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Montage In Architecture: A Critical And Creative Perception Of Our Space In The Everyday

Sze Wong
Ryerson University

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MONTAGE IN ARCHITECTURE:

A CRITICAL AND CREATIVE PERCEPTION
OF OUR SPACE IN THE EVERYDAY

Sze Wong

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in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
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Abstract

This thesis engages with our experience of architecture in the everyday. We appropriate spaces in a state of distraction. It slips past unnoticed by our critical minds. It is not until we look through the eyes and minds of artists that we begin to 'see' our everyday environment. But as soon as we 'see', we contemplate architecture as abstracted art. This mode of seeing distances architecture away from our daily experience.

This thesis searches for the possibility to superimpose, on top of our passiveness, a critical and creative perception of spaces in the everyday. This perception allows us to be far enough to 'see', while at the same time close and loose enough for questions and reinterpretations. Montage carries the critical and creative potential to encourage such a perception. This thesis explores and reveals aspects within montage and their engagement with architectural design to put forward this other possible perception.

Acknowledgements

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I would not have been able to pull through this thesis without them.

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All other illustrations in Appendices unless otherwise noted are produced by the author.

Thesis Statement

Montage is a potent creative principle to superimpose a critical perception on our understanding of space in the everyday. This emancipating potential of montage is revealed through four concepts from related literature: alienation, nonorganicity, close-up, and gap. Together, these concepts exposed a mode of engaging with the subject of montage as the conceptualization of a mental and physical space that inspires our critical and creative perception of its immediate context.
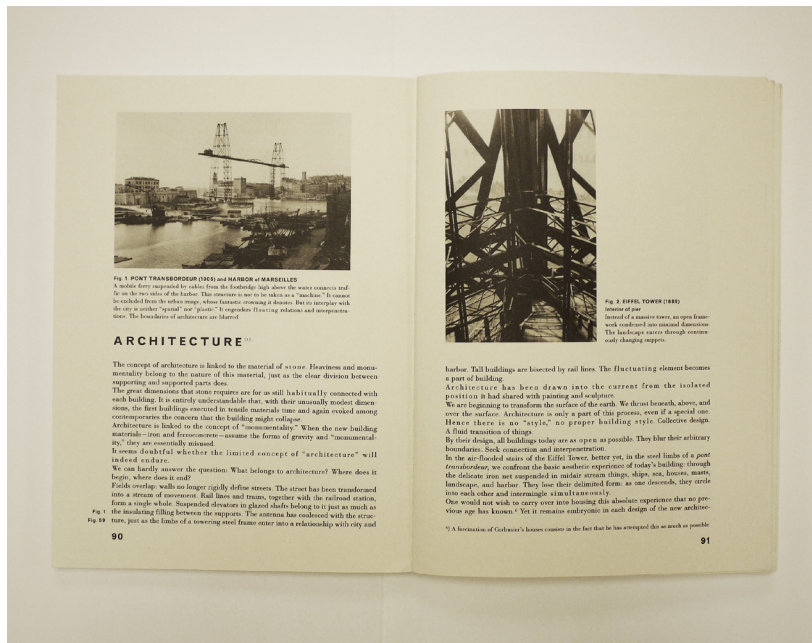
Figure i (above): a sample spread of Giedion's book Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete

Notes on the structure of the book:
montage as exposition (typography)

As montage is the central concept to be explored in this thesis, the structure and organization of this document is also prepared to reflect this practice while still trying to remain the linear clarity of thought expected from a thesis document.

The organization of the book's first two chapters are kept relatively linear in order to set up the background, problem, and direction of this thesis. Chapter 3 will begin to introduce the site for design exploration. Chapter 4, the main body of this thesis document, will present both theoretical research and design work simultaneously. In Chapter 4, design work is presented in fragments in relation to theoretical research and case studies.

There are two layers of texts throughout the book. The first layer is the research portion which is kept as a linear narrative. The second layer of texts are to be read more as fragmented captions and quotations to accompany the figures and possibly feed into the interpretation of the design work.

Then the layout of the figures, inspired by Sigfried Giedion's book *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete*, are often placed in pairs to perhaps inspire a 'dialogue of picture' (Deriu, 2007, p.52). Many figures are intentionally presented to be photographed as supposed to be perfectly scanned and digitally incorporated into the book. It is to remind the readers that this book is a construct of text and figures that were either created or selected by the author. This is, again, trying to adhere to the central theme of montage in this thesis.

Figure 1.1 (opposite): a collection of photos taken while travelling across the different circulation routes through Commerce Court.

Chapter 1:
introduction and problem

1.1 Experience and perception of architecture: the everyday and the contemplative

We experience and perceive our built environment in two ways.

On an everyday basis, we occupy our immediate built environment as it accommodates all aspects of our lives. We live in our homes, work in the office, and travel through subway stations. Architecture fades to the background as we concentrate on our activity at hand. According to Walter Benjamin (1934), we appropriate buildings through habit in a distracted state, absentmindedly (p.22).

Then occasionally, we contemplate architecture as art. During a visit to the Pantheon as a tourist or at the opening of the city gallery's new addition, we experience architecture differently. We are no longer distracted. Our level of concentration during contemplation varies depending on the relevance of functionality in that space.

For example, for the modern visitor, the original function of the Pantheon as a temple no longer exist—it will likely have our full contemplative attention. Visiting the city gallery's new addition at its opening is a mixed experience. Attention is split between contemplating the architecture of the new addition, viewing the exhibition content, and participating in the social event. In each case, our attention towards the architecture is much based on novelty, making this an often one-off experience. We rarely pay this much attention to spaces we occupy on an everyday basis. It is not until photos of our familiar built environment are exhibited in galleries, published in books or incorporated as part of an art event, that we begin to view them differently.

We often do not 'see'* the built environment we occupy on an everyday basis until it is presented to us through the lens of a different medium and setting.

* For a definition of 'seeing' within the context of this thesis, please see section 6.1 Seeing from a critical distance: a dialogue with Scott Sorli, p. 80.

Figure 1.2 (opposite): the same complex presented in a professional architectural photograph. In contrast to the collection of photos from the previous page, this view of the building invites us to contemplate it as art.

CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)
Commerce Court West exterior, west side

Ezra Stoller, 1973

1.2 Walter Benjamin's aura:
the change in the perception of art and the everyday

Walter Benjamin speaks about the change in the reception of art in a society when arts' aura withered as they become mechanically reproducible.

A traditional work of art (like painting and sculpture), because of its unique existence in time and space, is surrounded by an aura. This aura creates a distanced relationship between reality, the art, and its viewer through the 'virtue of his authority' (Benjamin, 1934, p.16). The art work absorbs its viewer. The viewer becomes a receiver of a total constructed illusion of reality by the artist. It is a hierarchical relationship where the viewer is at a passive position.

Then in contrast to a traditional work of art, there is the mechanically reproducible work of art (like photo and film). These new works of art, because they are no longer tied to the notion of the authenticity of the original, their 'aura' disappears (Benjamin, 1934). Reality, the art, and its viewer are brought much closer together while the mystic authority of the artist is reduced; the public mass absorbs the work. Viewers are bought to the position of a critic, which resembles closer to what Hill refers to as the creative user.

Architecture, as defined by Walter Benjamin, is the prime example of art where the work is absorbed by the mass (Benjamin, 1934).

1.3 The (absence of) aura in architecture: from reduction to the elimination of distance

Although Walter Benjamin identified architecture as a prime example of art absorbed by the mass, we cannot infer that it may be absentmindedly examined by the public similar to other art, such as film, that is absorbed by the mass.

First of all, most architecture, by its nature, is not a piece of mechanically reproducible piece of work. So the reduction of aura and the artists' authority that comes as a consequence of reproducibility does not apply

to architecture. Instead, this apparent absence of aura in architecture suggested by Walter Benjamin comes from a different characteristic of architecture. This characteristic is hinted by Benjamin's description of how buildings are "appropriated by the mass through habits" (1934, p.22). What reduces the aura of architecture is the fact that architecture is very often not received as art that stands between reality and the viewer. It is integrated as part of reality as people occupy architecture on an everyday basis.

Traditional art sets up a great distance between reality, artwork and viewer.

This distance avoids the artwork to be examined by the viewer.

Mechanically reproducible art reduces this distance.

This reduction of distance makes the artwork more approachable and invites examination by the viewer.

Architecture can completely erase this distance because we occupy it in real life on an everyday basis.

The total elimination of distance leaves no room for the work to be examined by the viewer because there is no more 'artwork' to be viewed nor examined.

The reduction of an object's aura closes its distance to the mass, making it more approachable for examination. As in the case of architecture, while the complete elimination of aura in the everyday will surely make the built environment 'most ready to be examined', people often miss this opportunity because of the complete absence of a critical distance. An underlying premise in this thesis is that a critical spectator can desirably be distracted, like Benjamin's film audience, but never completely absentminded.*

In contrast to the everyday, we try to reestablish the critical distance by seeing our built environment through the use of other mediums. Architecture is then read as a contemplative experience.

* The word distraction [zerstreuung] used by Walter Benjamin also has the connotation of 'entertainment'. (Ferris, 2008). But on the other hand, Bertolt Brecht with his Epic theatre argued otherwise. For him, those who were entertained and drawn away by the action cannot not think. "This was the essence of theatre of Bertolt Brecht, he didn't design plays to entertain passive spectators his plays were designed to challenge the audience, he challenged them to think, and to see possibilities for change. This was what Brecht liked to call dialectical theatre." (Willett, 1989)

1.4 Seeing through an external medium:
the artist's work and architectural photography
(someone's position)   **(some other means)**

We attempt to reestablish the critical distance between ourselves and architecture through two types of external media: artwork and architectural photography.

The first medium, artwork, provides direct or indirect critiques on architecture through the eyes of the artist.

An example of work that directly critiques would be experimental buildings and installations like the *NhEW* by Tanja Jordan Architects and TK Architecture. The work itself, regardless of its medium or format, responds explicitly to one or many architectural issues. The position of the artist is communicated through the work and is to be received by the public through their understanding of the work. These are statements about concepts and principles on architecture.

Figure 1.3 (above): Tanja Jordan Architects and TK Architecture, NhEW, 1999. The quote "The state of discomfort rouses the sense." by journalist Matthew Stadler was included with the images of the work. This work questioned the idea of comfort in architecture.

An example of indirect work would be the projections by public artist Krzysztof Wodiczko. He works with three elements in his projections: "a projected image, a chosen site, a particular issue" (May, 1991). The chosen site often includes an architectural monument where Wodiczko would project his images onto the surfaces of the building. Architecture in his work is used symbolically as a component to bring out the social/political situation to be questioned and challenged by the work. Although the central driver for the work is the particular issue, spectators are nevertheless implicitly invited to rethink their relationship with that chosen monument and what it represents in our lives.

For example, in Wodiczko's 1983 *Stuttgart Railway Projection*, the dominating power of the automobile business over the city is expressed. Then it also brings attention to how the capitalist corporation had executed its power symbolically in our built environment. The Mercedes-Benz logo, rotating, sits on top of the clock tower, overtaking the railway station, a structure of mass transportation and industry.

Figure 1.4 (above): "Stuttgart Railway Station Projection, Stuttgart," 1983.

Figure 1.5 (above): shown above is one of Krzysztof Wodiczko's projections: "Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.," 1988. Public projection at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

The artwork provided us with architectural criticism that is brought to the surface by the artist, which we may then associate with our everyday built environment. Although inspiring and provocative, if our critical perception of architecture solely depends on the commentary expressed by art, it will become heavily directed by the artist. The individual's perception is formed under the direction of the artist and his/her position. Much of our attention is spent interpreting the expression of the artist's position in the artwork. We become absorbed by the work.

The second medium, architectural photography, includes works that appear as a portrayal of architecture. We come across this type of work in books and magazines, on web sites, and through exhibitions. Architectural photography portrays the building directly to us as the subject to be viewed. Where the artwork presents a critique of architecture to us, architectural photography presents to us the built environment itself. The position of the artist seems more subtle. However, when architectural photography had put forward architecture itself as the subject for contemplation, it often fails, even at times prevents, a critical perception of our relationship with our everyday built environment.

* The artist's position on their subject is always embodied in the artwork, even for avant-garde artist whose work is partially created by the spectator as "the meaning may well be the message that meaning has ceased to exist" (Bürger, 1974, p.70).

1.5 Little essay of (architectural) photography: professional portrayal of architecture through a lens

The way architecture is portrayed as the central subject of our attention in contemporary architectural photography is very limiting in terms of its ability to invite us to reflect upon our built environment.

Suzhou Museum Hours:
9 am to 5 pm

Figure 1.6 (above): this is a postcard showing the stone garden in I.M.Pei's Suzhou Museum. The concept behind the garden is inspired by Chinese landscape paintings. This night shot has successfully communicated this idea.

Eugène Atget's photographs:

Figure 1.7 (top): Corner of the rue de Seine and the rue de l'Echaudé, 1919.

Figure 1.8 (bottom): Flat of Mme D. - The dining room, 1910.

* This was stated in his essay Little History of Photography, which was written in 1931, shortly after Atget's death in 1972. Also, Atget's legacy in photography is associated more with the surrealist artistic movement as Walter Benjamin (1931) had stated in the same essay.

Walter Benjamin described in his essay *Little History of Photography* how Eugène Atget's photographs of Paris have the power to establish "a salutary estrangement between man and his surroundings" (1931, p.519) because of the absence of humans in his works. The streets of Paris and interiors of houses in Atget's photographs appear strangely deserted. The scenes depicted looked as if they should be occupied by people while there are none shown. This discrepancy creates a sense of estrangement that let observers to reassess their relationship to the material world. For Benjamin, these photographs stand as a new way of seeing in opposition to commercial, conventional portrait photography which he associated with the greatest sense of self-indulgence.

However, it is important to notice that Atget's photographs were not part of the mainstream professional architectural photographs of his time. Benjamin (1931) states that "the contemporary journals knew nothing of the man, who … sold them [his photographs] for next to nothing" (p.518)*. Professional architectural photography, which is still the most common way in which architecture is portrayed to the public today, worked very differently.

In the 1930s, photography of new buildings had developed into a purposeful activity (Robinson & Herschman, 1987). By the 1960s, new buildings were only photographed by professional photographers who worked for the architectural profession and magazine editors (Robinson & Herschman, 1987). A "propagandizing style" was developed within the professional field (Robinson & Herschman, 1987, p.110). This attitude is still quite visible in today's architectural photography.

Architectural photography viewed by the public today is mostly what Eric de Maré identified as the second type of architectural photography, the 'Illustration'. The aim of 'Illustration' is to present the subject piece of architecture to be as attractive as possible (Maré, 1975). This type of illustrative architectural photographs are often characterized by their lack of human presence. But their effect is very different from Atget's images of Paris. Instead of looking strangely deserted, scenes from illustrative photographs looked as if there were never (and never meant to have) any traces of human presence. From post-WW2 majestic exteriors and sterile interiors by Ezra Stoller to contemporary slightly less pristine images, these photographs always exhibited architecture as art to be contemplated.

Rather than reducing the aura through photography as suggested by Benjamin's reading of Atget's photo, professionally commissioned architectural photographs have instead reinforced the aura around architecture. Spaces shown in architectural photography have disconnected architecture from human everyday occupation. The advancement of digital editing enabled this detachment to further increase. Some photographers have their images "so thoroughly re-touched that they look as fake as computerized renderings" (Shulman & Baan, 2012, p.20).

Pallasmaa (2011) commented how today's physical world is displaced by imagery that has created "its own reality that is often more 'real' than the existing physical and human worlds" (p.16). Arguably, architectural photography now has the power to even affect how we look at architecture even when we are experiencing it in first person. Images of architecture have 'taught' us what we should look for when we are trying to appreciate it in first person.

Some of today's photographers persued more life-like architectural photographs. Architectural magazines also opted for images that convey a project's essence in terms of a sense of the experience and context in addition to the traditional details and materials (Shulman & Baan, 2012).

The aura in architecture produced by architectural photography lies in the nature of the medium even when professional photographers tried to portray a sense of the experience in space. Even with the movie camera, there is no comparison to the complex experience of moving through a building in first person. Photography can successfully express architecture's external form, structure and façade but falls short in its representation of architecture's internal experience (Maré, 1975).

For Maré (1975), architecture's internal experience is four dimensional. When we are inside a building, we are not only experiencing three dimensional architectural spaces, but we also experience the space with our moving bodies. This makes up the fourth dimension, the bodily temporal experience, which photography cannot represent. In contrast, when we are admiring the exterior structure and form of a piece of architecture from the outside, we view it mostly as a three dimensional object. The two dimensional image can more easily represent architecture as an object to look at than as spaces that we walk through (Maré, 1975).

Touring the Pantheon in Rome:

Figure 1.9 (top): iconic photograph of the interior of the Pantheon.

Figure 1.10 (bottom): image of tourist looking up towards the skylight. The view from this angle will look strikingly similar to the iconic photograph, as shown in a photograph I took from a similar spot (below).

Figure 1.11: photograph of Pantheon's interior taken by author.

With photography's natural advantage for displaying architectural form, material and space, even at times where people are included in a shot, they are often abstracted. People became props to communicate design aspects such as scale of space, intended use, and desirable atmosphere. Architectural photography abstracts architecture and only displays its most ideal experience, as framed by the photographer (Figure 1.12). It rarely, if ever, allows for reflection upon our relationship with our built environment as real everyday scenarios.

When we 'see' architecture portrayed through another medium, architecture becomes an abstracted, auratic art detached from real life. Our relationship with architecture during our daily occupation of it is not part of this discussion. Since our relationship with architecture during our daily presence in it comprises the majority of our experience, it is important for us to be able to reflect upon it. This reflection should be within our daily experience with architecture.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

INSPIRED BY SHIMMERING PATTERNS OF LIGHT AT THE BOTTOM
OF THE POOL, THIS EXPANSION TO AN EXISTING MONTREAL
RECREATIONAL FACILITY ADDS NEW LIFE TO THE COMMUNITY.

Figure 1.12 (below left): Ken
Hedrich, Albert Kahn's Dodge Half-
Ton Truck Plant in Detroit, 1938.
In this photo, "The perspective
gives the building a more dynamic
air and emphasizes the glassiness
of the facade ... nudges us in the
direction Ken Hedrich, Albert Kahn
and the original publishers of the
picture want us to go." (Robinson
and Herschman, 1987, p.110)
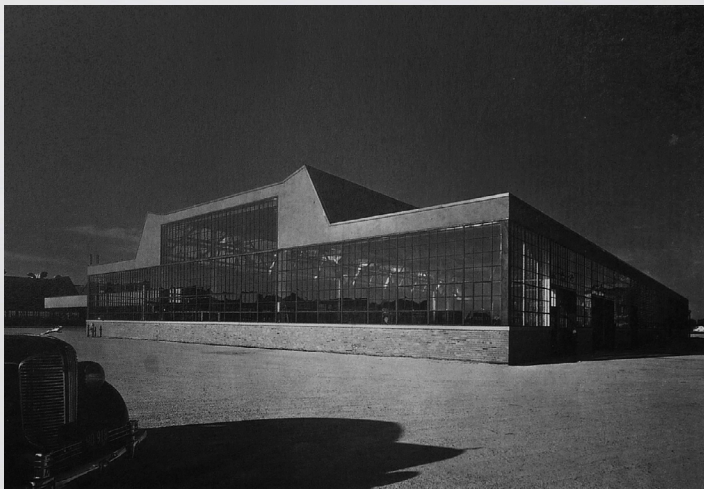
Figure 1.13 (below right): A
spread from a 2011 issue of an
architectural magazine. The
exterior shot of this sport centre
addition emphasized the facade
pattern created by the coloured
masonry as it was one of the
building's major features.

2011

1938

2011

Figure 1.14 (above): Ezra Stoller, Western Petroleum Corporation Headquarters, interior, lobby, 1957.

Figure 1.15 (left): A spread from a 2011 issue of an architectural magazine. In contemporary architectural photography, the absence of people and exaggerating perspective is still frequent, even in showing the interior of a community sports centre's new addition.

Figure 1.16 (below): Ezra Stoller, Seagram Building, exterior, overview, 1958.

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1.6 The passive user: our current role in the experience and perception of our everyday built environment

In our perception of our immediate built environment, whether through the everyday or the contemplative experience, we act as, what Jonathan Hill defined as, the passive user. The passive user is "consistent, predictable and transforms neither use, space nor meaning, whether performing useful tasks according to functionalist principles, following a sequence of spaces directed by the architect, or contemplating a building as an artwork" (Hill, 2003, p.88).

In the everyday, we passively occupy our spaces as created by the architect because we are absorbed into a state of absentmindedness. We miss any opportunities for critical perception because the everyday is too approachable, and we are unable to achieve critical distance.

As we distance ourselves from the everyday, perceiving our built environment through other mediums like architectural photography, we are conditioned to passively become absorbed by architecture as art. Architecture is idealized and abstracted and our real, individual human experience connected with it is overlooked. Or, we have to rely on artistic initiatives, being only able to examine architecture through another mind and pair of eyes.

The foundational intent for this thesis is to respond to our passiveness in our perception of architecture in the everyday by creating an environment that has the potential to free us from this passive role. It is the creation of another critical and creative perception in addition to our current conditions. It is the creation of a space (both mental and physical) for us to challenge the established meaning of, and our relationship with, the built environment that we occupy.

Chapter 2:
in search for the potential direction

2.1 From passive to creative:
encouraging intellectual creativity

Opposite to the passive user is the creative user. They are users who can create new spaces and give new meaning to existing spaces different from established ones (Hill, 2003).

Hill (2003) has identified five types of user creativity: mental, bodily, physical, constructional, and conceptual (p.88). The user creativity described by Hill can either be corporeal or intellectual. Corporeal creativity involves changes in our physical environment or our action within the environment. But prior to engagement in physical creativity, we must first be able to be intellectually creative. Intellectual creativity allows, but does not necessary involve any physical changes or action.

In becoming a creative user, the access to a state of intellectual creativity forms the basis for emancipating us from our passive roles in our current perception of architecture in the everyday environment. The architecture that allows the meaning and intensions of its design to be challenged through critical reflection and reinterpretation would encourage intellectual user creativity during our everyday experience in it.

2.2 Detour: Interacting with architecture as a creative user

Recently, architects have experimented with environments which would encourage active participation and engagement by making architecture "interactive". There is a general consensus that interactive architecture is characterized by the adaptation of interactive elements in architecture.* This consensus is also exemplified with a survey of architectural projects considered to be interactive.

With the intent to respond to our passive perception of architecture, this thesis examines the word "interaction" and its relationship with architecture beginning from a more rudimentary perspective. The involvement of computation technology is not a prerequisite. The concern is to define what is interactivity. A collection of text related to interactive architecture was examined.** It was determined that 'interactive' is characterized to be as enabling a relationship that is: continuous, open, non-deterministic and two-way. It is a dialogue.

It was concluded that, with or without the presence of the most current technology, an interactive relationship with architecture is a continuous and open dialogue with space. When we are in such a dialogue with our built environment, we become emancipated from our role as passive users. This is because creativity is required for a user to engage in an open dialogue with architecture.

The current focus of interactive architecture research on the advancement of interactive elements does not directly respond to this thesis's concern of our current passive perception of architecture. However, the understanding of the rudimentary meaning of 'interactivity' as a continuous, open dialogue provided qualities that pointed to another possible direction to be explored—montage.***

* Kas Oosterhuis in 2006 defined interactive architecture as primary "the art of building relationships between built components" where interactive architecture components are technically input-processing-output devices (p.4-7). Then Michael Fox in 2009 (p.96) described that current interactive architecture is an environment that will be able to automatically change physically in order to adapt and respond. This is based on the use of embedded computation and kinetic building components to facilitate human and environmental interaction.

** Texts examined include Usman Haque's essays such as Distinguishing concepts – lexicons of interactive art and architecture and Architecture – interaction – systems, Michael Fox's book titled Interactive Architecture and Kas Oosterhuis's iA.

*** This initial speculation came from the idea that montage worked with the assembly of fragmented material to be interpreted by the receiver. This mode of interpretation initiates the receiver to a dialogue with the work as fragments and gives the possibility for interpretation in numerous ways.

2.3 Montage and architectural montage: an overview of a multifaceted subject

It is believed that a critical dialogue should be an essential part of our everyday architectural experience. It is proposed in this thesis that we can create architecture that anticipates the creative user by exploring montage's critical and creative potential.

Montage

The concept of montage became a popular technique in mediums such as film and photography by the 1930s and was discussed in Walter Benjamin's writings around that time. In his writings, Benjamin praised the revelation power of montage to elevate the status of the masses to that of critic. The majority of his discussions on montage as a creative operation were observed from film, photography, and the Epic Theatre. Architecture's relationship with montage for Benjamin is less about a creative principle for design, but more as a resulting effect. In his major work *The Arcades Project*, the Parisian arcades were identified by Benjamin as montage structure because of their ability to create a dialectical image* between the iron and glass additions with the original historic structures. He explored the Parisian arcades through a literary montage consisting of quotations only, where meaning are created from a 'montage of material' (Ferris 2008, p.115). The relationship between montage and creation of architecture was never extensively discussed during the modernism period (Deriu, 2007).

Later, during the early 1970s, Peter Bürger revisited the concept of montage by Walter Benjamin in his discussion about the theory of the Avant-Garde. These literatures on montage mostly staged the discipline of art as the central subject of discussion. Bürger covered three areas that are associated with the concept of montage. They are montage as a technique in film, montage as an artistic principle, and montage as images for reading.

The first, montage in film, is a technical procedure that occurs because of the nature of the medium. Montage in film is an assemblage of photographic images to either create or recreate the impression of natural movement, or

to create a new illusion of stimulated movements (Bürger, 1974).

Secondly, montage also works as an artistic principle, associated with early Cubism works, such as *papiers colles* by Picasso (Bürger, 1974), where fragments of reality are inserted into the art composition. Bürger argues that the Avant-Garde's association to montage is related to this use of montage as an artistic principle, which later developed into his discussion of nonorganic works. Lastly, montage also refers to images for reading *(Lesebilder)*, such as photomontages by John Heartfield (Bürger, 1974).

