PALIMPSEST IN ARCHITECTURE

six personal observations

Graduation thesis

Faculty of Architecture

Delft University of Technology

Studio Explore Lab 19

Graduation Committee

Inge Bobbink, department of Landscape Architecture

Robert Nottrot, department of Architecture

Jan van de Voort, department of Building Technology

Daan Vitner, external examiner

Author

Robbert Verheij

1511734

Delft

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Pal-imp-sest: a parchment or tablet, reused after earlier writing has been erased

(Oxford Dictionary)

"The land, so heavily charged with traces and with past readings, seems very similar to a palimpsest."

- André Corboz, *The Land as a Palimpsest*, 1983

PROLOGUE

"The world around us, so much of it our own creation, shifts continually and often bewilders us."
- Kevin Lynch, *What Time is This Place?*, 1972

I am intrigued by buildings, landscapes, objects and the relationship between them. I am also interested in the transformative processes of time and history. Looking at the environment we live in, we will always find evidences and remains that tell us that a good deal of the past lives on. Nature provides us with many of those examples, such as geology and its processes of accumulation of land and stratification. In the same way, medieval towns are emblematic of multiple and endless restructuring and the reuse of buildings leave signs of the lives of the people inhabiting them.[1] We are constantly rewriting and rebuilding our environment. In this respect, William Morris, the English textile designer and poet, was aware of the continuity of history and stressed the fact that nothing stays the same.

Joan Blaeu, map of Holland, 1662; this map reflects a different land structure compared to the situation nowadays

Apart from the physical observations of transformation, there are also the immaterial things that we build upon. We learn from our ancestors and there are certain memories and historical events connected to places. There is a collective knowledge we as humans share which has a larger extensive history and tradition.

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[1] Aldo Rossi has written extensively about the medieval city. "One need only look at the layers of the city that archaeologists show us: they appear as a primordial and eternal fabric of life, an immutable pattern." See: Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1984, p. 22.

I believe things are part of a complex and larger whole. They are not singular, but instead, layered. Their origin can be found in earlier moments in time. I therefore strongly plea for using history - not in a way of nostalgia - but as a source of knowledge to create new - even modern - relationships in architecture that are meaningful. The following quote by Vincent Scully from his introductory text to Robert Venturi's book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* illustrates the importance of historical knowledge:

> "*The making and experience of architecture, as of every art, are always critical-historical acts, involving what the architect and the viewer have learned to distinguish and to image through their own relationship with life and things. It therefore follows that the strength and value of our contact with art will depend upon the quality of our historical knowledge.*"[2]

The Grand Tour of the eighteenth century is an example of this retrospective character and was of major inspiration to many architects. By studying monuments, ruins and old remains of the classical world a new and better understanding of the art of building could be gained. The other aspect that I like about the Grand Tour is the act of travelling. The journey was almost as - if not more - important as the destination itself. The will to explore the heritage of classical architecture is something that I appreciate and do think is still of importance nowadays.

Of course the question follows, how can we relate architecture to history? Each place has a cultural tradition and history. One has to know that, and has to know about the history of the place at the time one is building another addition to that place. I believe we live in a period that asks for more depth, and in times of searching for depth, history will find its way back.
One of the beautiful and poetic theories that captures and respects the notion of history is that of the palimpsest. The palimpsest is about an ongoing process of rewriting through time, thus linking the past with the present and future. It

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[2] Quote by Vincent Scully in the introductory text of the book: Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966). New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977, p. 11. In the book Venturi touches upon the complexity that is inherent to architecture; when we put two or more things together, suddenly they become not so simple anymore.

reflects how landscapes, buildings and objects are layered through the passage of time. In this respect John Ruskin wrote:

> "(…) *the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, not in its gold. Its glory is its age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of mysterious sympathy which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity.*"[3]

Now, what is the point using the word "palimpsest"? It is a metaphor to suggest the processes of transformation through time. Phenomena occurring in the world around us constantly change and evolve, but at the same time they leave inscriptions and traces. The term palimpsest is therefore a relevant analogy[4] since it refers to these long-term processes. It makes us aware of the many different layers we as designers are constantly working with and to which we are adding new things.

Furthermore, we need analogies and metaphors to be able to describe certain things. Therefore I would like to introduce the palimpsest metaphor - just like other metaphors that became embedded in the architectural language[5] - into our discourse to describe the making and remaking of buildings and places.

I believe that palimpsest, as a metaphor is relevant because the layering of things through time could be a method in bringing depth to buildings and places. It provides a way to engage in a dialogue. Within the research the idea of palimpsest is not merely used as a descriptive model of a certain appearance, but as a paradigm. I will search for a sensitive attitude that works through various scales and takes into account the many layers around us. One needs an attitude, just as everyone needs to have a position in life.

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[3] Ruskin, John. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1880). New York: Dover, 1989, p. 186.
[4] Oswald Matthias Ungers has put forward the importance of using analogies. "In employing the method of analogy it should be possible to develop new concepts and to discover new relationships." See: Ungers, Oswald Matthias. *Morphologie: City Morphologies.* Cologne: Walther König, 1982, p. 12.
[5] See other metaphors such as "tectonics" and "topology".
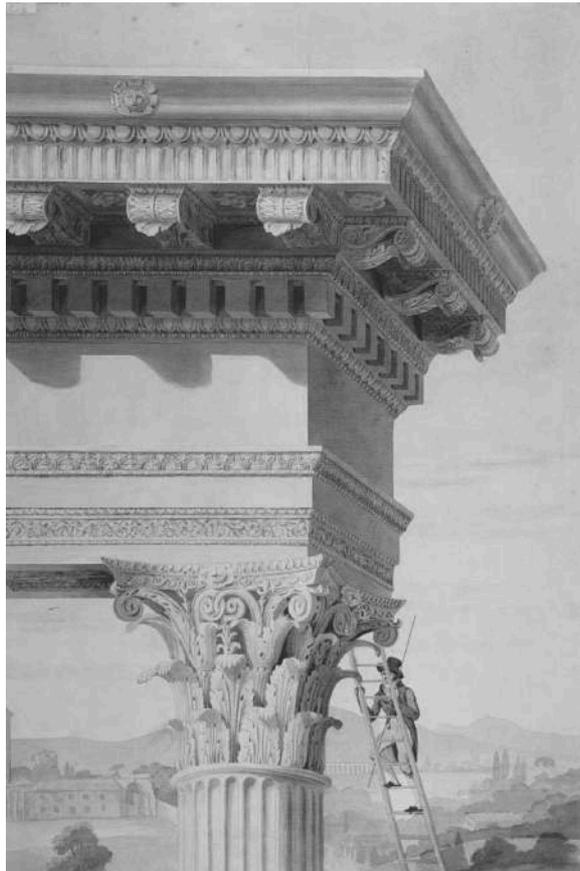
Henry Parke, a student measuring the Temple of Stator, c. 1806

In this book I will try to explore the ways palimpsestuous phenomena have been, and are present in the practice of architecture. The aim of the research is to understand the palimpsest and how its quality can be preserved or seen as a valuable idea. Furthermore I expect that a palimpsestuous design attitude can be a method of bringing "depth" and "meaning" to buildings, objects and/or landscapes.

Some motives for this research

I think the concept of palimpsest is relevant for several reasons. First of all, there is a schism in architecture surrounding the topic of tradition and history which is divided into two camps: one that leads to an idealized view of nostalgia[6] and the other breaking with the past in order to be modern. This debate often focuses merely on aesthetic values and puts the following aspects against each other: "old" versus "new", "past" versus "present" and "traditional" versus "modern". I believe that these are obsolete dichotomies because these aspects have a much more reciprocal relation and are bonded through notions of time. In fact, separating tradition - or history - from modernity is already a mistake. Modernity is perhaps just a reinterpretation of the past. The difference between the two is just a matter of degree.[7] History and modernity are both indicative of each other and thus modernity stands in relation to its past.[8] The notion of palimpsest tells us that it is not either the past, present or future. It is the past, present <u>and</u> future.

The second motive has to do with a conservative attitude of architects, institutions, and others who do not allow, in any circumstance, buildings to be changed. This is strange because in the end, buildings are inhabited by people who use them day in day out, and they are often forgotten. Portuguese architect

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[6] David Lowenthal talks about the modern disease of nostalgia or the need to idealize the past as an alternative to the failure of the present. See: Lowenthal, David. "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory", in: *Geographical Review*, vol. 65, no. 1 (January 1975), pp. 1-36.

[7] Carl Mitcham has pointed out how modernity and history are related. "(…) history and technology are both somehow characteristic of modernity. The modern period has been called the 'age of technology'; it has also been called the 'age of historical consciousness'. These views are both grounded in modern man's affirmation of himself." See: Angelil, Marc (ed.). *On Architecture, the City, and Technology*. Washington: Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, 1990, p. 10.

[8] Kenneth Frampton provided an idea on how tradition and invention are related. See: Frampton, Kenneth. *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995, p 24.

Eduardo Souto de Moura once said: "architecture lives to be transformed and therein lies its true calling".[9] I fully agree, the responsibility of architecture is to the people that will live in it, occupy it, and in occupying will change it. I think we should accept that in time our environment transforms, and thus also our buildings and places. Hence, architecture is not only about a "making" but rather a "remaking" as Nelson Goodman has stated:

> "*The many stuffs, matter, energy, waves, phenomena, that worlds are made of are made along with the world. But made from what? Not from nothing, after all, but from other worlds. Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking.*"[10]

The third point focuses on the ideology of progress. It questions the accelerated pace of the changing modern society in which we have lost some respect and sensitivity towards the past. Furthermore, because rapid building processes are driven by efficiency, new buildings and places are often build up from scratch, from a *tabula rasa* approach, where very little attention is paid to the meaning of place. The period of industrialization and the reconstruction period after the Second World War are indicative of this attitude. In this sense Sébastien Marot refers to the post Second World War period in which the method that was endlessly copied treated landscape as a "flat" plane: buildings were loosely positioned as freestanding objects within this open field. The result was an undefined flowing landscape, a blank surface with very little meaning and relation to its site.[11] Apart from the notion of *tabula rasa*, there is a palimpsestuous attitude.[12] However, it should be understood that sometimes it is necessary to rapidly change things and use the *tabula rasa* method. In the period after the Second World War many cities were destroyed and people needed to

[9] Souto de Moura, Eduardo. "The Kenneth Frampton Endowed Lecture", Columbia University, 2012, from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WVMzVn5Sb8.
[10] Goodman, Nelson. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978, p. 6.
[11] Marot, Sébastien. "The Reclaiming of Sites", in: James Corner (ed.). *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. New york: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, pp. 44-57.
[12] Today the term tabula rasa got a quite negative connotation. Please note that tabula rasa and palimpsest are not exclusive. Architects who do not work with ideas of palimpsest can not simply be framed as "tabula rasa architects" because most of them would still try to relate to things such as site, place and time. There is a whole "grey" area of attitudes surrounding the attitudes of tabula rasa and palimpsest. However it is interesting to put them against each other in order to understand the differences. The opposite of palimpsest is then perhaps the development of projects that are solely driven by economy such as the case for large real estate developers.

have a new home. The *tabula rasa* or palimpsest attitude is therefore dependent on the social and political situation. Today I see a chance for a more in-depth approach because <u>this time period of stagnation, scarcity and reuse asks for more depth and involvement.</u> There is a need for contemplation, one that regards the meaning of buildings, objects and landscapes and its inherent history.

Research goal

Considering the observations made, the concept of palimpsest can have positive implications for designing buildings, cities, landscapes and objects, in fact for places in general. With my research I hope to instigate the potential of making palimpsestuous buildings and places, and to regard them as a process of making and remaking. This would mean, accepting that a place might transform in time and trying to facilitate these future changes or extensions.

<u>The aim of the research is to inform the design practice, to develop a set of design strategies, and to portray possible design attitudes. I see a chance for a palimpsestuous attitude as a method of bringing a sense of "depth" to buildings and places. Here depth is about a sense of various layers of meaning.</u> In *What Time is This Place* Kevin Lynch talks about a sense of "depth" in old cities. He gives a very poetic description in which he suggests that places with a strong historical context are still the interesting ones:

> "*Layering is used as a deliberate device of esthetic expression – the visible accumulation of overlapping traces from successive periods, each trace modifying and being modified by the new additions, to produce something like a collage of time. <u>It is the sense of depth in an old city that is so intriguing</u>. The remains uncovered imply the layers still hidden (…).*"[13]

Overall, the idea of palimpsest can pay attention to deeper, spatial, soft, poetic and philosophical values - things I find lacking in the majority of projects I see nowadays. Thus, I hope to consider a more sensitive design attitude, one that respects history and tries to engage in a dialogue with the context.

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[13] Lynch, Kevin. *What Time is This Place?*. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1972, p. 171. Lynch's book deals with the human sense of time. It talks about how this sense affects the view and change of our environment.

Research question

The main question I asked myself for this research is: <u>how can the notion of</u> <u>palimpsest reveal new relationships and design strategies that are meaningful and</u> <u>contribute to a sense of depth?</u>

Sub questions are:

- How can buildings and places, installed within the continuity of time, be read as a process rather than a product?
- How can designers come to grips with their intuition and experiences of buildings and places?
- How can designers create dialogue between scales, materials and time?

Research methodology

The nature of doing research resembles a layered and complex structure, comparable to that of palimpsest.[14] The way I have done research can be characterized as intuitive.[15] In doing research I have read many things, searched for examples and references. In this book, highlights of all of these aspects will pass by and be discussed, some briefly, others more in depth. I have started this research by creating a theoretical framework around a selection of authors who have written about palimpsest or related topics: André Corboz, John Brinckerhoff Jackson, Sébastien Marot, James Corner, Kevin Lynch, Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman.

Six personal observations, six case studies:

From this literature study I have identified six themes related to the topic of palimpsest: <u>place</u>, <u>reuse</u>, <u>memory</u>, <u>traces</u>, <u>materiality</u> and <u>dialogue</u>. During the research these were the themes that kept coming back to me. By interpreting the themes, I made them my own and used them to describe certain aspects I was searching for in my research, and so the themes became personal observations.

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[14] I believe research and design are very similar. Just as research is not a linear process, design is neither. The way research is structured and the way we select references, literature and methods resemble a process of design. See the book *Design as Art* by Bruno Munari about the way the design process works.

[15] Doing research implies a lot of thinking, reflecting, reading, seeing, analyzing etcetera. Following the thoughts of Daniel Kahneman who believes that the mind works in two systems that determine the way we think, the first one is fast and about intuition and emotion, the second is slower, more rational, and more logical. Intuition has to do with feeling and the unconscious. I find intuition a relevant tool in doing research (and also in designing). See the book *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman about the way our mind works.

As a second layer to the research, the six observations are linked to six case studies, from the twentieth century, of architects that - although not all have talked about palimpsest in a literal way - speak for a sensitive attitude towards the specific observation: Fernando Távora's Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa in Guimarães (place), Dimitris Pikionis' pathway of the Acropolis (reuse), Rafael Moneo's Museum of Roman Art in Mérida (memory), David Chipperfield's Neues Museum (traces), Rudolf Schwarz's St. Annakirche in Düren (materiality) and Carlo Scarpa's Castelvecchio Museum in Verona (dialogue).

I choose these specific case studies because they represented something I was looking for. Particularly, a sense of depth in their work, a shared attitude towards designing meaningful buildings and places that engages in a specific relationship with their context and show a respect to tradition and history. What should be mentioned is that the selection of case studies and the connection to one of the themes is not holy in any sense. One could also see another way of organization and discuss the case studies within the other chapters. However, to me the chosen organization made the most sense in order to make a point, and to discuss them within the totality of the research project. To illustrate the specific observation, the case studies are analyzed on several scale levels: landscape, building and detail. The analysis are made through text, images and drawings. A timeline of the project is also provided.

The rest of the research consists of a sequence of several reference projects, discussed more briefly. Since I strongly believe in the power of references, they help to portray my observations and the notion of palimpsest.[16] The presented references are not only from the field of architecture, but also from other disciplines such as landscape, urbanism, archaeology, geology, science, art, film, photography, poetry and literature. Next to text, analyzes are also made by small sketches, to extract the essential things.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into three main sections. The first is an introduction to the concept of palimpsest. Here I will show how it is present at different scale levels: landscape, city, building and detail. These scale levels should not be interpreted as separate entities, but rather as transitional groups. What binds these scales is

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[16] Working with images and references is something important for many disciplines, not only for architecture. John Berger has written a book about the strength of images and the importance of seeing. "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak." See: Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing.* London: Penguin Books, 1972, p. 7.

landscape and materials.[17] A city, building or a detail is always part of a landscape.[18] Similarly landscapes can also be read from its details.

This issue of scale is articulated by an image of one of the chrome columns of Mies van der Rohe for his Barcelona Pavilion. At first sight it is not entirely clear what it is. It could be a building detail but at the same time it could be a plan for a building, or even a city. Throughout the research I will investigate and play with the idea of scale. I hope to initiate to design through the different scales and regard landscape and details as equals.
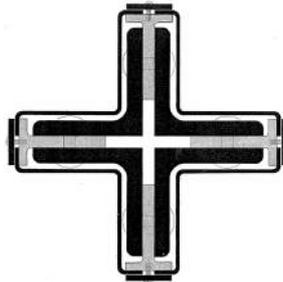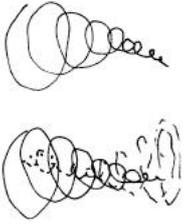
Mies van der Rohe, column Barcelona Pavilion, 1929

The next part of the book is subdivided into six chapters. Each chapter covers one of the six observations and can be read as short, rather personal, "essays", giving insights into palimpsestuous phenomena from distinct perspectives. I will start each essay by identifying how I understand the theme and how I see it is related to the idea of palimpsest. At the end of the essay a short conclusion is given. To illustrate the theme and come with some concrete examples, each essay follows with an analysis of one of the six case studies. The notions of "time" and "layers" will be discussed integrally in all the chapters.

As one will notice while reading the text, some architects or projects may appear within different chapters, this illustrates not only the relation between my observations but also the variety within the work of those architects.

The third part of the book provides some conclusions, recommendations, reflections and an overview of the case studies. Also the list of bibliography can be found here.

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[17] Inge Bobbink emphasizes the importance of designing through scales and suggests that landscape and materials are the binding element within the various scale levels. See: Bobbink, Inge. *Land InZicht: een landschapsarchitectonische verkenning van de plek*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij SUN, 2004.

[18] For the relationship between landscape and building, see: Steenbergen, Clemens and Reh, Wouter. *Architectuur en Landschap*. Bussum: Thoth, 2009.

INTRODUCTION: PALIMPSEST

As mentioned earlier, this project is about landscape, buildings, details and materials. To me, designing within these scale levels is not that different. It is in fact about the same kind of thinking, or the same attitude. Therefore I try to see these scales levels as one and the same and to also treat them as such.

