SCENARIC ARCHITEC- TURE

THE PROJECT FOR A NATIONAL CABINET OF CURIOSITY

BY

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PART 1

ABSTRACT

What ever happened to the people who lived, met, played and acted inside of buildings? When did architecture begin to stifle their creative capabilities and treat them as simple creatures of habit; as subsidiary to space rather than indispensable in the creative definition of space? While we have witnessed during the 20th century the construction of more buildings than any previous centuries, the place occupied by critical and compelling architecture continues to dwindle. Favouring facile formal and material manipulations, architecture today appears to have jettisoned its core values as a principally social and collective art form. The proposal for a scenaric architecture is one that attempts to re-discover architecture's beauty and power as an instigator of new spatial and social conditions by proposing to frame the users of buildings as active and essential actors in the creation and enactment of the events and actions that take place within architecture. Learning from the theatrical and cinematic orchestration of space, it is an attempt to mobilize a wide range of scenographic elements and techniques to script narratives and scenarios in space. It is the project for an architecture that questions, through interactive and imaginative spaces, whether or not we might propose new ways of interacting, intervening and altering the world around us.

To all those who see beaches under paving stones
and forests behind drywall.

PART 2

PREAMBLE

"The archdeacon gazed at the gigantic edifice for some time in silence, then extending his right hand, with a sigh, towards the printed book which lay open on the table, and his left towards Notre–Dame, and turning a sad glance from the book to the church,—'Alas,' he said, 'this will kill that... [Alas!] small things come at the end of great things; a tooth triumphs over a mass. The Nile rat kills the crocodile, the swordfish kills the whale, the book will kill the edifice'

[...]

It was a presentiment that human thought, in changing its form, was about to change its mode of expression; that the dominant idea of each generation would no longer be written with the same matter, and in the same manner; that the book of stone, so solid and so durable, was about to make way for the book of paper, more solid and still more durable. In this connection the archdeacon's vague formula had a second sense. It meant, "Printing will kill architecture."

[...]

Architecture will no longer be the social art, the collective art, the dominating art. The grand poem, the grand edifice, the grand work of humanity will no longer be built: it will be printed.

And henceforth, if architecture should arise again accidentally, it will no longer be mistress. It will be subservient to the law of literature, which formerly received the law from it. The respective positions of the two arts will be inverted."

PART 3 - PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

AVANT-PROPOS

In many ways, this project stems from the surprising discovery of previously unnoticed and underlying organizing structures within the architectural projects I had produced during my undergraduate studies. The mandatory introspection of the small body of work I had amassed over the years, indeed revealed the presence of a systemic and reoccurring architectural attitude in respect to the nature and role of the users of architecture. While a quick sweeping glance of the projects highlighted the presence of a healthy and eclectic exploration of architectural languages and trends, upon closer inspection – once the 'form' of the projects had been abstracted to reveal their true 'content – a clear and defined unifying thread began to emerge that seamlessly interlinked all the projects

Suspended in space and now rendered visible, a series of characters, settings, supporting elements and episodes all emerged that appeared to transcend the various projects and outline the basis of a continuous and encompassing literary and narrative exploration. Here, the users of these buildings seemed to be part of a layered and intertwined series of anecdotes and actions that had more to do with the construction of a series of short stories or novellas than of traditional architectural configurations. Furthermore, the resulting array of techniques used to spatially translate these stories into material configurations also began to unlock multiple links between these episodes and the architectural structuring of events and actions that could be observed in plays or movies. The architecture of these projects was hence beginning to be effectively used as a coagulating agent crystallized in a series of

scenarios and stories in space,* while serving as a vehicle for new social interactions, collective events and situations.

There, an alcove in a wall presented itself as the ideal place for lovers to embrace in a park; here a writer would be able to escape to a secret room within his house, sheltered from all distractions, to work on his latest manifesto; over there a curious museum curator would be able to use a series of devices and machines to constantly change the location and layout of exhibitions almost over night and surprise
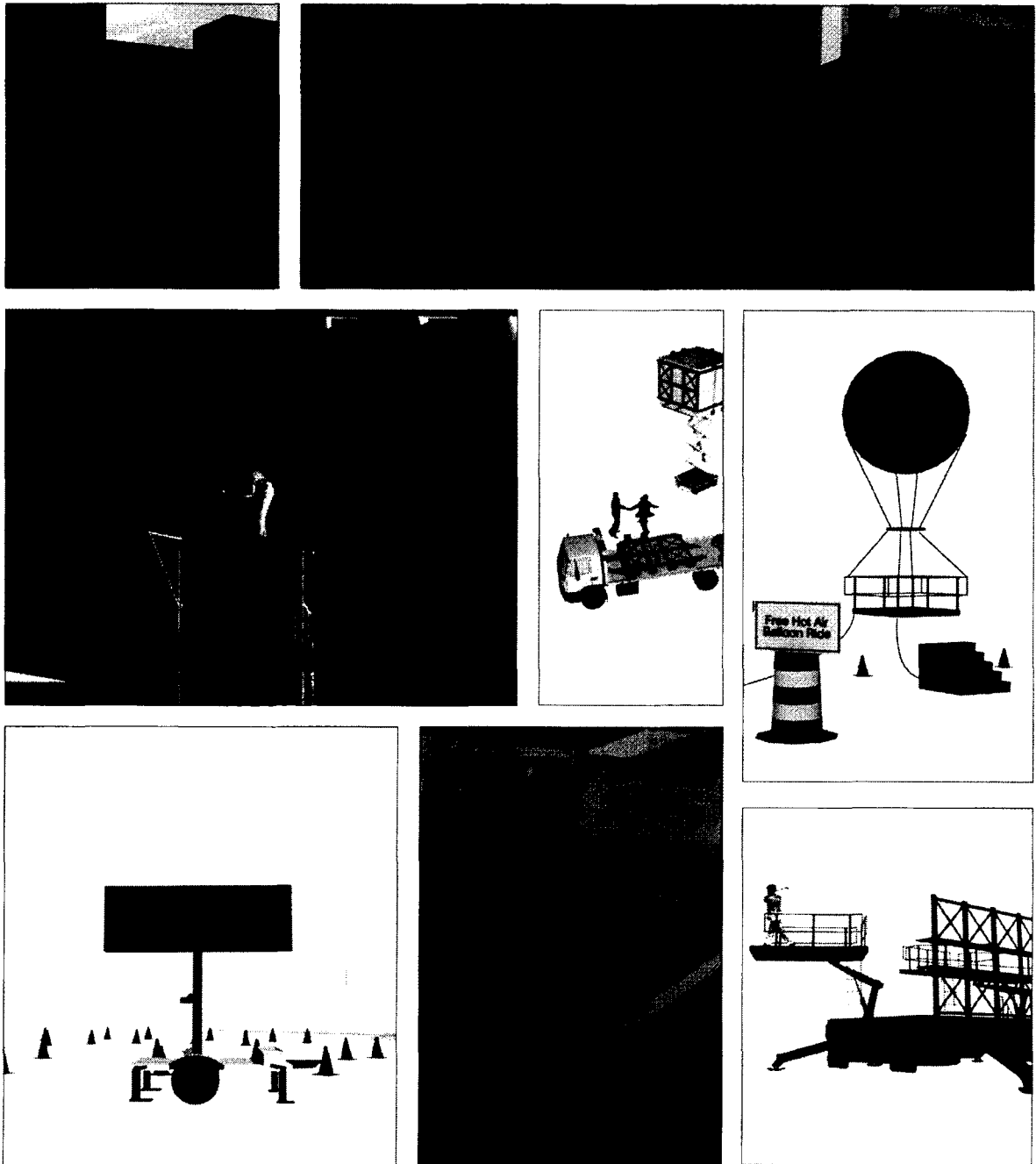
Various vignettes from multiple projects demonstrating characters and literary narratives seeping into the production of architectural works

returning visitors; elsewhere, a set of apparently haphazard shapes at the entrance of a church incited nearby skateboarders to mingle with the elderly clerical community and create new social interactions; or somewhere else, a series of apple and pear trees were planted in the parking beneath a daycare so that the crowns of the trees could pop out into the open sky and, within arms length of the children, to offer bountiful snacks at recess.

While the actions that these characters performed in space seemed at times to subvert the very meaning of the architecture above it, upon closer inspection this underlying content – sometimes at the start, totally independent from the specific architectural projects at hand – remained fundamentally responsible for the final formal and spatial outcome of each project. Around each imagined story, a series of architectural elements were spatially orchestrated that materialized these events and actions and anchored them in space. In a way, these narratives, scripts and scenarios were embedded within surfaces and became hidden mechanisms that informed possible human relations and actions that led to the creation of previously unimaginable, stimulating and vibrant architectural spaces. The architecture in some way was a kind of Trojan horse through which the exploration of new, inventive and fantastic scenarios were being slipped into the fabric of reality.

While some might argue that these explorations were perhaps unrealistically linked to purely literary explorations and naively utopian as they feebly depended on an assumed and fundamentally unpredictable response from their users, the following thesis will certainly argue that the arrangement and scripting of moments in space conditioning certain human interactions is however, and always has been, one of architecture's primordial, if not essential, responsibilities. Indeed, if recent history appears to have galvanized architecture's gradual shift away from its core values as a collective and social art, towards that of a geometric and tectonic art, the current project is a call for the re-exploration of an architecture capable of designing new ways of living, collectively interacting and imaginatively acting in space.

If we agree upon the fact that we all inherently long for stimulating events and ways to interact with one another in the spaces that shape our daily environments, then surely we can envision new architectural explorations that aim to collide a multitude of exciting scenarios together and enable our creative faculties to be prompted daily. Taking on this issue therefore, invites us to pose the question of whether or not we may begin to learn from the worlds of theatre and cinema and

the scenographic devices and methods they use to generate spaces that translate imaginative and poetic literary functions into fundamentally real spaces? Can we imagine an architectural project able to supplement the unavoidable architectural considerations of structure, envelope and function to propose other more ephemeral constructions of 'events', 'scenes' and 'situations' that directly involve users and provide an escape from the mundane and generic built environments that have come to condition our lives. Transcending notions of 'aesthetic', 'formal' and 'functional' concerns, can we explore architecture that delves into notions of 'experience', 'interactivity' and 'fun'?

Scenaric architecture will offer a discursive exploration into the practices of architecture that focus on the construction of actions, narrative functions and participative events through a scenographic staging of space. Through historical precedents and speculative projects, the project will investigate methods of creating spaces that borrow from the fantasy and liberty of theatre and cinema to create plausible and realistic conditions that spark curiosity and invite users to become the participants and creators of new scenarios in their built environment. Ultimately, it is the project for an architecture that provokes a new consciousness, leads to new ways of projecting one's self in space, prompts new ways of acting in space and actively questions the types of events and actions architecture may program.

PART 4 - EXPOSITION

DEFINING
SCEN·AR·IC

SCRIPTING SCENARIOS IN ACHITECTURE THROUGH SCENOGRAPHY

From the onset, the term *scenaric* appeared as a way to frame the current research and its goal in finding methods of scripting particular sets of actions in space. As a contraction of the reciprocal investigations of '*form*' and '*content*' for the project, it set out to reinforce the twofold nature of the design approach. Stemming from the notions of the '*scenario*' and the '*scenic*', the term refers to the qualities of an architectural approach capable of proposing a series of postulated sequences of actions in space, using the more ephemeral and relational spatial qualities of scenography.[1] It was hoped that the slight syntactic shift would further eliminate possible confusions with the notion of the 'scenic', now commonly associated to the realm of the picturesque and landscape architecture, while also actively re-affirming the importance of the authorless narrative functions in the project. While avoiding to specify the following in too much detail, understanding both terms, and the particular angle through which they are framed, will reveal itself to be useful.

[1] **SCENOGRAPHY**
The design and painting of theatrical scenery or (in painting and drawing) the representation of objects in perspective.
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005

Originating from the Greek words σκηνη (skene) or *scene* and γραφειν (graphein) or *writing*, scenography refers to the act of translating or re-writing literary narratives into materialized spaces. Quite simply, it is a *mise en scène* or staging of textual events and actions in space. In addition to communicating the settings and time of a text, scenography is also challenged with rendering visible much more abstract literary concepts such as human emotions, thoughts and psychological interactions. It is the actualization of fundamentally unreal spaces through an array of spatial constructions, communicative techniques, ephemeral elements and the orchestration of objects within a scene. While historically tied to the delimitations of the theatrical stage, today the exercise of scenography has in many ways transcended its original limitations. Breaching the divide created by the proscenium[2] and exiting the realm of the theatre hall, scenography in contemporary explorations has taken a much more

[2] **PROSCENIUM**
The part of the theater stage in front of the curtain separating the audience from the actors.
ORIGIN early 17th century: via Latin from Greek proskēnion, from pro 'before' + skēnē 'scene'.
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005

liberating approach in regards to its core mandate of literally *writing scenes* in space. Through radically new types of interventions, scenography has become a field directly focused on the scripting of human experiences and their insertion into public space and to much greater audiences.
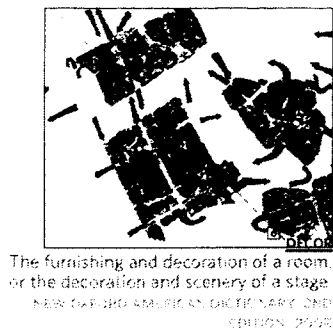
[3] DEBORD, GUY
(1931-1994) French philosopher, writer and filmmaker who was the founding figure of the Situationist International. Throughout his involvement with the Situationists, Debord developed and coined such notions as the détournement constructed situation dérive and psycho-geography.

[4] HILL, JONATHAN
An architect and architectural historian, currently teaching at the Bartlett School of Architecture and author of The Illegal Architect (1998) and Actions of Architecture (2003)

[5] JONATHAN HILL
ACTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE: ARCHITECTS AND CREATIVE USERS
(LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2003), P.58

INSTITUTE OF ILLEGAL ARCHITECTS
IMAGE SOURCE: ACTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE:
ARCHITECTS AND CREATIVE USERS
(LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2003)
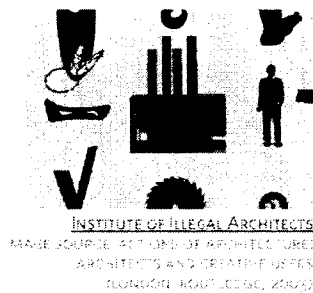
PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIC MAP OF PARIS
IMAGE SOURCE: SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL
ANTHOLOGY ED. KEN KNABB
(BERKELEY, CA: BUREAU OF PUBLIC SECRETS, 2006)

[6] DÉCOR
The furnishing and decoration of a room, or the decoration and scenery of a stage
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY 2ND EDITION 2005

[7] DEBORD, GUY
"PRELIMINARY PROBLEMS IN CONSTRUCTING A SITUATION" IN SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY ED. KEN KNABB
(BERKELEY, CA: BUREAU OF PUBLIC SECRETS, 2006) P.45

It is Guy Debord[3] in his essay 'Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation' – published in the inaugural Situationist International journal in 1958 – that perhaps first outlines the possibility of scenography to respond to the challenges typically reserved to the realm of architecture and propose new spatial solutions to these problems. Debord introduced the notion of the 'constructed situations' as new unfixed spaces embedded with scenographic properties that would be able to generate new events and actions in cities or architectural spaces. Jonathan Hill[4] describes a constructed situation as "a short-lived event or performance with a number of props in which the users are also the designers and builders."[5] Replacing the traditional axioms that defined architectural space as fixed, localized and experienced by neutral users, Debord effectively unlocked the possibility of new participatory, interactive, temporal and ephemeral spaces in architecture. Where up until this point, architecture had been seen as the resolution of spatial and programmatic problems through constructed and rigid spaces, Debord questioned the possibility for new programs, events and functions to be constructed as more momentary scenes or situations that simply tuned the existing fabric of space through scenographic elements.

In addition, the notion of the user is seen here, for one of the first times, as an entity also possessing creative powers and capable of concretely defining and altering space through their personal experiences. For Debord: "a constructed situation is not limited to an integrated use of artistic means to create an ambience, however great the force or spatiotemporal extent of that ambience might be. A situation is also an integrated behavior in time. It is composed of actions contained in a transitory décor. These actions are the product of the décor and of themselves, and they in their turn produce other décors and other actions."[7] Actions that are temporarily grounded in the construction of a scenic décor, are hence also able to instill in the users radically new ways of seeing and inhabiting space that transcend the initial experience.* These constructed situations are meant to trigger within individuals the realization of their creative powers on reality and promote their subsequent imaginative re-framing of other instances and situations within their lives. Architecture, in this context is capable of becoming a powerful spatial agent that redefines peoples' experiences

of everyday life as it triggers behaviours that encourage imaginative, creative, as well as subversive appropriations and manipulations of their environments. This new conception of space is infused with the latent aim to invest people with a new heightened awareness of their environments; thereby inciting them to creatively rewrite scenes and social narratives around them. For the moment however, let us further advance the importance of scripting spaces through scenographic devices, as a legitimate architectural approach to create new types of events, spatial qualities, programs and collective situations.

[8] BRÜCKNER, B. UWE
German architect and stage designer, who is creative director of ATELIER BRÜCKNER, one of the offices at the forefront of scenographic design in Europe and actively advocating for a redefinition of the field of scenography.

[9] Brückner here opposes the traditional architectural precept of "Form follows Function" coined by Louis Sullivan

[10] UWE R. BRÜCKNER
SCENOGRAPHY: MAKING SPACES TALK - PROJECTS 2002-2010 - ATELIER BRÜCKNER
STUTTGART, AVE T ON DYBAI 2011, P.12

WESTPHALIAN MUSEUM FOR ARCHEOLOGY (2005)
PHOTO: UWE R. BRÜCKNER + KID 21 12

[11] In reference the works of contemprary artists' Olafur Eliasson and Carsten Holler. In particular, Eliasson's works 'Your Split Second House' (2010), 'The Weather Project' (2003) and 'The Mediated Motion' (2001) as well as Holler's 'Test Site' (2006)

The work Uwe R. Brückner[8] and his office Atelier Brückner informs us of this possibility for scenography to yield spaces that also contain deeper meaning and structural relation between objects and events in relation to the users that inhabit the spaces. For Brücker, form is created from content[9] and "[it is] here that scenography is capable of completely making space itself into a narrative. At this place of questioning and researching, of inventing and writing stories, the most poetic creations of scenography are produced: their narrative spaces."[10] Space is therefore seen as the formal result of a textual narrative content it hosts and that scenography is capable of translating visually, materially and spatially. As a result, new types of spaces are possible that are not dictated by the traditional architectural tenets of form, materiality, enclosure, structure and functionality, but that rather begin to question and investigate the types of: ambiences, solicited reactions, interactions and behaviors that the space may prompt. Contrary to the system of coded and repeated architectural archetypes that are endlessly repeated today, through scenographic interventions we may attempt to imagine how new scripts can be inserted to modify and challenge the conventions of the traditional program, function and use of spaces. For example, Atelier Brückner's project for the Westphalian Museum for Archeology (2005), emerges visitors in an acutely scripted narrative where the traditional artefacts of the museum are placed in a fully functioning scientific laboratory. Here, scenography serves as a cross-programing tool that allows the museum to shed its traditional skin as a pristine controlled gallery space to instead take on the appearance of a scientific laboratory where a series of scenes encourage users to interact with artefacts, other visitors and the architectural spaces thereby leading to new discoveries and enabling users to personally curate their readings of the museums collection. Pushing this scenographic cross-pollinating of program and conditions to its extreme, contemporary art hints that we may even begin to dream of the possibilities of buildings with beaches in atrium spaces, rain in hallways, giant slides criss-crossing levels and tropical rainforests between rooms.[11]

Inserting scenic natural spaces within fundamentally contradicting settings was a central theme of Olafur Eliasson's early work. Such interventions ask that we question whether or not we may begin to imagine new ways of radically re-scripting spaces and programs in architecture and henceforth dream of new types of spatial experiences. Could the traditional 'transitional' spaces in our building, fundamentally unprogramed and devoid of true experiential qualities, such as atriums and lobbies, not perhaps be scenographically altered to produce much more stimulating interactions between users and their spaces?
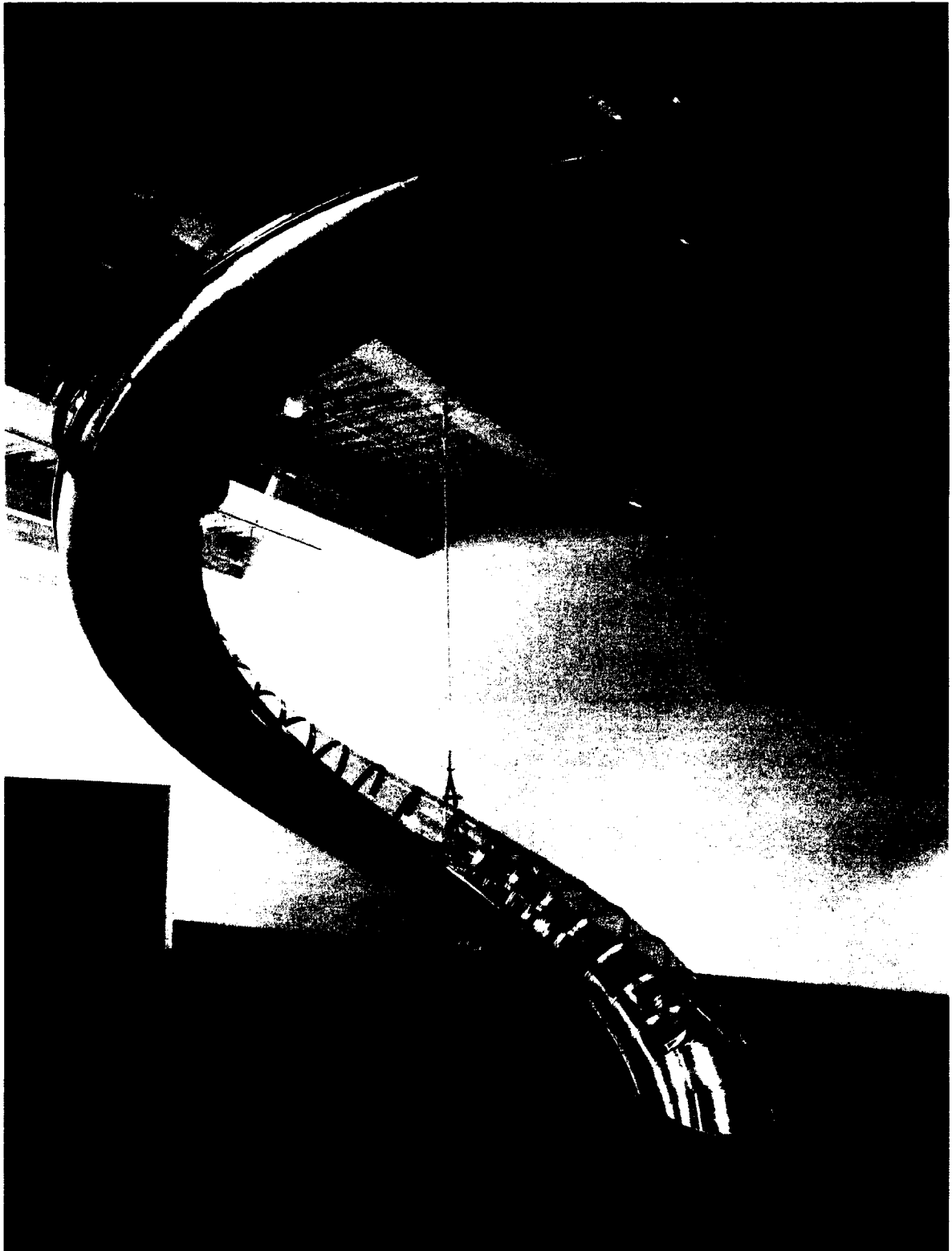
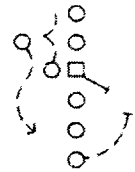Playful elements are used by Carsten Höller to contradict the normal use and inhabitation of institutional spaces and ignite the basic human desire for fun. Höller's installations question why routine and banal events such as travelling between floors in a building could not perhaps be scripted as scenarios that would start to prompt new and stimulating inhabitations of buildings.

Similarly, Bernard Tschumi,[18] asks us to consider: "To what extent could the literary narrative shed light on the organizing of events in buildings, whether called 'use', 'function', 'activities', or 'programs'? If writers could manipulate the structures of stories in the same way as they twist vocabulary and grammar, couldn't architects do the same organizing the program in a similarly objective, detached, or imaginative way? For if architects could self-consciously use such devices as repetition, distortion, or juxtaposition in the formal elaboration of walls, couldn't they do the same in terms of the activities that occurred within those very walls? Pole vaulting in the chapel, bicycling in the Laundromat, sky diving in the elevator shaft?"[19] Tschumi advocates for the composition of buildings not through formal ratios, proportions and stylistic orders but through the manipulation, organization and sequencing of events and actions that architecture has always fundamentally hosted but far too often expressed a reluctance to use as a generative elements. If architecture has always been a receptacle containing a series of users acting out events in space, Tschumi asks us to question the capability of architecture to begin altering and transforming the structure of narratives that are actually contained within it. Could we not perhaps start to shake the contents of buildings around a little bit in order to investigate the possibility to collage, splice, split, confront, re-assemble and re-frame the stories and characters that live within buildings. The architectural design and manipulation of the narratives that take place within buildings become for Tschumi a powerful method of conceiving new types of spaces and architectural typologies, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to begin to question the way architecture may influence new types of power and control mechanism in society.

The Cloudscape project Tetsuo Kondo Architects and Transsolar environmental engineers demonstrated the potential of more ephemeral interventions to start distorting programs and events within architectural spaces to create new and unexpected experiences that encourage new ways for people to interact and meet.

If we have begun to focus predominantly up to this point on the powers of scenography to inform new spatial constructions and the capacity of architecture to manipulate and compose these scenes, let us now take a brief moment to explore the second part of the term scenaric, or more precisely the notion of the 'scenario' and its capability to inform the design and creative alteration of narratives.

At the core of a 'scenaric' approach to architecture also lies the intrinsic aim to re-invest the users of architecture with greater powers of appropriation and interaction with their environments. It is a project that attempts to create environments where users and spaces are put in relation with one another through a plurality of interlinking, malleable and reflective narratives – or what we will now refer to as scenarios.[13] While the word scenario has come to be rather prominent and commonly accepted today in reference to a written outline, providing the detailed accounts of movies or stage performances, it is the embodied etymological roots of the word that we hope will emerge through its use in this project.

Derived from the Italian language, scenario appears to have stemmed from the lexicon of the Commedia Dell'Arte[13] as it began to be identified in relation to the structure of a specific type of play. Before referring to this and being assimilated in common language however, the term scenario appears to have been innately referred to as the term canovaccio. Translated as quite literarily 'canvas', or 'that which is on the canvas', the term referred to a broad set of stage notes attached to the back of canvas décors.[16] As the Commedia Dell'Arte was fundamentally rooted in improvisation and authorless texts, the canovaccio was not meant to embody very precise textual instructions but rather, to loosely frame a series of variants such as characters, stage movements, entrances, exits and key plot twists that may take part in shaping the play.

In this project, scenario will thus be used in respect of these origins as a means to explore the creation of a set of textual instructions embedded within the surfaces of scenic spaces. These scenarios will not be fixed and determinate, but rather open-ended and will call upon the improvisation and appropriation from the users. The challenge at hand in the project will be to create spaces that, through scenographic, elements incite the users to perform or enact actions but also allows them sufficient room to improvise or act in unpredictable ways.

The fundamentally authorless and open-ended quality of the canovaccio and the use of the scenarios draws many parallels to the

[13] Scenario
A written outline of a movie, novel, or stage work giving details of the plot and individual scenes
Or
a postulated sequence or development of events
Or
a setting, in particular for a work of art or literature
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005

[13] Commedia Dell'Arte
An improvised kind of popular comedy in Italian theaters in the 16th-18th centuries, based on stock characters. Actors adapted their comic dialogue and action according to a few basic plots (commonly love intrigues) and to topical issues
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005

[16] Rudin, John, and Olly Crick.
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE
RESOURCE BOOK FOR TROUPES
FLORENCE, KY, USA: ROUTLEDGE, 2001

[17] Rolland Barthes
(1915-1980) French philosopher and linguist
who consecrated a great part of his career to the
study and analysis of semiotics.

[18] Rolland Barthes
Image-Music-Text. Transl. by Stephen Heath
New York: Hill and Wang, 1978, 143.

[19] Lyotard, Jean-François
(1924-1998) French post-structuralist
philosopher who wrote extensively on
the human condition in the postmodern
world. His book La Condition Post-Moderne
famously brought the term post-modern
within the philosophical arena for the first
time and began to challenge the overriding
grand narratives of modernism.

[20] Lyotard, Jean-François
The Postmodern Condition:
A Report on Knowledge.
(Minneapolis: University of
Minnesota 1984), 60.

[21] Michel Foucault
(1926-1984) French philosopher, social
theorists and historian of ideas who has
enjoyed particular popularity amongst
architects for his writings in relation to
power and space.

notion of the open text and alludes to the possibility of new narrative structures such as delineated by Rolland Barthes[17] in his canonical essay 'The Death of the Author' (1967). Barthes suggested that we explore the structure of a text as something that was no longer entirely regimented by the hand of the author but rather as something that accepted and demanded appropriation and multiple different readings from its readers. While the role of the author as a 'scriptor' of more 'performative'[18] nature has been richly explored in literary and artistic productions, it is hoped here that the notion of the *scenario* in this project will lead to an architectural exploration with much less didactic and unyielding building-user relations.*

This plurality of open-ended scenarios furthermore resonates with what Jean-François Lyotard[19] described in his book La Condition Postmoderne (1979) as the creation of new types of mini-narratives. For Lyotard, the advent of post-modernism is characterized by a society where "[we] no longer have recourse to the grand narratives.[...] But as we have just seen, [where] the little narrative [*petit récit*] remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention."[20] Architecturally the death of overriding meta-narratives signifies the death of tyrannically exclusive and functionalistic mono-classifications of space. Architectural archetypes are henceforth no longer seen as fixed and immutable objects, but as open and inclusive organisms capable of hosting a series of smaller, momentary stories and narratives. For example, cafés, gardens, areas where children play, rendez-vous points, new technological additions, security mechanisms, and unprogramed spaces left to be appropriated by the users in the train-station or the library* become just as important if not more important in this type of world than the previous traditional functional calling of the buildings as a place to board a train or read books. It is in these smaller spaces that innovation might begin to appear or that more valid types of representation of society might be observed. Specifically designing to integrate these new miniature narratives, or designing with sufficient flexibility for these narratives to spontaneously emerge, hence proposes a new project of architecture that could be much more inclusive and representative of its users.