* The dialectical image involves thinking particularly through contradiction, "an initial thesis is opposed by an antithesis, and resolved through a synthesis of the two terms, which can in its turn become a new thesis" (Rendell, 2006, p.77).

Figure 2.1 (top): Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning, 1912.*
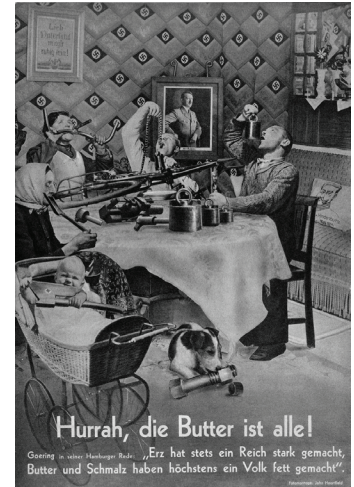
Figure 2.2 (bottom): John Heartfield, *Hurrah, the Butter is Finished, 1935.*

Architectural montage

Sergei M. Eeisenstein's 1938 essay (published in English in 1989) titled *Montage and Architecture* is considered to be the first attempt to make the connection between montage and architecture (Deriu, 2007). Eeisenstein noted the cinematic quality of ancient architecture as the precursor of montage in film. The first association of montage to the creation of architecture is the cinematic quality of architecture as its occupants move through space. (Figure 2.4) In early modern architecture, this relationship is more implied. Beatriz Colomina (1992) suggested that a house by Le Corbusier is "no more than a series of views choreographed by the visitor, the way a filmmaker effects the montage of a film" (p.114). (Figure 2.5) Later, Bernard Tschumi had also adopted methods from the cinema to architecture. (Figure 2.6-2.7)

Other than the relationship between montage and architecture established specifically through film, there are recent discussions that look at montage and architecture from a different perspective. Essays by David Deriu and Detlef Mertins examined the relationship of montage with architecture at the early modern era when montage is extensively discussed in Benjamin's writings.

Figure 2.3 (above): Sigfried Giedion, View of Houses from Pont Transbordeur Marseillies, a sample of an estranged view of the city.

Mertins (2011) argued that Benjamin's understanding of montage with architecture is comparable to the association of montage with the camera. Architecture is an 'optical instrument'. Just as the camera can help the masses to discover the 'optical unconscious' by making things analyzable through isolation, architecture allowed an 'expansion of vision' as well (Mertins, 2011, p.124-125). Here, architecture is the instrument that allows a montage operation on the city. It 'provides opportunities to crop, cut, reframe and abstract' (Mertins, 2011, p.130). An estranged and fragmented view of the city is created as the masses venture through these montage structures. (Figure 2.3)

Deriu examined the concept of montage in early modern architecture by looking at how early modern architecture is portrayed in Sigfried Giedion's book *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete*. Deriu (2007) argued that the concept of montage had implicitly affected Giedion's method of discussing early modern architecture. Similar to Mertins, Deriu (2007) suggested that Giedion's understanding of the new architecture involves the ability to provide 'liberated' views (p.50).

Both Deriu and Mertins, through works by Benjamin and Giedion, see that the relationship of modernist iron structures with montage lies in their ability to provide new views that are fragment-like, allowing spectators to assemble new understandings of the city. In the early modern era, montage is only discussed as a new way of viewing the city enabled by architecture, not as a potential principle for architectural design.

It was not until within the last decade, that montage is revisited as a potential principle for architectural design that is not strictly related to the cinema. Jonathan Hill viewed montage as a strategy to expand architecture's field of action beyond functionalism. In Jane Rendell's book, montage is a powerful principle and technique to establish dialectical work. She discussed both art and architecture. In these approaches to the subject, montage is not only specifically referred by its use in film, but also its association with other mediums as presented in Benjamin's writings.

Figure 2.5 (left): Le Corbusier, drawings for Villa Meyer, Neuilly-Sur-Seine, France, 1925.

Figure 2.4 (above): images of Auguste Choisy's analysis of the Acropolis in Historie de l'Architecture cited by Eisenstein and his analysis sketch of seeing these views as picturesque shots.
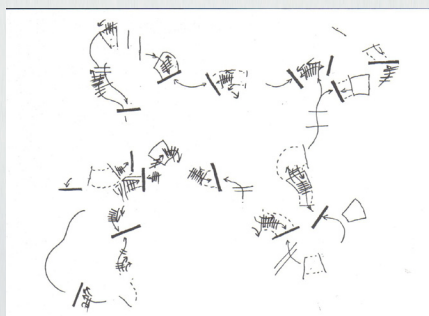
Figure 2.6 (above): Bernard Tschumi, sketch of cinematic promenade in Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1982-1998.

Figure 2.7 (below): Bernard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts 1976-1981.
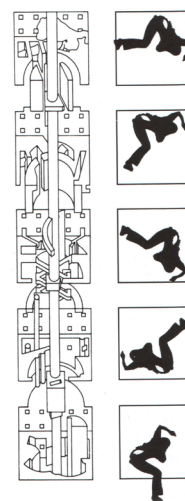
2.4 Montage's contradicting character:
a process to control or emancipate

From the previous section's overview, we see that the subject of montage and its application in architecture have a wide variety of interpretations. The basis of this thesis is to focus on the potential of montage as a creative principle and a technique to establish a critical and creative relationship between people and the space they occupy. Texts and their interpretations on montage will be examined according to their relevance to this concept.

As Pallasmaa identified that there are images of control and emancipation*, the various interpretations of the subject of montage also possesse this polemic character.

Principle of control: montage as a basic technique in film and photomontage

Bürger's notion of montage as the basic technique in the production of film and montage as images for reading such as in photomontage are both uses of montage as a principle of control. In both interpretations of montage, a very specific reading is to be generated from the fragments. In this type of work, the presence of the montage is usually hidden from the spectator so the fragments will be read as a unity with a clear message.

This prescriptive quality of montage is also present in Eisenstein's reading of montage in the experience of architecture. The comparison of an architectural experience to the directed sequence of shots in a film placed people in a role of the passive user exactly as described by Hill.

Principle of emancipation:
the Epic Theatre, nonorganic art, montage as insertion, Benjamin's camera, the montage of gaps

There are five notions of montage as principles to emancipate: the Epic Theatre, nonorganic art, montage as insertion, Benjamin's camera and the montage of gaps.

Bertlod Brecht's Epic Theatre is designed to emancipate by leading its audience into an intellectually creative state. During the play, the audience is led to judge the actions depicted in the scene and 'to see possibility of a change in a given situation' (Willett, 1989). Although Brecht had not explicitly spoken of montage, his work was noted by Benjamin as an example of montage and the essence of his theatre runs parallel to the intent of this thesis.

For Bürger (1974), fragmentation is presumed to be the intrinsic element in montage. The understanding of montage as an artistic principle revolves around the treatment of fragmented material and its relationship to the whole. This distinction on the relationship between part and whole characterized the difference between organic and nonorganic art. His notion of nonorganic art challenges tradition in the reception of art towards a critical understanding "by investigating the contradiction between the various layers and only then infer the meaning of the whole" (Bürger, 1974, p.82). Through this, we see that nonorganic art aims to be nonprescriptive.

Jane Rendell discussed montage in two key concepts. The first concept is montage as an insertion to a given context (Rendell, 2006). By doing so, the original meaning of the context is disrupted. This concept therefore asserted that the action of insertion with montage is a possible way to free people from their passive acceptance of established meanings because a disruption is produced. The second concept is to lengthen the effect of montage beyond the initial shock created by simple, opposing juxtapositions. She suggested the use of the allegorical technique with reference to Benjamin. Similar to Burger's nonorganic art, montage beyond shock is where "rather than singularity, an ambiguity on multiplicity of meaning is produced" (Rendell, 2006, p.76).

Walter Benjamin extensively discussed the liberating power of film and photography in many of his writings. Although the cinematic montage was

considered as a principle of control, Benjamin's interpretation of montage in film and photography, is different from that of Bürger and Eisenstein. Instead of the sequential assembly of fragments in film, Benjamin focused on the production of the fragment itself. He is interested in the photographic fragments produced by the camera as close-ups. These shots, for Benjamin (1934), are liberating imagery because of their ability to reveal the optically unconscious to the public.

Jonathan Hill, in his book *Actions of Architecture*, brought the discussion of montage right within the context of architecture while also focusing on montage's potential as a design principle. He established another theory of montage, the montage of gaps. He argued that the montage of gaps is a more appropriate technique for anticipating creative users in architecture compared to the traditional concept of montage as fragments.

The above section gave an overview of the different interpretations of montage by categorizing them as either a principle of control or principle of emancipation. For the underlying intent to respond to our passive perception of our built environment, this thesis' exploration of the creative potential of montage will from this point on focus on works that demonstrated montage as a principle to emancipate.

* Images of control and emancipation

Image of control "narrows down, confines and weakens the freedom, choice and individuality of the subject by means of focusing and channeling his/her attention and awareness into a forced pattern, often grounded in the subject's sense of guilt and inferiority" and "control the subject's attention and awareness for purposes of manipulating emotion and behavior" (Pallasmaa, 2011, p.21).

Image of emancipation "opens up, fortifies and liberates by means of strengthening personal imagination, emotion and effect" and it can "liberate and inspire his/her imagination opening up a dimension of individual imaginative freedom" (Pallasmaa, 2011, p.21).

Chapter 3:

introduction to context for exploration

3.1 Thesis exploration site: Commerce Court Toronto

Because the indepth investigation of montage in the next section also involves design as an exploration method, this section is inserted to provide some foundational knowledge related to the design work by introducing the exploration of the site selected for this thesis.

Figure 3.1 (above): photograph of Commerce Court prior to Zeidler's addition showing the west side of the complex facing Bay Street.

Commerce Court Toronto, located at King Street W and Bay Street, is composed of four towers, a central court yard, a public plaza at the southeast corner of King and Bay, and an underground concourse level connected to Toronto's PATH system.

This complex, with I.M.Pei's addition to the original North Tower, is selected as the site for this thesis exploration because it is the montage experienced as a space occupied on an everyday basis and a work by I.M.Pei to be visited by tourists and portrayed in other mediums. It is an example of architecture as contemplated art that is also occupied in the everyday.

The oldest building in the complex is the North Tower, designed by Pearson and Darling Architects in 1931. Then in 1973, the other three towers were added, forming a central courtyard in the centre of the block. The tallest tower, the West Tower, was setback from the corner of King and Bay. This move showcased the original North Tower and formed an entry plaza that faced one of downtown Toronto's significant intersections. In 1994, renovations and expansions were made at grade and the concourse level connected to the PATH system. The courtyard was also renovated, including the addition of an enclosed vestibule between the North and West Tower, a skylight

Figure 3.2 (right): photograph of Commerce Court prior to Zeidler's addition, looking from the corner of King and Bay.

connect to the concourse level, and canopies as seen today.

The remainder of this section intends to provide a collection of information that will provide insights to the distinctive qualities and tension within the site that has affected the decision making process during design exploration.* Along with my own interpretations of the site, some of the information gathered is also presented in its original form. It is hoped that the inclusion of these fragments of information will provide the readers with a foundation to form their own interpretation of the site and eventually the design exploration presented in this thesis. Although the information are roughly organized into three categories under the headings: *Between grade and underground, From public to private and (official) Design intent and reception*. The respective information under each heading are not distinct, pieces of information under different headings may also be read against or in reference to each other.

* For additional information about the site, please see Appendix A.

3.2 Between grade and underground:
the power of the businessman

A distinctive quality in this complex is its contrasting condition between grade and underground (the concourse level where the PATH is). On grade, the complex is the sculptural modernist superblock with empty court. Contrary to the at-grade condition, the concourse is packed with retail and office workers either on the run or taking breaks.

The design of the PATH under the major office blocks was driven completely by economic concern. Part of the decision to locate all the retail underground is to increase rent value. Developers are determined to present a prestigeious corporate image to the streets by eliminating all retail signage on grade (Goodman, 1984).

Figure 3.3 (left): photograph of Commerce Court's central plaza.

Figure 3.5 (below): image showing steps along Bay Street.

While the everyday activities are hidden by being buried underground, the towers stood as sculptural monuments. The iconic West Tower was setback from the street and raised on a granite pedestal with steps along Bay Street, separated from any possible messiness below grade.*

*It is possible that this interpretation of the Commerce Court complex might have been unconsciously influenced by Wodiczko's rejected proposal to project onto the roof of the Christchurch Cathedral in Montreal. Constructed underneath the cathedral was an expansion of Montreal's underground pedestrian system, RÉSO, which leads to the office tower behind the cathedral. For the information on the work, see Figure 3.18 located at the end of this chapter.

Figure 3.4 (bottom): photograph of Commerce Court concourse level.

3.3 From public to private:
crossing the threshold

The Commerce Court complex is composed of large areas of privately owned 'public spaces' both on grade and underground. They include the central court, entry plaza, and retail concourse with its food court. The tension between the private and the public in these privately owned 'public spaces' is constantly present, and is often revealed in the physical construct of the complex.

The setback of the West tower has created a public plaza at King and Bay.

The setback also made the entrances into the West Tower banking lobby far from the street. But inside the West Tower is the escalator leading to the PATH level, which is intended for public use. In fact, both escalators leading to the PATH level are located within the banking lobbies, one in the West Tower, the other in the North Tower.

"To maximize public access, the tower's core was pushed back … enhanced with enormous windows…" (Pei Cobb Freed and Partners). However, does visual transparency equate to accessibility? Or is it just a physical barrier in disguise?

Figure 3.6 (below): original ground plan of Commerce Court.

Figure 3.7 (above): looking into West Tower lobby from central court.

32
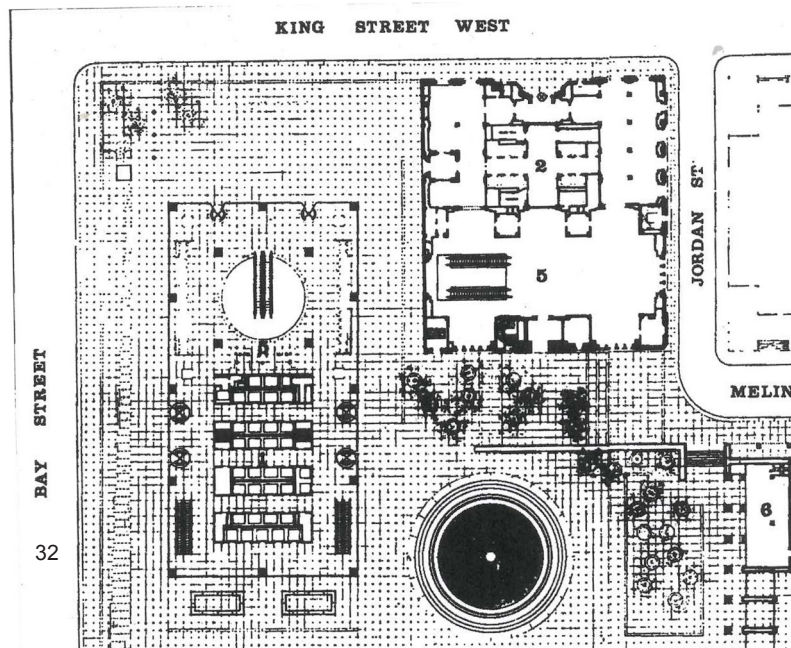
Figure 3.8 (right): image of entry plaza showing the line of planters.

Figure 3.9 (below): signage on planters saying "PRIVATE PROPERTY, SKATEBOARDING, STUNT CYCLING/SKATING, SMOKING IS PROHIBITED"

There are significantly more people on the street than the entry plaza beyond the line of planters.

As Zeidler tries to activate the site, there are planters with signs prohibiting 'unwelcomed' activities placed around the perimeter of the entry plaza.

The goal of Zeidler's renewal was "to make the area more active and user-friendly … accessibility for [the] general public was improved by … creating new pedestrian tunnel condition" (Zeidler Partnership Architects).

Zeidler has connected the North and West Tower by enclosing the space between the two buildings. It did block some of the wind sweeping into the central court, but because the revolving doors on the two sides of the enclosure are locked after hours, the access to the central court from King and Bay is in fact blocked.

Figure 3.10 (above): enclosure between West and North Tower by Zeidler.

The central court was originally intended to create a "civic space that encourages public use … during business hours and after" (Pei Cobb Freed and Partners).

3.4 (official) Design intent and reception: collected fragments of text and images

PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS *Architects* LLP

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Commerce Court

Toronto, Canada
Completed 1973

Lead Designers: I. M. Pei
Ralph Heisel

Profile
Projects
Contacts
Contents

Site
A 4-acre assemblage
in Canada's financial
center

Toronto, Canada

Gross Area
2.5 million s/f

Client
Canadian Imperial
Bank of Commerce

Time Frame
Planning: 9/67–
Construction: 12/69–
Completion: 1/73

Mixed-use complex with new office space, renovated existing headquarters, retail, entertainment, outdoor plaza and parking

The 2.5-million-square-foot headquarters of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce consists of four variously sized buildings that pinwheel around a fountain court, with five underground levels to house banking, parking, retail and subway connections.

The goal was to establish a unique skyline identity and also a civic space at street level while incorporating the client's existing 36-story headquarters and clearly expressing CIBC's Banking Hall. In solution, the back door of the renovated existing building was transformed into a front entrance onto the court. New 5- and 14-story buildings continue the established limestone cladding, all contrasted and reflected by a 57-story tower. The tallest building in Canada and the tallest stainless steel building in the world upon completion in 1973, the 784-foot tower clearly expresses its wide span structure with uninterrupted spandrels.

To maximize public access, the tower's core was pushed back and the front given over to a spacious first- and concourse-level banking hall. Supported by only four internal columns, the hall's airiness is enhanced by enormous windows that open the interior to the fountain court. The court itself, richly landscaped, is enlivened by a large fountain, outdoor cafe and shops to create a civic space that encourages public use, during business hours and after.

Figure 3.11 (above): screen capture of Commerce Court complex project description from web site of PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS Architects LLP.

Figure 3.12 (top): Photograph of Commerce Court exterior from the web site of PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS Architects LLP. It showcases the West tower where the existing 36-story headquarters melts into the background.

Figure 3.13 (below) & Figure 3.14 (opposite): Both taken from the web site of PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS Architects LLP. Both of these images showcase the liveliness of the central court adhering to the official description of the space.

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The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

COMMERCE COURT
FREEDMAN, ADELE

"Studies have shown that since the I.M. Pei complex was completed in 1973, it has been shunned by sun-loving pedestrians, who have taken their brown bags elsewhere, and the owners have decided that something must be done The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind."

Figure 3.15 (above): the heading and excerpt from a newspaper article criticizing the 'user-friendliness' of the Commerce Court central court, a great contrast to the images presented on the designer's web page.

Below is an excerpt from I.M.Pei's conversation with Gero Von Boehm published in Conversations with I.M.Pei - Light is the Key. I.M.Pei finds office buildings not as interesting because people and their interaction with the spatial experience is limited (Boehn, 2000). Yet in the architect's web page, the lobby is purposely shown empty.

PEI: "I think that is the exciting thing about designing buildings that maximize the opportunity to see people moving in a space." (p.108)

Figure 3.16 (below): image of the airy, open lobby of the West Tower from designer's web page, empty.

35
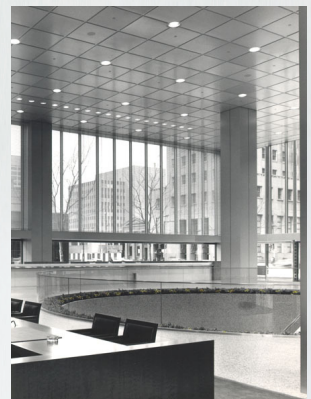
A hypothetical site condition:
Commerce Court with only I. M. Pei's addition

However, it is important to be clear that for the purpose of this thesis, the site will be explored as it was with only I.M.Pei's addition. The 1994 renewal by Zeidler Partnership Architects is not considered to have been added when doing the design explorations.

Figure 3.17 (right): original ground plan of Commerce Court by I. M. Pei, 1973 with timeline as set up for the purpose for this thesis.
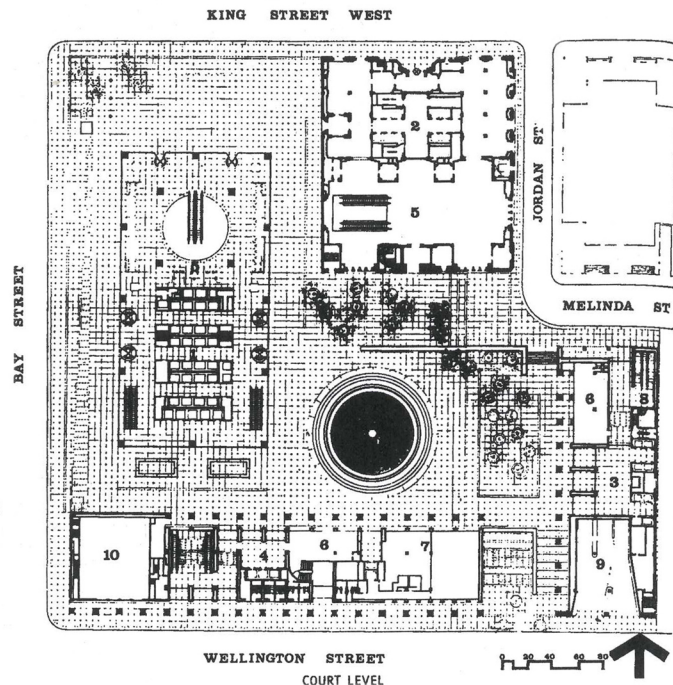
1931
original North Tower
(Pearson and Darling Architects)

1973
Court with West, South, East Tower
(I. M. Pei)

The purpose of setting up this premise is to find a testing ground for me to engage my subject matter with as much clarity as possible, by reducing the site's level of complexity, which can possibly begin to confuse and interfere.

It is also very important to be reminded that the discussion of these tensions present in the existing site is not to suggest that the purpose of this thesis is to solve these issues. Instead, the aim for this thesis is to respond to our passive perception of our given spaces. It is hoped that, through the fragmented revelation of these tensions and their manifestation in architecture through montage, we can begin to reinterpret our built environment critically and creatively in the everyday context.

Hence, the design exploration on this site is not to redo Zeidler's project whose aim was to improve the condition and accessibility of the site. Instead, the site serves as a background for me to explore the subject of montage through design.

1994
Courtyard, gound level and concourse renewal
(Zeidler Partnership Architects)

Figure 3.18 (left): screen captures from video Krzysztof Wodiczko: Projections narrated by Derek May, 1991. These images were shown as Wodiczko described the intended projection project on the roof of Christchurch Cathedral in Montreal. The description of the project by Wodiczko himself is provided under the images.

" Permission was not given... to project onto the cathedral roof. We were dealing with sanctified real estate. It was an interesting failure. A week before Jesus was crucified. He drove the money-lenders from the temple. Neither event prevented the merchants from making a comeback.

A shopping mall beneath the cathedral. And a skyscraper on the back lot. So, who is who? Who is who? Is the church a business person, The body of a businessman... praying, reflecting... the superior body of the business? Or is it the business... that embraces?... appropriates? The church somehow transporting to its own body... the spirituality... of the temple.

 And maybe this is the ultimate temple of temples, that connects the spiritual... with the material, the consumer... the consumer with... with what?" (Krzysztof Wodiczko, 1991)

Chapter 4:
indepth exploration

4.1 Methodology: the four 'takes' on montage's potential towards the purpose of this thesis

This section explores the different ways in which the subject of montage as principle of emancipation may contribute to the creation of architecture that responds to our current passive perception of our built environment. Text, case studies, and design work from different stages of the design exploration are intertwined in a non-linear, layered fashion trying to simultaneously work with the multiple facets related to the subject of montage.

The subject of montage as principle of emancipation in the context of architecture will be explored through four perspectives organized in the book as four parts: alienation, nonorganicity, close-up and gap. These four terms were borrowed from the various literature related to montage as examined in Chapter 2. Each of these terms represents a condition for the application of montage to architecture put forward by this thesis.

Alienation deals with the reestablishment of the critical distance, a precondition for intellectual user creativity. Then nonorganicity characterized the essential quality of a work that would sustain a continuous and open dialogue between people and space. Close-up examined the creation of fragments that contribute to the alienating and nonorganic effect. Lastly, gaps provided insights to the assembly of fragments that would sustain the nonorganic quality in a work.

4.2 Alienation:
the prerequisite condition

The title of the section is borrowed from Brecht's Epic Theatre. The first section of this thesis explained how we passively experience and perceive architecture because the distance required for a critical perception is eliminated in the everyday environment. Then as we try to distance ourselves through other mediums such as architectural photography, the distance is too great and architecture is portrayed as a piece of abstracted art with little relation to our daily presence in it. Hence, the first step is to reestablish a critical distance right within the everyday architectural experience.

Temporal alienation: the creation of distance with montage through interruption

Walter Benjamin in his *The Author as Producer* provided an example of how distance may be created through montage in a live human action experience apart from a reproducible medium such as film.

In Brecht's Epic Theatre, a technique of alienation, the 'gesture', is used to create a moment where spectators are woken from a passively receptive role in the midst of action. In the middle of an action, the scene is interrupted by the entrance of a stranger to the scene. "The discovery of situations is accomplished by means of the interruption of the action." (Benjamin, 1936, p.94)

In explaining the 'gesture' in the Epic Theatre, Benjamin described for us an imaginary scene. The interruption occurs "at this very moment a stranger enters" (Benjamin, 1936, p.94). This line showns that on one level, the strangeness of the stranger comes from his sudden appearance into the

"Imagine a family scene: the woman is just about to open the window and call for help. At this very moment a stranger enters. The action is interrupted; what comes to the foreground in its place is the situation which meets the glance of the stranger: contorted faces, open window, smashed furniture." (Benjamin, 1936, p.94)

scene, which is an action in time. In here, the success of the stranger to wake came from his ability to shock. His appearance is unexpected. On a broader level, the success of the stranger came from the nonorganic situation that he is able to create with his appearance. The 'stranger' in the Epic Theatre is able to create distance partially through his ability to shock and more importantly through his ability to create a nonorganic situation.