Arguably the term palimpsest is more appreciated in the field of landscape than of architecture. The reason probably is that in general the discourse of landscape architecture shows another way of thinking, a much more sensitive approach which I find very interesting. Landscape - from a natural perspective - is slow[19] and architecture is relatively faster. Landscape grows constantly whereas architecture is perceived as more static. In this respect, James Corner wrote:

> *"(…) landscape architecture is <u>a work in process</u>, never really attaining an ideal state at any moment in time, but always exceeding expectations when set in motion over time, when viewed as an active palimpsest accursing new properties, qualities, and potentials in time."[20]*

In many ways, I see palimpsestuous phenomena occurring in architecture as well - though in a slightly contrasting way. Architecture as an object or product is often conceived as a goal on itself: once the building has been built, it is there. What more to do with it? This is a rather limited way of dealing with architecture. The building gets a whole new life when it starts to be inhabited by people and when natural influences start to interfere with the building. There is a beauty to be found in the entire life of the building, from design to construction to its use by people.

<u>The notion of palimpsest becomes important for designers because I believe that it works throughout all scale levels.</u> In order to show how it is present within different scales, I first have to discuss them <u>separately</u>. In this introduction I will show how palimpsestuous phenomena occur on the scale levels of landscapes, cities, buildings and details. Before doing so, I will give a brief overview of the etymology and the history of palimpsests.

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[19] Landscape architects in essence work with a manipulation of nature which is strongly subsequent to time.

[20] Quote by James Corner in the introduction of the book: Desvigne, Michel. *Natures Intermédiaires: Les Paysages de Michel Desvigne.* Basel: Birkhäuser, 2009, p. 10.

Etymology and a short history of palimpsest

The word "palimpsest" derives from the Latin *palimpsestus* which means "scratched again" or "scraped again".[21] Originally a palimpsest refers to a parchment that has been recycled multiple times and displays traces of older texts. Because parchment, a material made from animal skin, was very expensive, especially around the seventh and ninth century, most manuscripts were reused. In order to do this the text was either scraped or washed off. With the advent of printing in the fifteenth century, parchment was largely replaced by paper for most uses. Only some luxury manuscripts were still made of parchment and some artist, especially during the Renaissance, appreciated the working properties of the material.

Palimpsest von Bobbio, c. 7th century; underlying text from Cicero's *De Re Publica* from the 4th or 5th century. From: The Vatican Library

Later, in the nineteenth century historical texts of palimpsests were recovered by using chemicals. Because these techniques sometimes proved to be destructive modern techniques of the twentieth century such as ultraviolet light and photography made lost text readable again.

A number of manuscripts only survived as palimpsests, which clearly puts forward the historical relevance of recycling parchment. A fascinating paradox that arises here is that there was an economical drive behind the use of palimpsest and the fact that a part of history has been preserved through an act of scarcity and reuse. Economical and cultural value go, so to say, hand in hand. Looking at the architectural task of the future I would argue that the qualities - economy, culture and reuse - put forward by the palimpsest are becoming even more relevant.

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[21] Oxford Latin dictionary.

~ 6th century: around this period the common way of reading with a scroll fanished and was replaced by the codex because the codex proved to be more durable. Even today most survived manuscripts were in codex format.

7th - 9th century: most parchments were recycled in this period and thus many palimpsest can be found from this era.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

END THE ICE AGE (11.000 BC)
ADVENT AGRICULTURE (20.000 BC)
INVENTION WRITING (3500 BC)

400   500   600   700   800   900   1000   1100   1200

> 6th century: popularity of palimpsest rose in western Europe due to the costs and scarcity of parchment.

~ 10th century: the original Byzantine Archimedes palimpsest dates from this period. It was later overwritten by monks in the 13th century.

~ 5th century: around this period papyrus was largely replaced in Europe by the cheaper and locally produced parchment which also had a higher durability in moist climates.

2003: book *Sub-ur-banism and the art of memory* by Sébastien Marot, who is one of the followers of the thinking of Corboz and continues on the notion of landscape as a palimpsest.

~ 15th century: many renaissance artists prefered the use of parchment oppose to paper. The material properties creates a certain depth when ink touches the parchment.

1940 - 1965: period of reconstruction after WWII. In this period a lot of changes occured in the landscape. Because of urgency many building projects were driven by efficiency, time and costs which resulted in tabula rasa approached.

RENAISSANCE

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

WWII

ECONOMICAL CRISIS

1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900 2000 2100

> late 15th century: advent of printing, during this time parchment was largely replaced by paper. For the first time books and other manuscript could be easily copied and distrubuted.

> 19th century: scholars started to recover palimpsests through the use of chemicals. Sometimes these chemicals proved to be destructive, in the 20th century modern techniques were developed such as photography and ultraviolet light.

2008: the economical crisis marked an era of re-thinking, reuse and new creative thinking. The notion of palimpsest therefore becomes more and more important.

1760 - 1840: the period of the industrial revolution came with new technologies that would make it possible to recover palimpsests

1983: André Corboz, introduced the term palimpsest in the discourse of urbanism and landscape with his essay *The land as palimpsest.*
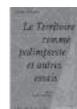
Palimpsestuous landscape

The term palimpsest was reintroduced in the modern discourse of urbanism and landscape in 1983 by Swiss urbanism and architecture historian André Corboz in his essay *Le territoire comme palimpseste* in which he wrote the following:

> *"Le territoire, tout surchargé qu'il est de traces et de lectures passées en force, ressemble plutôt à un palimpseste. (…) Mais le territoire n'est pas un emballage perdu ni un produit de consommation qui se remplace. Chacun est unique, d'où la nécessité de « recycler », de gratter une fois encore (mais si possible avec le plus grand soin) le vieux texte que les hommes ont inscrit sur l'irremplaçable matériau des sols, afin d'en déposer un nouveau, qui réponde aux nécessités d'aujourd'hui avant d'être abrogé à son tour."[22]*

Corboz suggests to read the land as a palimpsest, consisting of a layered structure dating back to ancient times. The land is constantly rewritten and erased by its inhabitants. In order to talk objectively about the morphology and the changing situations in contemporary landscape he developed a theory of territory.[23] The territory is a combined product of human and natural processes.[24] He then described his concept of territory by adopting the geographical and archeological concept of stratification and used the metaphor of palimpsest[25] to describe the long-term accumulation of layers through time. The palimpsest metaphor explains how the earth surface works similarly to that of a parchment sheet: one that is full of inscriptions and traces left behind by society and construction, some are maintained, others erased or reconstructed.[26] Within this dynamic transformation of land the factor of time is of course to be considered,

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[22] Corboz, André. "Le territoire comme palimpseste", in: *Diogène*, no. 121 (January-March 1983), pp. 12-31. Later re-published in: Corboz, André. *Le territoire comme palimpseste et autres essais.* Paris: Les Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2001.

[23] According to Annemarie Bucher, Corboz used the term territory instead of landscape because it is less loaded with definition, aesthetics and perception. Apart from this, she gives a very complete summary of Corboz's theory and his palimpsest metaphor in the essay "Landscape Theories in Transition: Shifting Realities and Multiperspective Perception", in: Chritophe Girot et al. (eds.). *Topology: Topical Thoughts on the Contemporary Landscape*. Berlin: jovis Verlag GmbH, 2013, pp. 34-49.

[24] See: Proidl, Catarina. "Defining structures in the urban landscape of the Alpine Rhine Valley", in: Leen van Duin et al. (eds.). *The Urban Project: Architectural Intervention in Urban Areas*. Delft: Delft University Press, 2009, pp. 258-265.

[25] The concept of stratification alone does not yet provide the most appropriate metaphor for Corboz to describe the accumulation of layers in time. For Corboz, man does not solely add layers, he also erases them. Therefore the metaphor of palimpsest is more complete.

[26] Bucher, pp. 47-48.

like sediments that change and develop over time or land that is subject to geomorphological erosion. Reading landscapes also means to study their material and transformative aspects.

Frederick W. W. Howell, Ice fall on Húrtafell, c. 1890;
photograph of one of his expeditions to Iceland

In order to describe his ideas, Corboz referred to the context of the Swiss Alpes. In Switzerland the landscape is so present. The glaciers, mountains and hills are almost a literal expression of the formation of layers through time. Now, if we would compare the Swiss landscape to that of the almost flat Dutch landscape, the differences are enormous. Where our landscape functions more as a background, the Swiss landscape is much more evident due to its rough topography. Reading the landscape of The Netherlands as palimpsest would imply to look at the more small things and situations related to water. The Dutch landscape is marked by a <u>continuous scraping off and remaking of land</u>, but also the dune landscape, formed about five thousand years ago, that is constantly changing and affected by erosion. These are a few examples of the Dutch palimpsestuous landscape.

David Herrliberger, Furka glacier, 1758; the Swiss Alpes were the focus
for Corboz's territory and palimpsest ideas
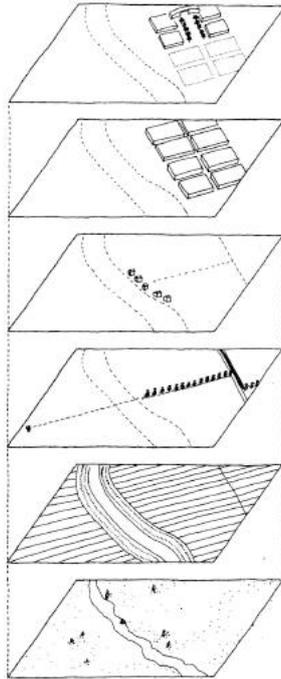
The Dutch situation; layers of intervention. From: TU Delft

The fact that palimpsestuous phenomena in the Dutch landscape are less evident means more attention has to be paid to the subtle layers and traces that are left from earlier times. We have to start almost by decomposing the landscape into its different layers. The preceding image shows the layered model in which the natural, cultural, architectonic, spontaneous, designed and transformative layer are superimposed.

Within this whole theory of landscape, other authors such as John Brinckerhoff Jackson, a great observer of landscape, and Corboz's and Jackson's protagonist Sébastian Marot should be mentioned. The recurrent thinking that brings interest to these authors is a sentimental overlap concerning the idea of landscape. Corboz talks about landscape as a territory, Marot as site and Jackson as place. What binds these ideas is that they were all searching for the meaning of place, or a sense of place. Landscape as a place that exists emotionally for people. Perhaps then, reading landscape as a palimpsest can provide a sense of depth.

Palimpsestuous cities

Authors such as Aldo Rossi and Kevin Lynch have touched upon the transformation of old cities and the presence of the past. Rossi has written much about historical cities as archaeological artifacts. An idea that Lynch also underlined:

> "*Scientific understanding of the past implies archaeological investigation. (…) Archaeology can be paced to precede new development, and occasionally it is even aided by it. (…) Most of the information is in the context: how remains relate to each other and to the total setting.*"[27]
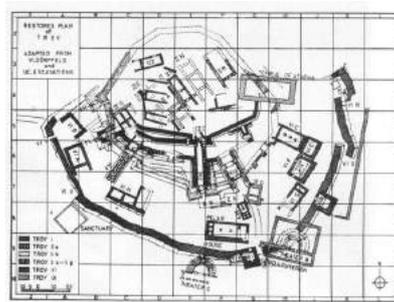
Wilhelm Dörpfeld, archaeological map of Troy, 1904

Many historical cities resemble a palimpsest. One of the most obvious examples would be that of the city Troy where through the course of time multiple cities were built upon one another. In the case of Troy this had to do with a turbulent history of battles and destruction. The archeologist Heinrich Schliemann and Wilhelm Dörpfeld studied the site and discovered underlying structures of former cities. Apart from Troy, many other cities provide a good reading of a palimpsest.[28] According to Kurt W. Forster working with the past is evident in urban conditions:

> "*Urban architecture always stands in relation to earlier building activity. New and old construction constitute reciprocal identities; planning for the future and recovering the past occur in communicating vessels.*"[29]

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[27] Lynch, p. 44, 49.

[28] To give a few examples: Athens, Damascus, Napels, Luca, Verona, Bath, London and Avebury.

[29] Following this quote Forster gives the example of Filarete's plan for the ideal town of Sforzinda which he placed "into an inverse relationship with the excavation of documents which purported to describe the ancient town that had previously occupied the site". See: Forster, Kurt. "Eisenman/Robertson's City of Artificial Excavation", in: Jean-François Bédard. *Cities of Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988*. Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1990, pp. 19-26.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, temple of Vespasian, Rome, 1756

In ancient times, Rome used to be the paradigm for urban life. Forster describes Rome as a "continuous cycle of construction and destruction occurring on one and the same ground throughout her history accumulated layer upon layer as ancient structures became buried in their own rubble and new ones rose over them".[30] Forster says that Rome became "several cities" through renovation and rebuilding. Still today the city is preserved primarily in its ancient structures, it becomes a sort of spectacle in which the memory of the past seems to predominate. Rome is a labyrinth that becomes almost indecipherable.

The drawing of Architect Giovanni Battista Piranesi of the temple of Vespasian in Rome shows the many layers of history. It portrays the half-buried remains of the Vespasian Temple conveying another interval in time. The juxtaposition of old and new is also something Lynch touches upon in his book *What Time is This Place?*:

> "*We are familiar with the visible accumulation of historical events. The juxtaposition of old and new speaks of the passage of time, and occasionally the contrast is eloquent.*"[31]

More recent, the period of industrialization in the nineteenth century was of major influence to morphological changes,[32] but also periods of war, such as the Second World War left traces. The transformation of cities is an ongoing process. They are examples of a continuous creating and recreating as we go along.

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[30] Ibid., p. 19.
[31] Lynch, p. 168. In the book Lynch does not talk literally about palimpsest but instead about "collage" and "layering".
[32] Both Corboz and Lynch stressed the impact of industrialization on the huge changes of our environment.

Palimpsestuous buildings

When talking about buildings as a palimpsest ideas of preservation, restoration, conservation, reuse, change of functions and transformation come to mind. The reuse of buildings and structures has been part of history for a long time. When talking about reuse, the founders of the theory of preservation, William Morris and John Ruskin should be mentioned. William Morris believed that one should never try to restore a building, that restoration was a lie. John Ruskin has expressed the aspect of time related to buildings. In the more recent discourse of architecture Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi are one of the few architects who have talked about the idea of palimpsest. For them it is a way to relate to site.
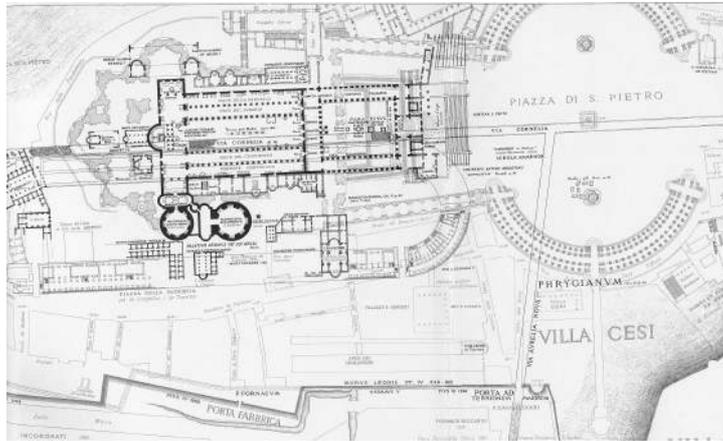
Rodolfo Lanciani, Forma Urbis Romae, 1901; previous footprint of the St. Peter's Basilica is superimposed with the existing structures

Regarding buildings as palimpsest implies to read them as processes. Buildings are inhabited by people who over time change and alter its structure. Therefore they are subsequent to time. The St. Peter's Basilica (1506-1626) in Rome is a paradigm of a palimpsestuous building. Over a period of almost 120 years the church faced many transformations on which an army of architects have been working, such as: Donato Bramante, Michelangelo, Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Additions and subtractions are part of a long process of constructing the basilica. In this context the architectural design is to be interpreted as a "remaking through changes to an existing building rather than a making".[33] An important figure to show the transformations that were made to the basilica is Tiberio Alfarano, whose palimpsestuous drawing of 1571 "allowed

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[33] Goffi, Federica. *The Sempiternal Nature of Architectural Conservation and the Unfinished building and Drawing*. Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2010, p. 18.

for the creation of memory through the unfolding of time; a simultaneous recollection of the past".[34] His drawing did not represent the condition "as is", but rather tried to show the transformative process of the building.

Talking about the life of buildings, its transformative processes and the idea of archaeology means also to consider the concept of the ruin and its related aspects of decay and abandonment. The theme of the ruin has often been idealized and romanticized, for example, in romantic paintings of Caspar David Friedrich.[35] The ruin and the landscape come together in a romantic image and when Gandy painted the Bank of England designed by Sir John Soane as a ruin he clearly brought forward the issue of time and decay that are inevitable associated to architecture. The ruin is often considered as sublime and beautiful, but of course, in architecture we should not be tempted by these images of decay. Decay can never be the end goal. Nevertheless, I believe that the ruin as a theme can inform the design process and entails an experience of bare materials, similarly to the rough materials and surfaces of bunkers, bridges and silos. They also have a relation to landscapes.

I am interested in the ruin, not in a romantic way, but because of its incompleteness and imperfections. <u>Every building is doomed to become a ruin.</u> Auguste Perret once said: "architecture is what leaves beautiful ruins".[36] Perret implied that a good building always makes a good ruin.

Wonderful is this wall of stone,
wrecked by fate.
The city buildings crumble,
the bold works of the giants decay.
Roofs have caved in, towers collapsed,
barred gates have gone,
gateways have gaping mouths,
Hoarfrost clings to the mortar.[37]

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[34] Ibid., p. 20.

[35] The theme of the ruin was very popular in romantic painting during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. These painting have often been considered with the sublime and a strong relationship to nature. Painters such as Jacob van Ruisdael, J. M. W. Turner, Jan Asselijn worked closely with these themes. In the twentieth century, artists like Robert Smithson and Gordon Matta Clark re-interpreted the theme.

[36] Collins, Peter. *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture, A Study of Auguste Perret and his Precursors*. Montréal: Mcgill-Queen's Press, 2004, p. 163.