Encapsulated within the confines of an architectural shell, the project for a scenaric architecture becomes an assemblage of a series of scenarios or mini-narratives that become intertwined and fused together to effectively create (new) parallel worlds. These new scenic and spatial situations hosting these scenarios constitute what Michel Foucault[21] would describe as: "[sorts] of counter-arrangements, of

effectively realized utopias in which the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found in society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned."[29] Like materialized frames from a screenplay or a graphic novel, these scenographically staged scenarios create miniaturized and actualized snapshots of the events from a precise time and space of the society from which they have emerged. However, these spaces also possess quintessentially reflective qualities – like tableaux painted on a mirror – that enable users to see themselves include within these social conditions and ways in which they may begin to enter the space or alter it to enact their own stories. Oscillating between the fantastic and imaginary utopian worlds they tend toward but never reach and the totally real concrete world that they have spawned from, these *scenaric* zones provide a space where reality is temporarily suspended to create new events and ways to creatively experience the world we inhabit. This heterotopic mirror world is one that reflects the world around it while also providing a utopic *mise-en-scène* of what is ultimately possible within it.

Let us bring this together briefly, even rudimentarily, by stating that the notion of the scenaric architecture may be sketched out as the creation of scenographic spaces promoting human interrelations through the construction of curious spatiotemporal situations that are contained in an inclusive environment where their multiplicity and plurality are celebrated. These scenographically constructed situations, through their fundamentally authorless and open-ended nature, finally promote the creativity of their users in directly intervening in the definition and construction of space to ultimately produce new parallel representations of the world that mirror, comment on or invert the events and actions of the society and worlds around them.

PART 5 - RISING ACTION

SCENE
□VS□
SCREEN

EXPLORATIONS INTO THE METHODS OF GENERATING SCENOGRAPHIC SPACES

If we have used the terminology of 'scenaric architecture' thus far in our exploration in reference to a new architectural approach, the concept of embedding sets of narratives within architecture through scenographic techniques is however not foreign to the history of architecture. Defining scenography as an exercise stemming from the art of staging theatrical scenes and later evolving into the framing of settings in cinema, it becomes possible to draw extensive links between scenography and architecture throughout the history of modern architecture. One can indeed begin to identify the reverberations of scenography in the recent history of architecture through two of the strongest aesthetic metaphors of modernism: the scene and the screen.[1] While, overly simplistic renditions of these concepts might lead to the comparison of walls and floors as the vertical and horizontal planes respectively associated to the screen and the scene, it is the construction of more intricate spatial situations and their properties that shall be of interest to us here. Notably, understanding methods of scripting spatial relations in regards to the theoretical frameworks of theatre and cinema will enable us to explore ways of prompting users to react to certain spatial arrangements and/or enact a series of actions in different ways according to their environment.[2]

In the essay 'The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism', Beatriz Colomina shrewdly exposes these notions of the screen and the scene in the works of Adolf Loos[3] and Le Corbusier.[4] In her attempt to reveal the latent and hidden mechanisms enforcing a patriarchal gaze and domination over women, Colomina is able to un-earth a series of traces and clues in the works of both architects that depict two radically different spatial systems. On the one hand, she characterizes the work of Loos as one that is dictated and regimented by a set of spatial decisions that consciously and continually refer the users back toward the interior

[1] **Roger Connah**
HOW ARCHITECTURE GOT ITS HUMP
(Cambridge: M.T Press, 2001) p.3

[2] While it is understood that it is impossible to fully predict the reactions or script the actions of human due to their inherent impredictability and fundemental free-will, we will attempt however to show that certain spatial orchestratrions might tempt or incite people to act in certain ways or carry out certain actions.

[3] **Loos, Adolf**
(1870-1933) Austrian architect who is seen as one of the forefather of Modern Architecture in Europe.
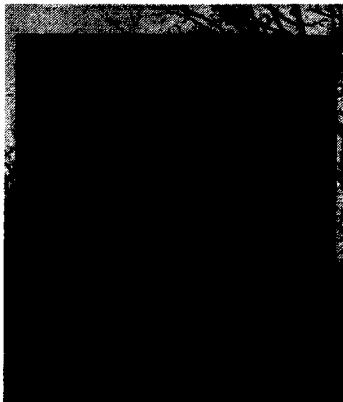
[4] **Jeanneret, Charles-Édouard**
(1887-1965) a.k.a. Le Corbusier. Franco-Swiss architect, urbanist, writer, designer, painter and boxer who is seen as one of the principal pioneers of Modern Architecture.

and centrality of a space. The users here are constantly put in relation to the shared public spaces they have been in or will be in and their actions become subject to the gaze of the collectivity. This effectively renders the spaces as stages for human actions and interrelations, and frames them as theatrical in nature. On the other hand, Le Corbusier's works are ordered by a series of elements that unremittingly push the users outwards and elsewhere, creating an understanding of the environment based on a specific montage of unusual spatial and visual experiences and connections. Here the space is infused with a sense of cinematography as the users are treated like actors projected into a plurality of situations one after another.

Loos is the first to take position on the use of the screen in his essay 'Die Potempkinstadt'* (1898). Here, he mounts a virulent attack on the notion of the screen which he sees as a superfluous element of camouflage. Loos writes: "Whenever I stroll along the Ring [Boulevard], I always feel as if a modern Potemkin had wanted to make somebody believe he had been transported into a city of aristocrats. All that the Italian Renaissance could produce in noble mansions had been plundered in order to conjure up for Her Highness the common people a New Vienna."[5] What Loos attacks in this instance is more precisely what he sees as an architecture of projection. This architecture, he denounces, projects upon itself an ostensible symbolic meaning through various simulacrums and masking devices such as ornaments, rather than creating actual experientially rich spaces. What is important to Loos is not the act of symbolic or metaphysical projection of characteristics of spaces on screens, but the total and true experience of an immanent and embodied space as a scene. Loos sees architecture that depends on projection as a reductive and shallow play of thin surfaces that deny users the true experience of spaces.* For Loos architecture was to be treated as an exercise in depth and the inherent components and complexities it harbors.

This conception of architecture as a palpable interior world serving as a stage for events is demonstrated in Loos' seminal Villa Moller built in 1928 in Vienna. While incredibly tectonic and formal, Loos' application of his raumplan for the Villa Moller is far less motivated by abstract divisions and multiplications of spaces within the fixed constraints of a perfect cube.[6] Rather with each slight inflection in section or plan, Loos creates a truly theatrical object that establishes a set of complex and calculated visual and social relations. Throughout the project, the geometric maneuvers and manipulations create a succession of deliberate shifts in the sensation of space that result in particular types of *mise-en-scène* of the different

[5] Translated by __Kenneth Frampton's__ in *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1980), 90.

Above: Loos' *Villa Moller* 1928. Image source: Ludwig Münz & Gustav Künstler, *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966)

[6] The apotheosis of such an architectural exploration can be found in Eisenman's early housing studies that relentlessly focus on the deconstruction and manipulation of pure form volumetric shapes. For Eisenman, the formal language of architecture exists independently from the users. This is in many regards not only the anti-thesis of Loos but of the project at hand.

programmatic elements of the house with one another. This is particularly observable in the raised seating area and the family dining room.

Conceived as the only extrusion projecting out from the pure cubic volume of the house, the raised seating area in the Villa Moller visually announces itself from the exterior as a moment of quintessential importance. Positioned on the central axis of the house, it is slightly raised above the other rooms of the ground floor placing it in a position of predominance and enabling its users to overlook all the actions in the house. Fittingly, Loos openly refers to this space in its use and shape as one that shares many characteristics with the theatre box[7] of an opera house overlooking the larger performance space of the scene below it.[8] The seating area acts as a belvedere overlooking the events of the household. The daily events of the inhabitants of the house unfold under the gaze of those present in the seating area thereby transforming their actions into performative events.

This expression of the theatrical *mise-en*-scène of the domestic life of the household is also strikingly revealed in Loos' articulation of the dining room and the living room. Situated in perpendicular position to the axis of the elevated seating area, the rooms are initially split apart one from another through a vertical drop of roughly 70cm. While visually appearing as an oversized step, the break becomes an effective physical border and establishes a clear hierarchy between the two spaces. This is further reinforced through Loos' astute use of wall-mounted cabinets designed as a proscenium, framing the dining room from the living room, and through the axiality of the dining room where users enter hidden behind this proscenium from the côté jardin (the kitchen) and the côté cours (the terrace overlooking the yard). In doing so, the dining room is emphasized as the principal moment of interaction in the house where the interior and the exterior worlds of the family collide and are elevated to the level of spectacle. The dining room in many ways becomes the *scene* where social interactions and conventions are exhibited on stage.

Essentially what is engendered by such spaces is a shift in the role of the user from passive to creative. No longer are the users simply the subjects of a deterministic functionalist environment, nor are they neutral entities travelling through space in a predetermined or apathetic way. This shift in the nature of the users through their recasting in space as actors, is what Jonathan Hill describes in 'Actions and Architecture: Architects and the Creative User' (2003), as the transformation of the role of the user as simply reactionary, to one where his creative capabilities are recognized.[9] For Hill there is a fundamental

[7] **Theatre box**
Referred to as a *loge* in French, the term originates from the Italian *logia* which designates a gallery or corridor at ground level or higher that is on the façade of a building and open to the air on one side. It is designated on the façade as a punctuation supported by columns or a series of pierced openings in the wall.

[8] **Beatriz Colomina**
'The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism' in *Sexuality and Space*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, p.73.

THE RAISED SEARING AREA IN THE VILLA MOLLER
ADOLF LOOS 1928
IMAGE SOURCE: LUDWIG MÜNZ & GUSTAV KÜNSTLER, 1964

THE STAIRS IN THE VILLA MOLLER
ADOLF LOOS 1928
IMAGE SOURCE: LUDWIG MÜNZ & GUSTAV KÜNSTLER, 1964

VILLA BAKER
ADOLF LOOS (1928)
IMAGE SOURCE: LOSS & KÜNZE, GUSTAV KÜNSTLER,
(1964)

VILLA BAKER
PLAN, 1ST FLOOR (1928)
IMAGE SOURCE: LOOS & KÜNZE, GUSTAV KÜN-
STLER, (1964)

need today to conceive space in architecture as a place that enables actions by its users, and acknowledges the essential creativity of each user to manipulate and re-shape the spaces they inhabit. While Hill himself uses Loos as an example of architecture which repudiates creative users and enslaves them as subjects of the architect, it shall be argued here that this argument is too loosely hinged on the textual relation between the role of theatrical 'director' Hill attributes to Loos and the subsequent notion of 'directed' that he projects on the users of such spaces. Instead we will argue that through the creation of spaces that openly theatricalize actions and human relations, Loos actually engages in a more sophisticated operation of estrangement.[10] Through his spaces, Loos calls upon the intellectual potential of the users to realize the theatricality of their environment and render them conscious of the social myths and conventions already at work in shaping their relations with spaces and people within architecture. This act attempts to invest in the users a new awareness to enable them to intensify, alter or distort these relations and create radically new scenarios of which they are the actors and the directors.
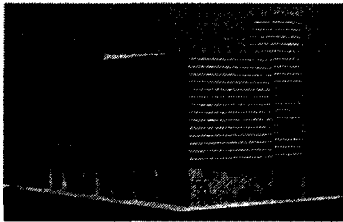
The potential of an architecture that theatrically frames users to valorize their creativity and conscious appropriation of space, leading to radically new imaginative scenarios in space, is also demonstrated in Loos' 1928 speculative proposal for Josephine Baker's[9] house in Paris. Conceived once again as an internal public world, the house is made of a thick inhabitable perimeter wall that delimits a series of spectacular scenic spaces within the house. This perimeter wall is constructed as a double wall through which one circulates, that is punctured by small windows to the outside that serve more as lighting devices than as actual viewing vistas towards the outside.[11] The interior wall however is extensively cut open toward the inside, framing views of the grand spaces within. The majority of these windows and frames are drawn around the showcase 4m x 10m x 2m pool situated at the center of the house. Loos pushes this notion of theatrically framing views of the 'spectacle' of the house to an extreme by placing a series of thick windows on the bottom and sides of the pool granting views to the swimmers from within the various rooms of the house. While the Villa Moller demonstrates the construction of scenes as a method of estrangement and distortion of human relations, the spaces of the Villa Baker attempt to liberate the users from the normal deterministic constraints of functionalist architecture, in order to engage them in a space of spectacle and fantasy. Destroying any preconceived concept of inhabitation, here someone inhabiting the house may very well be reading Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea in the living room under the watchful eyes of their friends swimming above in the pool.

Exploded isonometric projection of the spaces that compose the Villa Moller and the subsequent "scenes" created within the interior world of the cubic volume. Scenes have been pulled out to more explicitly demonstrate their location, relation to the whole and interaction between each other.

In presenting the notion of the screen one is reminded of Le Corbusier's statement on Arab architecture.✶ This architecture according to Le Corbusier "has much to teach us. It is appreciated while on the move, with one's feet...[I]t is while walking, moving from one place to another that one sees how the arrangements of the architecture develops."⑫ In opposition to traditional notions of centrality and hierarchy typically associated with the urban form of European cities, Le Corbusier outlines a conception of architecture that has become quintessentially linked to the conceptual perception offered by cinema and its specific production techniques. The notion of space now framed in Walter Benjamin's age of the mechanical reproduction of art⑬ enables a reading of space determined by the contrast of different, non-converging events in succession. Such an architecture is no longer dominated by traditional axioms of cohesion and centrality but instead leads to the concept of montage⑭ and the interconnection of independently framed events and their projected spatial elements in sequence.

Le Corbusier's statement on Arab architecture demonstrates his awareness of cinematic techniques and their formative relation to his canonical concept of the *promenade architecturale.*✶ Devised as a scripted sequence of events articulating space, the *promenade achitecturale* is a central and generative part of Le Corbusier's early architectural interventions. The Villa La Roche, one of Le Corbusier's earliest works shows this predominance of the promenade as the structuring element to space. Within this house, Le Corbusier generates an incredibly rich sequence that sees users enter at the core of the house and then centrifugally spun around and upwards throughout the space. The users are successively framed into sequences always leading them toward other rooms, suspending them within voids, projecting them inside cubist paintings and presenting them to various meticulously photographed views of the landscape and context.⑮ The outcome is much like an unwound film reel where the users are projected onto a series of constructed events and situations, spliced together, but ruptured from traditional spatiotemporal constraints. Screens and frames are mounted together creating scenarios propitious to the overlapping of previously unthinkable events and spaces.

This exploration into montage and the sequencing of events is pushed to its limits in Le Corbusier's Appartement de Beistegui. Situated on the Champs-Élysées, the apartment was commissioned in 1929 by Charles de Beistegui, the son of a tremendously wealthy Spanish industrialist. Intended to be de Beistegui's Parisien pied-

⑫ Roger Connah

⑬ Walter Benjamin
describes how the disappearance of the notion of cult and aura of an art work with the advent of cinema has brought about the capacity for art to create shock and sudden change in the conception of the world. For him: "[Film], on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives, on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of actions.[It] reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject."
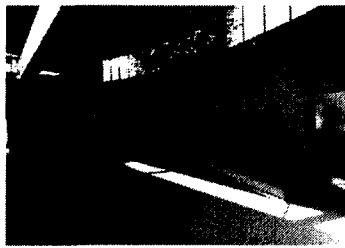"THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANI-
CAL REPRODUCTION" IN ILLUMINATIONS ED.
HANNAH ARENDT.
(NEW YORK: SCHOKEN, 1978) P.236

⑭ Montage
The process or technique of selecting, edit-ing, and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole.
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY 2ND
EDITION 2005

VILLA LA ROCHE
LE CORBUSIER (1924)
IMAGE TOUR DE FONDATION LE CORBUSIER,
OEUVRES ARCHITECTURE REALISATIONS, VILLA LA
ROCHE-JEANNERET
JANUARY 06 2012 <HTTP://WWW.FONDATION
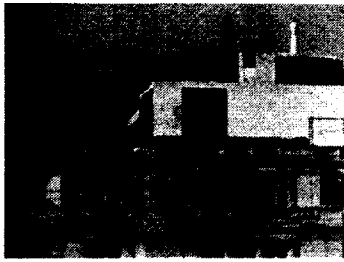LECORBUSIER.FR/CORBUWEB/>

⑮ Le Corbusier
elegantly describes how he sees his archi-tecture as a photographic device capturing the view of a landscape on a screen to secure it within the limits of an architec-tural space.
PRECISIONS: ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AR-
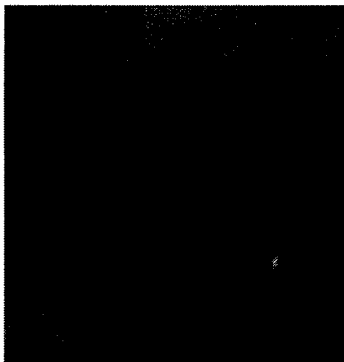CHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING. (CAMBRIDGE:
MIT PRESS, 1991) P.57

APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER (1930)

MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA
DZIGA VERTOV (1929)

[1] **Charles Baudelaire**
(1821-1867) French poet made famous for his collections of poems "Les Fleurs du Mal." Baudelaire would profess throughout his lifetime a love for the energy and vitality of the city. For him one should dive into the crowds to soak up and absorb all that the city had to offer.

[2] **Vertov, Dziga**
(1896-1954) Soviet film maker and cinema theorist who pioneered the practices Kino-Pravda or Cinéma Vérité, a style of moviemaking and documentary focused on a form of heightened realism.

[3] **Frederic Jameson**
Defined hyperspace as a new type of mediated and distorted space spawning from the cultural and new technological effects of modernity.

à-terre, the apartment was also designed to host de Beistegui's infamous lavish and extravagant parties. Le Corbusier's solution to the spatial constraints of the apartment and de Beistegui's strong surrealist penchants led to the creation of one of Le Corbusier's most interesting and abstract spatial projects. Upon entering the space, one is directly confronted with an unusually non-descript and empty space that seems to have done away with Le Corbusier's traditional notion of the *promenade architecturale*. However, upon closer review, the creation of the promenade is achieved through a series of hidden and subtle architectural strategies that create a series of new relations and disjunctions in the spatiotemporal experience of the space. Interweaving multiple spaces and scenarios together, a new multi-linear architectural promenade is created. This project demonstrated a completely new type of architecture that finds itself scripting spaces through radically new types of cinematographic techniques such as double exposures, tracking shots, jump cuts and split screens.

Upon entering the apartment, an extensive full height window at the end of the living room frames the Southeast elevation of the Champs-Élysées and directly confronts the users with a new type of projected space. More than simply dematerializing the divide between the exterior and interior, the window becomes a screen that intensifies the relation between the experienced bodily world of the room and the transient or frantic world of the modern city beyond. It effectively projects the users outwards where they are immersed like Baudelaire[1] in the drunken spree of vitality and modernity offered by the city. This energy and perceptual stimulus is heightened by the presence of concealed screens that drop down from the ceiling to cover the window and onto which films and images may be projected from a hidden projector in the wall. Like Dziga Vertov's[2] use of superimposition and double exposures in his film 'Man With a Movie Camera,' released the same year, new scenarios and emotions springing from the city are overlaid to create a new perceptual hyperspace.[3]

This use of projection as a means to create impossible but highly stimulating new perceptive situations is further encountered when one turns back from the window towards the interior of the house and decides to climb up the spiral staircase. Upon emerging on the second floor, the users find themselves enveloped in a small dark turret leading to the exterior terrace. This cylindrical room becomes the locus for an architectural tour de force by Le Corbusier where the room transforms itself into a panoramic camera obscura[4] relaying a 360° view of the Parisian skyline back into the apartment through a

APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER 1929
IMAGE SUR ACC FONDATION LE CORBUSIER, PARIS

APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER 1929
IMAGE SUR ACC FONDATION LE CORBUSIER, PARIS
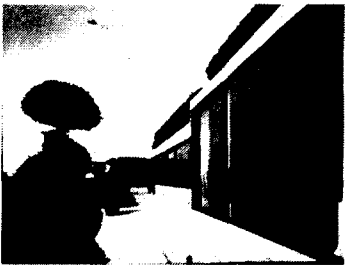
APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER 1929
IMAGE SUR ACC FONDATION LE CORBUSIER, PARIS
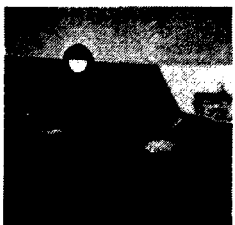
APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER 1929
IMAGE SUR ACC FONDATION LE CORBUSIER, PARIS

periscope device affixed to the ceiling of the turret. While Le Corbusier often referred to rooms as photographic devices capturing a landscape and re-transcribing them within the physical boundaries of the rooms, here this notion is taken to its extreme. In this room, the nearby Haussmannien façades of the 8ème Arrondissement are captured and literally re-transcribed within the walls of the environment, breaking the real spatiotemporal limits of traditionally conceived space.

Whilst both previous examples demonstrate the use of superimposition and double exposure as methods of redefining space through projection, Le Corbusier also begins to play with techniques of split screens and montage in the tail end of the project. As users finally exit the apartment and begin to enter the luscious three-tier rooftop garden, a series of architectural elements begin to cut, frame and collapse the environing context. Where in other projects such as the Villa Savoye (1931) or the Palais des Congrés (1964) in Strasbourg, the users are carried along the promenade architectural and their movement is framed within in a continuous unfolding of space that tracks the evolution of the exterior landscape and interior spaces, the Appartement de Beistegui proposes a new method of creating a 'tracking shot' in space. Due to the spatial constraints of the small apartment that denied the possibility of creating such long linear sequences in space, Le Corbusier creates architectural spaces that are instead able to unfold around the fix point of the user. On the rooftop garden this is accomplished by playing with the physical borders of the terraces and by mechanically opening certain parts to create moving panoramic shots of the city. Most notably, a series of hedges on the East side of the terrace are placed on tracks and moved in order to literally frame a cinematographic tracking shot of the Parisian monuments. The partial retraction of the first hedge frames the Tour Eiffel while hiding the rest of the skyline, while the full retraction of the hedges reveals a view down the entire Champs-Élysées towards the obelisk of the Place de la Concorde.

Finally, as users march up the last set of stairs, they are brought up to the last terrace of the garden enclosed in tall half-walls and covered in grass. This "terrace super croquet" is very much conceived as an open air yet enclosed exterior room. Amongst the scattered baroque furniture, an open-air exterior fireplace on top of which is hung a mirror, serves as a focal point directing the view Westwards towards the end of the Champs-Élysées. The mirror and fireplace form an almost perfect arch that perspectively inscribes itself within the opening of the Arc-de-Triomphe. Here Le Corbusier and de
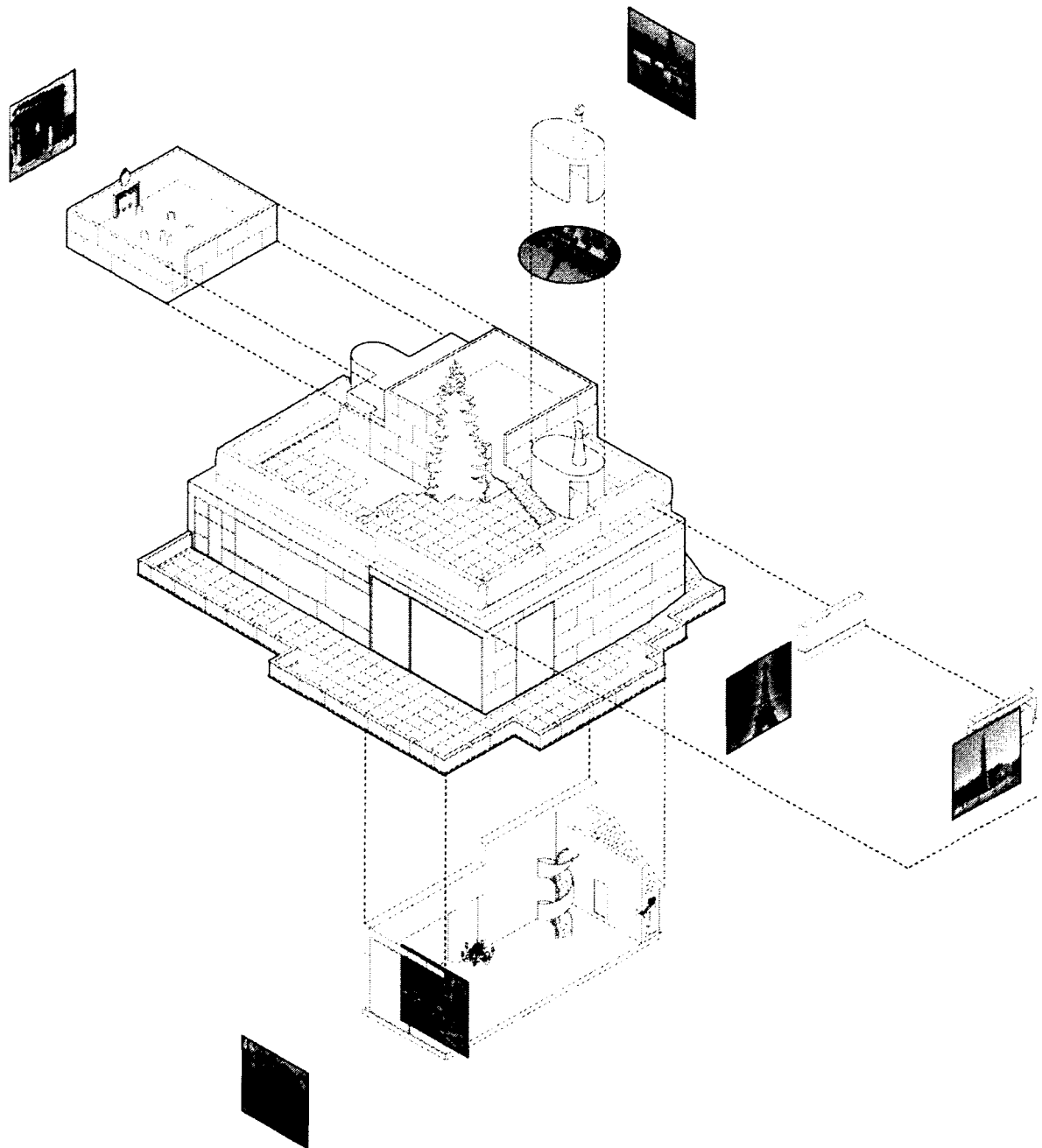
Exploded isonometric projection of the Appartemend de Beistegui demonstrating the numerous "screens" at work in forming a layered and interactive promenade architectural within the spaces of the confined apartment

Beistegui play a game of split screens that collapse foreground and background, collaging the spaces of the terrace with the celebrated iconic arch. Much like the other moments within the apartment, this final architectural orchestration creates a drastic disjunction in space offered through the manipulation of the *screen*.

In all these instances Le Corbusier creates spaces that radically deterritorialize[⊠] the users and where the boundaries between the real, the fictitious, the symbolic, the intensified and the projected are systematically blurred and overlapped onto one another. In opposition to the system of Loos' architecture where events are additive and in fixed relation to one another, in Le Corbusier's work, events are multiplied and mutable. The traditional spatiotemporal confines of space are shattered in favor of ever more creative and user-centric definitions and readings of space. The concept of the *screen* is manipulated to create sites of unimaginable and, ultimately, impossible, dimensions. Here we may even propose that these spaces unlock another type of creative appropriation of space through the imaginative projection of new scenarios opening up gaps between reality and fiction.

[⊠] **Deterritorialization**
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatari describe this as a mental process by which one de-contextualizes a set of relations, rendering them virtual to re-materialize them in new conditions afterwards

Andrew Ballantyne states "Nomadic thought in the Deleuze-and-Guatari-world is not a matter of making long journeys around the world for the sake of travel. On the contrary, it could happen without stepping outside one's apartment. It has more to do with the state of mind of the hefted sheep who has wandered away from the territory, and - for as long as it has lost its bearings - has become nomadic. Most often this sort of deterritorialization is immediately recuperated by a reterritorialization, so that one switches from one common-sense regime to another" THINKING FOR ARCHITECTS DELEUZE AND GUATTARI LONDON ROUTLEDGE 2007 P 58

PART 6 - CLIMAX

PROP
SPACE

THE MISE-EN-SCÈNE OF SPACE THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

So far, through our analysis of the 'scene' and the 'screen', we have seen how scenographic elements, embedded with theatrical or cinematic functions, can become powerful generators of new spatiotemporal experiences. In particular, we've examined the capacity of both these types of spaces to script new ways of acting within them and alter the users' perception of their environment. The question that remains for us to explore is whether or not we can localize and identify the shared characteristics of both types of spaces - isolating a form of common architectural language - and whether or not it is possible to extract these shared elements to create new scenaric spaces?

