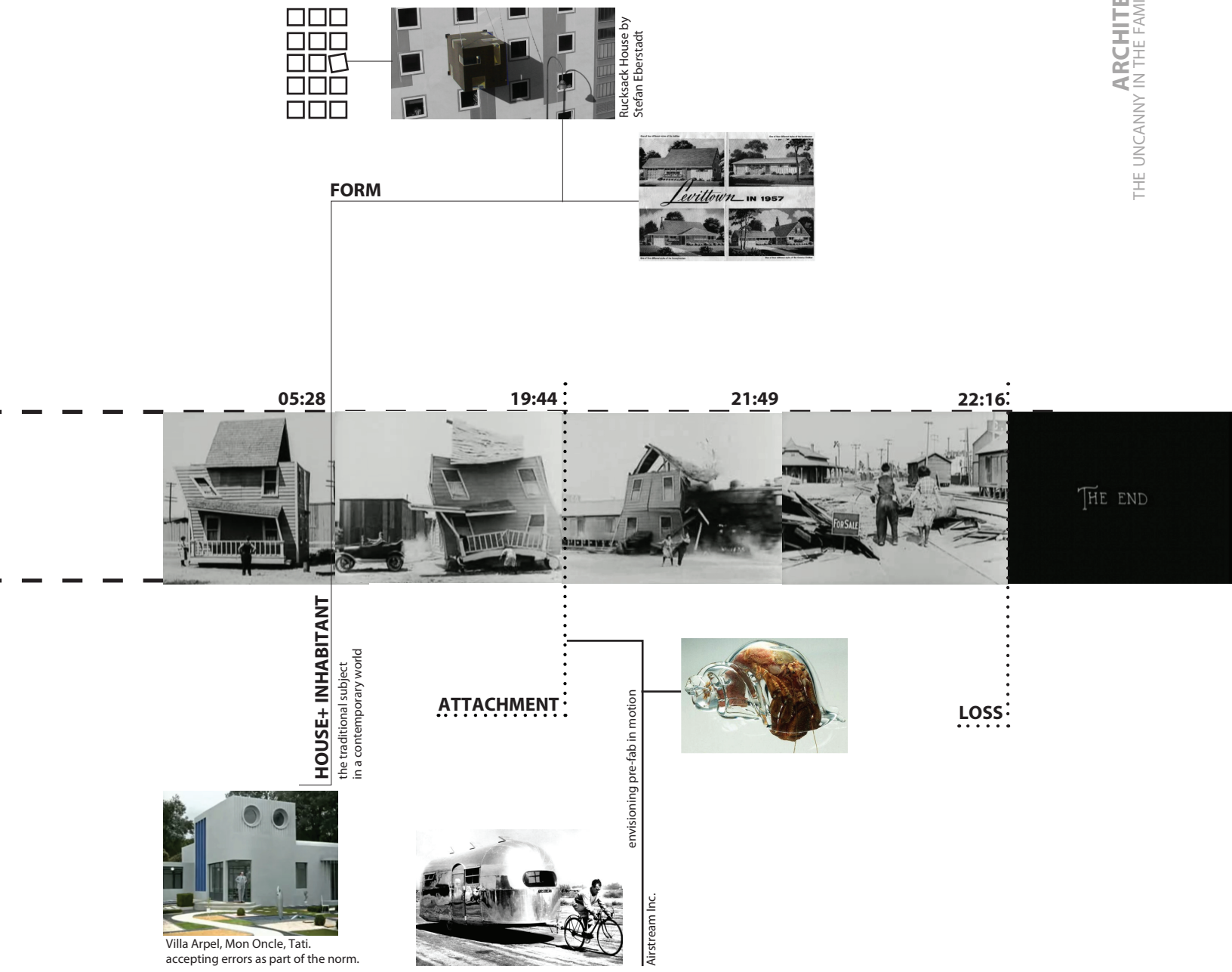
06:17

07:50

00:39





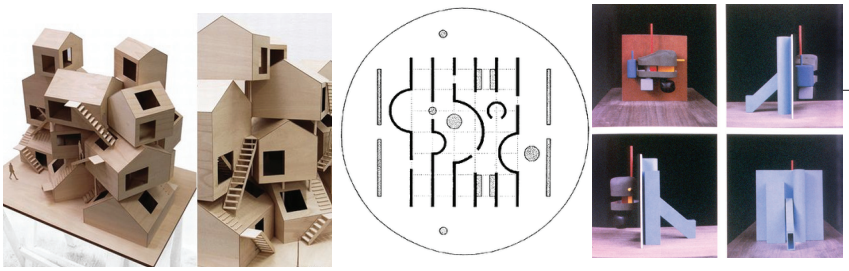


The caricature of the conventional house represented by Keaton's outrage persistently attempts to negate any possibly unified or totalizing image. A cruel metaphor of the stagnant nature of the single family house, it questions our idea of what a house should look like and whether we still need the 'parts and patterns' we prescribe a house should have. The conventional role of each architectural element of the house – wall, roof, floor, window and door – is reversed, and at times even omitted, thus allowing the space within the house to become a playing field of new function and program[7].

Fig.2.1 Analysis of movie stills from Keaton's One Week (1920)

The second responsibility of the architect is to play with what we know about architecture and to represent it in a way that makes architecture both relevant and challenging. In the early 20th century, modernism's aggressive encouragement to explore the 'new' was a step forward for the repressed nature of contemporary cultural imagination. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier disregarded contemporary trends of passive social architecture and led an era that indulged in the power of the body and the individual. Alienation was given virtue. By the 1970s, architects like Aldo Rossi and Robert Venturi took a more holistic approach to architecture by re-establishing the role of memory, vernacular associations and contextualism into their work. In the late 1980s, the sublime, the abject and the grotesque returned to characterize the world. In *Architecture and Disjunction*, Bernard Tschumi summarizes 20th century architectural discussion by explaining that "shock (was) still all we (had) left to communicate in a time of generalized information"[8]. The use of familiar and unfamiliar forms in architectural history is not systematic and therefore makes it difficult to determine what comes next. The pendulum swings both ways with equal aggression. What we can learn, however, is that architecture can be successfully used as a medium to jar a docile society by provoking interaction. Even if it means instilling conflict until it becomes more accepted.

Tolerance is one of Canada's biggest strengths, and arguably also its greatest angst-inducer. Today, Canadian architects are building for a young nation that enjoys both the particularities and the peculiarities of a rich cultural and linguistic mix from more than 200 countries of origin. What better place to aggressively influence the conventional choreography of human interaction than in the confines of the single-family house. Rather than taking a hands-off approach, the Chosen-Family House will create a playing field where the confrontation and clash of cultural elements can generate 'the new'. Given familiar forms of architecture that can generate unfamiliar experiences, Canadian households can be provided with a firm platform to have the courage to leap off from. As we have seen in the previous chapter, sharing space between kin, friend and stranger creates moments of both well-being and confusion that generate experiences of familiarity and unfamiliarity. Designing with an intention to balance both phenomena requires a lesson from Stephen Kellert who, in *Building for Life*, refers to Grant Hildebrand's ideas on 'prospect and refuge' to explain an innate human condition that embodies the ability to comprehend distant points of interests while maintaining a point of reference in close proximity.



> *Though the house is an area of security and peace for man, he would pine away if he locked himself in his house to escape the dangers of the world outside; the house would soon become a prison. He must go out into the world to transact his business and to fulfil his role in life. Both security and danger belong to man, and consequently both areas of lived-space, as life develops in the tension between outer and inner space.*[9]

Providing a connection, whether physical or perceptual, to the outer environment, through light or spacious dimensions for example, allows the occupant to fulfil the need to reach beyond the confines of the immediate physical surroundings. A simple square opening in a wall could offer the occupants of the house the opportunity to both extend the body's access to a space beyond physical reach yet without leaving them fully exposed. While protected and intimate enclosures at the end of a familiar path offer security, opportunity rises from ambiguous territories that allow for exploration. Enticement, which reflects the desire to explore, discover and expand one's knowledge, is a characteristic that has proven crucial to human adaptation and development. Provoking a sense of curiosity in the occupant of the house is a key idea in designing a house to be shared between people; a curiosity to expand one's world to the other. We seek out suspenseful spaces, we yearn for uncertainty in our environment. The work of the architect Robert Venturi in the 1960s promoted ambiguous composition as a legitimate design approach: he considered our perception of the world as a series of hinged shots; a pattern of spaces that leads, and sometimes teases and taunts, the individual[10]. The creation of vantage points that guide the occupant through the different rooms of the house engages their imagination which then stretches the physical space and extends beyond its actual walls. It allows for complete expansion. In a similar spirit, Christopher Hussey in *The Pictureseque* explains:

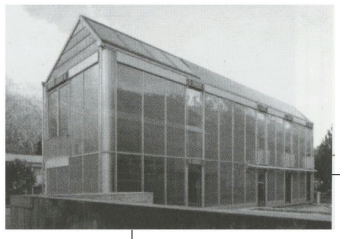
> *The impulse of the traveler for pleasure, apart form gain, is, to satisfy his craving for the ideal, or to drug his craving by the belief that it is being satisfied ... But, as Giplin puts it, it "amuses" him to pursue. It is the expectation of new scenes, perhaps the ideal scene, opening to his view that sets him off and keeps him going. It is the Pleasure of Hope, per se.*[11]

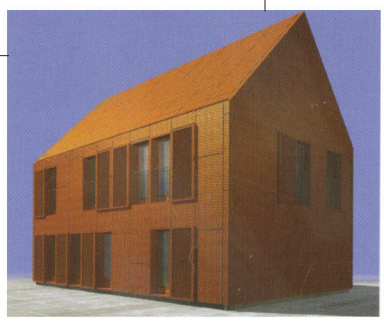
Creating an architecture that engrosses the mind and heightens the senses is immensely satisfying to inhabit. The uncanny nature of the Chosen-Family House transforms the conventions of domestic interiors by allowing architectural elements to generate, guide and resolve interaction between individuals and the house.

Fig.2.2 A collective housing project made up of five dwelling units in Tokyo by Sou Fujimoto

Fig.2.3 "Labyrinthine clarity" in the Kröller-Müller Sculpture Garden (1967) by Aldo Van Eyck

Fig.2.4 John Hejduk's Wall House 2(2001) by John Hejduk





We have covered the universe with drawings that we have lived. [12]

Let us begin with what we recognize on a piece of paper to be the single-family house. The promise of the New World is traced in a child's honest drawing of a house: five straight lines, two equal sized windows, one large door and a chimney. Perhaps accompanied with a bright green tree and a carefully drawn fence, finished with a group of smiling stick figures and a big sun. This is what we have come to know. From as far back as we can remember, the single-family house evokes a domestic culture with a "traditional" appearance developed over many years of civilization. We seem to be stuck in a repetitive mode of representation that perhaps limits the imagination from extending past recognizable patterns of form. The discussion of modern architecture involves a conversation between space and representation. Instead of thinking of architecture merely as a system of representation that is understood in a series of drawings, photographs and stories, it is important to give the building itself credit as a symbol of representation.[13]

Representation is made up of two parts: a subject and an object. Architecture has traditionally assumed the role of the unified object while its users are the subject. Modernity has allowed architecture to be a catalyst in human interaction to the extent that, today, it can be weighted as a subject in its own right. Following the idea of the *Raumplan*, Adolf Loos, a figure of mastery in dramatizing domestic space himself, constructed spaces without having completed working drawings and only finalized the design with amendments he made on site[14]. The house had as much authority over him as he did over the design. Like the occupants of the house, "he is both constructed, controlled and fractured by the project"[15].

The following discussion reveals the extent to which a playful and offbeat character to an architect's conventional methods of representation – whether it be experiential drawings, orthographic drawings, and digital media – can successfully convey the social dynamics within the house. By incorporating fiction with technical drawing styles, the precedent works below allow for social relationships, such as invisible moments of negotiation shared between occupants, to be translated directly into the walls and floors of the house. What is more, each author begins to reveal the extent to which the architecture of the house itself becomes an active character among the occupants, orchestrating moments of interaction.

