

# Language and the Architect's Mental Image

Olivia Jasmine O'Callaghan

SOMEWHERE  
I HAVE NEVER  
TRAVELLED

SOMEWHERE





Situated Poetic Device using black mirrors as openings into the textual site  
Author’s Own, Amsterdam, Netherlands 2023

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Preface

I am reminded now of evenings as a child after my parents put me to bed, when I would sneak into their dimming bedroom with a book barely legible in the darkness. I would watch as the last drops of sunlight struggled to push light through the orange glass of my mother’s old perfume bottles, casting a faint glow on the tawny wallpaper. Confronting the intellectual rigours to produce this thesis is like encountering the scent of my mother’s perfume on a stranger, immersing me in a sea of orange light as I am plunged into the memory of those evenings in which I struggle to decipher the words before me, yet content in the interiority of the moment.

*Oh longing for places that were not  
Cherished enough in that fleeting hour  
How I long to make good from afar  
The forgotten gesture, the additional act.<sup>1</sup>*

-Rainer Maria Rilke

Even if I were to return to that room, the mental image I hold of it would inevitably fall short, like an architect trying to transfix the richness of their design on a page, or like the light struggling to penetrate through a perfume bottle, only for it to lose the scintillating qualities that make it so enthralling to the mind in the light of day. Yet, the memory of my parents’ room in which I would secretly read as the sun sank is made all the more lucid in its emotional and sensory qualities by its incompleteness and inaccessibility, allowing it to become an opening for projecting my imagination.

This opening serves as a gateway to writing this text, letting it work as a threshold to a world where reading is a treasured act, imbued with sincerity and interiority. Although I cannot recall much of what I read back then as a child, I endeavour to use language to create something new to offer the young girl a world to explore, to recover the qualities enriching the memory and make it so meaningful.

1. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Vergers*, XLI. Translation: (Bachelard, 1958, p. 77)  
2. This is a mishearing by the deaf poet, Raymond Antrobus, of an epigraph by Robin Coste Lewis (Antrobus, 2018)

*“There is no telling what language is inside the body.”<sup>2</sup>*

Robin Coste Lewis and Raymond Antrobus

### Study question

How can the imaginative capabilities of language be utilised by architects through a design process to preserve qualities of the mental image and cognitive processes of the original design as it resides in the imagination? How can creating this thesis implement this design process, demonstrating a novel triadic design approach consisting of reading, writing and making to produce an architecture that remains connected to the imagination?

### Key terms

**Mental image** – The imagination creates representations of sensory information that exist solely in the locus of the mind. These images are similar to the oneiric ones experienced whilst dreaming, however when discussed in this thesis more often refer to imaginative confabulations, daydreams and memories.

**Mental process/cognitive process** – These processes are deeper mental systems that dictate the ways mental images are evoked.

**Interpenetration** – Interpenetration refers to two or more things entering each other. In this thesis it often refers to the meeting of the external world, frequently the site, and in the internal world of the psyche.

Architectural theorists and philosophers are frequently concerned with the use and function of the relationship between people and their environment. This thesis takes this discussion in a novel direction by probing the evocation and cognition of mental images as they respond to the site by using London's literary canon as a model. It aims to discuss relationships between architect and mental image, proposing a future practice where architects are trained professionals in an ecology of their own imagination. This practice intends to create architecture connected to the imagination, maintaining the meaningful qualities of the mental image often lost during a typical design process. This thesis suggests a triadic design process integrating reading and writing with making to inform the process of architectural production at all stages, from the very first stages of design to the physical production of architecture through to experience.

The model of London's literary canon is comprised of 3 authors who each embody a component of my triadic theory, thus aiming to produce a strong model of the effects of language to record, evoke and develop situated mental images and processes:

- 1 - Writing and Virginia Woolf
- 2 - Reading and Charles Dickens
- 3 - Making and William Blake

The flexibility and wide range of customisable relationship techniques of the imagination contribute to the growing diffusion of the mental image in the field of architecture communication such as the drawings and essays of Marco Frascari (1945-2013) whose teachings on building one's own individual practice of the imagination were illuminative to developing my own triadic theory.

This theory responds to modern design approaches which are all too often focused on the visual product as seen in computer-aided design software and asks: how can architects expect a building to inspire the imagination of its inhabitants if they have not been inspired by their own?

Thus, this thesis becomes the reading and writing of my own architectural project, testing the triadic theory and presenting a new approach to architectural production that integrates the imagination and language into the entire design process.





Collection of drawings and models produced during the design project  
Author's own

## Introduction

1

*Do you have a moment? Then please lightly spray the peonies.*

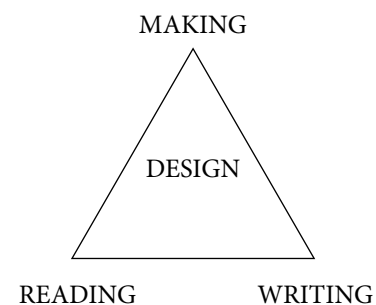
*A bird was in the room.*

*Fear again and again.*

*A lake doesn't flow into anything you know.<sup>1</sup>*

During the end of his life which he spent at the Sanatorium, Kafka (1883- 1924) was not allowed to speak due to tuberculosis. In the pathos of his notes scribbled on scraps of paper is a language which signifies the circumstances their creation in which the author could only communicate with hospital staff through writing. Merleau-Ponty describes language signifies in this way “when instead of copying thought it lets itself be taken apart and put together again by thought. Language bears the sense of thought as a footprint signifies the movement and effort of a body... Like the weaver, the writer works on the wrong side of his material. He has only to do with the language, and it is thus that he suddenly finds himself surrounded by sense.”<sup>2</sup> The language of Kafka's notes actualises emotional and sensory qualities alluding to their creation, therefore allowing us to feel what he feels, creating a mental image.

1. (Josipovici, 1981, p. 100)
2. (Merleau-Ponty, 1996, p. 82)



2

Upon encountering their mental image, the architect attempts to produce its physical representation, but often falls short of the qualities that once imbued the image with meaning. Contemplating the works of Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer in their *Studies on Hysteria*, reveals a similar struggle to the architectural fallacy in which their patient's bodies held within them a wisdom of the unconscious mind that the conscious mind was not privy to.<sup>3</sup> To reconcile the minds and bodies of the patients suffering from hysteria, Freud and Breuer had to decipher what they called the "hieroglyphs" of the body". They translated these "hieroglyphs" by conversing with the patients and discovered that the patients' bodies often unconsciously participated in the conversations. Freud even remarked how a patient's painful legs seem to join in a conversation. Considering this, architects can also look to develop a system to do the same for their own interior language asking how can we invite our painful legs to the conversation?

In response, I propose the following tenets which structure the thesis in two chapters, each looking at one tenet as an area of research:

1. language can be used to embody and develop the emotional and sensory data of the architect's mental image throughout the design process.
2. the mental image of the architect is constructed from wider mental processes and language usage is indicative of these wider cognitive processes. Understanding these can aid in the development of the design in response to the psyche and its relationship to the site.

To create buildings embodying qualities of the mental image and mental processes utilising language, I offer a novel architectural design processes composed of a triad of reading, writing, and making throughout the designing.

This thesis will embody the reading and writing components of my own architectural project, the 'making' of which I will embed throughout the text as it responds to the reading and writing. I paired a conversation I had with Jane Rendell, a Professor of Critical Spatial Practice who is concerned with 'site-writing', about the writing component of the thesis and her own approach to situated writing alongside the text. As a result, the structure is borrowed from the site and takes on the quality of being a conversation had during a walk through London, responding to the site through writing. The outward bound looks at the first tenet of my proposal and the inward bound examines the second tenet, revisiting the same sites through a new understanding of them.

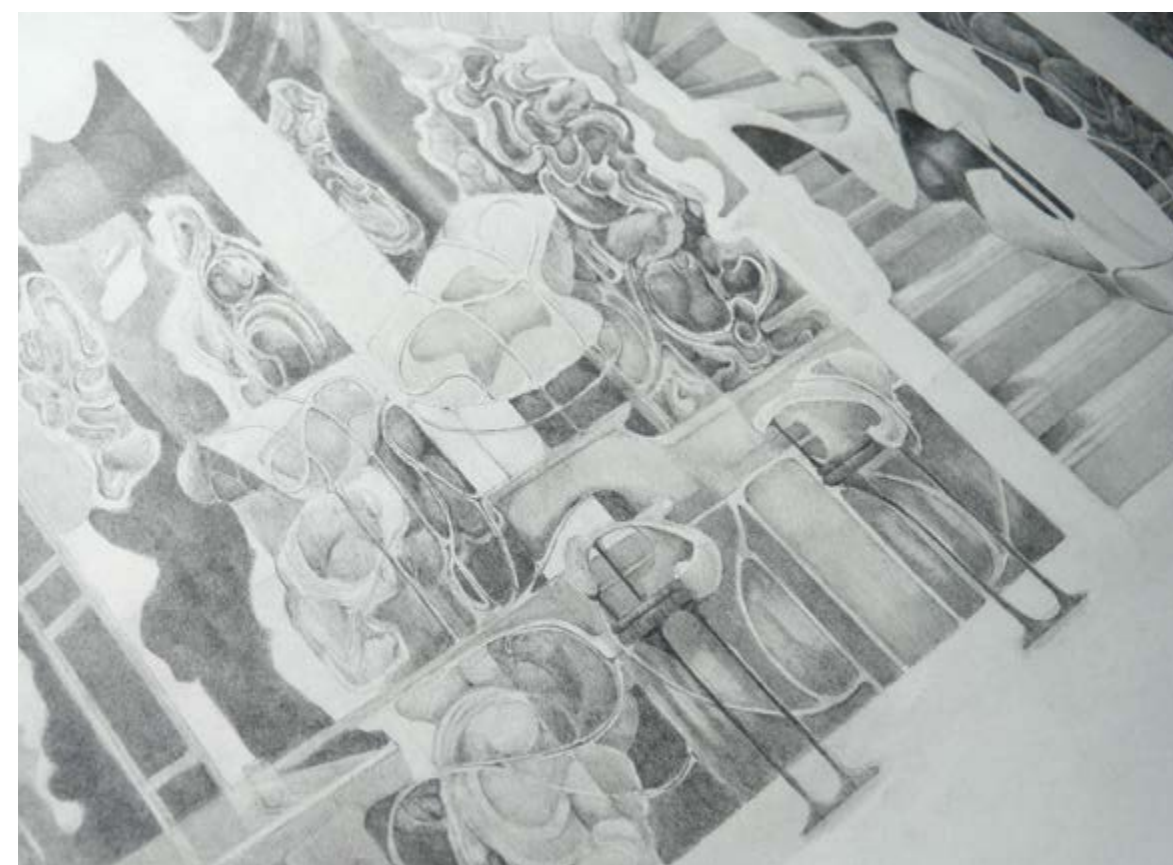


Photo of a drawing produced during the design project  
Author's own



## Chapter 1

Unpacking author's toolsets for reading, writing and making as a model for architects to design with the mental-image.

Oct 20<sup>th</sup>  
1924

The Hours  
Chapter One.

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The day would be taken off three hinges: Rumpelstiltskin men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa, what a day! Last!

What a <sup>miracle</sup> ~~miracle~~! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and ~~stepped out~~ <sup>stepped out</sup> on to the terrace at Bourton. It plunged at Bourton on to the terrace into the open air. ~~Like waves, like~~ How fresh, how calm, ~~thinner than thin~~ <sup>thinner than thin</sup> of course, ~~the~~ air was in the early morning; ~~loose, caressing, deep~~ <sup>loose, caressing, deep</sup> breathing; ~~the time~~ <sup>the time</sup> ~~when the water is at its best~~ <sup>when the water is at its best</sup> ~~late after~~ <sup>late after</sup> noon & ~~loose, caressing~~ <sup>loose, caressing</sup> dogs barking; & ~~it was~~ <sup>it was</sup> it all - not Peter Walsh ~~the world~~ <sup>the world</sup> ~~by the~~ <sup>by the</sup> like the flap of war; like the keening of a wave; ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~chill~~ <sup>chill</sup> & sharp & ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> for a feel of ~~eighteen~~ <sup>eighteen</sup> in the war then) ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~little solemn~~ <sup>little solemn</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~solenn~~ <sup>solenn</sup>. Peter Walsh would say - whatever Peter Walsh did say ~~when he found~~ <sup>when he found</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~wasn't that it?~~ <sup>wasn't that it?</sup> ~~Eli~~ <sup>Eli</sup> ~~who didn't know a rose from~~ <sup>who didn't know a rose from</sup> ~~a cauliflower.~~ <sup>a cauliflower.</sup> ~~I preferred~~ <sup>I preferred</sup> ~~men to cabbage.~~ <sup>men to cabbage.</sup> ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> ~~"I prefer men to cabbage."~~ <sup>"I prefer men to cabbage."</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~must have said it~~ <sup>must have said it</sup> at breakfast, for her to be thinking yet in the terrace.



1. Writing

In reading Kafka's end of life notes we cannot help but sense the pain that confines him to the page and his urge to communicate. However, the inexpressible nature of certain experiences, such as an architect's mental image, or confronting the end of one's life, require more than just words – they demand a careful consideration of language through an employment of one's own communicative toolsets. The litany of externalising an architectural design can be mitigated by implementing such toolsets through the first constituent of my triadic theory, writing.

For many architects-turned-writers like Juhani Pallasmaa, Louis Sullivan, and Adolf Loos, writing serves to refine their craft or justify their ideas. However, looking to an author who uses language to construct a world out of mental images as they respond to a site may be more elucidating to the power of writing as part of a situated practice. Virginia Woolf's writing approach offers insight to architects on how to cultivate a method of writing that externalises an internal encounter between the psyche and the site of this thesis, London. She uses language to relay how the interpenetration of the city "takes up the private life"<sup>1</sup> of the mind and affects her experience of reality.

*"A scene always comes to the top; arranged, representative. This confirms me in my instinctive notion... that we are sealed vessels afloat upon what it is convenient to call reality; at some moments, without a reason, without an effort; the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality; that is a scene"*<sup>2</sup>

Henceforth, we will coin a neologism for Woolf's toolset for embodying language with experience of reality as Sealed Vessels.

2. Mrs Dalloway and Street Haunting

Particularly exemplary of Woolf's Sealed Vessels method is her construction of Septimus' reality, a soldier experiencing PTSD after the First World War in her book Mrs Dalloway (1925). The passage below depicts the drama on his psyche that plays out through his interpenetration of Regents Park. Similarly, In her 1927 essay Street Haunting, Woolf explores the activation of mental images as they respond to the streets of London. We can use this essay as it parallels Mrs Dalloway to examine how Woolf structures Sealed Vessels as the mental images respond to the site.

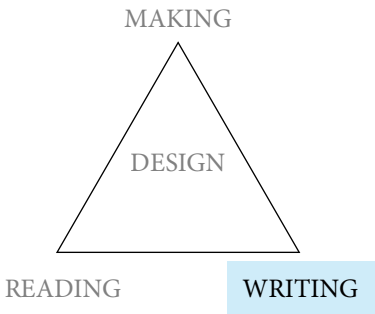


Figure A

1. (Woolf, 2017, p. 3010)
2. (Woolf, 2017, p. 8275)

Figure A (Google Earth, 2023)

Jane Rendell: You've chosen these 3 authors, and I would really work to respond to their work in the situated way that you're doing ... you could introduce some theoretical ideas that might be relevant ... But I don't think you should enforce the theoretical reading... responding to the writing with writing sounds like the most interesting way to do it.

Olivia J O'Callaghan: I didn't consider that approach because I thought I should almost write the thesis first, and then kind of go back into it ... and add in my own writings and weave them through. But I think that approach works better.

Jane Rendell: I wouldn't leave it if you're really interested in the effective power of images for writing. I wouldn't leave that affective writing to the end.

○

Mrs Dalloway:

1. He saw Regent's Park before him... We welcome, the world seemed to say; we accept; we create... To watch a leaf quivering in the rush of air was an exquisite joy.

Street Haunting:

The shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves, to make for themselves a shape distinct from others, is broken, and there is left of all these wrinkles and roughness a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye. How beautiful a street is in winter!"

⊗

2. "It is time," said Rezia. The word "time" split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time. He sang. Evans answered from behind the tree. The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids... "For God's sake don't come!" Septimus cried out. For he could not look upon the dead. But the branches parted. A man in grey was actually walking towards them. It was Evans!

We are in danger of digging deeper than the eye approves; we are impeding our passage down the smooth stream by catching at some branch or root.

⊗  
○

3. "The time, Septimus," Rezia repeated. "What is the time?"... As he sat smiling at the dead man in the grey suit the quarter struck—the quarter to twelve.<sup>3</sup>

It is, in fact, on the stroke of six; it is a winter's evening; we are walking to the Strand to buy a pencil. How then are we also on a balcony, wearing pearls in June? ...Is the true self this which stands on the pavement in January, or that which bends over the balcony in June? Am I here, or am I there?<sup>4</sup>

3. (Woolf, 2021, pp. 51-53)  
4. (Woolf, 1930, pp. 5,7,19)

# The Architect's Mental Image Constructed by Woolf's Sealed Vessels

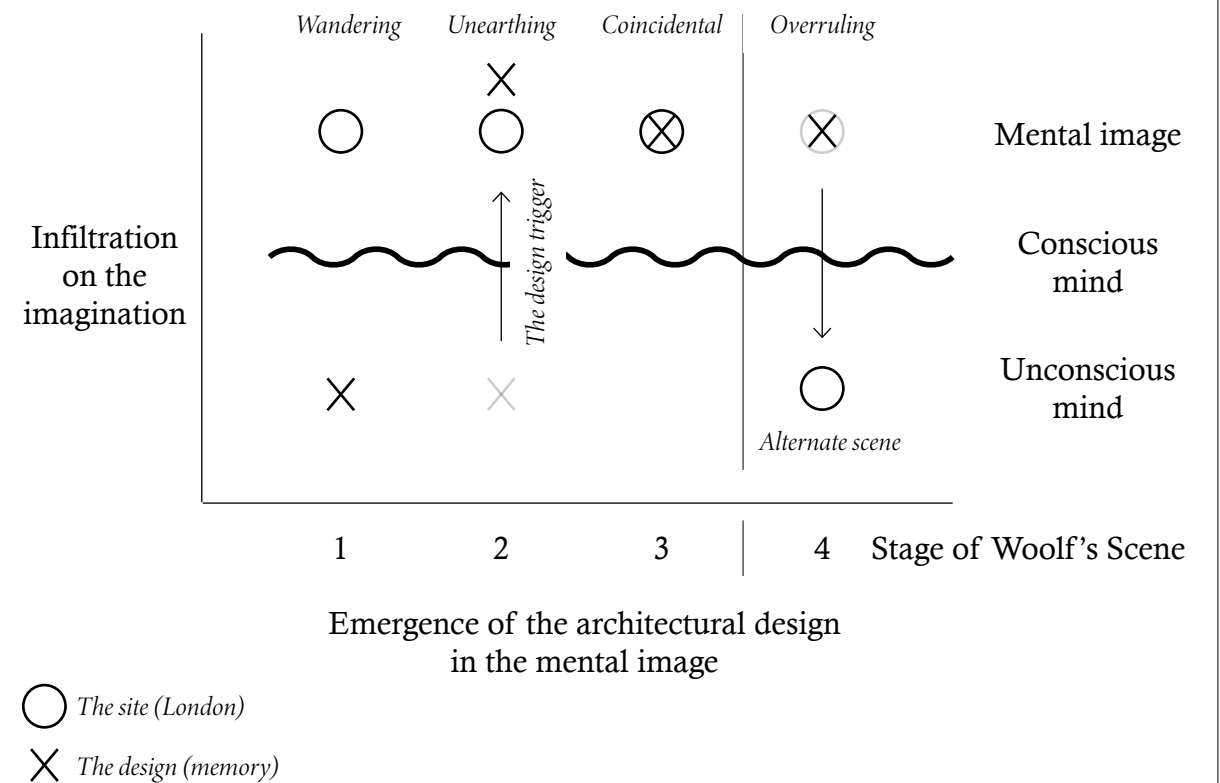


Figure B

Figure B portrays the imaginative faculties of an architect through the construction of a Sealed Vessel. The mental images in the scene respond to the site of their conception becoming an integral part of the image. In point 2, the appearance of Evans is staged as disappearance of the city in which it moves to a secondary position, taking on qualities of the battlefield. We can understand the trigger of this movement in the evocation of the mental image by looking to Roland Barthes's (1915-1980) *Pleasure of the Text* (1973) in which he suggests that language similarly triggers the mind when it becomes 'erotic'. He proposes language seduces the imagination when it exists between two 'textual edges' where one follows 'good' language usage as it is taught in schools, the opposing side being blank and the site of language's effect - the signified.<sup>5</sup>

"Is it not the most erotic portion of the body where the garment drapes?... the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing... which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance."<sup>6</sup>

5. (Barthes, 1975, pp. 6-7)  
6. (Barthes, 1975, pp. 9-10)

Figure B Author's Own





Figure C



Figure D

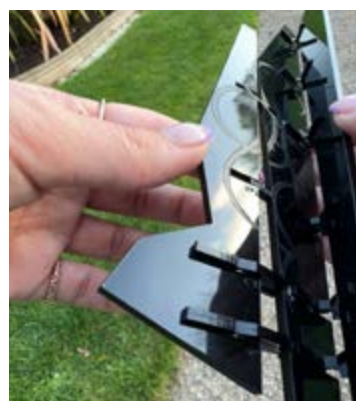


Figure E



Figure F

Construction stages of Situated Poetic Device using black mirrors as openings into the textual site. The angles of joints correspond to stages in the Sealed Vessels, creating its form.  
Regents Park  
Author's Own 2022

To uncover the 'skin' of Septimus' scene in which he dissolves into his mental image, as a reader likewise does when ingesting a text, I applied the construction of Woolf's Sealed Vessels to the third component of my theoretical triad: making. Creating prototypes from black mirrors constructed in-situ question if the evocation of my own mental images are structurally comparable to the reality of Sealed Vessels. Frascari saw mirrors as 'architectural divination', explaining that buildings take shape in the mental image just as they materialise in a mirror.<sup>7</sup> This begins to reveal the architectural implications that writing may hold for making. Recorded in the prototype's structuring is the textual 'skin' of the interpenetration of the site when the movement of my hands became unconscious and my experience of reality tempered with memories.