[37] Poem by a nameless poet, quoted in: Wilson, David (ed.). *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*. London: Methuen, 1976, p. 44.
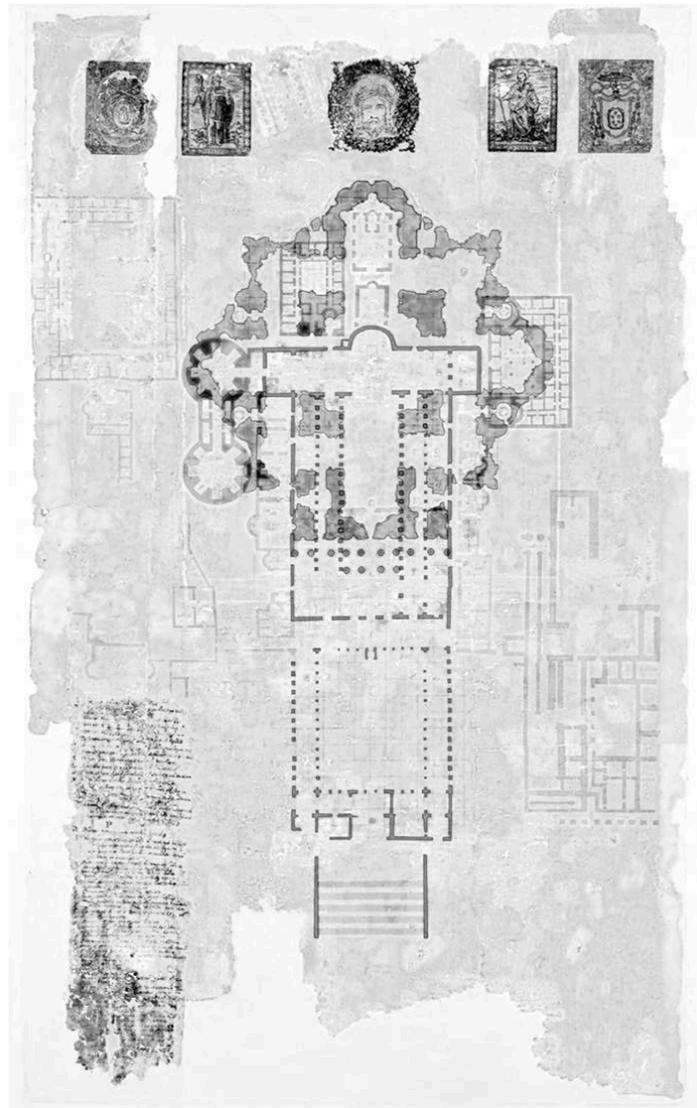
t: Tiberio Alfarano, Ichnographia, 1571; digital restoration drawing to highlight old and new
structures within the original drawing. By Frederica Goffi
b: Joseph Gandy, painting of the Bank of England as a ruin, 1830

Palimpsestuous details

The smallest scale that portrays palimpsest in a building or place is the scale of detail. Detailing is essentially about the joining of different materials. <u>Palimpsest through detailing calls for the quality of natural materials, that is: the ageing of the material, the influence of time and nature on the material as seen through "weathering" and the reuse ability of the building material.</u>

The scale of the detail is obviously related to "tectonics", the art of construction and crafts. Kenneth Frampton gave a very poetic overview of the tradition of tectonic architecture in his book *Studies in Tectonic Culture*. Materiality also touches upon atmosphere.[38] The theory that treats this is called phenomenology and talks about the experience of space.[39]

As mentioned before, the use of palimpsest arose from a necessity to recycle old expensive parchment. In architecture there is a similar phenomenon called *spolia*, which indicates the necessity of reusing older materials because of economic and cultural reasons that had made materials scarce. The term *spolia* derives from the latin *spolium*. The use of it becomes common during the late period of Roman architecture but also in Late Antiquity, the Middle ages, the Renaissance and further beyond. Today there is a small revival, although not named in this way, but resembling modern ideas of reuse. In the essay *Spolia in the fourth-century basilica*, Lex Bosman provides a clear summary of the origin of the word *spolia*:

> "*It is only since the early sixteenth century that the word spolia has been used to describe recycled architectural elements that are visibly recognizable as such; the word was apparently used to distinguish such elements from new material.*"[40]

The use of *spolia* recalls the technique of collage, which is a collection of various things. Alfarano's drawing method of the earlier described St. Peter's Basilica, resembles the idea of *spolia*. According to Marco Frascari the "combining pieces of traditional architectural prints and new drawings in a decoupage and completing the work by using representation techniques typical of icon

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[38] See: Zumthor, Peter. *Atmospheres*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006. Zumthor has written much about the idea of atmosphere and related it to the experience of materials, places and spaces.
[39] See: Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* (1958). Boston: Beacon Press, 1969. Others such as Martin Heidegger, Peter Zumthor, Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, Christian Norberg-Schulz and David Leatherbarrow are associated with the theory of phenomenology.
[40] Bosman, Lex. "Spolia in the fourth-century basilica", in: Rosamond McKitterick et al. (eds.). *Old Saint Peter's Rome*. Cambridge: University Press, 2013, pp. 65-80.

paintings, has made this a perfect *spolia* drawing".[41] Concerning the idea of collage as palimpsest one should always be careful. Not all collages are palimpsests. A collage could also be a superimposition of unrelated layers. A collage is a much more experimental and graphic model. On the other hand, <u>in a palimpsest the layers are in dialogue, there is a reciprocal affinity that enriches each other in a sense that 1+1=3.</u>

Another form in which palimpsestuous effects can take place in details has to do with the weathering of materials. Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow have made a beautiful book *On Weathering the Life of Buildings in Time,* in which they collected a series of projects by famous architects, both classical and modern. The buildings portrayed, have aged in time and show how that added another layer to the material of the building.[42]
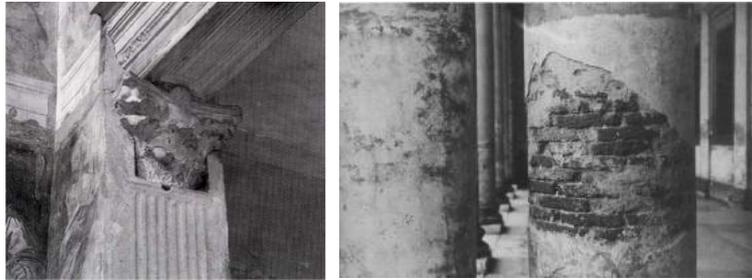
l: Santa Prassede, Rome, c. 817-824; a Corinthian capital
appears out of the Baroque stucco vestment. Photograph from: Goffi 2010
r: Andrea Palladio, Palazzo Chiericati, 1550-1580; weathered column
Photograph from: Leatherbarrow 1993

The weathering of building materials obviously has to do with the theme of decay, which I have described previously. The image portrayed in Mostafavi's and Leatherbarrow's book of the weathered column of Palladio's building in Venice is poetic and strong. Nevertheless as architects we should be aware of weathering, and know how it can be used as an advantage when choosing materials that age well, which are indicative of the notion of "building with time".

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[41] Frascari, Marco. *Eleven exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing: Slow Food for the Architect's Imagination*. New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 74, 75. Later Frascari describes the collage-like way of working with spolia as a proper tectonic solution: "(…) these portions of drawings are spoils of construction drawings and consequently in putting them together it should be figured out a proper tectonic solution".
[42] Mostafavi, Mohsen and Leatherbarrow, David. *On Weathering the Life of Buildings in Time*. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993, p. 9.

I. PLACE

Beate Gütschow, LS#7, 1999

"In time, we will find our way and rediscover the role of architecture and man-made forms in creating a new civilized landscape. It is essentially a question of rediscovering symbols and believing in them once again."

- J.B. Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, 1994

Our everyday life occurs in places. Places defined by people, soil, earth, water, vegetation, forests, houses, roads and so on. Every place has its own character and history, which is different from other places by the determined elements. A palimpsestuous place is about those elements that are sort of "inscribed" within its fabric through time. Inscription makes it therefore distinctive from the more broader idea of *genius loci*[43] which is about a certain quality or character of place. The inscribed elements thus not only characterize place, but are evidences of the continuity of time. They define the degree of meaning and depth. As an architect, the following question comes up: can we as architects - in making buildings, landscapes and cities - can we create place?

When thinking of place, a beautiful photograph by Beate Gütschow comes to my mind. At first sight it seems to be a very simple image of an Arcadian

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[43] See: Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. London: Academy Editions London, 1980.

landscape in which time freezes and place is revealed. When knowing the story behind the image, everything changes and the ambiguity takes over. The picture is not a real one; it is a layered composition and a collage of fragments photographed from different places, creating a fictional landscape. The methods used to create the image reminds us of the *spolia*-like architectural drawings of Alfarano.[44] What is interesting is that Gütschow's picture made me realize that certain elements (in this case the tree, the hill, the lawn, the sky) can create a sense of place and time - even when broad together from borrowed elements. There is also a soft side to the notion of places, that is the idea that places can be poetic and stimulate our mind. The greatest compliment I could give to a place would be to attain the feeling of "coming home". A place, although unknown, can still converse a sense of entrustment and recognition. The sculpture garden Little Sparta by artist Ian Hamilton Finlay[45] respects this sympathy of place. Poetry and sculpture are combined and form an interesting relationship with the landscape.

Ian Hamilton Finlay, Little Sparta, Dunsyre, 1966;
place and poetry. Photograph: Andre Lawson

Another author who should be mentioned, especially due to his modest interest in the perception and meaning of landscape and place, is John Brinckerhoff Jackson. His simple and provocative ideas have been of great interest to landscapers, urbanists and architects. He introduced the term "vernacular landscape", which in contrast to the "Arcadian Ideal", describes the contemporary everyday landscape. Considering Corboz's idea that the

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[44] See the previous chapter for Alfarano's drawing (introduction: palimpsest, p. 31).
[45] Ian Hamilton Finlay was often referred to as a "concrete poet".

contemporary landscape is a reflection of past events and changes, the following statement by Jackson provides a very similar understanding:

> *"(…) we can only start to understand the contemporary landscape by knowing what we have rejected and what we have retained from the past."*[46]

Jackson wrote an article named *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time.*[47] According to him, certain events - linked to ritual and celebration - can provide a sense of place and time. Some places have an inexplicable "attraction" which gives us a "sense of wellbeing and which we want to return to, time and again"[48] and create a sense of coming home. To conclude his thoughts, a sense of time and ritual is needed in order to establish a sense of place:

> *"In our urban environment which is constantly undergoing irreversible changes, a cyclical sense of time, the regular recurrence of events and celebrations, is what gives us reassurance and a sense of unity and continuity."*[49]

Kevin Lynch also relates the quality of time to the wellbeing of the individual and the success in managing environmental changes as mentioned in the following quote:

> *"(…) the quality of the personal image of time is crucial for individual wellbeing and also for our success in managing environmental change, and that the external physical environment plays a role in building and supporting that image of time."*[50]

He also acknowledged how elements such as an ancient tree can "confer a sense of continuity on the changing settlement around it".[51] The tree is a symbol of the community and a constellation of ritual. I believe that we need those symbols

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[46] Jackson, John-Brinckerhoff. *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics.* Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1980, p. 119.
[47] See also the book: Jackson, John-Brinckerhoff. *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time.* New Haven: Yale University, 1994.
[48] Jackson. 1980, p. 158.
[49] Ibid., p. 160.
[50] Lynch, p.1.
[51] Ibid., p. 111.

because of the ritual value. We need some permanence[52] because they are reflections of the past and continue to exist in the present and future.

An ancient tree can provide a sense of place. Photograph from: Lynch 1972

The continuity that occurs when working with a place with a past (such as existing structures, buildings, roads, etcetera) is something that can not only provide a starting point for the design, it can remain and keep playing an integral part in the new design. For example, the restoration project of the Upper Lawn Pavilion by the Smithsons where the old well is kept and provides this sense of continuity and ritual of the place.
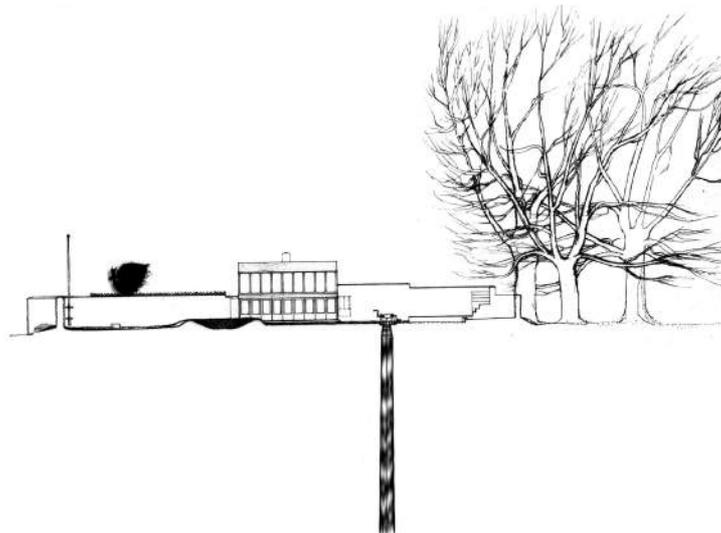
Alison and Peter Smithson, Upper Lawn Pavilion, Tisbury, 1959-62

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[52] Permanence: the state or quality of being permanent. Aldo Rossi talked about "permanences" within the city such as monuments. Rather related to permanence, Peter Zumthor talked about the idea of "presence". Presence is the state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present in a place or thing. For Zumthor presence is strongly related to place.

Álvaro Siza, Santo Domingo de Bonaval Park, Santiago de Compostela, 1990-94
t: Site plan
b: Ancient tree. Photograph: Howard Chan

The renovation of a thirteenth century convent into a park in Santiago de
Compostela by Álvaro Siza also reflects this. Elements such as an ancient tree,
walls, paths and buildings are kept and placed side by side with new
interventions.

Another project that embodies the notion of place is the Brion cemetery by
Carlo Scarpa. The cemetery is designed as a L-shaped enclosed garden where
paths, rooms, walls, pavilions, trees, lawns, water, and fountains are integrated
within a whole. Similarly as to Siza, who in a way stages an ancient tree by
creating a path towards it, in de Brion Cemetery, Scarpa also makes architecture
out of nature. The grass lawn is slightly elevated and framed by a concrete vessel,
the half enclosed rectangular pond creates the experience of a room, the linear
water basin becomes a route and the circular windows frame a view towards the
garden.
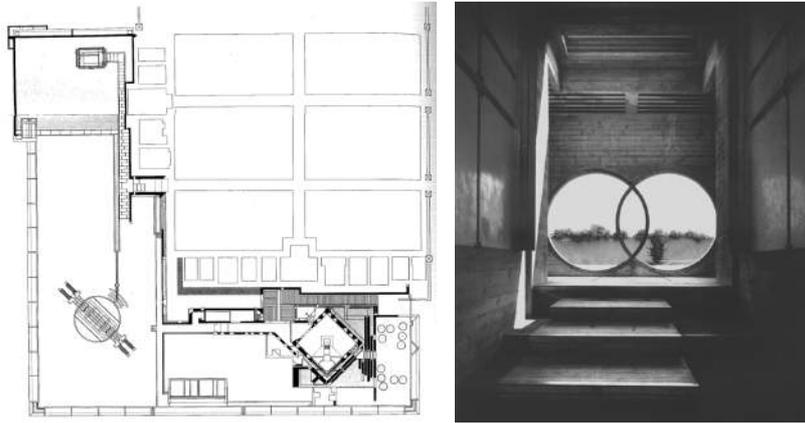
Carlo Scarpa, Brion Cemetery, Treviso, 1969-78
l: Site plan
r: View towards the garden. Photograph: Gerald Zugmann

Within the idea of place and time - the element - water has a psychological meaning. It stands for reflection, the self, contemplation and peace. In the work of Scarpa the element of water played a significant role. The origin of this relationship lies in the city of Venice, the city built on water, where Scarpa was born and grew up. The water metaphor comes back in several project such as the Castelvecchio Museum, the Fondazione Querini Stampalia, the Olivetti shop and the Brion Cemetery. In the Brion Cemetery the small basin was designed as a metaphor in which water is "the source of life". "The lake of meditation" also refers to this. The small fountain in the Fondazione Querini Stampalia is situated in an enclosed garden. One has to come close in order to see its beautiful details, where the distance of the observer becomes a critical aspect. The sound of the dripping water creates a rustic moment.
Sigurd Lewerentz's basin and fountain in front of the St. Mark Church functions in a similar way. It creates a spiritual and transcending moment. The basin is not only an integral part of the building itself, but it relates to the whole experience of the surroundings and the site.

Carlo Scarpa, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1961-63;
small fountain. Photograph: Maria Crippa

When working with place, time should be regarded as an essential part of designing. The English Landscape Garden at Stowe has been reshaped and redesigned over many hundreds of years. Within this period many different landscape architects, architects and gardeners have worked on the project, each with shifting taste and styles. In 1715 the English landscape architect Charles Bridgeman was asked to design a landscape setting. In his plan he designed long radiating avenues, monumental pools, temples, and lawns, all in a very classical and ordered manner. Later in 1733 the pictorial phase began when William Kent continued working on Stowe and "softened" the original plan of Bridgeman. He laid out a small valley, relocated some buildings in order to harmonize with the idealized natural setting and adjusted the axes into meandering paths. In the end the landscape garden grew in meaning through the accumulation of redesigning the garden, while still taking in account previous ones.
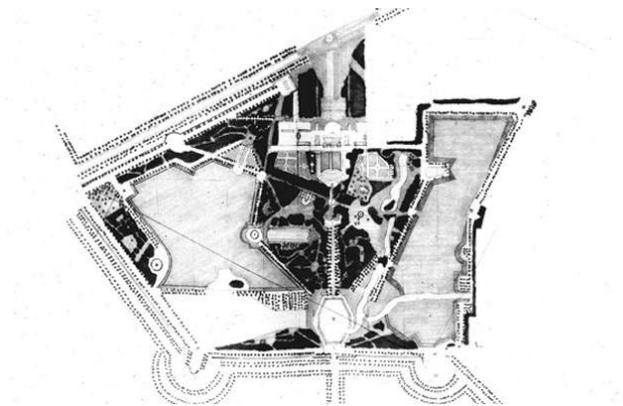
Stowe Landscape Garden, Stowe
t: Design by Charles Bridgeman, 1715
b: Redesign by William Kent, 1733

Time is also related to experience and movement. In the film Russian Ark, Aleksandr Sokurov compresses 300 years of Russian history within the museum the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. The whole movie is done in one shot, a remarkable example of extreme palimpsestuous layering in film. What made this movie so appealing was also the place: the beautiful interior of the Hermitage, that added to the experience of the whole movie.

Aleksandr Sokurov, Russian Ark, 2002

To conclude, architectural elements can provide a sense of place and time. Due to the passage of time, each place undergoes changes but simultaneously preserves elements. <u>By reusing the inscribed elements of a place more depth and layers can be generated.</u> It is important to be aware of the fact that inscribing things into place takes time.[53] However, being conscious of this does not mean that the process of creating place can never be accelerated. As Souto de Moura said: "if there is no pre-existence, I invent one, plant a tree or build a wall".[54] Nevertheless, a thorough study of all the existing conditions of a place before designing is essential. Apart from the literal passage of time that affects every project also the "soft" aspect of it can be expressed. By also implying the more poetic sides, architecture can enable a sense of place.

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[53] See: Høyer, Steen. "Things Take Time and Time Takes Things: The Danish Landscape", in: James Corner (ed.). *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. New york: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, pp. 68-77.
[54] Quote from the documentary: Andersen, Thom. "Reconversão", Portugal/USA, 2012.