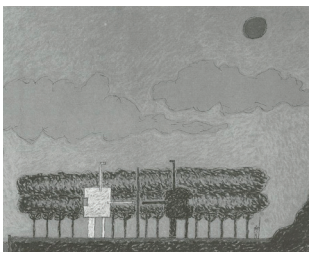
Architects are organically responsible today to have their language run parallel with their structure ... I cannot do a building without building a repertoire of characters, of stories, of language, it's all parallel. It's not just building per se. It's building worlds.[16]

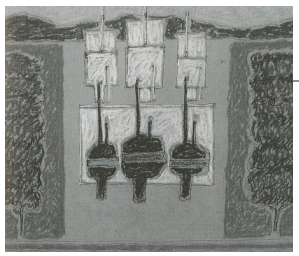
Fig.2.5 Single-family house in Switzerland (1996) by Dietrich Schwartz

Fig.2.6 "Groeten uit Lutjebroek" (1994) by Erik Weeda

Fig.2.7 Icon House(1997) by Jumeau Paillard

We understand the house the way we are used to seeing it on paper – a finite and clean drawing, organized in a seemingly balanced plan with an upright flattened facade. However we also understand the house by the way we walk through it, even though we often walk quickly through it. Lars Lerup, an American





architect and author attempts to narrow the psychological distance between the occupant and the house. His method of representation is best demonstrated in a series of fascinating drawings accompanied by the stories of fictional occupants, aptly-named *Planned Assaults*. According to Lerup, to inhabit a home you must allow the architecture to lead you by the hand through each room. Lerup puts an emphasis on slowing down the pace of this walk so that there is time to absorb the characteristics of the architecture around you – whether it be door or the position of the keyhole. Referencing the Beaux-Arts's *marche* and Le Corbusier's concept of *promenade architecturale*, Lerup uses architecture, along with the inhabitants, as a medium that moves through the house[17]. He suggests that the architecture of the house animates and provokes social dynamics of the occupants, therefore becoming a character in the household in its own right.

Two characters inhabit Lerup's house – the occupants and the architecture. The rigor and sensitivity in his drawings do not undermine the architecture of the houses, but instead, gives the architecture a prominent identity and its own elaborate personality. Lerup begins to playfully balance the familiar and the unfamiliar in the house, whether it be in occupation or construction. The occupants of each house are marked by emotions and dialogue, rather than names and physical characteristics, therefore allowing their existence to represent a relatable truth that transcends social boundaries. By using fictional storytelling as a means of communicating the familiar needs and demands of the single-family house, Lerup offers an approach that is thought-provoking without losing credibility. To critics of this seemingly 'fantastical' approach to architecture that may deem it as non-functionalist, I respond by saying that perhaps, these, like the sublime works of others like John Hejduk, are "a logical architecture of 'possible worlds'"[18]. Neither unreal nor surreal, these works belong to an invisible world that lives parallel to our domesticity and holds unusual amounts of joy and positivity.

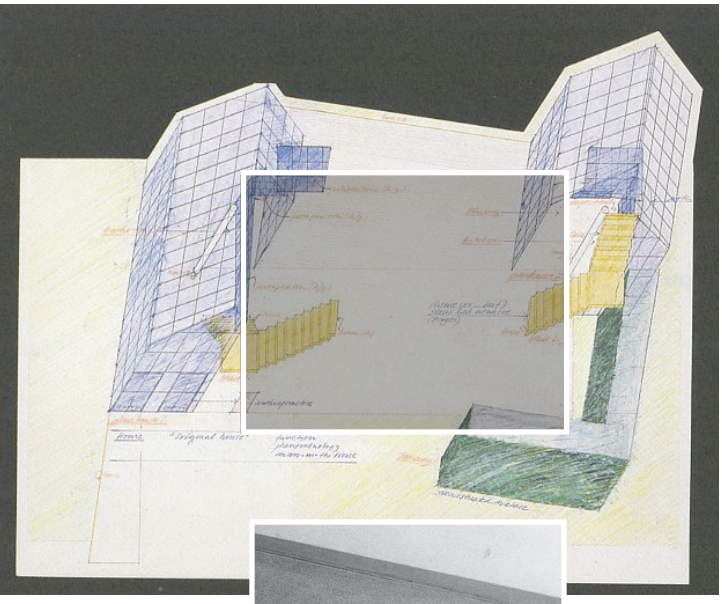
Planned Assaults is a collection of works that draws and narrates three housing projects, they all take the familiar form of the single-family house and place it in playful scenarios -- a place where storytelling of the bizarre lives of the occupant are given equal weight to permanent and physical descriptions of the house. Each project challenges the function and acceptable social and economic structures of the contemporary house, thus encouraging new ways of thinking about the house without losing the integrity of the familiar form. The shape of the traditional house – drawn by a child's hand with four walls and pitched roof – is maintained to provide a secure and suitable platform for Lerup's "assaults"[19]. Each house proposal challenges the conventional use and function of individual architectural elements, from the chimney to the doorknob, through exaggeration and inversion. Dimension, scale and proportion are maintained so as to provide a platform to control the connection between the 'dream' and reality.

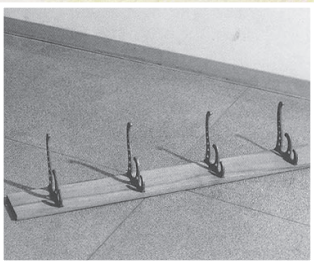
This is one of these moments:

Fig.2.8 Between the two houses stands a high wall that the occupants use to watch each other. The spyhole and a periscope embedded in the exterior wall allows the occupants to indulge in being Peeping Toms. This is "Good Neighbour House" by John Hejduk

Lars Lerup: *The Nofamily House (1972-1978)*, Unbuilt
Pacing the occupant by reconfiguring the use of architectural elements.

The assault of *The Nofamily House* is on our perceptions of the single-family house and the conventional family. The project is introduced in the form of two identical houses in a familiar suburban elevation. On a closer look, the houses are actually transparent glass structures, minimally drawn and stripped bare to reveal a haunting emptiness. The glasshouses are separated by an unidentifiable block of architecture. Ironically, this yellow 'lump' is detailed with precision, marking it as the focal point of the project. In plan, the largely introverted 'lump' is the pivotal place of program that stirs social dynamics between the husband, wife and son; providing a place for confrontation and interaction. The plan for the 'lump' appears functionally logical at first glance with the appropriate program of living, dining and kitchen, but the more you look at it, the more frustrating it gets. Again, the project stresses the importance of taking time to move through space, both while observing it on paper in the form of a drawing or walking beside it in the room. Lerup teases his audience. The house is slightly off center, has slanted walls, and openings that you can't walk through. It transforms the familiar functions of domestic territory into "a terra firma traversed by paths and checkered by domains of use, but intertwined with margins of wilderness in which 'use' in the common sense is of little importance"[20]. These are traps, minor objects of introspection: disruptive moments that expose the margins of the house which are rarely noticed with the hurried pace of daily narratives. [21]

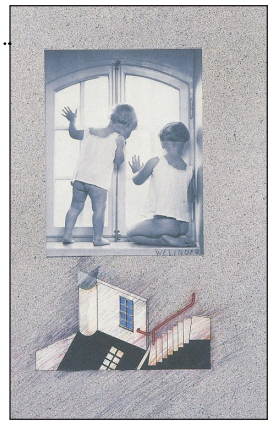


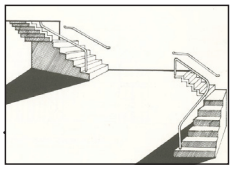


Trap Replica,
Duchamp 1964

The Fresh Window

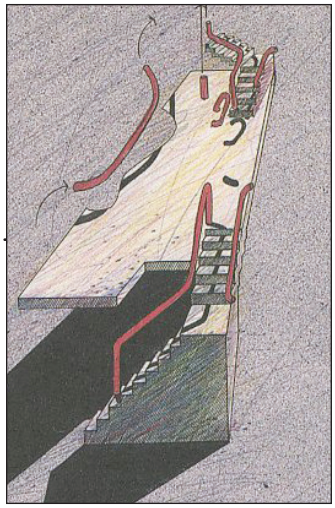
The Fresh Window, completely sealed in glass, is placed in the wall between the corridor and the master bedroom on the second floor. The purpose of the window is to look out at the view. Instead of being located where they are commonly found -- on the exterior wall of the house -- *The Fresh Window* invites the opportunity for the passerby in the corridor to look in, threatening the privacy of domesticity.





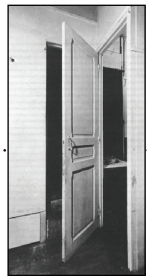
The Stair that Leads Nowhere

The stair leads nowhere. It is accessed by both the hallway and the bedroom, therefore making *The Useless Door* doubly useless. *The Stair that Leads Nowhere* is a static place to stay, rather than being a place of transition, and answers Georges Perec's loud cry: "We should learn to live more on staircases. But how?"[22]



The Liberated Handrail

The handrail is meant to be the most predictable fixture in a house: at a fixed height, with a fixed width, and always there when you need it as support. *The Liberated Handrail* begins at your fingertips at the bottom of the stairs but stops climbing parallel to the stairs at the second floor, before it abruptly ends. It is now above your head, and out of reach, leaving you unsure of your footing. The function is set adrift.



The Useless Door

There is a door on the second floor that leads to the bathroom. There is also an open corridor space right next to the door that leads to the bathroom. Unlike its Dadaist predecessor, *Duchamp's door*, *The Useless Door* firmly defies its function to be an object that opens and closes access to space.

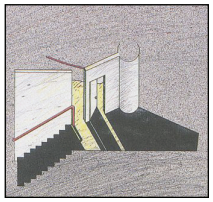
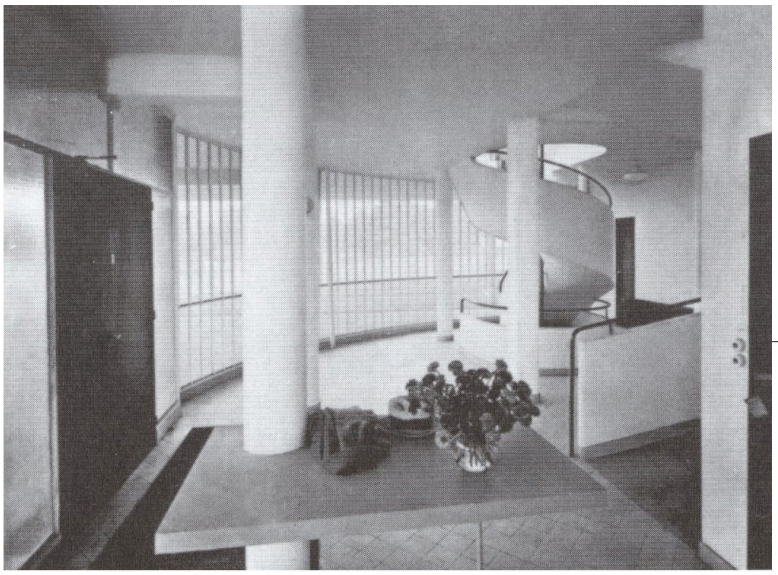


Fig.2.9 The Nofamily House by Lars Lerup

Despite the richness they bring to a project, speculative and experiential drawings are too quickly discarded in the design process and replaced by standardized drafting documents. This is largely due to the fact that imaginative drawings hold a type of knowledge that is marked with uncertainty rather than tangibility, and becomes something to doubt and, eventually, fear. One of the biggest challenges in designing a house is to find a medium that can both play with the architectural compositions of space and decipher the routines of everyday life. The unpredictable nature of human occupation in a room is often expressed in diagrams and sketches, while the location and placement of construction elements like walls and stairs are drawn in AutoCad. One is allowed to be free, the other controlled. What if the roles were reversed? Lars Lerup and John Hejduk have explored how architectural elements of the house can be given human characteristics and illustrated with a looseness that is evocative of inconsistency. Therefore, can human occupation in a room be manifested in a fixed set of rules and translated into an appropriate medium that would grant it more permanence?

The conventions of orthographic drawings readily allow professionals to dictate the space where daily activity occurs. It is a familiar means of representing housing configurations, but ironically it is resistant to the actual nature of inhabitation. There is a common professional mistrust for glossy magazines that blatantly omit people from the architecture. Even at the drafting table in Architecture School, the epitome of an appraised drawing is "clean and crisp", minimally rendered with shadows. We omit the details. While AutoCad drawings are instruments of precision and control, they are devoid of empathy and quickly forget the potential of possibilities that lie when a drawing is **misread**[23]. The strengths of an intricate drawing that obsessively documents the details of everyday life lie in its ability to involve the viewer by providing a page full of interpretations to react to. It is also important to understand how to effectively convey the unfamiliar under the guise of tradition and convention.



The work of Luke Bray and Rob Stevens, cited in the article *Drawing in Good Faith* by Adam Sharr, outlines the geometries of possessions found in student rooms in AutoCAD, giving the same weight to the intricacies of inhabitation as it does to the walls of the room. By drawing the fine grain details with AutoCAD, the traces of the occupants' lives become just as important as the structure of the house itself. Observing patterns in accurate documentation is perhaps the first step to understanding how to continue to build appropriately for people.