As previously noted, in Adolf Loos' Villa Moller, the scenographic design of spaces edged towards a theatrical dramatization of the interior. Through the careful manipulations of spaces and their articulation, Loos effectively created a type of space where users were plunged into a theatrical world where even the most mundane of actions became framed as an event in space. However, while many of the moments of the house are framed as scenes that placed the users under the gaze of the collectivity,[1] the control of these spaces and the events that take place within them are nevertheless almost always brought back into the hands of the users through key architectural mechanisms. None of these manipulations were more dramatic than the proscenium wall that separated the dining room from the living room. Here, Loos created a hidden wooden stair that collapses down from the floorboards, at the edge of the drop between the two rooms, and that was able to destroy the spatial connotations of the proscenium. This architectural mechanism, activated by a lever within the dining room, defined who was viewed and who was viewing, by placing the control of the space and its events in the hands of the user operating it. Such moments help to emphasize the notions of estrangement* embedded within the space and reinforce the 'authorless' qualities of the architecture, by not only raising the users' awareness of their environment but also explicitly

showcasing the capability for users to appropriate their surroundings. While the affairs of a family debating around the dinner table may at a moment appear as a perfectly framed scene to those in the living room, almost instantly, with the pull of a lever, the action can shift rooms and suddenly turn the spectators into an integral participants in the action.
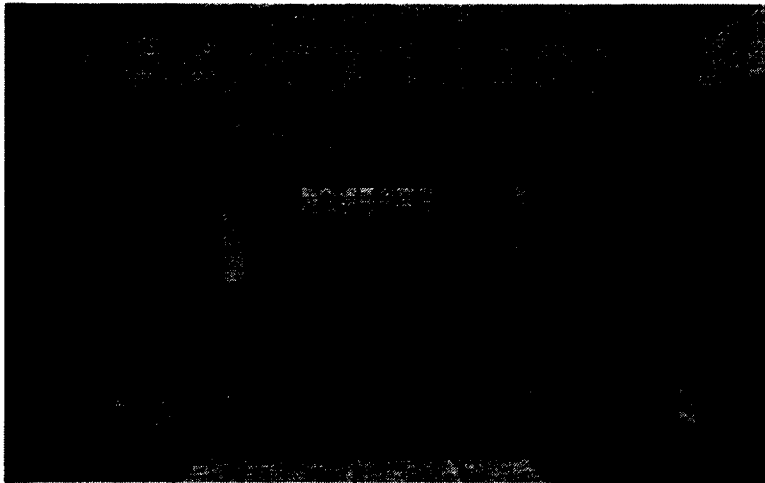
View into the living room wich also doubles as a music room (may we even say theatrical orchestra?) through the proscenium wall.

VILLA MILLER
ADOLF LOOS (1925)
MARGARETHE LOOS, GRAND MONUMENT, GUSTAV KLINSCHER, 1912.
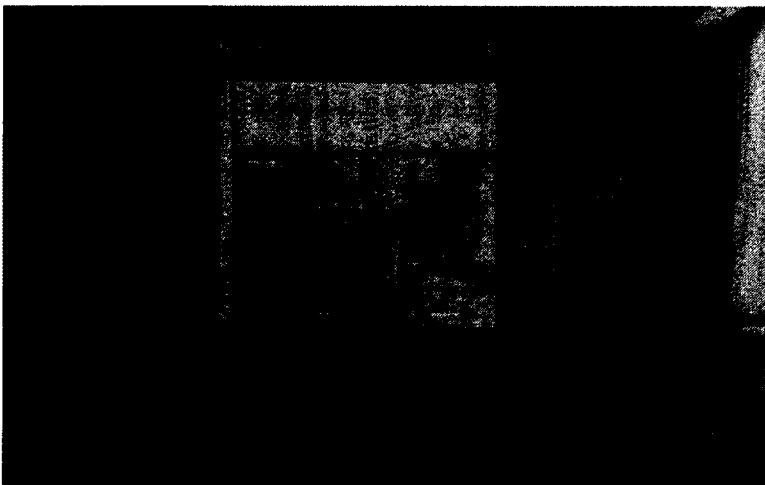
View of the proscenium wall and the perfectly framed dining table. In foreground the outline of the drop down stair activitated from within the dining room is also visible.

VILLA MILLER
ADOLF LOOS (1925)
MARGARETHE LOOS, GRAND MONUMENT, GUSTAV KLINSCHER, 1912.

This capability to unlock new experiences in space through key performative elements is reinforced through further analysis of the Le Corbusier's Appartement de Beistegui. Here again, users control their environment and actions through a series of architectural moments that distort perception and become catalysts for new events. Most notably, users can choose to manipulate a multitude of elements such as: the screens that drop down to cover the windows, the movable audio-visual equipment inside the house, the pivoting camera obscura periscope,

the sliding hedges and the trompe l'oeil Arc de Triomphe fireplace. Through these architectural elements, users are able to place previously unimaginable spaces in relation to one another, thereby unlocking new experiences through the altered resultant architecture. Rather than the traditional architectural spaces we have become accustomed to that conventionally offer banal and insipid first-degree experiences of space, here users can manipulate the architectural parts of the apartment as filters and lenses offering new readings of the buildings and hinting at new possible events. In this way, guests at one de Beistegui's notorious parties could, at any moment, substitute the view of a Haussmanian façade for scenes of the Amazonian forest straight out of 'Tarzan and the Tiger' (1929); or outside, between two hors-d'oeuvres, decide to change the view at the end of the terrace from the Tour Eiffel to the Place de la
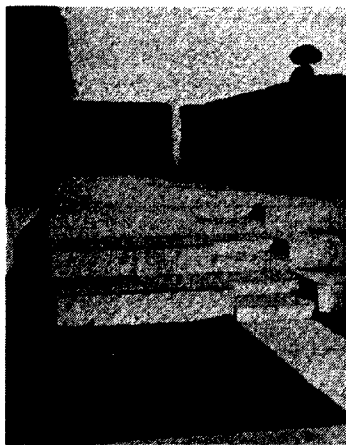
Mobile hedges in operation and framing two radically different views of Paris. One frames the Eiffel Tower while the other is framing the Place de la Concorde and further away in the distance Notre-Dame de Paris.

APPARTEMENT DE BEISTEGUI
LE CORBUSIER (1929)
IMAGE © LA FONDATION LE CORBUSIER, © DJ

Concorde.

While questions regarding the shared characteristics of both the *scene* and the *screen* will necessitate further advancing, we may begin to hypothesize that in the wake of the collapse of both types of spaces onto one another, a series of key defining architectural elements, that implicitly inform and define the environment around them, begin to appear. Indeed, by stripping away the surrounding fixed spatial arrangements of both types of spaces – by removing all walls, floors, windows and doors – we begin to observe the signs of a latent hidden architectural configuration; a sort of charged void animated by a series of discrete, interactive and performative[2] architectural elements. These architectural elements – the collapsible stairs, the periscope, the moveable hedges and etc. – are not only the main focal points of the spaces they are in, but are also the elements through which users interact and associate with the spaces.

[2] Performative
Something that is imbued with the qualities of functioning to supplement a performance in space

At this point, we may even begin to compare these performative architectural elements to theatrical props. Props,[3] or objects meant to *prop up* décors, are generally described as elements that are used to materialize settings, create moods and ambiences, and ground narrative events onto screen or in a scene. The works of Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, hint at the possibility of using these architectural elements much like props on stage or on movie sets, to inform new possible settings and actions through the users interaction with these objects. However to truly observe the wider potential of props as defining spatial elements, one only has to return to personal childhood memories to see how, for example: with a ball and a few random objects, a room could be transform into a full soccer pitch; or how a room with a few different rugs could become archipelagos surrounded by lava.* While these examples are of course slightly whimsical, they nevertheless serve to prove that, it is there, in a world of socially unconditioned, uncensored and unbridled creativity we can see how with a little imagination the prop becomes a tool capable of generating totally new spatiotemporal scenarios.

With this in mind, could we take this further and attempt to propose new ways for users to inhabit architecture through the construction of smaller elements and moments meant to incite new creative uses and events in spaces? Architecture as the design and orchestration of a series of props that would lead to the definition of new spatial (and special) situations? The proposed project for a scenaric architecture, asks that we no longer conceive architecture as simply the result of formal sculptural explorations or of deterministic functional requirements, where the actual inhabitation of the space by its users is a side thought, but rather as spaces that are composed as lively and eventful scenes that invite users to take the spotlight, move things around and even play a little bit. Far from the finished, compartmentalized, frozen compositions attributed to functionalist architecture, or the rather contrived resultant spaces of sculptural architecture, our aim will be to create spaces containing vibrant, complex and evolving stories and events. Buildings where multiple narratives are brought to life through the interaction of users with discrete architectural parts or moments. Scenaric architecture is the proposal for architecture conceived as petri dishes into which a series of architectural props are tossed to investigate the new social and spatial relations that can be stimulated; buildings as containers of curious architectural elements that generate experimental events, interrelations and experiences between people.

[4] Agitprop
Political (originally communist)
propaganda, especially in art or literature.
The origins of the words stem of a blend
of *agitatsiya* 'agitation' and *propaganda*
'propaganda '

[5] It should be noted that the term
propaganda did not possess a pejorative
connotation for the Marxists-Bolshevik.
Rather it was used in reference to
distribution of truths to the public.

[6] Cedric Boulet
advocates for disturbed architecture as a
method to explore the possibility of making
an unaccommodating and uncooperative
architecture in an effort to yield more
enriching and stimulating experiences.
Please Disturb (Ottawa, 2010)

[7] Kenneth Frampton
"Industrialization and the Crises in
Architecture", in K. Michael Hays, ed.,
Oppositions Reader
(New York: Princeton Architectural
Press, 1998) 452

[8] Viktor Shklovsky
describes how it was impossible to point
to another moment in history where such
exceptional infatuation for theatre existed
and had such effect in peoples lives.
"All Russia is acting, some kind of elemental
process is taking pace where the living
fabric of life is being transformed into the
theatrical."

Zhizn iskusstva, 4ᵀᴴ of April 1920
in Constantin Rudnitsky Russian & Soviet
Theatre 1905 - 1932
(New York: Abrams, 1988) P.41

[9] Alexandr Vesnin
(1883-1959) Russian architect, painter
and scenographer who is a pioneered
constructivist architecture

[10] Alexandr Vesnin
"In order to animate the stage, we have
introduced the following indispensable
devices - a moving truck, a moving
sidewalk used for pursuits and very
important for the whole development of
the play, a system of elevators, a turning
crane, spotlights and mobile battens, and a
luminous advertising device."

Zrelis A no 4 (Moscow: 1922) P15
in Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, Alexandr
Vesnin and Russian Constructivism. (New
York: Rizzoli, 1986.) P 91

Whilst we have begun to elaborate the notion of an architecture conceived as the composition of situations through their respective props, it becomes particularly difficult to ignore the coincidental homonymy that exists between the notion of the theatrical prop and the agitprop. If they do indeed stem from separate etymological roots, both types of objects shared similar physical properties and methods of affecting space in certain instances. Agitprops,[4] or objects which were meant to agitate with the aim of communicating propaganda,[5] became instrumental following the Bolshevik Revolution, to quickly and effectively spread the messages of the revolution to the masses. In the eyes of the avant-garde, the masses had to be radically startled or disturbed[6] out of their general state of conditioned apathy in order to be properly informed of the new world that was dawning. "To this end the largely illiterate Soviet society," Kenneth Frampton states, "provided the opportunity for the object to play a unique role in the space of public appearance, since everything required to be re-semanticized as it were, in a situation where objects and their contextual disposition,° rather than the written word, were to become the currency and the testament of the people."[7] In particular, this capability of agitprops to be infused with clear sets of scripted actions and inserted within public spaces to subsequently encourage specific interactions with users is crucial to our exploration.

In the context of an insatiable thirst for theatrical performances and mass festivals following the revolution,[8] the creation of these agitprops coincidentally became synchronic with the creation of theatrical props in the Soviet Union. As a result, scenography and theatre design provided the opportunity for many young architects and artist such as Alexandr Vesnin[9] to test their innovative ideas and concepts through the creation of hybrid theatrical props-agitprop objects. Vesnin's proposal for Meyerhold's interpretation of Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday in 1922, abruptly rejected conventional notions of stage design, to propose a near haphazard type of collage architecture. Here, rather than using multiple décors to communicate the changing settings and scenarios of the play, different spaces and elements of the city were collapsed into a deeply hybrid programmatic space. Vesnin abstracted numerous particular situations and sites of the city into a series of props[10] that he began to stack and collage onto one another. Elements from the play such as the sidewalks of the main streets were turned into conveyor belts; the interior life of apartment buildings were transformed into chaotic open joist stairways and hallways; the neighbouring office buildings became fully functioning elevators; the bustling dynamism of the city was retranslated as an operable crane; and

the local café was reconstituted as multiple moving tables and operable awnings. This constructivist collage of parts and props, like the cogs of a giant fantastic machine, created a radically new scenographic space that came to life through interaction with its users. In a way, it proposed the radical re-framing of architecture as a dynamic, richly hybrid and open composition of programs, stories and scenes, in which users could begin manipulating parts to re-arrange and re-script the space and its functions in an almost infinite number of ways.[*]
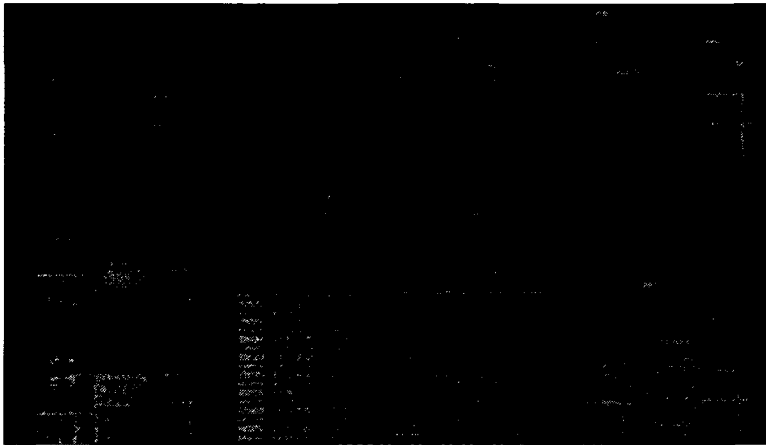
The programmatic elements of the city were reduced to a series architectural props that was interactive and could move to change the appearance of the set at any time

THE MAN WHO WAS THURSDAY, ALEXANDR VESNIN (1923)
[IMAGE SOURCE: SEE M.Q. KHAN, *MACOMEDOW, ALEXANDR VESNIN AND RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM*, NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1986]
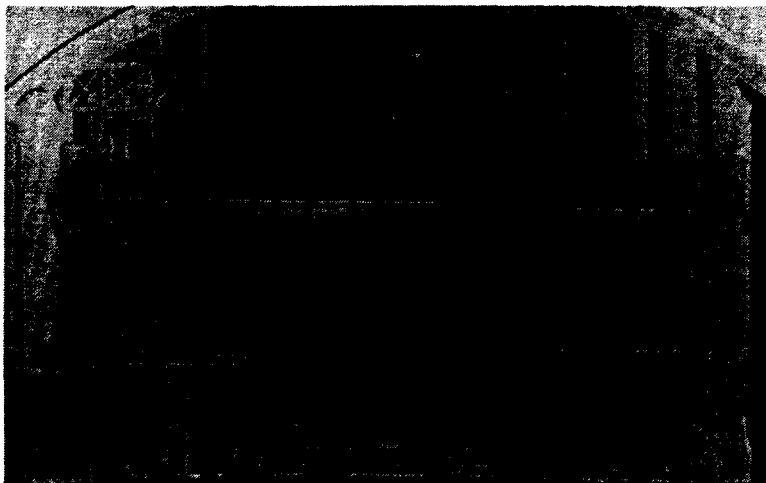
Once the actors started to invest the scene, their actions were immediately spatially inscribed and directly intervened in the narrative of the play

THE MAN WHO WAS THURSDAY, ALEXANDR VESNIN (1923)
[IMAGE SOURCE: SEE M.Q. KHAN, *MACOMEDOW*, 1986]

A few years later, Vesnin would directly transplant this idea of architecture as composed through a series of props suspended in space, in the project for the Leningradskaja Pravda building (1924), co-designed with his brothers, Viktor and Leonid. The five-storey office building for the Pravda publication featured a newspaper stand and vestibule on the ground floor, while reading rooms, offices, and editorial rooms occupied the upper floors. The most striking features within the

design however were the series of interactive architectural elements scattered across the building and its façades. Much like his set design for The Man Who Was Thursday, the traditional programmatic and functional characteristics of the spaces were reduced to a series of mechanical devices, furniture pieces and other objects. These architectural props allowed Vesnin to compose a totally new type of building that "stylistically," Selim O. Khan-Magomedov notes "was a sort of compilation of the most recent discoveries made in engineering works, certain features of rationalist architecture, research in stage design and discoveries made in minor projects – newsstands, tribunes, propaganda stands – by G. Kluksis, A. Lavinski, and A. Exter."[19] In many ways, the building became a bare concrete and steel frame onto which a series of performative architectural elements were affixed, while the glass cladding of the façades disappeared to render the building a transparent container[20] bursting with vibrant events and actions within it.

[19] Selim O. Khan-Magomedov
ALEXANDER VESNIN AND RUSSIAN
CONSTRUCTIVISM
(NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1986), P. 118

[20] Not to say fishbowl, a term I first
encountered at Carleton University
and used by the students as a slightly
humoristic sobriquet for a particularly
glazed and exposed studio room in the
school that is nevertheless – or perhaps as
a reason of – bustling with life and vibrancy.

Series of studies of agitprop stands and
kiosks by Gustav Kluksis that blur the field of
architecture, industrial design, graphic design
and furniture design.

HOARDING PLATFORMS AND LOUDSPEAKERS, GUSTAV
KLUTSIS (1922)
REPRODUCED IN SELIM O. KHAN-MAGOMEDOV,
ALEXANDER VESNIN AND RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM
(NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1986)

For Kenneth Frampton, this building particularly reflects a period in history where "[the] traditional fields of art, architecture and engineering now found themselves inundated and overrun by the world of objects in actions. Buildings were no longer hermetic finished compositions but rather aggregations of elements in the process of being enacted. Their component parts were not only signs of actual productive relationships,[...] but also the context for more explicit iconography* and information. Equipped with flags, clocks, searchlights, cinematic projectors, radio aerials, loudspeakers, slogans and billboards, they deliberately carried the dialectic of socialism into the street. They constituted both its manifest incarnation and its literal meaning."[21] Architecture in this instance was the repository of signs and elements recounting the narratives of the time, materializing them within a plane of immanence. The edifice had once again temporarily regained its role as the book of society,[22] albeit it had become a fundamentally open textual object that incited appropriation and multiple smaller narratives. The users within Vesnin's Leningradskaja Pravda building were not only inhabiting certain scenes and tableaux

[21] Kenneth Frampton
IBID., P.132

[22] Victor Hugo
THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE-DAME OF PARIS,
1831

Series of architectural props aggregated to create new dynamic ensemble.

that recreated the story of their society in front of their very eyes, but by manipulating the rotating propaganda billboards, loudspeakers or searchlights – or in the words of Frampton, these objects in actions – they were enacting their own personal stories and narratives of the Revolution that the building effectively historicized.

This conceptualization of architecture as a textual collage of richly hybrid and dense programs and functions through a series of interactive parts is further echoed in the works of Jonathan Hill. For Hill, architecture has the crucial social responsibility of facilitating users to appropriate the spaces they inhabit and enabling them to become designers of their space. While Hill accepts that "the building is not directly comparable to the text," he nevertheless proposes an architectural adaptation of Rolland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' by advancing the idea of the 'Death of the Architect.' "Instead," Hill suggests "that writer–text–reader relations as a whole are analogous to architect–building–user relations. Barthes' reformulation of the author and the reader suggest a model for architecture in which there is no clear linear route from the architect to the user. To use a building is also to make it, either by physical transformation, such as moving walls or furniture, using it in ways not previously imagined, or by conceiving it in a new way. Just as the reader makes a new book through reading, the user makes a new building through using."[17] This type of architecture therefore, is imagined as a type of unfinished or flexible composition that develops user-based configurations of space and mini-narratives[18] that permeate through the buildings.

The project for a scenaric architecture proposes that we once again re-explore the capability of architecture to script spaces that are not only illustrative of the narratives of a society, but that are also inclusive and representative of the stories of its users. Such an endeavour becomes even more crucial today in a world that has become populated with ever increasingly generic, privatized and regimented spaces[19] that continuously alienate the users and squander their creative powers. Kenneth Frampton outlines this particular shift in society "[where] in the nineteenth century the public institution was exploited as an occasion on which to reify the permanent values of the society, the disintegration of such values in the twentieth century has had the effect of atomizing the public building into a network of abstract institutions."[20] Scenaric architecture is therefore a call for the creation of spaces that creatively counter this alarming proliferation of increasingly insipid, predictable, uninspiring and unalterable environments, by providing them with architectural props that they can use to define and alter the spaces around them.

[17] Jonathan Hill
ACTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE: ARCHITECTS AND CREATIVE USERS
(LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2003), 139.

[18] For, as we previously noted, Jean-François Lyotard informs us that these new mini-narratives, or personal subjectivities, have become in the post-modern context perhaps even more definitive and informative of the values and truths of a society.

[19] It is the French anthropologist Marc Auger who perhaps best described these increasingly common types of spaces as "non-lieux," or spaces that are devoid of meaning and cast the user in anonymity and powerlessness in regards to the definition of the space.

[20] Kenneth Frampton
"THE STATUS OF MAN AND THE STATUS OF HIS OBJECTS: A READING OF THE HUMAN CONDITION"
IN ARCHITECTURE THEORY SINCE 1968, ED. MICHAEL K. HAYS
(CAMBRIDGE, MIT, 2000), 363.

Before further developing this particular crisis engendered by the increasing privatization of public space and the resulting erosion of human interrelations, let us lastly examine the aptitude of a certain type of agitprops to crystallize connections between people through the the active construction of events in public space. In particular, while Vesnin attempted to condense programs into a series of props used to compose architectural ensembles, the following shall examine the work of other architects such as Lubjov Popova[B] who transformed agitprops into entirely autonomous and inhabitable architectural spaces capable of re-scripting and re-defining the environments around them.*

[B] Luboj Popova (1889-1924) Russain painter, architect and scenograher who's first architectural project is done with **Alexandr Vesnin** for the design of the **Kohdysnkoe Field** in 1921

Lubjov Popova's design for the stage set of The World Upside Down (1923), appeared as a new type of mobile décor, built as a large itinerant platform that was equipped with rotating cranes, draw bridges and elevating platforms. Free to roam throughout the city it could generate site specific performances in almost any context, actively appropriating the site, by dropping down screens, re-arranging elements around it with its crane, lighting certain moments of the space and streaming banners and flags to draw people in. This new type of prop, architectural in its scale and materiality, constructed ephemeral and temporal scenographic situations where actors and spectators all inhabited a shared space that they both actively participated in creating events within. This shift in function is manifestly important to our exploration as the prop here sheds its role as accessory to the construction of unreal utopic and illusionary spaces on stage, and rather asserts itself as a defining architectural element in the composition of fantastic yet absolutely real conditions on a site. These
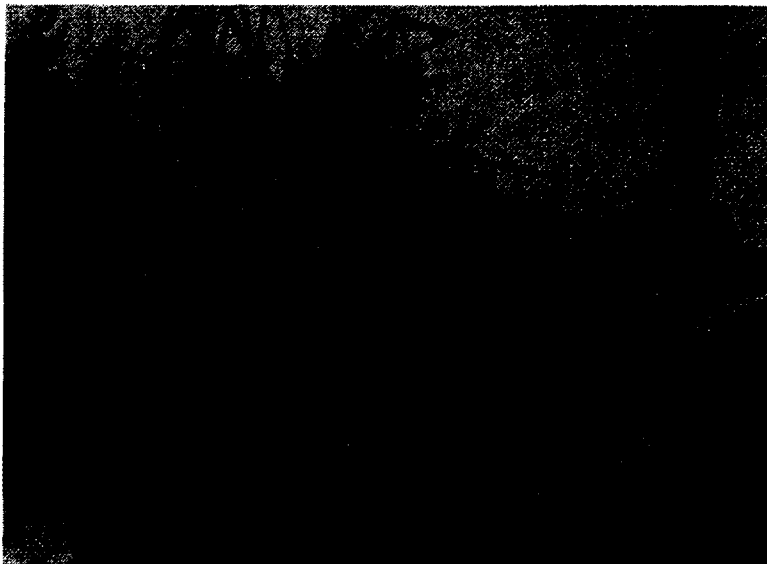
This de-centralized and inhabitable architectural prop does away with the notion of stage and backstage to instead offer a space where actions and events are conditions created by all of those present in time and space around the object. It orchestrates human relations and actions around it directly blurs all previous borders that existed in cinema or theatre between reality and fiction, opening up a world of unlimated spatial possibilites

THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, LUB. OVA POPOVA (1923)
IMAGE SOURCE: FELIPO, PHAN, MACOMEDOV,
MONTERE OF SOVIET ARCHITECTURE (NEW YORK
FIZZOLI, 1987)
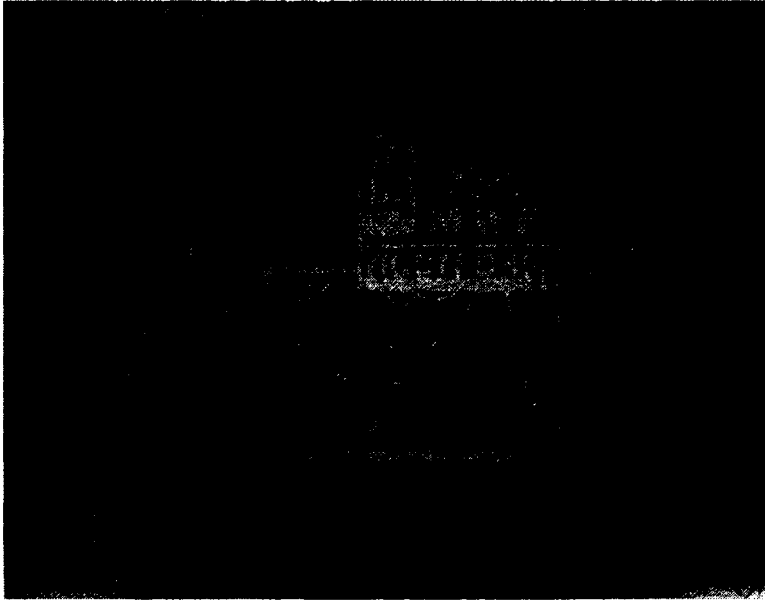
Popova's design included many moveable and operable elements that could be used to script spaces around it and configured multiple new situations and conditions for events in space

THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, LUB OVA POPOVA (1921).
IMAGE SOURCE SITE BY O. KHAN-MAGOMEDOV,
PIONEERS OF SOVIET ARCHITECTURE, (NEW YORK:
RIZZOLI, 1987)

elements serve to demonstrate the clear ability of certain architectural elements to define spaces that spontaneously share the spatiotemporal qualities of the theatre and cinema sets. Here, rather than being what Le Corbusier would define as 'machines for living', architecture takes on the role of props that are in many ways, 'machines for re-imagining and re-shaping the world."

This type of inhabitable and interactive architectural prop was re-investigated some 40 years later in Vienna, the city where El Lissitsky first published his manifesto "An Architecture for World Revolution," by a group of emerging architecture students and young artists. Opposing the historical rigidity of Vienna, and even more so the stale and lifeless over-rationalization and over-sanitization of the city following Modernism, the group increasingly began to explore the architecture's potential to script situations that would call on the senses and creativity of people to re-invest the streets and extract the latent experential potentials of the city. In particular, this neo-avant-garde attempted to destroy the tenets of functional rationalism, pragmatism and economy proper to modern architecture in order to supplement them with the new axioms of fantasy, imagination and visionary intuition.[30]

[29] Günther Feuerstein, "L'ARCHITECTURE VISIONNAIRE EN AUTRICHE," 1958-1970 IN ED. Brayer, Marie-Ange. ARCHITECTURES EXPÉRIMENTALES 1950-2000: COLLECTION DU FRAC CENTRE (EXPOSITION, ORLÉANS, 1 JUIN - 19 OCT. 2003, (ORLÉANS: HYX, 2003) 49.
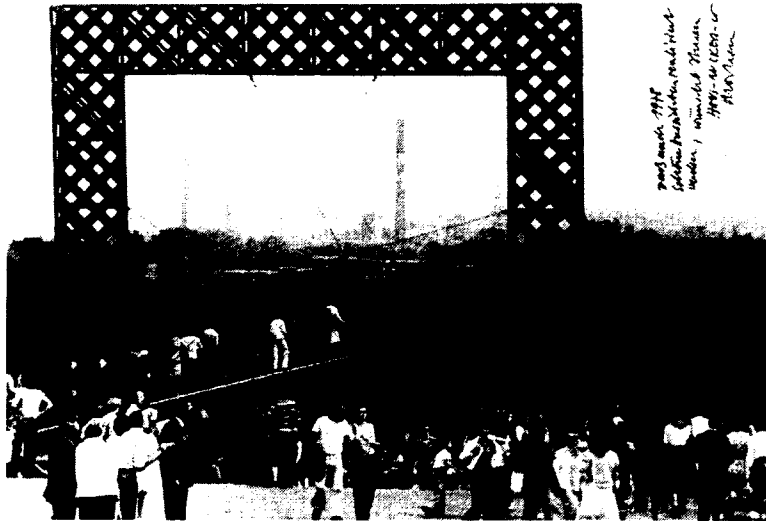
A giant frame was mounted at the edge of a hill that frames the city below it. A series of other smaller frames are also suspended off of the main frame and in the trees on the horizon. People can be seen discussing amongst each other in the ramp leading up to the belvedere and siting and enjoying the view in the stairs leading to the project

[1] Almost 40 years later again this topic seems to be garnering attention again in the contemporary architectural sphere as the 2010 Venice Architectural Biennale theme precisely addressed this issue. Curated by Kazuyo Sejima, the 12th Architecture Biennale was launched under the banner 'People Meet in Architecture' and explored the ways users interact with space and with another in architecture

At the forefront of this group, the trio of Haus-Rucker-Co. felt the need for architecture to solicit strong emotions, sensations and reactions from humans by producing new sensorial experiences through architecture. To this effect, Haus-Rucker-Co coined the term "Städtische Versatzstücke," as a way to propose a new type of architectural investigation. Translating quite literally as, urban set-pieces or urban props, these architectural elements were envisioned as prosthetic devices inserted within the fabric of the city that stimulated new conditions and would serve as the catalysis for new ways for people to meet in architecture.[1]

As such, Haus-Rucker-Co.'s Rahmenbau project asked users to literally re-examine the city they inhabited by suspending them in a frame hovering over the city. If people had grown use to the functional,

This pressurized bubble was inserted into the opening of façades and pressurized to create a plug-in room for buildings where totally new environments and scenarios could be scripted. In this case, a tropical paradise is imagined amongst the cold and austere buildings of Vienna realizing a mini-mirage like utopia in the city.

uncritical and dry buildings, or the hyper-regimented and over-regulated public spaces that their city had to offer, the project reframed the city behind a giant proscenium and prompted users to imagine how their city could become their personal film set in which new narratives and scripts could take place and be enacted. Similarly, Oasis No.7 proposed a pneumatic bubble that could be literally plugged or fitted into the windows of a façade and provide a personal scenographic space that would transport users out of their mundane environments and into a new fantastic world. Complete with palm trees and a hammock, users could temporarily materialize their own imaginative scenarios through the new fantastic inhabitation of the city.
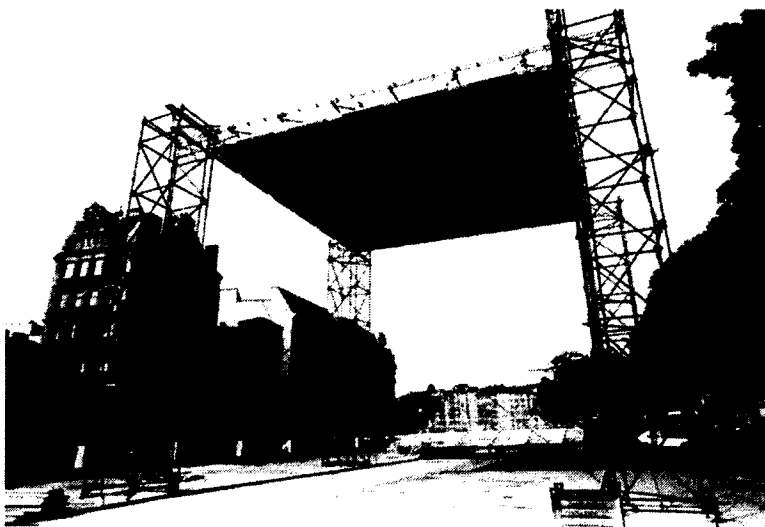
A new temporary scaffolding construction sets the stage for a series of public events that aim to radically take control of the streets and inject new life into the city. Here the sky is captured as a material entity off of which one can built and project literally their dreams and vision onto.