Fernando Távora

Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa, Guimarães, Portugal

1972–89

Steps leading to the enclosed garden. Photograph: Alessandra Chemolla

Place

Historical overview of Guimarães and the *pousada*:

9th century	The first settlement of the city was called Vimaranes. The Santa Marinha church was built on Roman archaeological remains
late 11th century	The Santa Marinha church was expanded to the canons of St. Augustine
1128	Major political and military events that would lead to the independence and the birth of a new nation took place in Guimarães. For this reason, in one of the old towers of the city's old wall it is written "Aqui nasceu Portugal" (Portugal was born here)
1128 (June 24)	The Battle of São Mamede took place in Guimarães
1528 (Jan. 27)	<u>The monastery</u> was installed along with a college in studies of humanities and arts and theology
18th century	<u>Reconstruction of the convent wings</u> of the Santa Marinha da Costa monastery started
1713	A new chapel was added
1936	The Santa Marinha da Costa monastery and its church were classified as public interest
1940	<u>Government Minister António Ferro envisaged the *pousadas* (historic hotels)</u>
1950	From this time many *pousadas* were installed in historical monuments and buildings, castles, convents and monasteries
1951	<u>The Santa Marinha da Costa monastery burned down</u>, hereafter the building fell into abandonment. The Santa Marinha church was largely saved from the fire
1972 – 1989	Remodelling of the monastery into a historical hotel was carried out by Fernando Távora
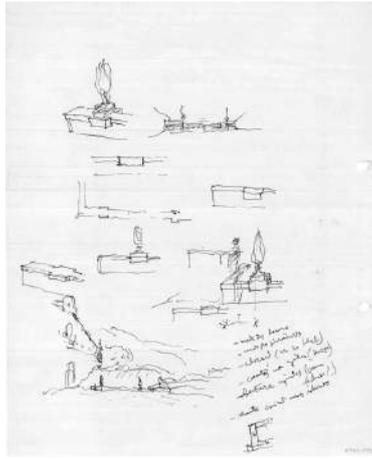
Fernando Távora, sketches for the Santa Marinha da Costa

The Portuguese architect Fernando Távora has given much substance to the idea of place. His work is interestingly broad. Apart from making buildings, he also designed parks, gardens, squares and objects. He worked with existing buildings as well as designed new buildings. Távora's variety of projects talks about working between various scales.[55]

Within his complete *oeuvre* the aspect of considering and creating place has been continually present. As a founder of the "Porto School" that later brought forward architects as Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura, Távora provided the guidelines for an architecture that is somehow inscribed into its place and time. Working mostly in the Porto region, his work can be described as a "critical regionalism",[56] strongly embedded within the traditions and ideals of its context.

Fernando Távora, garden of the Covilhã house, Guimarães, 1973-76
Photograph from: Luis Trigueiros 1993

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[55] See: Esposito, Antonio and Leoni, Giovanni. *Fernando Távora: opera completa*. Milan: Mondadori Electa spa, 2005.
[56] The term "critical regionalism" was first introduced by architectural theorists Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivren in 1981. Later Kenneth Frampton, adopted the term and associated it to other architects such as Álvaro Siza and Alvar Aalto.

To understand his work we have to know something about the geology of Portugal. Portugal can be roughly divided into two conditions: in the south clay and in the north granite. The old monastery Santa Marinha da Costa in Guimarães, a northern Portuguese city, which Távora converted into a *pousada* (historical hotel) is set on a granite hill called "Mount Penha". This mountain has a holy meaning since medieval times. The top of the mountain provides a view on the undulating character of the landscape. Ancient stones and an old church converse an idea of continuity and place. Granite rock[57] formations occupy the majority of the landscape but schist rock can also be found in certain zones of the northwest area. To the southeast of the city, clay can be found along the streambed of the river Ave, Vizela and Selho.
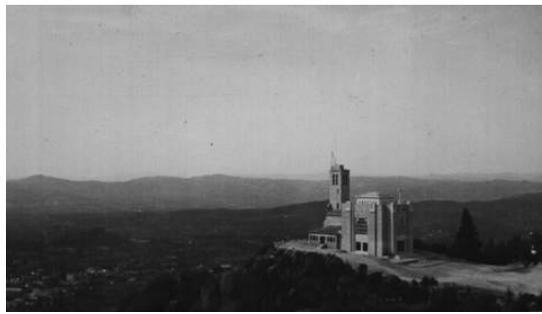
t: The top of Mount Penha. Photograph: Marques da Silva
b: View of the Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa with the church and the monastery
Photograph from: Luis Trigueiros 1993

[57] Working with granite is a repeating element in the work of Távora. He used this material for the various houses, square, gardens and public buildings he designed.

The design for *pousadas* started in Portugal in 1940 when Government Minister Antnio Ferro, also a poet and play writer, set up a program to restore historic buildings into hotels. Mostly abandoned or destroyed monasteries that were situated in remote areas were transformed.

Rebuilding the Pousada of Santa Marinha da Costa, 1979
Photograph: Carlos Martins

In 1972 Távora started with the remodeling and extension of the monastery of Santa Marinha da Costa. The life of the former building had been transformed over a period of eleven centuries, which found its origin in the nineteenth century. The site consists of a large garden, a small church and a monastery connected by an enclosed courtyard. In 1951 the monastery was almost completely destroyed by a fire, since then the building fell into decay.
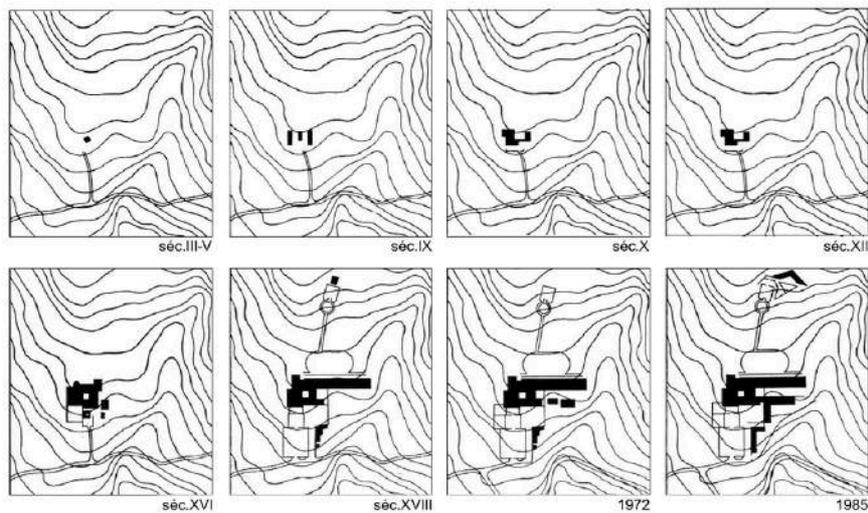
Fernando Távora, building historical phases survey of the Santa Marinha da Costa monastery

The general idea of Távora was to continue and innovate to the pursuance of the already long life of the old building and its site. To do so, its most characteristic spaces and elements were preserved and new additions, due to the program, were created. As Távora said: "This is how the life of a building is begun (…) in the certainty that other centuries and transformations will follow…".[58] A number of historical layers started to emerge referring to the long legacy of the place. Távora well understood the transformative process of buildings as explained in a quote by himself:

> "*The pousada will, no doubt, introduce a new use in the old building, but it is also certain that if men make houses, houses also make men. This is why the old building's scale and space ritual have been kept. They mean the presence of a past which will never return and are recalled and used here due to the modernity of their significance*".[59]

Eduardo Souto de Moura, Santa Maria do Bouro, Amares, 1989-97; view of the courtyard that was left as a ruin. Photograph: Joseé Filipe Silva

In relation to Távora's design, another project for a *pousada* made by his student Eduardo Souto de Moura should be mentioned. About ten years after the completion of Távora's *pousada*, the hotel of Santa Maria do Bouro by Souto de Moura was completed. The redesign by Souta de Moura comes from very similar ideas of respecting the site, its topology, and the existing structures. In the interior the design seems very alike to that of Távora; stucco walls with frames of granite stone covered openings. However an interesting difference

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[58] Trigueiros, Luiz (ed.). *Fernando Távora*. Lisbon: Editorial Blau, 1993, p. 116.
[59] Ibid.

within Souto de Moura's project is that he decided to keep part of the old monastery, which was also partially destroyed due to a fire, as a ruin. His idea was that the ruin has a quality by itself, one that does not need to be restored always.[60]

Concerning the aspect of place, what are the set of tools that Távora uses? <u>It is essentially about rediscovering the inscribed elements of the place that were already present:</u> the church, the enclosed patio with its fountain and camellia and magnolia beds, an enticing stone staircase that leads up to the holy forest with rhododendrons, the bay, chestnut and oak trees, to a secrete lake, the view over the hill and the terrace.

Távora was aware of the passage of time and knew that a new function could well be installed into an existing structure. In the Santa Marinha da Costa the presence of the monastery lives on, providing a ritual value of the place and enriching its current state.
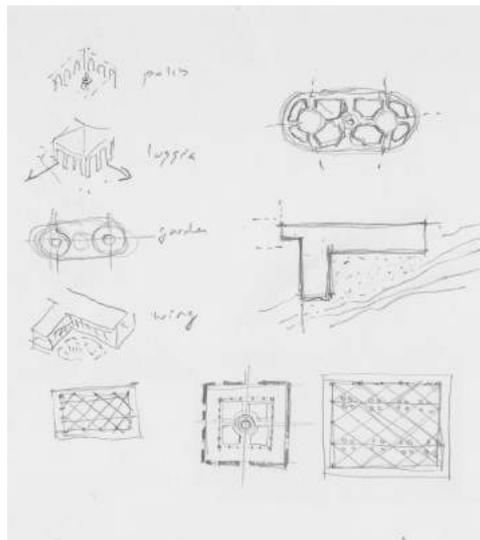
Sketch of some of the elements that provide a sense of place:
patio, loggia, garden, convent wing, square

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[60] Apart for leaving part of the building as a ruin Eduardo Souto de Moura also introduced modern elements to the redesign: "We rejected the pure and simple consolidation of the ruin as the sake of contemplation, opting instead for the introduction of new materials, uses, forms, and functions. The picturesque is an incidental byproduct, and not an objective of the program. Reality is far more powerful (…)". See: Andersen, 2012. See also the following book: Riewoldt, Otto. *New Hotel Design*. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2006.

Garden of the Santa Marinha da Coasta with stairs leading to the secret lake, 1973
Photograph: Alessandra Chemolla
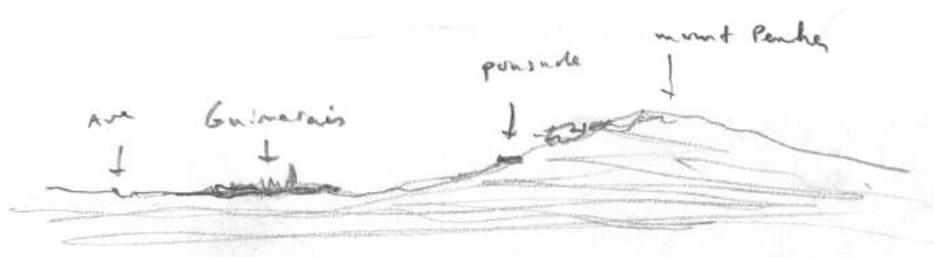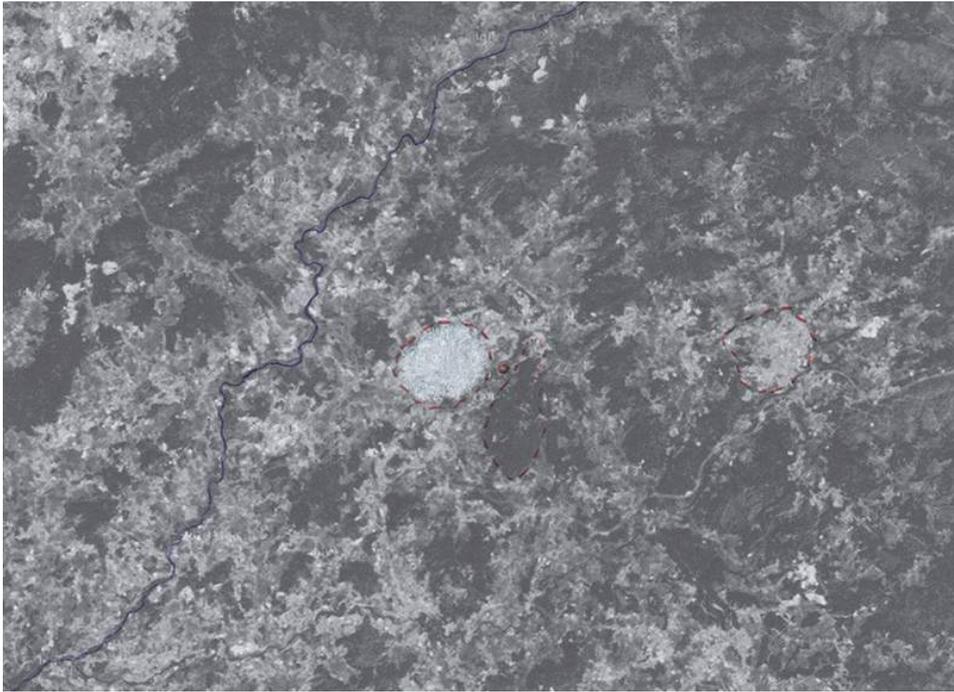
t: Aerial view with the river Ave to the west and Mount Penha to the east of Guimarães
m: Ancient rocks of Mount Penha. Photograph: Guimarães Municipality
b: Sketch of a section through the landscape, from left to right: river Ave, Guimarães, Pousada, Mount Penha
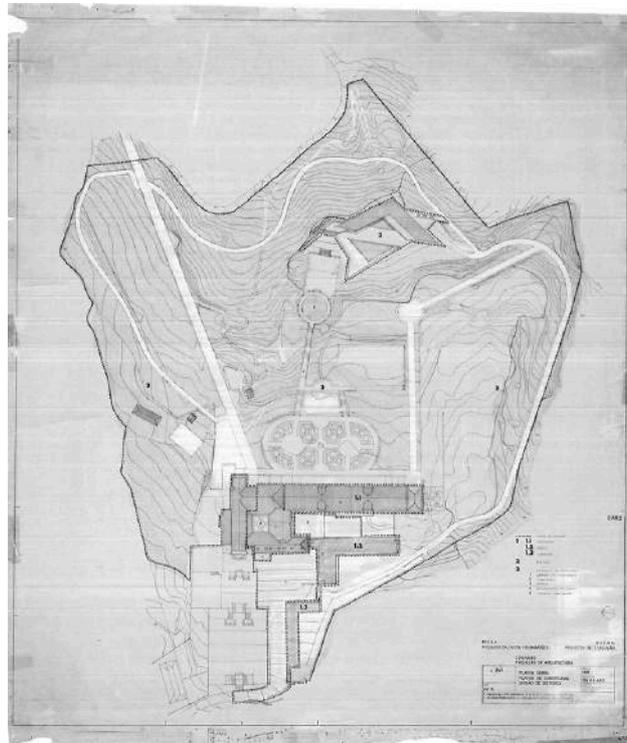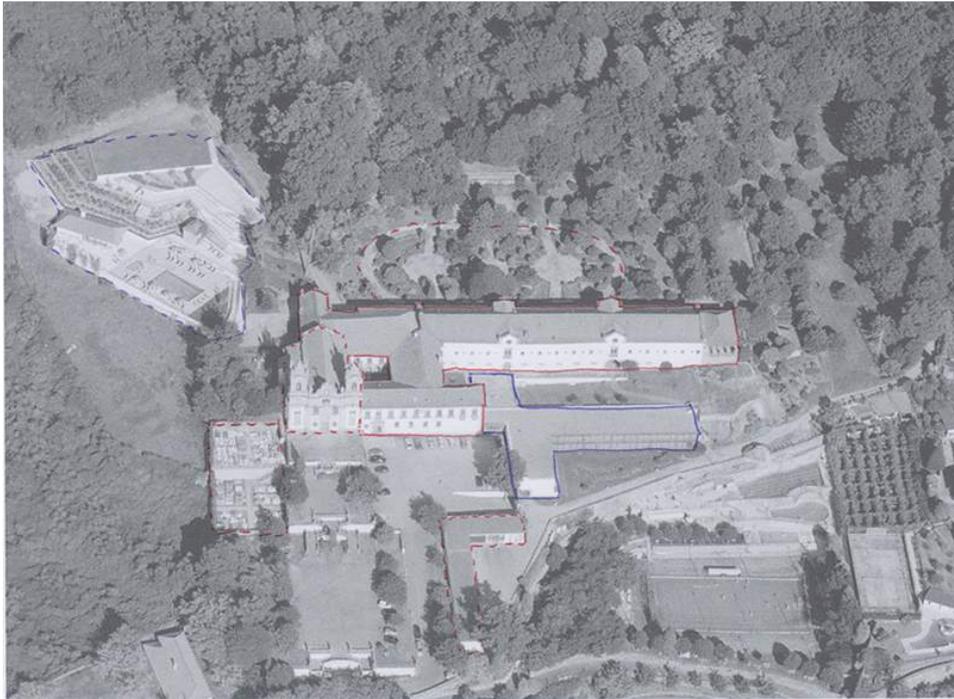
t: Birds eye view of the Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa (bleu indicating the new structures)
b: Site plan showing the buildings and the garden
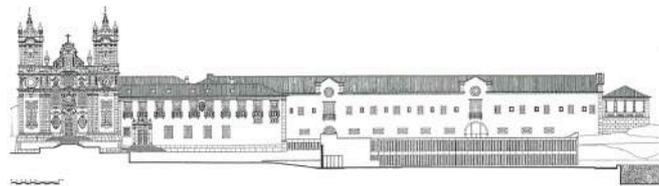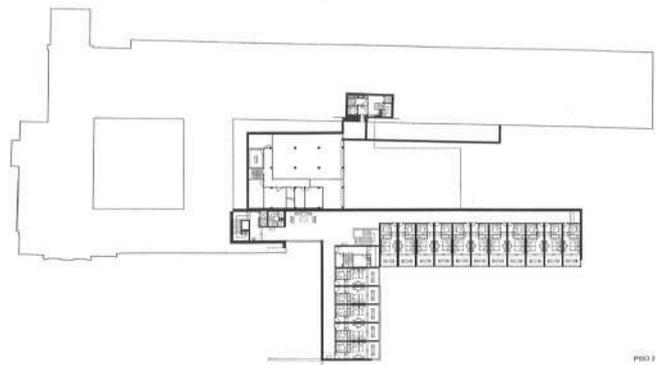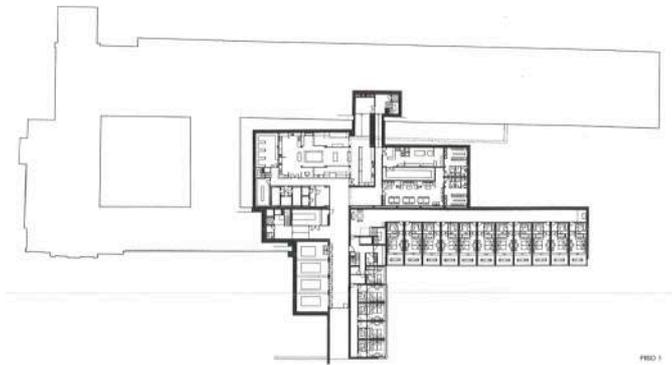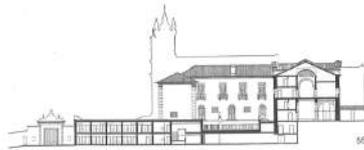
From top to bottom: south façade, cross section, floor level 1, floor level 2, west facade
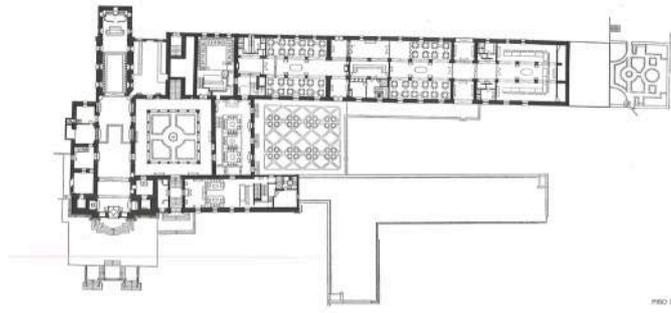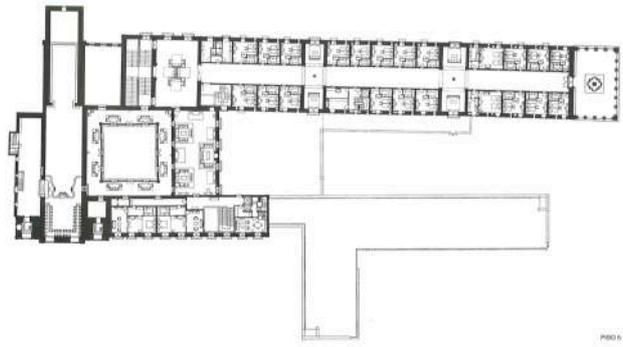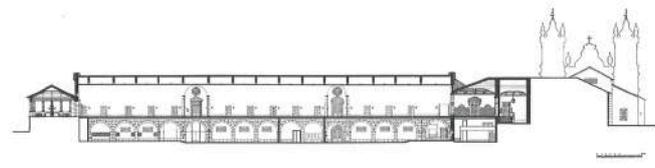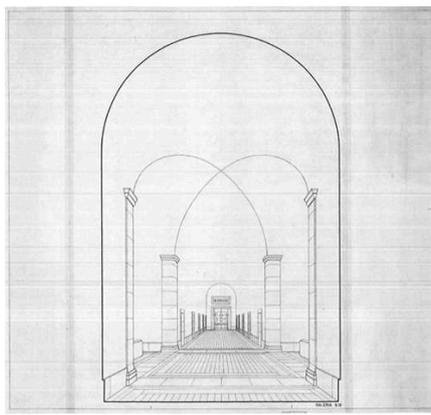
t: From top to bottom: floor level 3, floor level 5, longitudinal section
l: Central hallway. Photograph: Kees Hageman, r: Drawing by Fernando Távora
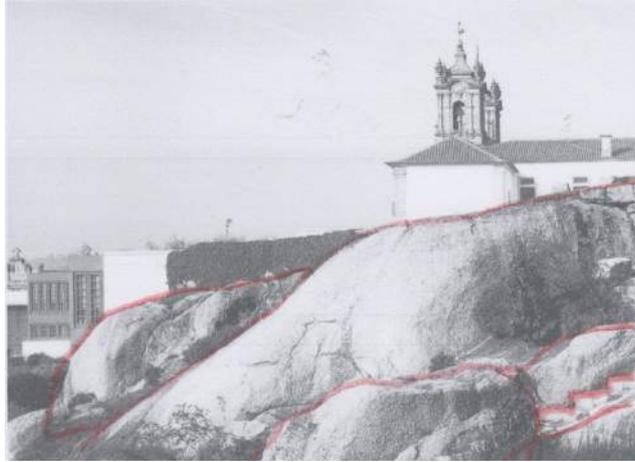
t: The granite rocks are inscribed elements of the site, a stairway cuts through
b: The irregular shape of the lookout refers to the rough topography of the site