In *Privacy and Publicity,* Beatriz Colomina discuses the scrutiny of photography as a medium that discloses how a house is lived in, by examining the works of two great figures of the Modern movement-- Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier. For Adolf Loos, the tensions between the senses found in the experience of architecture could not adequately be translated by architectural drawings[24]. His critique of technical drawings and photography was based on the same principle that it was impossible to represent a complete sense of space in a two dimensional plane. He writes:

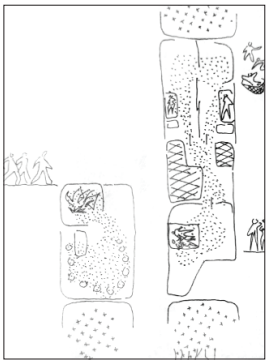
> *"It is my greatest pride that the interiors which I have created are totally ineffective in photographs. I am proud of the fact that the inhabitants of my spaces do not recognize their own apartments in the photographs, just as the owner of a Monet painting would not recognize it as Kastan's" [25].*

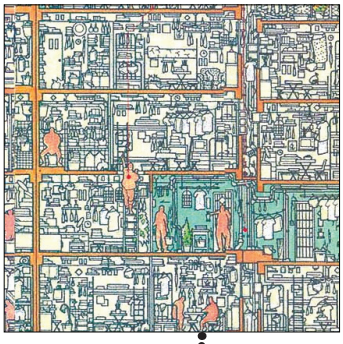
The photographs of Loos's interiors examine one room at a time and are deliberately composed in static positions with strategically placed unoccupied furniture that invites the viewer to "enter" the frame, and in doing so, makes it inhabitable [26]. Loos tampers with the production of photographs of his interiors so as to allow the viewer to experience the domestic environment. For example the obscure differences between openings and mirrors in his architecture is exaggerated by using optical illusions which he produced in the photograph by taking it at the precise point where the effect happens [27]. His intention is not to reproduce the identical experience, nor is it nostalgic of the "real", but instead to construct a new experience that is **only** found in the photograph. Other photographs of houses have additional adjustments such as embedded photomontages (as in the case of horizontal window of *the Khuner Villa*) and the removal of additional domestic objects such as rugs, plants and lamps.

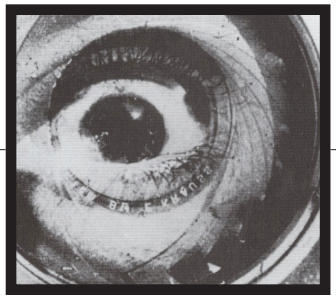
The photographs of Le Corbusier's houses are different. These houses seem to be disposed in a way that continuously throws the subject's gaze toward the periphery of the house. Each photograph is given more depth by including rooms in the distance and views into neighbouring corridor spaces. Hurried movement is emphasized in every frame. Personal objects – perhaps a hat, a package of cigarettes and a pair of sunglasses – are sparsely distributed on tables, and doors are left open to give the impression that someone has just come in and has already left. Unlike Loos's photographs that invite the viewer to 'stay' in the room, Corbusier's photographs follow the backs of people and scattered traces of

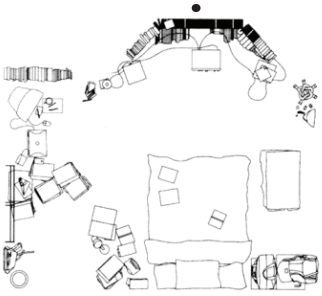
Fig.2.10 Apartment for Hans Brummel (1929) by Adolf Loos

Fig.2.11 Villa Savoye (1929) by Le Corbusier









inhabitation making both the occupant and the viewer become the voyeur[28]. Both architects bring mystery and ambiguity to their photographs, thus appropriately using photography as a means to enhance an experience that is real, rather than merely reproducing it.

However, can this approach survive an era that indulges in uninhibited observation and absolute documentation? Any provocative distance maintained between a drawn interpretation and reality is immediately reduced by the variety of technological methods of documentation made available today.

The AutoCad drawings produced by Bray and Stevens take a more aggressive and intrusive form in the exhibition *Plan* by Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga. The exhibition consists of a series of detailed photographs of 10 Warsaw-home interiors produced by compiling numerous photographs taken from a digital camera rigged to a track system on the ceiling. Each montage was then fitted into the familiar geometric layout of an apartment plan, rendered with white walls. The resulting stills are vertical plunges into the banalities of domestic life – unmade beds, dirty dishes and open books. It is simply a story of life, of every detail and a documentary of what you encounter within the walls of your home. It is never meant to be seen. However, there is something unusual about this exhibition of photographs that compels you to look deeper, further. It is either the unusual angle of observation or the mere fact that you are looking at something that you shouldn't be looking at. The sense of inherent intrusion in each view is conflicting and presents a perversity in both the viewer and the subject. A woman drapes herself over a soft armchair, naked, bending one knee, almost posing for the camera's eye - do the inhabitants desire self-exposure? Does the viewer have an abject fascination with the mundane details of other people's lives?

The omnipresent eye of digital technology in both private and public space intertwines the rush of excitement of spectacle with the conscious presence of surveillance. Contrary to Gaston Bachelard's declaration in *Poetics of Space* that "Being does not see itself"[29], the exhibition *Plan* peels away the layers of infrastructure to reveal lives that are in full view, exposing the very notion of 'being'. When approached with patience and curiosity, each montage reveals the subtle relationships between objects and the environment they inhabit. The drawings in this work move onto a more abstract level which assembles physical boundaries with fictional identities and perceptions, that create an autopoietic set of conditions rather than simply determining social patterns. It also begs to raise broader questions like Heidegger's: **"What is it to dwell?"** [30].

Fig.2.12 A map of a typical unit in Unité d'Habitation(1946) by Le Corbusier

Fig.2.13 The Plan(2004) by Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga

Fig.2.14 An illustrated section of Kowloon Walled City which housed 35,000 people in 2000 sqm.

Fig.2.15 The Mechanical Eye. A Still from The Man with the Movie Camera (1928-29) by Dziga Vertov

Fig.2.16 Drawings of Will's Room by Luke Bray and Rob Stevens at 1:1

"In The Beginning There Was Shelter." [1]

Recognizing the pivotal role of the house beyond its irreducible capacity of providing shelter, every generation of architects has re-examined the house in search of its appropriateness, both in terms of its nature and place, in mental and social life in contemporary society. The detached house, commonly found across North America, is understood as:

1. a single family house and
2. a private residence

Both terms allude to a predetermined set of physical and social conditions of isolation and exclusivity. The form of the house imposes a sense of formality on ways of living that are no longer suitable for the unpredictable patterns of contemporary households. Grappling with complexity and contradiction, domesticity today is realized through informal gestures of interaction and negotiation rather than a doctrine of acceptable social behaviour. Recent architectural debates on the evolution of domesticity, as well as the remarkable shifts in living arrangements across North America, offer an opportunity to chart unfamiliar territory and to generate significant architectural invention in housing typology.

Rather than approaching a project with a focus on construction and aesthetics, which more often than intended leads to yet another rendition of the ready-to-move-in 'model-house', architects are beginning to ask more important questions: who lives here, how do they live, and for how long? As Terence Riley points out: it is happening now, "more so in the last fifty (years) than in the preceding four centuries"[2]. The following chapter determines design strategies that reconfigure the conventional approach to the single-family house – in terms of its form, function and program – allowing it to develop from an isolated territory into a vehicle for social choreography.

an art exhibit for the 2009 Venice Biennale that was intended to stay afloat at the Venice Arsenale basin for six months. It sank shortly after installation.

FROM THE BOX TO THE RUBIC CUBE

Dwelling units are commonly understood as housing provided for 1, 2, 4, or 100 people: the studio apartment for the bachelor and the senior, the semi-detached home for the couple and the single-family suburban home for the young family. Multiples of single units placed in close proximity are given other names: the apartment building, the townhouse complex, and the duplex. With few variations, this has been the general rule.

The most popular form is undeniably the conventional detached house – the iconic image of status and virtue in North-American culture. Embedded with the nostalgic view of the strengths of the nuclear family, the house embodies a powerful image that still closely resembles post-WWII sentiments of owning your own plot of land and the promise of the "good life". In 1951, William Levitt took an unprecedented approach to private residential construction when he designed the 'model-home' for *Levittown* to satisfy the immediate problem of housing for a world that was emotionally and financially distraught. The attitudes of efficiency and affordability that came with capitalism developed a prototype that would gradually begin to objectify what today we believe to be the more subjective nature of the house. Even if it creates monotony and homogeneity, the demand for single-family houses still holds strong and the prototypes remain. Disguised as model homes, they still offer virtually the same composition, just bigger. While a large suburban house with a spacious front and back lawn may be attractive and attainable for some autonomous families, and even suitable for a certain time in the occupants' lives, many find that the house's inability to adapt makes it eventually unusable, unaffordable and even undesirable [3].

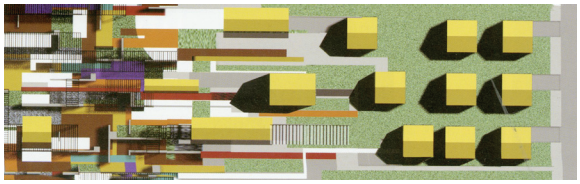
For non-autonomous households there is no recognizable type of housing that encourages joint living systems. For example, we can consider the form of the cooperative-house and the boarding house, a type of housing primarily associated with transitional living for students with similar incomes and lifestyles that foster mutual dependency in terms of companionship and resources. It is almost always a multi-levelled detached house, identical in form to its neighbours, different only in that each room is rented separately. The architecture of the house remains the same whether it is occupied by a nuclear family of four or seven graduate students. There is a certain wisdom in retaining the image of the single-family detached house in residential neighbourhoods that are suspicious of combining households and may mistakenly consider it as synonymous for being cramped together in insufficient space, not to mention the negative connotations that are associated with affordable housing[4]. However, can the structure of the detached dwelling be reconfigured so as to allow for an intricate combination of private and public spaces that fulfils the needs of the Chosen Family?

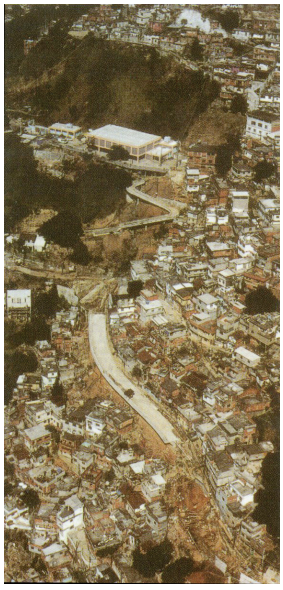
This discussion does not condemn the size of the detached form of the single-family house, nor is it a criticism on the lives lived in them, but rather, it questions whether the generalized approach to simple construction of large spacious model-homes can be supplemented with a sensitivity that is removed

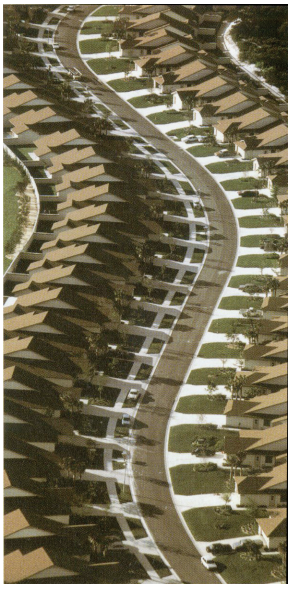
Fig.3.0 Mike Bouchet's art exhibit for the 2009 Venice Biennale

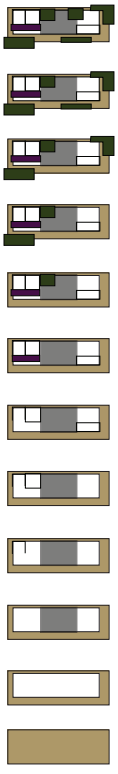
Fig.3.1 House additions to the model-homes in Levittown today

A 4m x 6m x 7m wooden frame with moveable walls that can be manipulated by the occupant, transforming this experimental house from a static object to a sequence of experiences.









from routine, inertia and mere mechanization. It is time to recognize that the 'hard' prefabrication of the "little boxes" of Malvina Reynold's pop song [5], which so many of us choose to live in, are resistant to change and are a commodity limited by specific functions. The ossification of the voluminous form of the detached house is frequently felt by families who are "coping" with change, whether it be the "empty-nest" syndrome or the expanding multigenerational family. The architecture that creates the form of the house allows for only one "trade up" solution[6]: either move to another house for more space or stay in a place you have grown to call home despite its inconveniences. Should this be acceptable? Akiko Busch in *The Geography of the Home* responds with a shared sentiment stating that the place where we live must be able to "fit" our lifestyle and she puts it aptly by saying: "and it goes without saying that this fit is almost always unlikely, idiosyncratic, personal" [7].

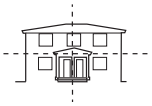
A project of notable interest in the study of mutating forms is Teddy Cruz's project *Casa Familiar (2003-6)* at the border of San Diego and Tijuana. Combining two radically different cultural approaches to the form of a house – the puritan urbanism of gated communities with informal settlements that thrive on being hybrid – the project searches for a form that can produce an integrated and flexible landscape. The intentions behind the project are to re-program wasted spaces of the Californian suburban plot that are derived from strict housing by-laws such as setbacks and driveways, so that they may include the benefits of multifunctional spaces that increase density and character to a block, similar to the vivacious alleyways of Mexico. In a parcel where existing zoning allows only three units of housing, the project proposes (through negotiated exterior walls and by sharing kitchens) twelve affordable housing units that are tactically interwoven with social service infrastructure to provide a catalyst that will encourage an interdependent system of living. The scale of this urban project is relevant to the dimensions of the detached house in that it brings to attention the strengths of informal spaces in cohabitation. *Casa Familiar* takes a special delight in the unexpected places where domesticity occurs in shantytowns and makes a commentary on the sterility of the structure of North American houses[8]. This criticism is not directed to the detached forms of the house, but rather to its volumetric structuring which reduces the opportunities for spontaneous program. The Chosen Family House harnesses the character of *Casa Familiar* by developing a rich fabric of interlocking and overlapping suites within one plot of land; perhaps this is what Aldo Van Eyck intended when he suggested we build small cities in large houses [9].