7. (Frascari, 2017, p. 40)  
Figure C (Google Earth, 2023)  
Figures D, E, F Author's Own



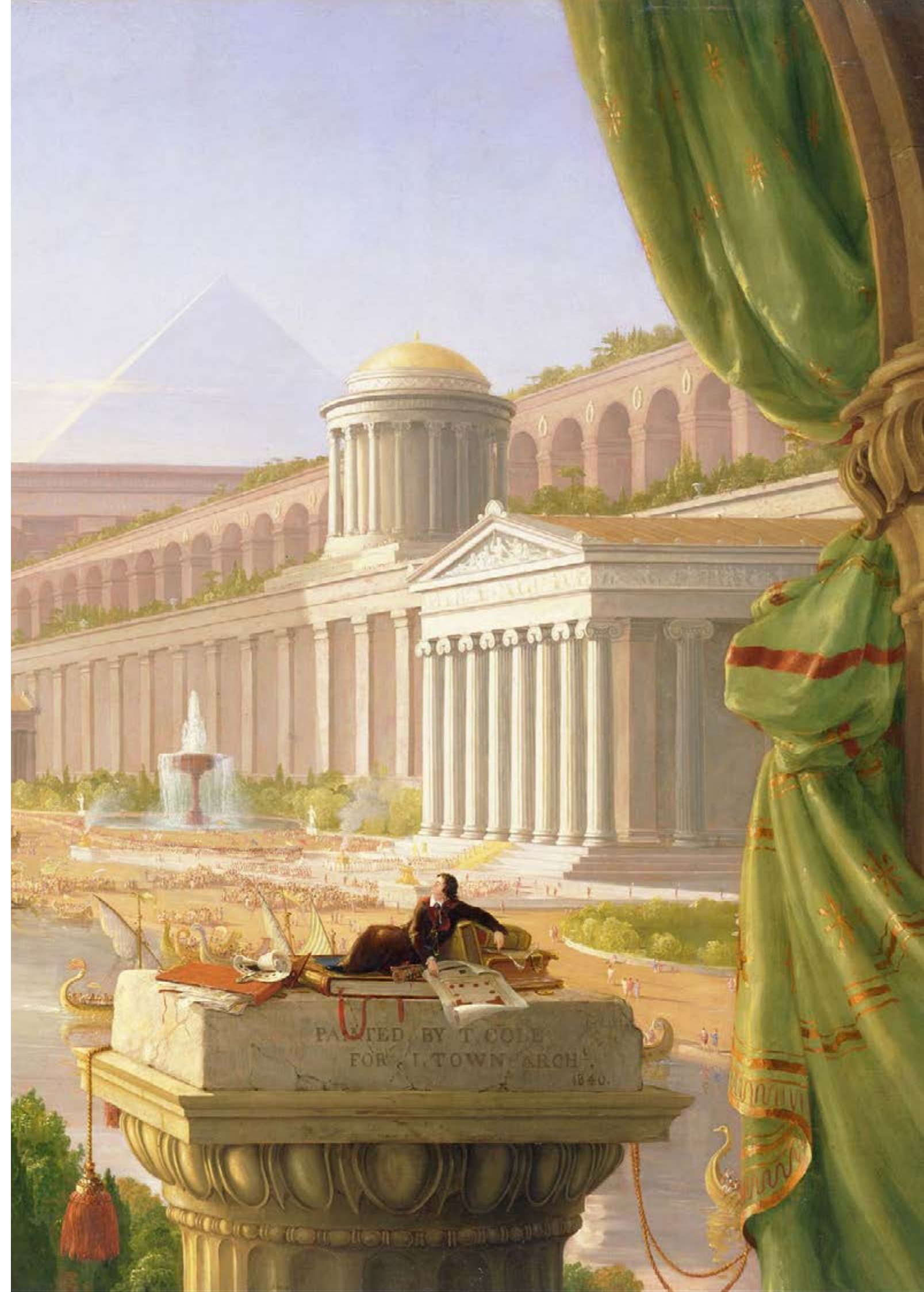
In her diary, Woolf interrogates her portrayal of Septimus' reality far more frequently than the book's titular character. She considers his position in the text as a comparison between the perceived world of the sane and insane.<sup>8</sup> It is as though she is using Septimus like my black mirrors, examining her own construction of reality. On this, in her diary she questions whether she is writing essays about herself or him.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps this elucidates to the two textual edges that Septimus occupies; the 'sane' edge of the good language usage that represents Regents Park as it is, and the 'insane' edge of signified: the battlefield. The mention of 'time' seduces his imagination to the opening between both edges and we too as readers dissolve into the scene. This is when, for Woolf, as seen in Street Haunting, the 'true self' actualises as it occupies multiple mental locus of both 'here and there'. This mental image can be likened to *The Architect's Dream* (1840) by Thomas Cole (1801-1848). The oneiric painting demonstrates the architect's mental image making as 'architectural divination'. In Cole's painting, buildings belong to different temporal and spatial locations but share the same locus of the imagination, mimicking Septimus and his confabulatory experience of Regents Park as a site of war. Perhaps proposing an answer to Woolf's question – that she is indeed writing essays about herself discovering the location of her selfhood in multiple locus of the mind through writing.

Mon Oct 15

*I am now in the thick of the mad scene in Regent's Park. I find I write by clinging as tight to fact as I can, and write perhaps 50 words a morning... I think the design is more remarkable than in any of my books... It took me a years groping to discover what I call my tunnelling process, by which I tell the past by instalments as I have need of it.*<sup>10</sup>

- 8. (Woolf, 2017, p. 8729)
- 9. (Woolf, 2017, p. 8729)
- 10. (Woolf, 2017, p. 3010)

Figure G (Cole, 1840)



(Figure G - Right) *The Architect's Dream* (1840) by Thomas Cole (1801-1848)



1. Reading London's Streets

For architects, “reading” extends beyond text to visual languages, hence books can teach us how to read buildings. Reading stimulates mental image-making, as does ingesting architectural languages. Thus, incorporating reading into an architect’s triadic design approach prompts mental image curation in response to architectural languages through a literary lens which may deepen our understanding of the way our imagination is ignited by buildings.

A popular method amongst spatial practitioners to read architectural languages is to do so through walking. When I was introduced to this practice several years ago through *flâneur*<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), I began implementing a practice of wandering into my routine, surmounting in an arduous 8 hour walk between Ruislip, West London, and Regent’s Street one summer with several friends.

Like Benjamin, Charles Dickens also works to uncover the genius loci of his own city, London, through walking which he diligently integrated into his writing practice, embarking on 3-hour daily walks. His eldest son noted on this that he gave a “*business-like regularity*” to the “*work of his imagination*.”<sup>2</sup> During my friends’ and I’s walk, we felt the effect of the ingestion of the language of the street on the mental constitution Dickens uncovered by moving between a variety of *genius loci*.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin commented on this phenomenon, describing the language of the street including street names as “*inebriating substances*” that, in the interpenetration<sup>4</sup> of their images, submerge us into a deeper state of perception.<sup>5</sup>

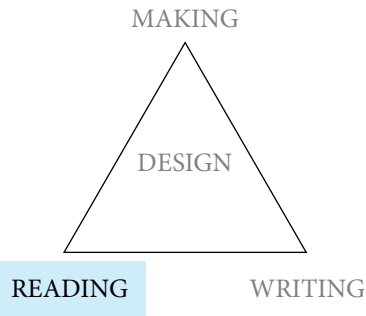


Figure A

1. A man who wanders, observing the city. Interestingly, Woolf is often named as a *flânerie* as a counter-narrative to the male writer-walkers.
2. (Anon., 2022)
3. The ‘spirit’ of a place.
4. (Vidler, 2001, p. 74)
5. (Vidler, 2001, p. 74)

Figure A (Google Earth, 2023)

Jane Rendell: You can come up with a structure, and I often call it (following DW Winnicott) a ‘good enough structure,’ a structure that will just ‘hold’ things enough to let you really develop them ... And if you’ve used the site to generate the structure, you’re not having to invent. You can borrow. You’re borrowing from the site.

## 2. Night Walks

During his time as an insomniac, Dicken's produced a series of essays titled Night Walks which document his nocturnal walks through London. The interpenetration of the 'inebriating substances' of the language of the streets encourages him to use the city as a space for daydreaming. London becomes a theatre for his imagination, therefore imbuing his ambulatory mental images with the genius loci of their conception. In the below scene, he regales us with a conversation with the language of the Thames, which his mental image thus answers to, much like it does when reading a book:

*"One of these landing-places is near an old fort.. from which fort mysteriously emerges a boy... His manner of imparting information, is thoughtful, and appropriate to the scene. As he reclines beside me, he pitches into the river, a little stone or piece of grit, and then delivers himself oracularly, as though he spoke out of the centre of the spreading circle that it makes in the water."*<sup>6</sup>

Dickens' practice of walking as reading can be seen in how his nightly preambles become a pool of knowledge for his fictional works. David Copperfield depicts another nocturnal encounter with the Thames in which Martha Endell, a prostitute, is followed by the protagonist as she attempts suicide one night:

*"As if she were a part of the refuse [the river] had cast out, and left to corruption and decay, the girl we had followed strayed down to the river's brink and stood in the midst of this night-picture."*<sup>7</sup>

Brian Robinson, a professor emeritus at St Mary's University College, discusses her position in the street and the text: *"it is necessary to place text and context together. Martha is 'text' to a general geographical code... Martha is subtext to the context of the street."*<sup>8</sup> Like the boy from Night Walks, who Dickens aptly names 'The Spirit of the Fort', she becomes a situated archetypal figure revealing the genius loci or spirit of the site. Dickens uses interchangeable language between her site and psyche, just as he does with the boy, both becoming subtext to the context of the river.

6. (Dickens, 2010, pp. 31-32)
7. (Dickens, 1869, p. 1011)
8. (Robinson, 1996, p. 65)

Figure B Commissioned by John Forster, the painting depicts Dickens in his Bloomsbury residence as he worked on A Tale of Two Cities (Frith, 1859)



Figure B Dickens in his Study by William Powell Frith (1819-1909)





Figure C



Figure D



Figure E



Figure F

Construction stages of Situated Poetic Device using black mirrors as openings into the textual site  
Fitzroy Square (site runs alongside one of Dickens' homes and between the locations of several of his books)  
Author's Own 2022

Applying my discoveries from the Ruislip-London walk and reevaluating it from my reading of Dickens, I progressed my previous prototypal engagement with the site by now assimilating the language of the city in a Dickensian manor. Appropriated elements such as the reflective qualities of the river and puddles as they ignited my imagination are used for materiality. The models therefore share a visual language with the site. Exemplary of this in Dickens work is Martha's understanding of the street revealing the qualities of her psyche as she recognises herself reflected in it. When on the edge of throwing herself into the Thames, Martha exclaims:

*"I know it's like me!... It comes from country places, where there was once no harm in it - and it creeps through the dismal streets, defiled and miserable - and it goes away, like my life, to a great sea, that is always troubled - and I feel that I must go with it!"*<sup>9</sup>

The language of the city is emblematic of her despair, and her relationship to the Thames is the most telling, the river becoming a place of recognition. The river has been abandoned to ruin by the relentless expansion of the city, leaving it as a site of death and decay in the shadow of Westminster. Martha's withdrawal into prostitution mirrors her withdrawal into the shadow of the prosperous city.

Architects may learn from his linguistic approach to assimilating the language of the city and its evocation of the mental image as reflective of the psyche and may therefore recognise their own elicitation of spatial images. For example, the psychological connection between Martha and the Thames resembles the work of architects and psychologists alike uncovering connections between the imagination, psyche and site. Ivan Chitchevlov (1933-1998) is a theorist who predicted a new form of architecture which ignites the imagination in that *"everyone will live in his own personal 'cathedral'... there will be rooms more conducive to dreams than any drug."*<sup>10</sup> He describes cities whose districts' functions are delineated by the emotional responses they evoke and calls for a 'continuous derive' through such areas as *"Bizarre Quarter - Happy Quarter (specially reserved for habitation) - Noble and Tragic Quarter (for good children)."*<sup>11</sup> The 'continuous derive' through such a city would perhaps not be particularly different from Dickens' own walks' as reading the genius loci of his environment and the language he takes from the site at its intersection with the psyche.



- 9. (Dickens, 1869, p. 1011)
- 10. (Coverly, 2018, p. 112)
- 11. (Coverly, 2018, p. 112)

Figure C (Google Earth, 2023)  
Figures D, E, F Author's Own  
Figure G Author's Own, taken just next to Fitzroy Square



### 1. Opening the Doors of Perception

I first encountered Blake (1757-1827) as an undergraduate student when my tutor took me to Treadwell's Books, an occult book shop in London. Soon after, I picked up a copy of Songs of Innocence and Experience and at first read, I couldn't understand much. However, over time, his words germinated within me and I found myself confronted with flashes of understanding of his work, particularly at moments when I allowed my mind to wander.

*"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."*<sup>1</sup>

Blake embodies the final part of the architect's design triad: making. This component is one which architects are most familiar with, however, unique to Blake is how he uses making to ignite the mental image, just as Woolf and Dickens have thus far accomplished through writing and reading. In 1803, in a letter Blake commented that his work is *"addressed to the Imagination which is Spiritual Sensation"* and only indirectly *"to the Understanding or Reason"*<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is why my connection with his work formed so latently. On this, Blake once said *"Just so the imaginative image returns by the seed of contemplative thought. The writings of the prophets illustrate these conceptions of the visionary fancy by their various sublime and divine images as seen in the worlds of vision."*<sup>3</sup> The architect can therefore look to how Blake uses language and the construction of his work to ignite the mental-image and uncover how they too can implement tools of the imagination in their own practice.

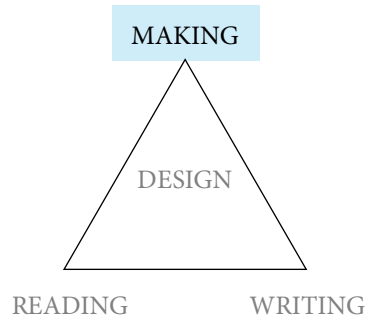


Figure A

1. (Blake, 1790-1793)
2. (Anon., 2014)
3. (Blake, 1880, pp. 186-187)

Figure A Primrose Hill(Google Earth, 2023)

Olivia J O'Callaghan: It's like a decentralised text. So it's not like you're kind of stuck, you know. You don't have to read it linearly, it's supposed to be kind of confusing. Relying on the intelligence of the reader.

Jane Rendell: That sounds beautiful, what you're trying to do.



Figure B

Copy A  
The British Museum



Figure C

Copy F  
Morgan Library and Museum



Figure D

Copy I  
Library of Congress

## 2. Decentralised Texts - Jerusalem

Blake was an engraver by trade who operated in London for most of his life and similarly to Dickens, uses the language of the city as a language for his work. *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (composed 1804-1820) is Blake's final and longest illuminated printing epic, steeped in his own mythology, ideas and symbolism, it features the language of London prominently. One hundred of the plates were etched in relief and five copies of the poem exist, only one of which is in colour.<sup>4</sup>

Blake's illuminated printing technique inverted the typical etching procedure by employing an acid-resistant liquid to draw directly on the copperplate and etching in relief. Each of his prints has differences in colour and design, as well as their arrangement within each copy of his books, which are ultimately originals in their own right. The outcome of this practice is what Saree Makdisi, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, refers to as a "decentralised text."<sup>5</sup> which I will henceforth use to describe his making toolset for the production and arrangement of his work. French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) comments on the effectiveness of decentralising poetry for activating the mental image, remarking that "*the atomisation of conceptual language demands reasons for fixation, forces of centralisation. But the verse always has a movement, the image flows into the line of the verse carrying the imagination along with it.*"<sup>6</sup>