t: The small church of Santa Marinha conveys a sense of place and time
b: Fragments of the monastery are maintained and framed against white rendering
Underlying photographs from: Trigueiros 1993

t: The secret lake creates a sense of place and time, the circular shape enhances the feeling of
contemplation and reflection
b: Detail of the secret lake, grass grows over the stone, suggesting the passage of time
Photographs: Pousada de Santa Marinha da Costa

t: View towards the staircase that cuts through the rocks and leads up to another garden
b: View of Távora's added wings containing hotel rooms, the L-shape engulfs the lawn in the front
Photographs from: Trigueiros 1993

II. REUSE

What makes palimpsest so relevant today is the aspect of reuse. Reuse in the broad sense of the word, means reusing buildings by accommodation new functions or programs. Reuse in the sense that building materials can be recycled. Reuse is also about the sense of "reinterpreting", "rewriting" and "rearranging". The palimpsest makes us aware that certain things can be remade, recovered and given new life: <u>architecture as a remaking</u>.

The creation of a palimpsest, Bologna, 1456
From: University of Bologna

The reuse of buildings and materials has been an integral part of history. Greek temples were converted into churches or mosques; monuments, palaces or industrial building transformed into museums; and bunkers that are turned into recreational functions.

The theater of Marcellus in Rome is an ancient example of reuse of an existing building. It is perhaps not so much a palimpsest due to the huge contrast between old and new. It is almost as if the two layers are aggressively crashed into each other, resulting in a literal superimposition of architectural styles and a collage of old and new. The combination of arcades and different column orders in separate layers enhances this feeling: Doric on the ground level, light Ionic on the first level and possibly Korinthic on the now disappeared third level.[61] Later, another structure was added to the third level in a completely new style. In this example clearly the passage of time reveals an covering aspect.

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[61] Watkin, David. *De westerse architectuur: een geschiedenis*. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij SUN, 1986, p. 63.
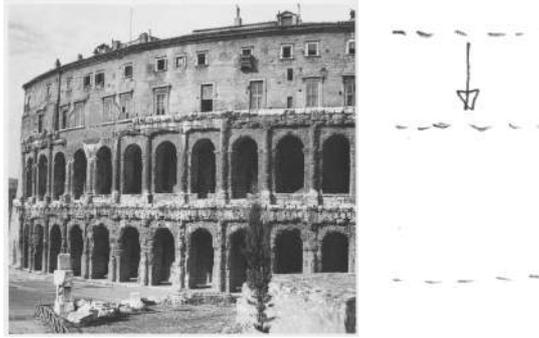
Theater of Marcellus, Rome, 13-11 BC. Photograph from: Watkin 1986

The reuse of architectural building materials, as discussed shortly in the introduction, is called *spolia*. Associated to *spolia* is the term *redivivus*[62], meaning an architectural element used multiple times and again. The use of architectural *spoila* results in a character of heterogeneity[63] or to translate it to a more common term in contemporary practice: (bri)collage.

In *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning* Gunther Bandmann states that the use of *spolia* did not solely come from economic reasons. According to the author, the popularity of *spolia* was also used to give meaning to the tradition and history of conquered places. Instead of copying relics from home, one would transport parts of buildings, and place them in the newly conquered areas. *Spolia* therefore also represented a regional power. To give an example, the columns from the Temple of Sol Invictus in Rome were used in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.[64]

In Sebastiano Serlio's treatise on civil architecture he provided guidelines how to reuse spoiled columns from various styles and to assemble them together in a new and coherent whole. In Serlio's awkward yet beautiful illustration of a perspective section of a dome space there appears to be two floating Corinthian capitals in the foreground. With this gesture he tries to underline "a shifting notion from member to fragment"[65] confirming the unity of the fragment within the whole body. Continuing on the ideas of Serlio, Frederica Goffi states the following:

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[62] *Redivivus*: coming back to life, reborn. From: Oxford Latin Dictionary.
[63] Heterogeneity: concept related to the uniformity in a substance (opposite of homogeneity). A heterogeneous material is nonuniform in composition or character.
[64] Bandmann, Gunter. *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 146-147.
[65] Goffi, p. 148.

"The architect is an expert collector, one who skillfully and meaningfully disassembles and reassembles architectural elements from an existing palimpsest, in such a way that old and new story might merge."[66]
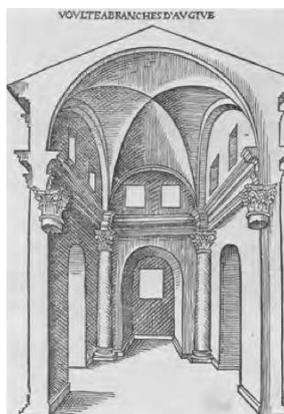
Sebastiano Serlio, *The five books on architecture*, 1611;
perspective section of a cross vaulted space

The comparison between architect and collector is a very valid one and closely linked to the idea of palimpsest. A project that comes to mind is the conversion of Sir John Soane's house into a museum on Lincoln Inn Fields. This house is a collection of architectural *spolia* and relics Soane has collected and brought together. Soane's reuse of materials is a very literal historical quote. Ancient Roman capitals are placed as fragmented ornaments on the façade, coincidentally referring to Serlio's drawing.

John Soane, elevation of Lincoln's Inn Fields 13, London, 1806-12
Photograph: Robin Sones

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[66] Ibid.

A more contemporary and integrated use of *spolia* is presented in the work of the Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis. He reinvented the use of architectural *spolia* in a few projects. For Pikionis it was an approach of "critical regionalism". Reuse was a tool to provide meaning to place and site embedded into a long Greek building history. In his work, there is a certain homogeneity due to color, composition and textures.

Dimitris Pikionis, St. Demetrius Loumbardiaris, Athens, 1954-57
Photograph: Hélène Binet

Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik also used the idea of reusing materials as a tool to provide a strong sense of locality, in his case not so much a palimpsest as Pikionis since he used primarily newly fabricated building materials. However it is an example of how the expression of reuse can provide a solution with new materials.

Jože Plečnik, University Library building, Ljubljana, 1930-41

Marco Frascari describes the tradition of architectural *spolia* in his book *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing* as something rather related to the architectural drawing of collage.[67] In art the reuse of materials is presented in the Pop Art Movement of the sixties in the last century with the method of collage. The idea found its origin in the *objet trouvé* advocated by Marcel Duchamp. The *objet trouvé* represents a natural or discarded object, found by chance, that has a certain beauty.

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[67] Please note to keep in mind my earlier comment where I mention that palimpsest is not the same as collage, however they can be related. (see: introduction: palimpsest, p. 33).
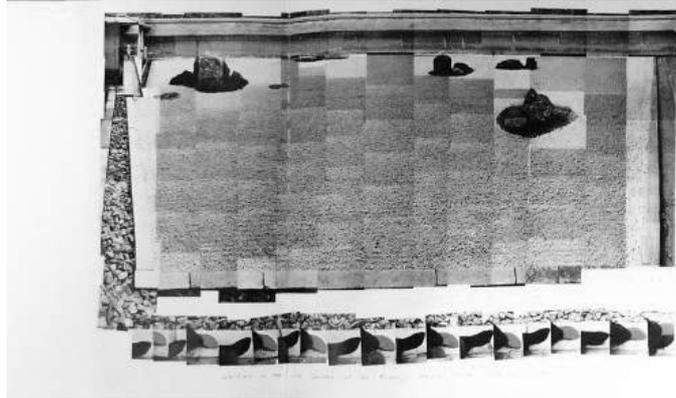
David Hockney, photographic collage of the Zen
Garden of the Ryoanji Temple, 1983

Today the question of reuse is perhaps greater then ever. We are left with a huge amount of empty buildings and places.[68] The contemporary use of architectural *spolia* became not only a necessity due to the building crisis of 2008. Today it also became an architectural tool of expression. In the Ningbo Museum designed by Wang Shu, old tiles and stones were reused in the façade. The tiles and stones were collected from local destruction sites, referring to old times in Ningbo when houses were built with tiles because cement was not yet available.
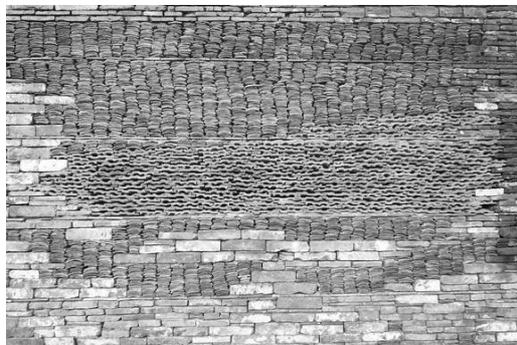
Wang Shu, Ningo Museum, Ningbo, 2003-08
Photograph: Edward Denison

A contemporary project that uses recycled building materials in a similar way is the installation "Verwoest Huis Bloemhof 4" by Marjan Teeuwen. She collected waste materials from demolished buildings and rearranged them in a new manner to create spaces as art objects.

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[68] For example: industrial sites, postwar areas, abandoned offices and decaying monumental buildings.

Marjan Teeuwen, Verwoest Huis Bloemhof 4, 2013

Finally, architecture is about remaking: working with existing buildings, places and materials. The architect is a collector, one who carefully collects and puts things together. To be able to do so the scale of the detail and material becomes very important. How to nit and to construct the different materials together is essentially the task of the architect. By reusing materials, local or not, meaning can be given to buildings and places. Furthermore, reuse can also be a tool of architectural expression.

Dimitris Pikionis

The landscaping of the archaeological site around the Acropolis, Athens, Greece

1954–57

Detail of the "tapestry of stone". Photograph: Hélène Binet

Reuse

Historical overview of the Acropolis:

3500 BC	First humans gathered in Athens
1200 BC	Mycenaean palace and wall was built
700 BC	The first sanctuaries and Temple of Athena were built
480 BC	The Persians largely destroyed Athens
475 BC	Construction of the wall "Themistoclean" began along the Acropolis
438 BC	<u>The Parthenon was built</u> adjacent to the former site of the old Temple of Athena. A few years later, the Temple of Nike and the Erechtheion were erected
26	Temple of Rome and Augustus was constructed along with the <u>Acropolis staircase</u>
267	The Heruli tribe destroys Athens. Almost a century later Emperor Julian repairs the Parthenon
1458	<u>Parthenon is converted into a Mosque, which is an early example of forms of reuse</u>
6th century	Temples of the Acropolis are converted into Christian churches
1600	The Acropolis is occupied by Turkish garrison houses
1687	The Venetians bombard the Parthenon
1834	Athens becomes the capital of Greece
1845	<u>First restoration works on the Acropolis started</u>
1874	<u>Acropolis museum was established</u>
1933	Nikolaos Balanos carries out major restoration works for the Acropolis site
1957	Pikionis finishes the pathway of the archaeological site
2009	Bernard Tschumi constructs the Acropolis Museum

Dimitris Pikionis was well aware of the quality of reusing existing structures and building materials in his design for the Acropolis pathway in Athens.[69] The project is a collage of stone, almost like a tapestry. <u>In this project Pikionis acted as an archaeologist and collector. He reused stones and materials that he found in the landscape on al kind of scale levels.</u> He also reused a former road and the existing topography of the site. His design thereby gained a very personal and local character, one strongly embedded in Greek building tradition. In that sense Pikionis provided for a "critical regionalism", similarly to the School of Porto with Távora, Siza and Souto de Moura and associated to the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Especially Távora, who had designed many squares in Guimarães and Coimbra knew Pikionis' work very well. Although less in a collage-like way, Távora's work expresses a similar atmosphere.

Fernando Távora, pavement of the Municipal Park Quinta da Conceição, Matosinhos, 1956-60
Photograph: William Curtis

To understand the project of the Acropolis paths, which Pikionis built from 1951 until 1957, we should be aware of the history and culture of the place. The site is marked by the presence of many ancient Greek ruins, the most well known being the Parthenon, the Temple of Nike and the Erechtheion. The Acropolis is located on a flat - topped rock - approximately 300 meters long and 70 meters high - above the city of Athens. The word "acropolis" comes from the Greek word *akron*, meaning edge or extremity. The word *polis* meaning "city". Over a long period of time the Acropolis site has undergone many changes and has been reused on several occasions. Throughout history, the Parthenon has functioned as a temple, a treasury, a fortress, a church and a mosque. Today it is a monument. The rough topography of the site is characterized by the Acropolis rock that is part of a late Cretaceous limestone ridge that cuts through the Attica *plateau* from the northeast to the southwest of the site. Its flat top on which the

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[69] See: Pikionis, Agni. (ed.). *Dimitris Pikionis: The Landscaping of the Archaeological Site Around the Acropolis 1954-1957*. Athens: Bastas-Plessas Publications, 1994.

Acropolis is situated is formed due to the numerous landfills that have accommodated construction of fortification and temples since the Mycenaean era. Typical olive trees occasionally interrupt the stone earth of the site. The light beige color of the earth predominate the atmosphere of the place and blends with the ruins of the ancient temples of the Acropolis.
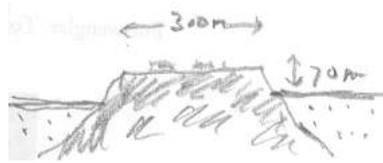
t: H. G. Wells, view of the Acropolis, Athens, 1922
b: Sketch of the Acropolis plateau

The design of Pikionis takes all the elegant aspects of the site very much into account. The project is often described as a "sentimental topography".[70] It touches upon ideas of strolling, travelling and wandering. It is very much about the narrative of how one experience a place through time. But it is also about the story that the place tells. In that sense, it is appropriate to quote a few lines of a poem of Ithaka by Constantine P. Cavafy who beautifully describes the essence of the journey:
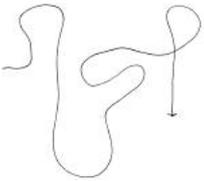
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.

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[70] Litho, Target. *Dimitris Pikionis, Architect 1887-1968: A Sentimental Topography*. London: Architectural Association, 1989. The word topography comes from the Latin "topos" and "logos".

Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.[71]

The beauty of the journey is also something that is embodied in the myths around a small and remote house, designed by a farmer Alekos Rodakis on the island of Aegina. The house, carefully designed and crafted within every detail, is situated on a hill; the route to this house is a spiritual experience. Pikionis discovered the existence of the house through the archaeologist Adolf Furtwängler. Today the house is in decay and is dissolving into the landscape.

Alekos Rodakis, private house, Aegina, c. 1880; now a ruin
Photograph: Olaf Nicolai

Coming back to Pikionis' project for the Acropolis, how is Pikionis able to take into account almost every aspect of the context? Perhaps, the secret is that he simply just respects the things as they are, or "as found".[72] He reinterprets and reorganizes them into a new thing. He tries to re-discover the qualities of the site. His reuse of ancient materials is "collaged rather than designed" and "it reinterprets the *genius loci* as a mythic narrative, part Byzantine, part pre-Socratic, a promenade to be experienced as much by the body as by the eyes".[73] As Alexandre Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre said: "Pikionis created a topographic continuum", all of this to give meaning and depth to the site.[74] The project of the paths look like they have been there for many years, one can not easily

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[71] Savidis, George. *Cavafy: Collected Poems*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 36-37.
[72] The attitude of respecting the things "as found" seems similar to the earlier described Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa by Fernando Távora.
[73] Frampton, pp. 8-9.
[74] Ibid., p.8.

distinguish what is new and what is old. The intervention of Pikionis blends seamlessly into its surroundings. This is because of a certain homogeneity and careful assemblage of the different materials within the design, an extensive and sensitive attitude, one very much in line with palimpsestuous architecture.