SUPER SUMMER 1976, COOP HIMMELB(L)AU. IMAGE TAKEN FROM URL NOVEMBER 29 2012, URL <WWW.COOP-HIMMELBLAU.AT>

Paralleling the activities of Haus-Rucker-Co, the group of young architects Coop Himmelb(l)au developed a series of architectural elements or props that they would similarly describe as a series of urban transistors[2] capable of amplifying the existing conditions, events and social relations present in the city. Conversely to Haus-Rucker-Co's Rahmenbau project that set a cinematic projective re-scripting of the city through the creation of a giant theatrical proscenium, Coop Himmelb(l) au's Super Summer project attempted to literally build a new blue sky as a giant cinematic screen that would delimit a new public theatrical stage in the middle of the streets of Vienna. During this radical take over of the street, a series of plays, concerts and public consultations were organized under this new sky onto which movies and animations were projected. Günter Feuerstein described these architectural interventions as ones that "discovered new fields of actions [and] offered new architectural possibilities, effectively constructing a new 'topos' in the steppes of the

[22] Günter Feuerstein

big cities, provoking a new conscious and allowing for new perceptions."[22] These interventions were a call for cities and building to regain their imaginative, curious, idiosyncratic and playful aspects by re-scripting new scenarios within them; by opening up new gaps in increasingly private and deterministically alienating spaces for people to interact with one another and once again experience forms of collective happenings.

In opposition to the traditional agitprops that very much served as a radical object meant to shockingly announce the dawn of a new world, these new props and architectural elements inform us of the conception of more sophisticated and careful methods of tuning and amplifying existing conditions to subversively shift control-relations back into the

[23] Bourriaud, Nicolas
French art critic and curator has attempted in multiple essays and writings to track the new paradigms of contemporary art in relation to the notions of public space, human relations and production.

hand of the users. In many ways, this shift in the role of these objects in actions can be related to the greater shift in artistic production that can be observed in the post-modern world. It is Nicholas Bourriaud[23] who enables us to locate and historicize this shift in particular through his

[24] Relation Art
Art works that take on as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context

analysis of Relation Art.[24] Where previously these props had "intended to prepare and announce a future world: today [they are] modeling possible universes. [...]The role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities but to actually be ways of living and models of action

[25] Nicolas Bourriaud
RELATIONAL AESTHETICS (PARIS: LES PRESSES DU RÉEL, 2002) P.13

within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist."[25] For Bourriaud, these new artistic projects reveal a twofold response to the project of modernity that he begins to map out in his book 'Esthétique Relationnelle' (1998). Firstly, these new artistic objects deny the possibility of a carte-blanche or tabula rasa re-conception of the world through grand narratives to instead propose new smaller narratives that effectively open up gaps that aim to critically re-frame and re-organise the fabric of reality. If such a position is certainly indebted to others such as Jean-François Lyotard, Bourriaud innovates when he defines the contours of this new form of artistic production as one that is increasingly becoming

Rirkrit Tiravanija, perhaps one the most cited artist in Bourriaud's work, creates a series of situations that are not possible to archive in museum collections and that temporarily are able to galvanize people around an event. His project for untitled 2006 (demo station no.5) proposed to rebuild Frederick Kiesler Raumbühne (1924), or space stage, that became a form of lauchpad for a wide range of activities ranging from karate competitions, rock concerts and teenage fashions show in a museum. Tiravanija described this space as simply as 'space for possibilities.'

UNTITLED 2006 (DEMO STATION NO.5) 2006, RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA, IMAGE SQUARE D WALKER ART CENTER EAST EXHIBITIONS, MARCH 14 2012 [HTTP://VISUALARTS.WALKERART.ORG/OBJECTS/TIRAVANIJA/ACT/25/OBJECT_FILE/PAGE/16/ EXHIBITION/STYLE/MARKED/]

concerned with the disintegration of public space and specifically attempts to counter this nefarious and continuous hyper-privatization of the world. Therefore, Relational Art secondly aims to coagulate human relations in order to script new experiences where people can once again interact and come into contact with one another.

As such, let us note in closing, that in addition to its other previously explored characteristics, the architectural prop possesses the intrinsic and fundamental objective of materializing new states of encounter between people.[27] It is Adolf Loos who reminds us here of the architecture intrinsic nature as a relational element. "When we find a mound in the woods," Loos states, "six feet long and three feet wide, raised to a pyramidal form by means of a space, we become serious and something in us says: someone was buried here. That is architecture."[28] Architecture, is therefore and always has been a powerful tool for the association and connection of people together. The project for a scenaric architecture, simply attempts to explicitly render this quality visible through smaller, more momentary and interactive parts that can directly start to engage people in an around space. By sparking human curiosity, these architectural props aim to trigger new sensorial experiences and instigate new events in space that will inevitably lead to new interactions between people and critical re-appropriations of space.

[27] Nicolas Bourriaud

[28] Adolf Loos

PART 6 - CLIMAX

INTERMISSION

TIME FOR A DULY DESERVED BREAK. HAVE AN ESPRESSO, OR A SCOTCH, SMOKE A CIGARETTE, TALK TO SOME FRIENDS AND RELAX BEFORE WE CONCLUDE.

It would be hard to continue this project without acknowledging two of the greatest buildings never built and around which this entire thesis could be re-written to describe all of the ideas of the 'scene,' the 'screen,' the 'prop' and the 'relational element.' Let us then take a moment before concluding to briefly glance at Cedric Price's proposal for the Fun Palace (1964) and Archigram's project for the Monaco Entertainments Centre (1970).
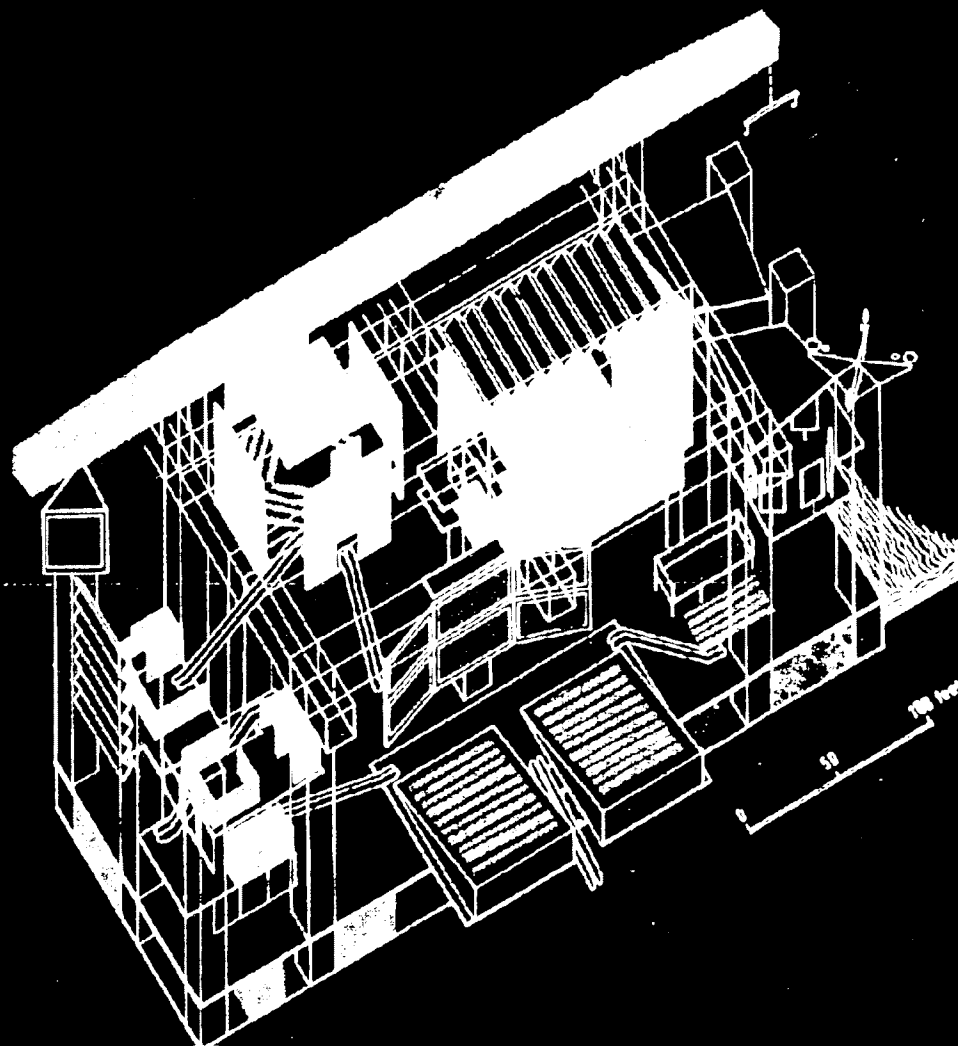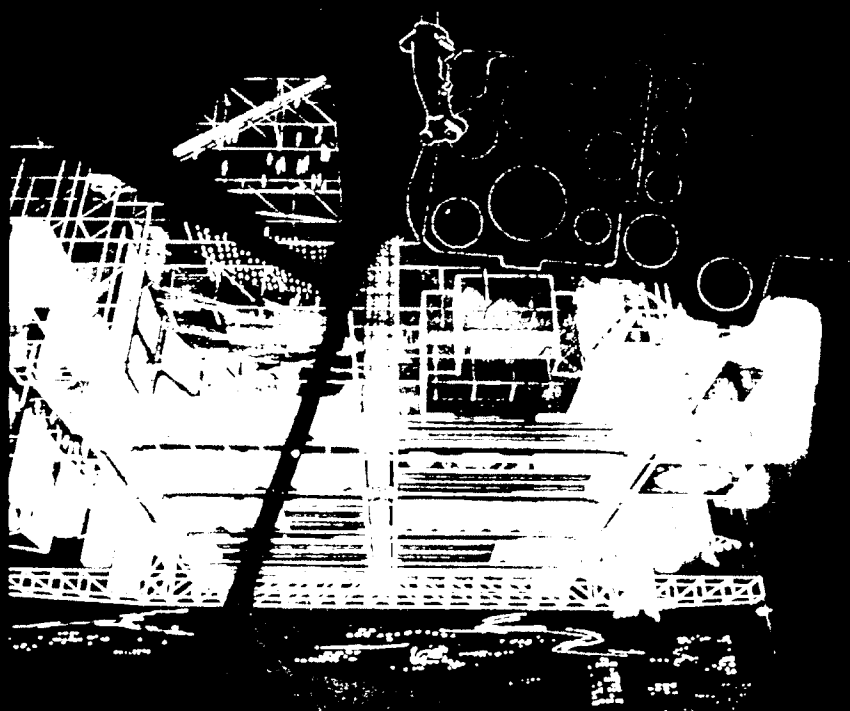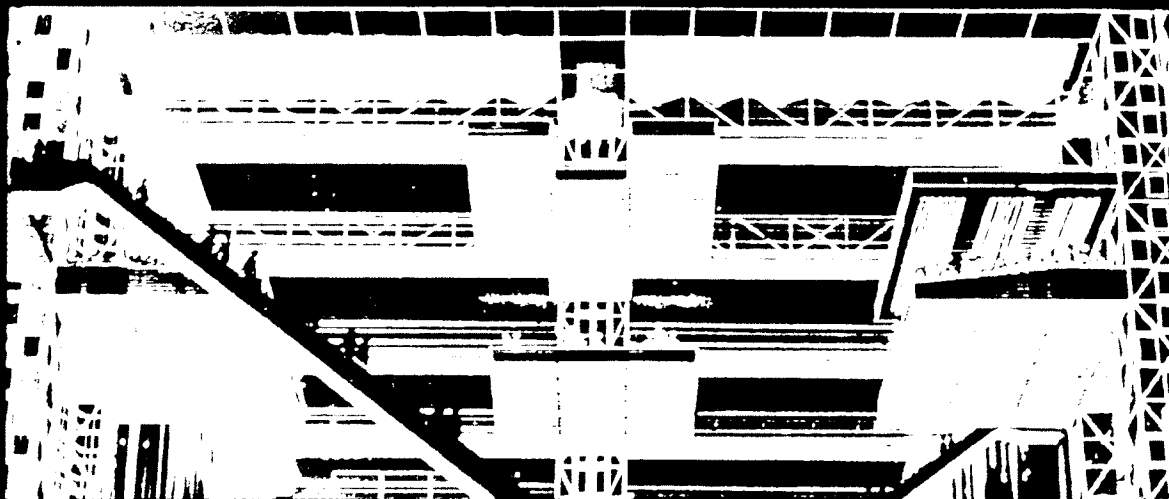
53 . ASSEMBLY
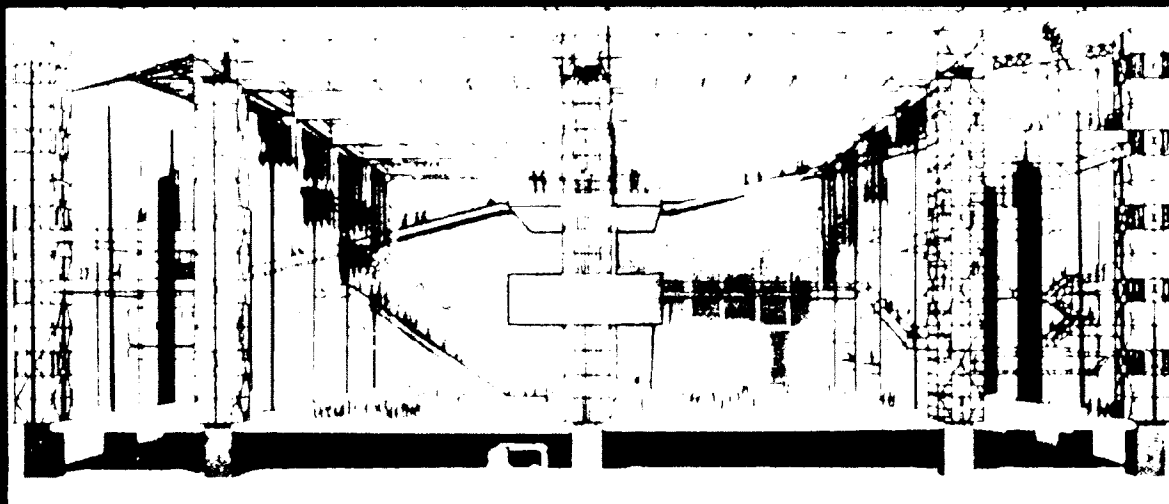
54 MOVEMENT

Cedric Price's Fun Palace was designed as a fundamentally open-ended building that could be entirely (re-)configure by its users ad vitam aeternam.
Designed as a giant space frame structure, a series of architectural props such as moveable staircases, inflatable conference room, removable floor plates,
rotating partition walls and operable awnings could be manipulated freely by the users to totally redefine the spaces.
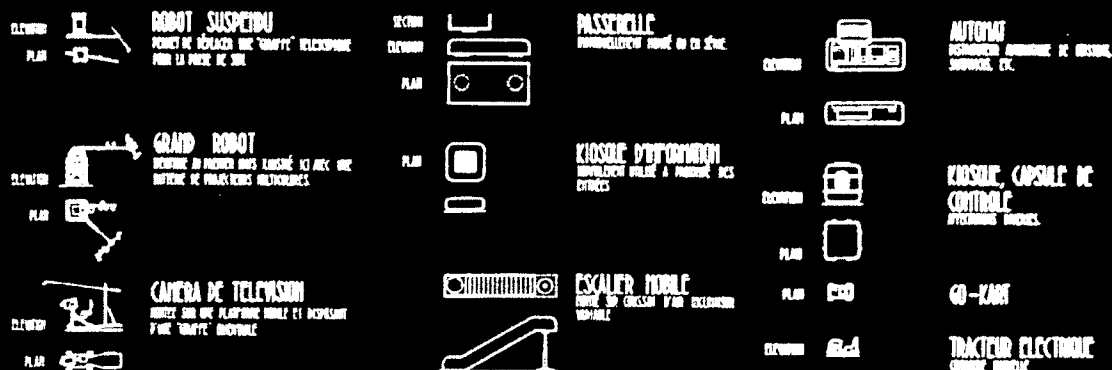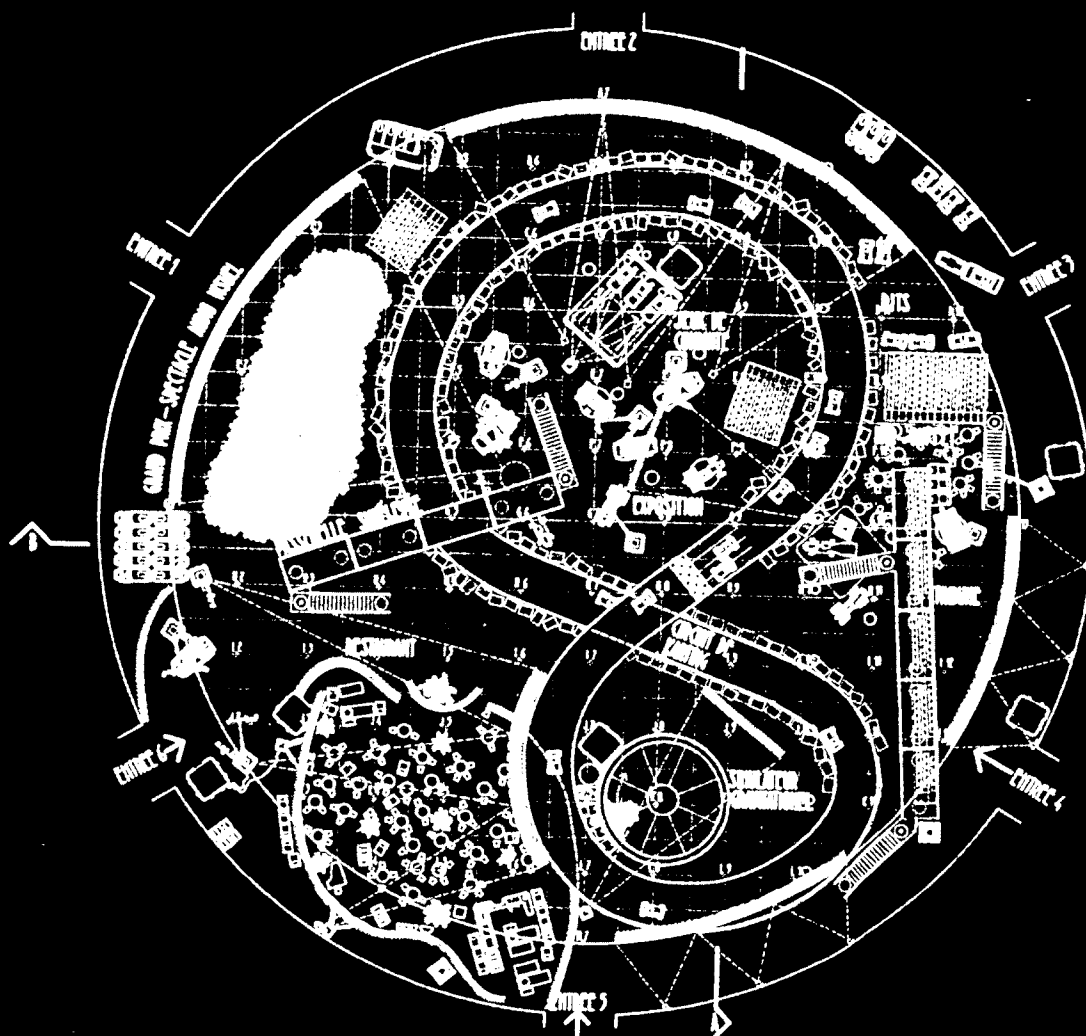
Archigram's Monaco Entertainments Centre was literally designed as an architectural petri dish into which a series of props could be thrown to harvest different types of events and actions in space. Through an exhaustive creation of different mobile elements, a variety of completely different users and programs could be scripted within the space and re-configured almost over night.

Here let us simply note an important nuance between these projects and our exploration into a scenaric type of architecture. While the Monaco Entertainments Centre and the Fun Palace are evocative of the great 1960's hyper-flexible and technological utopian projects, the notion of flexibility in our project is not interpreted as a physical construction of space that is totally alterable and movable. Rather, the flexibility of the spaces is achieved through the interaction of the users and the capacity of these scenographically constructed situations to be sufficiently inclusive to prompt multiple personal mini-narratives and perceptions of space.
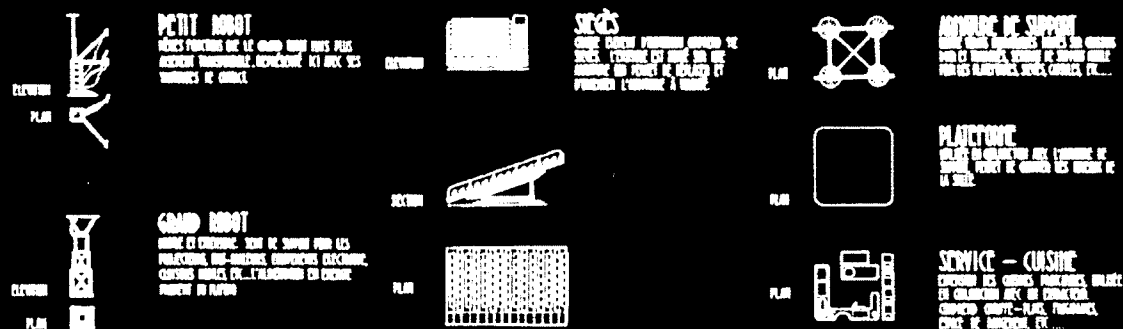
PART 7 - FALLING ACTION

NATIONAL CABINET OF CURIOSITY

THE PROJECT FOR A PEOPLE'S CABINET

As we have explored throughout the last sections, scenaric architecture can be seen as the spatial orchestration of scenic spaces composed through the manipulation of architectural props embedded with narrative properties that script new events in space and solicit new interactions between users. The challenge that lays ahead in the final stage of our exploration remains to spatially consolidate these sets of scenarios and scenographic instances through the creation of a hypothetical project serving to demonstrate this new architectural approach. Learning from the previously analyzed architectural precedents – from Alexandr Vesnin's Leningradskaja Pravda building to Cedric Price's Fun Palace and passing by the fantastic spatial installations of many Relational Artists – may we begin to imagine the basis of an architectural project that acts as a container for a series of rich and vibrant events, programmatic spaces and collective situations to take place?

If we agree to frame the nature of the upcoming project as an architectural intervention that will attempt to aggregate a series of curious and peculiar architectural objects and scenographically constructed situations within an architectural envelope, let us consider the archetype of the museum and in particular its historical and architectural roots as a valid point of departure. Indeed, while hyper-structured, controlled and institutionalized today, the early architectural archetypes of the museum appeared as inherently different spaces that cherished complexity, indeterminancy and the scripting of spaces through a series decentralized singular elements. More precisely, it is the cabinet of curiosity or the wunderkammer.[1] which emerged around the sixteenth and seventeenth century as a place for the collection, exposition, debate and dissemination of knowledge, that proves to be an ideal and extremely fruitful point of departure for the design of a scenaric building.*

[1] Wunderkammer
A place where a collection of curiosities and rarities is exhibited
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005

Originally conceived as small portable furniture pieces that safeguarded a series of special artifacts, cabinets of curiosity over the years would gain in size to eventually become fully inhabitable rooms in buildings. With the chief mandate of igniting curiosity and simulating a greater thirst for knowledge, these cabinets were spaces with incredibly intricate spatial organizations that orchestrated a plethora of objects that shared the characteristics of being peculiar, heteroclite, strange and new. Objects in these spaces were not classified or rigidly divided into categories but rather were ordered in relation to more complex networks and associations that weaved rich and developed narratives and sequences in space between users and the elements around them. As a result, art works, natural discoveries, technological objects, and historical artefacts were all amalgamated one with another in a dense and charged space where users could weave links between objects and script their own narratives of a world that was presented to them under an unexpected and strange light.

Sir John Soane's House in London (1824) perhaps best demonstrates the latent architectural possibilities embedded within cabinets of curiosity through their techniques of spatially sequencing and orchestrating all of these curious elements. Soane masterfully arranged the spaces of his house and the objects it contained, to create a multitude of intriguing architectural moments that prompted unusual relations between the users, the objects, and their spaces. This elaborate and sophisticated articulation of space is fully discovered in section where the scenes of the house and spatial anecdotes slot themselves together like the multiple vignettes that shape the pages of a graphic novel. In many ways, the house literally becomes a receptacle where scenes, scenarios, architectural elements and unexpected events all collide and assemble themselves together to form a new self-contained world that plunges the users into an interlinked succession of imaginative scenarios. It is precisely this type of environment and spatial manipulations that will we strive to create and transcribe in our project for our own cabinet of curiosities.
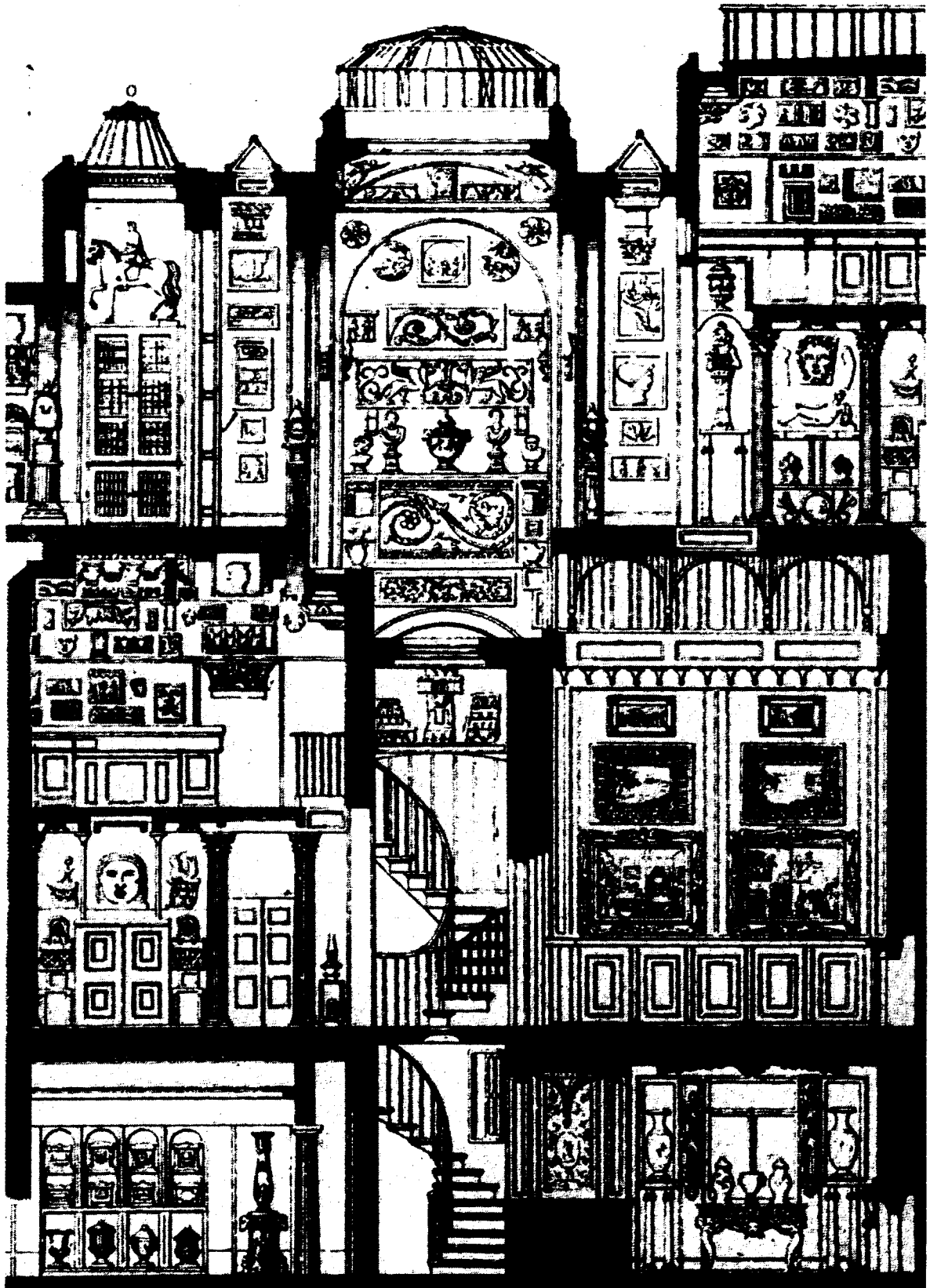
Collage made from sections of Sir John Soane's House (1824) demonstrating the immense richness of narratives sectionally present in the house. The rooms, composed around particular elements, props and curiosities all form a series of miniatures stories that read just like a graphic novel in section.