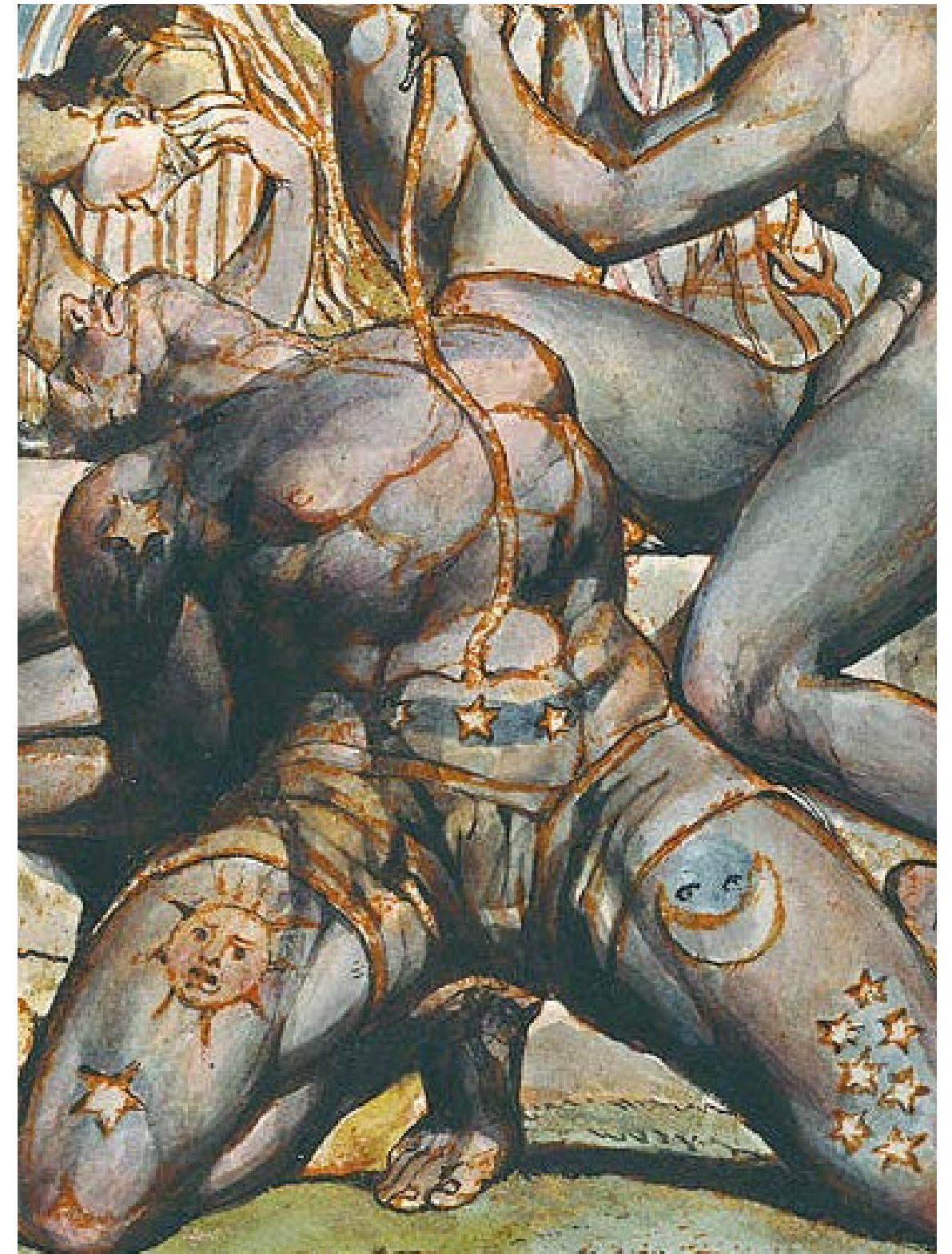


Figure E

Copy E  
Yale Centre for British Art

4. (Anon., n.d.)  
5. (Makdisi, 2015, p. 26)  
6. (Bachelard, 1958, p. 12)

Figures B-E (Blake, 1804-1820)





Figure F - Drawing using the reflections in protypal models hybridised from the ones created in situ  
Author's Own 2022

The decentralised text has an openness allowing it to become a realm of discovery. On this Bachelard asserts that: *"Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning."*<sup>7</sup> Blake's work allows him to transcend what he knows about the profession of engraving and the typical expectations of the linearity of written works. Frascari similarly addresses architects in the possibility of assimilations of mental images through novel associations, proposing *"the importance of a phenomenological reading lies in the enlightenment of a person's awareness."*<sup>8</sup> He reflects that if we don't value the cognitive power of the architectural images we produce, it will result in *"a complete degradation of the images that are supposed to feed our thinking process."*<sup>9</sup> In this vein, rereading my black mirror prototypes through drawing divines architectural images. The process uses the reflective surfaces as a drawing device, mirroring a reading of Blake's decentralised text where these images can be read in a multitude of ways, thus valuing the cognitive processes available to the architect. On Blake's decentralising power as a prompt for associations, author Ian Sinclair (1943) remarks *"I think of Blake more than anything else as a presence, a guide, an advocate."*<sup>10</sup> In this way, Blake guides the reader through actualising their own imaginative power. Likewise, just as a reader moves through Blake's corpus, the mark making in my drawing takes on different associations based on the movement of the mirrors, enabling me to actualise the imaginative powers of my response to the sites. As a result, connections across the sites and my interpenetration of them become the architectural forms of the drawing.



Figure H

Drawing using the reflections in prototypal models hybridised from the ones created in situ  
Author's Own 2022

Treating the black mirrors as openings into the textual body of the site parallels Jerusalem's Plate 3, which has text gouged from its surface before it was printed (figure J), activates the imagination. Tristanne Connolly (1970) in William Blake and the Body (2002) describes "*the incisions in plate 3, then, would be scars of affliction on the body of the text...enacting despair and calling for attention. On the other hand, they may be openings in the text, orifices, entry points.*"<sup>11</sup> The removal of the words ignites the imagination of the reader more than their inclusion. Reminiscent of Kafka's dying notes, there is an unspoken pain reflected in the creation of the text, interstitial between the language and an awareness of its production which was supposedly a response to a failed exhibition and estrangement from several friends and supporters.<sup>12</sup> Ostensibly Blake wants the reader to actively participate in the construction of their own mental-image making while reading in imagining the circumstances for the words' removal.



Figure I

7. (Bachelard, 1958, p. 16)
8. (Fracari, 2017, p. 28)
9. (Fracari, 2017, p. 28)
10. (Sinclair, 2018, p. 7)
11. (Connolly, 2002, p. 11)
12. (Connolly, 2002, p. 11)

Figure G Author's Own

Figure H Author's Own

Figure I Author's Own

Figure J, K (Blake, 1804-1820)



Jerusalem: The Emanation of the  
Giant Albion - Plate 3 To the Public

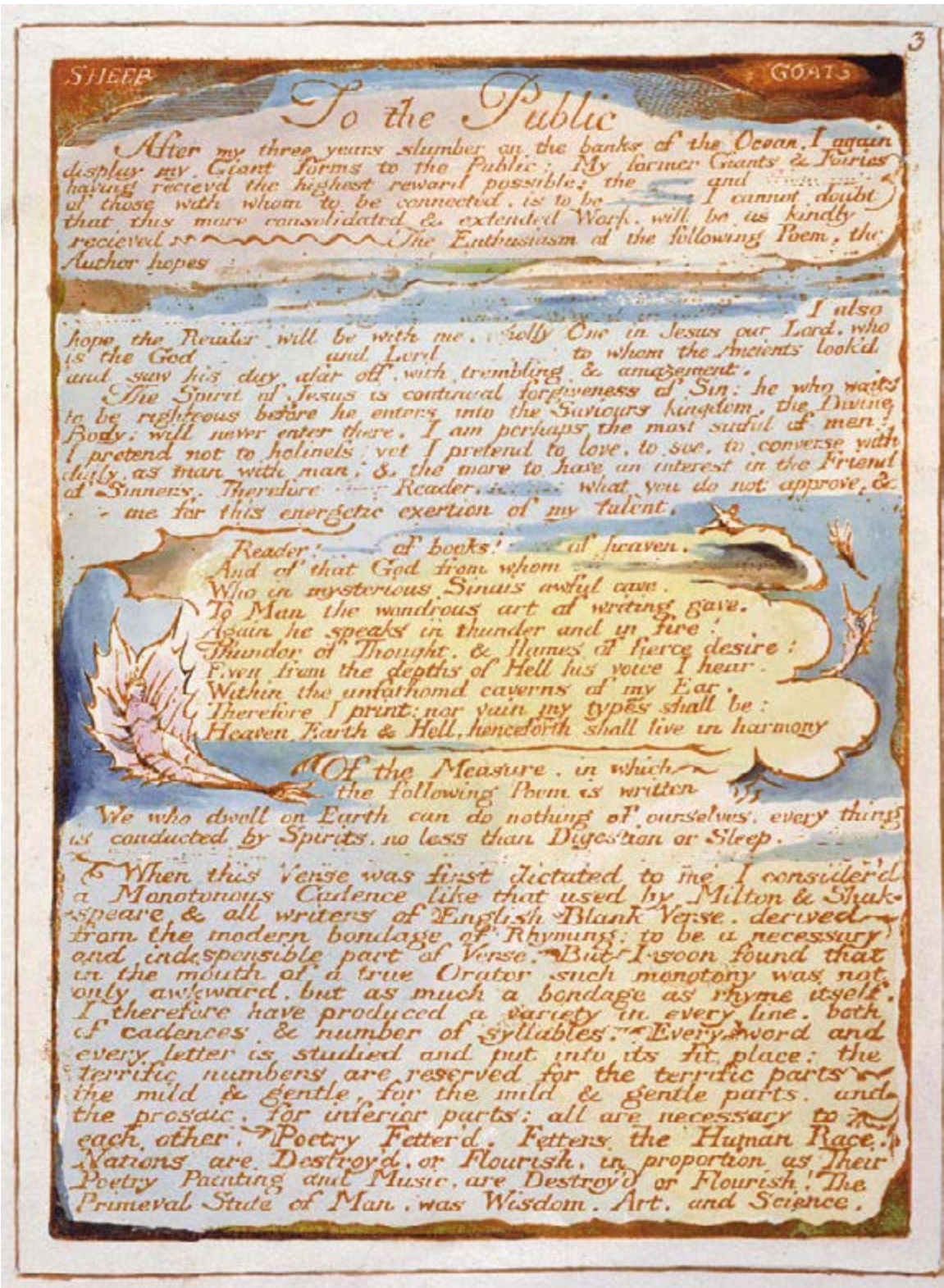


Figure J  
Copy E  
Yale Centre for British Art

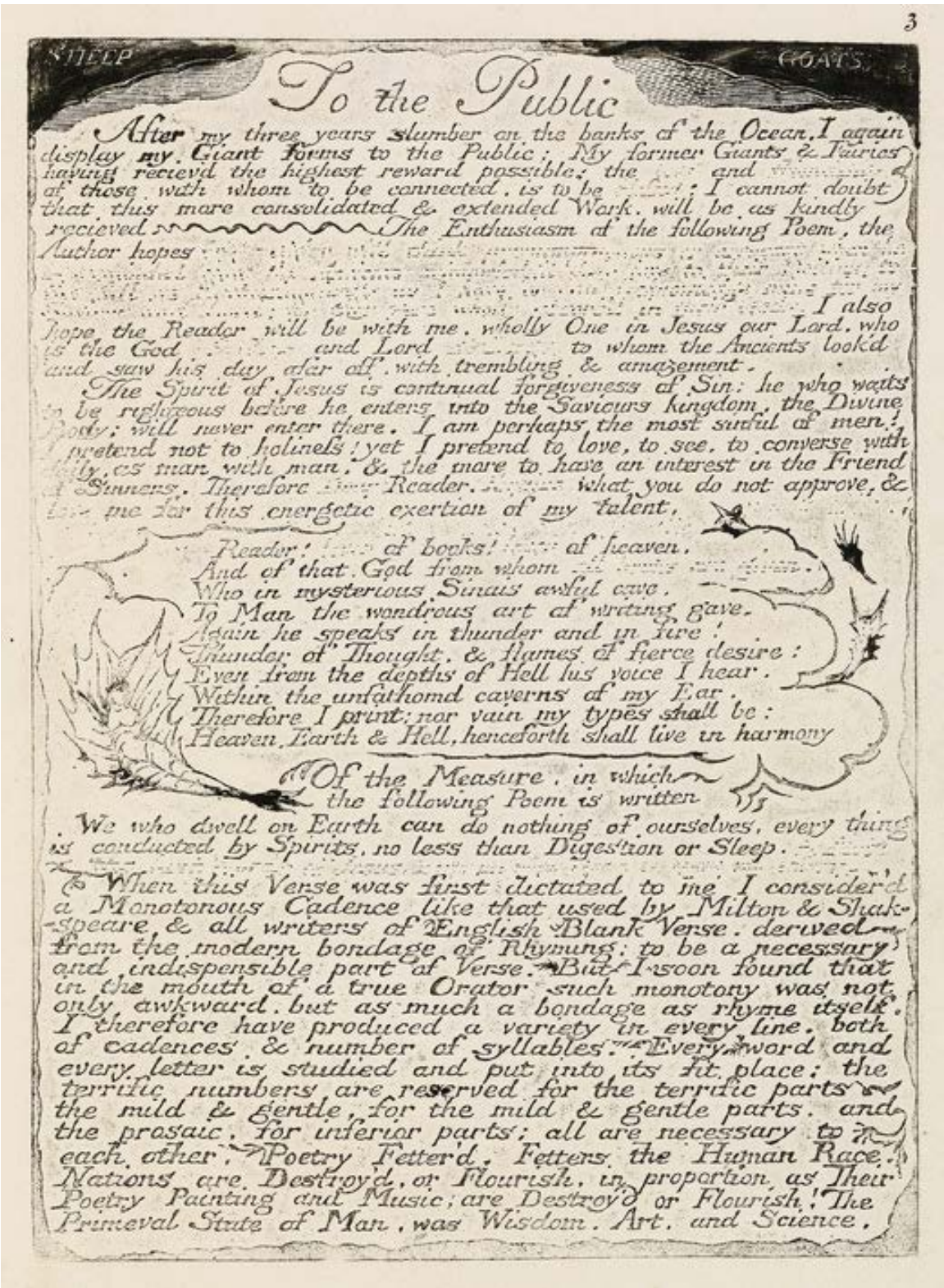


Figure K  
Copy F  
Morgan Library and Museum



## Intermission

Unpacking the writing component of the triad through an interview with Jane Rendell discussing her writing practices and the writing of the thesis. Justifying the significance of language for spatial practitioners through research into aphantasia.

Drawing from reflections, Author's Own



### 3. Jane Rendell – Interview

Thus far, I have demonstrated the making and reading components of my theoretical triad when applied to my own designing, but my interview with Jane Rendell as it flows alongside the thesis reveals through associations the epistemological process of writing the thesis as part of the development of the design project.

Rendell is professor of Critical Spatial Practice at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. She coined theories of ‘critical spatial practice’ and ‘site-writing’ through her books and essays which include *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* (2017) and *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Criticism* (2010). During our conversation we discussed her site-writing practices and their significance for her and other architectural practitioners. We also discussed the writing component of this thesis which encouraged me to borrow the structure of the thesis from the site (London), responding to the London canon with my own writing. On situated structuring in her own work, in our interview Rendell remarked “*it’s performing its argument*”<sup>1</sup> on her writing of *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis*.

Olivia J O’Callaghan: And I wanted to know as well how you think actual practitioners like actual architects, how, for their own personal development, reading and writing could benefit them.

Jane Rendell: I think it suits the architecture’s sensibility to work with writing creatively, and combine it with drawing and with image, making. ... For me, like I said, is about situated knowledge and taking responsibility for kind of where you are and who you’re writing to. And I think that the ethics of that as well, because when you are kind of writing in a disembodied way you’re not really taking responsibility for the places that you’re connected to and I think that kind of ethical responsibility and architecture is very important.



Figure A  
1. (Rendell, 2023)  
Figure A The Welsh Dresser  
(Rendell, 2003)



One of her projects I was particularly keen to discuss the writing of was *Coming to Welsh*, an installation with an accompanying text exhibited at The Mission Gallery 2013. The text, *The Welsh Dresser*, documents her reactions to her great aunt's dresser, where dictionary definitions seeking to define the items stored in the dresser are presented alongside childhood scenes. Rendell proposes that from a psychoanalytic and literary perspective, personal recollections may be seen as scenes, while from a historical perspective, they may be interpreted as occurrences. On the relationship between scenes and memories, we discussed her reference to Woolf's *Sealed Vessels* in *Coming to Welsh*. In the text, she describes the memories as being "*preserved intact [coming] to the surface*" in 'Sealed Vessels'.<sup>2</sup> In the interview she expanded on her inclusion of Woolf and its relationship to her situated writing practice: "*In the site-writing workshops I lead, I always encourage participants to do experimental short pieces of writing, so that people don't think. 'Oh my God, I've got to do this long piece'. They're more sort of building up in the fragments. I've found that a helpful approach in my own writing. That's why I love that Virginia Woolf fragment. Because it just shows in a couple of 100 words you can just capture the essence of a place.*"<sup>3</sup> She expanded on this point, by saying on the issue of how similar short writing exercises "*can just take you to a different type of place in your writing where you're really attentive to your emotions and sensations rather than to the intellectualisation.*"<sup>4</sup> The writing of 'Coming to Welsh' and the exhibition of the Welsh Dresser thus demonstrate how a practice of writing can be interdisciplinary, revealing unforeseen associations that expand the architects relationship to space and the emergence of mental image-making.

2. (Rendell, 2013, p. 13)

3. (Rendell, 2023)

4. (Rendell, 2023)

Figure B (Rendell, 2013)



Figure B - Photo from Rendell's exhibition

4. The Architect Who Lost the Ability to Imagine:  
significance of the study

Arthur Zajonic, a physicist interested in quantum optics, proposes that there are two lights of vision: one exterior and one interior. He refers to cases of individuals who were born blind and after gaining sight, still unable to see objects in front of them. Zajonic states this is because they do not have interior light to construct mental-images of them.<sup>5</sup> This parallels Blake’s address to the imagination only perceivable once he shows us how to use the inner light of our mental image to reveal more than ‘the chinks of our caverns’ our external light reveals.

We can look to architects who lose their inner light, becoming dependent on their external light and in their pathos find that it evokes in us an urgency to preserve our own imagination. In 2020 an aphantasic architect reported his loss of mental imagery to a group of researchers collecting neuropsychological data on late onset aphantasia. The aphantasic architect reported how it affected his practice, predictably saying that: “*I just do everything on the computer. That is one of the advantages of us using computers for these sorts of thing nowadays. You can see the stuff happen.*”<sup>6</sup> Seemingly the aphantasic architect does become dependent on their external light, which takes on the glow of their computer screen.

However, another research report looked at aphantasia’s effect on spatial memory. Individuals with aphantasia were tasked with drawing images from memory and compared with control subjects (figure C). The researchers noted that the aphantasic subjects recalled significantly fewer details and relied heavily on “verbal scaffolding”: 29.6% of aphantasic participants used text to label their memory drawings while only 16% of control participants did (figure D). Aphantasic participants that included text did not draw fewer objects as one might assume. One participant noted, “*Because I don’t have any images in my head, when I was trying to remember the photos, I have to store the pieces as words.*”<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the research into aphantasics exemplifies how, in their natural tendency to use language for spatial recall capable language is at activating spatial qualities of mental-processes.