Dimitris Pikionis, Belvedere on Philopappus Hill, Acropolis, 1954-57
Photograph: Hélène Binet

To understand the work of Pikionis we should expand the idea of reuse to a broader sense. Pikionis not only literally reused - collected and assembled - old building stones but also reused more abstract aspects such as site, topology, tradition and identity. <u>In the project for the pathway around the Acropolis, Pikionis affirms the idea of the architect as a collector and architecture as a remaking.</u>
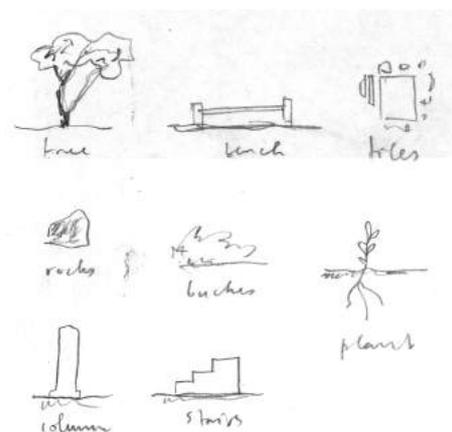
Sketch of a few elements Pikionis worked with
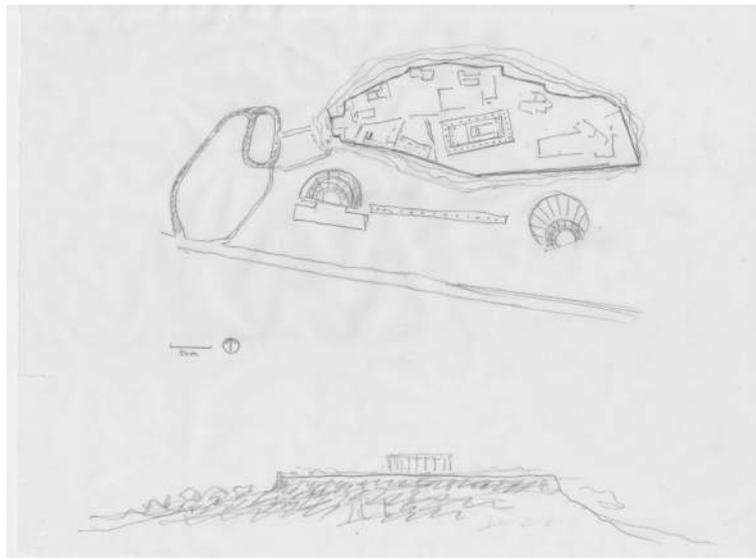
t: Aerial view of Athens with the five hills (Acropolis to the south west) and Mount Hymettus to the east

b: Sketch of the Acropolis
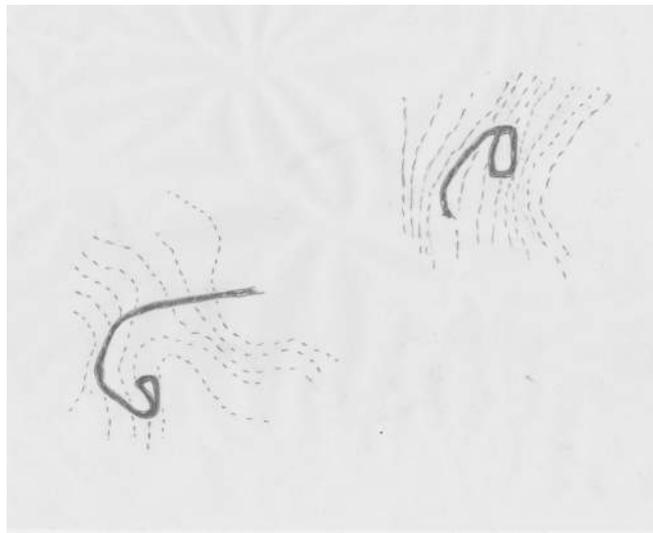
t: Areal view of the two twisting - one left-handed turn and a right-handed turn - pedestrian roads
b: Sketch showing the relation of the roads to the topography

Picture of the road cutting through a forest. Photograph: Hélène Binet

Dimitris Pikionis, plan of the pathway around the Acropolis, 1954-57
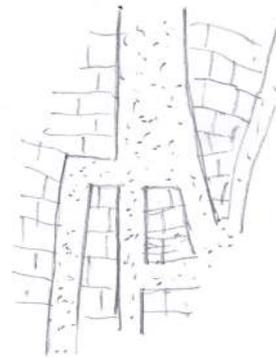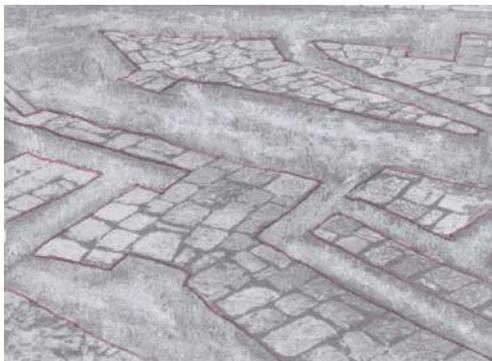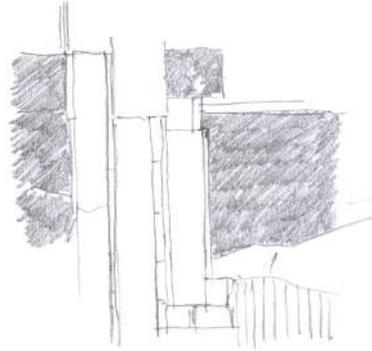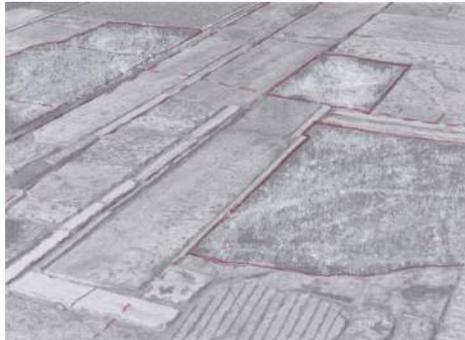
t: Arrangement of stone is done in a parallel way where long shaped stones are positioned amidst
b: A continuous finger-like pattern of stone cuts through the smaller tiled stones
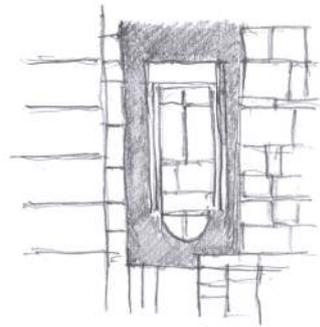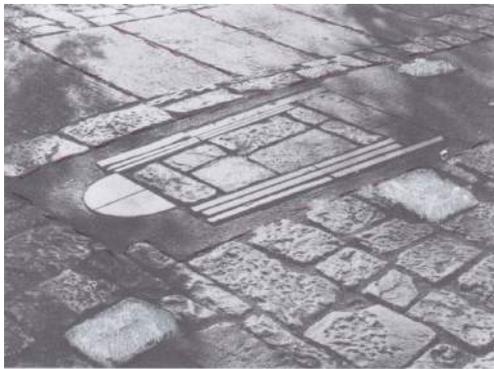
t: The topography of the hill is reinterpreted and accentuated by leaving a small gap in-between
b: A frame is provided for a composition of stones in an ornamental manner
Underlying photographs: Hélène Binet

Collage of the view towards the Acropolis showing the tapestry of stone, the olive trees and the look-out
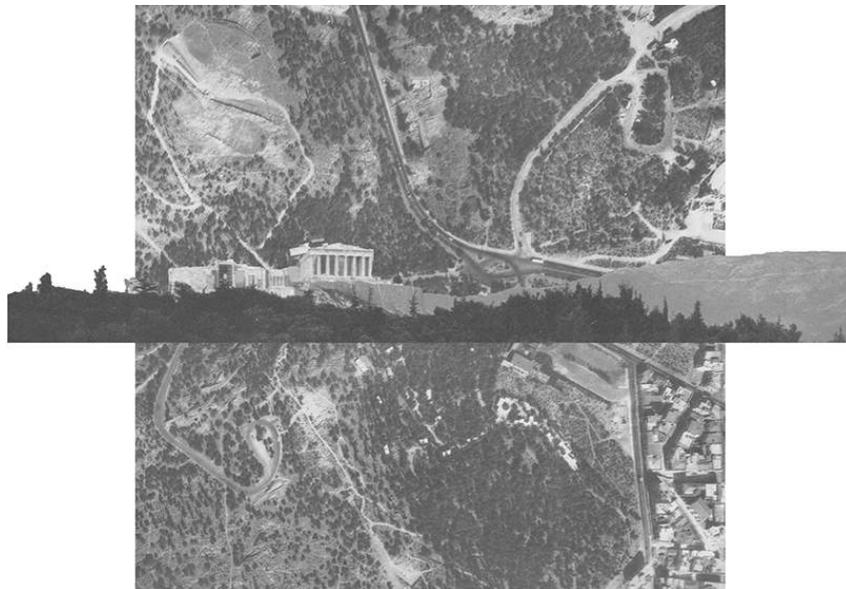
Collage of the context, aerial view and section of the Acropolis and surroundings

III. MEMORY

"Memory begins when history ends."

- Peter Eisenman, 1984

A kite festival can stimulate our memory
Photograph from: Lynch 1972

How is it possible that certain places or buildings we have visited stay in our memory? Many others, the majority, of our visits we forget. Of course this is a very personal thing. Still, the observation raises the question how places can stimulate our unconscious and appeal to us? Does it have to do with outside factors such as the climate of the day, the people with whom we were, a memorable event that took place or a spontaneous thing that occurred? Does it have to do with a duration of time we have spent at a place? In order to look for answers we have to study the mechanisms of our brain, something already done by the Greeks who invented the *ars memorativa:*

> *"Few people know that the Greeks, who invented many arts, invented an art of memory which, like their other arts, was passed on to Rome whence it descended in the European tradition. This art seeks to memorize through a technique of impressing "places" and "images" on memory. It has usually been classed as "mnemotechnics", which in modern times seems a rather unimportant branch of human activity. But in ages before printing a trained memory was vitally important; and the manipulation of images in memory must always to some extent involve the psyche as a whole."*[75]

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[75] Yates, Frances. *The Art of Memory*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, p. xl. For another book on the theory of memory see: Rossi, Paolo. *Clavis Universalis*. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1993.
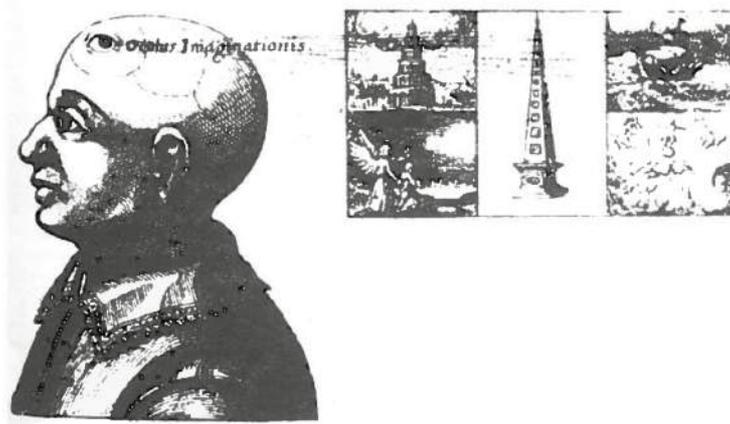
Robert Fludd, the eye of the imagination, Oppenheim, 1619

Frances Yates' book *The Art of Memory* reveals how memory works; we connect images to our memories so that one memory helps another. The theory that deals with these phenomena in architecture is called "mnemonics", it concerns space and memory and the memory of place.

The Greeks developed a theory on mnemonics that kept part of tradition and culture alive while the Japanese presented another interesting attitude more related to ritual. The Japanese Naiku Shrine temple complex is rebuild in its entirety every twenty years. There is no value to the physical matter but instead to rituals and the continuum of traditional building knowledge. The sacred domain of the process of re-building recalls a collective memory and knowledge transfer of traditional Japanese architecture for the local community.

Naiku Shrine, Ise, first construction c. 678
Photograph: Government of Japan
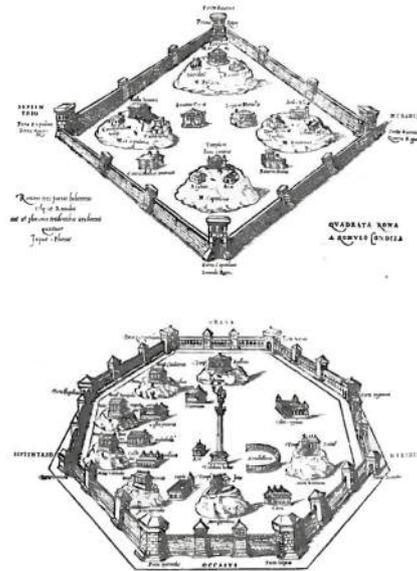
Two states of the city of Rome showing the Roma Quadrata and Rome of
Servius Tulilus, 1527. From: Marot 2003

In 1930 Sigmund Freud writes *Civilization and its Discontents*[76] where memory
and its complexity is discussed. In this book he raises the "general problem of
preservation in the sphere of the mind". Freud devoted much attention to the
techniques of memory. His analysis contributed to the processes of regression
and "an archaeology of the personality". He believed that memories once
"destroyed" preserve as "traces" in the unconscious mind and when regression
goes back far enough they "can once more be brought to light".[77]

To illustrate his ideas, Freud borrows the analogy of the palimpsest city, Rome.
He takes the reader on a tour through several phases in the development of the
city - Roma Quadrata, the Septimontium, part of the city surrounded by the first
Servian and Aurelian wall, and so on. Freud said that as a visitor you could still
find traces of all the earlier stages:

> "*Except for a few gaps, he will see the wall of Aurelian almost unchanged. In
> some places he will be able to find sections of the Servian wall where they have
> been excavated and brought to light. If he knows enough – more than present–
> day archaeology does – he may perhaps be able to trace out in the plan of the city
> the whole course of that wall and the outline of the Roma Quadrata. Of the*

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[76] Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). New York: W.W. Norton, 1962
(translated by James Strachey).
[77] Ibid., p. 16.

buildings which once occupied this ancient area he will find nothing, or only remains, for they exist no longer. The best information about Rome in the republican era would only enable him at the most to point out the sites where the temples and public buildings of that period stood. Their place is now taken by ruins, not ruins of themselves but of later restorations made after fires or destruction. It is hardly necessary to remark that all these remains of ancient Rome are found dovetailed into the jumble of a great metropolis which has grown up in the last few centuries since the renaissance. There is certainly not a little that is ancient still buried in the soil of the city or beneath its modern buildings. This is the manner in which the past is preserved in historical cities like Rome."[78]

In the passage by Freud he suggests a relationship between the past of the human mind and the past of the city. According to Marot, Freud suggests that "the city can be effectively analyzed like a mental organism: an organism whose previous states of existence are accessible to varying degrees, and whose spatiotemporal depth, now transparent, now opaque, is more of less available to the voyage of memory".[79] In a drawing of the "geology of the psyche", Freud illustrated his ideas on the human mind by borrowing the metaphor of sedimentation.
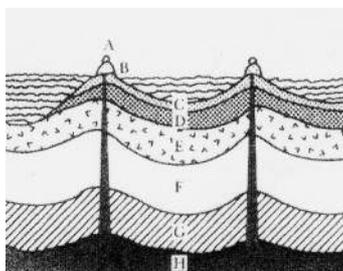
Sigmund Freud, geology of the psyche, 1925

Aldo Rossi was interested in the archaeological aspects of cities and how their monuments played on the collective memory of the city, place and inhabitants. In *The Architecture of the City*, Rossi stressed the importance of monuments as a

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Marot, Sébastien. *Sub-Urbanism and the Art of Memory*. London: Architectural Association, 2003, p. 31.

notice of "a past that we are still experiencing".[80] He stated that "with time the city grows upon itself; it acquires a consciousness and memory".[81] Architecture is not only a narrator of the past, but it also has the ability to stimulate ones memory. Marco Frascari believed that "architecture is a kind of corporal time machine where the past, the present, and the future are related architecturally through memory".[82]

Sébastien Marot has provided a view on how memory and palimpsest are related. In his paranoid, if not slightly silly, lecture "Palimpsestuous Ithaca: a gentle manifesto", he gives a broad overview on how palimpsest is both present in the physical and immaterial world.[83] To illustrate his thoughts he projects his ideas on the site of Ithaca near New York, where the landscape bears many traces dating back to the ice age. Examples of stratification[84], superimposition and layering are present as shown in the image below.
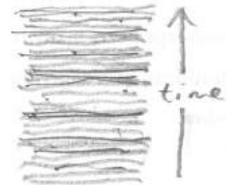
l: Fall Greek, Ithaca; example of stratification. Photograph: Cornell University
r: Sketch representing the formation of layers through time

If we would visualize memory within this idea of archaeology and the geological phenomena of sediments and stratification, as a set of superimposed layers that have accumulated in time, a few architectural projects come to mind.