Shock!:
to break through the illusion and question

Shock has the power to wake.
However, this power wares off quickly.

Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* challenged the traditional concept of high art with the ready-made. This is a prime example of using the power of shock to initiate the public to question the established authority. The majority of Duchamp's success is based on this idea that the *Fountain* is a unique experience for the public to see a ready-made object exhibited in a gallery setting. Because shock only works as a unique experience, it cannot be repeated. If a shock is repeatedly experienced or anticipated, it will be 'consumed' by the public and loses its power to wake and to initiate reaction (Bürger, 1974).

Hence, when trying to establish a critical distance from our everyday architectural experience, we should not rely on the shock effect alone.*

*After this chapter, the issue of the sustainability of shock is also further discussed in section 6.2 titled *(after)Shock: more on sustaining the creative dialogue*. This section is written in light of having finished the final presentation and the benefit of discussing this issue during the final review. A further discussion on temporal alienation is also further touched upon.

Other methods of alienation:
the Epic Theatre within our everyday experience of architecture

Instead of using shock to forcefully produce the critical distance, we can seek for gaps where the critical distance can be easily established and try to expand these gaps.

In the Epic Theatre, there are other methods to stimulate feelings of alienation in addition to the interruption of a 'stranger' to the scene. The actions in the play are designed to be clear to the audience that the plot is almost self revealing. This way, the audience will be able to have a certain understanding of the plot even if a piece of glass is placed between the audience and the stage (Willett, 1989).

A self revealing plot through plotting and action requires little effort from the audience to figure out the plot by concentrating on the performance of the actors. This in turn avoided the audience from being completely absorbed in the actors' performance and to sympathize with them. The maintenance of this emotional distance sets up a condition where the critical distance may be easily created.

In the Epic Theatre, this condition is maintained throughout the entire play, but that would not be the case with architecture. Instead, it will only be a momentary experience. It will be like a play where the audience may be drawn by the action through the majority of the play, but momentarily be distanced on occasions.

Appropriating this idea in an architectural experience, our everyday occupation of our built environment is seen as the entire play. Within this play, we move from action to action as we move through different spaces absorbed in various activities. At such times, we can absorb ourselves in our activities in hand with the experience provided by the space as intended by the architect. It is only at moments between such experiences that we establish a sense of 'emotional distance', a gap where the 'stranger' may interrupt without heavy reliance on shock.

This thesis does not want to avoid the enjoyment of spaces created by architects. Nor does this thesis wish to condemn our completely distracted use of designed space through habit as a passive occupant. But rather, this thesis aims, on top of these layers of experiences, to add, momentarily, a critical and creative experience where we are alienated to a critical distance for an opportunity to strike a dialogue with our built environment. A space, both at the mental and physical level, will be created where we may begin to question with awareness and start to continuously reinterpret the space we occupy on an everyday basis.

Like the condition purposefully created in the Epic Theatre with plotting and actions, the moments where the 'stranger' may successfully interrupt would be moments during our entire experience in a building where the program is the least demanding, namely circulation spaces. When we circulate through space, way finding is our only major mental demand. Then as we repeatedly encounter the space on an everyday basis, this demand will diminish with familiarity.

The time we circulate from space to space can be utilized to introduce the 'stranger' in the Epic Theatre into our architectural experience, interrupting our actions as passive users in the built environment.

Tschumi's roof at Le Fresnoy:
spatial alienation as a concept in the creation of physical spaces

Bernard Tschumi's Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts, Tourcoing, France, 1991-1997

The Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts is intended to be a place where different disciplines of art come together and exchange ideas through cross-disciplinary activities. The roof space of the existing complex is conceptualized to become an in-between space where the strangeness of the elements may suggest new, unperceived uses.

Similar to Tschumi's creation of Le Fresnoy's in-between space for creative programming, an in-between space may also be used to create a physical space for mental creativity. The in-between space is an alienated space that is neither the programmed and defined space that comes before or after it. It is a physical spatial 'stranger' that interrupts.

"The in-between was not composition, it wasn't design; it was pure concept." (Tschumi, 2006, p.117)

The physical space defined by the addition of an element on top of the existing condition is able to create a conceptual in-between space. What gives this new defined space its conceptual power is its existence as a clear distinction from the traditionally programmed space in the original complex. The new addition is clearly read as 'a roof on top of a roof'. The existing roof stayed as a roof conceptually, but became a new floor level physically. This distinctive duality in meaning allows this newly defined physical space to conceptually act as the 'stranger' to the regular field of action located at the existing complex below.
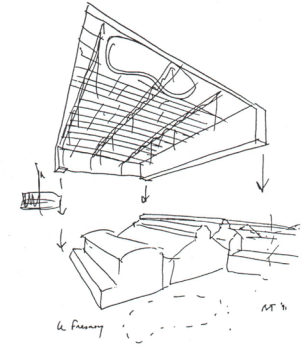
Figure 4.1 (above): Bernard Tschumi's concept sketch of Le Fresnoy.
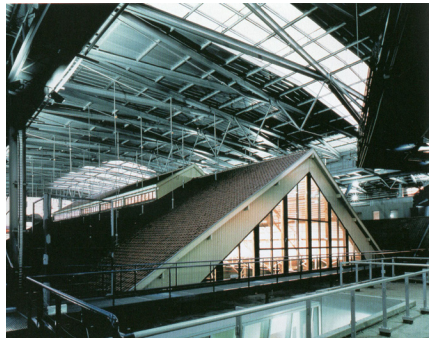
Figure 4.2 (left) & Figure 4.3 (right): images of the in-between space in Le Fresnoy. The combined reading of the existing roof with the catwalks and stairs have created a strangeness that suggested inordinary uses to the space.

Alienation potential on thesis site:
the spatial in-between and temporal gap in plan and section
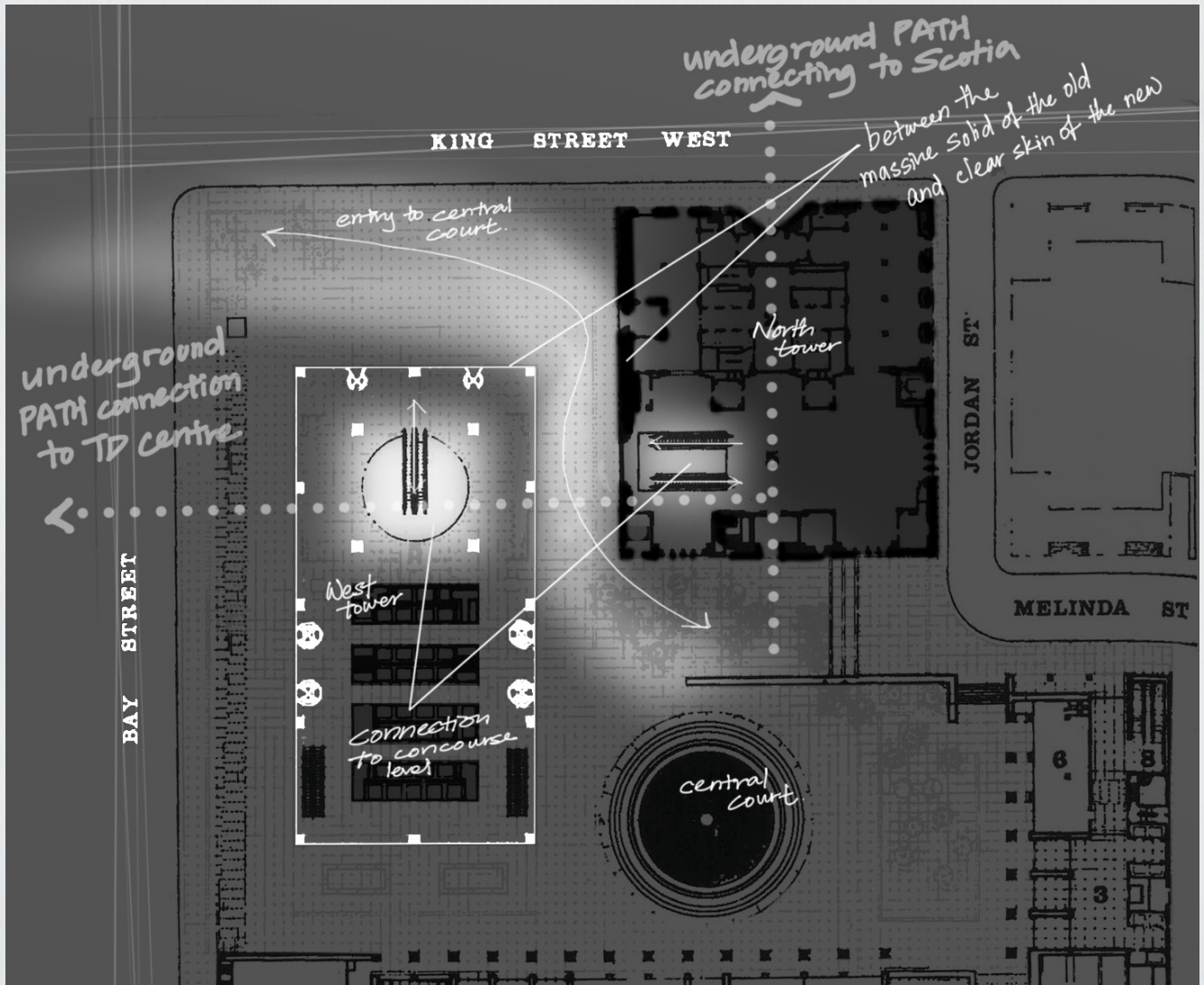
From the complex circulation pattern in the Commerce Court complex, two conditions were selected for the design exploration. One is the entry plaza through the space between the North Tower and West Tower into the central court. This space is between the old and the new, between the pubic and the privately owned public. It is a spatial in-between in plan. The other condition selected is the escalators leading to the underground PATH that merges into the route connecting the Commerce Court with the other offices.

Alienation potential on thesis site:
the spatial in-between and temporal gap in plan and section

Annotations on image:

escalator:
↓ bodily activity
↑ mental activity

bank lobby

thickness of floor slab as a space in between the coporate condition at grade and the PATH condition underground, a spatial gap

the possible expansion of this gap.

vertical circulation as a temporary break, a gap in time

foodcourt & retail
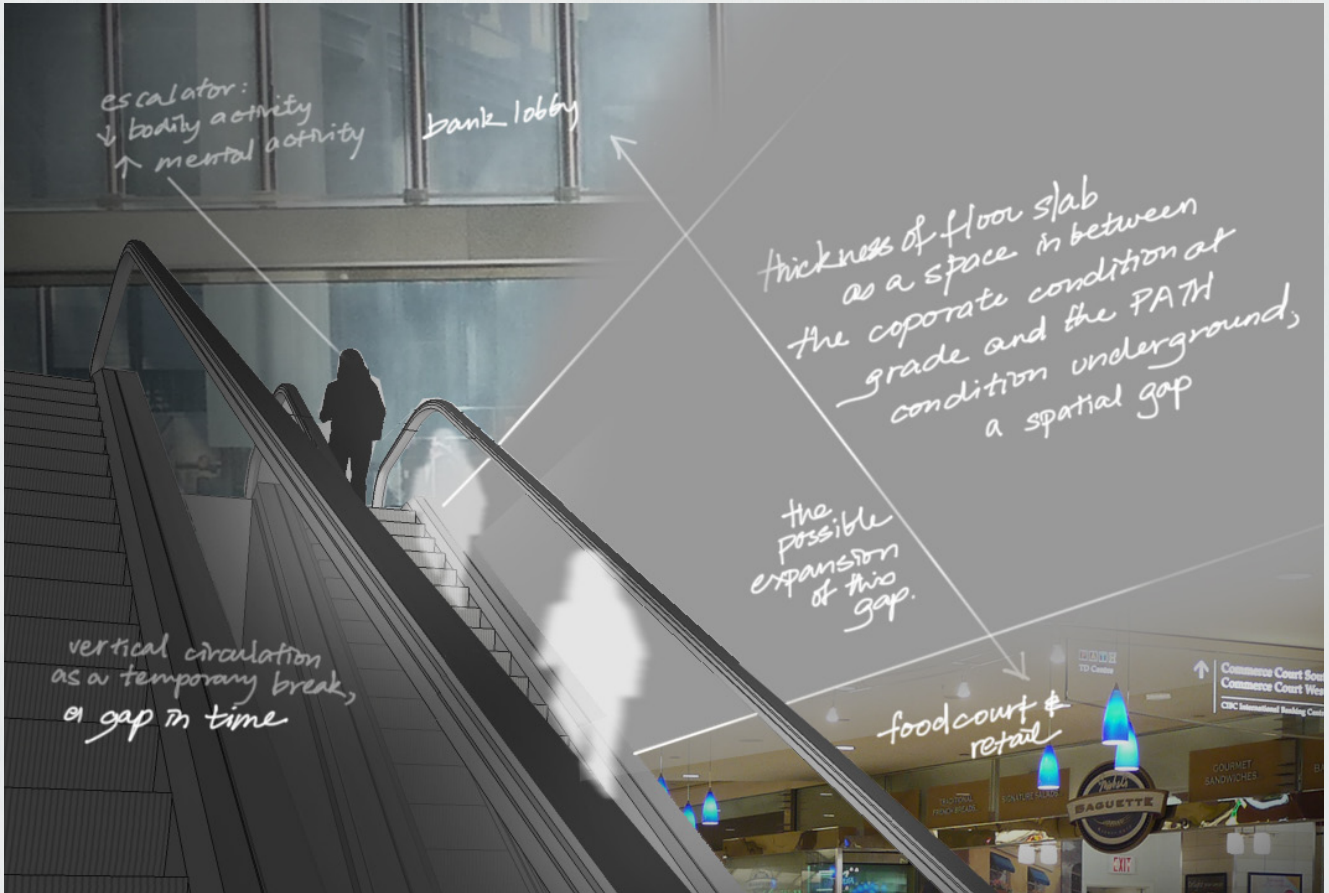
The thickness of the slab is a spatial in-between in section where the two conditions between grade and underground converge. The time travelling up and down the escalators can create a temporal gap.

bank lobby.

food-court
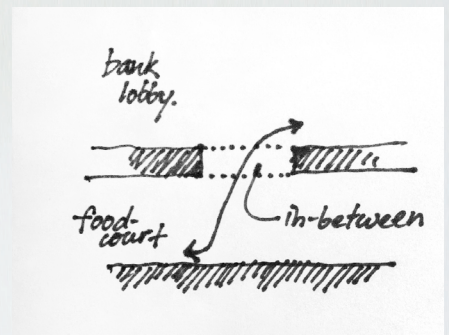
in-between

Expanding the spatial in-between:
through the insertion of vertical fragments

the corporate
condition in the
banking lobby

filtration
of the foodcourt
condition to
ground level
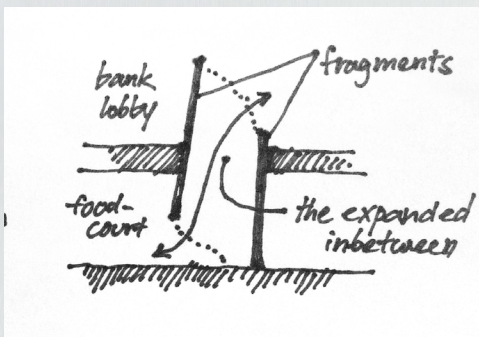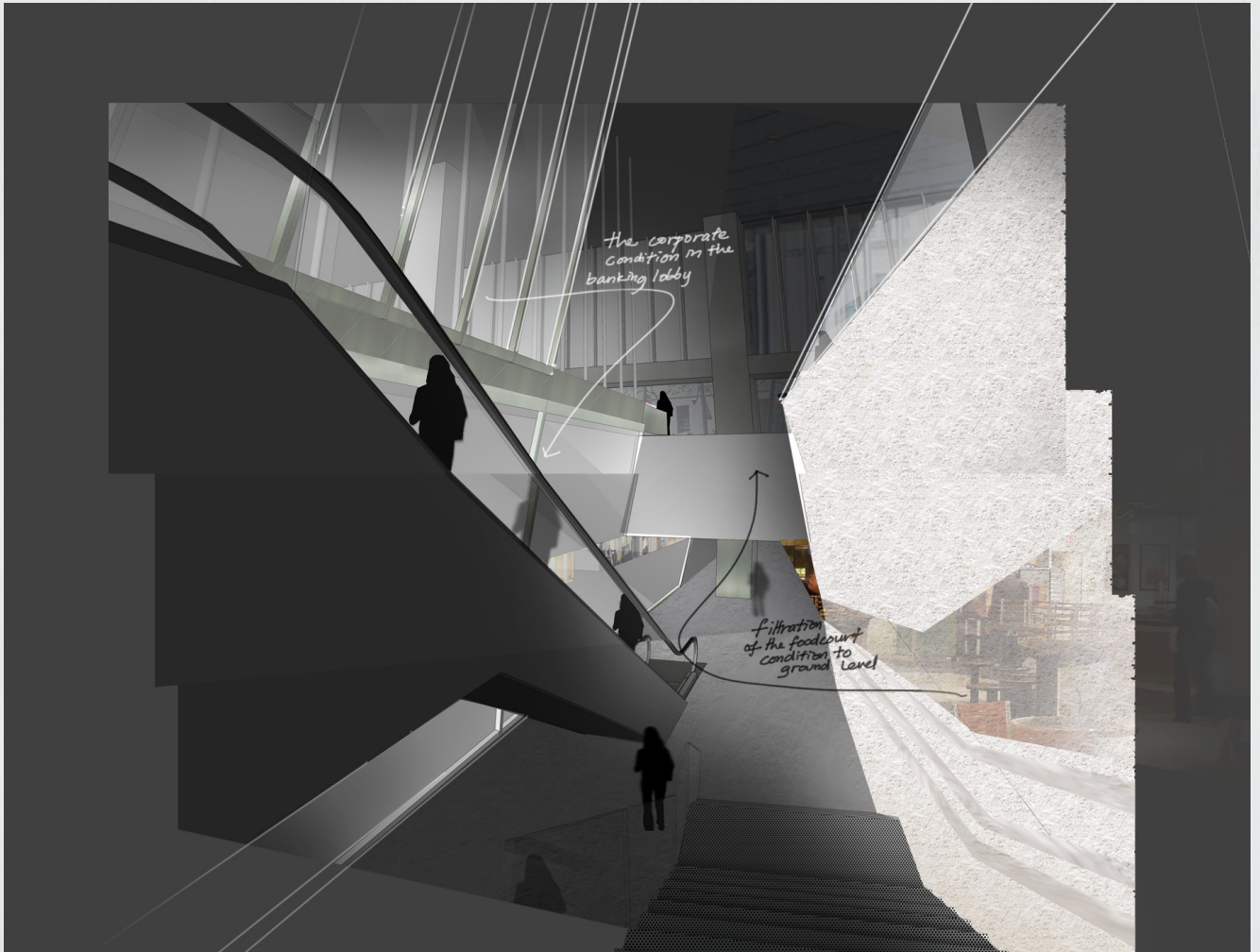
Concept sketch of using
additional fragments to
expand the spatial
in-between.

*Work in progress:
exploration into the
possibilities for expanding
the in-between space
originally consisted of
only the slab thickness
by inserting additional
fragments. On one side, the
condition of the bank lobby
extends to the level below
while the condition of the
food court below extends
towards the ground level.*

From action to matter:
from the stranger to the set

Case Study: sets in Epic Theatre and the Teatro Olimpico by Palladio

The 'stranger' is strange, not only because he shocks, but also because he simply reveals himself clearly as the 'other' in the scene.

The 'stranger' actor defined himself as another distinctive presence from the other actors. The stranger's impact to the audience, after the initial shock, is that he has created a theatrical experience that is nonorganic. In fact, the goal of the Epic Theatre is to portray itself as nonorganic in the sense that it was purposefully trying to portray itself as an artificial construct; it is a play and only a play.

The interruption of the stranger achieves the nonorganic effect by interrupting the harmonious flow of actions within individual scenes. This is useful in illustrating the possible moment for the insertion of montage into our actions as users experiencing our built environment because of its temporal quality. However, in the design of architecture as a physical artifact that would provide this moment of interruption in our daily architectural experience, we can look into other aspects of the Epic Theatre that work with tangible materials.

In a Renaissance theatre, the set on stage is very convincing as a real scene. Palladio's Teatro Olimpico created realistic scenes with tremendous detail and forced perspectives. The audience is kept away from discovering the working of this illusionary reality. The Epic Theatre is the complete opposite. Sets were kept to a minimal in their resemblance to the actual scenery that is supposed to accompany the scene. For example, in his production of the play *Life of Galileo*:

> "Bretch wasn't trying to pretend what he put on stage was like real life. He was not concerned, for example, that a scene in Galileo in a Renaissance palace had to take place in a believable imitation of such a palace." (Willett, 1989)

The minimal appearance of the stage is not just "a not believable imitation of a renaissance palace", but it is clearly anything but a renaissance palace.

Figure 4.4 (top): photograph of the convincing set in Teatro Olimpico.

Figure 4.5 (middle): section of Teatro Olimpico, showing how the perspective is created forcefully.

Figure 4.6 (bottom): scene from Life of Galileo, showing the contrast between the set and costume.
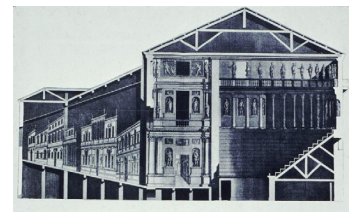
This in effect created a contrast to the more believable costumes worn by the actors. It is this inharmonious appearance between the different parts of the play (the set and costume) that revealed to the audience that this scene you are watching is an artificial construct by the producer.

When we look at a scene in the Epic Theatre as a composition by the producer, we can see that it is the incoherency between the parts that breaks the unity of a scene in traditional theatre. This disruption to the unity reveals to the audience the play's true identity as a construct. It is nonorganic.

4.3 Nonorganicity:
the essential quality

Nonorganicity is the quality that Bürger associated with Avant-Garde art. It ensures that once we are freed from the role of passive users, we are not led into another prescriptive experience similar to Eisenstein's montage architectural experience. Instead of the creation of a singular united whole, a multiplicity of meanings would become inherent in the design, inspiring a continuous and open dialogue between people and the built environment.

Organic vs. nonorganic:
the harmonious whole vs. the artificial construct

Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* distinguished between two types of art, the organic and the nonorganic. He categorized the traditional institutionalized works of art with the organic and the Avant-Garde with the nonorganic (Bürger, 1974, p.56). The differentiating quality between the organic and the nonorganic that is useful to our discussion on montage and

architecture is their respective attitude towards the relationship between the parts and the whole.

Organic art is created to be received with the illusion of being a totality (Bürger, 1974). The traces of it being an artificial construct are kept to the minimal. All the parts are to be read as contributing to the whole, while the whole is the constitution of all the parts, forming a seamless composition. This is how we experience architecture as we contemplate it as art, whether in first-person as a tourist or through photography. All parts (form, structure, material to detailing) are used to create the unified spatial experience imagined by the architect.

In contrast, nonorganic art opposes the illusion of totality and encourages the work to be read as obviously composed of fragments. The parts are free to be read either individually or in groups without necessary being in the context of a 'whole' (Bürger, 1974). It is this freedom that bestows the nonorganic art with the capacity to have multiple interpretations as there is no definite, singular 'whole'. Instead, the whole is a "perfect embodiment of the totality of possible meaning" (Bürger, 1974, p.73).

Nonorganicity in architecture:
reading against a context (the norm)

In Bürger's theory, the Avant-Gardist works are marked by their nonorganic quality with their treatment of the relationship between part and whole. The Avant-Gardist attitude runs against the traditional preconception that the part must be in some way related and contributing to the construction of the whole. For the Avant-Gardist, the parts are not necessarily related to the whole where in the extreme case, the meaning (or the 'whole') is completely constructed by the spectator (Bürger, 1974). However, it cannot be expected that such extremes can be directly appropriated into contemporary architecture. There is no use to simply create buildings out of unrelated fragments and expect recipients to be creative about their meaning. As the initial shock created by the strangeness resulted from the apparent lack of meaning wears off or became expected as it repeats, recipients would soon give up on their search for meaning all together (Bürger, 1974). When the spectator understood that there is no meaning to be found in the first place,

the fragments will remain forever meaningless.

Therefore, in our momentarily experience where we are alienated to a critical distance for an opportunity to strike a dialogue with our built environment, we are not only reading a collection of unrelated fragments. Instead, it is a series of fragments that will be able to be read against organic experiences provided elsewhere within the larger context.

For a piece of artwork, whether a painting or a play, we are usually able to gain some grasp of the entirety of the work within a single experience. In such cases, the work will appear as either organic (a harmonious unity), or nonorganic (an artificial construct of fragments). However, our everyday environment is understood through multiple fragments of experiences. The spaces we visit within a building and the sequence in which we visit them varies with each experience*. This mode of experience allows the building to be understood as both organic and nonorganic.

The original context is read as an organic whole at times when the fragments are not experienced. It is not until the fragments are experienced occasionally that the illusion of the organic whole is disrupted. Here, architecture is neither totally organic nor nonorganic; when parts of the original larger context is left untouched while others are interrupted by the new insertion.

*Not to mention that even if we visit the same space in the same sequence, our experience of it may vary according to the time of day, weather, or other special condition occurring at the site.

Jane Rendell's insertion as montage:
beyond simple juxtaposition and shock

When montage works only as a simple juxtaposing fragment inserted into the existing context, it will have little value after its initial shock.

The refusal of given meaning in the Avant-Gardist work is received by the public as shock at the time of its appearance (Bürger, 1974). The power of this shock came from the Avant-Gartist work's strong juxtaposition to the traditional organic works. The clarity and specificity of the juxtaposition

creates a simplicity that gave the work strong shocking power but also avoided any further interpretation as the initial shock wears off. Duchamp's *Fountain* provided a shock as an ready-made object, a urinal, was inserted into a gallery setting and titled *Fountain* with the artist's signature. However, after this shock effect is digested, there is not much further to be read from the urinal as an artifact itself.