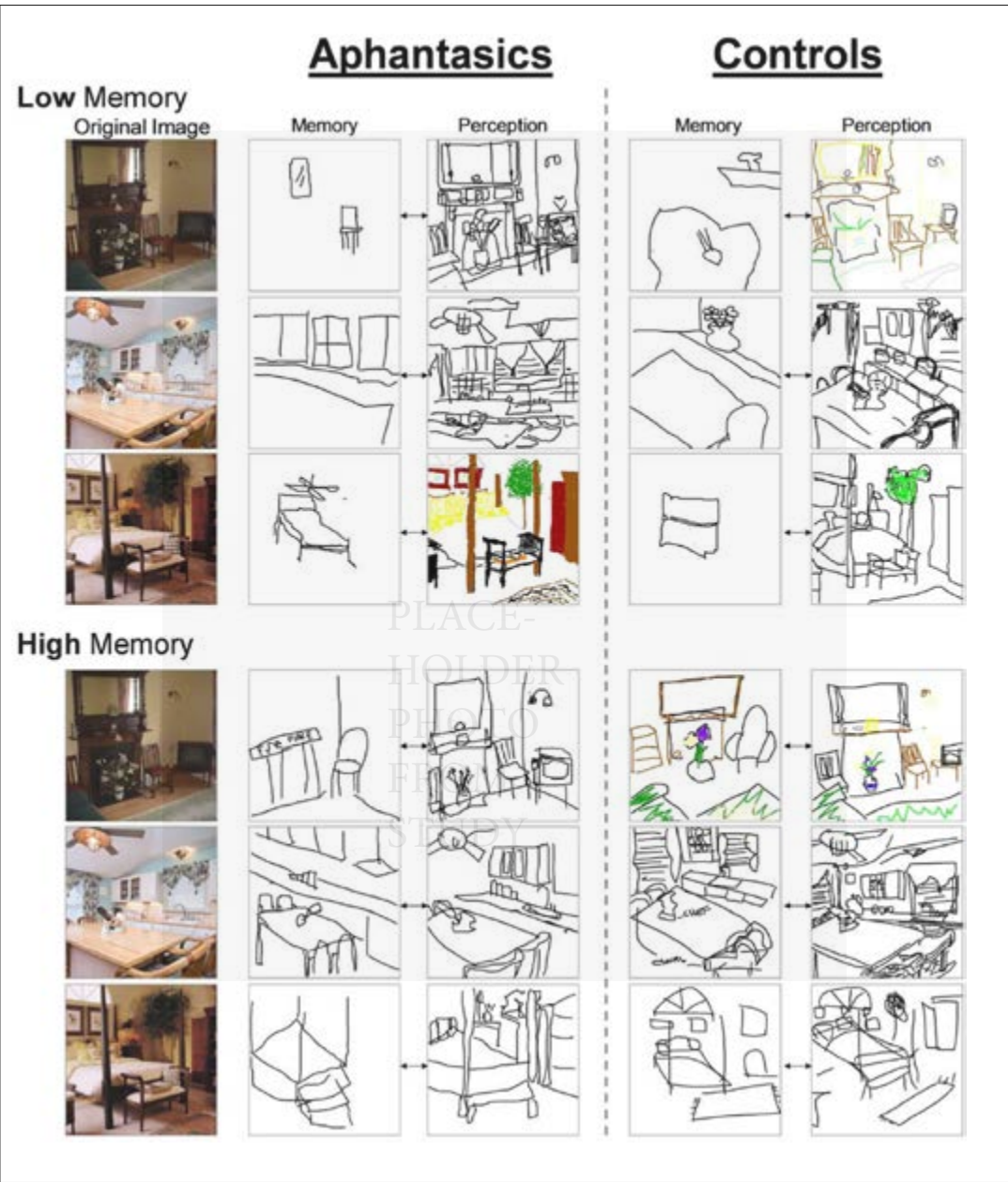


Figure C



Figure D - An Aphantasic's Verbal Scaffolding

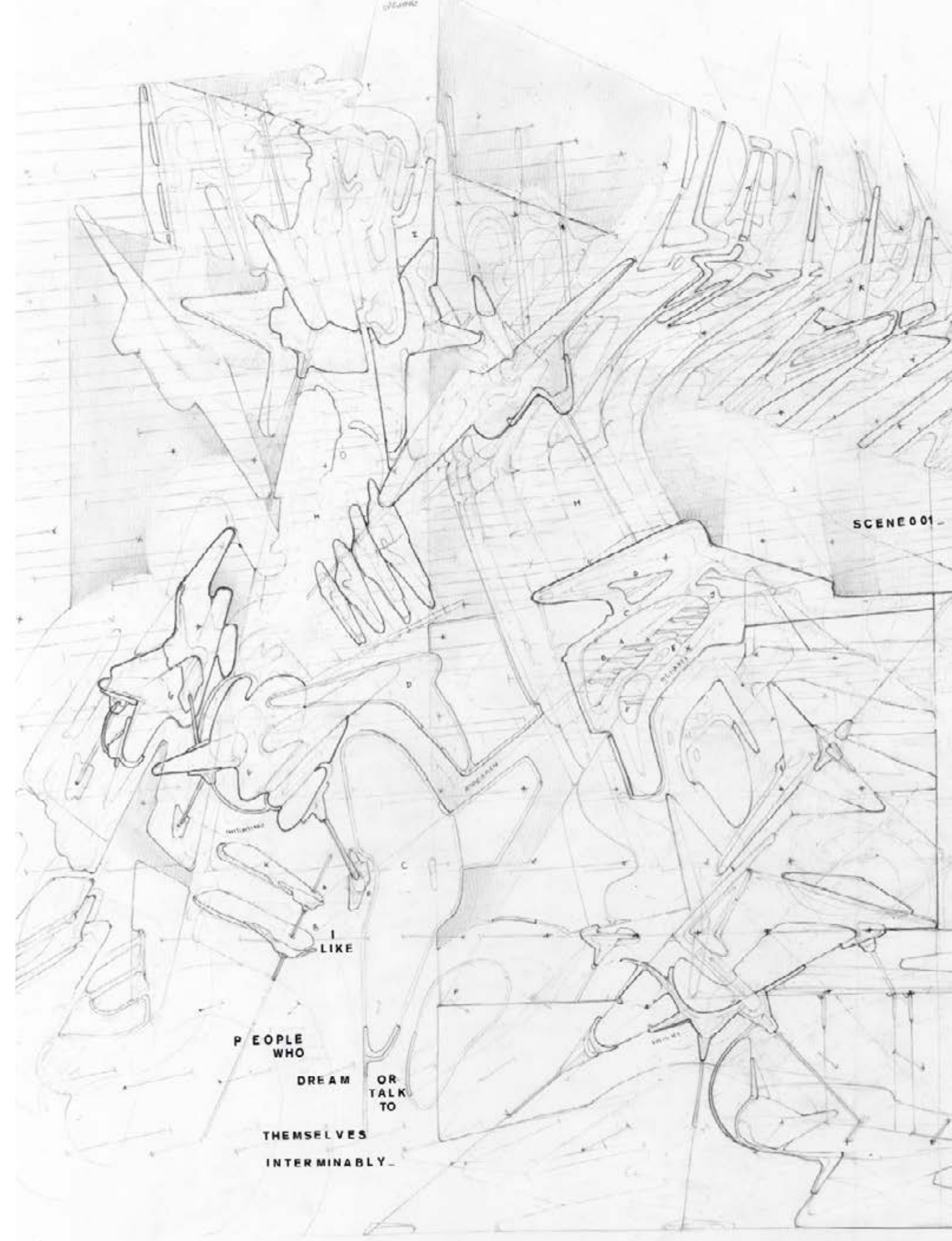
5. (Fracari, 2017, p. 33)  
6. (Thorudottir, et al., 2020)  
7. (Bainbridge, et al., 2020)

Figure C, D (Bainbridge, et al., 2020)



## Chapter 2

Using the established tool sets for activating the mental image and applying them to the deeper cognitive processes of the architect's imagination.



Developed drawing from reflections, teasing out  
architecture connected to language and the imagination  
Author's Own

After establishing how Sealed Vessels evoke mental images, we can now unpack how Woolf's literary toolset is effective at evoking these images by revealing how they are aroused as part of wider mental processes of encountering language. These processes can be applied to the architect's mental processes of imagining their design as it responds to site and stimuli. As we saw with Zajonic's patients who could not perceive objects before them for they did not have a system by which to perceive them, Virginia Woolf's Sealed Vessels become a cognitive system allowing the individual mental images to be illuminated by Zajonic's 'inner light'.

In a diary entry, Woolf describes her approach to constructing a scene by using London as the material for playing out a drama on the psyche: *"I keep thinking of different ways to manage my scenes... seeing life, as I walk about the streets, an immense opaque block of material to be conveyed by me into its equivalent of language"*<sup>1</sup> Language for her then becomes the illuminating inner light that she shines on the 'material' of the scene, giving the implosion of the street its meaning. London therefore becomes intertwined with the meaning making of its characters.

Freud's 1891 study on aphasia in which he examines the link between words and their referents can be applied to Woolf's sealed vessels to deepen our understanding of their effectiveness in using language to reflect the cognitive processes her characters and activate the reader's imagination to similarly experience their experiences. Freud studied that sensory and motor regions were "radiating" their primary function across secondary areas of cortex because of their direct links to specific sensory or motor mechanisms, leading him to conclude that these regions were tied to specific activities. He explored what would happen when radiations from several primary areas coincided, asserting that in these regions of overlap, "complexes of associations" would emerge, connecting tactile and articulatory information with visual and auditory information<sup>2</sup> (Figure B). He says that *"the word, then, is a complicated concept built up from various impressions, i.e., it corresponds to an intricate process of associations entered into by elements of visual, acoustic and kinaesthetic origins. However, the word acquires its significance through its association with the 'idea' (concept) of the object... The idea, or concept, of the object is itself another complex of associations composed of the most varied visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and other impressions."*<sup>3</sup>



Figure A

1. (Woolf, 2017, p. 8516)
2. (Bazan, 2011, p. 165)
3. (Freud, 1953, pp. 77-78)

Figure A Freud's Desk displaying objects he used as inspiration and references for his work (Freud Museum., n.d.)

Jane Rendell: I suppose it is about how I've wanted to think about how you write site rather than write about site. That was the starting point for me to write architecture rather than write about it. So how can you take the qualities of space -

Olivia J O'Callaghan: whether you're actually in it, or it's a memory -

Jane Rendell: and use that to formulate not just the content of the writing, but the shape of it. That's why I'm really interested in taking the architectural qualities of the site and using those to create the structure of the writing. So a lot of my work doesn't follow conventional structures of argument, but rather uses spaces or objects to structure the writing.



The sensory and emotional qualities of mental images that are often lost by the architect in their design process are otherwise imparted intact through language via ‘object associations’ with the referent, rather than the word itself. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the sealed vessels as a method of communicating the experience of the interiority of reality in the street because it establishes a connection between the reader’s experience of reality and the act of reading. In chapter 1 we saw how Barthes established the seductive abilities of a text where the reader dissolves into a scene as similar to how one may dissolve into the street. Barthes additionally comments that “it is that rare locus of language which from any ‘scene’... any logomachy is absent... the text establishes a sort of islet within the human – the common – relation, manifests the asocial nature of pleasure... grants a glimpse of the scandalous truth about bliss: that it may well be, once the image-reservoir of speech is abolished.”<sup>4</sup> Woolf’s Sealed Vessels occupy this locus of scenes that use language moving beyond single mental images, becoming part of a mental process in their object associations. Moreover, it can be argued that obsessing over words and engaging in logomachy is akin to the architect who focuses on the visual image and not the qualities of the mental image and process that produced it. When writing Mrs Dalloway, Woolf reports that she does not submit to the “beautification” of language<sup>5</sup> despite the seductive nature of her work.



The Gallery of Ancient Rome painted by Giovanni Pannini (1757) represents an imaginary architecture exhibiting paintings of significant ancient roman sites. For Freud ‘The Eternal City of Rome’ applies architectural thinking to the unconscious mind.<sup>6</sup> In Civilization and Its Discontents (1930) he aims to amplify the Roman presence in the tapestry of modern cities by resurrecting every building which has at one time existed alongside their modern counter parts. This parallels Septimus’ memories existing alongside the present in Regent’s Park. The connections between each ‘real’ building and sites of memories are pathways like Freud’s associations which therefore maintain the sensory and emotional data of the mental image through their cognitive processes. London then becomes an ‘Eternal City’ constructing memories and reality alongside each other ruled by one cognitive system: Septimus.

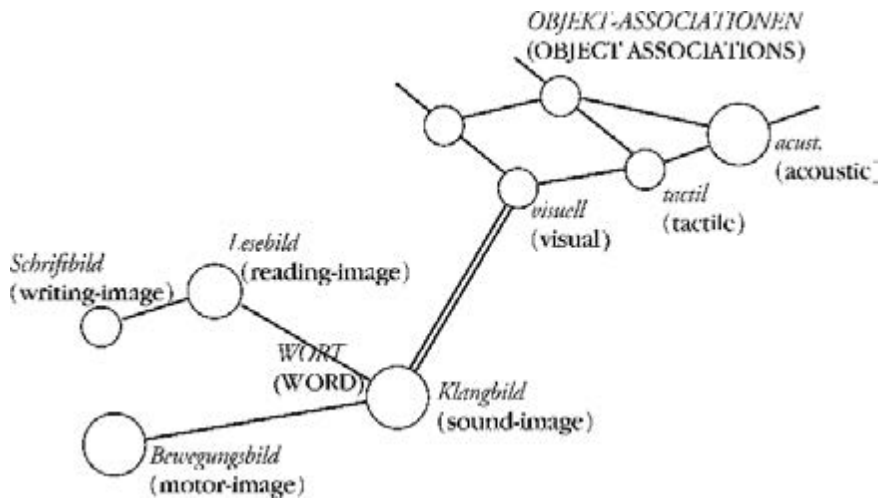


Figure B

6. (Huskinson, 2018, p. 34)

Figure C (Panini, 1757)

4. (Barthes, 1975, pp. 15-16)  
5. (Woolf, 2017, p. 3008)  
Figure B (Freud, 1953, p. 77)



Figure D Author's Own

In this iteration of the models, the associative power of words is used to create openings to the textual body of Amsterdam. The fragments ignite the imagination as the surfaces borrow qualities from the site. The lights of the shop fronts then become transfigured into new spatial alignments and possibilities.

(Figure D - Right) Poetic Device used in Amsterdam to create openings to the textual body of the site, Author's Own





Figure E - The black mirrors borrow from the materiality of the site by reflecting the shop windows in the same way as the river. They take on the poetic nature of the river and bring a materiality and design to the architecture embodying the mechanics of the models, remaining connected to the imagination and activated by language. The photo here shows the author using the devices on site.  
Amsterdam 2023  
Author's Own



Figure F  
The site as it is illuminated at night  
Author's Own  
2023



Figure G  
A model as it is illuminated at dusk  
Author's Own  
2023



Figure H  
Collection of the poetic devices  
Author's Own  
2023



Frascari proposes that architectural drawing contains a “chain” of mental images<sup>1</sup>, in response I offer that a sequential chain found through its reading then reveals in its structuring the mental processes which hold the chain together. Applying this to Dicken’s reading of the street may then move beyond mental images and reveal its cognition in a similar way.

As Martha’s shared language with the site exemplified, Dickens records the language of the street as shared with the psyche by using walking as an alibi for reading the chain of these mental images. The mental processes behind these chains manifest in his work as dualistic cognition. The fabric of Night Walk’s construction, for example, of reading the nocturnal city as Dickens is displaced by insomnia from his position as its daytime inhabitant incorporates the dual nature of the city seen throughout his corpus, which one critic, Jeremy Tambling, describes as “*magnificently unsure of itself because it knows the self as double.*”<sup>2</sup>

Jane Rendell: The journey can be a brilliant structuring mechanism. To shape the writing so that it follows a walk, this can be a brilliant way of structuring of piece of writing.

Olivia J O’Callaghan: I’m trying to embody that in the thesis writing itself. Yeah, it’s really fascinating, and because my interest in it kind of started last year when I was looking at the situationists and wandering. It’s a practice that came from there. So the idea of wandering and text is very interesting, like you know, the pleasure of the text. How reading a book can be the same as reading a site.



Figure A

1. (Frascari, 2017, p. 40)  
2. (Tambling, 2017, p. 189)

Figure A Moonlight, a Study at Millbank, painted somewhere near Tate Britain depicting the Thames at night by William Turner. (Turner, 1797)

As Dickens wanders past Bethlehem Hospital during a nocturnal preamble, he considers his psychological doubling: “Do we not nightly jumble events and personages and times and places, as these do daily? Are we not sometimes troubled by our own sleeping inconsistencies, and do we not vexedly try to account for them or excuse them, just as these do sometimes in respect of their waking delusions? Said an afflicted man to me, when I was last in a hospital like this, ‘Sir, I can frequently fly.’ I was half ashamed to reflect that so could I – by night.”<sup>3</sup> These oneiric associations akin to the Architect’s Dream begin to divulge the construction of the mental processes surrounding ingesting the street into the psyche. In this shared language, Dickens work establishes the two significant cognitive domains seen below. This is perhaps how at night we might ‘jumble’ places and people as both exist within the same unconscious domain. However, unlike one may first assume, the doubling of Dickens’ corpus is not in found in the two domains (for another author may have more than two) but is manifest in the two types of connections seen within and between the domains:

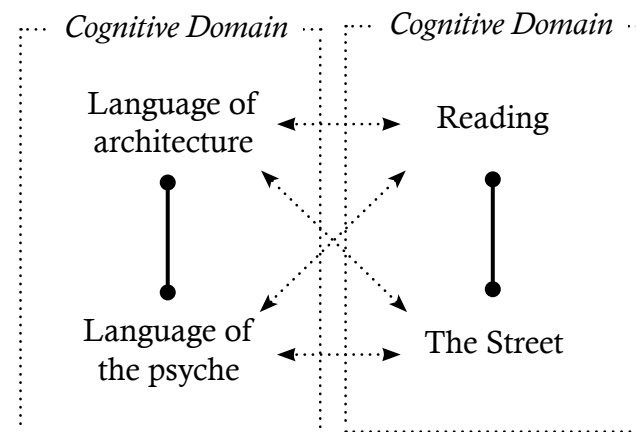


Figure B

The connections within the domains activated by the reader-walker’s practice versus the connections between the domains reflect a literary toolset Dickens uses in his situated reading and writing: metonymy and metaphor respectively.

According to David Kunze, in his essay, *Architecture’s Two Bodies*, linguists and architects both contend with the binary nature of metaphor and metonymy, where metaphor usage relates the capacity to recognise resemblance and metonymy reveals contiguity. In aphasic patients, these poles are exposed as two distinct pathological states.<sup>4</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), another text from the London canon, is hyperbole of this psychological doubling of the self.

3. (Dickens, 2010, p. 8)
4. (Kunze, 2017, p. 123)

Figure B Author’s Own



Figure C - Bolligen Tower

Frascati believed metonymy effectively weaves abstract and concrete aspects of a building’s design, such as integrating features in details and the façade alluding to interior functions or cultural links.<sup>5</sup> This concept is exemplified by Martha in *David Copperfield* who displays her cultural position in the city and her own psychological state. Similarly, in *Bleak House* (1852-1853) Dickens describes “Every house put out a sign of the kind of people who might be expected to be born in it.”<sup>6</sup> One house that has such a sign is Carl Jung’s Bolligen Tower (built 1923-1956). The stone monument outside alludes to the metonymic approach the house’s design and construction has to Jung’s psyche. He saw the house as allowing him to be reborn in stone which therefore becomes the embodiment of his innermost thoughts and personality,<sup>7</sup> signified in the stone monument. Jung’s signage is similar to the metonymy of Dickens’ London reflecting the interiority of its characters. In *Sketches by Boz* (1833-1836), a collection of observational pieces, Dickens describes the signs the nocturnal inhabitants leave on the city at dawn: “A partially opened bedroom-window here and there, bespeaks the heat of the weather, and the uneasy slumbers of its occupant.”<sup>8</sup> The traces left on the city are like Jung’s inscriptions on the stone, transmuting the psyche in the mental processes aroused by its signifiers embodied in architecture.



Figure D - Stone Monument outside the tower

5. (Frascati, 1983)
6. (Dickens, 2013, p. 51)
7. (Huskinson, 2018, pp. 46-47)
8. (Dickens, 2011, p. 33)

Figure C, D (Jung Psychology Space, n.d.)