The project for a <u>National Cabinet of Curiosity</u> arose in reaction to a series of events that transpired within the earliest months of the redactions of this thesis that not only demanded to be acknowledged but furthermore displayed an uncanny relation to each other and the explorations at hand. Indeed, at the time, two clear threads of events seemed to be occurring and converging to almost directly inform the shape of the project. While a series of protest movements across the country exposed the dangerous over-privatization and hyper-regimentation of space, other events in the city of Ottawa continued to expose the total lack of true public space in the city and even more worrisomely the continuous and slow erosion of the very concept of public space itself. In particular, setting aside their political affiliations, the <u>G20 protests</u>[2] in Toronto and the <u>Occupy Movements</u>[3] highlighted the lack of forums for the debate and discussion of ideas within our sociey and the inevitable marginalization and radicalization of the movements as a result. Almost synchronically, the (lack of) debate revolving around the re-development by a sole-source private consortium of <u>Lansdowne Park</u>[4], the city's largest and oldest public space, into a new commercial, retail and entertainement complex further highlighted the lack of importance attributed to the creation of truly public spaces in our cities.

All these events finally culminate when the <u>NCC</u>[5] announced theat they would be vacating their Infocenter, located directly in front of Parliament Hill, without any real plan for the re-occupation of the site following their departure in November. Prior to its relocation, the Infocentre had been a key public infrastructure piece that served as the façade to the <u>Nation's Capital</u> for many tourists while also animating an important public square that was the site of many meetings and the rallying point for various events. The NCC, faced with an increasingly dwindling budget and demonstrating its systemic impotence and myopic vision of the city, opted to vacate this quintessentially important site to instead rent space for a kiosk nestled between food-court concessions and cellphone vendor booths inside the interior courtyard of the <u>World Exchange Plaza</u>. As a result, the length of Wellington street directly in front of the Parliament – one of the most symbolically important strips of land in the country – now found itself totally vacated, un-occupied and lifeless.

The project for a National Cabinet of Curiosity is therefore a proposal to create a new vibrant public institution that would re-claim the site vacated by the NCC and provide new fundamentally public spaces to a wide variety of users. The project aims to generate

[2] An estimated 1 billion dollars were spent to host the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto with a majority of the costs being invested in security measures. One may easily wonder what type of infrastructure or parallel events could have been provided at a fraction of the costs, instead of barricading and quarantining the major part of the downtown core, to instead provide a forum for the protesters to democratically debate and discuss of the issues of globalization.

[3] Organized by the Canadian magazine Adbuster and inspired by the Arab Spring movement, the Occupy Wallstreet (2011) movement opposed itself to the growing social inequalities and lack of discussion and social debate following the financial crisis of 2008. Within weeks, the movement had spread to most of the major cities across the globe.

[4] Lansdowne Park is a 40 acre historical park that played a crucial role in the development of the city of Ottawa. For years it hosted numerous cultural and recreational acitivies as well as numerous fairs and exhibitions.

[5] Created in 1959, the NCC's chief mandate is to supervise the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region, as well as to organize, sponsor or promote public activities and events in the National Capital Region as will enrich the cultural and social fabric of Canada.

a wide range of new spatial scenarios for the radical self-expression of users and creation of new social and collective situations through the assemblage of a multitude of curious objects (architectural props) and spatial curiosities (scenic spaces). Programmatically, the National Cabinet of Curiosity is a hybrid building that oscillate between a 'maison du people'* and a traditional cabinet of curiosity outlining the basis of a new type of institution that advocates for the propagation of knowledge, the stimulation of creativity and the prompting of new participative experiences. It is a public place where people may interact and meet to understand an increasingly complex world and provide the forum for new debates and discussions. Central to the creation of the National Cabinet of Curiosity, is the establishment of a new People's Cabinet that will be housed within the building. Playing here with the notion of the cabinet as a political entity formed from elected ministers that collectively consult with the Prime Minister regarding the current government's policy and/or tactical directions, it is suggested that the National Cabinet of Curiosity would house a series of activities that shape the basis of a new democratic and inclusive network of engaged citizens, intellectuals, artists, specialists and politicians who would debate and address an infinitely wide array of contemporary issues.* It is imagined that this National Cabinet of Curiosity would be an edifice where members of this constantly evolving and mutating People's Cabinet could program a series of exposition, conferences, readings, public consultations and events year round.

The National Cabinet of Curiosity would furthermore provide a space where the People's Cabinet could organize meetings with the Prime Minister's Cabinet and the official opposition's Shadow Cabinet to discuss national issues and events. This meeting of the three cabinets would take place in a central meeting room jutting out of the middle of the building and hovering out into the public square in front of the building rendering visible the meeting to the general public. Around this room, the rest of the building articulates itself as an open sectional cut that superimposes and connects a series of conferences rooms, living rooms, offices, gardens, reading rooms and various scenographically constructed situations.

The subsequent pages will provide a selection of examples and clues as to how the project for a National Cabinet of Curiosity will be materialized and translated spatially.

90 WELLINGTON ST.

EMPLACEMENT OF CABINET IN CITY

Naturally blessed from its prominent position at the core of the city. the proposed site for the National Cabinet of Curiosity is ideally situated at the crossroads between the Parliament. the Prime Minister's office. the Opposition's Shadow Cabinet and the original Prime Ministerial Cabinet, the Privy Council.

The proposal for a new building on this site in particular attempts to respect the important axis created by the Peace Tower of the Parliament that crosses the site at its midpoint. In order to respect the NCC's desire to open up a visual axis to the Peace Tower from Metcalfe Street, the projected building slightly steps back from the street while additionally

90 WELLINGTON ST.

REVITILIZATION OF WELLINGTON

Situated on the site of the now vacated NCC Infocentre, the new National Cabinet of Curiosity is meant to spark the revitalization of Wellington Street. Since the implementation of the 1950's Greber Plan for the Nation's Capital, this street has particularly struggled to ever truly take shape and assert itself as a true symbolic artery in the city. Neighbouring the now vacated former American Embassy, the National Cabinet of Curiosity aims to slowly participate in the re-densification of Wellington street by taking steps to close and consolidate the badly fragmented city block between the Metcalfe and O'Connor Streets. Reinvesting this site, left vacant and forgotten since 1979 is therefore of primordial importance
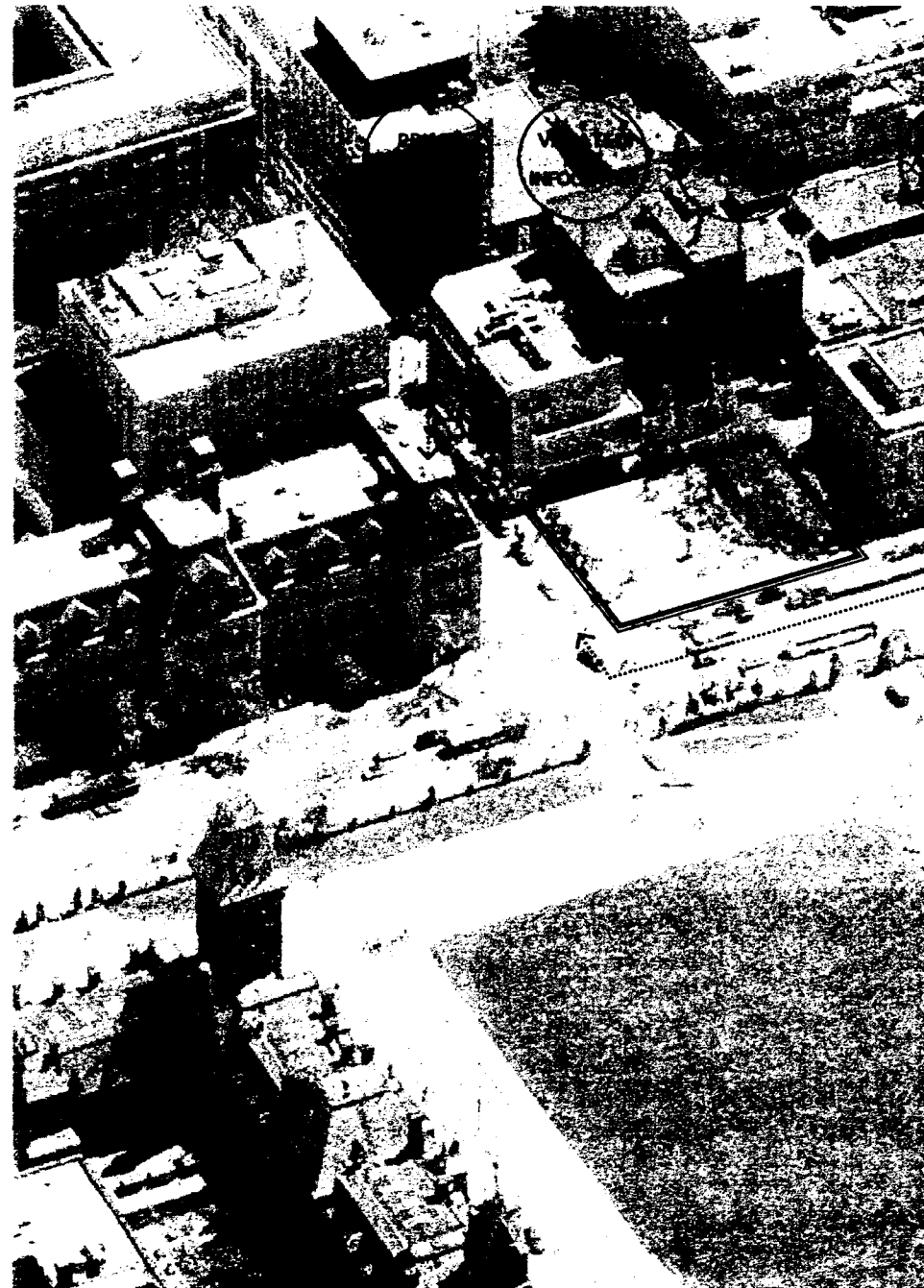
THEN
&
NOW

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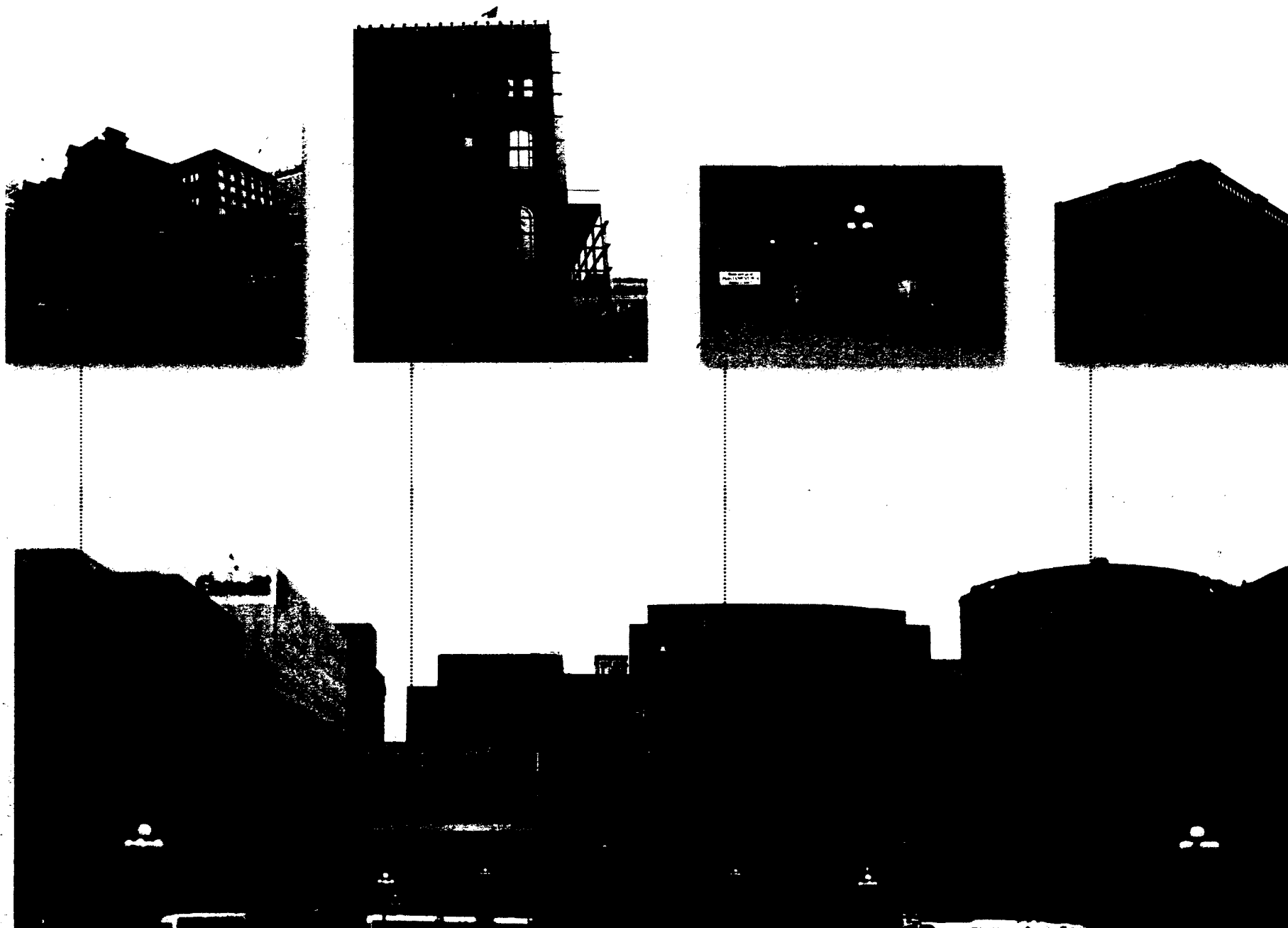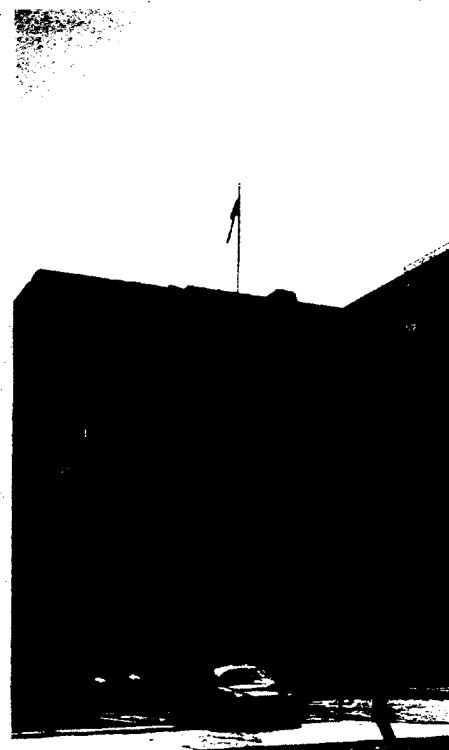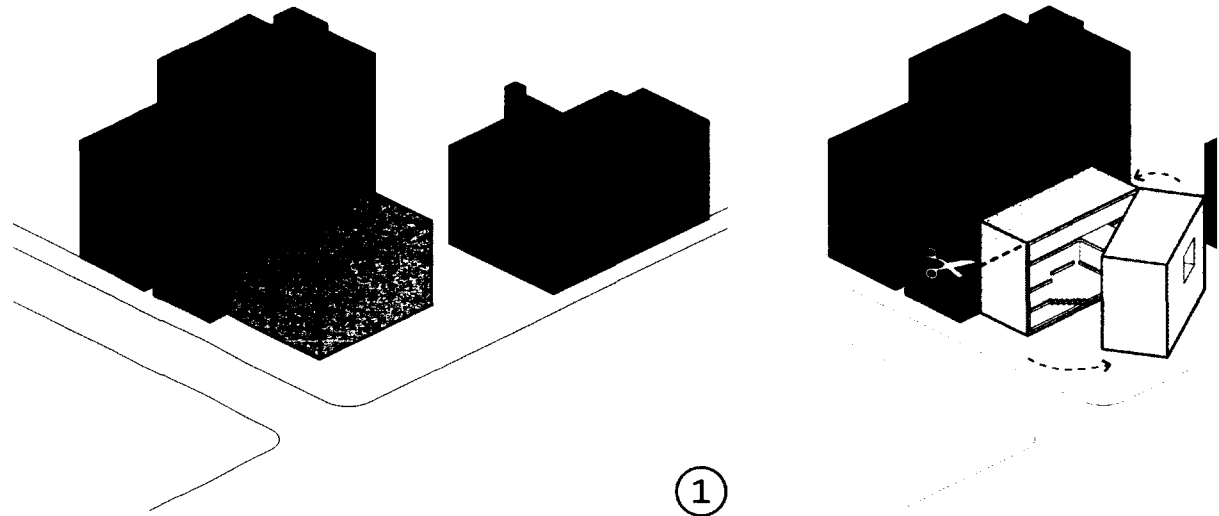
THE CABINET

BUILDING MASSING

Conceived to re-invest the void left on the site since the demolition of the Rideau Club, the National Cabinet of Curiosity is literally designed as a open cabinet that reveals a complex and rich sectional organization around a series of curious situations and elements in the building. The hinge point around which the cabinet is opened becomes an important transitory moment in the building where multiple programs directly meet and overlap. Finally, the opened up cabinet maintains the public square while providing numerous activities that might spill into it or be observed from the outside..
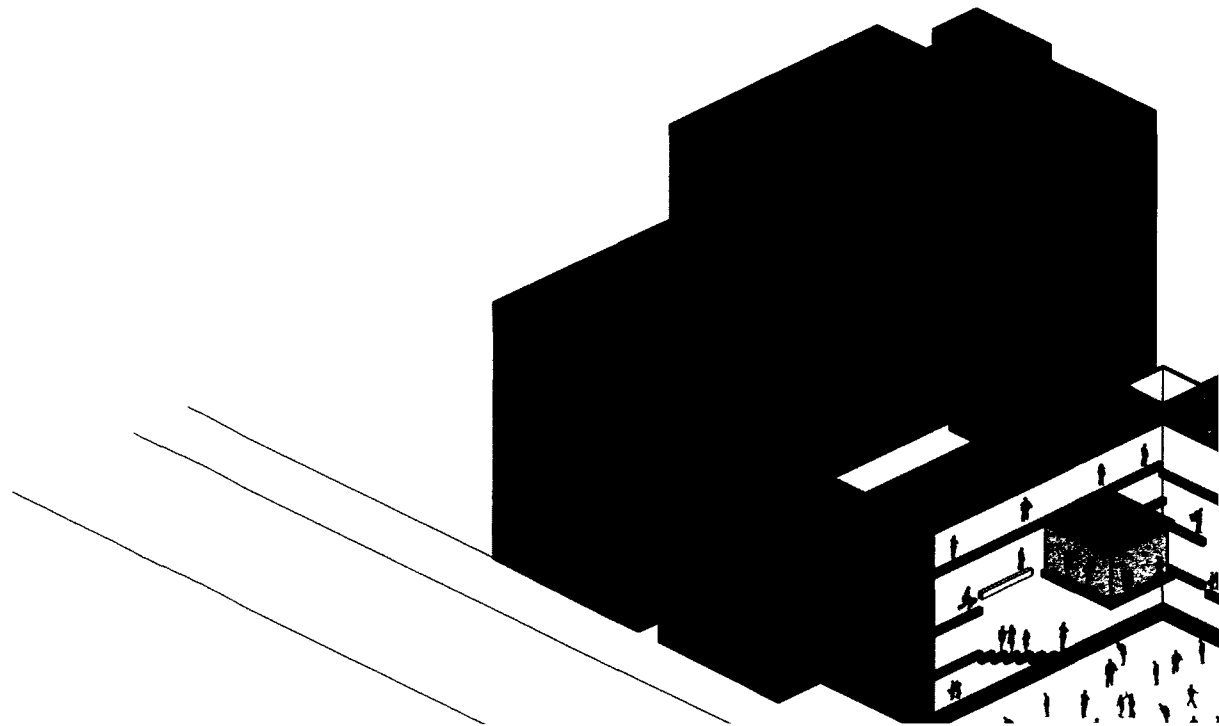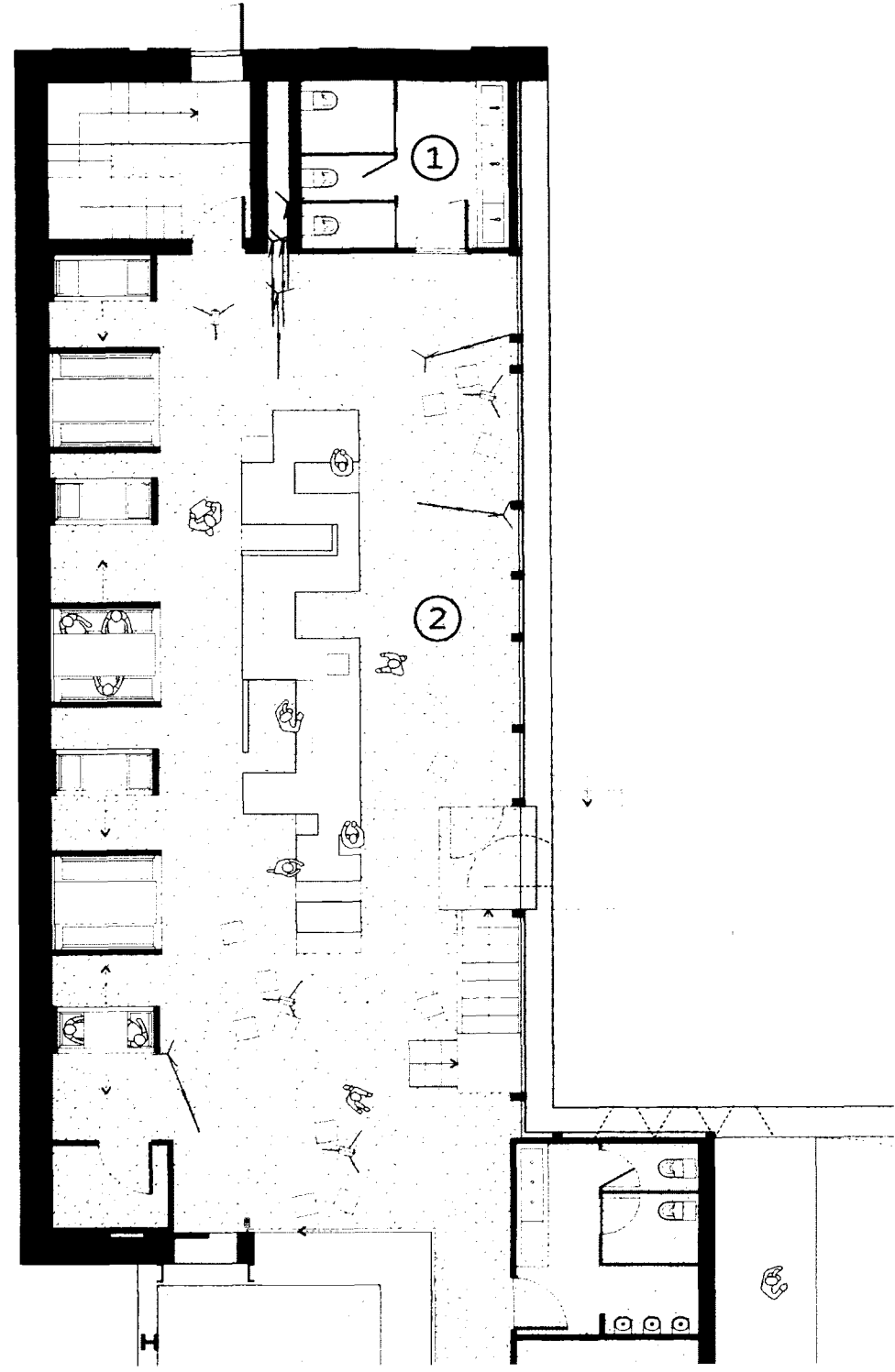
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FIRST FLOOR
PLAN @ 1:150