This type of power through the use of simple juxtaposition may be desirable in works of art, but in the creation of a critical and creative dialogue with architecture in an everyday context, where repetition is expected and continuous reinterpretation desired, simple juxtaposition alone is not enough.

Therefore, instead of being a single, direct commentary towards an established meaning of the existing context, montage in architecture for this thesis should engage in the creation of "material and spatial forms that produce multiple associations and ambiguous situations" (Rendell, 2006, p.120).
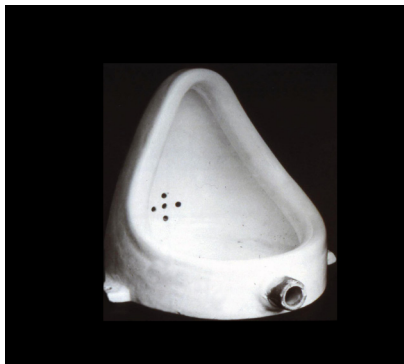
Figure 4.7 (left): Duchamp's Fountain, 1917.

Figure 4.8 (right): a urinal.

Destabilizing the organic unity:
through insertion of fragments in form

Work in progress:
The entire Commerce Court complex is the organic whole and the design explorations are fragments inserted as interruptions. Then there are other part sof the court that are left untouched, preserving the possibility for an organic experience of the site as intended by the original design.

The insertion of triangular fragments into the site destabilizes the grid which organizes the design of the complex into an organic unity. The triangular fragments are read against the grid in both plan and in elevation.

The bottom view is looking from the corner of King and Bay, showing the triangular insertion located at the upper right corner in the plan above. It cuts into the ground plane and then extends to become a canopy.

KING STREET WEST

BAY STREET

triangular insertions disrupt the grid and is read as the interruption

NORTH TOWER

the grid is the context.

WEST TOWER

CANOP
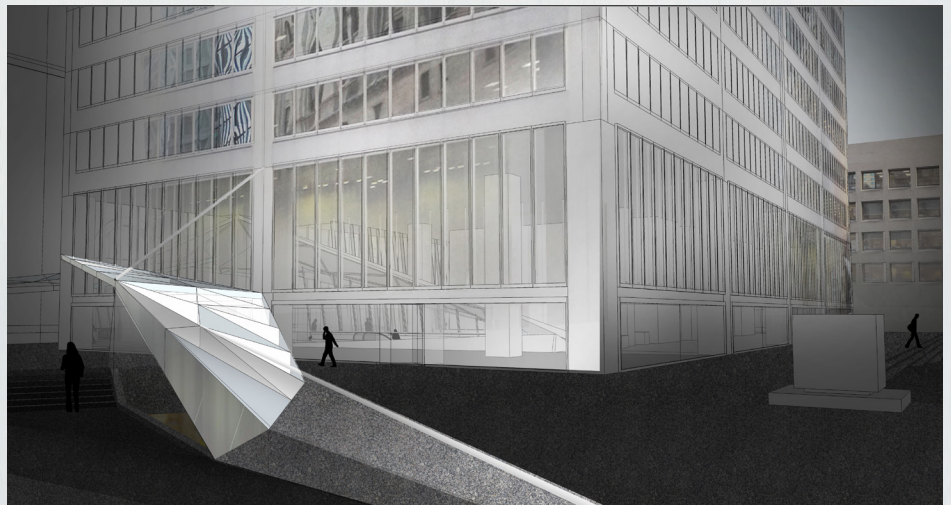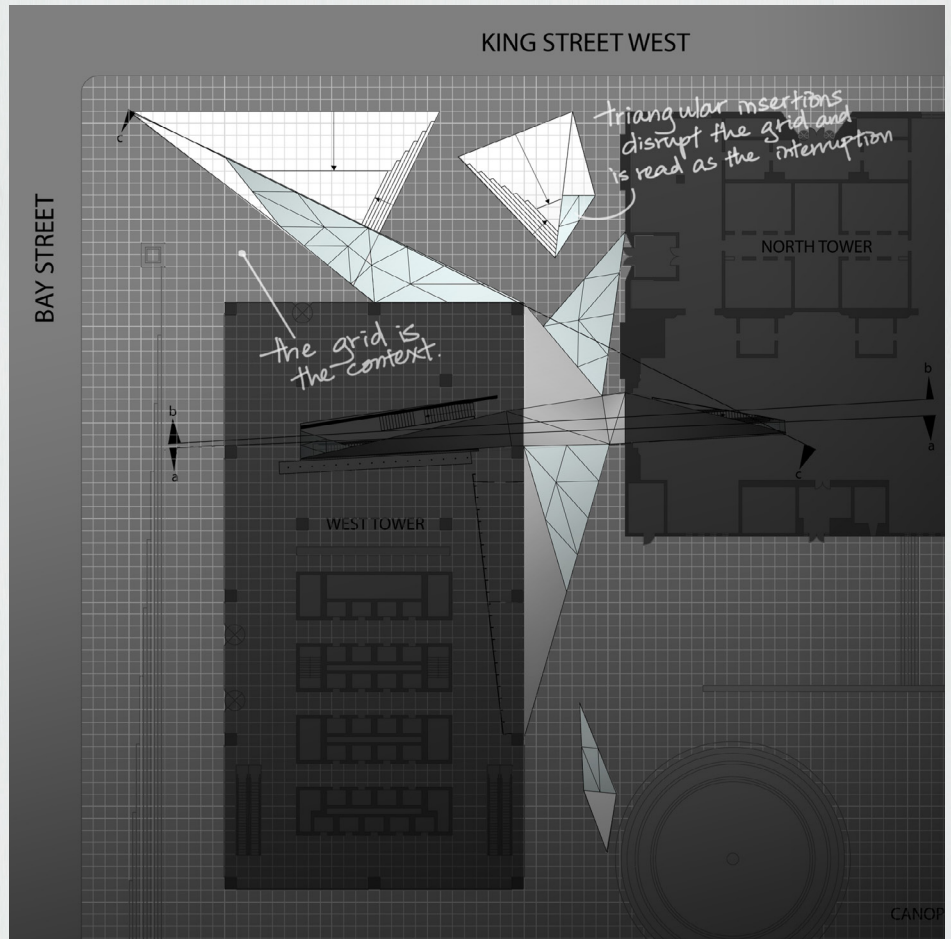
Destabilizing the organic unity:
working beyond forms

The insertion of fragments to destabilize the organic unity of the site can also work beyond a formal juxtaposition. It can also work with our other senses.

solidity?
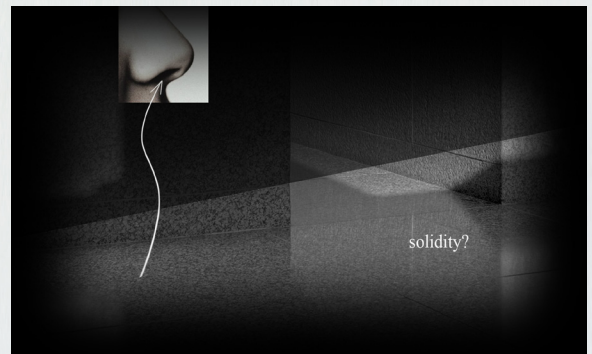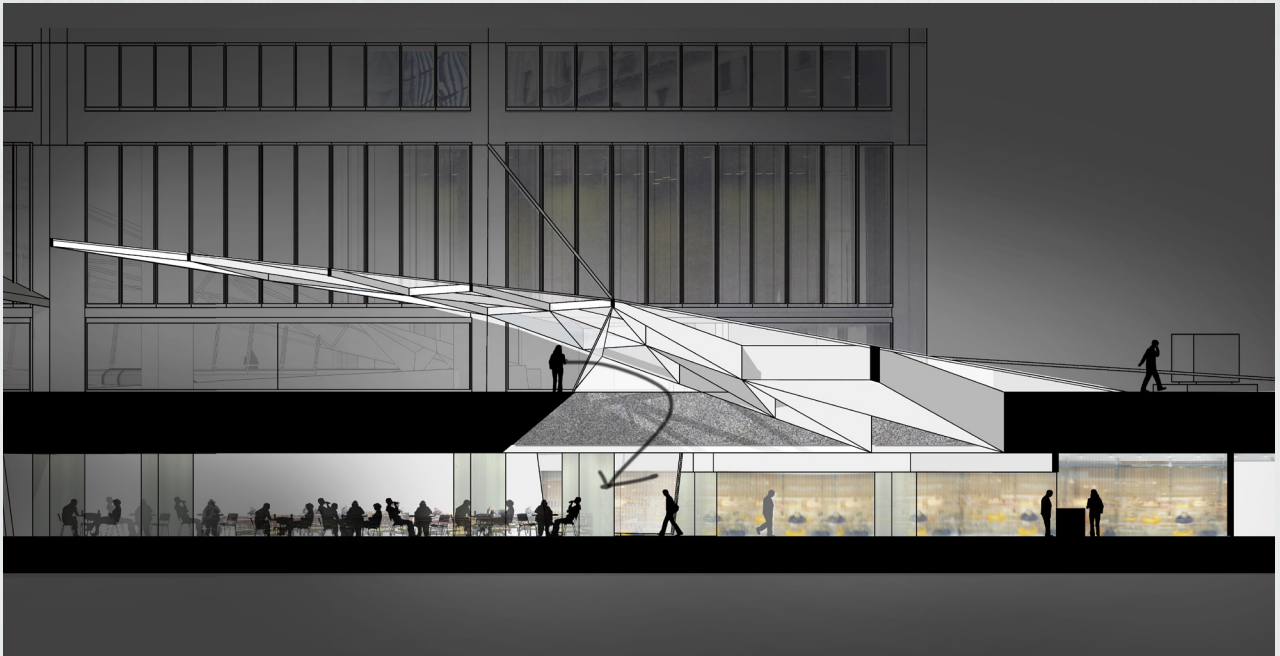
The destablization of the set hiearchy by revealing the foodcourt underneath through smell is also an example of a sensual and seminal gap described by Jonathan Hill. The idea of gap will be further discussed a later section.

*Work in progress:
The triangular insertions not only attempt to destabilize the geometry of the site, but also the set hierarchy of the programming.*

The retail and food court, (the everyday amenities) were buried underground, separated by the granite ground plane, leaving the office towers as pure sculptural forms. The insertion destabilizes this hierarchy by interrupting the ground plane and revealing the presence of the food court and retail underneath through sight and smell.
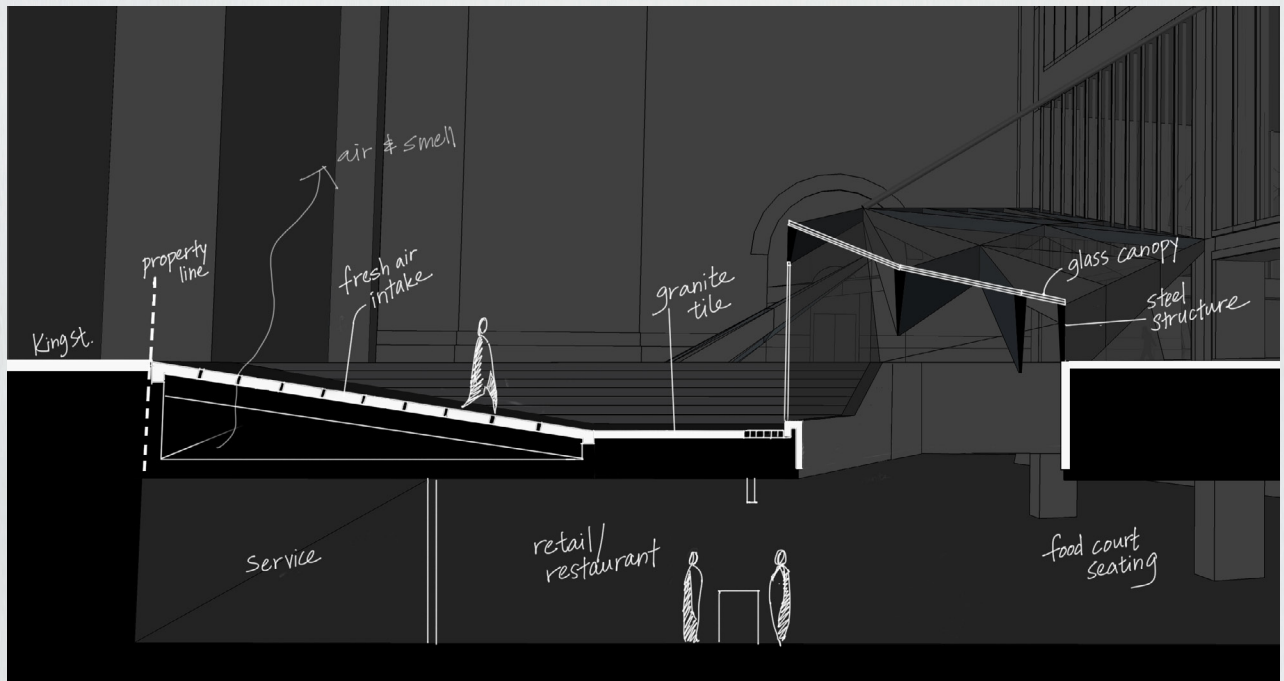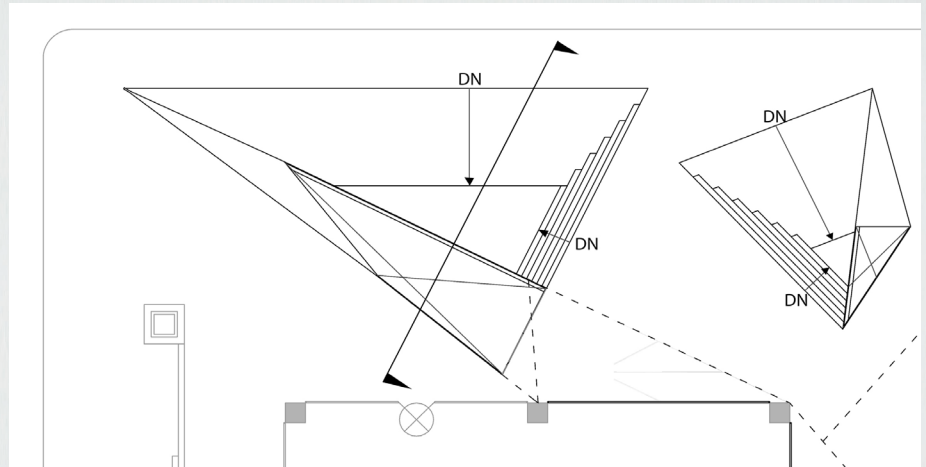
Beyond simple juxtaposition:
a layered experience

To move beyond simple juxtaposition, the insertion should be able to provide a layered experience for multiple interpretations. It can appeal to our different senses and respond to different conditions of the context. Then all these ideas should be loosely woven together in the design so that we can begin to make associations, yet not be restricted.
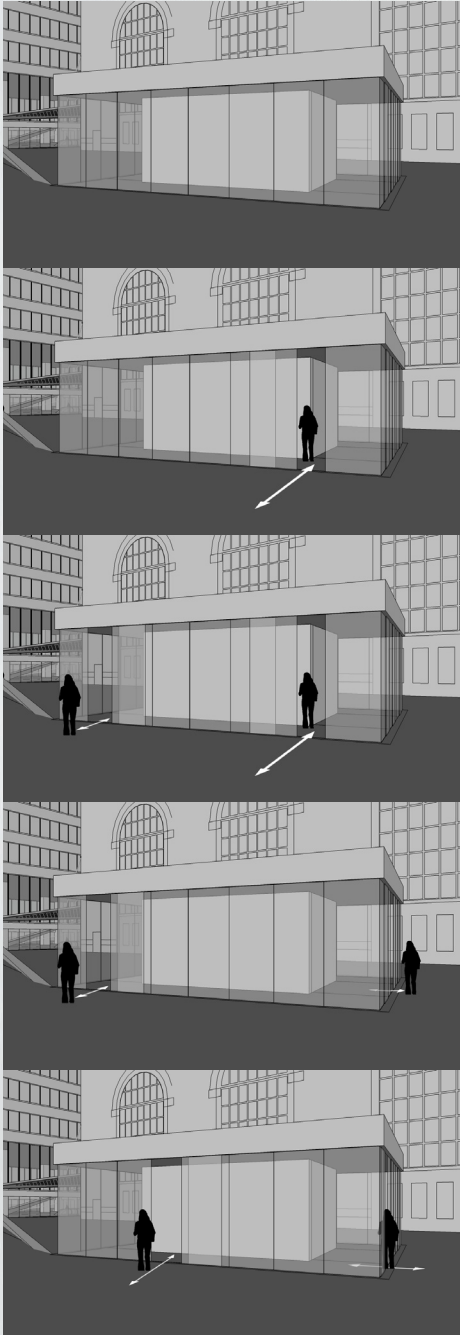
Early trial: In response to the question on glass as a material that restrains access under the disguise of providing visual transparency, a pavilion with a stairway leading down to the PATH with only automated sliding doors, was proposed. It is to create 'a glass wall thoroughly accessible from any point' to juxtapose the glass in the West Tower. This ended up as a simple juxtaposition, 'an one-liner'.

before reaching the
skylight, smell from below
filters through to grade
through the embedded exhaust
hidden between
granite tiles

slope towards skylight
physically drawing
awareness to the underground

visual access
to PATH below

KING STREET WEST

BAY STREET

DN

DN

c

NORTH TOWER

canopy extends inside, visually
merging the exterior
path with interior circulation,
amplifying the "inaccessibility"
of glass

steps that
reveals the
underground
and steps that
raised the towers
onto a pedestal

b

a

b

a

c

becomes a canopy

canopy in the interior
merges back, leading
to the underground,
now with physical
access.

WEST TOWER

now canopy
extends to merge
with interior
physically leading
to an entrance
to the interior.

CANOPY PLAN   1:200

4.4 Close-up:
the creation of fragments

Borrowed from Benjamin, close-up is a key element that gave films their revelation power and their audience the power to critique. The close-up examined the workings and characteristics of this imaging technique followed by its translation to architectural design.

Isolation: making the familiar unfamiliar to strengthen its presence

Eisenstein's cinematic architectural montage is prescriptive because of its focus on producing meaning through a singular sequence of fragments. Walter Benjamin viewed film very differently. He focused on the effect of viewing the world through the camera, especially with close-up shots. Benjamin's close-up shots are related to two aspects related to montage as principle of emancipation that can be translated into the creation of built environment.

The first is how the concept of using close-up shots can produce the necessary base condition for montage in everyday built environment with the reestablishment of critical distance through fragmentation.

Using the book *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* as an example, Benjamin (1934) identified how a work can isolate "… and made analyzable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception…" (p.18). In this example, he noted how the isolation of the parts from their context have the power to reveal. This isolation of parts from their context is indeed the creation of fragments, a supposition to montage. Through isolated fragments, the critical distance needed for intellectual user creativity is reestablished and our surroundings are revealed to us.

Secondly, the effect of the close-up shots and their creation as used in films can suggest how a fragment with the ability to reveal can be created.

For Benjamin, film creates a similar effect as the book *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* did. In film, the "… close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects… extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives… manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action" (Benjamin, 1934, p.19). The power of the close-up to reveal came from its ability to make the familiar strange, where we will be granted the opportunity to view the familiar in a different perspective. The close-up reveals by amplifying the intensity of fragments and purposeful framing to extract it from its original context. This understanding of the close-up suggested how an architectural fragment that reveals its original context can be created.

A particular example of montage of gaps identified by Jonathan Hill is an example of the close-up in an architectural context. It is the sensual gaps where a sense is purposefully eliminated (Hill, 2003). By eliminating a particular sense, the other senses are highlighted. The example he used to illustrate this type of sensual gap is the rice paper windows used in traditional Korean housing. By obscuring the visual, the sound outside is amplified.

Figure 4.9 (above): Bernard Tschumi, Glass Video Gallery, Gröningen, 1990.

The concept of close-up appropriated into architectural design is not only restricted to the manipulation of sensual information. It can also be achieved through other design aspects, exemplified by Bernard Tschumi's Glass Video Gallery in Gröningen. The transparency of glass is exaggerated by the program of the pavilion as a setting for viewing videos, which, ideally and expectedly to be pitch dark. This example demonstrated how a certain architectural aspect (a material quality) may be amplified by another aspect of the design (program), through a contradicting relationship.*

*This contradiction between the design and general expectation is further explained in the next section on Jonathan Hill's montage of gaps. This is what Hill defined as a semantic gap.

Alternative perspectives:
fragmentation, emphasis and alternate views

Handwritten annotations on the image:
re-experiencing the exterior facade of the West tower

bringing beam to ground to reveal the scale of the structure, a different understanding on the scale of space. between observing from afar & coming close to it.

close engagement with the glass and seeing it on a different scale

glass

Solid
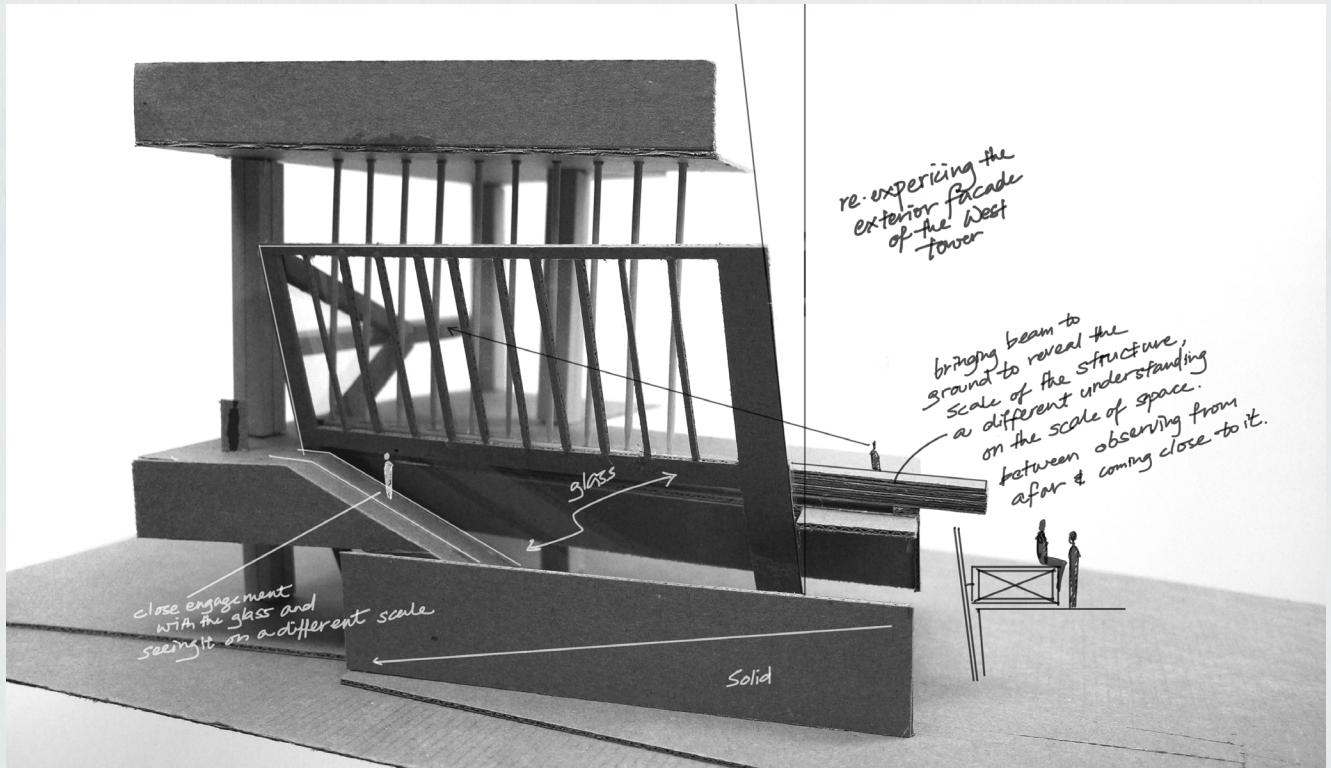
Work in progress (above):
This is the first exploration on creating a fragment from the larger context. There
is little alteration to the original design language used in the context. What is
being altered is the human relationship to the fragment.
It quite literally tried to bring a fragment of the context (the exterior glass facade
and structure) closer to the spectator.

Work in progress (opposite):
This is a consideration in working with a material quality and its meaning
as fragment. Instead of the physical fragment, the character of 'glass
as a clear physical barrier' had been isolated into a 'fragment' by
emphasizing its transparent quality.

This 'close-up' effect on a material quality is achieved by reorienting
the escalators in the West and North Tower and other cues that would
suggest a 'circulation path' that is actually blocked by the clear facade of
the West Tower.