On the opposing end of the dualistic nature of Dickens work is the metaphorical connections between different domains. The understanding of a metaphor comes from comprehending the cognitive systems that give rise to these pathways.<sup>9</sup> Both forms of connections compound to depict the mental processes that construct the mental image seen below:

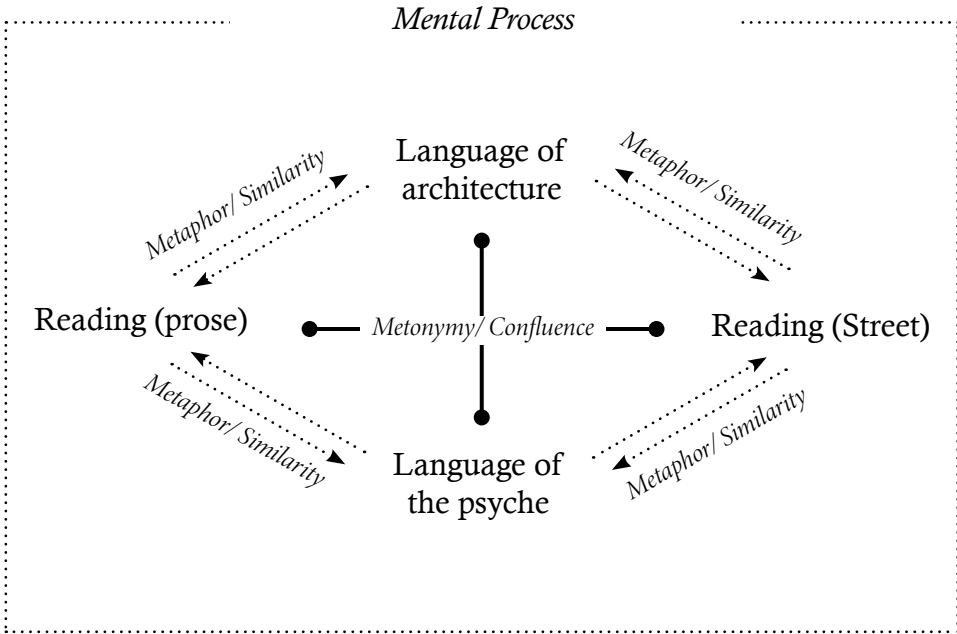


Figure E  
The role of metonymy and metaphor in an architectural practice seen in Dickens

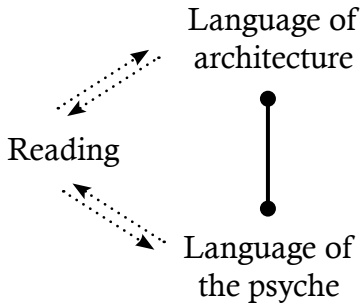


Figure F

The separation of domains allows language to be recordable and used as a pool of knowledge for his writing, as demonstrated in chapter 1. Jung’s experience in constructing the Bollingen Tower is similar, as he read its language to understand his own psyche. He describes realising his reaction to his wife’s death, in which he relates “*to put it in the language of the Bollingen House, I suddenly realised that the small central section which crouched so low, so hidden was myself!*”<sup>10</sup>

9. (Yousef, 2012, p. 3)  
10. (Jung, 1989, p. 273)  
Figure E Author’s Own  
Figure F Author’s Own



I responded to Dickens' work with the third part of my theoretical triad through drawings intended to be read in the same way he reads the city. Despite not asking to be built, the drawings make use of metaphorical cognitive abilities on how we typically read drawings and prose. The data I collected about the interpenetration of images through the black mirrors is then made readable through this cognitive domain.

Figure G Author's Own

(Figure G - Right) Modelling illuminating and casting shadows into a drawing which uses fragments collected from the black mirrors to tease out an architecture activated by the site's light and shadows, grounded by linguistic points.



ACT - 1  
ENTRANCE



SCENE\_001



SCENE\_002.7



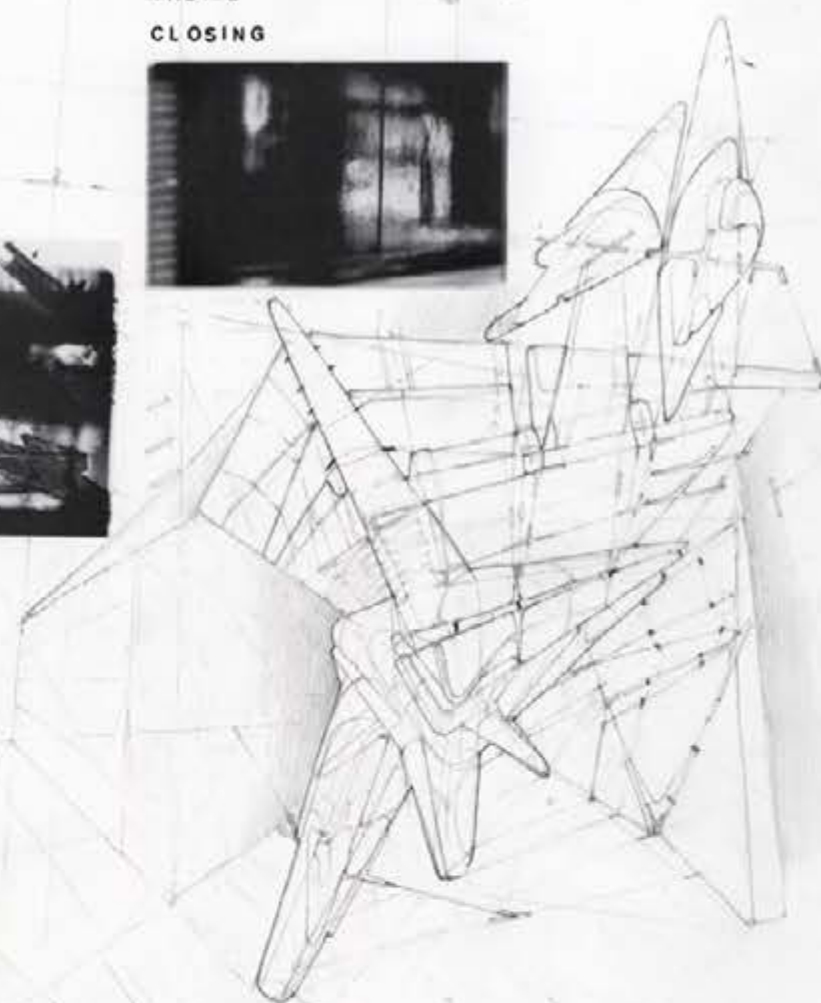
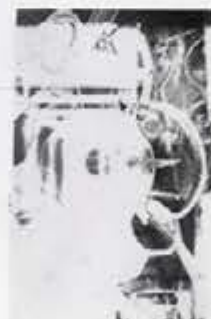
ACT - 2  
CLOSING



SCENE\_005



INTERVAL









In Gulliver's Travels, Gulliver visits the Grand Academy of Lagado where a professor has the idea to stop speaking entirely and carry around the objects that will give your listeners an idea of what you mean by pointing at them. In the making component of my triadic theory, Blake uses making to decentralise the text thus curating an openness to interpretation of the mental images which is akin to the professor dictating the objects and choosing which to carry, thus maintaining an openness in how they are interpreted by the listener. A single object upon the professor's back prompts a single mental image, but a series of objects – a series of mental images – become a mental process as was established by Frascari's "chain" of mental images in architectural drawings. Blake, utilises the mental processes of their interpenetration and unlike the professor, guides us through the openness in in interpreting his making. Architects can similarly uncover how to utilise making to inform cognitive processes in ways which are effective for justifying and progressing their design approach, distinct to the ambiguity of the approach of the professor to the mental processes of the openness of language.

Unlike Dickens whose work embodies a dualism, Blake's is triadic in nature. The poetry and the images forming 2 parts of a whole, the third being the accompanying music to the work which was an integral part of the composing process of the illuminated printing.<sup>1</sup> In the "Introduction" to Songs of Innocence, music, singing and writing come together sequentially in the form of a book. The piper who narrates their performance relays "And I wrote my happy songs, Every child may joy to hear"<sup>2</sup>, proposing the question of how one may hear as a form of reading. Makdisi answers this stating the obvious answer is that a child first comes to books by being read to so of course hears.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Viscomi and Margaret LaFrance in Blake Illustrated Quarterly describe the effect reading the poetry has on the mental processes on the reader: "Reading is hearing the songs, the melody being the activity of mind as it reads."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, then, the rhythmic component of Blake's poetry acts as the piper, guiding us through the openness of the text and our mental processes. In The Ghost of Abel (1821) Blake adds to this effect on the mental processes: "Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has."<sup>5</sup>



Figure A - Details of Introduction

1. (Viscomi & LaFrance, 1985, p. 85)
2. (Blake, 1789)
3. (Makdisi, 2015, pp. 12-13)
4. (Viscomi & LaFrance, 1985, p. 85)
5. (Blake, 1822)

Figure A (Blake, 1789)

Jane Rendell: that sounds really lovely as an approach. And you're trying to do that for Blake as well?

Olivia J O'Callaghan: Well, William Blake is incredible. You know, in the way that each copy was never a copy that, it was always a slightly different iteration of the same poem or etching. So I love the way that you may be handed a copy of William Blake, but it could become anything. It doesn't impose an order of reading on you and encourages you to make connections.

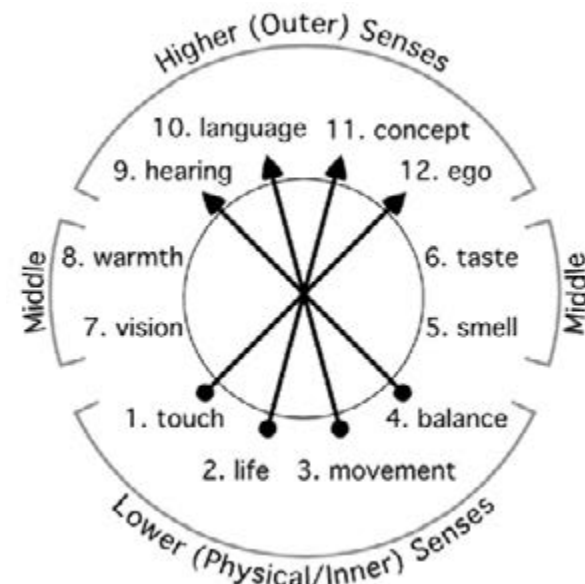


Figure B Steiner's teachings on senses

Connolly in William Blake and the Body proposes “*being concerned with music as well as meaning, poetic language is a suitable place to find eruptions of the symbolic, of speaking to express an urge.*”<sup>6</sup> She looks at the advent of the symbolic, uncovering the rhythmic ‘drive energy’ of poetry by applying Julia Kristeva’s model of language to Blake’s work. Kristeva uncovers a means of unlocking the ‘doors of perception’ within language in her model which denotes texts as either ‘genotext’ or ‘phenotext’. Genotext is semiotic, engendering the symbolic, while phenotext is more common and symbolic, obeying rules of language. Kristeva argues the signifying process includes both forms and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm, reaching the semiotic point preceding signs and signifiers.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was a mystic and educationalist whose schools teach his ideas on the senses, notably, the connection between language and movement, reminiscent of Kristeva’s vocal and kinetic rhythm. Steiner’s ideas on this poetic connection are manifest in the making component of his own architecture as it responds to his reading of Goethe (1749-1832). The Goetheanum (1920) exemplifies a process of making as it responds to reading, developing a design which maintains the sensory and emotional qualities of the mental images. Steiner, along with Edith Maryon, a sculptor, implemented a practice of making throughout the designing and construction of the building, creating clay models.<sup>7</sup> The movement of the hand to form the clay exhibits a design approach that doesn’t aim to imitate a mental image but rather, as Goethe put it: “*Had you felt more than you measured... you would have created your own designs, and there would have flowed out of them living beauty to instruct you.*”<sup>8</sup>

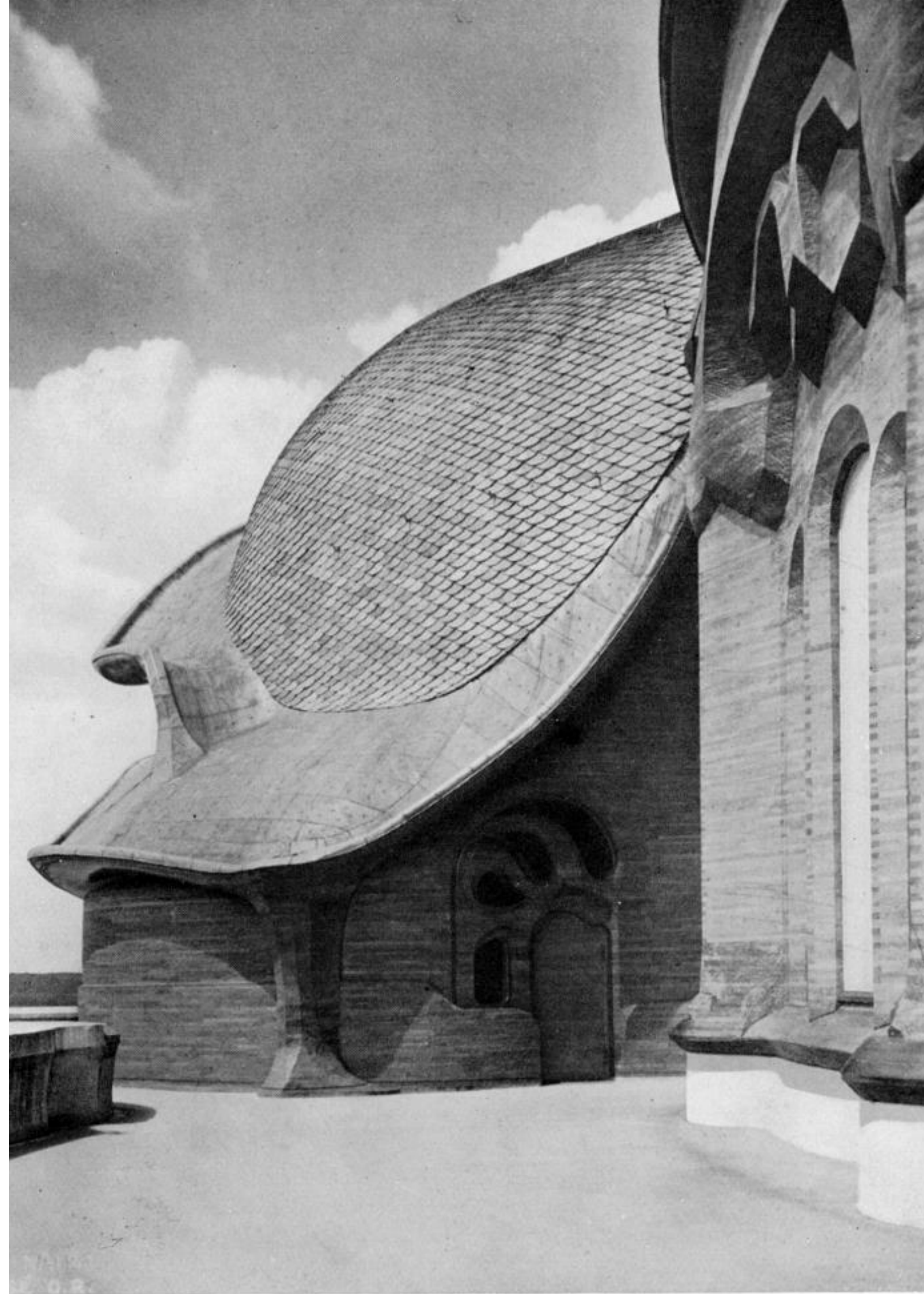


Figure C  
Original Goetheanum

6. (Connolly, 2002, p. 6)
7. (Paull, 2020, p. 9)
8. (Goethe, 1921, p. 5)

Figure B (Waldorf Education, n.d)  
Figure C (Rudolf Steiner web, 1921)





Figure D Clay Model



Figure E Original Goetheanum

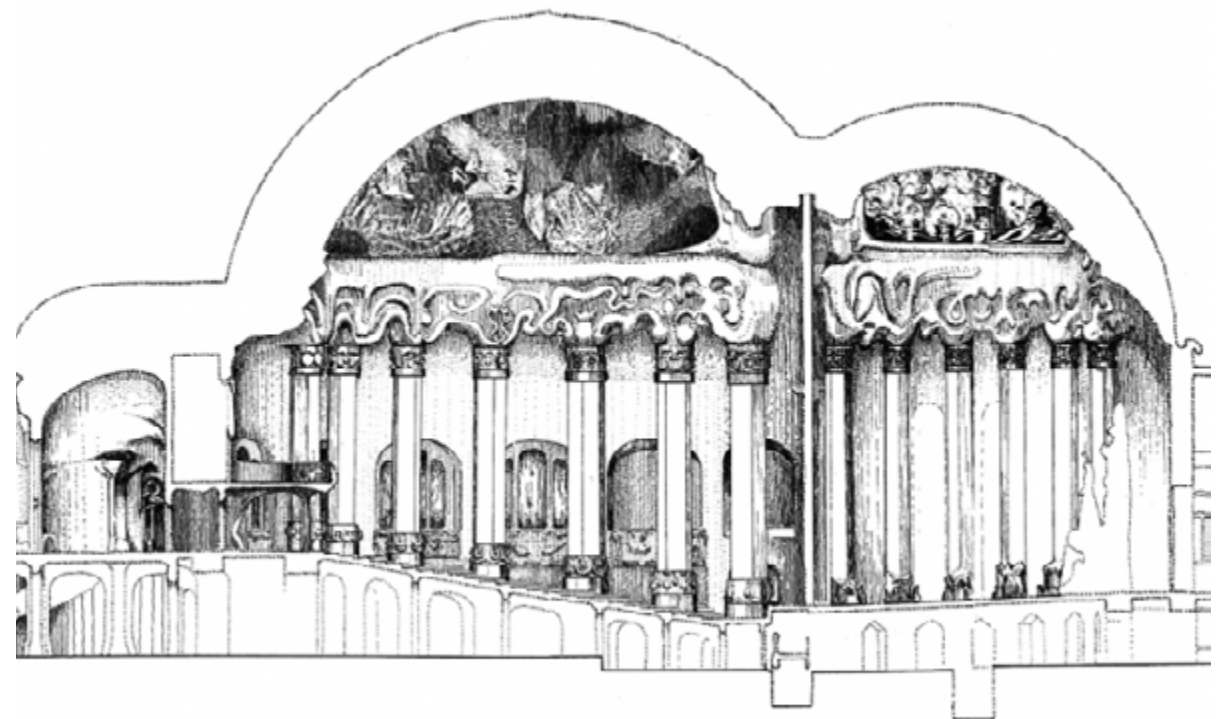
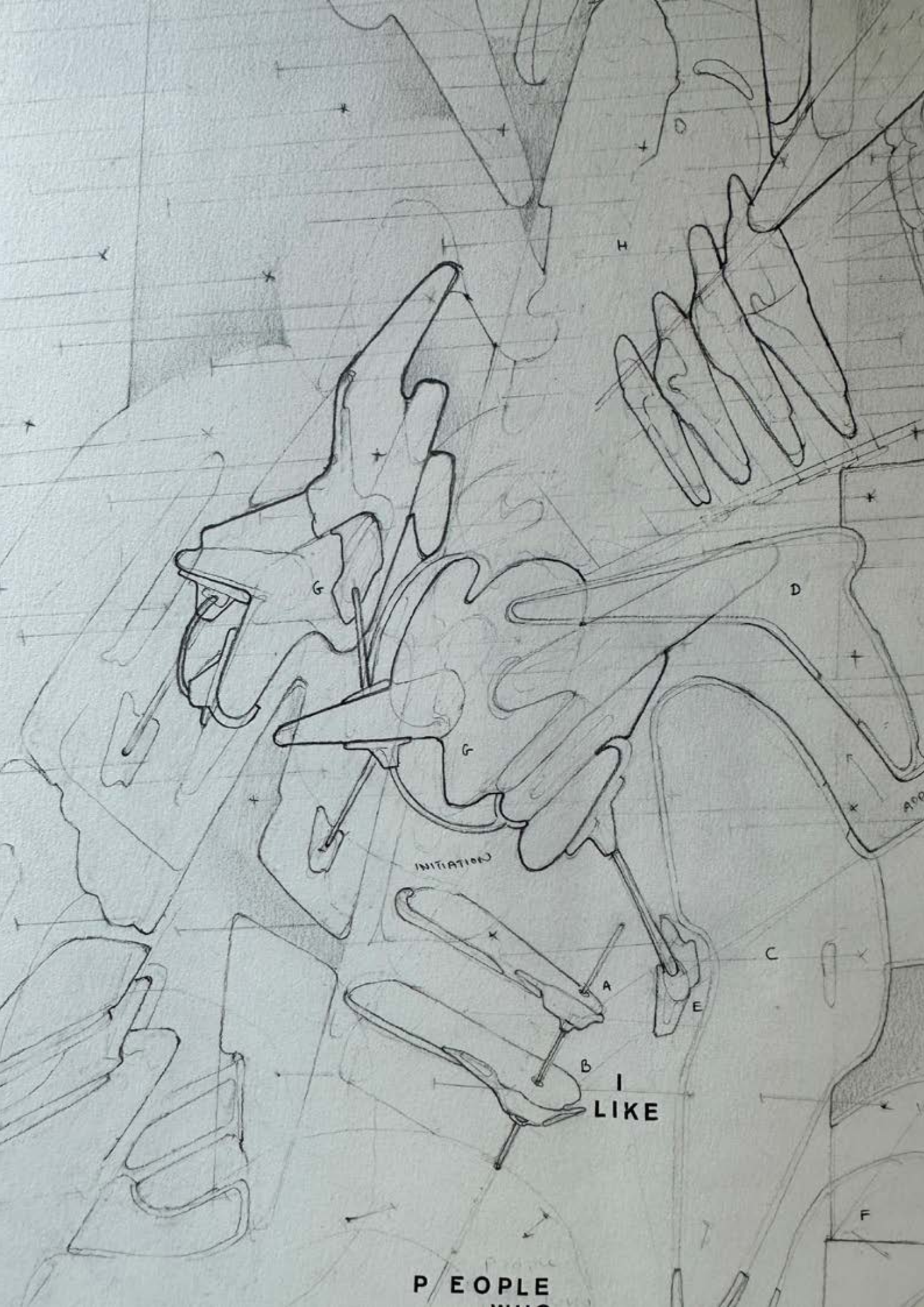


Figure F Original Goetheanum  
Section

Listening to how composers have put Blake's work to music demonstrates how his making operates in mental processes, maintaining a signifying position through its kinetic and vocal movement. The differences in how they are played reflect the differences in how they actualise the emotional and sensory qualities of mental images, like Steiner's clay models responding to Goethe. Vaughan Williams' (1872-1958) *Ten Blake Songs* (1957/8) version of *Introduction* is lively and makes use of an oboe, whereas Gregory Forbe's 1980 interpretation is akin to a folk song and uses a flute rather than an oboe. The similarities between them such as both featuring wind instruments can be taken to be the work of the mental images associated with the piper and emblematic of the symbolism of the phenotext.