SECOND FLOOR

PLAN @ 1:150

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THIRD FLOOR

PLAN @ 1:150

FOURTH FLOOR

PLAN @ 1:150

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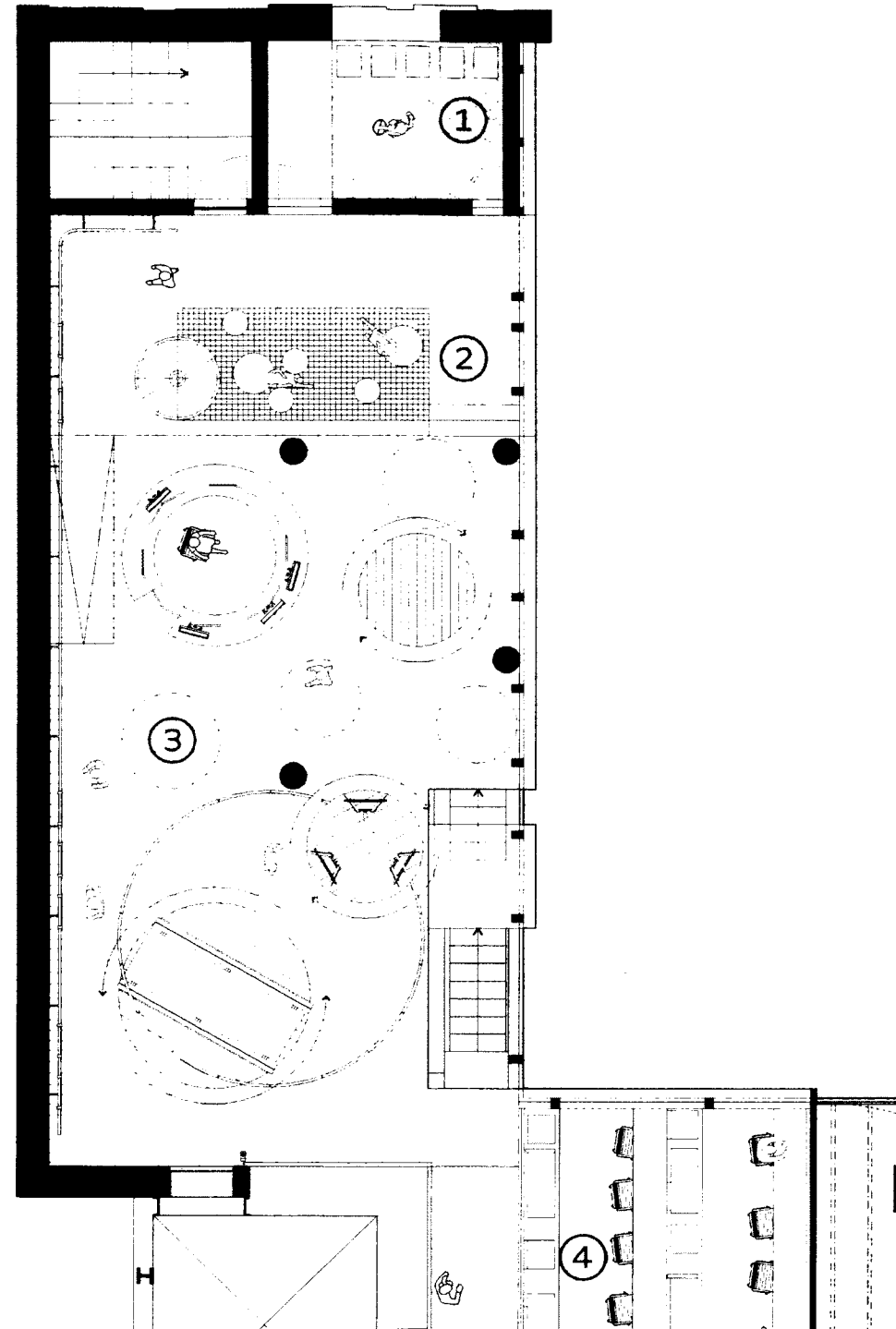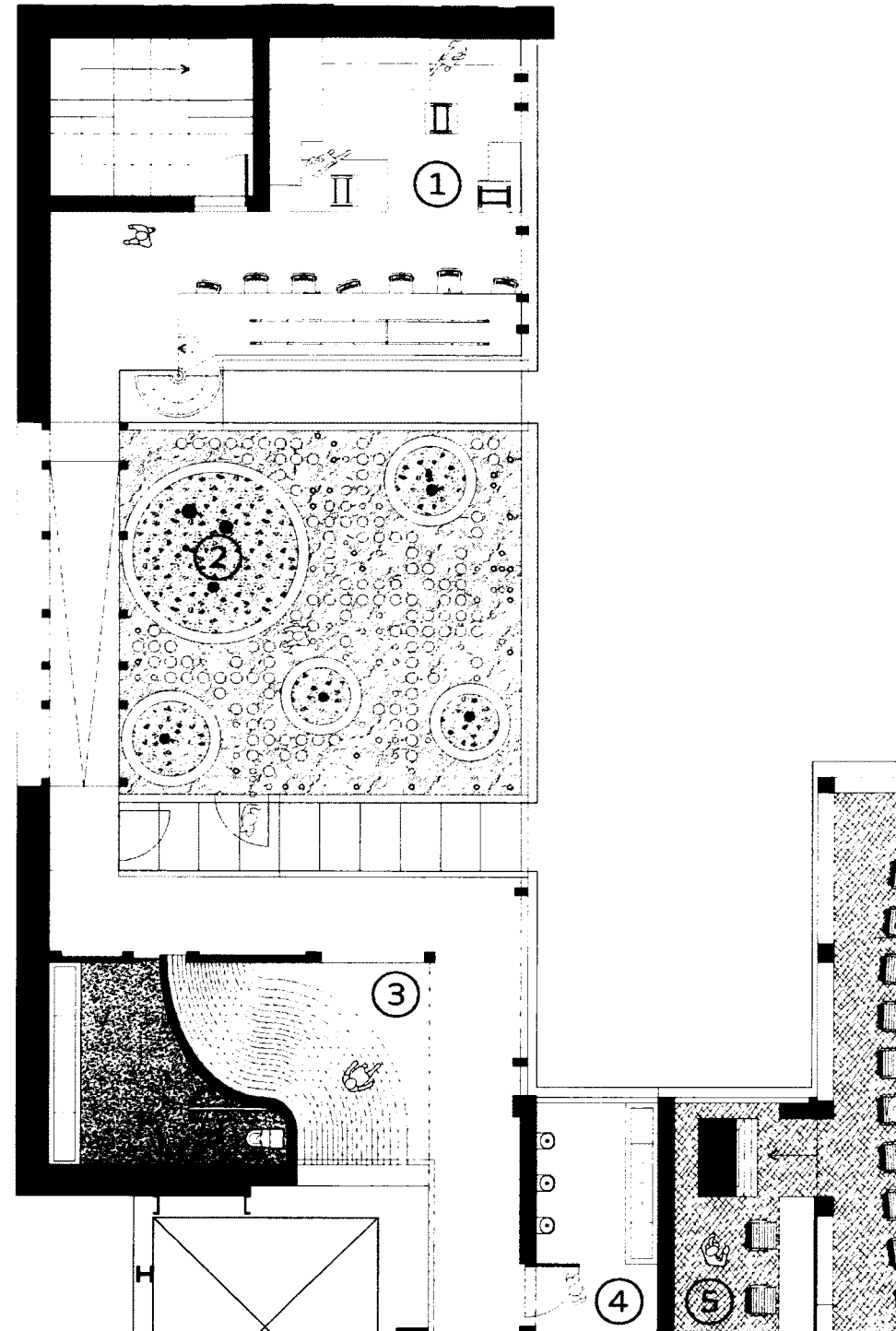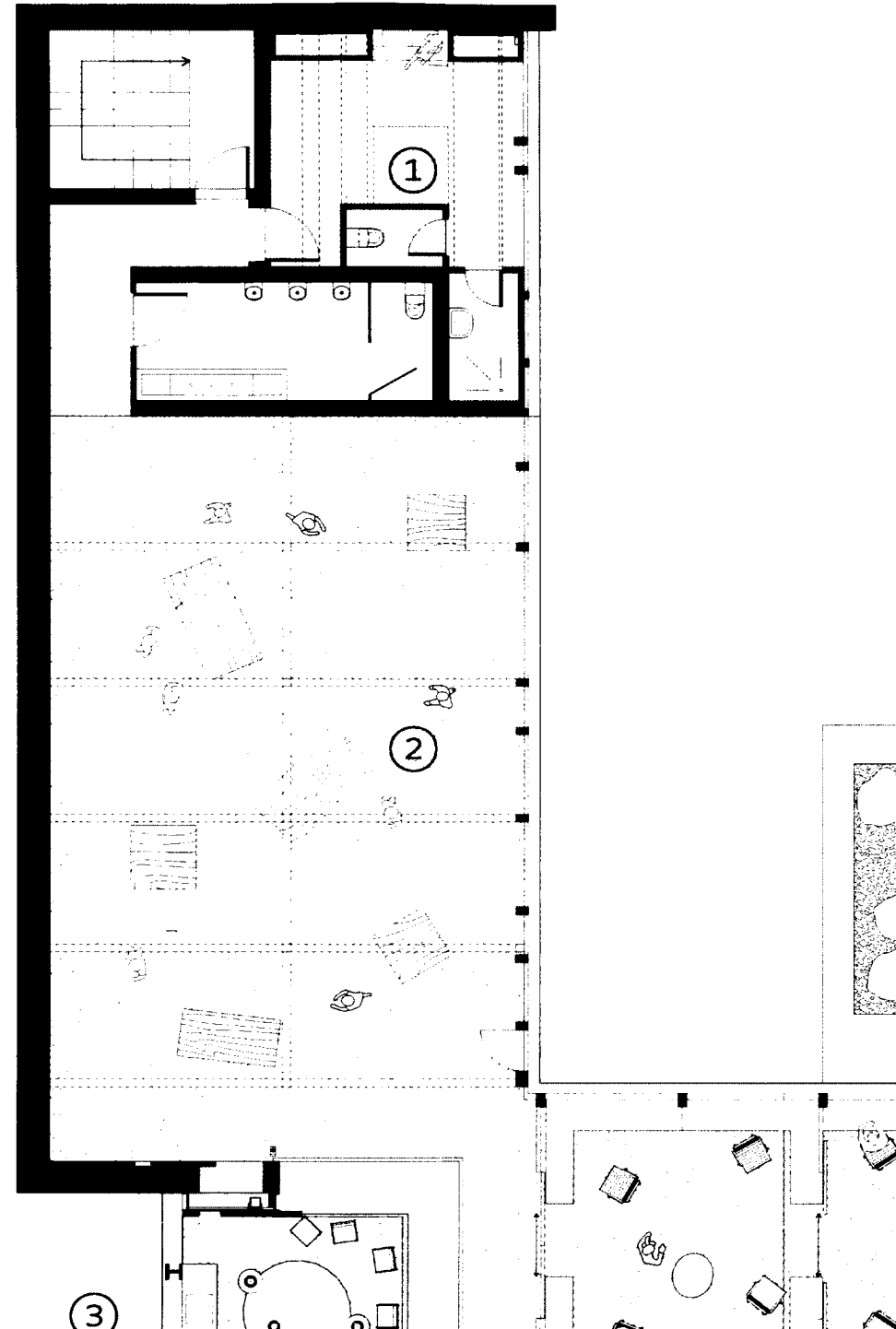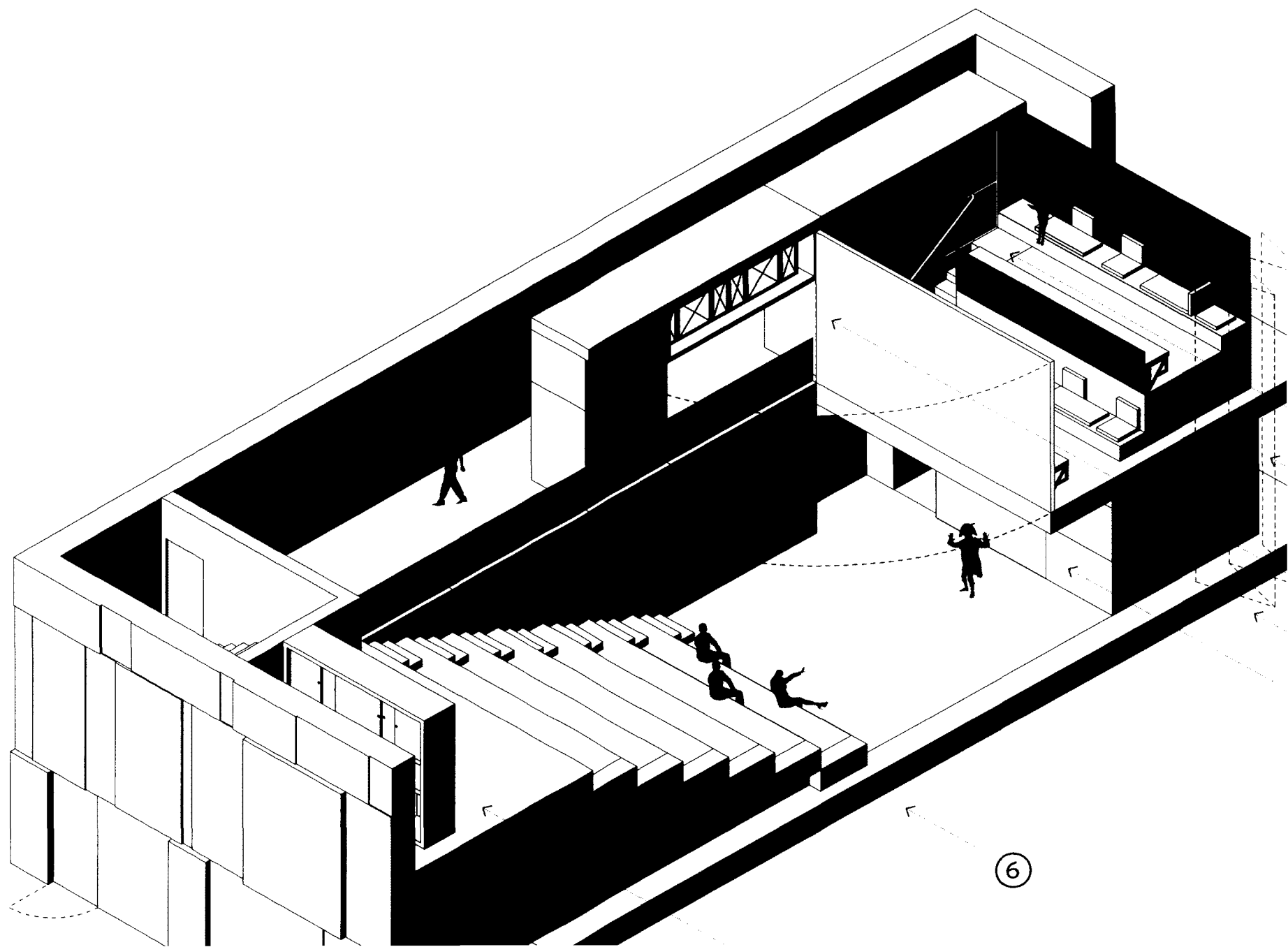
AUDITERRARIUM

RECONFIFURABLE CENTRAL ROOM

The axis of the room, normally longitudinally aligned within the building, can be flipped 90 by swivelling the hinged wall - reminiscent of those present in the painting gallery of the Soane House - to create a new projection wall to the South and enabling the stepped working platform to become part of the auditorium. The room can furthermore be converted again by stowing away of the retractable bleachers creating a full floor open room with a 270 degree balcony surrounding it. Here a second wall can also pivot out to cover the retracted bleachers to reveal a hidden service area with bars and rolling cabinets that can be used to start scripting situations inside the open floor room. Lastly, the unique position of the room under the cantilevering cabinet meeting room gives overhead protection against the elements to

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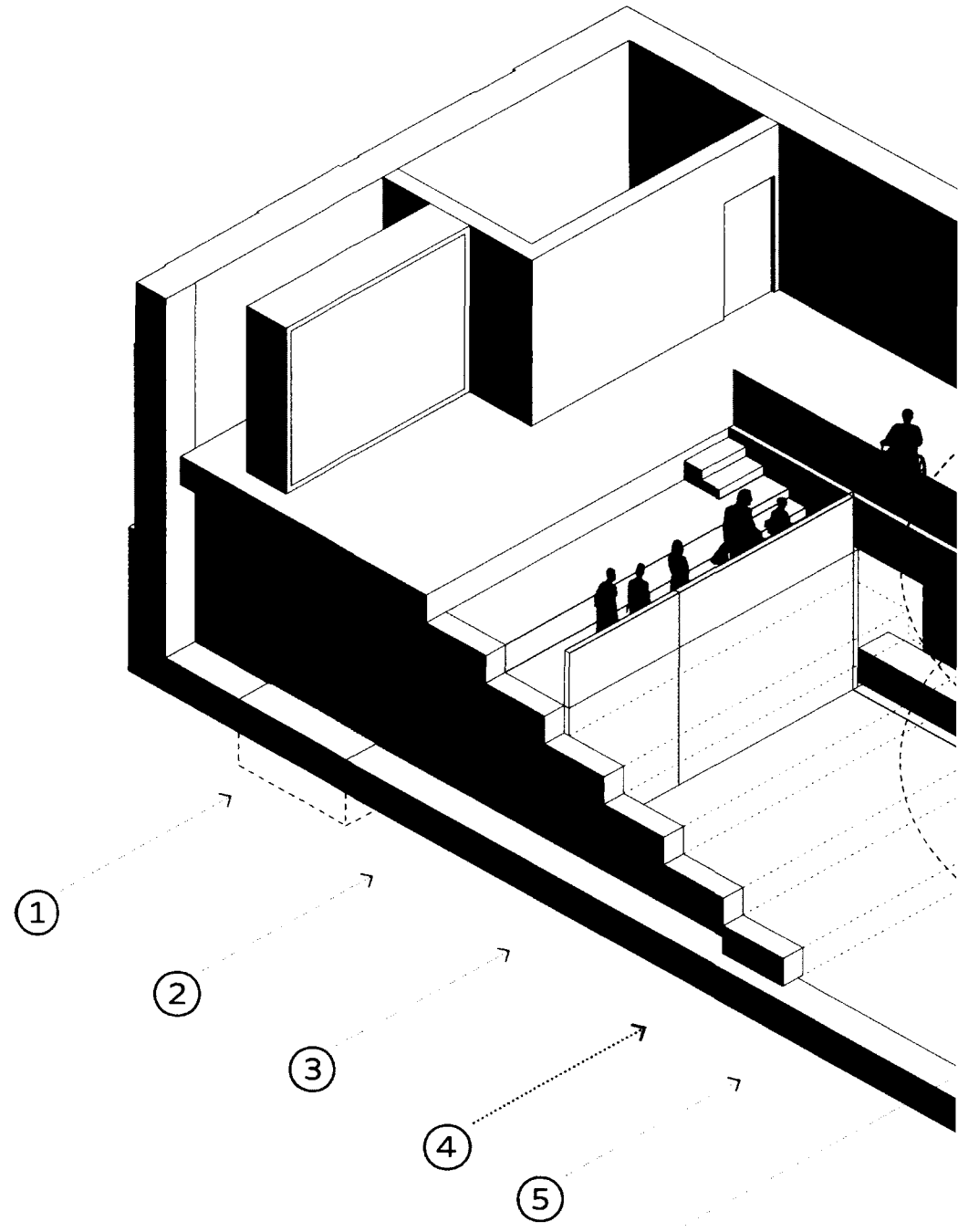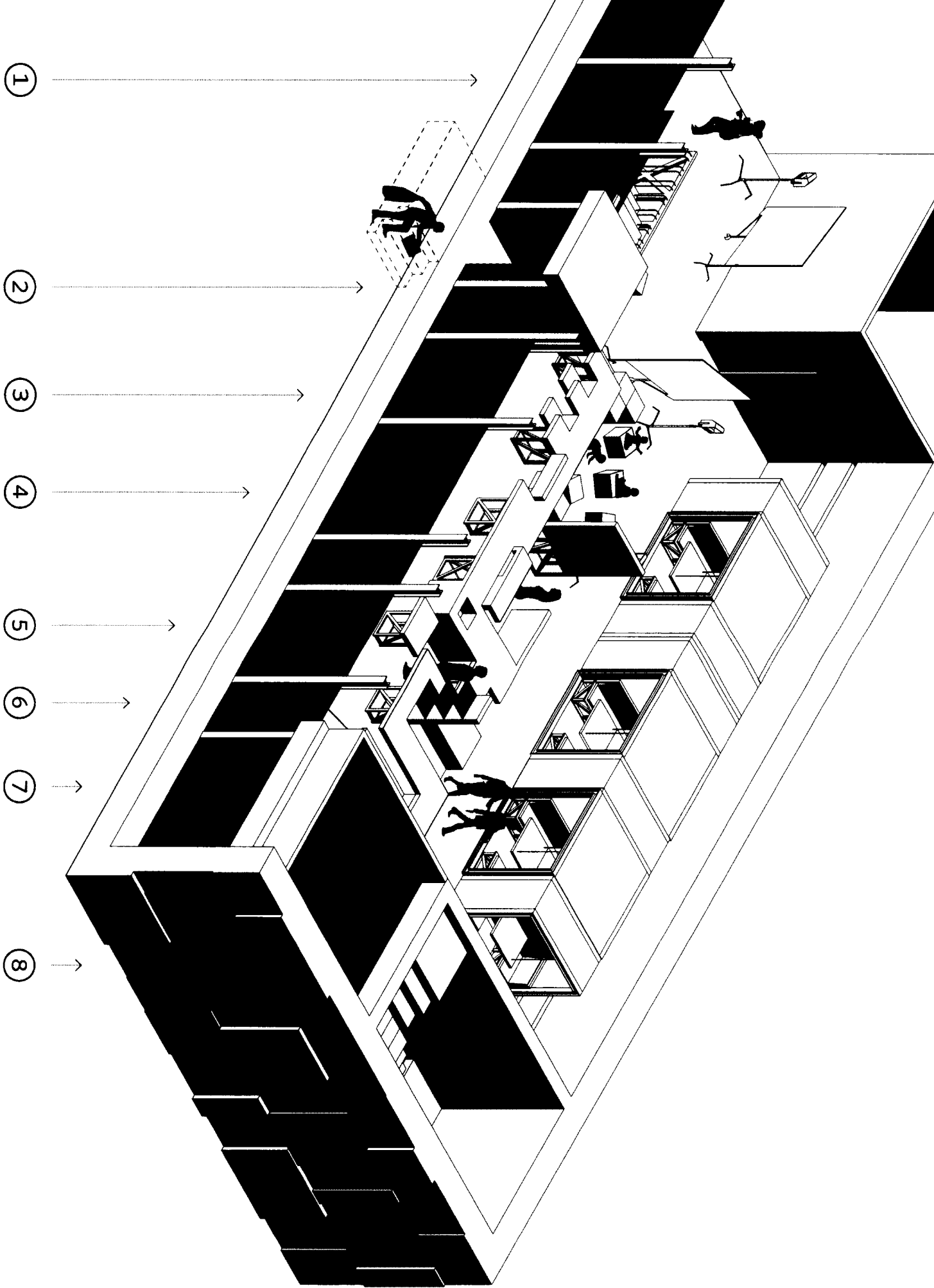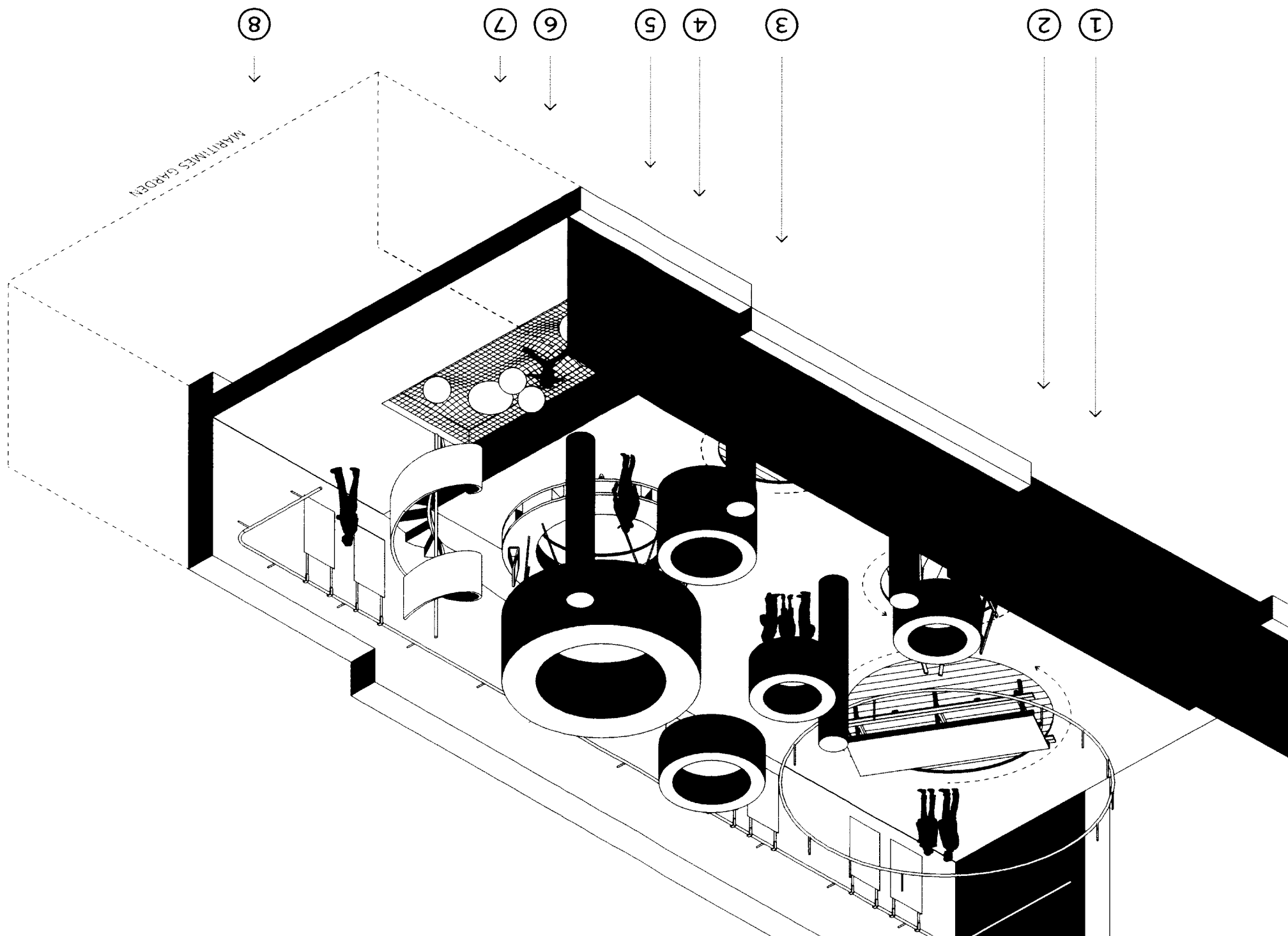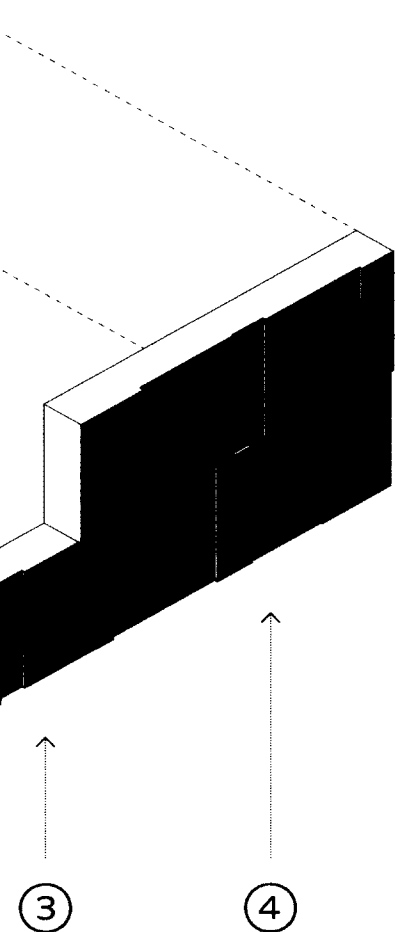
MARITIMES GARDEN

the four thematic gardens · representing
different ecosystems and climates across
e Maritime Garden confronts visitors with
ted water feature suspend in the middle
ding. Self-enclosed and hidden from line
m both the inside and the outside of the
e garden becomes a space of tranquillity
lection. It is proposed that the space also
ed around a commissioned sculpture by a
promising Canadian contemporary artist.
the garden is portrayed with a sculpture
Hanson)

HIDDEN WATER FEATURE
SCULPTURE
OPENING IN EXTERIOR WALL
EXTERIOR WALL STONE CLADDING
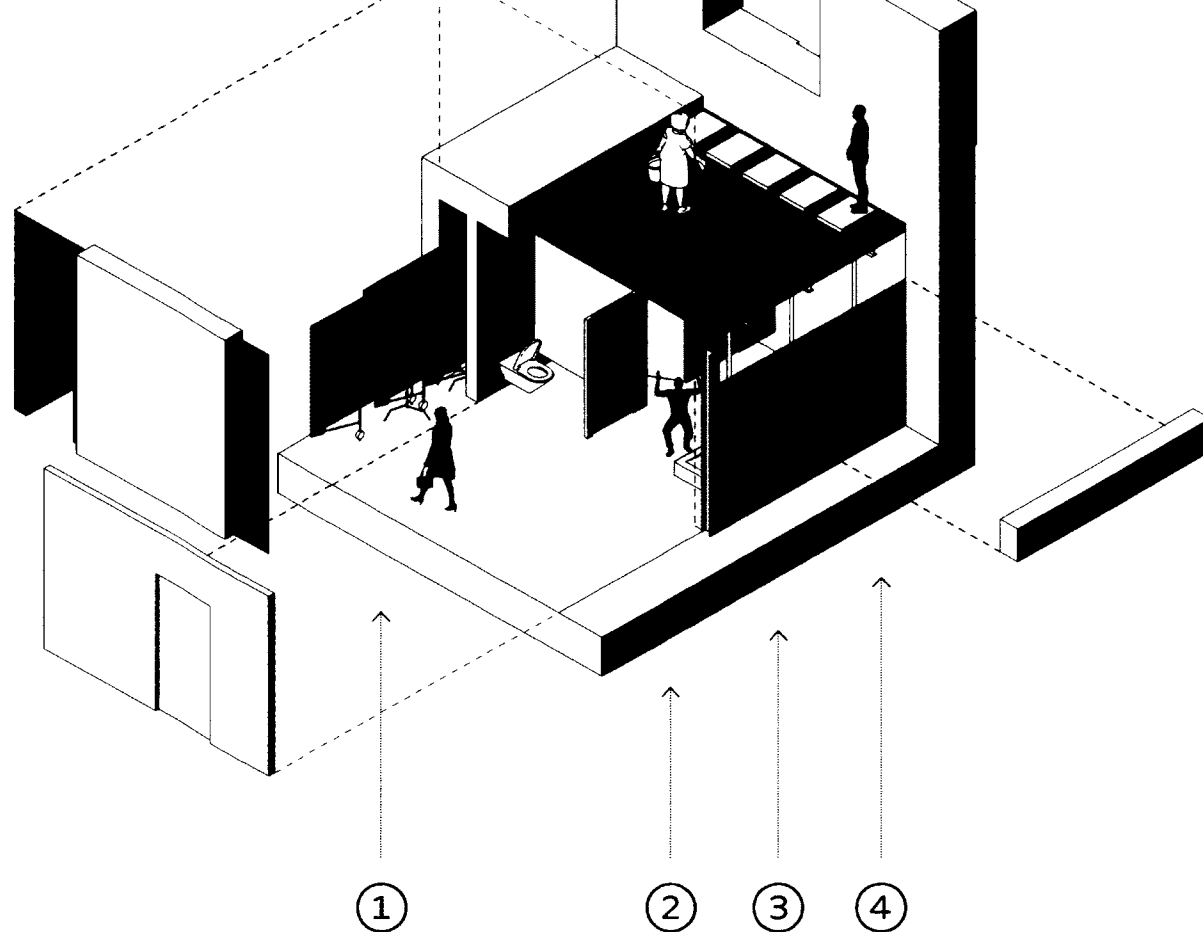
HUNDERTWASSER WC

SURREAL UNDERWATER BATHROOMS

The bottom of the very shallow water feature above
the bathrooms is fitted with two-way glass that helps
to double the visual depth of the water feature when
viewed from above, while giving the illusion of being
underwater in the bathroom below. Faucets dropping
down from the glass ceiling also appear to be fed from
the pool of water above. Lastly, the glass facade facing
the public square is slightly frosted and a constant
stream of water cascading down assures a certain
level of privacy.

1.	**SCREEN STORAGE FOR CAFÉ**
2.	**TWO WAY MIRROR/GLASS CEILING**
3.	**DROP DOWN FAUCETS**
4.	**CASCADING WATER FACADE WINDOW**

PIECEMEAL WALLS

PIECE KIT BUILDABLE CLUB ROOMS

The National Cabinet of Curiosities provides a series of club rooms that various groups and organisations may use to host a wide variety of workshops, discussions and meetings. The walls of these club rooms are designed as cut out furniture pieces that can be removed to enable users to physically configure their own scenarios and settings. In slowly de-constructing and re-building the walls of the rooms, numerous visual connections are also created between the different club rooms and the rest of the building. Pendant lights hung from a grid of ceiling hooks may be configured to best fit the constructions within while the hooks themselves can also be used by the groups in the club rooms to hang other props.