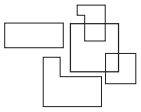
Fig.3.2 The "Gucklhuph" (1993) designed by Hans Peter Wörndl

Fig.3.3 Casa Familiar(2003-06) by Teddy Cruz.

60.0%

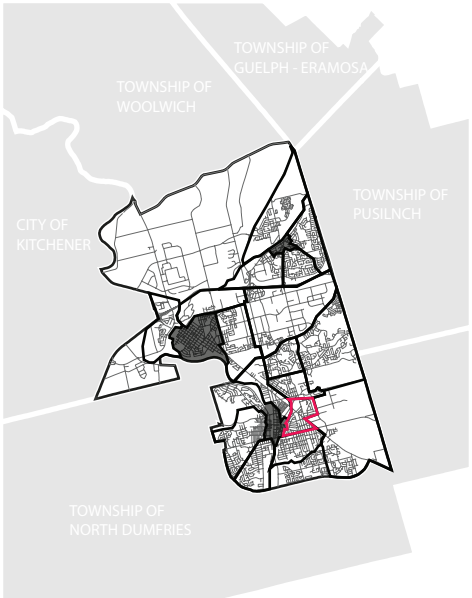
18.2%





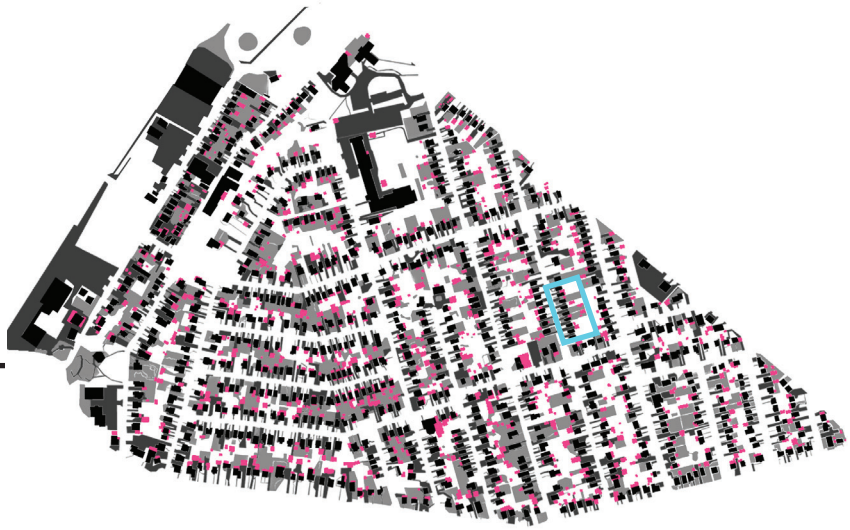
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Site:
Lincoln Oaks Neighbourhood:
an autopoietic residential community

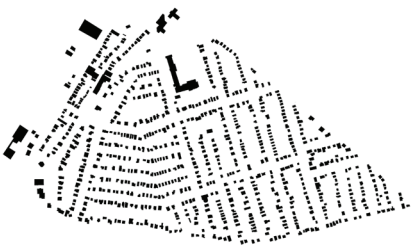


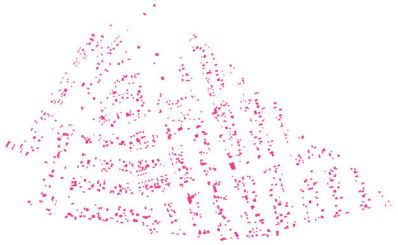
City of Cambridge core areas
Designated neighbourhoods
Lincoln Oaks neighbourhood

Industrial
Institutional
Commercial
Medium high residential
Low density residential
Lowell St. Site



planned versus rogue





built form | add-ons: bump-outs, wings, trailers, extensions etc.

official access | claimed territory: patios, gardens, pools, decks etc.

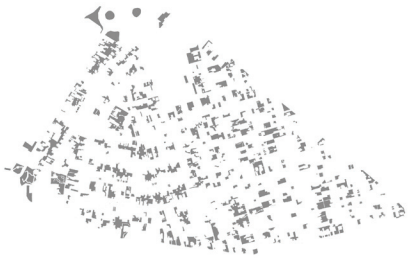
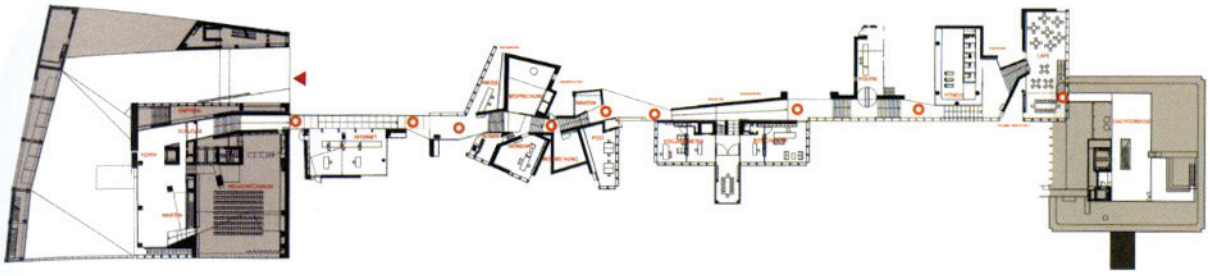
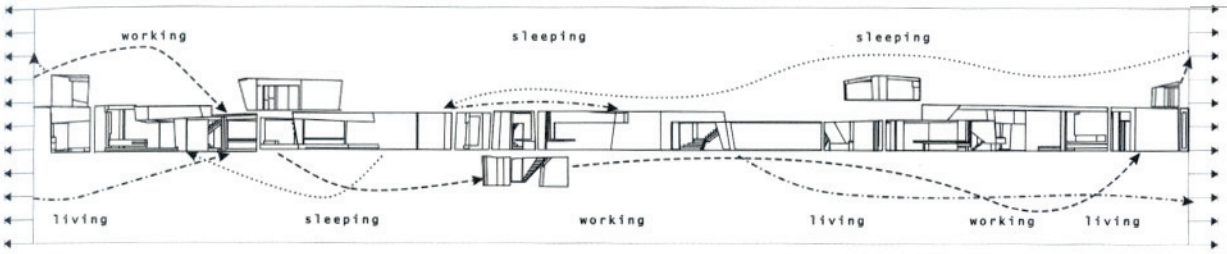


Fig.3.4 Types of Housing

Fig.3.5 Site Analysis

Fig.3.6 Neighbourhood: Fact and Fiction




working
sleeping
sleeping
living
sleeping
working
living
working
living

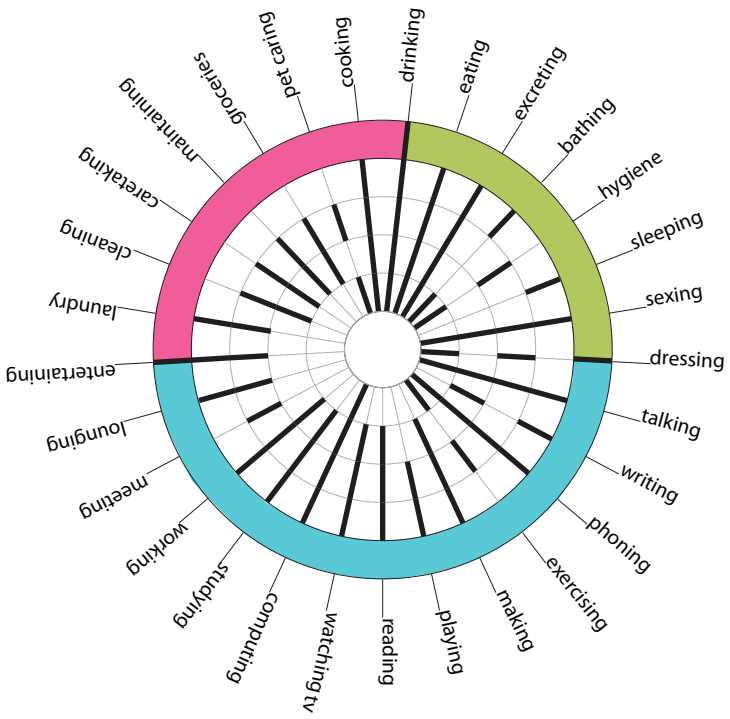
FROM THE LINE TO THE MOBIUS STRIP

We have witnessed an evolution of the function of the house from a place of presentation in the grandeur of Louis XV to a place of necessity in Le Corbusier's "machine of living". Today, the formalities of presentation between public and private spheres once designated by a ceremonial gradation of rooms have given way to a more ambiguous set of conditions that deal directly with social confrontation. Also, primary functions of "eat, live and sleep" have expanded to accommodate 24 hour transitory lifestyles of work and leisure. The house is no longer merely a purpose driven space between arrival and departure; instead it has begun to develop into a system of flows where occupants live out the particularities and the peculiarities of their lives.

The house is traditionally experienced in a linear manner. The visitor is led from the periphery to its core, from the public into the private. It is a structured progression that is riddled with formality and custom. Taeg Nishimoto's *Plot House (1961)* tests the "hard-line" boundaries within the house by enabling transparencies in the architecture to become a tool for casual interactions between occupants: "When I see the shadow of her robe hanging on the bedroom sliding door, I know she is sleeping"[10]. As spheres of work and daily life are reintegrated we can logically expect the sharp distinction between private and public space to be blurred and traditional boundaries to continue to become less and less definitive. Movement, in the very style of Lars Lerup's unbuilt work, is the choreographed catalyst in the house that allows the occupants to live seamlessly between work and family.

UN Studio's *Mobius House (1998)* is a key example of a project that heightens the condition of "living as continuous difference"[11] by encouraging activities that are not traditionally associated with domesticity to infiltrate the home. What is revolutionary about the *Mobius House* is the manner in which the architecture indulges in sculpting spaces to allow for dualities commonly found in the house to occur side-by side: public + private, masculine + feminine, action + repose, work + leisure. The form and circulation of the house is derived from its very name – the mathematical model of a strip twisted and joined with no beginning and no end – and follows two parallel trajectories of a couple living together, tracing when they meet and when they are apart. The two main materials – concrete and glass – embody the movement through the house by mirroring its character and moving either one in front of each other or switching positions depending on the program of the immediate. The concept of the house as a contained form that is experienced in a linear manner from beginning to end, is replaced by a continuous flow of activity. Perhaps dwelling in such a house would feel like moving from room to room in search for space that satisfies your particular need, at that specific hour.