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[80] Aldo Rossi, p. 59. Rossi uses the word "permanences" to describe these monuments.
[81] Ibid., p. 21.
[82] Frascari, Marco. *Monsters of Architecture: Anthropomorphism in Architectural Theory.* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1991, p. 61.
[83] Marot, Sébastien. "Palimpsestuous Ithaca: A Relative Manifesto for Sub-Urbanism", 2013, from: http://www.theberlage.nl/events/lectures. In the lecture he combines landscape theories of Corboz with that of J.B. Jackson to give a new definition of the contemporary landscape as a multilayered landscape, what he calls "a hyper landscape".
[84] For ideas on stratification and how it is used in the design practice look into Marc Angélil, Robert Smithson, Tony Smith and Álvaro Siza.
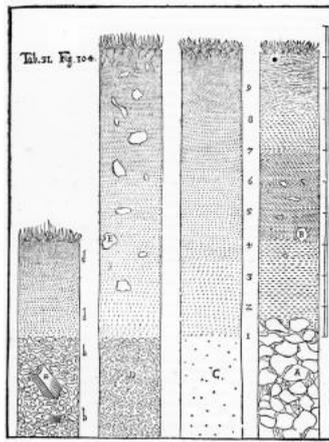
Olof Rudbeck, study of the principle of sedimentation, 1697

The project of Peter Zumthor in Chur is literally built upon a Roman archaeological site, leaving intact the former structure, while building a new structure over it. The Kolumba Museum in Cologne, also by Zumthor, resembles an identical attitude. The ruin is left "as found" and the new building sits on top of the old one. By doing so, the old ruin becomes a "layer of memory". The new structure follows the previous one but creates a new legacy to the existing memory. New ideas are build upon old ideas; one ruin comes out of another ruin.
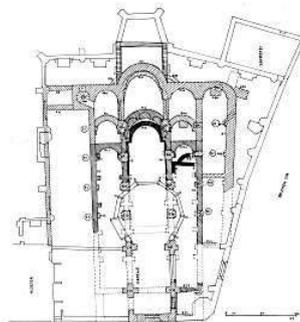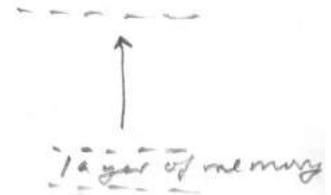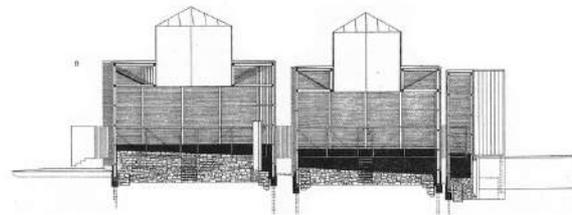
t: Peter Zumthor, Shelters for a Roman Archaeological Site, Chur, 1985-86
b: Peter Zumthor, Kolumba Museum, Cologne, 2003-07

Apart from the memory of the city and buildings one can wonder whether materials have a memory? Certainly the parchment of palimpsests do. When the ink touched the structure of parchment that consist mostly of collagen, the water in the paint media melts the collagen slightly, forming a raised bed for the paint. When later the ink is scratched off, a raised bed remains and is juxtaposed with the successive text and a trace of the older text, creating a hierarchical composition. <u>This can be compared to the reciprocal events of an imprint of a foot in sand, erosion of dunes or weathering of building materials.</u>[85] Scarpa's stone tiles in his Fondazione Querini Stampalia will in time compress the ground as more people walk over it; the stone inscribes itself into the soil, just like a footprint in the sand.

l: Carlo Scarpa, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1959-63; tiles in the enclosed garden
Photograph: Maria Crippa
r: Sketch of an imprint of a foot and tile in the soil

There is also an immaterial aspect to the idea of memories and buildings. According to Yates buildings are not that solid as they may seem. They exists long before they are built in the mind of the architect and after they have been realized, remain in the memories of people for generations.[86]
I am also interested in how ideas can be transported and memory created by association. The memorial monument for the Italian poet Dante by Guiseppe Terragni in Rome in 1942 is a project that is a constellation of The Divine Comedy which itself was influenced by the architecture of Byzantine churches, therefore the Danteum is a translation of a translation. It is exemplary of how a spatial structure can express a poetic meaning without an explicit vocabulary of architectural symbols.

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[85] For example: the oxidation of corten steel and the weathering of cedar wood are examples of materials that are intended to change with time.
[86] Marot, 2003, p. 10.
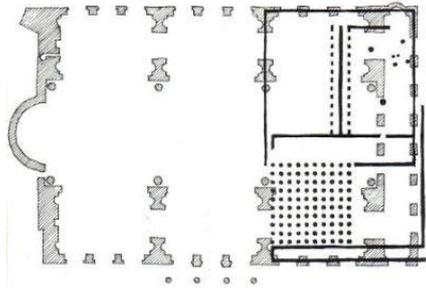
Thomas Schumacher, superimposition of the Danteum with the
Basilica di Massenzio, 1980

The hierarchy that arises when layers are superimposed and juxtaposed creates a complex structure in which memory connects. In architecture, memory can be presented in a literal way such as in the city of Rome or in layers of memory as seen in the projects of Zumthor. Memory can also suggest immaterial things such as ideas, associations and emotions. In this sense Charles Baudelaire poetically described memory and how it is related to the mind:

> *"Countless layers or ideas, images, feelings have fallen successively on your brain as softly as light. It seems that each buries the preceding, but none has really perished."*[87]

Memory is about remembering and to do so one needs to refer to past things and dig into the unconscious. We need ritual and we need traces. <u>An imprint can stimulate memory.</u>

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[87] Quote by Charles Baudelaire, see: Virilio, Paul. *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1980). New York: Semtiotext(e), 1991, p. 29.

Rafael Moneo

Museum of Roman Art, Mérida, Spain

1980 – 86

The first "layer of memory" showing the basement with excavated ruins of Roman streets
Photograph: Museum of Roman Art

Memory

Historical overview of Mérida and the Roman Museum:

25 BC	<u>The Roman town</u> was founded in the name of "Emerita Augusta"
6th century	Mérida was the capital of Hispania
713	Mérida was conquered by the Muslims, and became the capital of the Cora. <u>The Arabs reused most of the old Roman buildings</u>
1230	The city was brought under Christian rule, when it was conquered by Alfonso IX of León
16th century	<u>Don Fernando de Vera y Vargas, señor Don Tello y Sierra Brava began an important epigraphical collection in their house, later this collection grew to what is now the collection of the Museum of Roman Art</u>
1720	The city became the capital of the Intendencia of Mérida.
19th century	In the course of the <u>Napoleonic invasion, numerous monuments of Mérida were destroyed or damaged.</u> Later the city became a railway hub and underwent massive industrialization
19th century	The house of Don Fernando de Vera y Vargas, señor Don Tello y Sierra Brava was torn down
1838	<u>Initiative started for an archaeological Museum in Mérida</u>
1910	The first inventory of the collection gave a total of <u>557 objects</u>
1936	<u>Systematic excavations</u> of the town's archaeological areas (theater, amphitheater, circus, necropolis, houses, etcetera) were initiated and carried out
1980	Start of the construction of the Museum of Roman Art by Moneo
1986	Completion of the Museum of Roman Art

In Rafael Moneo's work the aspect of tradition has played an integral part. In a series of occasions he worked with existing buildings and ruins. His work is very much inspired from Álvaro Siza, Peter Eisenman and Aldo Rossi. In comparison, the work of Moneo can be describes as focused more on the architectural form than his counterparts. One can sense an underlying quality in his work, especially in the Museum of Roman Art. On several occasions, Moneo works with the idea of memory with a strong connotation towards traditional Roman engineering that has a strong presence in the ancient Roman city of Mérida. On the other hand, similarly to the projects in Cologne and Chur by Peter Zumthor, Moneo literally created underlying memory and rooms of memory. The vast emptiness of the museum refers to that; it is a space to be filled with old and new memories.
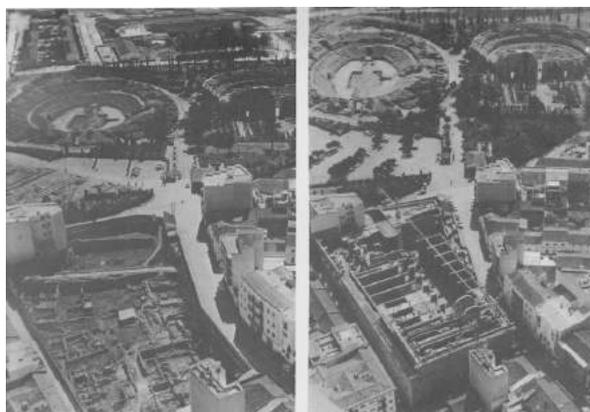
Two aerial views of the site, before and during the construction of the museum
Photograph from: Levene 1985

The Museum of Roman Art in Mérida[88] is designed from 1980 to 1986. The museum is built on top of an existing Roman archaeological site.
Mérida, a city laid on the cross-section of two major Roman roads, has many theaters, aqueducts and bridges that are remnants of the Roman Empire. Close to the site, only a few meters away of Moneo's museum, there is the Roman theater and the amphitheater. To connect the museum with these ancient structures, Moneo made a secrete underground passage that links the museum with the Roman site.

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[88] In Mérida there is another, more contemporary, project that deals with an archaeological site. It is the Roman Temple of Diana by architect José María Sánchez García. The building is a modern white concrete structure surrounding an old Roman temple. In this micro context there are three different time periods coming together: the Roman, traditional houses from the beginning of the twentieth century and the twentieth-first century structure by José María Sánchez García.
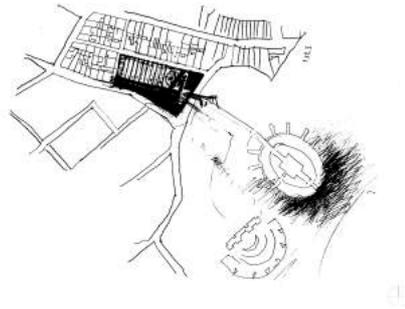
l: Roman Theater, Mérida, c. 16-15 BCE. Photograph: Theodora
r: Rafael Moneo, site plan of the museum in relation to the amphitheater

The design is marked by a series of repetitive parallel walls made from red brick and arched openings. William Curtis has written that Moneo "spliced together real ruins with metaphorical ones, working its way back to the structural anatomy of ancient architecture and touching upon certain continuities in Spanish tradition".[89] The building and the ruin almost melt together:

> "*In Merida, the astonishment before the work – its size and implacable constructive firmness – gathers the image of those walls overlapped up to the top with archeological remains, overwhelming in their quantity. This is an image that, furthermore, addresses a future time, that perhaps will never see, when the museum funds take their definitive positions: that is not our time, we belong to it. The individual is reduced without residues in that worthy past that appears as a future goal.*"[90]

The walls recall the Roman aqueducts as drawn by Piranesi, but also the ruin of the Proserpina aqueduct of Mérida built in the first century AD. The aqueduct of about 10 km transported water to Mérida and entered from the north side of the town. It is a reflection of the Roman era. By reinventing the aqueduct wall as an architectural element "a certain will of remembering and evoking the Roman past can be sensed in the project".[91]

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[89] Curtis, William. *modern architecture since 1900*. London: Phaidon, 1982, p. 629.
[90] Quetglas, José. "The Post-Raphaelite Brotherhood", in: *El Croquis*, no. 20 (April 1985), pp. 12-15.
[91] Levene, Richard et al. (eds.). "Museum of Roman Art", in: *El Croquis*, no. 20 (Arpil 1985), pp. 72-115.
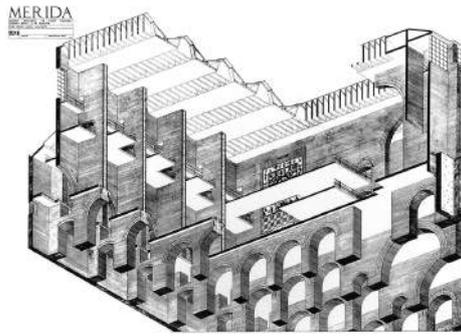
t: Moneo's axonometric drawing of the parallel wall system of the Roman Museum
b: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Castello del Acqua Giulia, 1761

In Moneo's project it is clear what is old and new. The memory of the archaeological site is emphasized by exposing them in the basement of the building. From there the walls rise up and enter the gallery space, positioned over three levels and connected by bridges. Light penetrates the space through the roof. In the galleries, antique fragments and *objet trouv*é of a classical column are exposed and placed against the red brickwork.[92] The gallery is then divided into rooms that are connected through an enfilade-like passage, penetrating through the rooms of memory.

The whole project becomes an urban constellation that fits well into the existing context and resonances to the presence of a Roman history. Moneo has tried to "give sense to the location"[93] by reinterpreting the collective memory of the site on several scale levels: the urban plan, the construction, organization, detailing and materiality. Memory is used in terms of referring to and reusing old techniques, which he reveals by displaying the process of archaeology, of digging into the ground and discovering layers of time. It is a modern interpretation of

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[92] Curtis, p. 629.
[93] Levene et al., p. 4.

the past. The following quote by Ignasi de Sola-Morales expresses very well the experience of the building:

"*The delicacy of the Roman brickwork, the homogeneous, continuity of the plane of the wall in a simple arrangement, the solidity of its weighty mass: these are all images associated with the art of building in the Roman world and hence they possess immediate evocative power, through a chosen type of support, a contextualization produced not by the pictorial decoration, which is more commonly used, of the ornamental covering of Roman architecture, but by the modern interpretation which we can make today of its constructional forms*".[94]
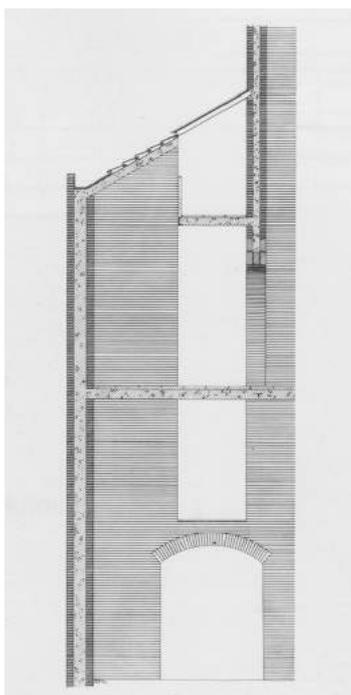
Moneo's drawing of the load bearing structure of the Roman Museum

[94] Sola-Morales, Ignasi de. "Support Surface", in: *El Croquis*, no. 20 (April 1985), pp. 125-127.

t: Aerial view of Mérida with the river Guadiana crossing the city
b: The Proserpina aqueduct constructed during the first century AD. Photograph: Carole Raddato

t: Birds eye view of the urban context

b: Entrance of the secret passage that connects the museum with the archaeological park across the road. Photograph from: Levene 1985
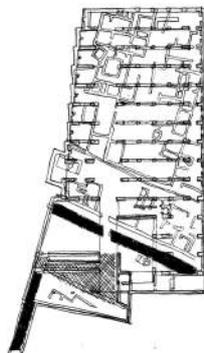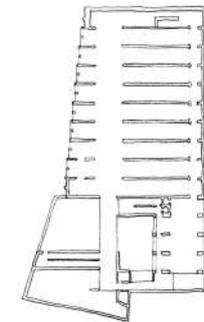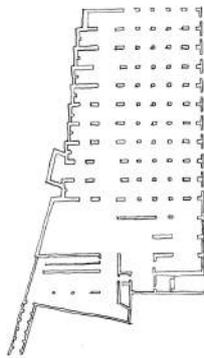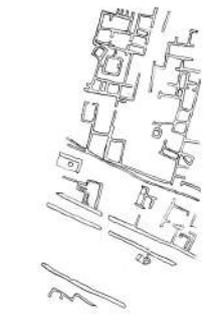
Layers of memory
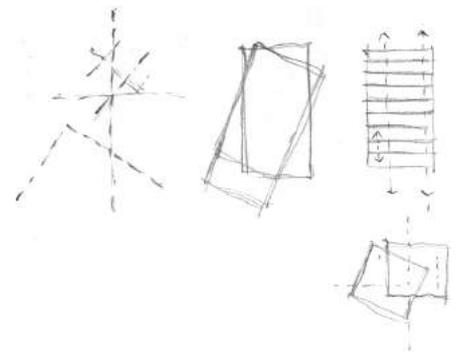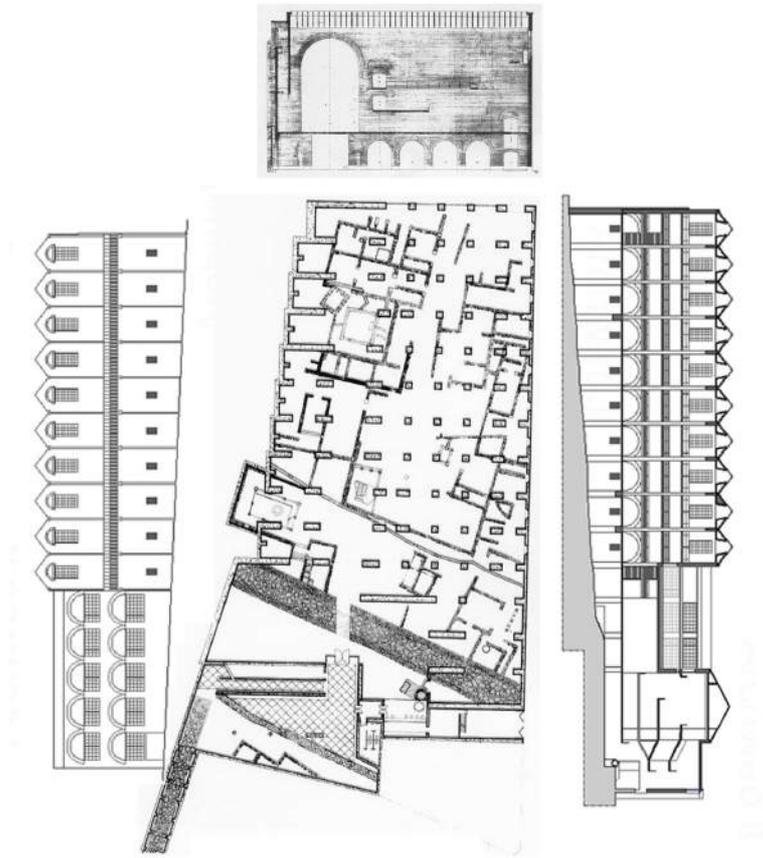
t: Plan, sections and elevation
m: Analytical sketches of the plan
b: Street view. Photographs from: Levene 1985
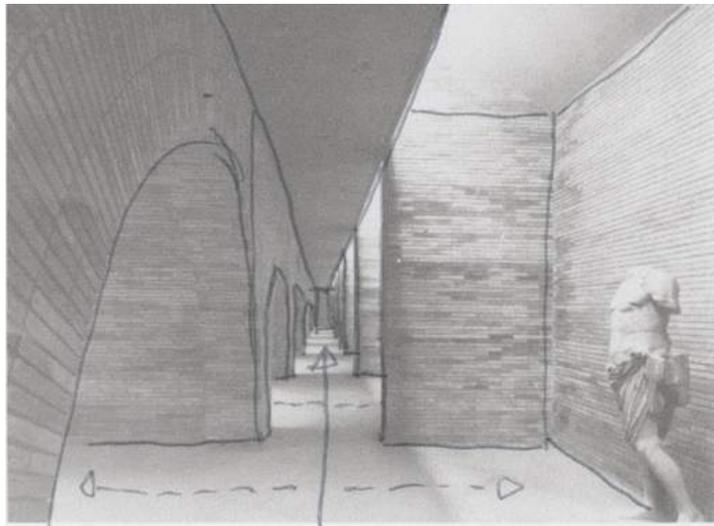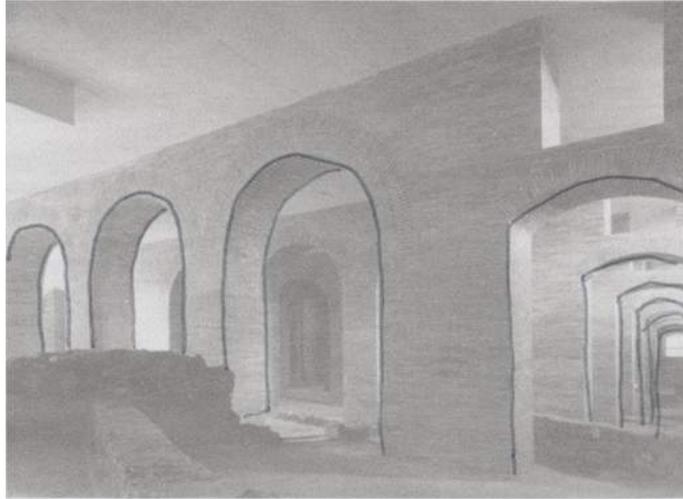
t: The typology of the Roman aqueduct is used for the parallel walls
b: The enfilade connects the many "rooms of memory" where Roman art is exposed
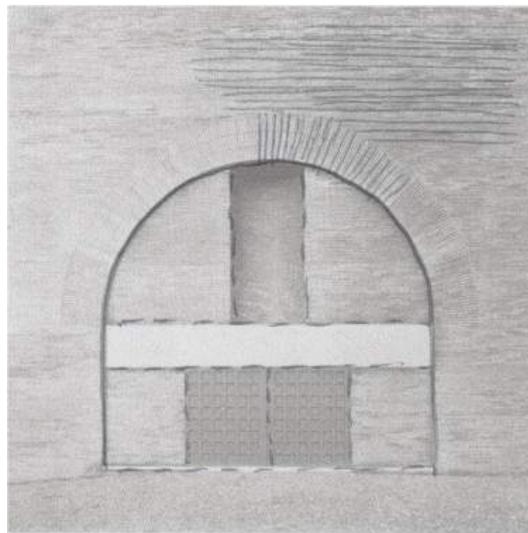
t: In the basement archaeological relics of the site are kept and loosely exposed
b: A niche in the façade that sits into a circle refers to classic Roman architecture
Underlying photographs from: Levene 1985
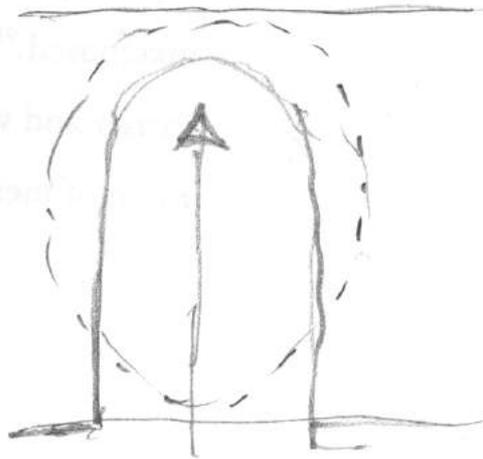
Sketch depicting the vast openness of the gallery space towards the sky becoming a vertical room
of memory

The vertical "room of memory". Photograph: Museum of Roman Art

IV. TRACES

We can refer to traces as "presences of the past", or "moments of the past". "Moments" are interesting as they provide an architectural experience. How can one catch these moments? By revealing, covering or disjunction?