1.	STOOLS AND BENCHES
2.	PENDANT LIGHTS
3.	TABLE DOUBLING AS BILLBOARD
4.	FLOOR WINDOW TO ATRIUM
5.	DE-CONSTRUCTABLE CONNECTING WALL
6.	KIT PIECE WALL

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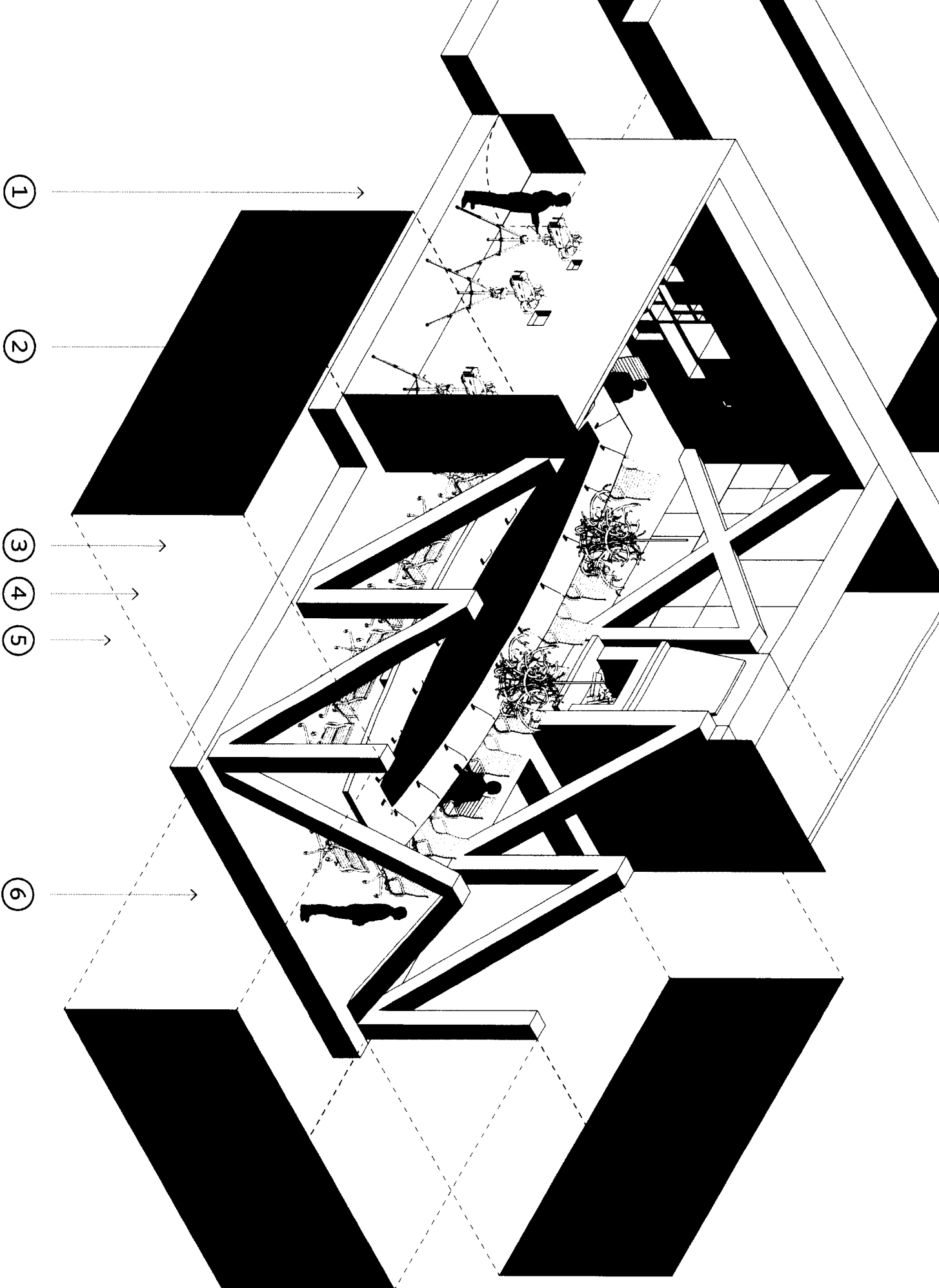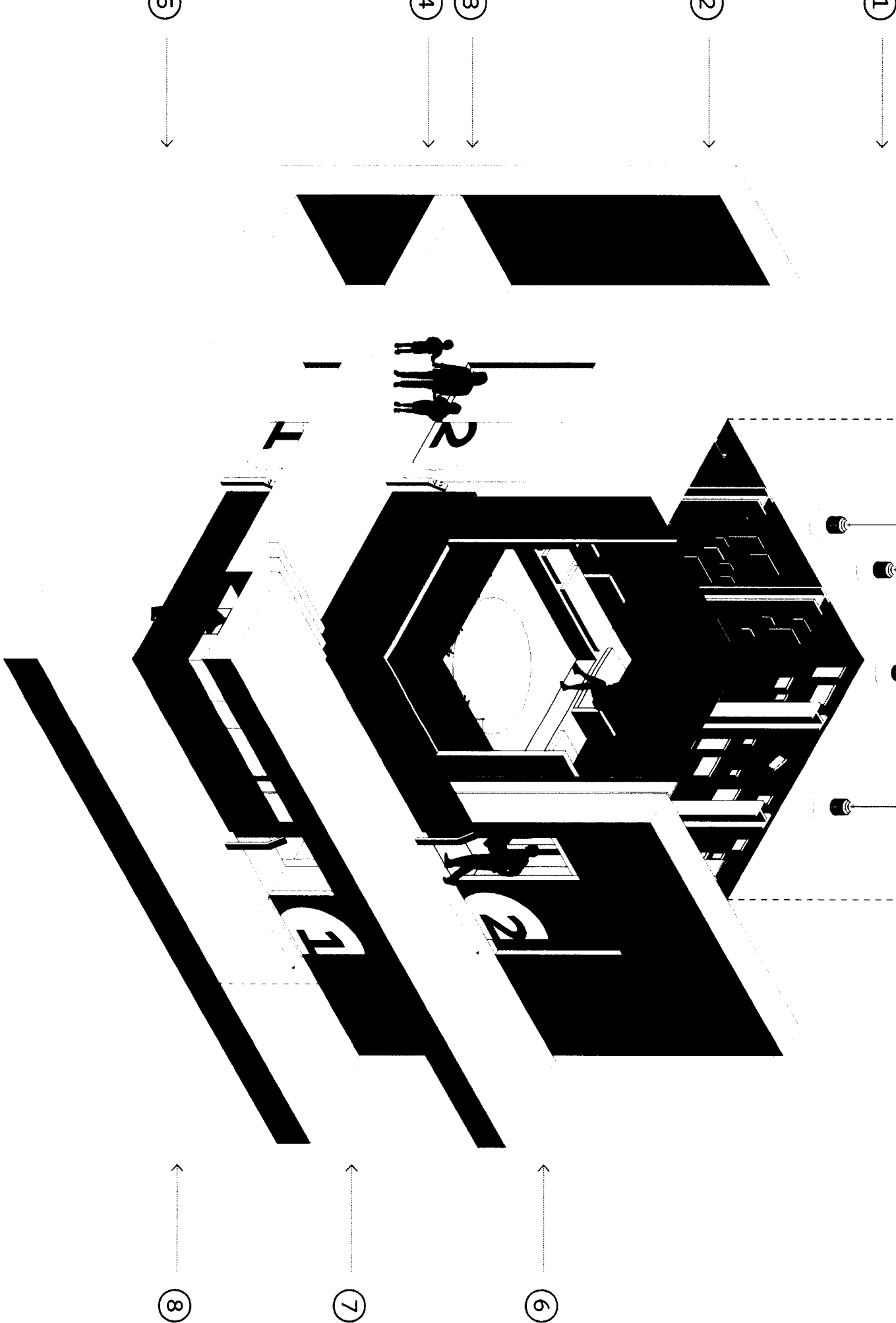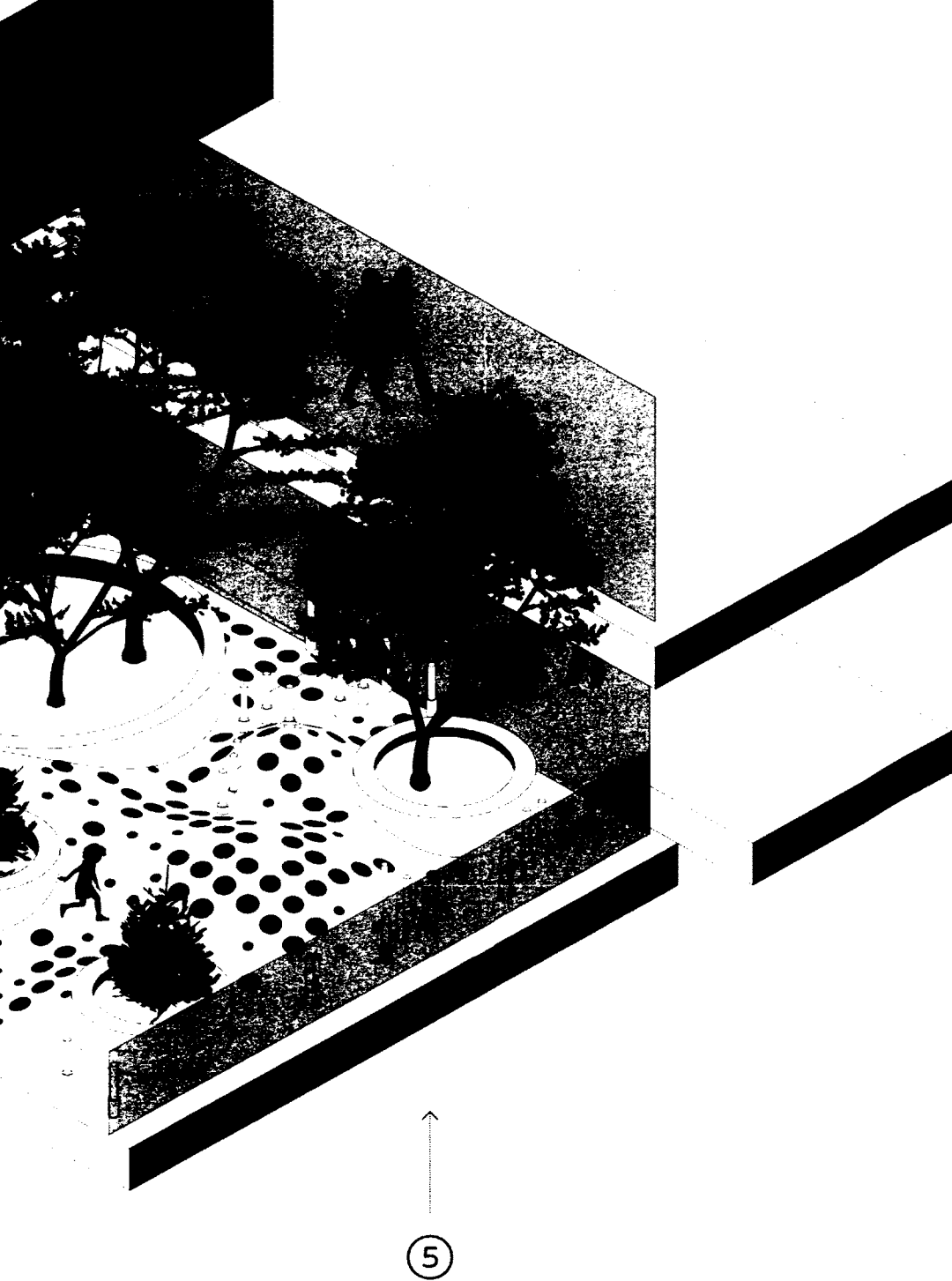
BOREAL GARDEN

OPEN-AIR & DOUBLE-HEIGHT GARDEN

Symmetrically echoing the projected Cabinet
Meeting Room on the East wing of the building,
a double height void was carved out to host a
suspended tree garden on the West wing. Within this
void, trees are planted in cylindrical planters that are
puncture the floor slab below and begin to inform the
undulating landscape above. This organic blanket is
made of a bed of cedar chips while a series of circular
moss and grass inserts modulate the space. People
in need of a breath of fresh air my additionally gain
access to a elevated footbridge that suspends them
within the crown of the trees while offering a unique
view of the Chateau Laurier and the Bytown Market.

1.	GLAZED HALLWAY
2.	EXTERIOR BELVEDERE FOOTBRIDGE
3.	CYLINDRICAL TREE PLANTERS
4.	CIRCULAR MOSS PATTERNS
5.	LIGHT ROD PLEXIGLASS BOLLARDS
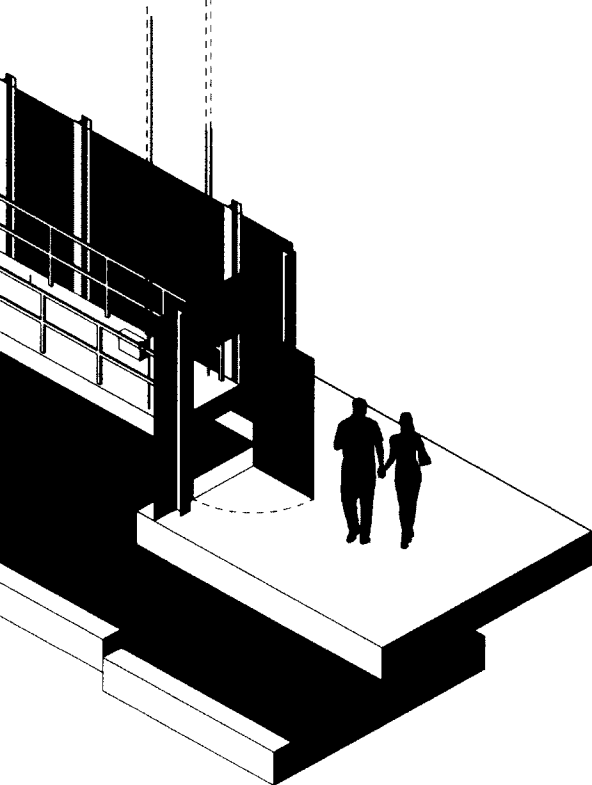
ematic garden in the building takes advantage of the space above the
g meeting room and offers a pleasant sight to the users occupying the
s of the building rather than the traditional asphalt waterproof roofing
Mimicking the sparsity of plants in the tundra, the garden is staged
cks, gravels and mosses that also double as waterproofing elements
eting room below. Furthermore the space can be mounted with a
le stage (not shown) that can converts the garden into a grandstand
ce for grand public demonstrations or addresses. Access to the garden
rough the use of the window cleaning basket that temporarily can serve
g element between the building and the cantilevered garden.

TUNDRA MOSS AND GRAVEL GARDEN
INUKSHUK
WINDOW CLEANING BASKET
POLARIZED WINDOW BATHROOM
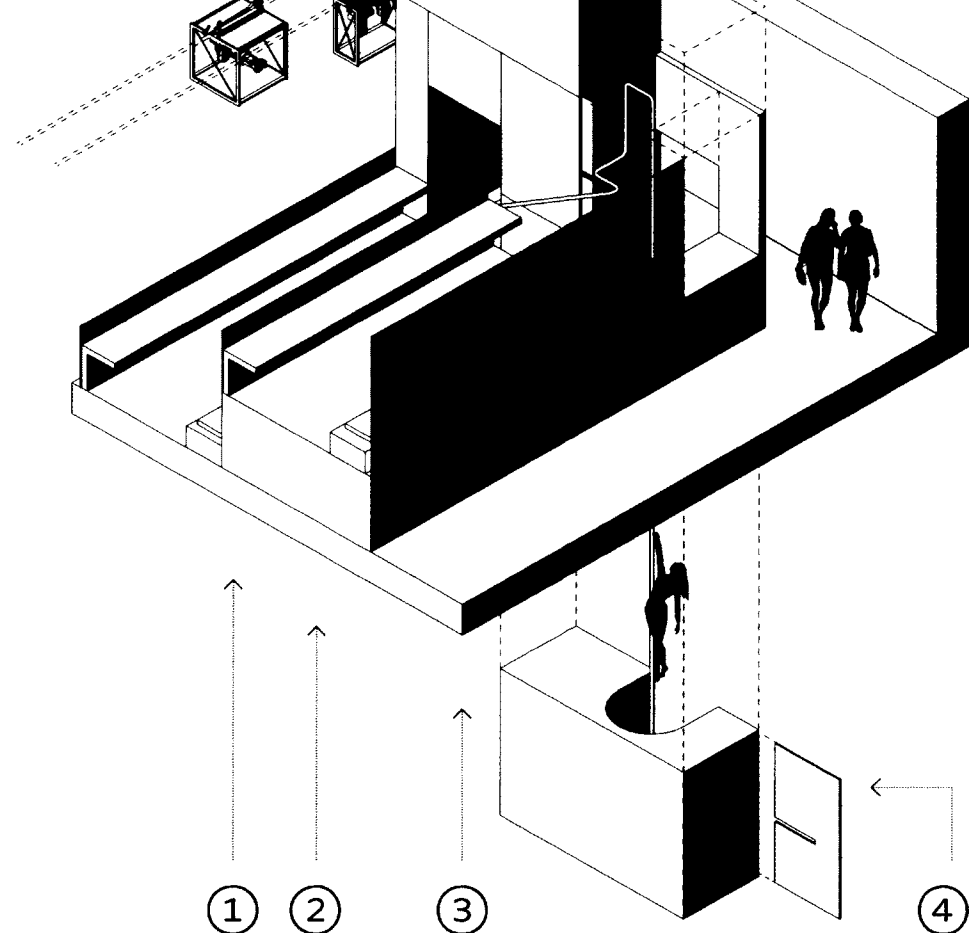
SECRET POLE

HIDDEN FIREMAN CLOSET

The National Cabinet of Curiosities contains a series
of hidden parts and elements ment to surprise users
and foster their sense of adventure and discovery. In
particular these elements are often used as methods of
introducing shortcuts in the promenade architecturale
of the building. Hidden behind pocket doors in the
cabinetry, a curious closet proposes a rapid way for
people to make their way back down into the building.
What appears to be a handrail dissapearing into a wall
in fact turns out to be a fireman pole going down and
connecting two other floors.

1.   **SUSPENDED ANIMATION BOXES**
2.   **STEPPED WORKING PLATFORMS**
3.   **FIREMAN CLOSET**
4.   **POCKET DOORS HIDDEN IN CABINET WALLS**

TAYLOR CUBICLES

DEATH OF BUREAUCRATIC ISOLATION

Countering the habitual separation of bureaucratic work into small and non-correlated tasks that ultimately leads to a dangerous lack of vision, initiative and comprehension, the offices of the National Cabinet of Curiosities aims to create an environment of constant surprise and cooperation for its users. Work stations are placed in a long continuous room where traditional cubicle separation walls are replaced with automatic glass sliding doors that effectively generate a plurality of stimulating and accidental encounters and communications between workers. Located at the center of this space, a room equipped with sliding and rotating boards is also created where workers may share and exchange ideas concerning on-going projects and be kept informed on the project their peers.

1.   AUTOMATIC SLIDING GLASS DOORS
2.   PANORAMIC VIEW INTO PRAIRIE GARDE
3.   PROJECT BOARD(S) ROOM
4.   CONES OF VISION
5.   INDIVIDUAL WORK STATIONS
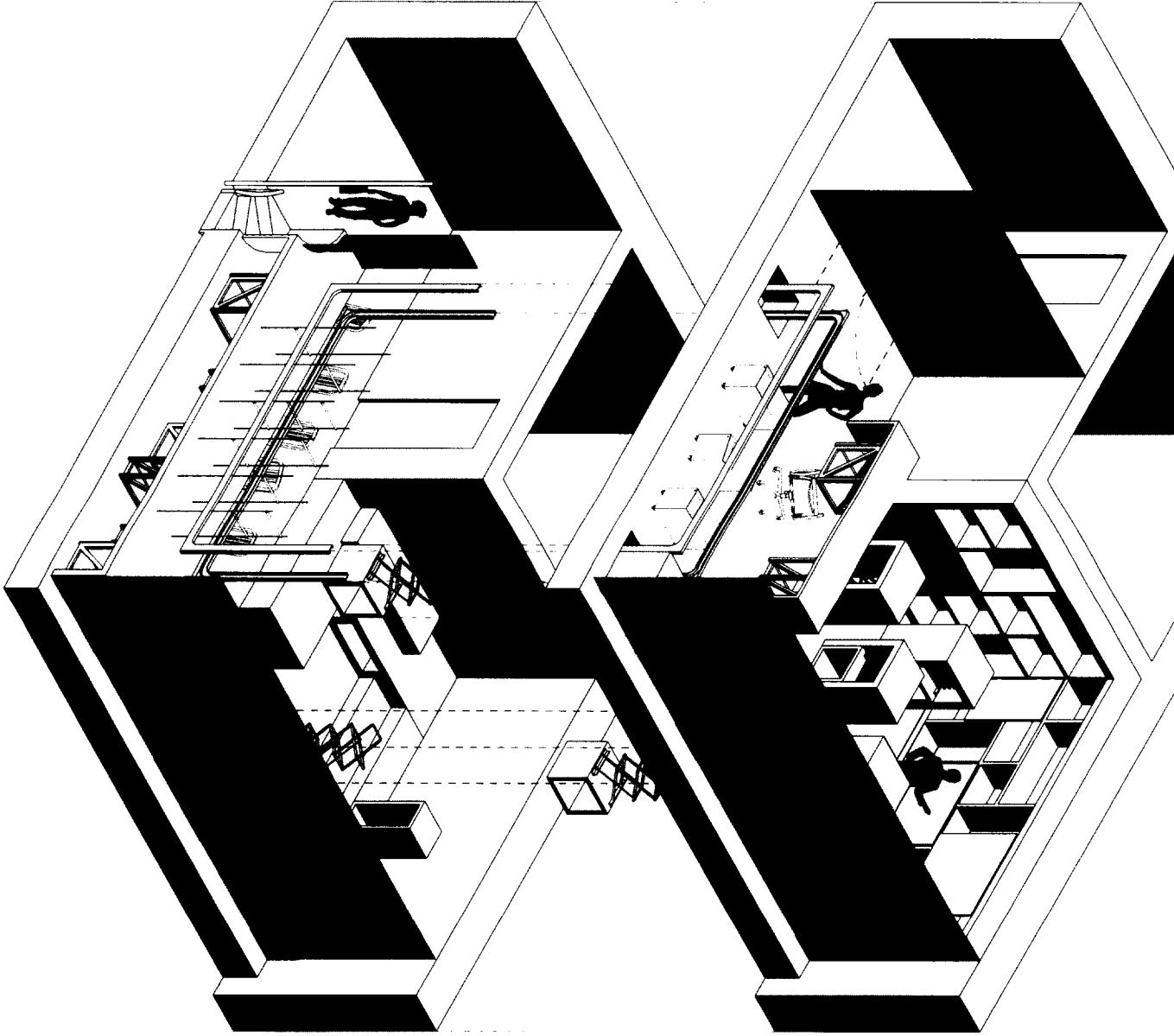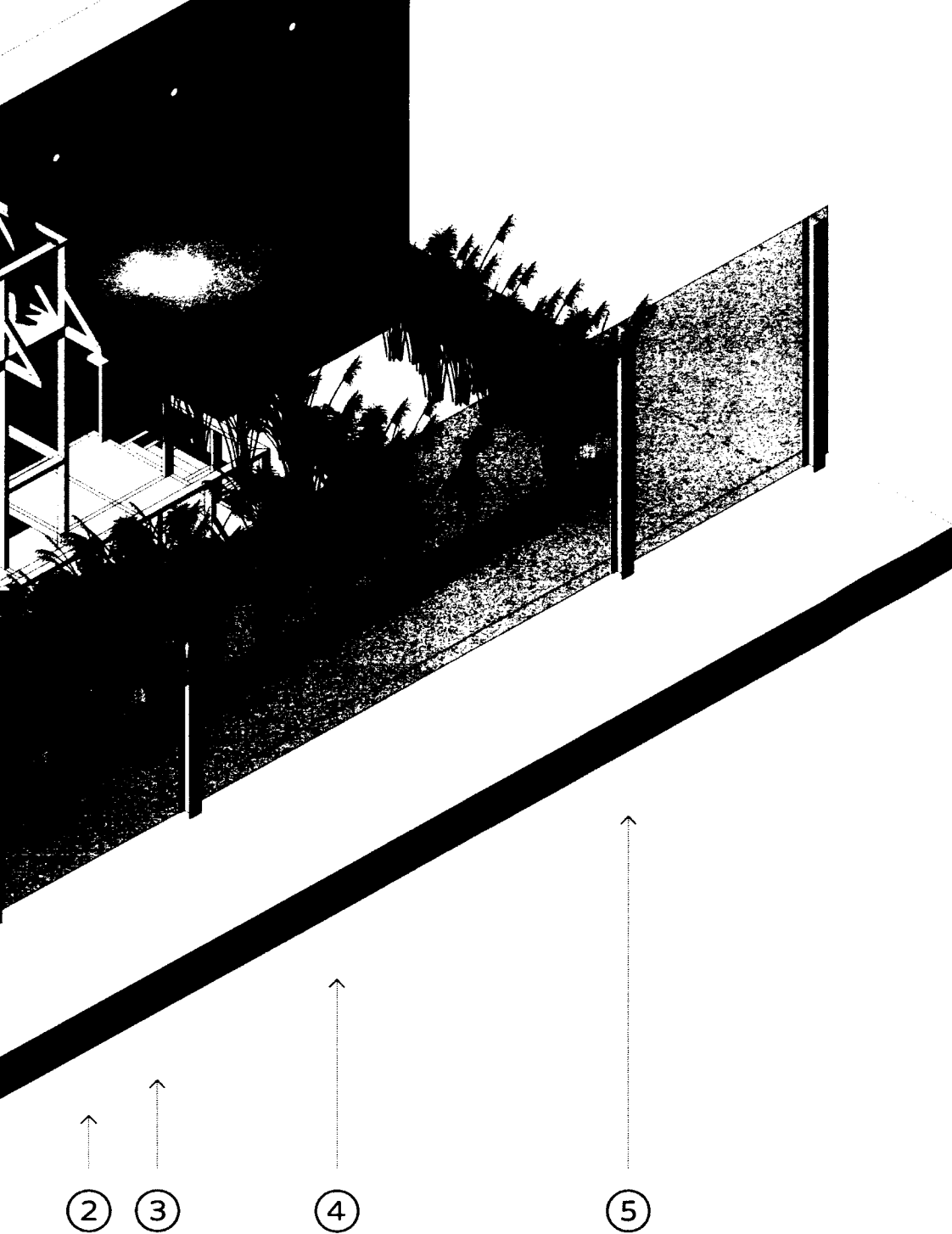
PRAIRIES GARDEN

THE FOGGY FIELDS

The last of the thematic gardens in the building is situated between the 3rd and 4th floor. Bordered on all sides by walls, it nevertheless remains open to the sky above and acts as a light well towards the core of the building. Planted with tall grasses and wheat plans, the garden offers users a chance to serpentine through a dense shoulder high array of plants. Those not comfortable directly beating their own paths through the garden may also opt to use and elevated wooden boardwalk that also features a climbable watchtower offering a peak of the top of the Peace Tower. Furthermore at this height people find themselves suspended in the cloud of fog that is intermittently dispersed over the field. mimicking the mesmerizing fog that settles over fields in the landscape and giving users a truly unique experience within the building.

1.   TALL GRASSES
2.   ELEVATED WOODEN BOARDWALK
3.   WATCH TOWER
4.   FOG DISPENSERS
5.   WHEAT PLANS

PART 9 - CONCLUSION

SCENARIC
INTERJECTIONS
POST-SCRIPT ON THE ARCHITECTURAL SCRIPTING OF NARRATIVES

The National Cabinet of Curiosity provided a near perfect platform to investigate the scripting in space of a series of scenarios through scenographic means, or what we have come call scenaric architecture. Working from a position of a theoretical - or even clinical, if we are to revisit the analogy of the petri dish - vacuum, it enabled the exploration of an architecture hosting new types of actions and events in space that were to be enacted and modified by the users of the building to create radically new public spaces and processes. This ideal new public institution and its accompanying program, manipulated in a self-contained yet transparent and porous container, was certainly a very ripe environment for our exploration. Yet, it is worthy to question the potential impact of such an infrastructure and its capacity to challenge the greater conditioning of space in our society today. How would users traditionally accustomed to overly regimented and regularized spaces react? Would they willingly interact with the building or simply not understand that this is indeed a place where things can be touched and lines can be crossed? Or worse would they eventually self-consciously tune out these architectural moments, and let them slip back into the background realm of their habitual?

To say that this problem of projection into the future is specific to our exploration would be a gross overstatement. Indeed, whilst venturing on the paths that attempt to redefine greater societal constructs through speculative projects, many have gotten lured by the daunting specters of architecture's utopian pasts. Here, more than ever, it becomes crucial to begin investigating methods of testing these types of architectural explorations brought forth in this project and the methods through which they may be used as concrete vehicles towards tangible and instant social change. To come back to our analogy of the petri dish, after having been observed, tried and tested in a confined hermetic realm, it is time to open some of these petri dishes up to take out architectural elements and bring them back into the public

sphere. May we then begin to conceive of discrete architectural objects capable of infiltrating public spaces that disseminate new methods of interacting with space? Revisiting an earlier version of this project that had been advanced under the title of scenaric interjection, [1] could we begin to imagine possibly taking some of these architectural props and dropping them in public sites? Through smaller, decentralized interventions, it is hoped that a wide range of projects could begin to lead towards a new public consciousness of space while opening new ways for people to creatively alter the fabric of cities. These projects could create certain 'mise-en-scènes' that effectively reclaim the land of the commons,* leading to new dialogs, processes and actions between people and henceforth developing new uses and demands for public spaces and infrastructures.

These scenaric interjections in many ways could begin as forms of curated interventions within the public square in front of the National Cabinet of Curiosity, that would be able to later proliferate and move onto other sites across the city and country. These mobile interventions, or set-pieces, would almost form the basis of an actual architectural vanguard testing the reach and span of these architectural techniques and theories in attempt to ally architecture with the praxis of the everyday life and create a system of reflective feedback loops for the creation of a truly inclusive architectural project. Such architectural strategies, certainly echo what Jeremy Till,[2] now describes as spatial agency, whereas new types architectural processes, strategies and tactics, aim to transform the users into integral actors or agents that are able to intervene and short-circuit complex social, political, environmental and economical networks. In this sense, scenaric interjections could be seen as momentary operations, planting the seeds for a new type of (scenaric) architecture.

[1] **INTERJECTION**
An abrupt remark, made esp. as an aside or interruption.
An exclamation.
ORIGIN late 16th cent. from Latin interject- 'interposed,' from the verb interjicere, from inter- 'between' + jacere 'to throw.'
NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, SECOND EDITION, 2005.

[2] **JEREMY TILL**
English writer, architect and educator currently Dean of Architecture and the Built Environment at the University of Westminster who has written notable books to try and identify the direction the contemporary architecture such as Architecture Depends (2009) and Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture (2011)

The project Double Happiness (2009), Atelier Mésarchitecture perhaps best exemplifies what a scenaric interjection might be. In appearance very similar to a subverted publicity billboard, the project reclaims public space and invites users to climb up and use the architecture as a method to escape the space around them and connect with each other in a moment of pure happiness.

PART 10 - CLOSING STATEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

In closing, I would like to take the time to thank and acknowledge all those who helped directly or indirectly to define this project.

I would like to thank my advisor, Roger Connah for his continuous guidance and contagious exuberance. Nearly 4 years ago, Roger arrived to the school with a ruffled up notebook seemingly bursting at the seams with diagrams, maps and drawings of all sorts and declared to a handful of students his intention of 'throwing a spanner in the works.' Today, it is with an unabashed conviction that I can state that he accomplished his mission. Every discussion we have had since then has contributed bit by bit to the perpetual development of the ideas presented in these pages and to the greater and continuous development of a much greater project for which I will forever be thankful.

Lucie Fontein for all her interest in the project, constant availability, astute inquiries, and capability to transform the wildest ideas into fruitful and material realities.