Fig.3.7 Mobius House (1998) by UN Studio

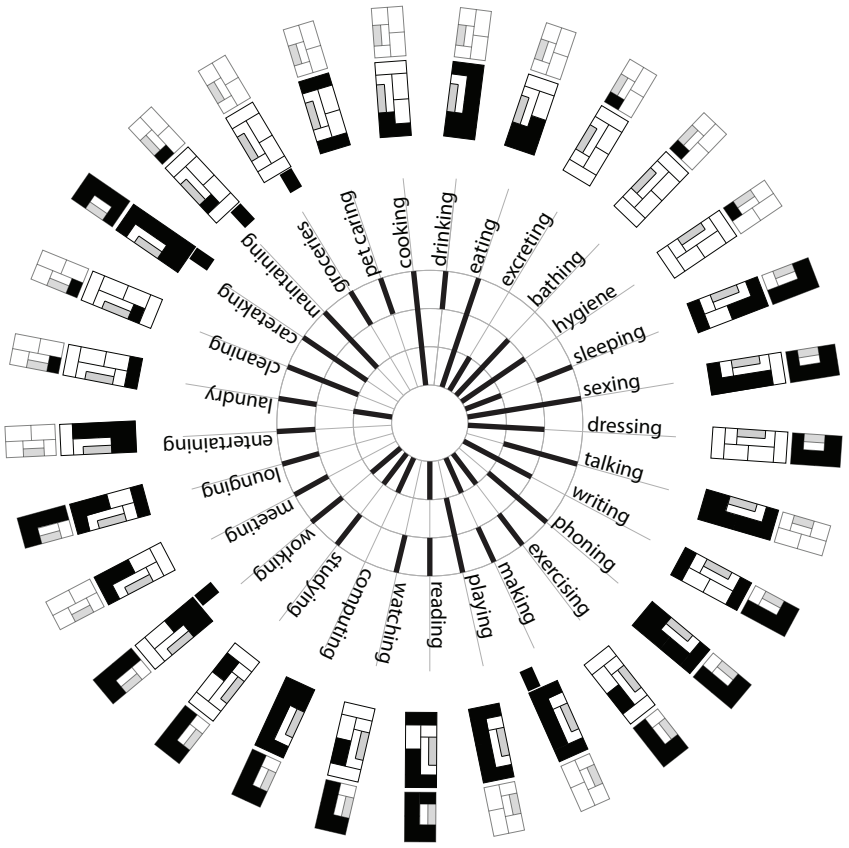


TYPE

- BODY NEEDS : ESSENTIAL
- MENTAL NEEDS : EXTRA
- SUPPORT NEEDS : SERVICE

TIME

dawn
9am - 5pm
dusk
night



GRADIENTS OF INTIMACY

intimate
semi - intimate
public

LOCATION

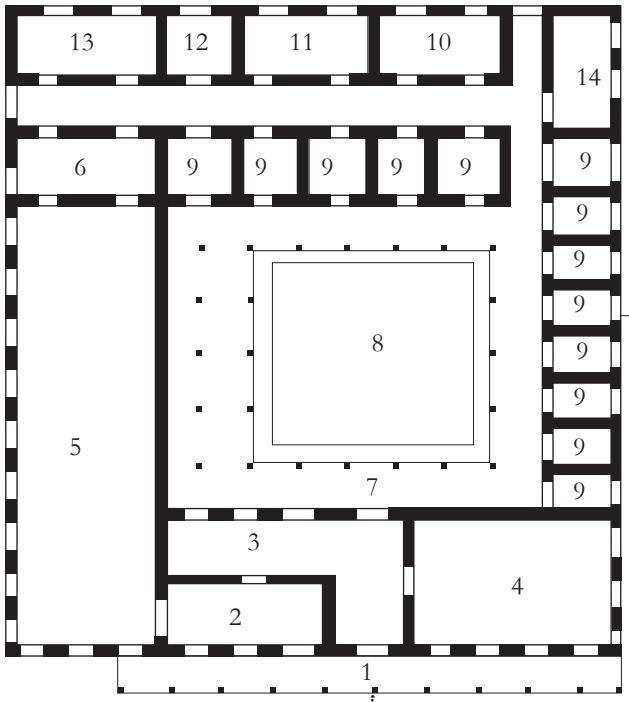
- garage
- back deck
- kitchen
- dining room
- parlour
- porch

+ 0 FLOOR

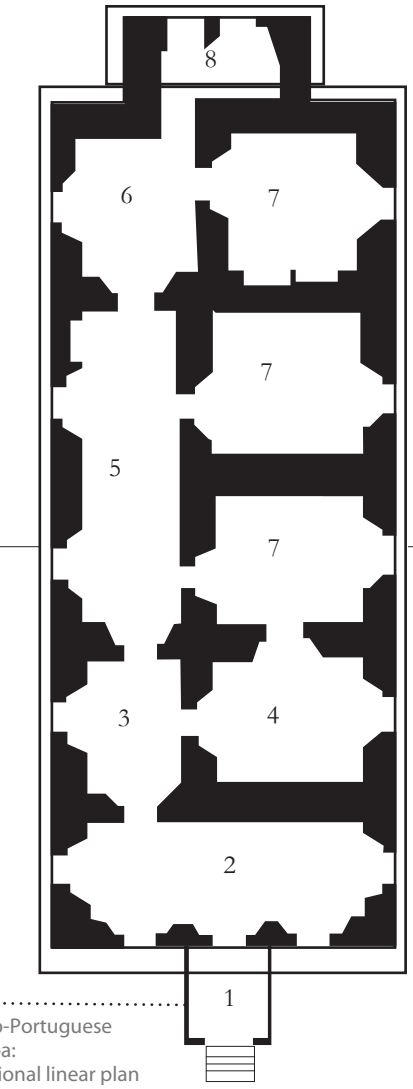
+1 FLOOR

- bathroom
- bedroom

Fig.3.8 Scheduling activity on an average weekday in a typical single-family house



A traditional house in India:
an introverted courtyard plan



Typical Indo-Portuguese
house in Goa:
the processional linear plan

Casa Dempo, Panaji

1 veranda
2 entrance hall
3 hall
4 reception
5 temple
6 sacred area
7 veranda
8 raj angonn
9 room
10 main kitchen
11 dining room
12 pooja room
13 sacred kitchen
14 granary/ store

1 balcão
2 sala
3 oratória
4 quatro de dormir
5 sala de jantar
6 cozinha
7 quatro
8 dependências

0
2.5 5.0 10.0
mts

Private house of the
Pilar sisters
in Loutolim

UNDERSTANDING ROOMS AS ACTIVITY

The present layout of specialized rooms in a house, often taken for granted in North American culture, is relatively recent. Up until the 18th century, rooms were accessed by multiple doors leaving the occupants with little privacy and functions were as undefined as the nature of the family at the time[12]. Today, architects conventionally address program in the house by that assigning each square on the architectural plan with a label: the most essential ones being the living room, the dining room, the kitchen, the bedroom and the bathroom. James Wentling in *Housing by Lifestyle* groups these rooms into four general components that are experienced within an average home in North America: rooms for ceremony, community, privacy and services. He identifies them as unspoken guidelines that satisfy most mainstream housing design needs[13] but perhaps are becoming irrelevant when building for the exceptions. The tendency of allocating specific rituals within a house – such as greeting guests, preparing food, rearing children – to specific rooms is rapidly changing in an era that has a growing affection for morphing space. We are comfortable in mutating identities in people, just as we are agreeable with living in spaces that are multifunctional. In *The Geography of Home*, Akiko Buschi links our infatuation with creating multifunctional spaces with the enthusiasm we have to radically change our physical images – whether it be tattoos and body piercing or more radical aesthetic surgeries[14].

This is reminiscent of the large multi-family houses in India:

The essence of the house run by a Hindu household is the symmetrically balanced square plan, symbolic in local mythology of the four corners of the world that are assumed to be dominated by Agni the God of Fire[15]. The courtyard is drenched in rain or stands dry according to the weather, and is bordered by numerous rooms of equal size. There is no prescribed name given to each room – no library, study, dining or living area. The only exception to this rule applies to the preparation of food and sacred space – the kitchen and the *pooja* room. The house is alive with activity: children play noisily in corridors, women anxiously complete their chores in the passages. No area is wasted, no room is owned. The benefits of these multifunctional spaces are strengthened by the absence of large ostentatious furniture in the Hindu lifestyle – chairs and tables are replaced by mats, *patts* or *baithaks* [16]. Rooms become sleeping areas during the night and places of work during the day.

Fig.3.9 Houses in Goa, South India

-1 FLOOR
+0 FLOOR
+1 FLOOR
enter
watch tv
sleep
sleep
store
heat
store
bathe
sit
bbq
enter
eat
drink
cook
sit
show
study
enter
wash
show
park
enter
enter
bed
study
change
bathe
bed
bathe
bed
bed
patio
kitchen table
couch
bar
phone
master bedroom
computer
jacuzzi
ceremony
community
privacy
service
negotiation

Eventually, this flexibility makes the architect's definition of public and private space a much harder task than simply drawing a diagram of what "should" occur. In *Descriptive Programming in Contemporary Modernism,* Targ Nishimoto argues that the diagram can no longer be used by the architect as a tool to determine spatial qualities of rooms for houses. Now more than ever, these consist of a combination of activities happening in one room, for example: the "Dining-desk room". Perhaps there is an additional way in which programmatic articulation can occur and it begins with characterizing activities (depending on their length of time) involved in the space [17]. For example, instead of simply allocating a "bedroom" space, we build spaces for "sleeping", for "afternoon naps", for "momentary rest", allowing them to occur in a multiple scale of spaces such as: the room, the rocking chair or the built-in bench. It is not a far stretch to further assume that the functions within a house circulate around the furniture more so than the rooms' intended function. A kitchen table at different times of the day can become the place a family dines or the surface used by a teenage daughter to do her homework, the piano in the hallway can become a music room, or the books in the bathroom become the new library. It is the circumstances between object and space that perhaps create the new functions in the house.

Does naming particular rooms according to conventional function limit the design imagination? A design competition held by the magazine *Architectural Design* in 1981[18] asked architects, designers and students across the world to propose a doll's house for its editor's daughter Alexandra. What began as a seemingly humble objective turned into an inspirational demonstration of imagination from 260 competitors across 27 countries. This incredible response indicated the extensive breadth of opinions and values of the detached house in terms of aesthetics, construction and more importantly, psychology and collective memory that surpassed what was being built at the time. The traditional doll's house is an ornament that was prized for its craftsmanship and its details of reality. However, the intention of the competition was not simply an essay in miniaturization but , more importantly, was an exercise on defining the border between the rigour of the grown-up's world of consideration and practicality and the vast imagination of a child's world of play and possibility.

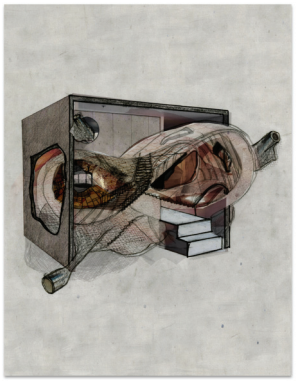
Inspired by the competition, the following illustrated descriptions are four 'doll-houses' that convey the four components of the house outlined by Wentling – the parlour, the kitchen, the bedroom and the bathroom. The purpose of the investigation is to bring to realization the true nature of the activities that occur in each room and to imagine what the space they hold would look like. The drawings are intended to be viewed as individual doll houses experienced at multiple scales: it can be put on a table and scrutinized by the academic, it can be placed on the floors and played with by a child, and if you let it, its rooms can surround you.

Walk with me through each house ...

Fig.3.10 Documentation of existing rituals of the author's single-family house in Toronto

You are met in the Parlour (at the pace of the occupant)

There is an undeniable presence of a ceremonial set of rooms in every house. Taking many names – the salon, the sitting room, the front room, the foyer, the living room, and the dining room – this place of highest expectation is where the public is faced with a projection of the household's persona. You are the spectator in this empty stage preparing for encounter and enactment. This doll's house can only be described through its "features"[19]: be it the double height entrance, the jacuzzi, or the crimson velvet curtains. While scenes of activities from everyday life were once the subject of generations of artists, the household today is identified through "carefully composed representations of families"[20]. These were most commonly composed in front of the mantelpiece adorned by personal possessions: musical instruments, books, *objets d'art* and trophies. An inventory of material things that speak of taste, interests and status, almost like the nonverbal diaries of family life, are chosen by the occupant only and showcased to the public in a carefully formulated frame. One side of the doll's house is left empty to indicate the architect's role of providing a graceful balance of window and wall but without dictating the placement of furniture[21].

You are invited into the Kitchen (at your own pace)

The kitchen is the metaphorical focal point of family life, the hearth in a household that has evolved from the wood stove, the fireplace, the radio, and the television. The functions of the kitchen have expanded past its initial purpose as a place to cook, to include: a 24-hour place of transitory activity and a social centre where guests and the household congregate. The informality of activities in the kitchen has set a potential stage for a renegotiation of traditional allocation of masculine and feminine space and has disrupted the social hierarchy of the household [22]. The folklorist Gerald Pocius explored the lure of the country kitchen in the New Foundland outpost village of Calvert that he vividly describes:

> *"There are chairs and a table, for all meals are taken here too. Most kitchens also include a day bed, where family members can take an afternoon nap or friends can sit when they come in for a chat. (...) The front entrance to the house is seldom used and almost everyone enters though the back door, which normally opens right to the kitchen"* [23].

You are invited into the Bedroom (at your own pace)

> *"Their Bedrooms are made something after ye manner of a sailor's cabin, but boarded all round about the bigness of ye Bed, except one little hole on the Foreside, just big eno' to crawl into, before which is a Curtain drawn & a step to get into it, there stands a chest"* [24].

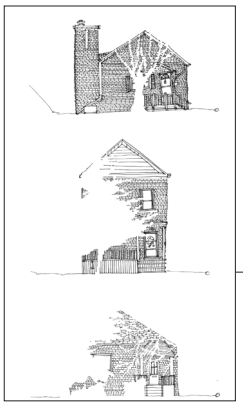
The American Colonist Robert Hale described the closed box-bed or *lit clos* of Northern France introduced to the New World in 1731, at a time when each room had multiple beds laid out in a row, it was the bed itself which gave the individual a space for privacy. With each member of the household, adult and child alike, commonly having their own bedrooms with gym equipment, telephones, television-sets, books, phones, and sometimes intercoms, the bedroom has almost assumed the character of an entire apartment[25]. We tend to fill it with things that introduce a host of activities other than sleeping.