WEST TOWER

NORTH TOWER

orientation of circulation
staggering of glass section
and canopy both suggest
connection between the
towers. Its all these
clues that emphasized the
"inaccessibility" of glass

exit

exit

NORTH TOWER

visual access only

visual access only

DN

visual access only

exit

WEST TOWER

exit

exit

GROUND LEVEL

N

east west connection
is emphasized at
concourse level

FOOD COURT SEATING

RESTAURANT / RETAIL

RETAIL

RESTAURANT / RETAIL

CONCOURSE LEVEL

N

Work in progress:
The presence of the glass as a physical barrier is emphasized as the spectator travels up the escalator from the level below. Then, this notion is presented as otherwise. When exiting from the east facade of the West tower, people can 'slip' between the glass, crossing the threshold seamlessly between the interior and exterior.
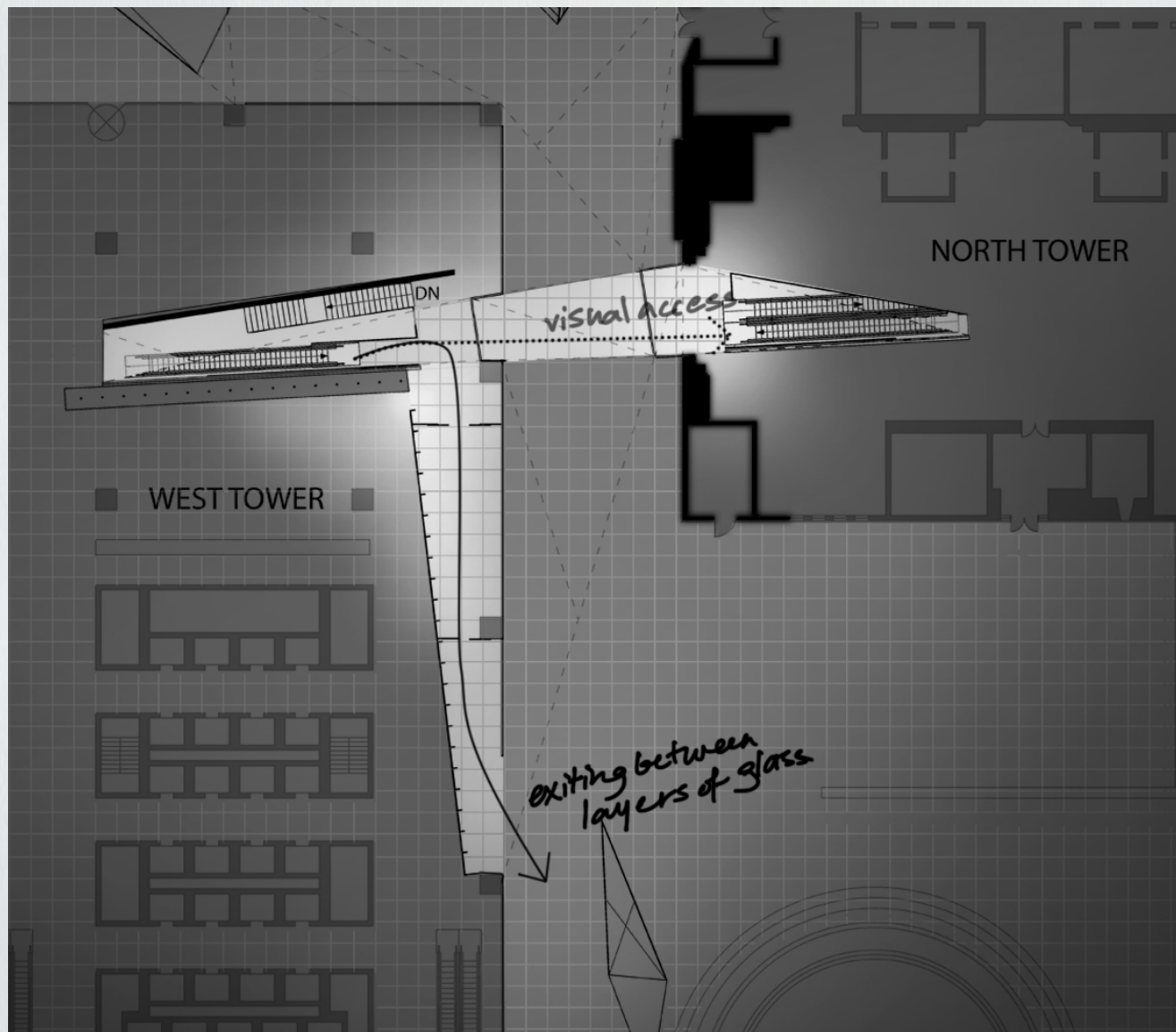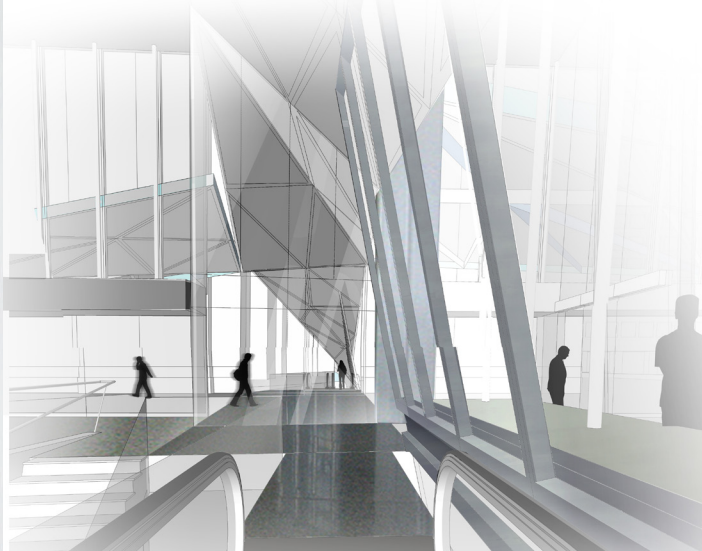
The isolation of a fragment does not necessarily have to be tangible, it can also be a quality. And this quality can be isolated through its confirmation, opposition, or a combination of both.
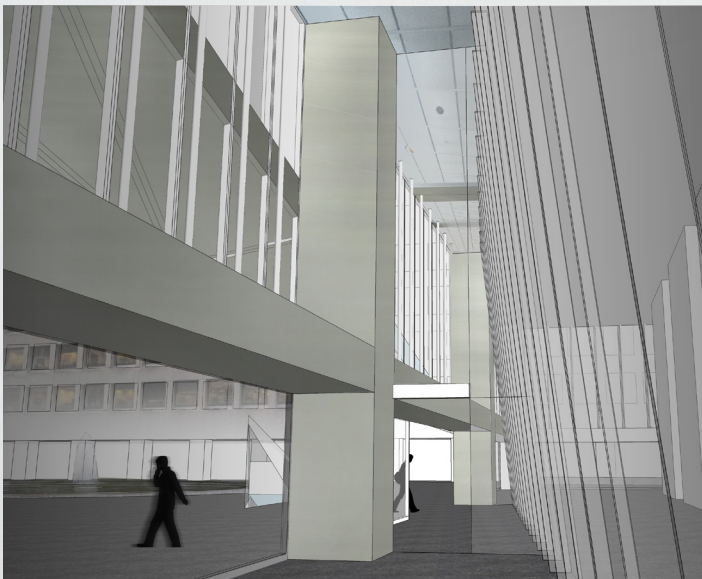
4.5 Gap:
the assembly of fragments

Hill proposed the montage of gaps. It is formulated in response to his critique on the traditional montage of fragments, which he associated extensively with shock. He sees the montage of fragments unfit for use in architecture. Instead of focusing solely on the fragments, he suggested that the spaces between the fragments are just as, if not more, important. The nonorganicity of a design is maintained through this attitude towards the assembly of fragments.

Montage of Gaps:
physical, sensual, seminal

Jonathan Hill believes that the power of montage in architecture to anticipate for creative users lies in his concept about the montage of gaps.

Montage works with the assembly of fragments. Up until this point, the montage of fragments into an existing condition is identified as an interruption to the organic unity of the work. But depending on how these inserted fragments are treated, in their assembly, the effect of the montage can vary dramatically.

Montage as a fundamental technique in the production of film and a graphic design technique in the production of a photomontage is very dictating. Both of these uses of montage assemble the fragments in such a way that they are to be read as an organic unity, clearly expressing the intension of the creator.

Sergei. M.Eisenstein in *Montage and Architecture* associated such a use of montage and it's parallel as an architectural experience. In his sense, montage is an assembly of fragments that acquire a specific meaning when viewed in a particular sequence. It is exemplified in the experience when

travelling through the Acropolis with sequential cinematic view of the temples and the reading of the eight coats of arms on the canopy over the altar inside St. Peter's in Rome. As Eisenstein considered these as examples of montage structure, this use of montage is to be avoided in this thesis as its deterministic character runs against the purpose that this thesis tries to achieve with montage.

Hill has identified three types of montage of gaps. The first type is a spatial gap, the 'latent space' between fragments (Hill, 2003). The second is a sensual gap where a sensual contradiction occurs, or a sense is completely eliminated (Hill, 2003). In this type of gap, people either create a new hybrid interpretation in the case of a contradiction or fill in their interpretation in the case of an absence. The last type of gap is a semantic gap. It is when usual expectations were not met and needs to be created (Hill, 2003).

Figure 4.10 (above): Space Between (24 Photographs of Middelburg Residents), 1985 is an installation at the exhibition "Space Between," De Vleeshal Middelburg. Middelburg, The Netherlands, July 12 - August 4, 1985.

Figure 4.11 (below): close up of two of the 24 photographs by Baldessari and his description of the work.

Spatial gap – John Baldessari, Space Between (24 Photographs of Middelburg Residents) in Vleeshall in Middleburg

Space Between (24 Photographs of Middelburg Residents), 1985 is an installation at the exhibition "Space Between," De Vleeshal Middelburg. The work includes a series of 24 photographs of faces placed in two rows against the opposite walls of the exhibition room. The essence of the work lies not so much in the faces depicted in the photographs, but more in the tension that these photographs are able to create through their arrangement. This tension exhibited between the two rows of photographs, one of male faces, the other of female faces, is created by the physical gap between the images. The work sparked reflection upon the establishment and the nature of the relationship between the two genders.

"People apart, either by attraction or repulsion. The subject is the space between, the magnetic field created by the peripheral poles. A way to scrutinize relationships."
(Baldessari)

65

Sensual gap – Jonathan Hill, The institute of illegal architects (internal wall in the smell production space)

Jonathan Hill illustrated his concept of gaps in a collection of architectural fragments in his design of The Institute of Illegal Architects (IIA). The IIA is a statement on the established hierarchy from professional architects to passive users. By being an institution for the 'illegal architect', who is a producer-user, Hill created production spaces for the hybrid between the professional architects and passive users. There are five production spaces within the IIA, each associated with the creation of a type of experience: time, sight, sound, smell and touch (Hill, 2003). The smell production space with the working of its internal walls was used to demonstrate the sensual gap.

Embedded as part of the internal walls of the smell production space are clear containers used for the storage of raw materials. These raw materials are to be taken out from the containers when used for essence extraction. As raw materials are taken out of their containers, a sensual gap is created. The smell of the raw material taken out fills up the space and is juxtaposed to the visual imagery of other raw materials sealed within the rest of the containers.
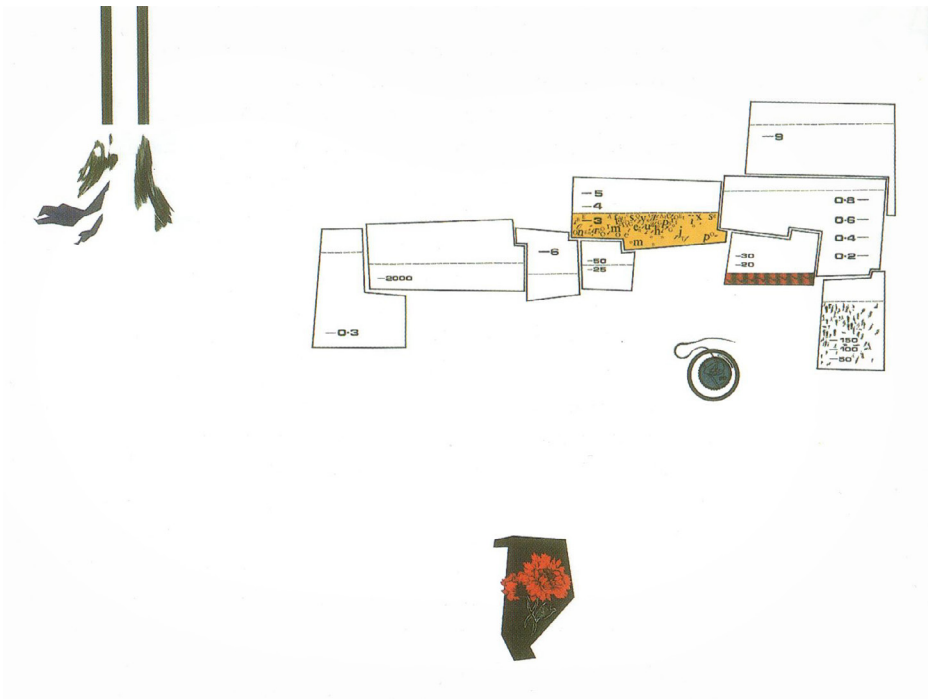

Figure 4.12 (left): Jonathan Hill, The Institute of Illegal Architects, Smell Production Space, 1996.

The focus when examining the sensual gap is how this incoherency between the senses creates the tension that filled a spatial gap with potential reinterpretation. In a spatial gap, we work with physical fragments and their spatial arrangement, in matter and physical space. In a sensual gap, we work with sensual fragments and the experience they create in our perception and mental experiential space.

So the question is: does the sensual gap produced by the internal wall in the smell production space create this level of tension?

The sensual gap presence in the smell production space is very non-specific. Our only knowledge of it is that the smell of the room does not match the material seen visually in the space. This generality of the gap presents itself as being less about any particular subject (ex. 24 photographs)*. But rather, it speaks more about the way smell as a sense is treated in the experience of architecture. In the example of the IIA, the presence of the sensual gap itself creates the tension for reflection. However, it is more useful to look at the potential of specific sensual gaps and their ability to create the tension for a variety of subjects.

*24 photographs reveals itself as a piece that explores human relationships, especially those between the two genders, through the choice of using photos of human faces and the way those photos are arranged in two rows according to gender.

Figure 4.13 (top) & Figure 4.14 (bottom): Diller + Scofidio, Blur Building, 2002.

Semantic gap – Diller + Scofidio, Blur Building

The Blur Building itself demonstrated a semantic gap because "missing from the Blur Building are the precise thresholds and spatial and material stability expected of the building" (Hill, 2003, p.179).

The semantic gap challenges our current understanding of what a building should be through its relationship with weather. This gap is created by using mist as a building material. This choice of material led us to question our understanding of spatial definition. Traditionally, space is always defined by a positive, tangible counterpart. But in the Blur Building, the mist is at once both the space and the material that 'defined' the space.

Semantic gaps in architecture often work very closely with materials and their expected properties.

67

Laminata House:
seminal gap working with material

Case Study: Laminata House, Leerdam, Netherlands – Kruunenberg Van der Erve Architecten 1995 - 1999

The Laminata House has challenged many qualities commonly expected of glass as a building material, creating several semantic gaps within one design. The structural integrity, conceptual lightness, and visual transparency of glass are disrupted with structural glass walls constructed with pieces of float glass laminated together.

The common expectation of glass is its application as a non-load bearing façade material because of its brittle quality. Designed in 1995, the Laminata House challenged this expectation by using glass as the only structural material in the house. However, as architects more and more often begin to consider glass as a structural material possible by engineering advancement, the strength of this gap diminishes.

More interesting are the gaps related to the conceptual lightness and visual transparency of glass. When glass is used as structure, its notion of 'invisibility' is still highlighted. An example would be the glass column developed by HI-TEC-GLAS Gruenplan. In the Laminata House, by contrast, the glass wall is solid and massive, as its thickness ranges from 10cm to 170cm (Linz, 2009, p.183).

The clear sheets of laminated float glass used to construct the glass wall are expected to be selected because of their visual transparency as demonstrated by the windows incorporated into the glass wall. However, the wall appears opaque when it is seen from an angle. In the Laminata House, a clear material was made opaque through construction.

It is illustrated by the Laminata House that one design element can be inscribed with more than a single gap through a combination of design decisions such as the selection of material, form, and construction.
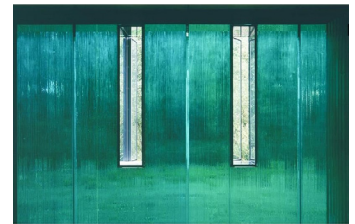
Photographs of Laminata House by Kruunenberg Van der Erve Architecten, 1995 - 1999.

Figure 4.15 (top): image of interior glass corridor showing the opaqueness of the wall.

Figure 4.16 (bottom): image showing an elevation view of glass wall with window insertion.

Figure 4.17 (below): image of clear glass columns by HI-TEC-GLAS.

A gap is anything but emptiness:
an inspiring field for reinterpretations

The creation of any of Hill's gap is not the creation of emptiness where nothing exists and the imagination of spectators is expected to run out of nothing. Instead, it is the creation of an infinite field inscribed with potential interpretations through the tension generated by the arrangement of fragments. The effect is at once both suggestive and yet loose and unconstrained, free for interpretation.

Hill's concept of gaps ensures that the assembly of the fragments will be kept nonorganic and their readings will not be singular and prescriptive. It is because the insertion of gaps will leave the work in a destabilized state. It also shows how montage can work beyond a rearrangement of physical fragments. The nonorganic quality of a work can go beyond a physical and visual level. It can also have other layers that are nonorganic in experiential and intellectual terms.

Laminata House:
seminal gap working with material

Case Study: Laminata House, Leerdam, Netherlands – Kruunenberg Van der Erve Architecten 1995 - 1999

The Laminata House has challenged many qualities commonly expected of glass as a building material, creating several semantic gaps within one design. The structural integrity, conceptual lightness, and visual transparency of glass are disrupted with structural glass walls constructed with pieces of float glass laminated together.

The common expectation of glass is its application as a non-load bearing façade material because of its brittle quality. Designed in 1995, the Laminata House challenged this expectation by using glass as the only structural material in the house. However, as architects more and more often begin to consider glass as a structural material possible by engineering advancement, the strength of this gap diminishes.

More interesting are the gaps related to the conceptual lightness and visual transparency of glass. When glass is used as structure, its notion of 'invisibility' is still highlighted. An example would be the glass column developed by HI-TEC-GLAS Gruenplan. In the Laminata House, by contrast, the glass wall is solid and massive, as its thickness range from 10cm to 170cm (Linz, 2009, p.183).

The clear sheets of laminated float glass used to construct the glass wall are expected to be selected because of their visual transparency as demonstrated by the windows incorporated into the glass wall. However, the wall appears opaque when it is seen from an angle. In the Laminata House, a clear material was made opaque through construction.

It is illustrated by the Laminata House that one design element can be inscribed with more than a single gap through a combination of design decisions such as the selection of material, form, and construction.

Photographs of Laminata House by Kruunenberg Van der Erve Architecten 1995 - 1999

Figure 53 (top): image of interior glass corridor showing the opaqueness of the wall

Figure 54 (bottom): image showing an elevational view of glass wall with window insertion

Figure 55 (below): image of clear glass columns by HI-TEC-GLAS

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A gap is anything but emptiness:
an inspiring field for reinterpretations

The creation of any of Hill's gap is not the creation of emptiness where nothing exists and the imagination of spectators is expected to run out of nothing instead, it is the creation of an infinite field inscribed with potential interpretations through the tension generated by the arrangement of fragments. The effect is at once suggestive and yet loose and unconstrained, free for interpretation

Hill's concept of gaps ensures that the assembly of the fragments will be kept nonorganic and their readings will not be singular and prescriptive. It is because the insertion of gaps will leave the work in a destabilized state. It also shows how montage can work beyond a rearrangement of physical fragments. The nonorganic quality of a work can go beyond a physical and visual level. It can also have other layers that are nonorganic in experiential and intellectual terms.

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Figure ii (above): a sample spread of the thesis document draft as sent to the panel prior to the final review.

More notes on the structure of the book: the book as an nonorganic construct

This book has two roles: as a component of the final review and as the final thesis document.

The final review was considered as an event consisting of three parts. The first is the draft document sent to the panel prior to the presentation.* Here, the document was considered as the prologue to the final presentation. The focus was on setting up the issues and theoretical background along with some understanding of the design exploration in service of the presentation. This part consisted of the four chapters prior to this page and information located in Appendix A, B, and C.

Then, in its role as the final thesis document, this book is to be considered in its entirety with content and images from all six chapters and appendices. To retain both roles of the book, major additional content written with the benefit of having been through the final review were concentrated in Chapters 5 and 6 located after this page. A self-running presentation video with narration included in the form of subtitles was also included because the final presentation itself is a significant component of this thesis.

Stopping at this point in the book to flip through the first three appendices at the back and view the presentation file would give an experience of the presentation closest to the one experienced by the review panel. It is also how the presentation was intended to be experienced.

* The second part is the final presentation, and the discussion after the presentation is considered the third.

Chapter 5:
(Re)presentation as design exploration

The four aspects of montage as explored in the previous chapter were, in the end, both manifested in and revealed through the conceptualization of a physical insertion within the Commerce Court complex. This inserted physical space will alienate us from the everyday and interrupt the organic unity of the complex, providing the mental space that inspires our critical and creative perceptions. Qualities from the complex and its manifestation as physical design are isolated, assembled and layered.

However, it was also understood that each representation of the design exploration, and in the case of this thesis, each presentation, is one possible manifestation of the design out of many. This means architectural (re)presentation itself defines to us the architecture as much, if not more, as the design as an artifact would.

N
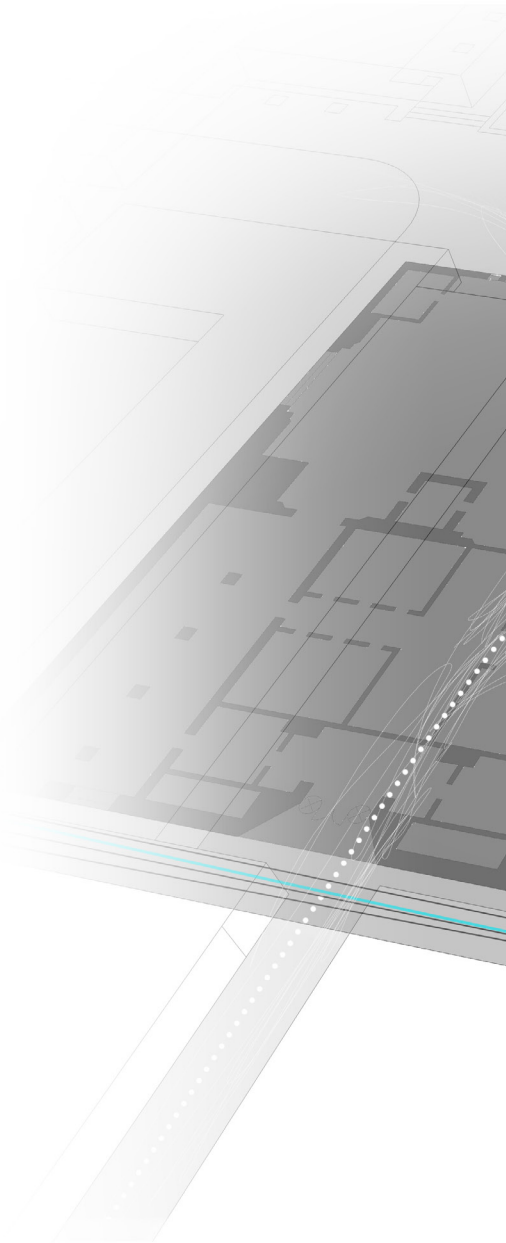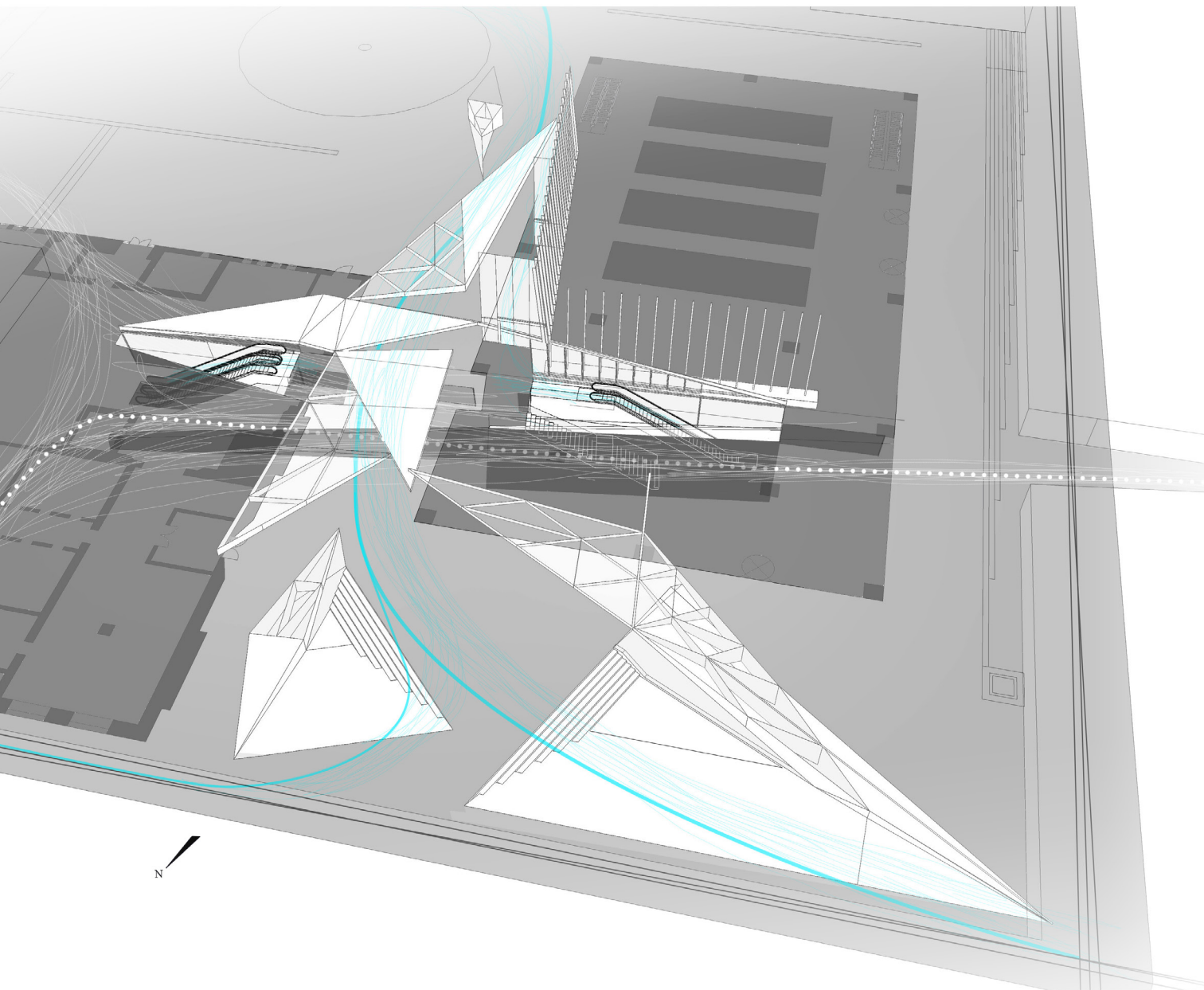
5.1 (Re)presentation I:
the conventional trial

In an earlier review, the design exploration was presented in a conventional structure consisted of drawings pinned up on the wall in the configuration shown below. These conventional drawings of plans, sections and perspectives had communicated to the audience the design exploration as an artifact. In this review, the thesis was considered as three things. The first was the ideas, which are about the concepts of montage as discussed throughout this document. The second was the design that reflects those ideas. The role of design as a process was used as the vehicle to discover and explore aspects about the subject of montage as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Then lastly was the representation of the design, shown as conventional drawings in this review. Here, the representation was still considered as a separate entity from the design exploration.