Connolly relates Thomas Vogler's identification of a semiotic opening in Blake's work<sup>9</sup>, like the opening created by the gouged text in Jerusalem's Plate 3, which disrupts the phenotext. This opening in Milton occurs when the call of a lark's "*trill! trill! trill! trill!*"<sup>10</sup> interrupts the voice of the Bard. Readers conjure mental images of a bird, just as the musicians both interpreted the wind instruments, but differ in the belief about what the bird is saying, if it is saying anything at all. Analogous to the openness engendered in the making of his corpus, the lark's trill acts as an opening to the individual's cognitive processes, guided by Blake's mental images and symbolism through the genotext. Like the architect's drawings which can become openings to the mental processes engendered in their reading.

Perhaps, then, trilling within the openness of the text, and likewise the mental image of the architect, there really was a bird in the room.

9. (Connolly, 2002, p. 7)  
10. (Blake, 1810)

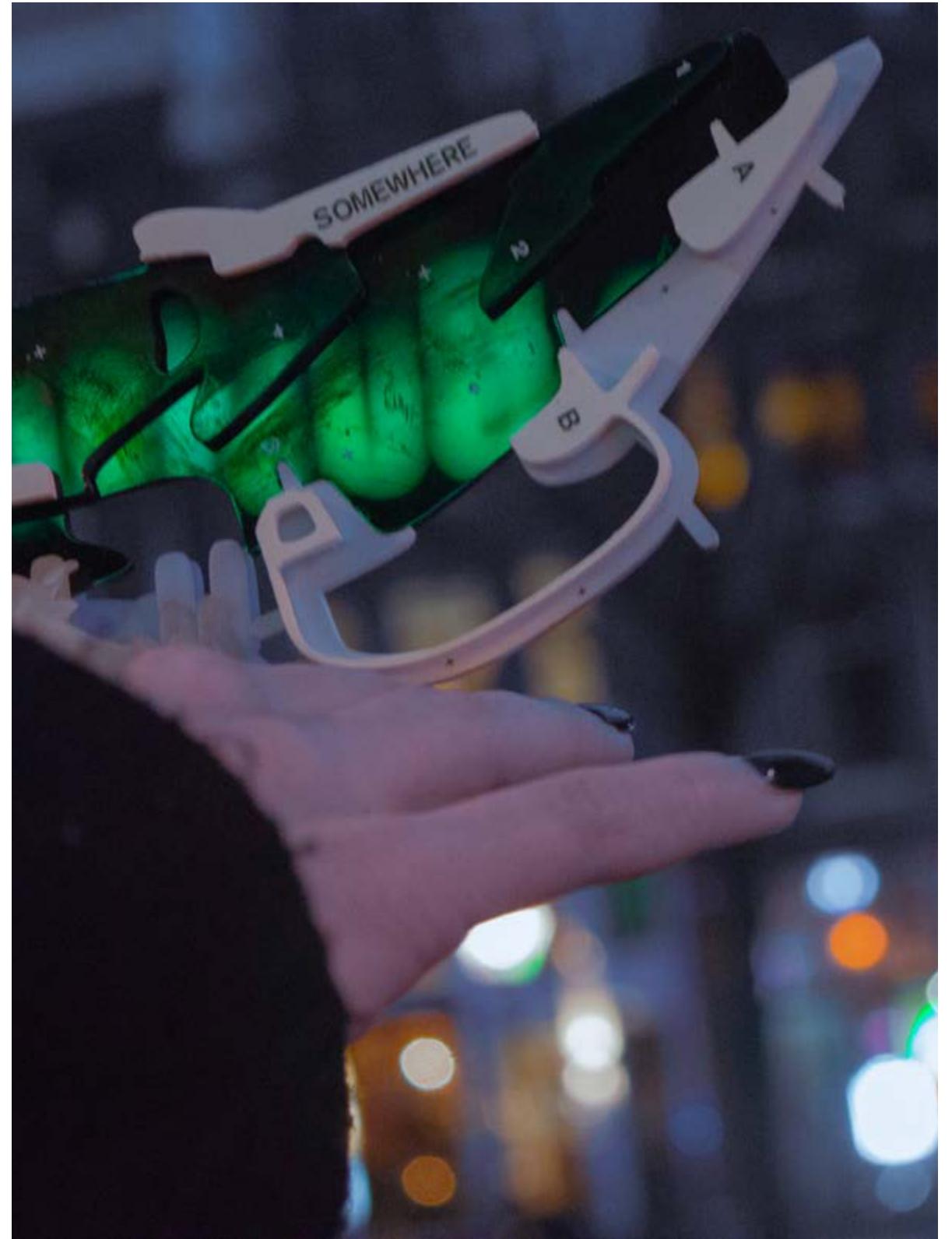
Figure G Author's Own

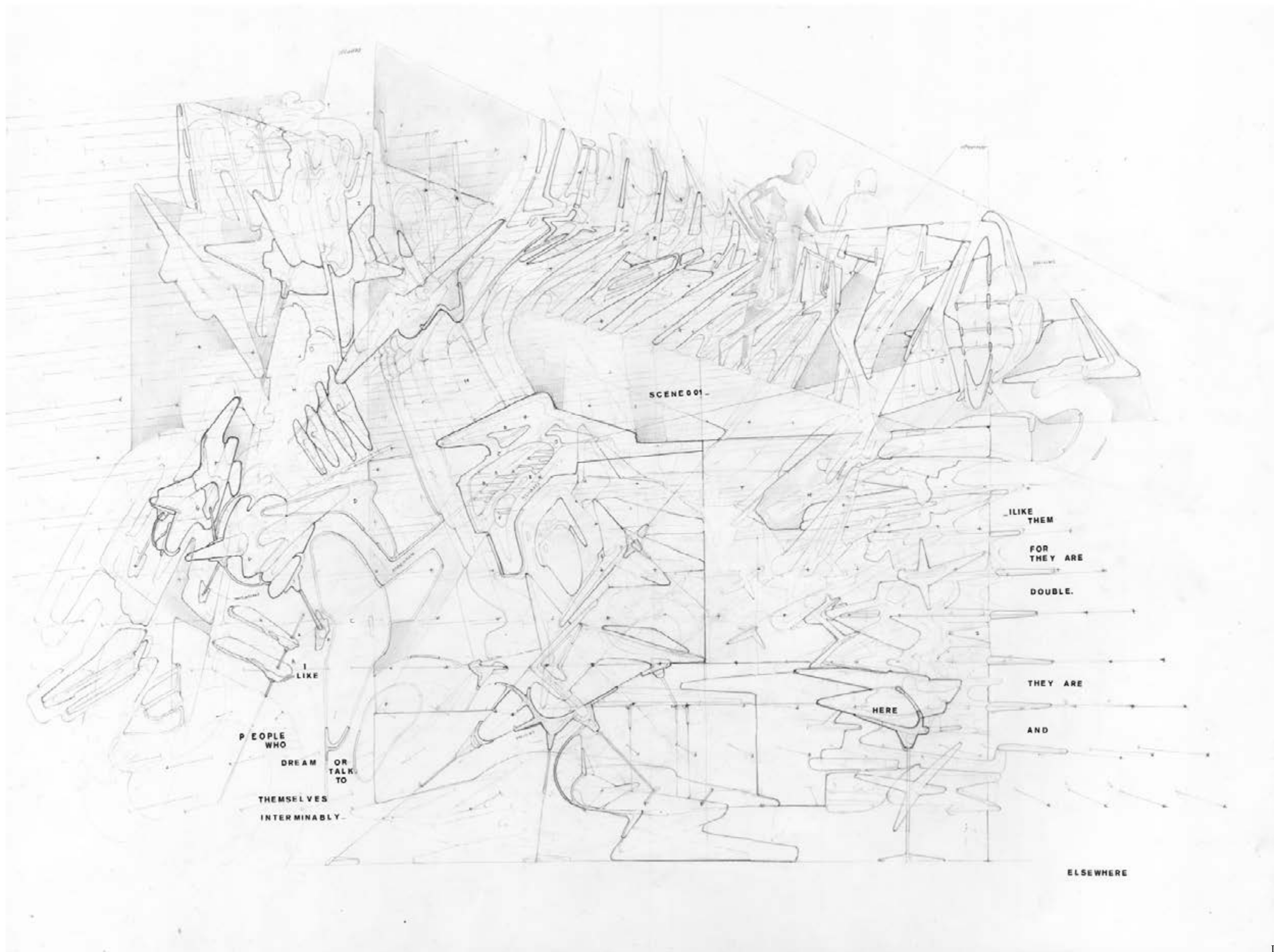
(Figure G - Right) Drawing created using information about my connection to the site, teasing out architectural forms and activated by language



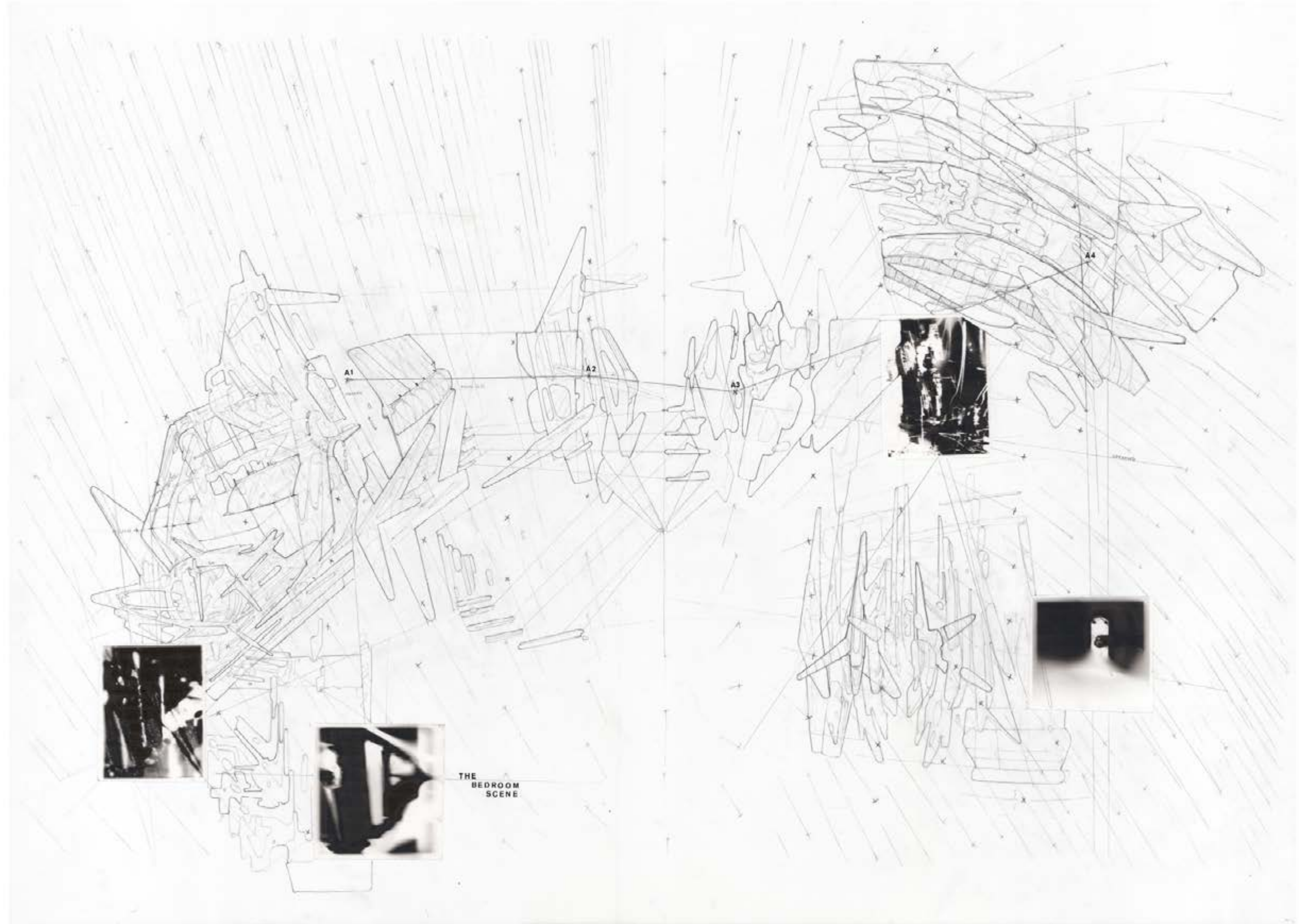
## Portfolio

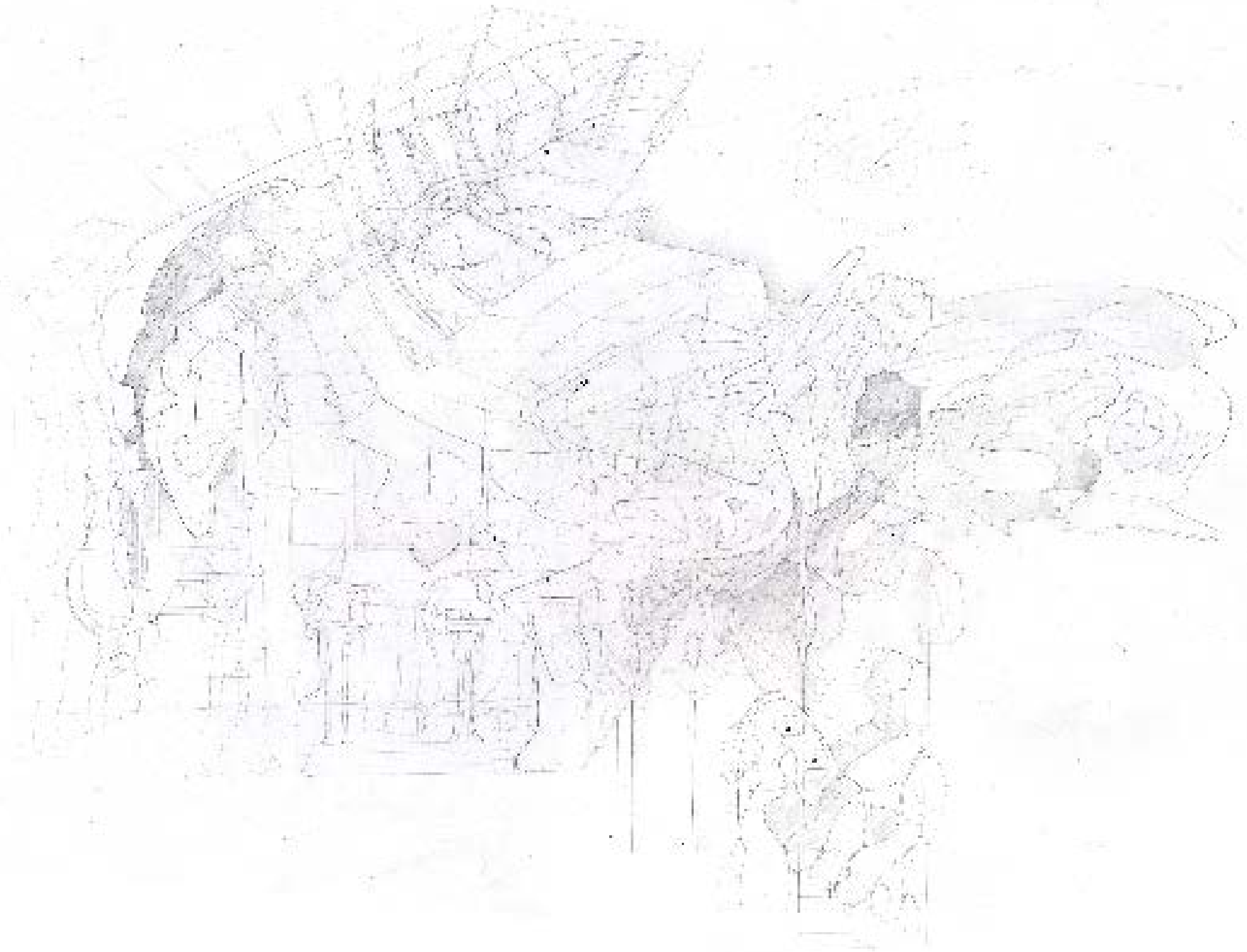
Works created during the 'making' element of the triad, responding to my relationship to the site as reflected through linguistic markers. The resulting architecture aims to design a bar for Amsterdam.





















Final Drawing  
Pencil  
150cmx75cm

As I immersed myself in the creation of this paper, I found myself transported to a head space where reading was a cherished experience, as it was long ago in my parents' bedroom. It was as if I was recapturing the magic of my childhood, where imagination was boundless and playtime took me to imaginary worlds, much like reading does. In this way, the design process felt playful, particularly in its exploration and resulting drawings.