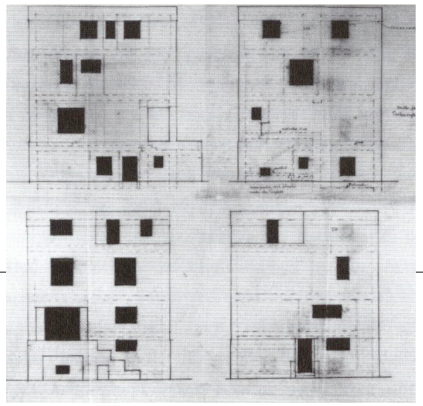
You are met in the Bathroom (at the pace of the occupant)

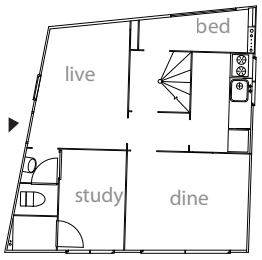
The designer often addresses the bathroom as a purely functional space, however the bathroom is perhaps the only room in the house that inspires personal growth. It is a place of running water and privacy – two essential ingredients conducive of clear thought[26]. The bathroom is still the only room where you are justified in being alone and this yearning for solitude is realized when armchairs and bookshelves are gradually moved in.

Fig.3.11 Plate 2.0
Fig.3.12 Plate 3.0
Fig.3.13 Plate 4.0
Fig.3.14 Plate 5.0

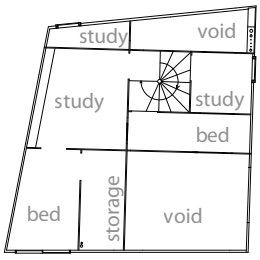
Returning to the scale of the house, the lesson here for the architect is to design and detail rooms, not by their given labels or standardized dimensions, but rather, by the character of the activities they hold. Kazuyo Sejima's *House in a Plum Grove (2003)* in Tokyo questions the validity of a contemporary dwelling that consists of set number of rooms and is designed with the intention of using space sporadically rather than in a fixed amount of time. The compact 92 sqm project understands the house to be a "temporary perch" for living [27]. The conventional dimensions of living spaces are divided into 17 different spaces where multiple activities can occur. For instance, the bedroom of the child consists of the "room-bed" and the "room-desk"[28]. The challenge of this scheme was to design an unconventional living space for five occupants in a space that would feel like "one-big room"; space is linked by a variety of openings in the internal walls of adjoining rooms so that "a window" at times becomes a place of passage. This allows for a seamless sense of movement throughout the house where privacy turns elastic, rather than being prescribed, and occupants of the house choose their space according to whether they want to be alone or visible to others[29]. Perhaps, then, it is the interstitial spaces between rooms that hold the biggest programmatic potential to choreograph the types of activity in each room.



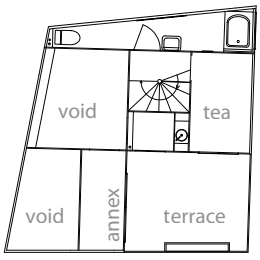




+0 floor



+1 floor



+2 floor

DEVELOPING INTERFACE

The relationship between the inhabitants of the house (place of some people) and the city (place of many people) is conventionally defined by the nature of the front facade of the house. The entryway becomes an extraordinarily sensitive region of the boundary of the house taking the dimensions of an architectural microcosm that belongs both to its occupants and to the community outside. The faces of a house are more conventionally treated as surfaces, stretched into a strong, symmetrical and seemingly satisfying expressions.

> *"When I was finally given the task of building a house, I said to myself: in its external appearance, a house can only have changed as much as a dinner jacket (...) The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead all its richness must be manifest in the interior."* [30]

Adolf Loos's attitude toward the outside of the house as a definite skin which splits the intimate "inside" life of private life and the "outside" life of the metropolitan is misleading. In fact in every Loos house the point where tension of private and public space reaches its maximum is always found at its threshold[31]. The exterior cannot simply be treated as a mask of the inside of the house because they are both constructed simultaneously. The elevation drawings of Loos's *Rufer House (1922)*, which include not only the outlines of the facade but also the dotted lines of the interior spaces, proves that the architect indeed did treat the skin as it's own entity[32]. The boundary itself becomes a volume in its own right that is impressionable from both the public and the private spaces it divides. In Loos's *Moller House*, the exterior wall enclosure protrudes onto the street in the form of a tightly wrapped enclave, a form also revealed in the double space of the interior hall. This in-between space where the occupant literally inhabits both exterior and interior space at the same time is found in the Josephine Baker House. The external wall is split into two walls and punctured with windows so that a narrow space is left around the pool, allowing the swimmer to see into both spaces, belonging to neither.

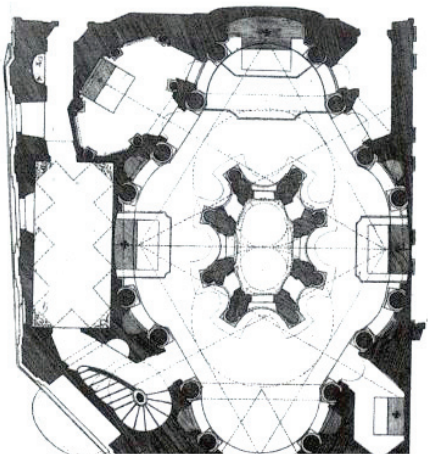
In an era that thrives on intimacy and passion with a deep fascination with connecting people, it is appropriate to explore the potential of the porch and the corridor as interstitial architectural elements that foster interaction. Jane Jacobs's commentary on the isolated dwellings in the suburbs of 1961 was largely concerned with the evident lack of social interaction that was brought about by the static and permanent boundaries between public and private, exterior and interior space[33]. In the conventional residential house, the point of contact between the household and the public is most often the porch, or the front stoop. In a house designed for multiple groups of people, however, maintaining the balance between public and private spaces among the occupants requires particular attention to another layer of boundaries within the house – the corridor. Both hold equal value. Instead of defining program to certain rooms, the Chosen-Family House begins to explore the potential of spaces where interaction can occur: these are the boundaries.

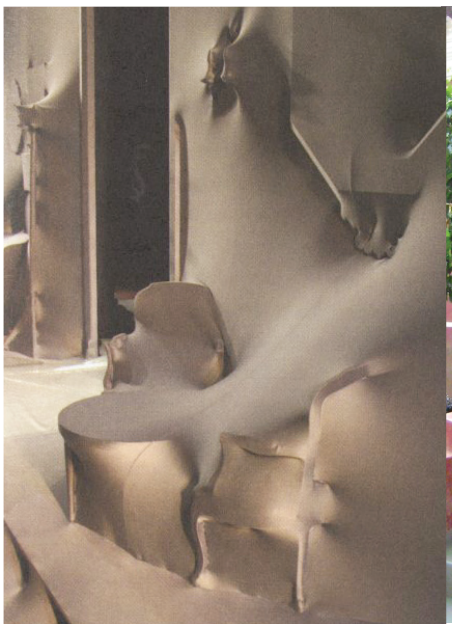
Fig.3.15 Plate 6.0

Fig.3.16 Adolf Loos's elevation drawings of Rufer House (1922)

Fig.3.17 Inhabiting the wall in House in a Plum Grove(2003) by Kazuyo Sejima

Borromini's little church, *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, in Rome is a 17th century masterpiece that takes the form of a conceptual carving. The plan, intricately constructed with complex geometric arrangements and layers, is dominated by a thick poché wall which suggests that the highly ornamental interior surface is bound by a fluid structure[34]. The whole wall translates into an undulating movement and becomes a medium that is alive and ready to be inhabited.





THE PORCH

The porch in North American culture has conventionally been understood as a threshold: a place of viewing, meeting and greeting; however today, it is a place of arrival where no one enters. The elaborate curved porches in suburban homes were quickly replaced by a modest variation after World War II, sometimes remaining little more than a covered stoop marked by a plastic chair. Is the ceremonial front door that architects still build a "useless" formality or simply "never used"? The entryway becomes an extraordinarily sensitive region of the house boundary, a landmark which must respect and reinforce the feelings and identity of both the inside and outside communities. Yet, we find greater comfort in the informality of casual exchanges rather than in the adoption of a prescribed routine: the gated side entrance from the driveway or the garage door have become the parallel entrances that lead to areas where hats and shoes can be left. In split-level homes, the side entrance is posed precariously between two staircases and occupants greet each other in a hurried and awkward manner[35]. Porches work best in high density neighbourhoods – like the outdoor wrought iron stairs that characterize east-end Montreal – however the growing distance between the street and the front door common in most suburban homes makes the porch, with its current aesthetic and dimensions, an obsolete appendage.

While the structural features of the porch in North America are composed of borrowed elements from colonial bungalow of India, the French "galleries", the Ancient Greek porticos and the Haitian "shotgun house", the character of the porch is determined by its universal usage: a place of innocent courting, of heavy chores made more enjoyable, of gossip and company. Noting that the primary sources[36] on the subject, such as David Rochlin's essay *The Front Porch* and Ruth Little Stokes's *The North Carolina Porch: A climactic and cultural buffer,* are largely narrative, interpretative and anecdotal, Sue Bridwell Beckham's essay on the American front porch[37] comments on the lack of sources on the architectural history of the porch. The social intention of the porch is to "meet" the street and to draw the occupant out of the house into the public realm. However, contemporary culture struggles with defining the "appropriate" distance between private and public spaces.

The Indo-Portuguese houses of Goa in South India provides a remarkable example of a housing type that combined two cultures, paralleling the dilemma we face today in North America: one which thrived in a world of close proximity, and the other which maintained a formal distance toward the public. A most bizarre lexicon of architectural elements was developed to orchestrate social dynamics:

Fig.3.18 San carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome

Fig.3.19 Absorbing furniture into the boundary

Fig.3.20 The balcão

Author, age six, at the family's ancestral home in Pombrupa, Goa

A simple road trip around Goa's villages will familiarize you with 18th-20th century Indo-Portuguese houses, where visitors are warmly greeted at the gate and ushered down the narrow lane to the entrance of ancestral family homes. The journey from the front gate to the front door is clearly defined, establishing a distinctively Goan pattern of public and private realms. At the front of the house is the feature that distinguishes the Goan house, the *balcão*, a curved plan of seats on a balcony, held up by quasi-Tuscan capitals, shafts of cypress columns and swan necked volutes[38]. Raised by a staircase with built-in seats, the *balcão* gave the occupants of the house the vantage point over the people in the streets. The interstitial space between the gate and the elevated veranda of the house, it is designed to be a place to "see and be seen". More importantly, the built-in seating on the *balcão* gives the place its own distinct program in the house, making it a place of gathering – a place to stay – rather than a place of transition. The *balcão* is recognized as the focal point of the household's daily life:

Just after a fish-curry-and-rice dinner, the men in the family fill their small glasses with feni (the pungent, potent local cashew brew)and a dash of lemon soda before they walk out onto the balcão. It is the perfect time at dusk just after the swarms of mosquitoes have subsided for the night and before the village sinks into black darkness. A good time to enjoy the cool sea breeze rustling the coconut palms in the twilight after a long day. People stroll by in the lane, peer over the low compound walls, most of them family friends for generations. Each waves; some stop to gossip. The women stay inside; planning the next day's meal.

...or perhaps...

"They would invariably start in the back-yard, some old disillusioned housewife crying foul over the neighbour's coconuts falling on her roof or their dog chasing her chickens. Then like a bad smell they would swirl through the house making their way to the balcão and in this swirling movement they would gather force like a tsunami and capture everyone in their vicinity including the men of the household who would elect themselves as Generals of the battle and little children who would enlist as foot-soldiers. The women would hitch their kapod unto their waist, the men would stand up-right in the balcão with a dando club for effect and the children would run about frantically not knowing really what was going on except that there was a fight raging with their neighbours and that for the next month at least they wouldn't be allowed to play with the neighbour's children. The women like dervishes would gain momentum in this cross-fire exchange of verbal vitriol making sure to bring to light every titbit of information that had been gleaned from various sources which was usually the neighbour's maid, such as the night Padre Vicar paid a visit while the man of the house was away and stayed long enough to sample those delectable bolinas the wife had made just that afternoon. The men of the house would interject into this fray frequently with foul obscenities usually calling into question each other's legitimacy. These fights would go on for hours on end until twilight would gently peep through the evening sky and the neighbouring audience watching in mute fascination would tire and close their thick, ant-eaten wooden windows."[39]

Fig.3.21 Living with the extended family

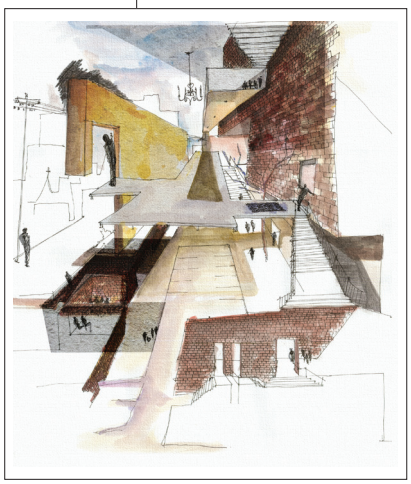
Since we live in a world where distances are diminishing, it is possible to imagine leading the general public right into the center of the house. Already the position of the porch has been brought into the house as guests are led hurriedly through the entrance and into the back patio. The back of the house – the patio, the deck and the poolside – has gradually taken the place of the front stoop. Even the term back yard – with its utilitarian connotations of a place of storage and woodwork – is replaced by "garden" which is more indicative of a place of presentation, a new face of the house. Bringing the catalyst for interaction into the middle of the house, taking the forms of a courtyard of green space or a central staircase, heightens the tensions between public and private realms. Perhaps the place of the porch can be stretched throughout the house to include the place of "the corridor", thus making it the central spine of the house that strengthens interaction.