1	2	4	6	8	9	12	15
		5	7	10	11	13	16
		3				14	
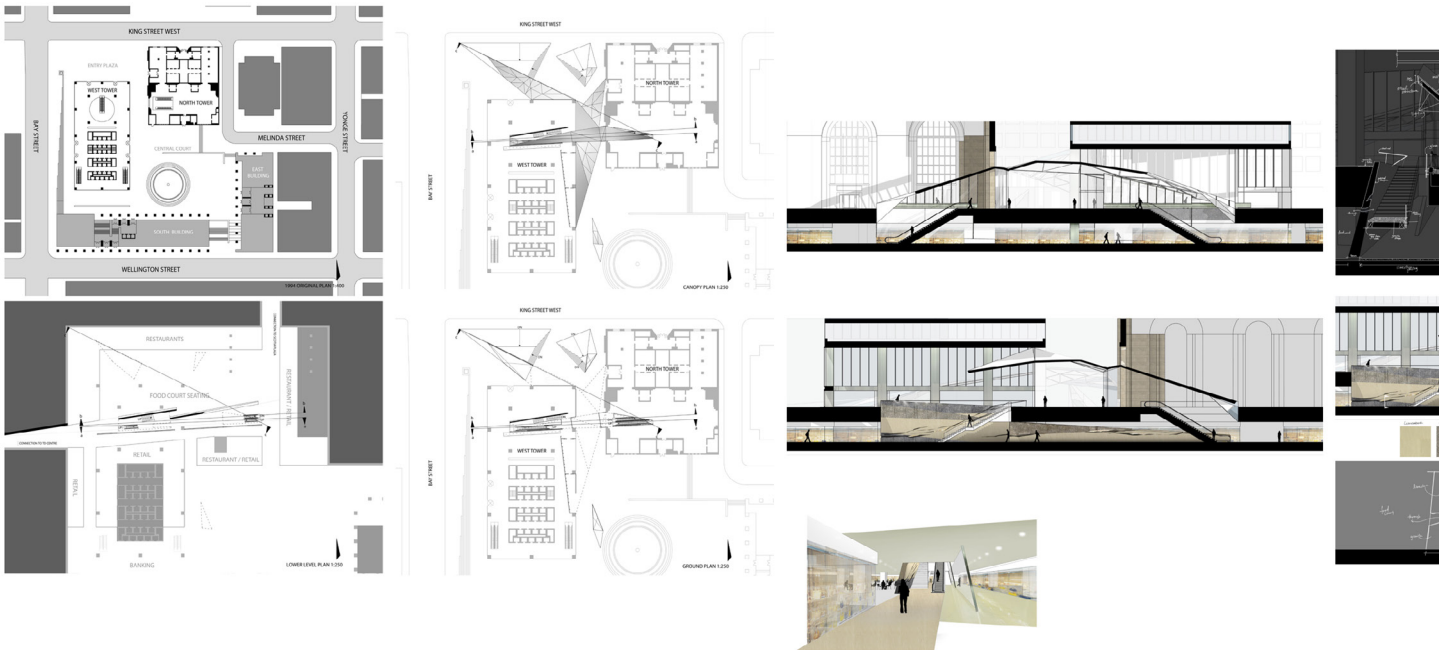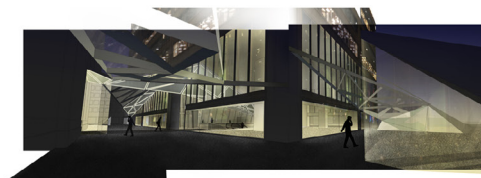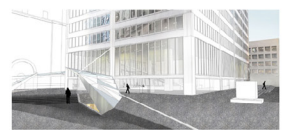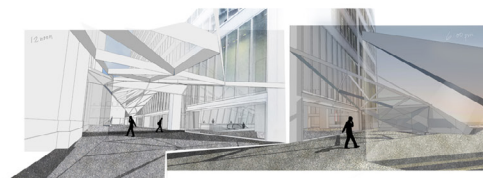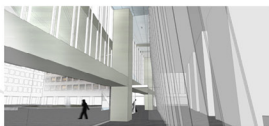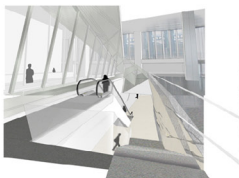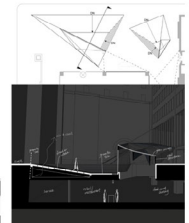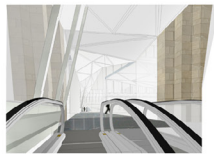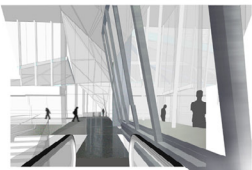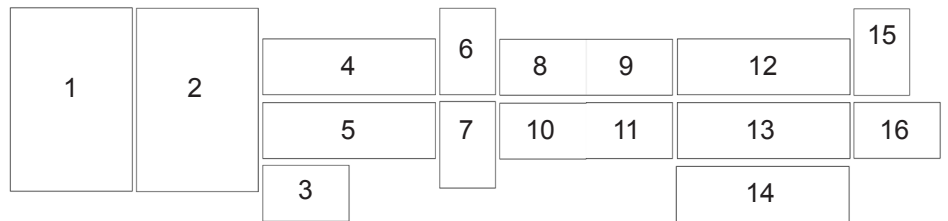
However, referring back to the beginning of this document which identified our two types of passive architectural experience, architecture in this thesis is never singular. It is the sum of its various experiences whether in first person or through its representations.

Architecture is the distracted experience of the everyday.

It is the contemplative experience through the arts.

It is also the montage experience put forward by this thesis.

Then arguably, it will be the experience of the design exploration as it was presented too.

This means that the representation of the design exploration itself now becomes another form of design exploration. When exploration considers design as a process, it allows for a personal journey of discovery with the subject of montage in architecture. When exploration considers design as represented, it can facilitates the critical and creative dialogue with others on the subject matter. This kind of dialogue and the experience that leads to it becomes very important given the intension of this thesis is to bring forward the importance of critical and creative perceptions.

* Some of the images produced in this earlier review are included in Appendix C.
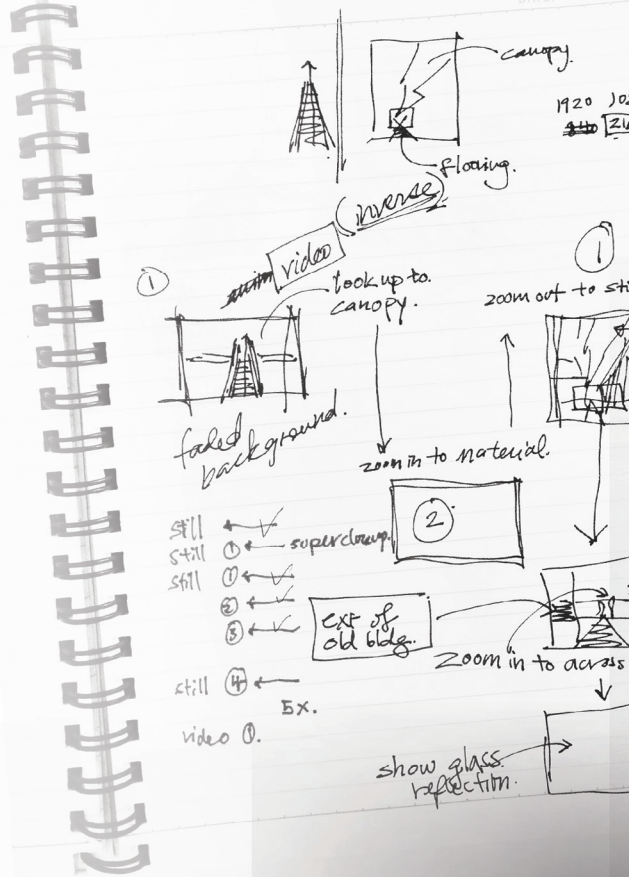
5.2 (Re)presentation II:
the experiment

The (re)presentation now becomes the design exploration where the design itself is repositioned to be the expression of architectural ideas about montage put forward by this thesis.

The final exploration, similar to this book, was intended to be the expression of montage as it relates to architecture, a central idea in this thesis. Both the representation of the design along with the actual presentation should embed all qualities of montage with enough clarity to be suggestive yet still leave enough space for interpretation.

20 min presentation.
= 2800 words 140 words per min

opening video sequence.

everyday & gallery

site video

montage icon

history & theory slides. 30 sec.

thesis   30 sec

what is glass   30 sec.

video →

alienation.   38 sec
organicity.   50 sec
close up   25 sec
sop.   23 sec.

overall understanding of design

plan, section, elevation
3d overview disruption

going to site

epic

(smell)

triage glass stone section

going to site

+10 min
model thesis
design

4 min 25 sec
experiencial zoom
sequence (un-finished)

conclusion (50 words).
(icons popping up sequence).

5 min.

1 min

3 min

5 min.

5 min.

30 sec.

Structure and assembly of fragments:
repetition and layering through montage as an event

A significant change in attitude from the previous presentation is to view the (re)presentation as an event instead of an artifact consisting of printed images. This allows the presentation to work more closely with the subject of this thesis because montage in architecture is also temporal. It should be considered and structured as an event.

Overall, the presentation tries to convey experientially the ideas and architectural experiences discussed and put forward by this thesis. Hence, it did not follow a conventional presentation structure that begins with theoretical background and end with the design project. Instead, the problem, theory and design exploration is introduced all at once in the opening sequence prior to showing the title of this thesis. This type of structuring is then explored in hope to have it follow through for the rest of the presentation. For example, to emphasize the importance of the everyday, the montage sequence towards the end of the presentation showing the experience through the design exploration responds to the very first sequence about the everyday in the very beginning. Then to reiterate the significance of montage in the creation of a space with multiple interpretations, images of the site and the design exploration are shown repeatedly in layers, but each time in a slightly different way.

These intended structurings of the presentation were not explicitly revealed during the presentation. Just as explanation about the design exploration was kept to the minimal by omitting conventional design drawings, and limiting the amount of narration, it is about leaving space for experience and interpretation. The presentation, in addition to the representation of the design exploration, also becomes an expression of montage as proposed by the thesis.
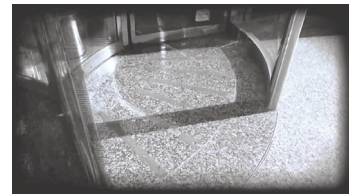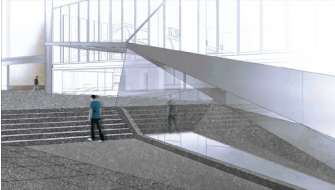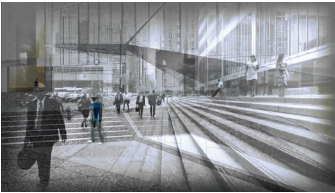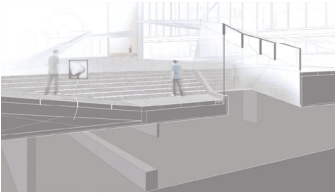
Chapter 6:
(Dia)epilogue

The complete event of the final review was valued in its entirety. It was not only valued as the design as represented during the presentation, but also the exchange of ideas through this presentation experience and people's interpretation of it.

Some of the questions and comments from the panel are included and kept as close to their original form as possible. It is to retain the notion of montage as the nonorganic construct put forward by this thesis. Reactions from the panel revolved around three elements within this thesis: seeing critically, sustainability of shock and architectural representation. My response shown in this book in turn became a synthesis of my immediate response to the panel, and a further elaboration and reinterpretation of my own work in hindsight.
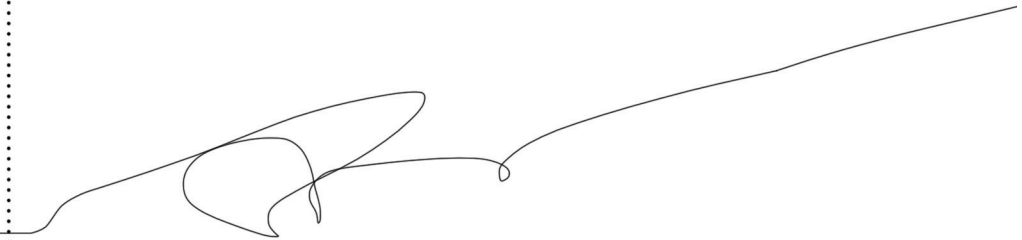
SS - Scott Sorli
AW - Arthur Wrigglesworth
VH - Vincent Hui
JC - John Cirka
SW - Sze Wong

6.1 Seeing from a critical distance:
a dialogue with Scott Sorli

This thesis began with our perception of architecture, concerning the way we 'see' (or not see) our built environment. Then a question brought up was about "what are we trying to see with montage", or more particularly, with the alienation aspect of montage.

SS: If I were just to pick one particular component of your thesis, like let's just say… the component of alienation, what would be the purpose of alienation in your design be… on this site?

SW: The purpose of the alienation begins with the concept of how we passively accept our spaces in the everyday in a state of distraction. What alienation does is that it inserts a gap where we can begin to pause, and reflect upon our built environment.

SS: So you are trying to knock us out of this state of distraction…

SW: Temporally yes.*

SS: …temporally yes… so the place you want to take us into… would that be still in a realm of material pleasure…? In other words, are you using architectural montage as an method of making us more aware of an architecture or making us more aware of other issues like for example what effect the corporate bank of commerce have on our society?

SW: It is not exactly neither, but it is in-between the two. It is how the corporate image of the Commerce Court complex is being expressed architecturally. It is being aware of the material qualities that are the corporate image manifested in physical design.

AW: That's also leading it to the other direction…

SW: So it is about knocking us out into an understanding of the material what would then possibly lead us into the direction towards understanding the corporate image and all its other meaning as you engage with the complex.

SS: Which you think Brecht is interested in? Do you think he is more interested in the material end of things or the corporate?

SW: I would say the corporate.

SS: Would you say the material is a means to an end to alienation?

SW: It is on two levels. On one level, alienation is used as a particular concept within montage that helps us to realize the material. On the other level, this realization of the material would then lead us to the alienation closer to Brecht's term, which is a realization to some bigger issues, in this case of my site, the corporate power.

SS: Why do you talk about aura, would you say that the aura would have the same outcome as alienation?

SW: Both aura and alienation work with creating a distance. That's the apparent similarity between the two. However, aura is a distance that prevents you from questioning the work as it puts the work in a higher position while alienation is a distance that allows you to criticize the work.

SS: Both of them operate with the gap, so… could you just walk through your proposal here as to tell us that gap, how did you motivate that gap?

SW: The gap is motivated in two ways. The first is the physical gap, working with circulation, creating a charged field with fragments in which you circulate through and read as a spatial in-between. The gap also works with the sensual and conceptual quality as well. For example, the insertion of exhaust grills into the granite with the suggestion of permeability work in both the sensual and conceptual level.

By foregrounding a distinction between the material and the political, what this conversation was able to highlight was not only the concept of alienation being the critical distance for us to 'see', but also what does it mean to 'see' and what are we 'seeing'.

Referring back to the thesis statement, this thesis's sentiment is to create a space that inspires a critical and creative perception of its immediate context. The term 'seeing' is much about having access to acquire one's own critical perception.** Both Benjamin and Brecht spoke about this type of 'seeing'. In both cases, 'seeing' is about waking from the illusion created by those in power within society, where the function of mechanically produced art for Benjamin, and the role of the Epic Theatre for Brecht, is to let us 'see'. However, this thesis is not trying to translate this type of 'seeing' enabled through mechanically produced art and Epic Theatre directly to architecture; which is similar to using architecture as an optical instrument as discussed by Mertins and Deriu.

Instead, this thesis tries to appropriate Benjamin's and Brecht's techniques of seeing to see a view of architecture different from those presented by its creator and artists. It is not only about seeing political issues through architecture, but seeing the political dimension of architecture as a material manifestation of our society. In this particular case with the Commerce Court complex, it is the corporate power of the bank in disguise behind a seemingly elegant and muted image portrayed in glass, steel and stone.

* A fuller discussion about temporality is included in the next section.
** The other aspect, the creative perception, is also further discussed in the next section.
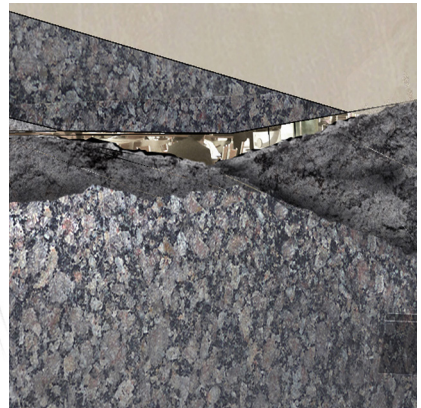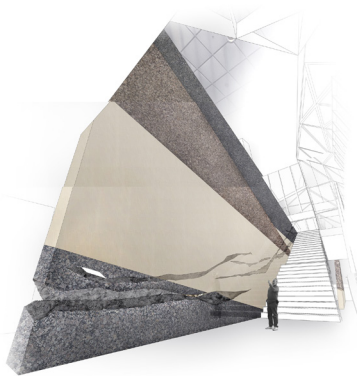
6.2 (after)Shock:
more on sustaining the creative dialogue

VH: You start talking about the issue of shock and you always relate back to art and montage right, when you presented your project, I kept on thinking about the urinal and I can imagine that as this whole shock issue and you are talking about having people retune themselves to architecture. So, how do you maintain this sort of "sustainability"? (Not in the ecological sense, we are talking about the sustainability of effect.) At an architectural level, we pass by a lot of crazy spectacle like say we walk by the ROM addition, we walk by the Toronto City Hall, and it just becomes another bland piece of architecture that we just walk by. But you are presenting something in an everyday work environment, so how do you maintain that effect?

SW: The fragments themselves are not meant to only have one singular read to it. For example, the cuts on the stone wall, it can be read as a question about the massiveness and solidity of stone as a separator. Then on the other hand, it could also be read about material choice and its relation to the human experience. There is the perfectly polished surface immune from any human trace in contrast with the rough surface for touch inside the cuts as possible railings.

JC: That question is really an important one and that's why I choose the word spectacle because I think that… Vince's point is actually something that really needs to be considered within architecture because it is there all the time… There's a moment we reserve for this kind of aesthetic appreciation of [art] and that's something that is not there in architecture because of its functional role…*
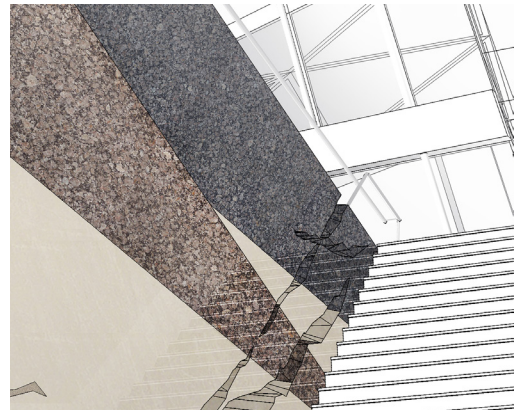
* This is an excerpt from the original comment.

The thought that architecture does not enjoy the same aesthetic appreciation as art because of its functional role only applies when we look at architectural experiences without the temporal dimension. The idea of temporal alienation looked at montage in our architectural experience as a temporal event. It seeks and expands the gap where the functional role of architecture becomes less prominent. This gap is demonstrated by the design insertion through two design decisions. The first is the choice of circulation as program. The second is the use of a spatial in-between as the actual site for the insertion, where we travel between the concourse and grade.
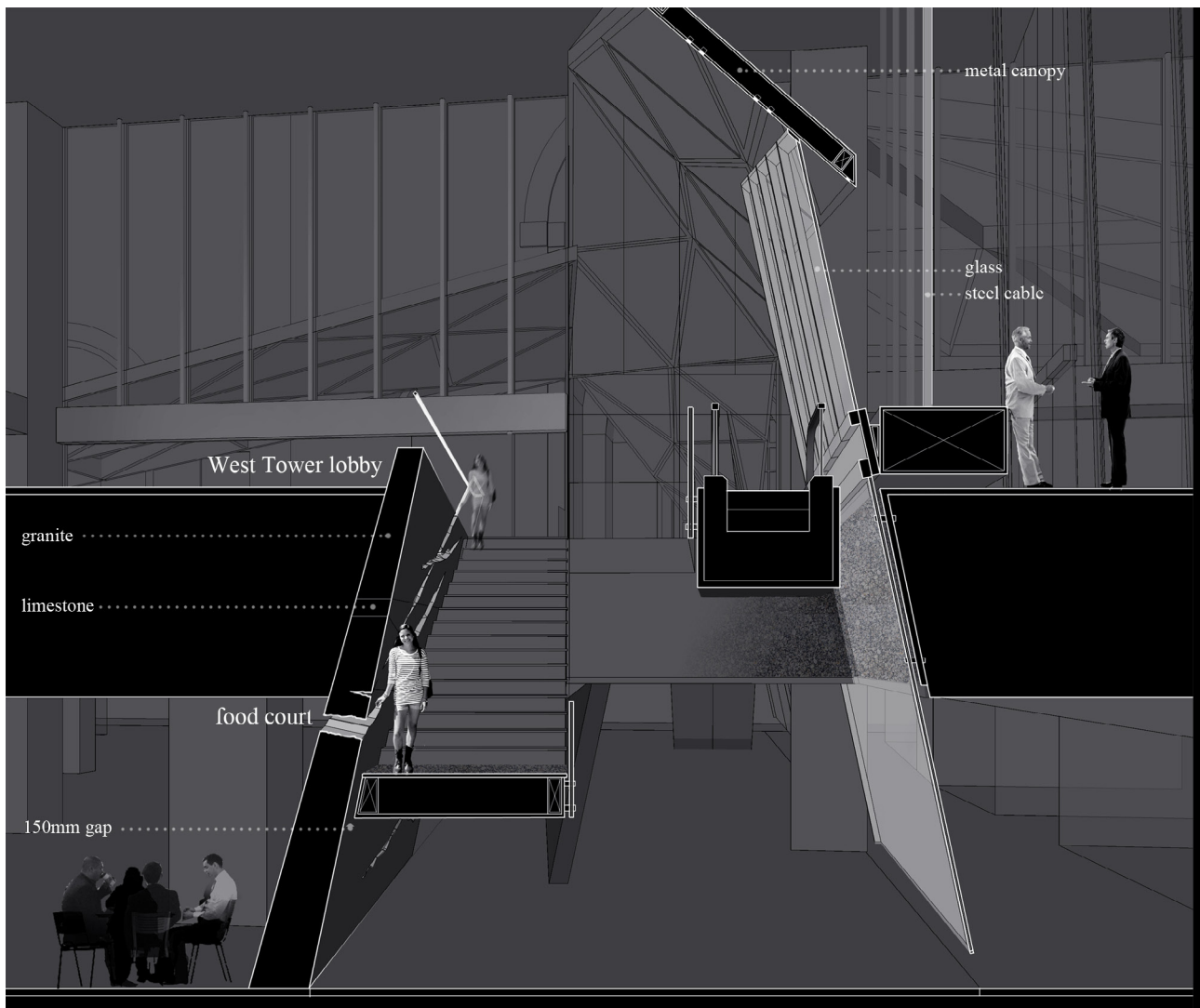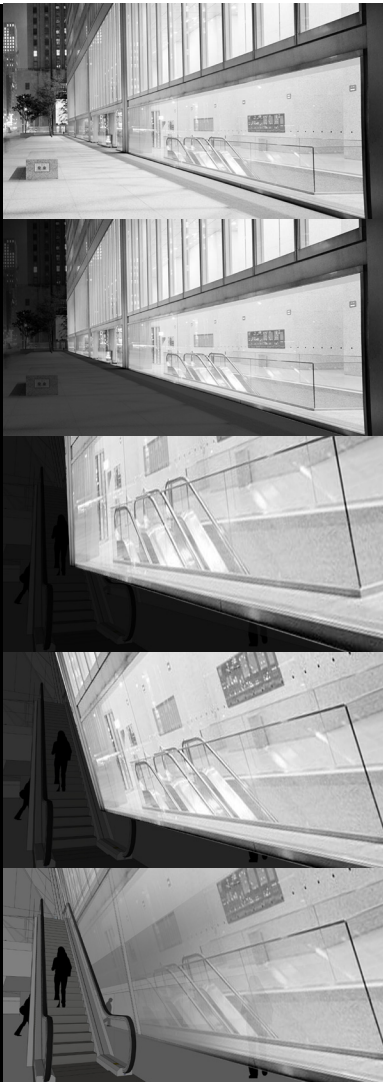
Shock wears off as it is repeatedly experienced, making the sustainability of it an issue with architecture. However, with the aspects of temporal alienation and nonorganicity, it is proposed that montage in architecture for this thesis would create a design insertion that would operate in a different mode once past any initial shock generated by its 'spectacular' nature.