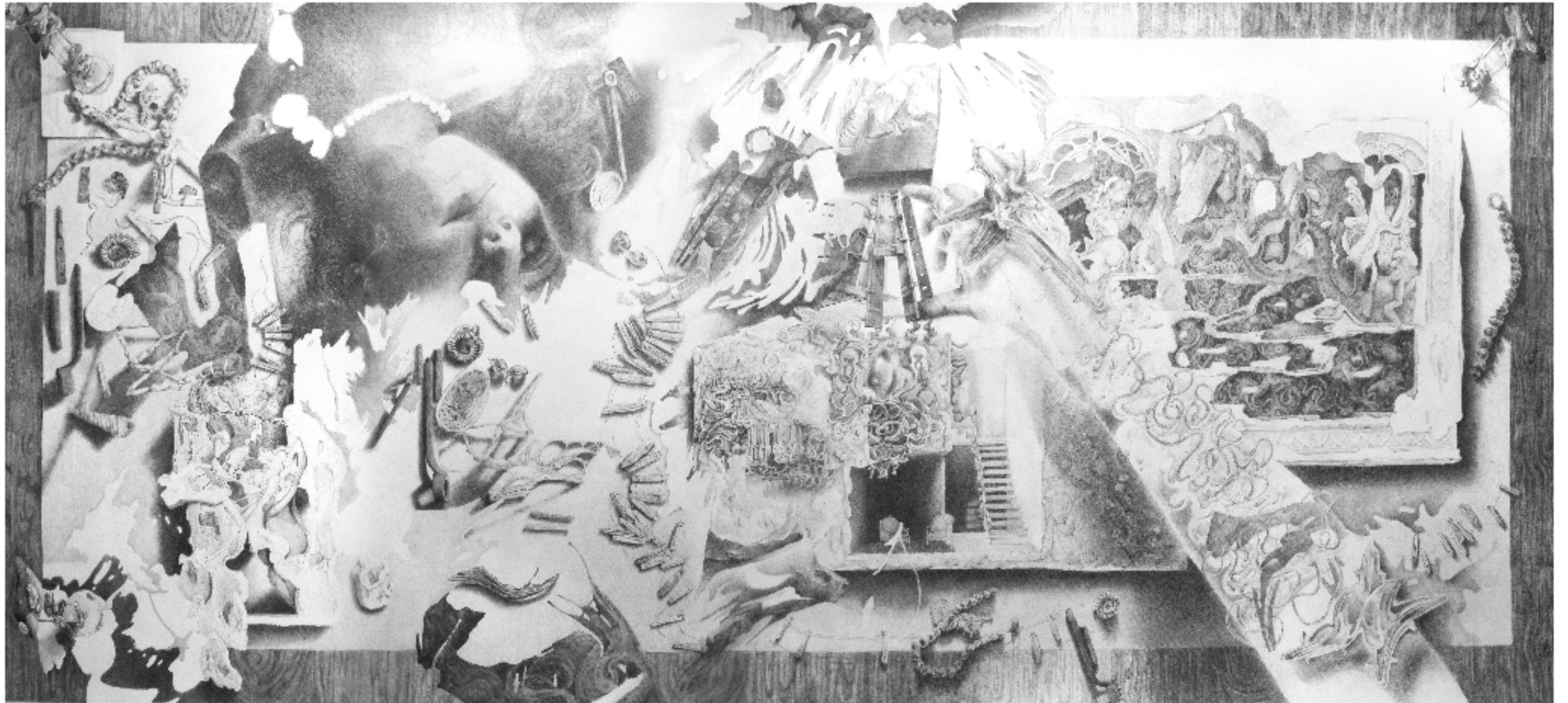
Through my own design outcomes, I was able to demonstrate the imaginative capabilities of language for architects, using the London canon as a model for linguistic possibilities. The process allowed me to develop my own mental images through designing, resulting in an architecture that was connected to my imagination, as it was evoked in response to the site.

The writing component allowed me to carefully scrutinise and justify the theory whilst also creating an alibi to the situated experiments. However, it would have been more successful if I had written more of my own prose to accompany the design narrative. Meanwhile, the reading constituent not only provided an understanding for architects' mental images and cognition, but acted as a source for inspiration in the construction of my models and drawings and how they respond to the interpenetration of the site. The making was effective at demonstrating the outcomes of the reading and writing in the design processes.

I am now more conscious of the significance of imaginative abilities and the role of the mental image, however scrutinising the mental processes behind these images may stifle their spontaneity. Although it may be successful in better understanding relationships to the site, ultimately I found it to be less successful at capturing the original magic of the architect's mental image. Thus, the second part of this theses was more successful in justifying the capabilities of the mental image, rather than the design possibilities of the mental processes. Additionally, my new model for the architectural design process overlooks the practical considerations of the field such as the necessity of technical drawings in order to make buildings buildable. Moreover, it was only tested on the individual scale, rather than in a larger architecture practice. Such a design approach is time consuming and would be difficult to justify to a client. The model may then be a more successful strategy for students, 'paper' architects, smaller experimental studios and the continuous development of one's own personal practice outside of the office.







Final Drawing  
Pencil  
150cmx75cm



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**Thank you for Reading**

## Participant Information and Consent Form

UCL Bartlett School of Architecture  
MArch Architectural Thesis: Somewhere I have Never Travelled (working title)

Researcher: Olivia Jasmine O'Callaghan  
ucbjoc@ucl.ac.uk  
University College London, London, WC1H 0QB  
Thesis Supervisor: Shaun Murray

- 1. Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in this MArch research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.
- 2. Purpose**

This thesis argues for the integration of reading and writing in the architectural design process to produce architecture connected to the interstitial space between language and thought within the body often lost during a making-only focused design process.
- 3. Why have I been chosen?**

You have been selected to participate because your work is concerned with spatial writing practices and language.
- 4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will need to fill in the consent form at the end of this information sheet. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- 5. What will happen if I take part?**

The interview duration is about 30-45 minutes and will be audio recorded with your consent. It will take place either in person or over Zoom, whichever is more convenient for the interviewee. I will ask a series of questions relating to your individual writing practice. The information collected at interview will be used to inform the analysis of selected case studies.
- 6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?**

With your consent, I will take an audio recording at the interview which will be destroyed immediately following transcription. Transcripts may be partially or fully transcribed within the thesis for analysis and illustration of specific case studies. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. At your request prior to publication I will send a copy of the transcript to you. You have the right to ask for modifications to be made to the transcript.
- 7. What are the foreseeable disadvantages to taking part?**

There are no foreseeable discomforts, disadvantages and risks for taking part.
- 8. What are the foreseeable advantages to taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that the work will inform research in the area of architecture.

## 9. What if something goes wrong?

If you would like to raise a complaint about this research, please contact me or Shaun  
If you feel like your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee - [ethicsucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethicsucl.ac.uk)

## 10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The data controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found here: [www.ucl.ac.uk/legalservices/privacy/participants-health-and-care-research-privacy-notice](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/legalservices/privacy/participants-health-and-care-research-privacy-notice). Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data will be performance of a task in the public interest. The legal basis used to process special category personal data will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes. Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. Following transcription, the recording of your interview will be deleted and will not be stored in any capacity. The interview transcripts will be stored securely and separately from any personal identifiers you may have disclosed, such as email address, and we will ensure that all the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation are complied with. Your personal data will be processed as long as it is required for the research project. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact UCL in the first instance at [dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/fororganisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individualsrights/>

## 12. Declaration of consent

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. A copy of this information sheet and consent form will be provided to you by email for your records. If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign below:

Interviewee signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 6 March 2023

Print Name: Prof Jane Rendell



Interview Transcript

31  
00:08:42.360 --> 00:09:01.670  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: the architectural design process often begins with like a mental image, and that’s very rich with a lot of information like sensory emotional information. And then, throughout the design process, it kind of flattens it, because people focus very much on the visual. So I’m kind of arguing that using reading and writing and just

32  
00:09:01.670 --> 00:09:17.590  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: effective language throughout the process can kind of maintain this visual image and the richness of that, because, you know, when you read something, you can feel the sense of space. You can almost touch it, almost you feel it within yourself. So it kind of

33  
00:09:17.590 --> 00:09:33.280  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: having. This is like a cool process in reading, writing, and making kind of maintains that richness of the mental image. It’s kind of lovely. That’s why I love your work, because it’s all you know the site, writing the spatial stories and things like that.

34  
00:09:33.280 --> 00:09:40.100  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: So I’m kind of using 3 main case studies of Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, and William Blake.

35  
00:09:40.100 --> 00:09:55.220  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: because they all have this unique approach to writing that demonstrates either writing, reading, or making like 3 of them. Yeah, that’s kind of why I wanted to get you a take on the writing aspect of it.

36  
00:09:55.590 --> 00:10:07.270  
Jane Rendell: Yeah, I think in the is it in the site writing book that I had that lovely quote from Virginia Woolf that I think maybe your attention. Yeah, it’s beautiful, isn’t it.

37  
00:10:07.640 --> 00:10:17.750  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: yeah in the essay about the Welsh dresser. You quoted her about her sealed vessels. And then, in my essay I kind of

38  
00:10:17.930 --> 00:10:32.380  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: try to have each author as if they have a specific tool set that they use for writing and reading, and whatever, and for her I’ve kind of said that hers is called the sealed vessels, and that kind of what encapsulates how she writes.

39  
00:10:32.440 --> 00:10:49.450  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: So, looking at her scene making methods, so I was quite interested in your especially like the Welsh Dresser project, because of like your relationship to the memories, and how they kind of come back to you at moments and things like that, because that’s very much similar to how she writes

40  
00:10:49.450 --> 00:10:55.760  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: especially I don’t know if you read Mrs. Dalloway. I think you quoted it in something. Yeah.

41  
00:10:55.820 --> 00:11:02.310  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: yeah, you have like an extract from it, I think, in something. Yeah. because she’s very. It’s very

42  
00:11:03.190 --> 00:11:22.870  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: like with relating kind of to scene, making the way that she wanted to see the streets. And these memories come back to her and stuff and you’re very much reminded me of this the dresser, and how these childhood memories come back to you, and translating that into a language is just like such a unique idea, and approach to writing beyond

43  
00:11:22.870 --> 00:11:24.810  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: simply word usage.

45  
00:11:30.460 --> 00:11:34.490  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: I was quite interested in your like specifically how you use language

46  
00:11:34.670 --> 00:11:39.850  
Olivia J O’Callaghan: to kind of craft that on the specific words.

47

Jane Rendell: Yeah, I suppose it's that idea of

48

00:11:43.120 --> 00:12:02.370

Jane Rendell: which are not that a really interesting. But I mean your reading list is probably just exploding, called Eve Low Max. He's a photographer, wrote a book writing the image that might you might find helpful to sort of philosopher, prose writer, and photographer. Yeah. And I

49

00:12:02.740 --> 00:12:08.880

Jane Rendell: I suppose it is about how I've wanted to think about how you write

50

00:12:08.930 --> 00:12:20.670

Jane Rendell: site rather than write about siet. That was the starting point for me or write architecture that rather than write about it. So how can you take the qualities

51

00:12:21.040 --> 00:12:22.580

Jane Rendell: of a space.

52

00:12:22.740 --> 00:12:25.750

Olivia J O'Callaghan: whether you're actually in it, or it's a memory.

53

00:12:27.190 --> 00:12:32.710

Jane Rendell: and use that to formulate not just the content of the writing, but the shape of it.

54

00:12:32.900 --> 00:12:44.700

Jane Rendell: So that's why I'm really interested in taking, like the architectural qualities of the site and using those to create the structure of the writing. So a lot of my work doesn't follow

55

00:12:45.010 --> 00:12:45.820

Jane Rendell: like

56

00:12:45.910 --> 00:12:53.660

Jane Rendell: conventional structures of argument, are rather use spaces or objects to structure the writing.

00:12:53.830 --> 00:13:09.800

Jane Rendell: and I find that that produces a really different sequence of ideas which Don't necessarily move from a to a to Z. There's not a like a linear progression, then, so I suppose it moves more into what's now kind of called

58

00:13:10.030 --> 00:13:13.790

Jane Rendell: critical creative writing. I don't know if you've come across that term

59

00:13:14.030 --> 00:13:25.080

Jane Rendell: there's like a long list of all those kind of terms, art, writing, and all that, you know. There's so many I mean one book that I do think is really helpful.

61

00:13:28.700 --> 00:13:34.160

Jane Rendell: I've got it behind me. There's 2 which I think would be really worth looking at.

62

00:13:34.310 --> 00:13:47.510

Jane Rendell: One is called writing Architecture, I actually wrote the forward for that, and but it's got some great stuff in it, and another one is called.

63

00:13:48.430 --> 00:13:57.980

Jane Rendell: I think it's called the Creative Critic. edited by Emily Orley, and another 2 editors. because

64

00:13:58.470 --> 00:14:14.100

Jane Rendell: one of them is coming from the architecture discipline, talking about different ways of writing architecture. So not so split between design on the one hand, and like more conventional history theory, linear argumentation on the other. But that you can use design skills

65

00:14:14.530 --> 00:14:28.140

Jane Rendell: mit ctl, and to spatially curate the writing. So I think there's a lot for me in in terms of using design skills, because I trained originally as an architect, and worked as an architect. So using those design skills to arrange writing 101,

600:14:28.160 --> 00:14:32.900

Jane Rendell: and whenever I'm working on something, I'm working on something at the moment about

67



67  
00:14:33.610 --> 00:14:52.880  
trying to work to protect a lake. That of course, being developed into some kind of result when actually it's biodiversity, just amazing biodiversity reservoir. It's an artificial lake, but it's not been touched for 40 years. So it's got all this incredible kind of wildlife.

68  
00:14:52.880 --> 00:15:00.600  
Jane Rendell: but to write that, to write about about that lake or not, rather to write the lake. I'm writing

69  
00:15:00.870 --> 00:15:20.940  
Jane Rendell: from 3 or 4 different viewpoints to a little island in the middle and writing it as because I swim across that make a lot swimming out and back. So, using the rhythm of swimming to right to right. So I think for me it's also very much about embodied experience. And perhaps that's where the memory parts really important.

70  
00:15:21.180 --> 00:15:29.190  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, absolutely. That's really fascinating. Writing as swimming. Yeah, I love that. It's amazing.

71  
00:15:29.230 --> 00:15:47.910  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, because in a lot of your work I definitely noticed how you had this correlation between the picture and like, and the quotes and stuff, and I think that was one about a housing estate. I can't remember what it's called, but like the way that you structure, your work is seems very important to kind of the work itself

72  
00:15:47.980 --> 00:15:51.290  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: And yeah, like

73  
00:15:51.540 --> 00:15:56.890  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: the Welsh Dresser as well. And yeah, it definitely kind of stands out to me. But

74  
00:15:56.950 --> 00:16:10.300  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I mean that's also because I'm like studying it like the way that you structure it. I think that is, I'll try to make that quite a distinctive thing.

75  
00:16:10.850 --> 00:16:17.790  
Jane Rendell: it's really how people in literary criticism

76  
00:16:17.840 --> 00:16:22.830  
Jane Rendell: have become more creative than what they do, and equally how maybe

77  
00:16:22.850 --> 00:16:39.420  
Jane Rendell: creative writers are more critical. So it works both ways. But it's. I have to say. I find that it's mainly about literary critics becoming more creative. So they're using creative genres in their critical writing. I think my work because

78  
00:16:39.490 --> 00:16:45.510  
Jane Rendell: because of the architectural context, and my interest in architecture is always trying to be spatial.

79  
00:16:45.680 --> 00:16:48.810  
Jane Rendell: So it's not just spatial in terms of

80  
00:16:49.480 --> 00:16:54.540  
Jane Rendell: taking into account the situatedness of writing like where you're writing from.

81  
00:16:54.590 --> 00:17:14.369  
Jane Rendell: and who you're writing to. But it's also making these spatial compositions out of words and images. I just was always really interested in pattern, in kind of weaving. So a lot of my writing has lots of different strands of voice. I think the Welsh Dresser was one of the first, where I just took the dresser

82  
00:17:14.430 --> 00:17:25.150  
Jane Rendell: and all the objects on it, and then it's these little compositions each time as a definition, a story, and an image, and one that I just finished, which will come out soon in this

83  
00:17:25.500 --> 00:17:36.760  
Jane Rendell: collection on the work of Roland Bart. It's called After He Had Gone, and that was based on actually my when I lost my dad. He was really, really in to.

84  
00:17:36.880 --> 00:17:44.540  
Jane Rendell: He was a hydrogeologist, really into landscape geology, and also into reading on landscape. So he'd left this

85  
00:17:44.540 --> 00:18:03.760  
Jane Rendell: set of books in his study, and they'd all I mean. He was terrible for not finishing anything, and I'm the same. Fiction I do finish, but theory books. I'm always multiple reading, and they've always got. Yes, they had all these bookmarks in them. And so I've structured that piece of writing on.

86  
00:18:04.190 --> 00:18:23.820  
Jane Rendell: taking each of the books and each of the pages where the bookmark was, and then, starting with a piece of text off the bookmark, and kind of riffing off that to it, to a quote from the page, and then going into something related to my dad's life, so I tend to

88  
00:18:28.360 --> 00:18:42.420  
Jane Rendell: I think it's, I mean I'm not a musician. Are you a musician at all? I mean, I think, for some musicians I mean, I actually stopped

89  
00:18:42.780 --> 00:18:56.480  
Jane Rendell: playing music because I was not very good at improvising, and I wanted to improvise, whereas actually what I found in writing, that by using these structures you can kind of improvise and make make things up as you go along.

90  
00:18:56.490 --> 00:19:08.270  
Jane Rendell: and that's what I make these connections. And then you just find different things happening we before the I am this old before the age of the computer

91  
00:19:08.270 --> 00:19:17.660  
Jane Rendell: when I wrote my dissertation for my architecture degree, which was called the Pyramid and the Labyrinth. It was a feminist kind of critique.

92  
00:19:17.680 --> 00:19:34.000  
Jane Rendell: The way I wrote it was on paper, handwritten, of course, but then I cut it all up and recomposed it. Now, in those days I was still, I hadn't known about collage writing and stuff, I mean. So I was. It's quite a linear argument.

93  
00:19:34.000 --> 00:19:45.530  
Jane Rendell: but when I've done it since, and I still quite often do it as a printed cut up thing, you can just recompose things in such an interesting way, and it draws out these different connections to ones that you would have

94  
00:19:45.600 --> 00:19:48.390  
Jane Rendell: originally sort of expected.

95  
00:19:49.110 --> 00:20:04.230  
Jane Rendell: Still, yeah, it's really where you can get it out of the computer, because you can't see everything, Print it out and lay it out. Sometimes you can compose it, and it

96  
00:20:04.530 --> 00:20:13.650  
Jane Rendell: You can come up with a structure, and I often call it a good enough structure, a structure that will just hold things

97  
00:20:13.910 --> 00:20:23.910  
Jane Rendell: enough to let you really develop them, so that you don't have to all at once know what the full argument is. And if you've used the site to generate

98  
00:20:24.070 --> 00:20:29.920  
Jane Rendell: the structure, then that also really helps, because you're not having to invent.

99  
00:20:29.970 --> 00:20:34.110  
Jane Rendell: You're not having to invent. You can borrow. You're borrowing from this site.

100  
00:20:34.370 --> 00:20:38.160  
Jane Rendell: I mean. There was a term which my

101  
00:20:38.400 --> 00:20:54.690  
Jane Rendell: colleague she used to did her Phd. with me, but just amazing artists called Polly Gould,

102  
00:20:55.270 --> 00:21:08.600  
Jane Rendell: Wow! That's beautiful because it is structured. When you try and form the writing to be like the site. There is a kind of classical



103  
00:21:08.650 --> 00:21:13.840  
Jane Rendell: tradition which is when you try and do a writing

104  
00:21:13.890 --> 00:21:18.170  
Jane Rendell: in praise of the site. I don't think it quite goes as far

105  
00:21:18.570 --> 00:21:26.450  
Jane Rendell: as being structured like the site, but it's like a in praise. So in in Poly's work

106  
00:21:26.580 --> 00:21:27.730  
Jane Rendell: she does this

107  
00:21:27.780 --> 00:21:39.460  
Jane Rendell: journey, following explorers out to the Antarctic and back. And so the whole book is structured as an out and back, and everything that's structured in one way on the out

108  
00:21:39.710 --> 00:21:47.290  
Jane Rendell: shifts in relation when you're going back. So it's not a mirror symmetry. She calls it a refraction.

109  
00:21:47.330 --> 00:22:04.710  
Jane Rendell: So there's a really nice kind of play down. If the journey can be a brilliant structuring mechanism. To walk can be a brilliant way of structuring.

110  
00:22:04.740 --> 00:22:12.070  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I'm definitely kind of trying to embody that in the thesis writing itself  
My interest in it kind of started Last year I was looking at the situationists and wandering. So

111  
00:22:12.080 --> 00:22:31.560  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: that came from there. So the idea of wondering and text is very interesting, like you know, the pleasure of the text. How reading a book can be the same as like reading a sites, and the way it's in and out of things. And yeah memories can come back to you, and

112  
00:22:31.560 --> 00:22:34.860  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: absolutely

113  
00:22:35.160 --> 00:22:45.150  
Jane Rendell: does it want you to read it linearly? How is that? Or does it want you to kind of go back and forth, or that's an interesting question.

114  
00:22:45.420 --> 00:22:53.490  
Jane Rendell: I would say it does bear a really nice linear read out and back, but you could dip in as well. I mean a bit like my

115  
00:22:53.710 --> 00:23:11.550  
Jane Rendell: architectural psychoanalysis book has got these 3 strands of writing. My thesis had 3 sort of strands, but maybe her book. I can't remember her books, whether she does it in strands or not, but they're definitely also vignette. So you can dip in.