Hideyuki Nakayama 's *O House (2009)* is a two-storey house in Kyoto, Japan, which takes the form of a passage that extends off of the main street. The program of the house and the staircases to access them is neatly tucked around corners of the large open 'corridor'.

It is an experiment that challenges passers-by to walk in ...







THE CORRIDOR.

Within the scale of the house, another place of circulation that has potential to encourage encounters among the occupants is the corridor. More than two decades ago, Robin Evan's essay *Figures, Doors and Passages* offered one of the clearest and most compelling arguments about the evolving role of the passage. In the Palladian villa, every room was linked to its neighbours through multiple doors where occupants and visitors alike were allowed to flow through public and private rooms. There was no separation between circulation and room, suggesting that ideas of privacy and intimacy were perhaps not what we have prescribed them to be today[40]. The corridor grew from being a hidden service passage that ran parallel to interconnected rooms, to a public passage off of which each room could be access. Most model-homes were quick to adopt the corridor as a means of allowing bedrooms to have privacy. However the conventional use of the corridor is best suited for a house that bases its domesticity on moralities, social organisations and regimes of labour, all obsolete today. The corridor is addressed as "the route" while the rooms have become "the destination". However, the corridor has greater potential. The introduction of built-in furniture in the public corridor forms "niches" of private space that can encourage the narrow strip to expand from a mutual "space" into a claimed "place". Gradually, "the corridor" itself can become a place of program therefore eliminating its conventional function in its entirety.

By reconfiguring conventional household spaces from programmed rooms to "types of activity" and by re-claiming circulation space as "a place to dwell", the detached Chosen Family House can be experienced sporadically rather than sequentially which in turn can strengthen the dynamics between the multiple household. Boundaries between public and private space take on a pivotal role in determining what the function of each space is, and whom it belongs to. The house becomes a series of territories with boundaries triggered by the designer, but only realized through the act of negotiating what is "yours and mine".

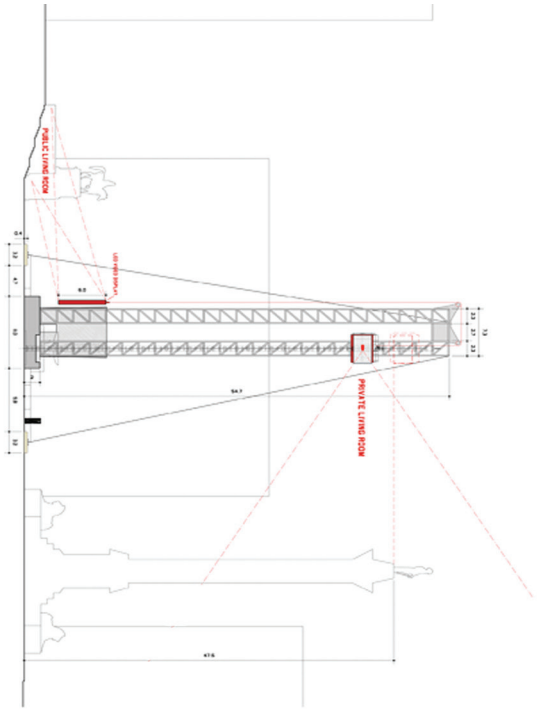
Fig.3.22 O House(2009) by Hideyuki Nakayama

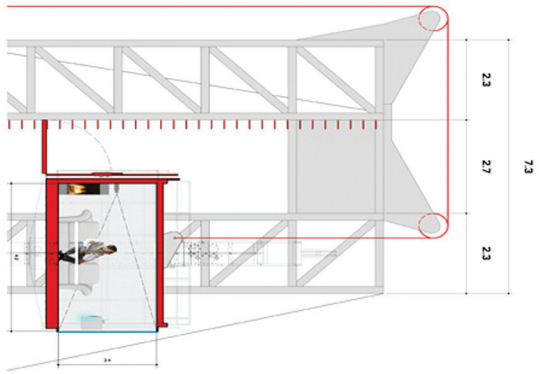
Fig.3.23 Plate 7.0

Some thirty inches from my nose
The frontier of my Person goes,
And all the untilled air between
Is private pagus or demesne.
Stranger, unless with bedroom eyes
I beckon you to fraternize,
Beware of rudely crossing it:
I have no gun, but I can spit. [1]

W.H. Auden's musings in *Prologue: The Birth of Architecture*, resonates with the intense emotions associated with the boundaries of personal space that is appropriately both upfront and a little crass. Having marked and divided most of the surfaces around us, we are people who set up specific rules of etiquette, build boundaries and allocate markers to stake territories that are our own. Human beings, like animals, build the environments around them. While we recognize that animals, whether it be weaver-bird or termite, build instinctively, forming the ideal shape to suit its needs, social scientists continue to speculate on how human beings establish their own personal space.

Strongly rooted in zoology, the term 'personal space' is defined by Heiddeger's observation of flight distance and critical distance in animals[2]; where, as a general rule, flight distance is the spacing that allows the other animal enough reaction-time to retreat, and critical distance is a more aggressive stance of closing proximity quickly to provoke retaliation. Studies[3] that explore the micro-ecology of small groups of people have revealed that human beings establish similar patterns of behaviour, universally experiencing in our innate bodily reactions of discomfort when an individual's perception of personal space is breached. In *The Hidden Dimension*, Edward Hall coins the term 'proxemics', suggesting that culture is largely responsible for colouring each individual's sensory world, therefore making each individual's perception of space unique. While the impact of culture and education on our perception of space is assumed as a given and rarely questioned, it becomes evident in a situation where multiple occupants of varying ethnic





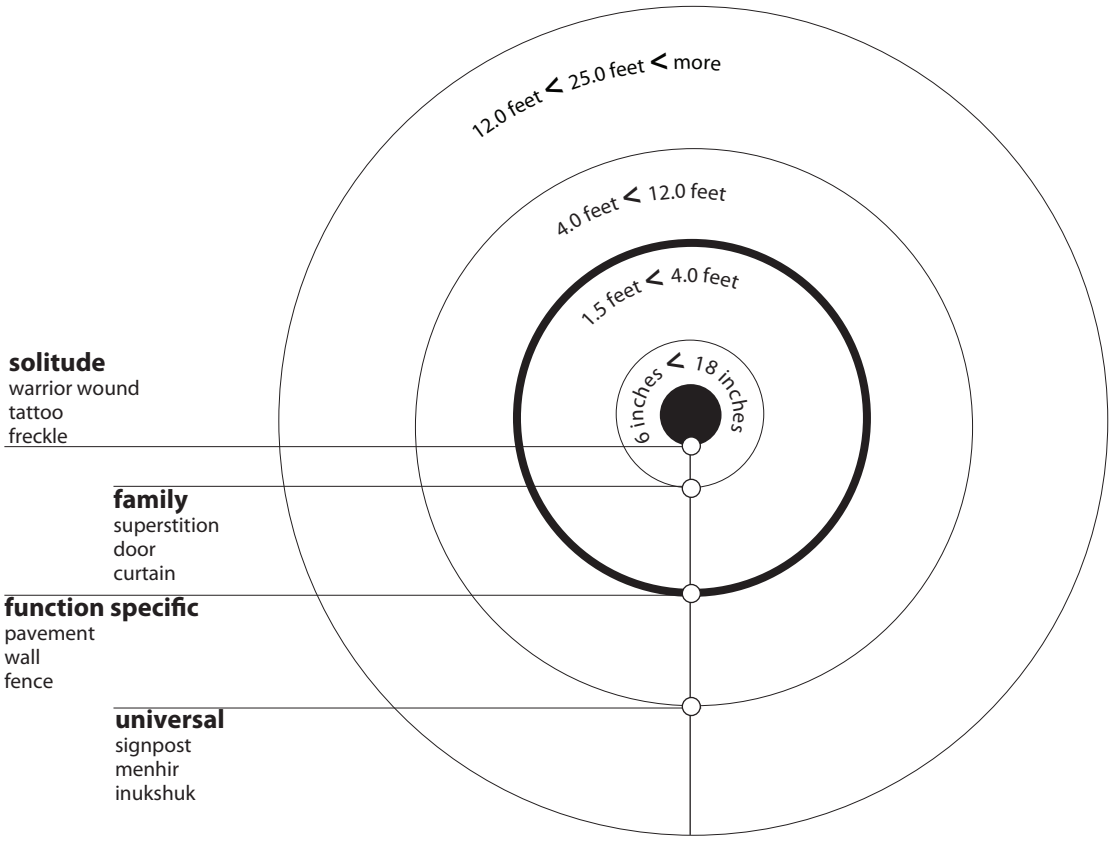
"Living Room" is a 12m^2 domestic space, completely furnished with a working fire place, elevated 59 meters above Trafalgar Square in London.

backgrounds share a space. Only when challenged, in the clashing of cultures, does the individual have to justify their personal space, therefore guarding it by any means possible: whether it be verbal, visual or physical.

The following is a commentary from a 30-something African-American architect from Miami on his first impressions of India[4]:

"There are 1.1 Billion people in India and they are all used to not having personal space. This is a country where families suffering from economic hardship (the government uses the terms: Economically Weak Sections) live in apartments with one room and often have 6-9 people living in it: the parents, the children, the parents of the father and if the eldest child is recently married--his wife would be there, too. If you come to India you will have no personal space (...) this is just how things are; too much space and someone might cut in front of you. Try riding the subway in Delhi; it is a study in contradictions. They are immaculately clean while everything street level is that of a developing country: gritty, haphazard and trampled upon by humanity's heaviest footprint. Subways in most cities are intended to be part of a rapid transit system. In Delhi, you have to go through a metal detector. First form a line to buy your token (they have smart cards, too, which save time and money) then form a line 100 people deep (if it's a popular train station) and wait 10 minutes to get through the line during rush hour. The line is the very image of diversity with young and old, the prosperous rotund, and the famished skinny. Women bedecked in the latest western trends standing behind women in traditional garb that could have been plucked from the 50s. While you are in line you have plenty of time to be observant ... unless of course you're distracted by the corpulent short guy behind you who persists on aligning his bellybutton with the apex of your butt-crack. Every time you move forward he moves forward the same distance and then adds a margin of 2cm just in case he gauged your distance from his orifice incorrectly. Okay, so maybe the pot-belly was the exceptional character, right? That was the bag check line. Before that was the metal detector line where some waifish teenager was so close he seemed to be testing to see if my sneakers were properly inflated by kicking my heel as if I were equipped with tires. To ensure that no one cut between us and interrupted his courtship, he absentmindedly placed the back of his hand on my lower back as he casually jabbered to his younger family members behind him. Suddenly the tire inspection turned into a rodeo with him practically riding my back and holding on. If I moved up he would move up and add the same 2 cm margin as Shri Potbelly-ji. I don't scowl; I don't suck my teeth or sniff angrily at people. I just cope and will take my revenge by dry humping the guy in front the next time I have to queue up."

Fig.4.0 Living Room (2004) by Diller Scofidio + Renfro


12.0 feet < 25.0 feet < more
4.0 feet < 12.0 feet
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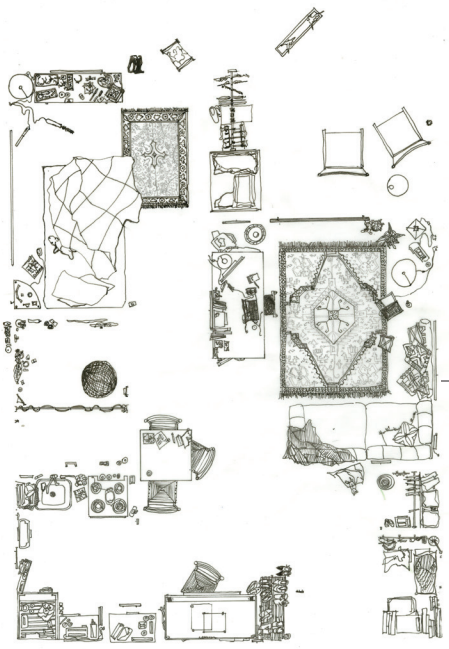
6 inches < 18 inches
solitude
warrior wound
tattoo
freckle
family
superstition
door
curtain
function specific
pavement
wall
fence
universal
signpost
menhir
inukshuk

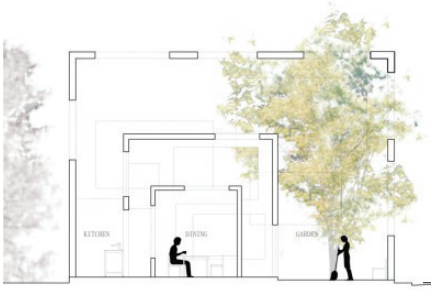
How do we define this quality of self-awareness of personal space? Seymour Fisher focuses on the psychological strengths of the primary boundary of the body and its ability to enhance vivid haptic sensing[5]. Building on this observation, Yi-fu Tuan, a professor in human geographies, suggests that architecture significantly defines and refines the body's sensibility towards space that is otherwise fleeting and diffused in the natural world[6]. Consider the distinctions between dichotomies of inside and outside, private and public, yours and mine, that are recognizable through the body, but are only heightened and accentuated against a constructed form. Compare the experience of crouching in a cave enveloped by opaque walls to standing in a greenhouse where the transparent boundary is vague and visually indefinite[7]. The experience of the first condition is heightened because the scale of the body's dimensions shrinks and is shielded by the surface of the wall that concentrates stimulation. The experience of the second, however, is expansive and increases the body's boundary past the space that it is in so to also include the garden outside[8]. The body responds directly to qualitative elements of design that enclose or expose, compress or stretch, are shrouded in darkness or bathed in light.