The major concern is actually less about how to sustain the shock, but to imagine the scenario after shock. Through temporal alienation and nonorganicity, it is anticipated that even after shock, this spatial insertion would never become normative, falling back to the usual disinterest.

Montage after shock in this thesis also works as what Rendell (2006) described as "material and spatial forms that produce multiple associations and ambiguous situations" (p. 120). The 'multiple associations' quality is demonstrated in each fragment; the stone wall brought up during the final review is an example. It is also demonstrated in the design insertion as a nonorganic construct.

The shock effect of the 'spectacular' design insertion would appear the strongest when the insertion is encountered in isolation and intense focus.* But when the insertion is repeatedly experienced on an everyday basis, as anticipated by this thesis, it will always be read against the larger context in a fragmented manner. Revealed sporadically, all elements of the design insertion and the larger context together will eventually evolve into a state of 'ambiguous situations'. With all the elements juxtaposing with one another, the complex, especially the insertion, is left in a nonorganic and destabilized state. It will always be out of the norm as an ambiguity.

 * This is where the presentation might have fall short, being overly focused on the ambition to communicate as much of the montage effect within the design as possible in the limited amount of time.
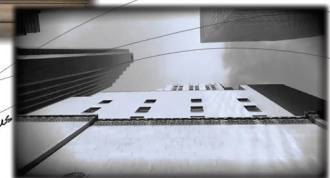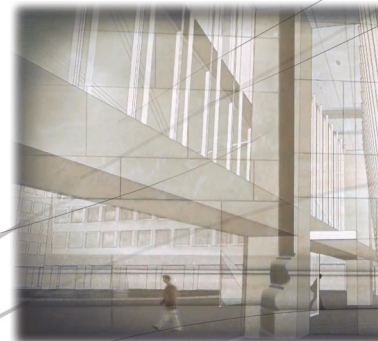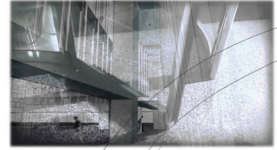
Stone is at once massive, tall, heavy, a separator, and the old , but also permeable, tactile, a handrail, and the new. It can never be settled to a singular read.

The cuts on the stone wall can be associated with the exhaust grill, which in turn can be associated with granite as used in the complex, to the separation between the concourse and grade level. Then through the canopy, it can be associated with the distinction between interior and exterior, and eventually with glass as a transparent barrier…
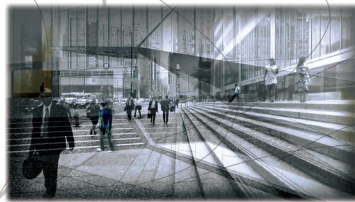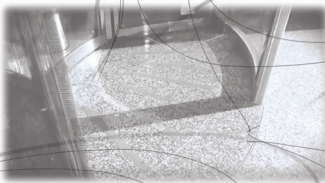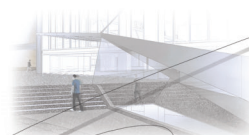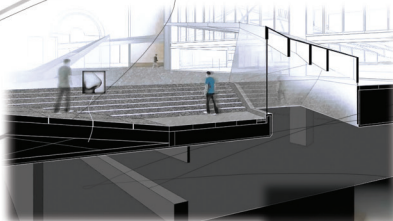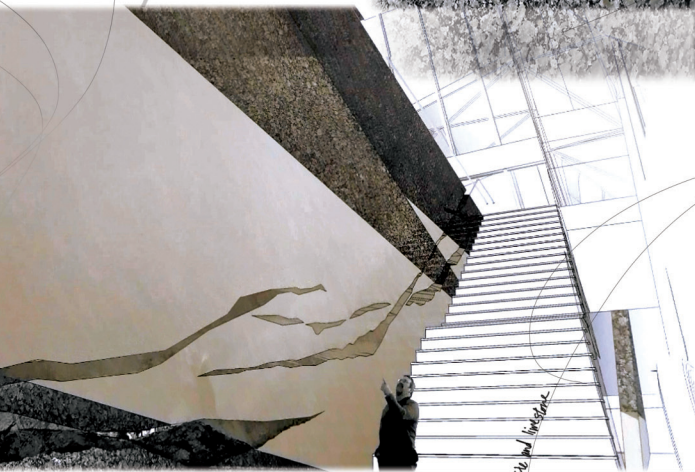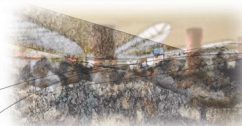
6.3 On architectural representation:
as inspired by the presentation

In addition to a discussion of montage, the subject matter of this thesis, the presentation itself, and the representation of the design exploration also became a topic of discussion.

JC: Do you have an issue with architectural representation? … cause one of your theme is montage and you choose a particular way of presenting the project to us and that's not… you didn't make that explicit, that's kind of implicit as well. So I'm curious about that dimension of your subject matter. You spent a lot of time in constructing a very wonderful presentation for us that isn't the standard plan, section, elevation, maybe some renderings, maybe an animation, but you really structured it in a very very different way and that is left for us to really read, which I think is kind of interesting with your subject matter. And also there is this discussion about the muteness of architecture, so I'm really starting to now turn that discussion on architecture to representation of architecture and put that into the context of your opening remarks of the artist foregrounding a space that in the everyday perhaps disappears.

SW: The way I chose to represent my project is tailored towards my subject matter… It is understood that in my thesis, the representation is not just the representation, but it is also the design (or now in hindsight, more precisely, part of the architectural expression).

SS: I follow what you are saying if I can rephrase on your behalf. There are things that montage can do that conventional plan, section, elevation can't do, and some of those things followed from your work and intervention.

AW: It's also… what was being presented today was not so much the design artifact as the design artifact coming into service of a communication or representation of these ideas that have been investigated. So what I appreciated… I think this is what we were kind of mucking around with… is that the design artifact isn't being "here's what I've designed", but "I've designed something, but I'm only showing you that design as it is useful in expressing these ideas that I wanted to tell you". And so where we get, for me, the video and all these various techniques which are aside of the expectation or the norm of language of representation are coming out of critically putting the design artifact into some subservient kind of role in this particular venue.

SS: Or is a tool.

AW: Right… that's goes all the way back to the beginning…

The artist foregrounds space that perhaps in the everyday disappears through contemplation. In here, architecture in the everyday is represented through art.

The design as an artifact during the design process foregrounds concepts of montage as explored in this thesis. In here, architectural ideas are represented through design.

 The (re)presentation of design is used to foreground the ideas on montage for interpretation and discussion. In here, architectural ideas are represented through the representation of the design.

In each of these cases, the representation becomes a component, equal in significance, of the represented. The critical and creative perceptions of architecture through montage can be understood as our individual mental representations of the spaces we occupy on a daily basis. This, as believed in this thesis, is as significant as the spaces themselves.

Speculation

In the very beginning, this thesis initiated from the observation and interest in the 'interactive' architecture using responsive technology that starts to permeate into our everyday environment. As I read on about this topic and eventually get to the rudimentary definition on 'interactivity', it became apparent that my primary interest was the interactive relationship between people and the space they occupy, whether with responsive technology or not. At this moment, the research had looked at various concepts that could possibly reveals the nature of this interactive relationship and how to create architecture that anticipates for it. Several potential concepts were looked at and montage was one of them. At that moment, montage was only understood as one of the technique to create interactive architecture that anticipates the creative occupants among others such as deviation and polyvalence.

As more research was conducted, montage reveals itself as a subject with much conceptual richness and depth that it is beyond a technique. This is where the thesis as it stands now began to take shape. Montage became a fundamental theoretical and creative principle that affected the formation of the entire thesis. It eventually led to the definition of the critical and creative perception of spaces in the everyday as one possible understanding of interactivity between people and their spaces. The various aspects related to montage were researched and explored through design simultaneously, distilling to the four concepts of alienation, nonorganicity, close-up and gap presented in this book.

Although the four concepts are presented in order and separately within the book, they feed into one another in reality. This is demonstrated by the design exploration. No part of the design insertion can be isolated as a pure demonstration of one of the four concepts nor does the design process follow the four concepts in a specific order. The concepts are interlinked and can be applied in various combinations creatively similar to montage as an emancipating principle proposed in this thesis.

Towards the end, approaching the final review, the significance of montage stretched even further. It's effect reached beyond this thesis's conception, theoretical understanding, and design exploration, reaching into its representation in presentations. The feedback from the panel had shed new light on this subject which some are included in the last two chapters of the book. It seems that even within the few selected aspects of montage presented in this thesis, without mentioning all the other excluded or not yet discovered, the subject of montage could never be exhausted.

The path of my search from the initial interest in 'interactive' architecture using responsive technology to montage was long and winding. And in here as this thesis comes to its end, it seems like I have just reached a beginning. It is a beginning to start a deeper understanding of an interactive relationship between people and space in its most rudimentary terms, and in this case, through the subject of montage.
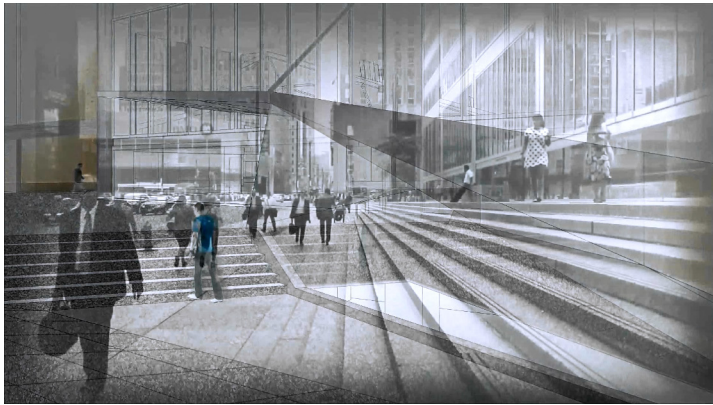
Appendices

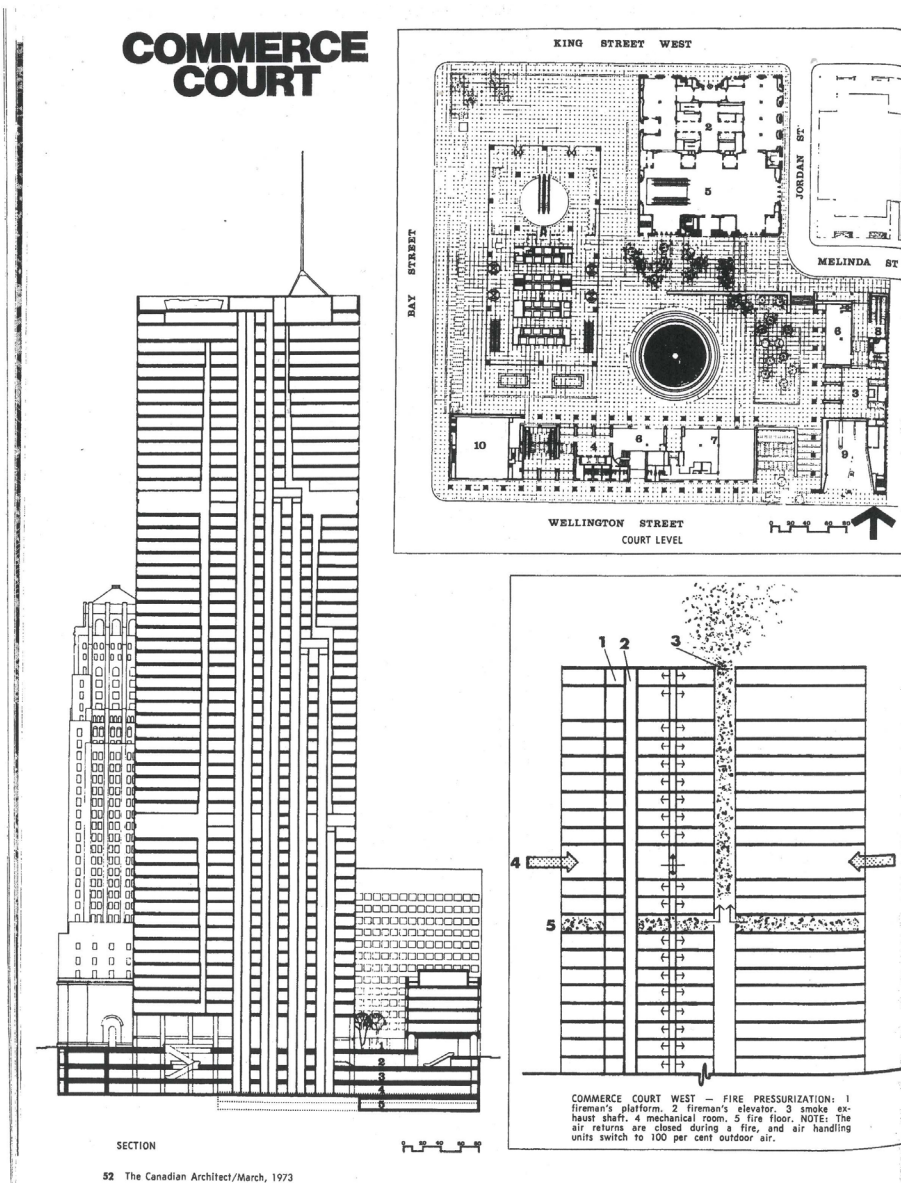# Appendix A:
Additional site information

Original drawings of Commerce Court complex with I.M.Pei's addition. <Smith, C., Grant, A., & Gillespie, B. (1973). Canadian Architect. p. 52.>

Photos of Commerce Court's additions:
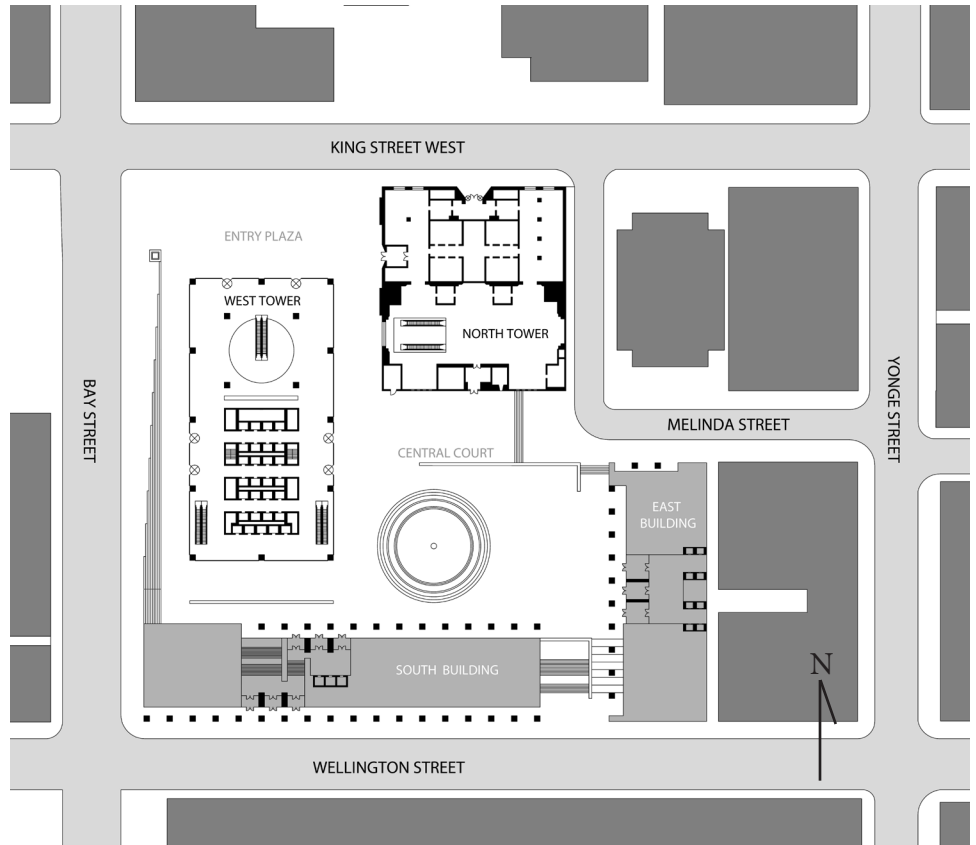
(left): exterior image of North tower. <http://farm9.staticflickr. com/8289/7640381890_ c8c6bb86e0.jpg>
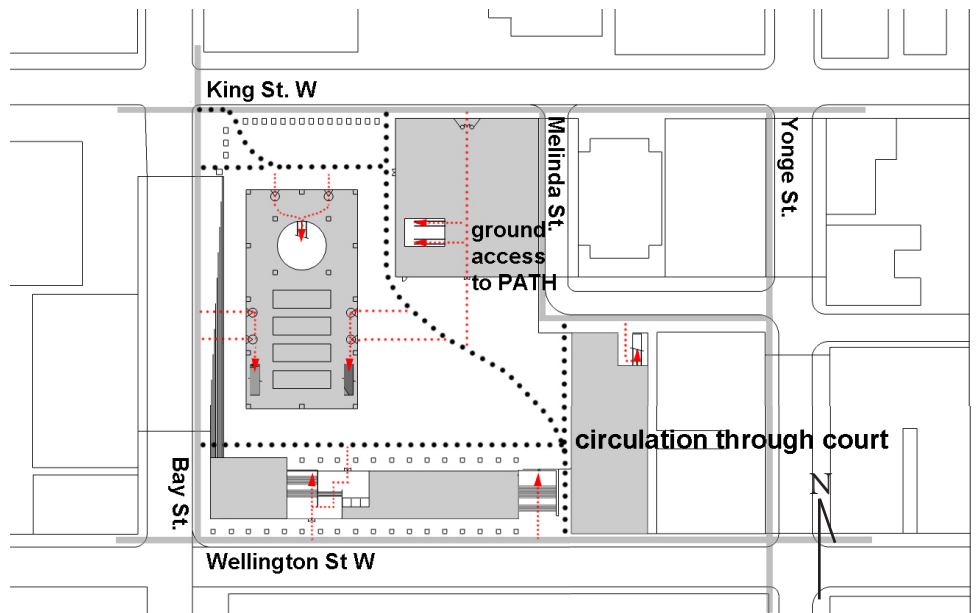
(centre): exterior image of central court. < http://www.pcf-p.com/ a/p/6510/3.html >

(right): Zeilder's addition of a steel and glass enclosure between the West and North tower. (to be considered not there for the thesis). <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_ dOgk21RR1m0/TEmb04q_vsl/ AAAAAAAAAdQ/HMoSuFzmUF4/ s1600/CIBC_3.jpg >

Ground plan of Commerce Court complex. (as with I.M.Pei's addition)

KING STREET WEST

ENTRY PLAZA

WEST TOWER

NORTH TOWER

BAY STREET

YONGE STREET

MELINDA STREET

CENTRAL COURT

EAST BUILDING

SOUTH BUILDING

WELLINGTON STREET

N

Ground plan showing existing circulation pattern. (as with I.M.Pei's addition)

King St. W

Melinda St.

Yonge St.

ground access to PATH

circulation through court

Bay St.

Wellington St W

N
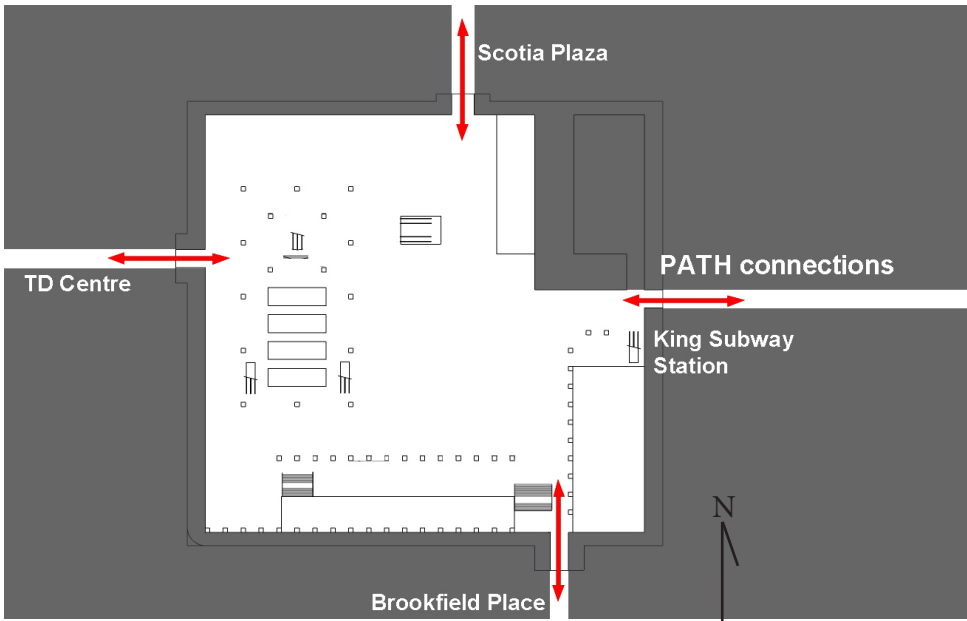
Concourse level plan showing existing circulation and major services areas. (as with I.M.Pei's addition)

Red arrows showing Commerce Court's PATH connections to adjacent office buildings and subway station.

(below left): North Tower interior banking lobby as of today. If according to original plans shown by I.M.Pei, the escalators would be located in the foreground of the image. < http://www.toronto. ca/doorsopen/images/gallery/ commercecourt.jpg >

(below right): interior of banking lobby of West Tower as of today.
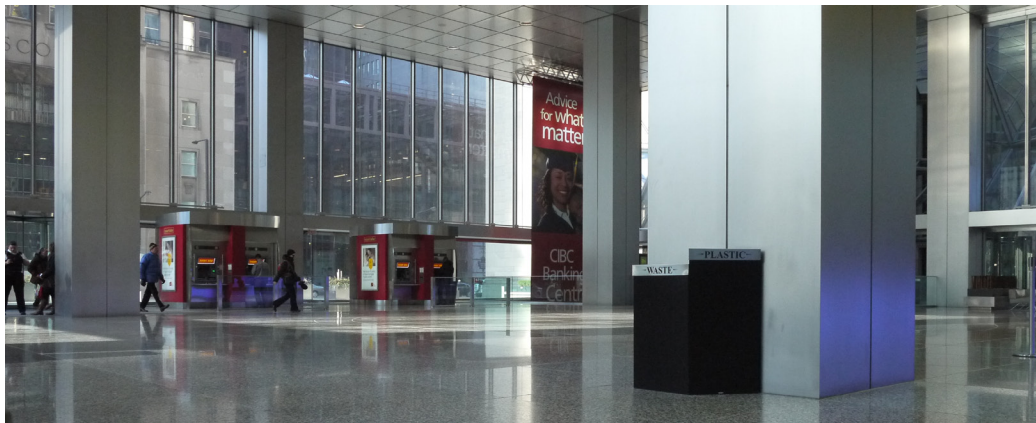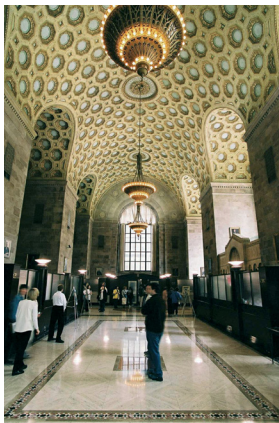
(above): condition of Commerce Court's concourse level showing the food court.