My brother, Mathieu Lagacé, for showing me the true nature of determination and teaching me that we should not let the paths we are on dictate the direction we are going.

My parents André Lagacé and Diane St-Pierre for all of their seemingly inexhaustible support and encouragement, as well their curiosity and stubbornness that I have hereditarily inherited.

And my uncle Claude Lagacé, for perhaps first identifying that there could be an architect hiding in me at a young age and who has inspired me in the last few months.

Lastly, to all my friends, from close or afar, a particular thanks! Every single one of you have informed a part of this thesis.

PART 11 - ENCORE

LIST OF
CURIOSITIES

①   p.06

Pamela Howard in her book "What is Scenography?" describes a curiously similar fascination for the mini narratives embedded within architectural projects. This fascination for the events, actions and people that lived and acted within architectural projects pushed her towards scenography. For Howard, scenography was a method of scripting, recreating and manipulating the narratives that are housed within the spaces of architecture.

In a tiny overcrowded house in the north of England at the start of the Second World War, a young man too young to go into the army, is dreaming of becoming an architect. He has a drawing board in one corner of a room that serves as sitting, dining and working room for a large extended family. His collection of T-squares hang from the green-painted picture rails around the room, creating a dark brown angular frieze. The room is always humming with the noise of people talking to each other in broken English with nobody quite understanding anyone else, accompanied by the unforgettable sound of tea being sucked through sugar lumps out of a saucer. Under the drawing table a small girl sits on a little woven-top stool watching the scene, but having an important daily job to do as holder of the T-square for the young architect, my uncle Henry. At the end of the day's work, provided we had no been required to rush underground into a bomb shelter, I could stand on the stool and look at what he had drawn, and ask all the questions I wanted. At the edges of the paper he used to draw little houses, and little people seeming in an a hurry walking across squares, pushing prams or riding bicycles. Sometimes he drew crowds of people looking at something that had caught their attention, and all these people seemed to live in very big open spaces. I always wanted to know who they were, what they were doing and where they were going, and the story I was told was never enough.

Pamela Howard sees scenography as the act of [drawing] at the edges and corners of the frame, creating places where action can unexpectedly happen, very like those architectural drawings with their crowds of people at the edges of the picture that so fascinated [her] as a child.

PAMELA HOWARD. WHAT IS SCENOGRAPHY?
(LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2002)
P.XXII,XXV

②   p.11

This construction of situations and new interpretations of spaces through a décor or stage elements is explicitly demonstrated in the first project of the young radical group of English architecture students Archigram in 1963. Their project, Living City, enabled people to temporarily take on the characteristics of a series of characters that were figuratively represented on an accompanying board game. Users were invited through their new avatars and a series of props to challenge their cities and re-imagine possible methods of inhabiting it. What is particularly significant to our exploration is the shift in the conception of architecture as a fixed spatial enclosure responding to a clear program and function, towards instead a conception of architecture as a much looser and more ephemeral method of proposing alternative experiences and readings of space.

Simon Sadler underlines the importance of this project in ascertaining this shift in the conception of architecture in his book 'Architecture without Architecture' (2005):

'This architectural exhibition without architecture, this celebration of nonarchitecture – of the serendipitous orders that come about without planning and the personal experiences that lay beyond the nib of the architect's pen – remained, after all, an architectural excursion. 'Living City' was trying to find an overall vision of the plural, of designs within chaos. In so doing it contributed to an ongoing paradigm shift in modern architecture from idealism to realism'

The re-discovery of the everyday life and its re-framing in the hands of this young 'realist' architectural avant-garde also coincidentally beings to parallel the literary movement of 'magic-realism'. This literary movement that gains considerable momentum following the Second World War through the works of key figures such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Günter Grass and Italo Calvino attempts, like Archigram and their contemporaries, to re-appropriate the realm of the real to bring about a new collective consciousness through the manipulation of diverse narratives, viewpoints, and readings of events. Subsequently, the inclusion of imaginative and creative fantastical elements in these already rich literary works, aimed to promote a new heightened awareness of the beauty of the ordinary and served as a critique of the totalitarian and excluding projects of modernism.

SIMON SADLER, ARCHIGRAM: ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT ARCHITECTURE?
(CAMBRIDGE MA: MIT PRESS, 2005) P.69

③   p.18

Stanley Matthews in his essay 'Cedric Price as Anti-Architect' (2007), questions whether or not Cedric Price's work can properly be described as authorless architecture. In his essay, Matthews furthermore alludes to the performative aspect of an authorless architecture that is indebted to notions of agitprop and capable of offering greater powers to the users of the building through their creative reading and reshaping of interactive spaces in a building.

'In the Fun Palace, Price hoped that authorship, origin, and programmatic determinism would recede, while the building itself, as an architecturally performative language, would speak and be 'read' and understood differently by the individual users.'
[...]
The Fun Palace project began in 1962 as a simple collaboration between Price and avant-garde theatre producer Joan Littlewood

From her beginnings in the 1930's working class agitprop street theatre to her string of successes on the London stage, Littlewood had long sought to create a truly Brechtian theatre – not of stages, performers, and audiences, but a theatre of pure performativity, a space of cultural bricolage where people could experience the transcendence and transformation of the theatre not as audience, but as players themselves. Her vision of a dynamic theatrical experience which demolishes the invisible fourth wall of conventional theatre, provided the conceptual framework on which Price began to develop an interactive, performative architecture, endlessly adaptable to the varying needs and desires of the users"

<div align="right">
STANLEY MATTHEWS. "CEDRIC PRICE AS ANTI-ARCHITECT"
IN ARCHITECTURE AND AUTHORSHIP. ED. TIM ANSTEY, KATJA GRILLNER,
AND ROLF GULLSTRÖM-HUGHES.
(LONDON: BLACK DOG, 2007.) P.142
</div>

④   p.18

The body of work of the dutch firm OMA headed by Rem Koolhaas provides ample examples of this type of infiltration of petit-récits or mini-narratives within traditionally fixed and hermetic archetypes. In particular, the Seattle Public Library (2004) clearly demonstrated this inherent tension that exists in pre-modern or modern buildings in response to post-modern conditions. Here, built in flexibility through compartmentalized indeterminacy provides room for new technologies and new types of uses or occupations of space to infiltrate into the building. The building is conceived therefore specifically conceived to respond to evolving social and technological narratives and be fundamentally public through its inclusiveness

'As new media emerge and gain currency, the library seems threatened, a fortress ready to be taken by a marauding hoard of technologies. In this fairytale, the electronic becomes barbaric. Its intangible, ominous ubiquity, its uncontrollable accessibility seems to represent a loss of order, tradition, civilization. In response, the language of the library has become moralistic and defensive: its rhetoric proclaims a sense of superiority in mission, social responsibility, value...

The last decade has revealed an accelerated erosion of the Public Domain – replaced by increasingly sophisticated and entertaining form of the Private.

The essence of the Public is that it is free.

Increasingly, public space has been replaced by accumulations of quasi-public substance that, while suggesting an open invite, actually make you pay. The library stands exposed as outdated and moralistic at the moment that it has become the last repository of the free and the public.'

<div align="right">
JOSHUA PRINCE-RAMUS "SEATTLE PUBLIC"
IN CONTENT ED. REM KOOLHAAS
(KÖLN: TASCHEN, 2004.) P. 139
</div>

⑤   p.21

A curious homonymic connection presents itself here in regards to Adolf Loos' essay Potemkinstadt which vilifies the notion of the screen and Sergei Eisenstein's canonical film Battleship Potemkin which celebrates cinema as the only art form that has been able to surpass architecture in its capability to exploit the properties of space on screen to create and frame new events and actions. Eisenstein's fascination for architecture is perhaps best demonstrated in his analysis of the Acropolis as an architectural

montage of views and events

'Painting has remained incapable of fixing the total representation of a phenomenon in its full visual multidimensionality. (There have been numberless attempts to do this). Only the film camera has solved the problem of doing this on a flat surface, but its undoubted ancestor in this capability is -- architecture. The Greeks have left us the most perfect examples of shot design, change of shot, and shot length (that is, the duration of a particular impression). Victor Hugo called the medieval cathedrals 'books in stone' (see Notre Dame de Paris). The Acropolis of Athens has an equal right to be called the perfect example of one of the most ancient films.
[..]
The calculation of a [film] shot effect is obvious, for there, too, the effect of the first impression from each new, emerging shot is enormous. Equally strong however, is the calculation on a montage effect, that is, the sequential juxtaposition of those shots.

PARTIALLY CITED IN
ROGER CONNAH, HOW ARCHITECTURE GOT ITS HUMP,
(CAMBRIDGE, MA: THE MIT PRESS, 2001) P.3

ORIGINAL ARTICLE WRITTEN IN 1938 BY SERGEI EISENSTEIN WAS REPUBLISHED IN

SERGEI EISENSTEIN "MONTAGE AND ARCHITECTURE" RE-PUBLISHED IN ASSEMBLAGE NO.10
(CAMBRIDGE: MIT PRESS, DECEMBER 1989) P.119

⑥   p.21

Adolf Loos' comment seems to presage and preemptively attack the shift observed in postmodernism from the notion of depth (scene) to surface (screen). Frederic Jameson in his essay 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1991) describes this progressive shift in the notions of perception and collective understanding that have shifted from the scene (something that is embodied and tangible) to screen (something that is projected and abstracted) as a quintessential characteristic of postmodernism. What Jameson comes to refer to as the 'Waning Affect' is precisely the shift from a notion of depth and the interior dualistic qualities it enabled to a much more fluid and blurred 'thinness' of surfaces and exterior networks.

'[What] I will shortly call the depth model is useful for us as a very significant symptom of the very postmodern culture which is our subject here.

Overhastily, we can say that besides the hermeneutic model of inside and outside which Munch's painting develops, there are at least four other fundamental depth models which have generally been repudiated in contemporary theory: the dialectical one of essence and appearance; [the] Freudian model of latent and manifest; [the] existential model of authenticity and inauthenticity; [and] the great semiotic opposition between signifier and signified. [..] What replaces these various depth models is for the most part a conception of practices, discourses and textual play; whose new syntagmatic structures we will examine later on: suffice it merely to observe that here too depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surfaces (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth)'

Increasingly interesting to our examination is the examples Jameson uses to describe this shift. Contrasting the notion of a pedestrian and personally experienced city with the language of new architecture that has begun to infiltrate our cities and that can no longer be understood at a personal scale. Citing in particular the Crocker Bank Center by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in Los Angeles, Jameson describes this new architectural typology as one that is able to fuse and merge images and meaning upon its surface in cinematographic ways that recall montage and creates a form of schizophrenic chain of signifiers. This architecture that he sees as acting like a stereopticon instantly materializes a series of unrelated chains of events

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SCENE -VS- SCREEN

p.20-29

presents in time to create the basis of new hyper-reality. This directly brings us back to the notions of space and time disjunction and deterritorialization that we examine further on with the analysis of Le Corbusier and the screen.

FREDERIC JAMESON, POSTMODERNISM, OR, THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF LATE CAPITALISM, (DURHAM; DUKE UP, 1991) P.61-62

⑦   p.23

The pursuit of knowledge and the historical anecdotes or curiosities that it can unearth along the way is whimsically demonstrated in Josephine Baker's pivotal position between Loos and Le Corbusier and their respective projects of the Villa Baker and the Appartement de Beisteigui analysed in this section. Anna Novakov describes in her essay 'Chez Josephine' the curious relation Loos maintained with Josephine Baker.

'Baker's relationship to Adolf Loos is unclear. It has been suggested by some historians that they knew each other socially between 1926 and 1928. It has also been rumoured that Baker, at some point, taught Loos to dance the Charleston. Apparently this rather absurd act was a bragging point for the aging Loos. Some texts have suggested that the design for the house was in fact commissioned and later rejected by Baker herself. Others have written that the proposal was completely unsolicited by Baker and that she in fact didn't even know that Loos was an architect.'

In opposition to this, and almost simultaneously Le Corbusier is known to have entertained a well documented relationship with Josephine Baker whom he meets on board the Lutetia cruise ship while returning from a cycle of conferences in South America. It is also on board this ship, while Loos at the very moment that Loos is finishing plans for the Villa Baker in Paris, that Le Corbusier is completing the first sketches for the Appartement de Beisteigui in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and simultaneously courting Josephine Baker.

NOVAKOV, ANNA. "CHEZ JOSEPHINE; REVISITING THE JOSEPHINE BAKER HOUSE." LECTURE. 2003 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES AND ARTS. SHERATON WAIKIKI HOTEL, HONOLULU. 2003 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES AND ARTS PROCEEDINGS. 12 JAN. 2003. WEB. 08 DEC. 2011. <HTTP://WWW.HICHUMANITIES.ORG/AHPROCEEDINGS/ANNA%20 NOVAKOV2.PDF>.

⑧   p.25

Marcel Proust in Albertine Disparue paints the beautiful picture of an urban landscape that much like Le Corbusier is only fully understood by walking and drifting. The streets of Venice for Proust not only underpin the historical influence of Arabic architecture on the urbanism of the city, but also open up the fruitful comparisons between architecture and narrative structures. Proust indeed parallels the complex and intricate web of streets and piazzas in Venice to the narrative structure of the Arabian Nights. Here the 1001 stories of the Arabian Night are materialized and lay the foundation of an architecture experienced as a series of mini-narratives that deny a traditional concentric understanding of the city as regimented by a total narrative. This effectively brings us back to our earlier description of scenaric architecture as fundamentally de-centralized and assembled as a series of petit-récits in space. In this sense, scenaric architecture can very much be seen as the spatial assemblage of a 1001 stories that merge, intersect and morph out of one another.

'After dinner, I went out by myself into the heart of the enchanted city where I found myself wandering in strange regions like a character in the Arabian Nights. It was very seldom that I did not, in the course of my wanderings, hit

upon some strange and spacious piazza of which no guidebook, no tourist had ever told me.

I had plunged into a network of little alleys, calli dissecting in all directions by their ramifications the quarter of Venice isolated between a canal and the lagoon, as if it had crystallised along these innumerable, slender, capillary lines. All of a sudden, at the end of one of these little streets, it seemed as though a bubble had occurred in the crystallised matter. A vast and splendid campo of which I could certainly never, in this network of little streets, have guessed the importance, or even found room for it, spread out before me flanked with charming palaces silvery in the moonlight. It was one of those architectural wholes towards which, in any other town, the streets converge, lead you and point the way.'

MARCEL PROUST, "ALBERTINE DISAPPU" IN A REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST (1927)

⑨   p.25

Standford Anderson in his essay 'Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs' (1984) if one of the first to unearth the more complex programs and conceptual motives operating behind the traditional axioms of modernist architecture. In many ways, his analysis of Le Corbusier's work allowed other more subtle operations present in his oeuvre to begin transpiring and transcend the stigma of pure functionalism attributed to Le Corbusier. Anderson particularly focused on Le Corbusier's sketches from his trip to the Acropolis to describe the subtle operations of spatial unravelling and human experience latent in Le Corbusier's promenade architecturale. Almost exactly like Eisenstein before him, Le Corbusier meticulously decomposed the architecture of the Acropolis into a sequential series of views and insinuated movements. This fascination for the spatiotemporal orchestration of events in the Acropolis demonstrated in Le Corbusier's sketches would in many ways become the basis of his further explorations in the promenade architecturale and reinforce our claims of the fundamental cinematic and projective qualities in Le Corbusier's work.

'When Jeanneret-Le Corbusier, on his Voyage d'Orient of 1911, came to the ultimate canonic site of Western architecture, the Acropolis in Athens, he did not repeat or seek to make more precise the earlier researches into the orders, the temple form, or their sophisticated formal nuances. Le Corbusier rather produced a set of sketches which vividly evoke the sequential experience of the ascent of the Acropolis. From outside the Propylaea, we are already embraced by the heights of the Acropolis and the Temple of Athena Nike above. Passing into the Propylaea, the Parthenon appears through a screen of columns. Though these columns are just before the viewer, or precisely because they are so near, one does not see them as wholes. These columns are a screen, not sophisticated elements of precise proportions and prescribed relations to the whole of which they are a part.'

'If at the Acropolis, the concept of architectural promenade afforded another and valuable reading of a canonic site, then at the Maison La Roche Le Corbusier invents an architecture that offers another compelling promenade.'

STANDFORD ANDERSON, "ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AS A SYSTEM OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS" IN
ARCHITECTURE THEORY SINCE 1968. ED. MICHAEL K. HAYS.
(CAMBRIDGE: MIT, 2000) P.498, 501

· PART 5 - RISING ACTION

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PART 6 - RISING ACTION

AN ARCHITECTURE
OF PROPS

p.30-44

⑩   p.30

It is the theatre director Tadeusz Kantor that perhaps best demonstrates the possibility of mobile and interactive scenographic elements to be used to further reinforce notions of estrangement or destroy the theatrical divide between real and illusionary spaces traditionally enforced in theatre.

"I started with architecture. I was profoundly influenced by Pronaszko when he was considered to be greatest decorator in Krakow and I was the second best. But I had to surpass this architectural side, I had to vanquish architecture. Hence where the mobile shapes that constituted the scenography of Antigone began to emerge I had realized that movement is the only way to destroy architecture. The movement of these shapes corresponded to the psychological movements, they prompted psychological reactions. At times dangerous, at times pathetic. At the moment of the action, one of these shapes would fall like a cleaver."

More than banal accessories that are simply positioned on stage, the theatrical prop for Kantor was able to serve as a crucial mobile and interactive instrument to help the spectator cross the border that separates reality and illusion.

"This is the problem of the object in theatre. Previously, we would talk about accessories. Accessories are terrible things, they are not objects, they do not contain any danger. They are traps. I see the object as something that I can invest with a new realism. The problem of the object is for me very important. When I seize an object, this act of annexing is almost a magical phenomenon. [...] If an object is painted on a canvas, it is not dangerous, it contains its conditions within the canvas, it is an illusion. But if this same object is inserted between us, if we let it freely penetrate within our environment, on the road or in a room, then we being to touch on the notion of the happening, it is art that surpasses the border of art, we reach the frontier between real life and art."

TRANSLATED BY AUTHOR FROM
TADEUSZ KANTOR, ENTRETIENS
(PARIS: ÉDITIONS CARRÉ, 1996) P.29,41

⑪   p.33

The theatrical prop in many ways remains an object of unfixed signifier-signified relation – it can freely oscillate between informing a situation or being informed by it. In many ways the open authorless function of scenaric architecture is established through this shifting nature in the capacity of props to inform or react to the use of the users in the nature of the situation. Silvija Jestrovic in her book Theatre of Estrangement: Theory, Practice, Ideology outlines this specificity of the theatrical prop as something that hints to a use but remains open-ended in its appropriation by the users.

"Honzl describes the set used in Meyerhold's staging of The Death of Tarelkin, a cylindrical construction that look is like a meat grinder. It is only when we see the actor pacing back and forth in the cylindrical structure like a prison and clutching its slats like bars that we realize the function of this prop, it is a cell (Dynamic Signs of Theatre, 1976). Honzl uses this example to demonstrate that we know for certain what the props in a theatrical production signify only through the ways actors use them. Similarly, in contemporary performances such as Robert Lepage's production of 12th House, an ironing board represents an exercise machine in one scene and a car in another."

SILVIJA JESTROVIC, THEATRE OF ESTRANGEMENT: THEORY, PRACTICE, IDEOLOGY
(TORONTO: UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 2006.) P.31

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Paul Shepheard describes a time where architecture defined the world and materialized a set of localized relationships that were manifested through the architectural dispositions of things. The radical changes that marked the new post-Galileo and post-Gutenberg world would not only destroy this fixed spatial arrangement of things in the world but also see the escape and affirmation of machines and literature as now newly formed totally independent entities, freed from the grasp and domination of architecture.

"That's the action set. The scene is the central figure, this ancient city, where everything was fixed and hierarchical and brilliant; lustrous, though stained with filthy privilege.
[...]
Now when the gates of this city were finally torn down and all the people rushed out into the sensual wilderness that the walls had been built to overcome, and when they found that all the material of the world and all the shapes of the world and all the life, too, could be subject to perception, not prescription – each one's own perception, that is, true to what was really seen and really felt – why, what a babble was on!
[...]
Most of all technology escaped the immovable tyranny of buildings and slipped its leash to join the dramatic whirlwind. The time of the ancient city was a time when everything was like a building. Whereas before this time the people had been fixed in their relation to each other – king, noble, yeoman, serf, just like the prune stones round the edge of a plate – and buildings themselves had been the model of society, a building being the perfect expression of a set of fixed relationships, conclusions in my earlier term; from this moment, with the gates of the city broken down and people swarming out over the wastelands that surrounded it – wasteland, that is, because it's wild nature, uncultivated – the great current of human preoccupation shifted from architecture to literature. Other people, not the land."

The world of the post-Bolshevik revolution that Kenneth Frampton describes is however one where architecture regained its technological and literary function and spatially re-established and re-grounded relationships in the world. As a result, meaning was directly re-embedded in space and rendered visible and tangible through the interaction of people these architectural objects in action.

PAUL SHEPHEARD, WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE? AN ESSAY ON LANDSCAPES, BUILDINGS AND MACHINES
(CAMBRIDGE MA.: THE MIT PRESS, 1994) P.50-51

⑬   p.35

For Vesnin, "It does not matter whether the object concerned is both efficient and useful – such as an engineering construction or a household article – or merely efficient, such as a laboratory project aimed at resolving problems posed by the new modern form. Every real object produced by the modern artist must play its part in life as an active force to organize the individual's consciousness, exert a psycho-physiological effect upon him and prompt him to energetic activity."

SELIM O. KHAN-MAGOMEDOV, PIONEERS OF SOVIET ARCHITECTURE
(NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1987). P.548

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AN ARCHITECTURE OF PROPS

p.30-44

⑭ p.36

What is interesting to notice here is the parallel yet divergent attitude that emerges between Kenneth Frampton and the duo of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown in regard to the notion of iconography and scenography. For Frampton, "as in the traditional Russian lubok or icon, the slogan and the image of an object became almost mutually interchangeable, the word fusing into the sign while the object by virtue of its simplification began to function as inscription." Here, agitprops operated as objects that were symbolic, iconographic and scenographic at the same time in their capacity to shift meaning through all mediums and become stand-alone objects that rewrite the very nature and narratives of the spatial, political and social space around them. Agitprops were elements that scenographically scripted scenes in the world and through their interaction and use in space could begin communicating meaning and situated people physically and metaphysically in the world they inhabited.

Curiously, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown seem somewhat sceptical of the notion of scenography. For them, the shift from architecture away from form and mass established a new communicative iconographic architecture of signs and symbolic appliqués. However, the transformation of these independent signs into situations opened up a dangerous door towards the creation of scenographic worlds of inauthenticity.

"And that's why we think current Las Vegas is ironically less relevant than old Las Vegas. [...]To simplify, the main thing is that it went from the archetype of strip and sprawl to the scenography of Disneyland. Scenography is not necessarily bad – the Place des Vosges is scenographic, and architecture in a sense, does involve making scenes. The danger is that it becomes an exotic theatre rather than an actual place. [...] It is not necessarily negative and, as I said, a lot of good architecture has elements of scenography. The challenge would be to do it well – authentically – today.

Let us therefore specify that scenography in this instance is seen as strictly related to Frampton's concept of 'objects in action' that help to create scenes of authentic meaning and portrayal of the world from which they emerge.

KENNETH FRAMPTON "INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE CRISES IN ARCHITECTURE",
IN K. MICHAEL HAYS, ED., OPPOSITIONS READER
(NEW YORK: PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 1998) P.57

DENISE SCOTT BROWN AND ROBERT VENTURI "RE-LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS"
IN CONTENT ED. REM KOOLHAAS
(KÖLN: TASCHEN, 2004.) P. 156-157

⑮ p.39

Some 40 years before Archigram would gain considerable international notoriety with their project 'Instant City', Liuboj Popova and Alexandr Vesnin collaborated together to create an curiosly similar project for the Kohdysnkoe Field (1921) that proposed the use of blimps to anchor and drop scenographic décors in space to radically re-program a space and create new events and a new form of travelling architecture that could script new situations almost anywhere.

Vesnin and Popova conceived an open-air construction consisting of two symbolic representations of social orders: a 'Citadel of

'Capitalism' and a 'City of the Future'.
[…]
These two 'cities' were joined from above by a series of wires suspended from two moored airships. Banners and pennants bearing slogans such as 'Proletarians of All Nations Unite in the Third International Komintern', 'Long Live in the Third C.I.' and 'Proletariat Unite' hung from adjoining wires.'

SELIM O. KHAN-MAGOMEDOV, ALEXANDR VESNIN AND RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM
(NEW YORK: RIZZOLI, 1986), P.72

(16)   p.50

The information pamphlet of The Museum of Jurassic Technology in attempting to describe its own mission statement highlights the values and goals of the of the late eighteenth century Peale Museum situated in Philadelphia.

"This cabinet of curiosity was open to all people (including children and the fair sex)... Peale fervently believed that teaching is a sublime ministry inseparable from human happiness, and that the learner must be led always from familiar objects toward the unfamiliar – guided along, as it were, a chain of flowers into the mysteries of life."

LAWRENCE WESCHLER, MR. WILSON'S CABINET OF WONDER: PRONGED ANTS, HORNED HUMANS,
MICE ON TOAST, AND OTHER MARVELS OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY
(NEW YORK: RANDOM HOUSE, 1995), P.28-29

PART B - FALLING ACTION

THE NATIONAL CABNET OF CURIOSITY

p.50-54

(17)   p.51

Lawrence Weschler in his book 'Mr Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder' cites Francis Bacon's description of a wunderkammern and its heterotopic nature as a duplicate, miniaturized mirroring of the world.

From him such a space is 'a small compass, a model of the universal made private.' This space is: 'a goodly, huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine had made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance and the shuffle of things hath produced, whatsoever Nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.'

LAWRENCE WESCHLER, MR. WILSON'S CABINET OF WONDER: PRONGED ANTS, HORNED HUMANS,
MICE ON TOAST, AND OTHER MARVELS OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY
(NEW YORK: RANDOM HOUSE, 1995), P.76

(18)   p.54

The Maison du Peuple or Workers Club as it was also known in the USSR is a fundamentally public space and communal institution that aimed to provide citizens with a space for knowledge, entertainment, leisure and self-expression. El Lissitzky, who saw architecture as a primarily social and collective art, placed considerable importance on the role of these institutions in society and their particularly interesting architectural properties.

'Buildings designed to serve all of society have always acted as a repository of the sum total of all creative energies. Depending on the prevalent social order, these have usually been of either a religious or governmental character: the Church or the Palace. These were the power sources of the old order. Their power can

only be transcended by establishing new power sources belonging to our new order. Some years ago it was thought that palaces would serve this purpose, except that now they to be called 'Palaces of Labor.' [..]The competition of 1922 for the 'Palace of Labor' in Moscow represented a new departure in this direction and marks the beginning of a great number of competitions for similar palaces, later called 'Palaces of Culture', which in turn eventually came to be known quite simply as 'Clubs.'
[..]
The club ought to become a gathering place where the individual becomes one with the collective and where he stores up new reserves of energy, while he should at the same time be given the opportunity to split off and join smaller groups for the pursuit of special activities. Thus, both small and large rooms must be conceived in an organic manner, while the whole should form a new unified spatial relationship. In this context, the Roman bath, old monastery layouts, or theatre plans, can no longer serve as models. It is evident that flexible rooms will have to be created to allow for different uses and variable circulation patterns. The most important thing to remember is that in the club the masses should not throng there from the outside merely seeking amusement, but that they should instead arrive at the realization of their potentialities by their own efforts. The club's role is to become to become a University of Culture.'

PART 8 - FALLING ACTION

THE NATIONAL CABNET OF CURIOSITY

p.50-54

EL LISSITZKY, RUSSIA: AN ARCHITECTURE FOR WORLD REVOLUTION
(CAMBRIDGE MA : THE MIT PRESS, 1984) P.43-44

(18)   p.54

The periodical 'Cabinet' highlights the particular nature of the cabiner of curiosity in their mission statement of their magazine and hint at the possible curatorial philosophy that the National Cabinet of Curiosity might take

'Its hybrid sensibility merges the popular appeal of an arts periodical, the visually engaging style of a design magazine, and the in-depth exploration of a scholarly journal to create a sourcebook of ideas for an eclectic international audience of readers, from artists and designers to scientists, philosophers, and historians. Using essays, interviews, and artist projects to present a wide range of topics in language accessible to the non-specialist, Cabinet is designed to encourage a new culture of curiosity, one that forms the basis both for an ethical engagement with the world as it is and for imagining how it might be otherwise. In an age of increasing specialization, Cabinet looks to previous traditions of the well-rounded thinker to forge a new type of magazine designed for the intellectually curious reader of the future.'

SINA NAJAFI ED. CABINET: WHAT IS IT? IN CABINET (ALL ISSUES)
(NEW YORK: IMMATERIAL INCORPORATED, 2000-2012)

PART 4 - EXPOSITION

SCENARIC INTERJECTIONS

p.77-78

⑲   p.78

The definition of the 'commons' offered by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their magnum opus Empire is certainly worth citing in the optic of this project.

'Capitalism sets in motion a continuous cycle of private reappropriation of public goods the expropriation of what is common
[...]
The commons, which once were considered the basis of the concept of the public, are expropriated for private use and no once can lift a finger. The public is thus dissolved privatized, even as a concept. Or really, the immanent relation between the public and the common is replaced by the transcendent power of private property.
[...]
A new notion of the 'commons' will have to emerge on this terrain. Deleuze and Guattari claim in 'What is Philosophy?' that in the contemporary era, and in the context communicative and interactive production, the construction of concepts is not only an epistemological operation but equally an ontological project. Constructing concepts and what they call 'common names' is really an activity that combines the intelligence and the action of the multitude making them work together. Constructing concepts means making exist in reality a project that is a community. There is no other way to construct concepts but to work in a common way. This commodity is, from the standpoint of the phenomenology of production, from the standpoint of the epistemology of the concept, and from the standpoint of practice a project in which the multitude is completely invested. The commons is the incarnation, the production, and the liberation of the multitude.'

MICHAEL HARDT & ANTONIO NEGRI, EMPIRE
(CAMBRIDGE MA: HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2000) P.301-303

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