116  
00:23:11.550 --> 00:23:24.400  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I would, cause I mean, I was gonna ask you about like how you want people to read your own work like would you prefer it to be linear? Whereas you kind of have this approach where you are like dissecting your own work and chopping it up and stuff. so

117  
00:23:24.440 --> 00:23:40.070  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: do you have that intention for people to also approach your work in a similar way of like. Oh, maybe they see this image that relates to something they're interested in, and they dip in there, and then they move around kind of what's your intention for that.

118  
00:23:41.270 --> 00:23:55.190  
Jane Rendell: I think I'm quite torn. I think both. Maybe I think the work can be read. Let's say, say you take the architecture of psychoanalysis, but I think you can dip into the different. That's like

119  
00:23:55.580 --> 00:23:58.520  
Jane Rendell: 3 strands in 5

120  
00:23:59.160 --> 00:24:09.290  
Jane Rendell: moved, so it's 15 part book. so you could read each strand individually, and I designed work with the designer to write it to the design.

121  
00:24:09.420 --> 00:24:18.000  
Jane Rendell: So it's. So it goes, you know ABC. First time, ABC. Second time, ABC third time, so you could.

122  
00:24:18.200 --> 00:24:28.430  
Jane Rendell: You could read, and each one is a sixteen-page section, because when you're making a book, you make them in sixteen-page sections, so each one I wrote

123  
00:24:28.440 --> 00:24:32.810  
Jane Rendell: the right number of words to fit each one's a double each.

124  
00:24:32.900 --> 00:24:38.580  
Jane Rendell: that but each one is a double-paced spread of image, and so each text is about.

125  
00:24:39.040 --> 00:24:44.380  
Jane Rendell: Each page can hold around 400 words. So I had to write each section no longer than

126  
00:24:44.780 --> 00:25:04.880  
Jane Rendell: What's it? 2,800 words ssh, and the design was very, very patient with that process like a loving, perfect yeah,

127  
00:25:04.880 --> 00:25:09.880  
Jane Rendell: But I also think there's something that happens when you kind of read through it.

128  
00:25:10.070 --> 00:25:15.120  
Jane Rendell: and some sections you have to turn on your on the side. Have you not seen a physical copy? Oh, I'll have to give you one.

130  
00:25:28.510 --> 00:25:37.900  
Jane Rendell: I'm just trying to think what I mean. I'm in all day on Thursday and some of Friday. Are you in then?

131  
00:25:37.980 --> 00:25:57.520  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I'm in unit 25. So I think that's by your office on the fourth floor. We'll come by.

132  
00:25:57.520 --> 00:26:14.190  
Jane Rendell: Then I could give you a physical copy, because I think, take a look at it, you know. It makes a big difference to just seeing it online. And I did actually get an email from one person. Soon after it came out he said to me.

133  
00:26:14.240 --> 00:26:28.100  
Jane Rendell: I'm really sorry to be the bearer of bad news. But you've made some really bad mistakes in your book because you've got the wrong captions under every image. And I said.

134  
00:26:28.140 --> 00:26:44.150  
Jane Rendell: Okay, no, that's actually intentional, because what I do is swap. I swap the captions yeah to sort of destabilize things, but I mean it's a complicated book.

135  
00:26:44.150 --> 00:27:01.020  
Jane Rendell: and it tries, maybe to do too many things because it's trying to make an up academic set of arguments around the development of corridors in communal housing and the development of psychoanalytic spaces is these transitional spaces, but it's also

136  
00:27:01.380 --> 00:27:19.240  
Jane Rendell: I guess it's performing its argument. It's more like an artist's book like, you know. Yeah, yeah. So a lot, you know now, and so many colleagues who work between writing and design.

137  
00:27:19.240 --> 00:27:22.480  
Jane Rendell: it's very difficult to find publishers who will

138  
00:27:22.620 --> 00:27:41.050  
Jane Rendell: go with that because publishers, my God, yeah, I was only able to do that book because it was my third book with that publisher, and the commissioning editor really really trusted me, and let me do what I wanted to do, and that publisher, unfortunately was brought up by another publisher, who doesn't, who's much more

139  
00:27:41.160 --> 00:27:42.950  
Jane Rendell: worried about

140  
00:27:43.340 --> 00:27:50.600  
Jane Rendell: making money.



141  
00:27:50.690 --> 00:28:09.180  
Jane Rendell: Yeah. So you got I mean, you've got small, small scale publishers who will take risks but publishers, but they're often putting in their own funds to support what they what they love.

142  
00:28:09.180 --> 00:28:21.880  
Jane Rendell: And then the academic publishers are working to very, very tight margin, so they would prefer a more conventional academic book. But interestingly, after I wrote Sit, Writing

143  
00:28:21.980 --> 00:28:40.690  
Jane Rendell: the commissioning editor at Bloomsbury, who now owns all my books, but before that was with continuum, it's all been brought up by Bloomsbury and James.

144  
00:28:40.690 --> 00:28:49.550  
Jane Rendell: and he said that actually a lot of people, once they'd read site writing. Wanted to do a book that was more like that. So I think there are.

145  
00:28:49.580 --> 00:29:10.770  
Jane Rendell: You know. I've been writing like this since 1998, or something. So quite a long time, and I think there are definitely more people doing these more experimental history and theory now, which is great because it means it's a much more creative discipline. I mean, there's still people doing very conventional work which is great, and there's plenty of room for that. But I think there's more

146  
00:29:11.310 --> 00:29:23.800  
Jane Rendell: There's a bit more openness to that way of working, because I think it's very like you're saying it kind of just makes sense for designers. I mean. The reason I did it in the first place, was because of teaching.

147  
00:29:24.040 --> 00:29:28.100  
Jane Rendell: So I started teaching. I used to run the

148  
00:29:28.500 --> 00:29:31.330  
Jane Rendell: fourth year history and theory program.

149  
00:29:31.340 --> 00:29:41.010  
Jane Rendell: This is back in 2000 to 2004, and my module was called. I think the first module I did was called Travel Stories, or maybe it was the Reading Room.

first module I did was called travel stories, or maybe it was the Reading Room.

150  
00:29:41.420 --> 00:29:51.500  
Jane Rendell: No, it wasn't. It was situated writing.. What I wanted to do was bring

151  
00:29:51.580 --> 00:30:11.470  
Jane Rendell: creative design, thinking and practice into seminars. So people would start there, working out what their station was, by bringing an object and writing that object. And then the next week they bring another object and write that. And the third week another one. So you sort of build things up

152  
00:30:11.470 --> 00:30:22.070  
Jane Rendell: in fragments and then start arranging and composing. And that's what got me working on it. I for me, research and teaching always really, really closely linked.

153  
00:30:22.370 --> 00:30:24.670  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, I mean, I was gonna ask about

154  
00:30:24.820 --> 00:30:36.940  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: You know, if you thought that writing was missing, like the practice of writing, was missing from teaching, and at least my experience of architectural education. It's not been a significant part it's just been

155  
00:30:37.090 --> 00:30:54.530  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Do the essay. It's not like kind of what's embodied in there. And I kind of wanted to know as well how you think actual practitioners like actual architects, how, for their own personal development, reading and writing could benefit them, because a lot of people Don't read nowadays.

156  
00:30:54.530 --> 00:31:07.380  
Jane Rendell: you know, they don't have this practice.

157  
00:31:07.520 --> 00:31:14.970  
Jane Rendell: writing workshops and creative writing, I really feel it should be part of architectural education.

158  
00:31:15.010 --> 00:31:20.550  
Jane Rendell: I mean I teach it now on the Ma. Situated practice and architectural history. But I do miss

159  
00:31:20.580 --> 00:31:26.930  
Jane Rendell: running the module for professional practice, and I, you know, it would be really nice in the future to come back to that

160  
00:31:27.020 --> 00:31:38.210  
Jane Rendell: because I think it, I just think it suits the architecture's sensibility to work with writing creatively, and combine it with drawing and with image, making.

161  
00:31:38.560 --> 00:31:55.610  
Jane Rendell: So I think it should be part of architectural education, and also I mean the other part of it. For me, like I said, is about situated knowledge and taking responsibility for kind of where you are and who you're writing to. And I think that the ethics of that

162  
00:31:55.680 --> 00:31:59.340  
Jane Rendell: is really important. As well, because when you are

163  
00:31:59.640 --> 00:32:03.770  
Jane Rendell: kind of writing in a disembodied way. You're not really taking

164  
00:32:04.080 --> 00:32:06.880  
Jane Rendell: responsibility for

165  
00:32:07.240 --> 00:32:20.300  
Jane Rendell: for the places that you're connected to, or and I think that that kind of ethical responsibility and architecture is very important. So I think it should be part of education. I'd love to to see.

166  
00:32:20.300 --> 00:32:30.320  
Jane Rendell: you know shifts that to the curriculum that would allow that. I mean, I know Robin, who runs the fourth year. He's really into this kind of writing I don't who supervised you in fourth year

167  
00:32:31.570 --> 00:32:41.400  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I did ornamentation

169  
00:32:48.440 --> 00:32:59.900  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: yeah, I wrote some really interesting stuff, but the project kind of felt really too short to kind of really dig into it, you know.

170  
00:33:00.080 --> 00:33:09.560  
Jane Rendell: I think it's the essay form, it should be much more open to that, because the essay form is actually a creative form. But I think in the University setting the essay for

171  
00:33:09.760 --> 00:33:18.130  
Jane Rendell: is quite often the academic essay, and also for some people. It's a real challenge to write that much, anyway, so

172  
00:33:18.270 --> 00:33:22.330  
Jane Rendell: there has to be a kind of safe structure to write in, I think.

173  
00:33:23.600 --> 00:33:29.490  
Jane Rendell: in terms of architects themselves. I think the architects who who write

174  
00:33:29.600 --> 00:33:31.880  
Jane Rendell: I mean someone like Neil Mclaughlin.

175  
00:33:31.970 --> 00:33:33.060  
Jane Rendell: Yeah.

176  
00:33:33.080 --> 00:34:01.040  
Jane Rendell: And yeah, I think. And there's a brilliant architect at Edinburgh, Ed Hollis. Do you know Hollis? It's not hyper academic at all. It's lovely. He's a brilliant writer. I think it enriches imagination.

177  
00:34:01.040 --> 00:34:06.510  
Jane Rendell: While people have different aptitudes for drawing some people do really

178  
00:34:06.860 --> 00:34:17.750  
Jane Rendell: naturally draw, whereas other people find it hard. They can learn to do it, but it's much harder. I think it's the same with writing, I think, for some people they just... it really



179  
00:34:17.969 --> 00:34:36.870  
Jane Rendell: opens them up. It captures the imagination. It helps create spaces and things, I think, for others sometimes to do with the way they've been introduced to writing in their earlier life can be quite hard, and it takes a while. That's why, when I do the site writing workshops in my

180  
00:34:36.900 --> 00:34:38.429  
Jane Rendell: course

181  
00:34:39.020 --> 00:34:56.469  
Jane Rendell: I always do experimental short pieces of writing, so that people don't think. Oh, my God, I've got to do this long piece. They're more sort of building up in the fragments. That's why I love that Virginia wolf fragment. Because it just shows in a couple of 100 words you can just capture the essence of a place.

182  
00:34:56.840 --> 00:34:59.510  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, absolutely

183  
00:34:59.550 --> 00:35:13.180  
Jane Rendell: I mean. That's why I kind of took to that quote, and then kind of use it as a thread throughout my discussion of her, like the fact of the soon vessels and the threads literally in the boat. Yeah, she's amazing. Are you writing any of your own?

184  
00:35:13.430 --> 00:35:19.920  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, I'm planning to kind of have it weaved throughout, and kind of just

185  
00:35:20.160 --> 00:35:21.120  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: make it.

186  
00:35:21.310 --> 00:35:33.710  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: It's like a decentralized text. So it's not like you're kind of stuck, you know. You have to read it linearly like it's supposed to be kind of confusing. But the intelligence of the reader

187  
00:35:33.720 --> 00:35:34.980  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: back and forth.

188  
00:35:35.100 --> 00:35:40.230  
Jane Rendell: That sounds beautiful, and then you're trying to do.

191  
00:35:47.130 --> 00:35:53.330  
Jane Rendell: wait. Oh, I can hear you again. Sorry, I just said that sounded really lovely.

192  
00:35:53.710 --> 00:35:55.200  
Jane Rendell: Yeah.

193  
00:35:55.250 --> 00:36:09.240  
Jane Rendell: And you're trying to do that for Blake as well. And yeah, yeah, well, William Blake is incredible.

194  
00:36:09.240 --> 00:36:17.780  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: You know, in the way that each copy was never a copy that he produced it was always a slightly different iteration of the same poem or piece. So I love that way that

195  
00:36:17.800 --> 00:36:30.240  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: you know you may be handed a copy of William Blake, but it's could be anything, you know. It doesn't mean that you must read

196  
00:36:30.240 --> 00:36:37.930  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: this poem and then that one. And then there's like an image in that connects to this kind of one over here, and you make those natural connections

197  
00:36:37.970 --> 00:36:43.160  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: thats why I was intrigued about your writing process, and how you can kind of connect

198  
00:36:43.170 --> 00:36:54.540  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: things like, especially with the psychoanalysis book that you wrote. It sounds kind of disparate

199  
00:36:54.610 --> 00:36:59.870  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: the psychoanalysis like justifies things, and you want to move around through the text.

200  
00:37:00.210 --> 00:37:11.970  
Jane Rendell: Oh, that's great. It's lovely to hear that as a response, because I mean if we talk about association, so in that psychoanalysis book

201  
00:37:13.290 --> 00:37:32.700  
Jane Rendell: I purposely didn't have a formal introduction. And that was another thing was so happy that the publisher trusted me on that. So there's no formal introduction. In fact, there were 3 alternative introductions at the end of the book, and one of them does talk about the psychoanalytic method and free association.

202  
00:37:32.910 --> 00:37:51.430  
Jane Rendell: Just kind of writing what comes to mind and that can be what's really nice about setting yourself like little 1 min exercises to write an image or a site without over analyzing. So just whatever comes to mind, and then kind of crafting that, and I mean

203  
00:37:51.550 --> 00:37:58.660  
Jane Rendell: As as a method. It sounds like with your Virginia Woolf, if it's not sequential that it could be

204  
00:37:58.700 --> 00:38:03.760  
Jane Rendell: read in any order. How the reader arranges. It is a sort of active

205  
00:38:03.810 --> 00:38:21.340  
Jane Rendell: curation as well, I mean you might. There's there was a brilliant show. It's a long time ago by an artist called Tessa Dean which just look it up because it was at the Camden Arts Center, and she used free association as the

206  
00:38:21.340 --> 00:38:24.370  
Jane Rendell: model for how she curated the show.

207  
00:38:24.520 --> 00:38:32.130  
Jane Rendell: Okay. And I think you'd really like her work, too, because it's very suggestive. It just kind of a lot of her work is

208  
00:38:33.570 --> 00:38:34.450  
Jane Rendell: quite.

209  
00:38:34.630 --> 00:38:42.110  
Jane Rendell: It's not didactic. It's quite subtle, quite light.

211  
00:38:57.030 --> 00:39:04.680  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I guess that kind of relates to how you experience a sites because you form your own connections, and you go. Oh, this reminds me of

212  
00:39:04.870 --> 00:39:14.500  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: I don't know some place I visited last week, or whatever our childhood memory, you know, and you make these free associations. I think it's why it's very important to

213  
00:39:14.610 --> 00:39:27.500  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: kind of the text to have that wandering that you can kind of lose yourself in and out. Yeah, I guess that piece in the site writing book called She is Walking About in this Town She Does Not Know

214  
00:39:27.640 --> 00:39:29.290  
Jane Rendell: that's trying to

215  
00:39:29.380 --> 00:39:48.710  
Jane Rendell: riff off a an essay by Freud on that topic, an artwork by Sharon Kiffland, but also this show off these 7, or maybe it was 9 artists who were doing the show in Brittany in this town that I was never going to get to see it because of the timing. So I had to write the essay

216  
00:39:48.710 --> 00:39:59.170  
Jane Rendell: based on sketches of the artworks they were going to make, and a few maps and photographs of the place. So I based it on this kind of imagined walk through the site.

217  
00:39:59.830 --> 00:40:04.610  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: That's really interesting, very relevant to kind of

218  
00:40:04.990 --> 00:40:20.300  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: to how I treat reading, and how you can visit all these places. Yeah, which is kind of like where this thesis kind of began with that idea. And then kind of

219  
00:40:20.610 --> 00:40:39.160  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: blossomed from that.



221  
00:40:44.940 --> 00:40:54.640  
Jane Rendell: And then, you know, there are really great intros to Freud. This I always say to people, yeah, sure, read the original.

222  
00:40:54.920 --> 00:41:09.890  
Jane Rendell: we and then read other people on Freud or really, I mean, this is a brilliant book. I just came. We found it yesterday. Yeah. Quite heavy going. It sounds like You've got quite a lot to read. This is a great book.

223  
00:41:09.970 --> 00:41:27.250  
Jane Rendell: This is just reading Freud, you know, literally a to Z. A chronological route through Freud, so I never shy away from intros to writers. I don't take them in place of the writer, but I think they can be really helpful.

224  
00:41:27.890 --> 00:41:36.390  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Yeah, especially when you first kind of approach it, and that's so like amorphous.

225  
00:41:36.470 --> 00:41:48.200  
Jane Rendell: I mean, you know, he wrote so much. Also, you're doing this alongside design. So you don't have the luxury of days and days in the library reading through

226  
00:41:48.200 --> 00:41:58.950  
Jane Rendell: You've got to sort of get to grips with it quite, quite swiftly. It sounds to me. I'm sorry, but I am. I have to go for another meeting. But it sounds to me like

227  
00:41:59.270 --> 00:42:03.960  
Jane Rendell: You've chosen these 3 authors, and that I would just yeah, really.

228  
00:42:04.120 --> 00:42:13.800  
Jane Rendell: really work to respond to their work in the situated way that you're doing

229  
00:42:13.880 --> 00:42:16.800  
Jane Rendell: Of course, the theoretical reading.

230  
00:42:17.220 --> 00:42:31.100  
Jane Rendell: I think you could introduce some ideas, theoretical ideas that might be relevant, and in the conclusion you can come back and reflect on it. But

231  
00:42:31.100 --> 00:42:38.150  
Jane Rendell: responding to the writing is the interesting way to do it.

232  
00:42:38.380 --> 00:42:43.400  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Okay, didn't really consider that approach so much

235  
00:43:04.850 --> 00:43:16.320  
Jane Rendell: But I wouldn't leave if you're really interested in the effective power of images for writing. I wouldn't leave that effective writing to the end.

237  
00:43:26.910 --> 00:43:28.050  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Okay.

238  
00:43:28.050 --> 00:43:48.090  
Jane Rendell: yeah, I mean, it's great to get advice from other people other than just one person, you know. So yeah, I really appreciate that. Yeah, I mean it. Doesn't have to disrupt what you're doing. But it I think it can in it can really inform it, because it might just give you some clues as to things that are then going to be really important in the more conventional writing.

239  
00:43:48.320 --> 00:43:54.130  
Jane Rendell: Yeah, even kind of small writing exercises, like writing for a minute or something in response

240  
00:43:54.130 --> 00:44:09.750  
Jane Rendell: to something like you were suggesting earlier could be quite beneficial. I would try that. I think it can be real. It can just take you to a different type of place in your writing where you're really attentive to your emotions and sensations rather than to the intellectualization.

241  
00:44:09.920 --> 00:44:14.500  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: Hmm. Cause I guess that is very significant to what I'm. Looking at is like

242  
00:44:14.660 --> 00:44:23.470  
Olivia J O'Callaghan: the embodied emotions and senses, embodied in writing.

243  
00:44:23.580 --> 00:44:32.280  
Jane Rendell: and that could even work as prefaces to each of your sections.