Appendix B:
Timeline

1889 – Eiffel Tower

1912 – Pablo Picasso – *Still Life with Chair Caning*

1917 – Marcel Duchamp – *Fountain*

1928 – Sigfried Giedion – *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete*

1931 – Pearson & Darling – Commerce Court North Tower

1931 – Walter Benjamin – *Little History of Photography*

1934 – Walter Benjamin – *Work of Art in Age of Mechanical Reproduction*

1936 – Walter Benjamin – *The Author as Producer*

1938 – Sergei M. Eisenstein – *Montage & Architecture* (written)

1973 – I.M. Pei – Commerce Court addition

1974 – Peter Bürger – *Theory of the Avant-Garde*

1989 – Sergei M. Eisenstein – *Montage & Architecture* (published in English)

1989 – Krzysztof Wodiczko – *Christchurch Cathedral Project*

1991/7 – Bernard Tschumi – Le Fresnoy Nation Studio for Contemporary Arts

~~1994 – Zeidler Partnership Architect s – Commerce Court renewal~~

2003 – Jonathan Hill – *Actions of Architecture*

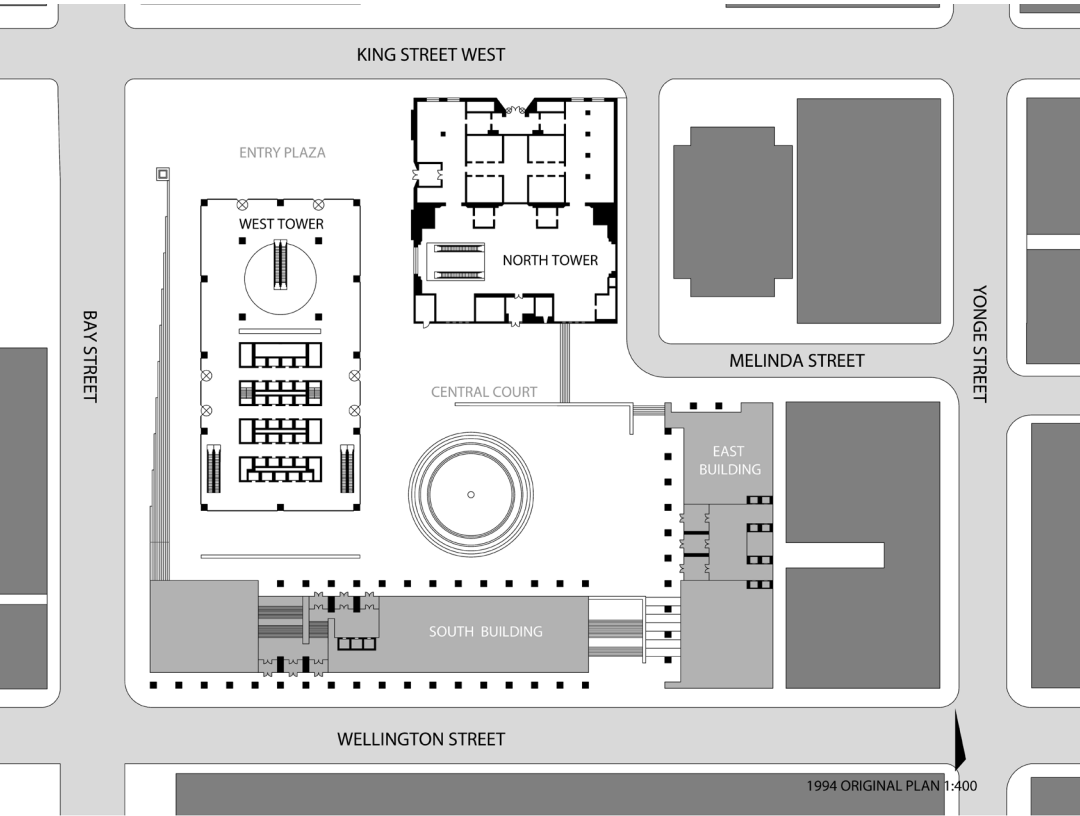2006 – Jane Rendell – *Art & architecture – a place between*

2006/7 – Usman Haque – *Distinguishing concepts – lexicons of interactive art and architecture, Architecture – interaction - system*
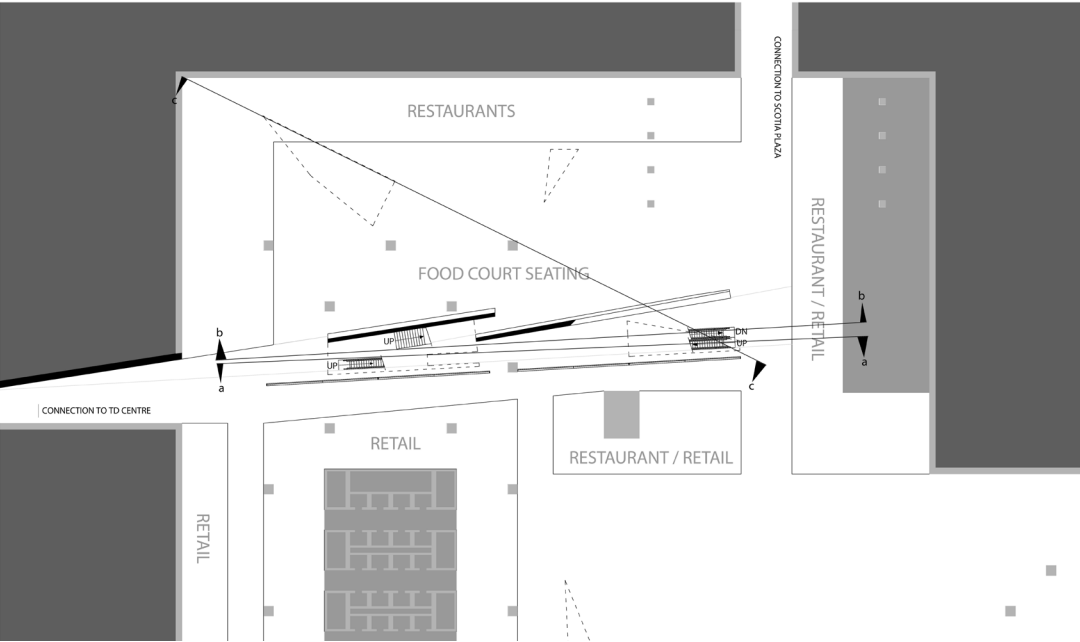
2007 – David Deriu – *Montage & Modern Architecture*

2011 – Detlef Mertins – *Modernity Unbound – Walter Benjamin and the tectonic unconscious: using architecture as an optical instrument*
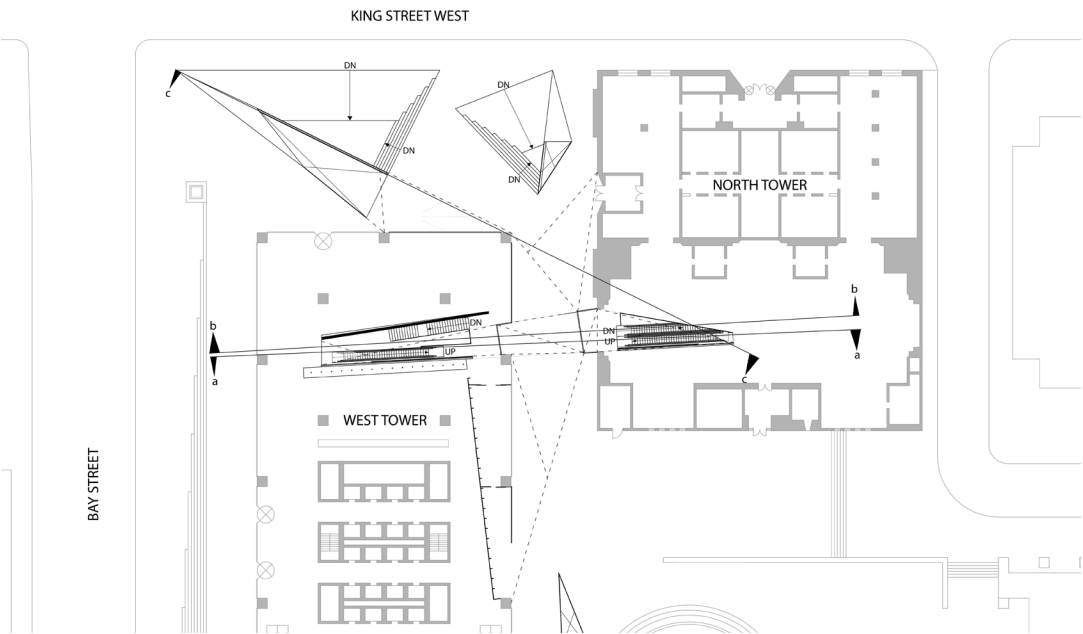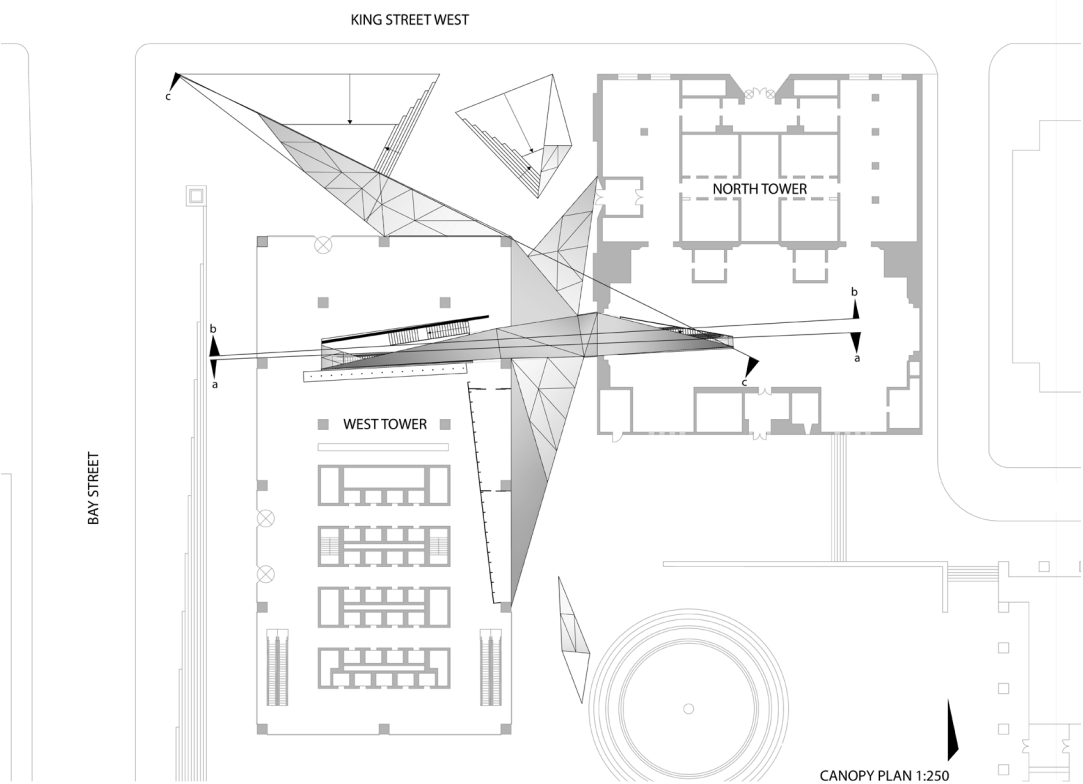
Appendix C:
Images presented in Substantial Completion Review

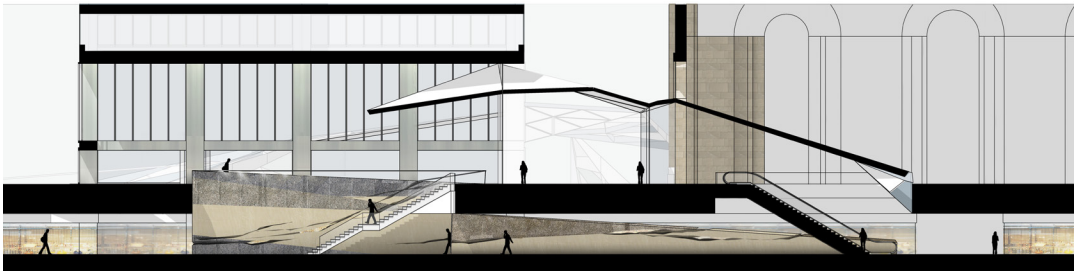*1: (top) 1994 original plan & (bottom) proposed lower level plan*

KING STREET WEST

ENTRY PLAZA

WEST TOWER

NORTH TOWER

BAY STREET

YONGE STREET

MELINDA STREET

CENTRAL COURT

EAST BUILDING

SOUTH BUILDING

WELLINGTON STREET

1994 ORIGINAL PLAN 1:400

CONNECTION TO SCOTIA PLAZA

RESTAURANTS

RESTAURANT / RETAIL

FOOD COURT SEATING

CONNECTION TO TD CENTRE

RETAIL

RETAIL

RESTAURANT / RETAIL

*2: (top) proposed
canopy plan
& (bottom)
proposed ground
plan*

KING STREET WEST

BAY STREET

NORTH TOWER

WEST TOWER

CANOPY PLAN 1:250

KING STREET WEST
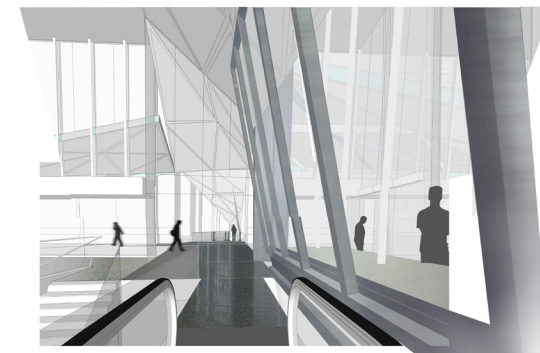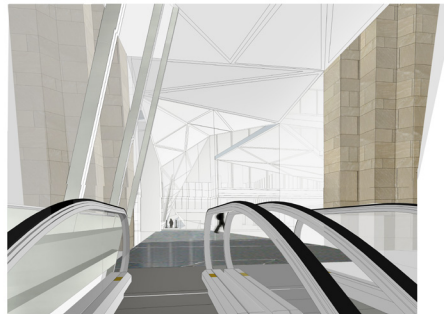
BAY STREET

NORTH TOWER

WEST TOWER

DN

UP

4: section through escalator, facing southern glass wall

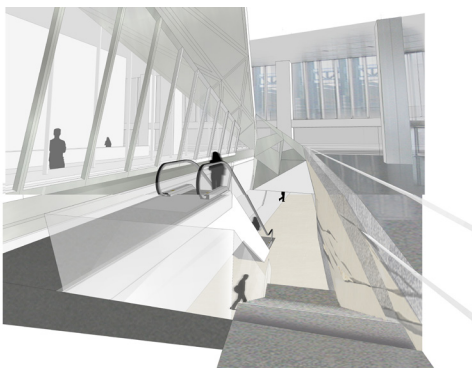5: section through escalator, facing northern stone wall

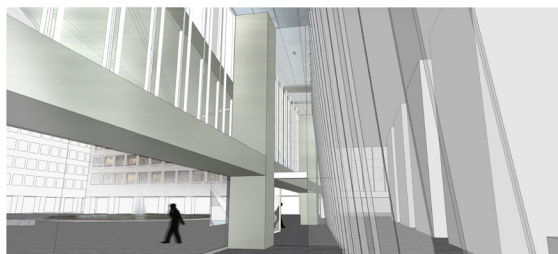6: section through escalator and stairs in West Tower banking lobby

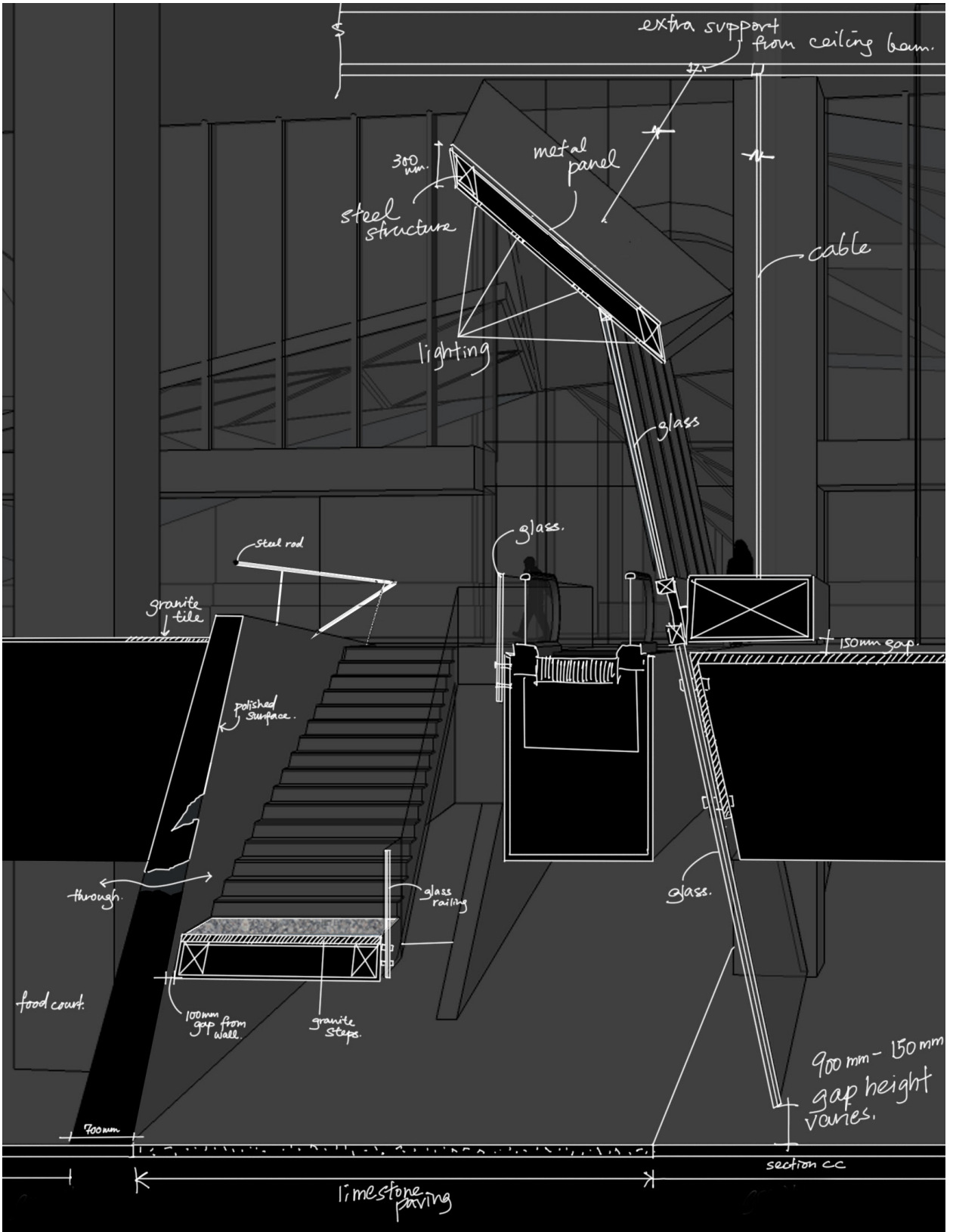8 (left): entering West Tower lobby from lower level on escalator

9 (right): entering North Tower lobby from lower level on escalator
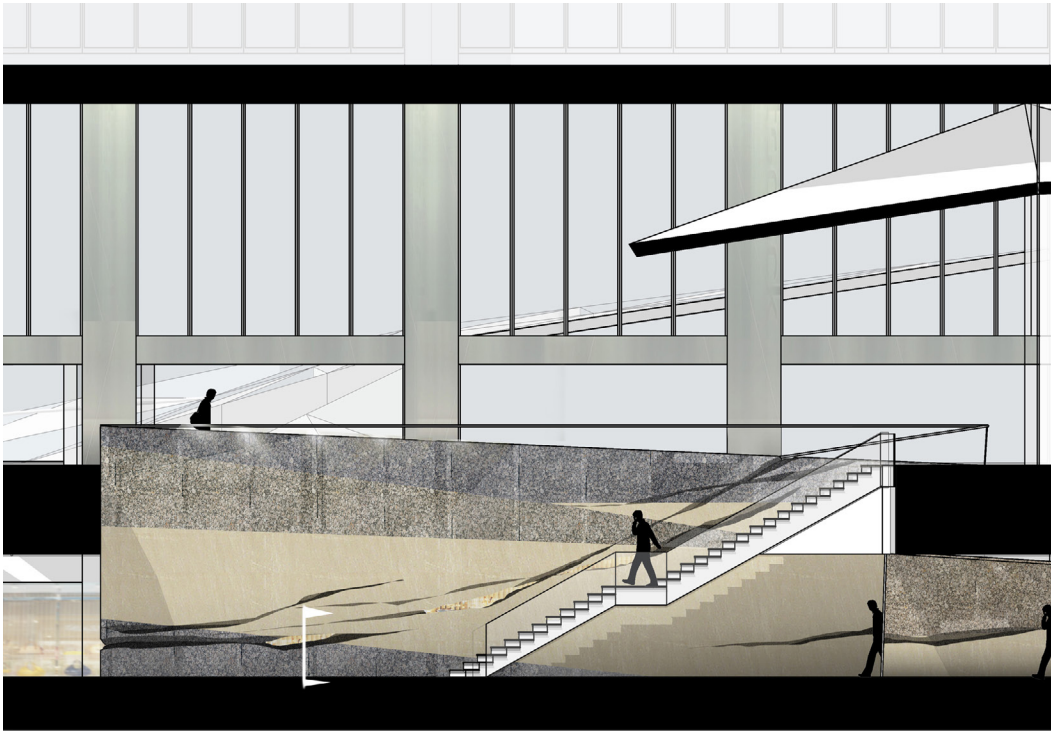

10 (left): going to lower level from West Tower banking lobby through stairs

11 (right): exiting West Tower banking lobby from vestibule on east facade towards central court

extra support from ceiling beam.

metal panel

steel structure

300 mm.

cable

lighting

glass

glass.

steel rod

granite tile

polished surface.

150mm gap.

through.

glass railing

food court.

100mm gap from wall.

granite steps.

glass.

700 mm

900 mm - 150 mm gap height varies.

section cc

limestone paving

101

7: section showing concept of northern stone wall

Limestone   granite   granite

limestone

food court

through.

granite

700 mm

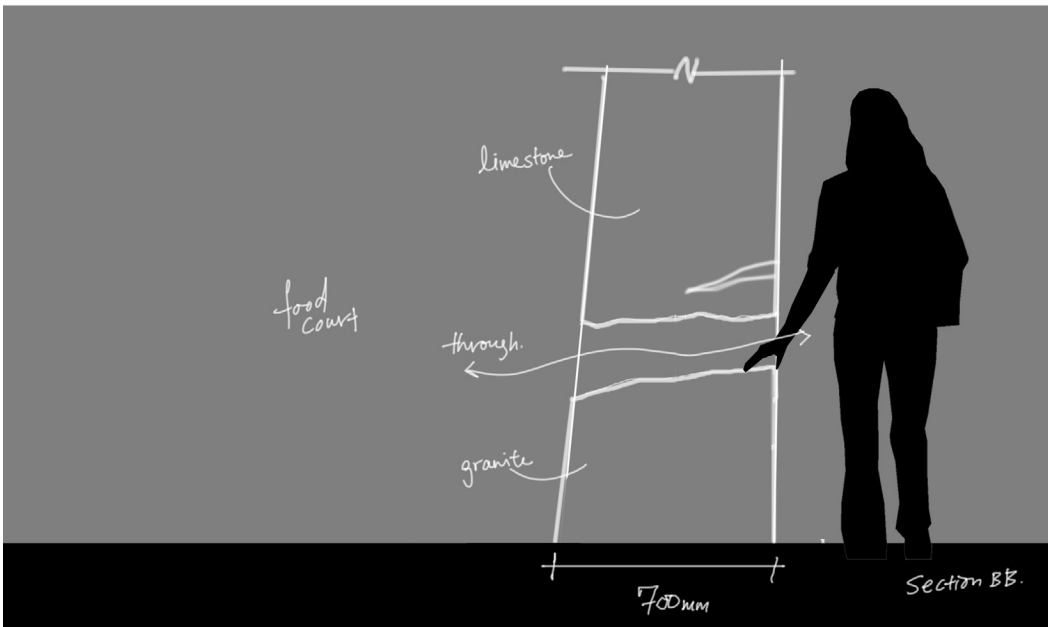Section BB.
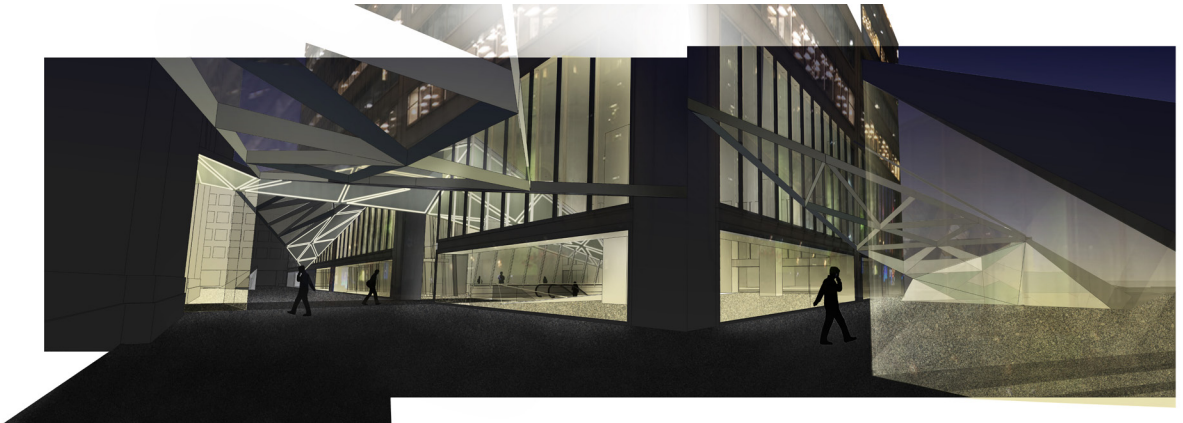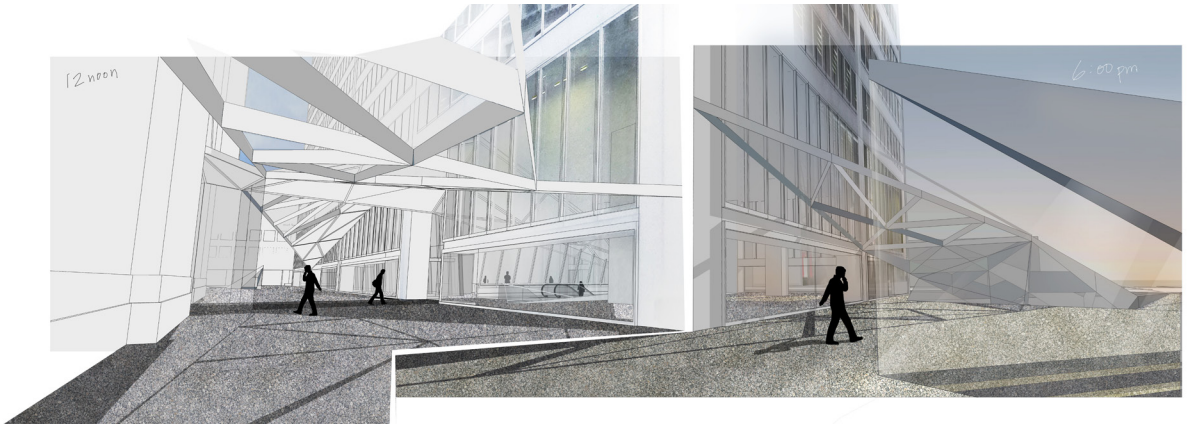
13 (left): condition of space between North and West Tower with canopy casting triangular light pattern on the tile grid during noon in June. (right) condition of entry plaza during 6 pm in June.

14 (bottom): condition of both location during night time. The solid canopy are incorporated with artificial lighting casting light onto areas shaded during the daytime.

16: view from the intersection of King Street and Bay Street
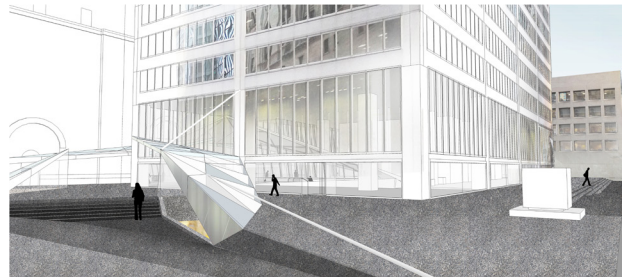
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