Identifying an affinity with space and making physical boundaries to maintain a sense of proprietorship is the first decision made by an individual who enters a shared space. Oscar Newman identifies an evident lack in society's commitment to place in the city: "the larger the number of people who share a communal space, the more difficult it is for people to identify it as theirs or to feel they have a right to control or determine the activity taking place within it"[9]. On the other hand, the house offers an intimate scale that enables people to release their bottled-up territoriality. The emotional involvement and aggression of defending personal space in the house heightens tensions within a household. The layout of the house traditionally attempts to organize individual territories by allocating rooms: it takes the form of the stiff garment, its shell the thickness , and its doors and windows the slits that are revealed at the liberty of its wearer[10]. By standardizing dimensions and views, the seemingly democratic set of rooms, evident in houses today, are subject to the negotiation between the modern family of equals[11]. However, despite its progressive intensions, the way the house is built often disregards the emerging tendency of modern families, who are made up of independent individuals, to live markedly unique lifestyles that are also symbiotic. In the contemporary house, a greater emphasis is commonly placed on the exterior boundaries of the house, with the assumption that the household is organized as a single territory. While this nurtures a harmonious sentiment of "togetherness" and community protected from the outside world, it fails to establish a variety in the hierarchy of boundaries within the house and ignores the tensions of privacy and governance among a household that struggles to preserve self-identity. It is important to recognize that different groups of individuals sharing a house need the existence of articulated **and** dynamic boundaries to mediate and ritualize activity, making it "a turbulent sea of constant negotiation"[12].

Fig.4.1 Appropriate distances Edward Hall

Fig.4.2 Marking territory




KITCHEN
DINING
GARDEN

Markers of territory in a house can range from being physical, like the tangible architectural elements of the wall and the stair, or customary, such as a grandmother's rocking chair in the living room. Commonly, greater attention is given to the former. However, individuals are constantly adapting their boundaries as they move around the house in the course of a single day. Often they use possessions to mark out their territory, for example, reading glasses placed next to a particular chair. The extensive studies of domestic interiors in the context of contemporary material culture, commonly recognizes the term "home decoration" as a means of self-expression[13]. The character and placement of the objects and furniture in a room demonstrate an individual's attachment to the immediate space. The psychologist David Katz's description of "the shell of a snail" and Jacob Von Uexküll's vivid image of the phenomenal world as a "soap bubble around each creature", implies that personal space carries a physical boundary that moves with the individual [14]. There is an apparent shift in the conventional permanency of territories that moves from being assigned by the functions of a particular room to being associated with an arena of things that move with the occupant if desired. The usage of things determines whether the space is public or private and changes according to the routines of daily living[15]: children playing video-games are ushered out of the living room when guests arrive; the parent irons in the den while watching TV, and the family congregates to recap their day on the couch in the master bedroom.

The conventional planning of a house attempts to organise and structure this fluctuating system of negotiation by placing walls and stairs that tends to limit interaction between public and private space. Ironically, each of these elements may be considered an area of transition in itself.

We build walls: single walls and double walls, thick and thin, concrete and brick. We call them thresholds, barriers, surfaces, and boundaries; they are undulating, rotating, solid or permeable. The effect of each wall as a boundary, however, is much more than a physical description of its composition.

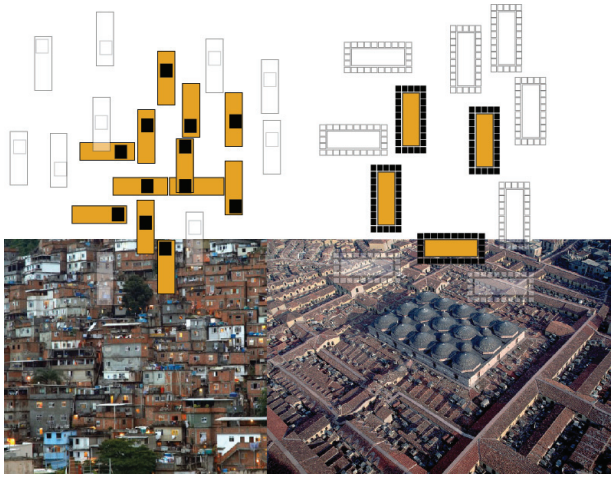
> *"Normally one wall has two sides, so if you define the shape of the wall, this will affect two adjacent spaces (...) a kind of double wall with two thin membranes not necessarily linked together, and this created a kind of double wall between these two spaces and marked the independence of each room. Both are close and you can perceive one from the other, but they keep their independence."* [16]

If a diagram were to be drawn of the experience of the wall, it would be best illustrated in the sequencing of Sou Fujimoto's House N (2008) in Japan which abandons a distinct outer wall and replaces it with a series of partial walls that reveal the interior program at shifting points according to the position of the passer-by. The street and the house are not separated by a single wall but by a gradation of "nested" experiences of various distances that give the boundary a volume.

Fig.4.3 Plate 8.0

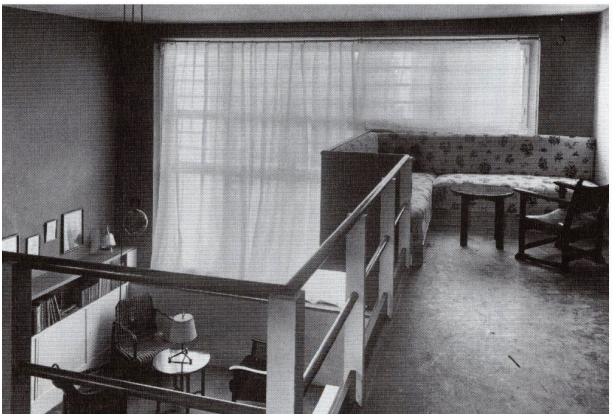
Fig.4.4 Dissolving boundaries

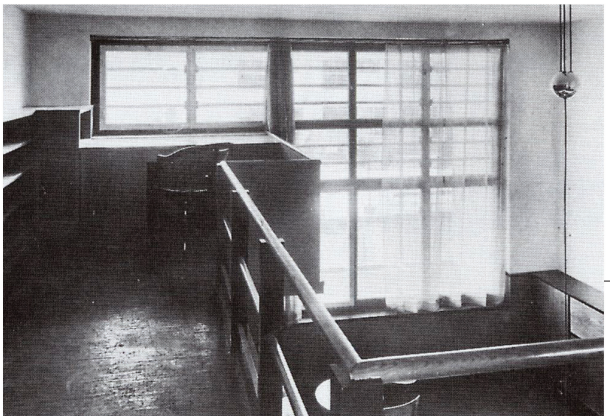
Within the house, the second boundary between public and private



CITY AS CAMP
The private house is contained in a green space that is defined by fences on the periphery of each lot; there is an evident lack of a controlling boundary.

CITY AS BATTLEFIELD
The private house joins a system of neighbouring dwellings that form a "wall" on the periphery of each lot; controlling the entrance of the public space.





space is the staircase which stubbornly limits spatial organization to the horizontal dimension: the ground floor is public and the upper floors remain private. The nature of the staircase, however, allows transition to be gradual rather than being abrupt and definite like the opening and closing of a door[17]. There is an option to retreat or expose oneself on the staircase, which allows for a subtle shift of controlled orientation. For example, the hostess who descends the stair to the living room where her guests wait can quickly withdraws her steps when she realizes she has forgotten her earrings[18]. The conventional levels of a house, therefore, can be abandoned to adopt split levels, thus carving spaces for territories to manifest what Adolf Loos believes is the *Raumplan* evolution of architectural house design: "mankind will eventually succeed in playing chess in the cube"[19].

There is a greater potential than is commonly recognized to address the boundary as a multi-faceted volume that can stimulate a number of reactions. In the houses of Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, spatial organization offers a series of theatrical experiences where boundaries are features of the set through which the viewer's movements are choreographed, in reaction to the boundary itself. No longer static, the boundary becomes dynamic, an active participant in its immediate context. One example is the vantage point which enables visual access despite limited physical access: where the boundary might create a viewing platform that allows for social interaction or it might offer a means of control to preserve self-identity. In another case, it might lead one through spatial sequence by partially obscuring or "hinting" at progressively revealed familiar or unknown territory.

Beatriz Colomina begins her critique of Adolf Loos's houses, with an apt observation that "the inhabitants of (the) houses are both actors in and spectators of the family scene – involved in, yet detached from, their own space"[20]. In one of the houses designed for the *Vienna Werkbundsiedlung (1930),* Loos paradoxically places the most intimate space of the house at the periphery, on a narrow mezzanine level overlooking the main living space. The careful placement of a sofa and desk enable the occupant to monitor access to the entire house. By positioning the sofa against a large window, the strong glare hides in shadow the occupant of the space[21]. By isolating areas in the house and replacing conventional heights with split-levels, the intimate scale of the "nook" positions the individual so that any intrusion to the room can be detected immediately. Loos observes: "the smallness of a theatre box would be unbearable if one could not look out into the large space beyond" [22]. Ironically, since there are no walls to shield visual access to this seemingly private space, the placement of theatre boxes also draws attention to itself, becoming subjected to voyeurism. Evocative of the image of an unreachable place of seclusion, like the monarch on a throne, there is a duality of power in markedly individualistic places, making it not just a platform for viewing but also a viewing mechanism that produces a new subject[23].

Fig.4.5 Strengthening defence systems

Fig.4.6 Living room on two levels in Vienna Werkbundsiedlung (1932) by Adolf Loos

It is our curiosity about the 'other' that allows us to identify the differences in individuals, and perhaps also confirms our similarities. The curiosity

Friedlander's photographs defy the two dimensionality of the drawing plane and evoke an ambiguity that oscillates between a reflected and an actual reality.

regarding an unknown space is intensified when exposure to the unknown space is at a maximum while access is reduced to a minimum, or where easy access is provided to the unknown space whose content is hardly visible at all[24]. The first is best adopted by Le Corbusier's *Villas La Roche- Jeanneret (1925)*, by revealing an unknown space through carefully composed windows while limiting an indication of the threshold; the design of the space is made more comfortable by maintaining a 'flight distance'. To strengthen the connection we have with our homes, more opportunities need to be made to actively exhibit individual territories. Hints allude to a sense of partial disclosure: an unknown space beyond that is selectively revealed.

Svetlana Boym begins his investigation of the daily interactions between occupants in Soviet Russian communal apartments with the observation that all communication happens in a series of 'half words'[25]. This phenomenon of "not saying what you mean" is an indication that tactfully-revealed partial information can become a tool to protect the privacy of the individual. Therefore ambiguity and secrecy secure the household from outsiders and from each other when a physical boundary cannot be established.

Once identities and territories are recognized in a house, the game of negotiation begins to prescribe patterns of living that can both protect the Self and strengthen an awareness of community. While routine and inertia may be inevitable in daily interaction where movement is physically limited, the variety of activities that occurs in response to the architecture can stimulate and enhance vitality. By establishing provocative sequences of experience, the familiar boundaries of a house can transform into a realm of possibilities.

Fig.4.7 Photographs by Lee Friedlander of New York from 1962-1989

"Half way between Pooh's house and Piglet's house was a Thoughtful Spot where they met sometimes when they had decided to go and see each other, and as it was warm and out of the wind they would sit down there for a little and wonder what they would do now that they *had* seen each other. One day when they had decided not to do anything, Pooh made up a verse about it, so that everybody should know what the place was for.

This warm and sunny Spot
Belongs to Pooh.
And here he wonders what
He's going to do.
Oh, bother, I forgot –
It's Piglet's too."[1]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1.....Gibran, Khalil. *The Prophet (*Middlesex: Echo Library, 2006), 22.

PROLOGUE

1.....Particularly referring to Canadian cohousing options offered by websites such as:
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and *The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada* <http://www.chfcanada.coop/eng/pages2007/2020home.asp> (accessed February 10, 2010).
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3.....Ibid, 416.
4.....Ibid, 419.
5.....Ibid, 423.
6.....Boym, Svetlana. *Common places: Mythologies of everyday life in Russia* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1994), 124.
7.....Ibid, 145.
8.....Ibid, 148.
9.....Ibid, 148.

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