In the previous chapter I indicated that memory and traces are related. <u>I would like to emphasize that the fourth observation of "traces" is used here to show the moment when the distinction between old and new become blurred.</u> The projects of Zumthor and Moneo almost literally create a layer of memory to which the new building is superimposed. In this chapter, old and new becomes juxtaposed[95] almost as if the trace creates a <u>patina</u>. The trace belongs to the carrier and *vice versa*. Many traces compressed together can make a layer or room of memory. Traces as such are more dispersed and fragmented.
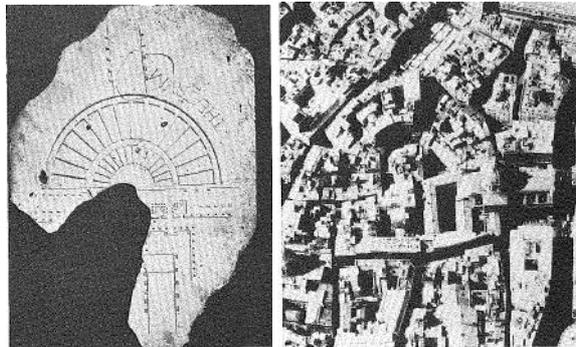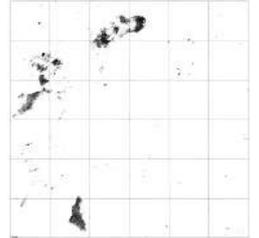
Theater of Pompey, Rome, 55 BC; today the persistent trace of the former theater still resonances
Photograph from: Lynch 1973

Rome showed us that traces remain in ruins or archaeological foundations. They make us aware of an encounter with the past. The archaeological city of Rome provides many examples of surviving traces. The image of the Theater of Pompey indicates a fragment of the marble map of Imperial Rome. Looking down on the same area of Rome today, we see the persistent trace of the former structure and so traces are something of al times, they live on.

Apart from the city, our landscape is full of traces. Many land artists choose to work with this idea, and deliberately created traces and by doing so, accelerating time. A Line Made by Walking by Richard Long presents a trace in the landscape. This formative piece was made on one of Long's journeys to St

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[95] Of course the juxtaposition and dispersion that I am talking about has to do with the resolution that we use to look at things.

Martin's from his home in Bristol. Between hitchhiking lifts, he stopped in a field in Wiltshire where he walked backwards and forwards until the flattened turf caught the sunlight and became visible as a line. He photographed and recorded his physical interventions within the landscape. The photograph of Long presents the trace as something both permanent and impermanent. It tells us of motion and relativity. <u>It made me aware of the fact that traces can arise as easy as they can vanish.</u>

Richard Long, A Line Made by Walking, 1967

In architecture, traces can be used as a starting point for the design. Architect Peter Eisenman has written about palimpsest, memory and traces. <u>He used the phenomenon of traces to describe his attention to the relationship between architecture and site.</u> His architecture is intended to free itself from traditional language and canons but at the same time is referring to history. In the Wexner center, the traces of the former layout of the previous building site are reused for the new plan. In his design for the competition of Parc de la Villette "the palimpsests holds the traces of the site's memories".[96]
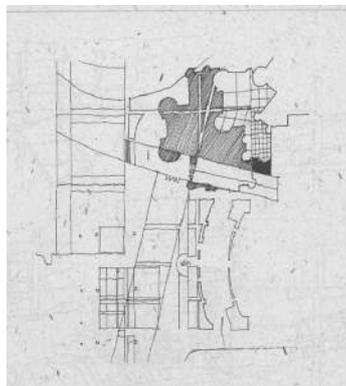
Peter Eisenman, Wexner Center, Ohio, 1983-89

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[96] Bédard, p. 15.

Bernard Tschumi won the competition for Parc de La Villette. He was aware of the idea of palimpsest and his design shows some similarities towards a palimpsestuous attitude, yet it is different from Eisenman's proposal. The method that was used is a more abstract mediation strategy. Tschumi wrote about the Parc de la Villette: "the palimpsest was not pursued, for its inevitably figurative or representational components were incompatible with the complexity of the programmatic, technical, and political constrains that could be foreseen".[97] In a slightly different manner Tschumi used the concept of vertical layering in which three elements - the follies, lines and surfaces - are superimposed. Hence, the concept of layering was used on an abstract level.
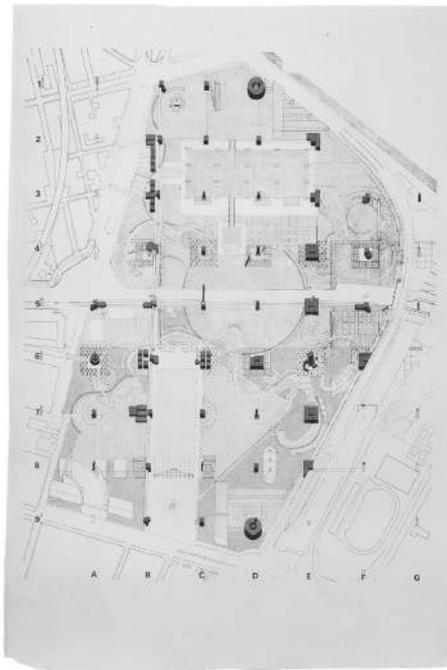
Bernard Tschumi, Parc de La Villette, 1982-98

For Tschumi the large scale of the project of La Villette made it difficult to work closely with the traces of the site. He then did not pursue the idea of palimpsest. His project - just as Eisenman's work - can therefore be seen more as a top-down method.

In order to be working with traces the small scale becomes very important, particularly the scale of materials and details, thus another "lens" is needed to

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[97] Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994. p. 193. In the beginning of the chapter Tschumi gives a definition of how a palimpsest can be used as a method when dealing within an urban situation, quote: "When confronted with an urbanistic program, an architect may either: (…) Deconstruct what exists by critically analyzing the historical layers that preceded it, even adding other layers derived from elsewhere - from other cities, other parks (a palimpsest)."

<u>comprehend this further.</u> Again, Peter Zumthor provides an interesting reading on how to deal with traces and materials through the imprint of one element on another. The burned trimmed surface of the concrete interior of the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel near Cologne was achieved by burning a wooden framework to create the black patina, evoking the quality of an emotional space.[98]
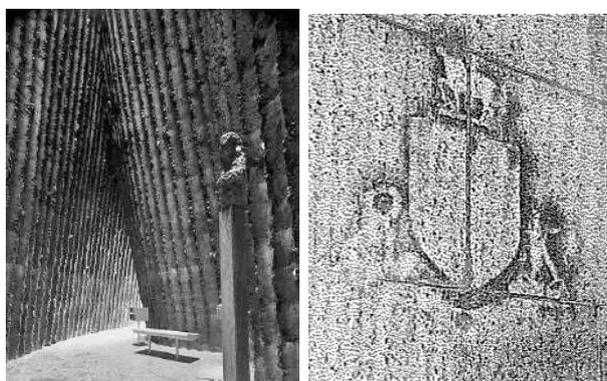
l: Peter Zumthor, Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Eifel, 2007. Photograph: Pietro Savorelli
r: A trace of a former emblem has left a mark on the façade of a building
Photograph from: Lynch 1973

The imprint of one element to another reminds one of traces on buildings. For instance a removed emblem that was part of a façade can become a motive of an imprint of something else. The imprint holds the memory of a past situation. Another way of looking at traces would be through erosion or weathering of materials. Weathering are traces of the influence of nature. The photographer Aaron Siskind has made a series of photographs of peeled off posters on walls within the city. The photographs show the depth of a thin element as several sheets, hereby revealing different tones, colors, textures and texts. The traces are the underlying layers that become present, exposing the substratum.

The idea of a peeled off surface is also present in the interior of the renovation for a studio house designed by British architectural office Caruso St John. The project reminds us of the sensory attitude towards materiality. The existing structure of the building was conceived "as found" and used as the first layer to which new things were added. In some parts of the building the old structure was left untouched in order to reveal its origin. The space is experienced through the ageing of materials.

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[98] In the Kolumba Museum, Zumthor used a similar idea. He burned the handcrafted grey bricks with charcoal to give them a warm hue. The method of burning creates an extra layer.

t: Aaron Siskind, Rome 55, 1963
b: Caruso St John, North London Studio House, London, 1993-1994
Photograph: Hélène Binet

Tracing can also be a way of coding. For the remodeling of the Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo Scarpa used the technique of tracing as a way to mark time within the rendering of the façade. The lines that were created on the façade, in the end, became an architectural gesture, almost as an ornament. In this respect, Richard Murphy stated:

> *"With a series of vertical and horizontal scored lines in the rendering Scarpa marked each day of work so that together with the rectangular windows the palace is being layered with a subtle thin and modern new white skin."*[99]

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[99] Murphy, Richard. "Lecture about the work of Carlo Scarpa", SSoA, 2014, from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_78_KQZiP8.

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Carlo Scarpa, Palazzo Abatellis, Palermo, 1953-57. Photograph: Richard Murphy

For Scarpa, tracing was also a drawing method often used during the design process. New and old drawings were overlaid in order to redrawn and adjust the previous situation, but also photographs were drawn into in order to communicate his design ideas.
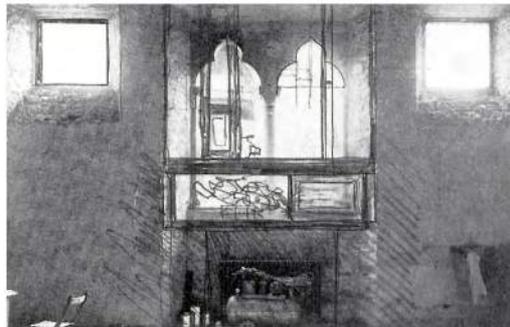
Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, 1953-65; trace drawing of photograph

In renovation and restoration projects working with past traces is evident. One should therefore always judge whether to use or not to use a certain trace. It order to work with traces we need a detailed "lens" to look through. <u>Working with traces can enhance a relationship to the site and can be used as an architectural gesture or expression. There are different methods of working with traces: peeling off, imprint and marking.</u> In order not to erase the past we need to preserve some traces. However, not all traces can stay on the foreground, therefore the notion of a palimpsestuous overlay becomes relevant.[100]

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[100] As David Lowenthal suggests: "let us retain all the traces and memories as far as we can, and let us go on adding to them." See the lecture: Lowenthal, David. "Conservation Past and Present", Harvard GSD, 2014, from: http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/#/media.

David Chipperfield

Neues Museum, Berlin, Germany

1997–2009

Dispersion of traces along the wall, portal and column. Photograph: Christian Richters

Traces

Historical overview of the Neues Museum:

1841 (June 19)	Construction of the Neues Museum began according to plans by <u>Friedrich August Stüler</u> (student of Schinkel)
1843 (April 6)	Ceremony of laying the cornerstone took place, the foundations, including the cellars, were already built
1843	Construction of the walls was completed
1844	The cornice and roof of the museum were completed
1845	Iron constructions, the construction of flat vaulted ceilings and brick-lining of the connecting gallery to the Altes Museum were completed
1846	The workers began to work on the building's facade, and also started cleaning the interiors, <u>building the marble stairway steps</u> and began work on the flooring
1847	Decoration was added to the interior
1848	The March revolution led to delays in the construction work, which was however not completely interrupted at any time
1855	<u>The museum was opened to the public</u>
1866	Work on parts of the interior decoration, in particular the wall frescos in the stairway, continued and were finished this year
1939	beginning of the Second World War, museum was closed
1940 – 1945	<u>Building was heavily bombed</u>
1997 – 2009	Rebuilding of the museum by David Chipperfield

Compared to the other five case studies in this book, this building is a much more recent one. <u>This becomes interesting as it means that the building does not have an archaeological value,</u> compared to the Museum of Roman Art for example, which suggest that the notion of palimpsest can also work with more contemporary projects.[101]

David Chipperfield learned from the historically attuned and site-specific work of architects such as Moneo and Siza. He developed his own style, characterized by a modern interpretation of classical architecture, one that is perhaps more in line with Mies van der Rohe or Swiss architect Peter Märkli. Although Dipperfield did not often work with existing buildings or renovation projects, the Neues Museum stands out and can be seen as a true palimpsestuous attitude of working with layers and traces of a former building. <u>Here the layers of old and new became much more dispersed, on one and the same ground:</u> "no imitation of an old décor is attempted, yet the spirit of the building has been preserved".[102] Resulting in a play to distinguish what is trace.
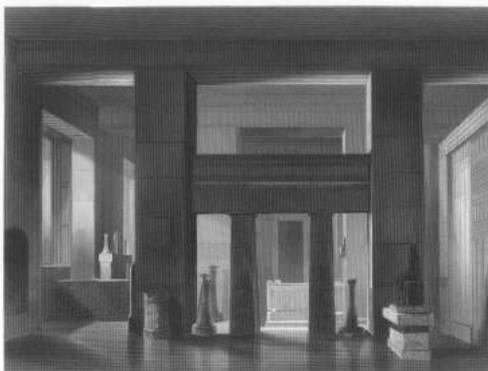
Friedrich August Stüler, Neues Museum, Berlin, 1850

The Neues Museum is situated in Berlin, to the North of the Altes Museum, adjacent to the Spree river. It forms part of the Museum Island complex. The museum was originally built between 1841 and 1855 by architect Friedrich August Stüler, a student of Karl Friedrich Schinkel, to house ancient Egyptian artifacts, a pre-historical collection, etchings and engravings. The building testifies to a neoclassical style. For the construction, new and industrialized techniques of iron construction were used.

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[101] Please note that the Neues Museum certainly had an monumental value.
[102] Jodidio, Philip. *Architecture Now! Museums*. Cologne: Taschen, 2010, p. 103.
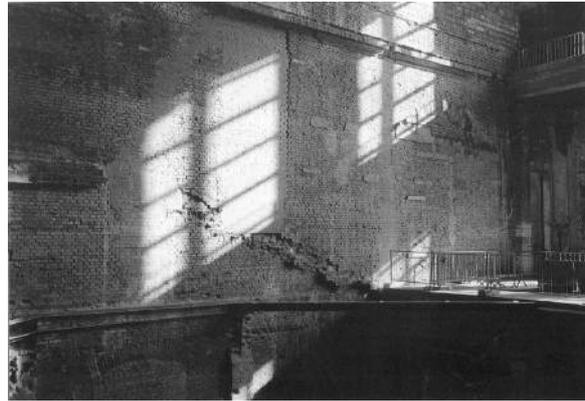
The Neues Museum, during construction
Photograph: David Chipperfield Architects

The renovation of the old museum by Chipperfield started in 1997. Since the Berlin bombing of the Second World War the building fell into a state of ruin. The following pictures below show the destroyed east wing years after the bombing and a photograph of the restored situation. About his intervention Chipperfield stated:

> "*The key aim of the project was to recomplete the original volume, and encompassed the repair and restoration of the parts that remained after the destruction of the Second World War. The original sequence of rooms was restored with new building sections that create continuity with the existing structure.*"[103]

l: East wing of the Neues Museum with a tree growing. Photograph: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
r: Renovated situation of the same wing. Photograph: Christian Richters

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[103] Ibid., p. 104.

The grand staircase, before and after the bombing and the renovated situation. Photographs: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and Jörg von Bruchhausen

The position of Chipperfield seems very much in line with the old building.[104] Instead of creating contrasts, new additions are made almost <u>inconspicuous</u>. The new staircase, for example, traces the original volume of the previous one, yet by introducing a new material of natural stone, it doesn't become a literal restoration.

View of the inner courtyard. Photograph: Christian Richters

On the other hand, Chipperfield reveals the many layers of the building; as an <u>archaeologist</u> he carefully <u>peeled off</u> parts of the building while adding, very gently, new ones. This is achieved by using recycled handmade bricks in other parts of the building and by the <u>discreet</u> introduction of new materials. The result is a very coherent project in which the old and new traces <u>dissolve</u>.
In the same way as the North London Studio House by Caruso St John, the atmosphere of weathered materials is taken as an architectural expression to blur the lines between old and new, echoing to its former state. It reflects the idea of the thin veneer of a new surface which then covers up or sits in contrast with the various degradations of time.

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[104] Chipperfield's attitude is similar to the one by Távora. There is a respect for the old structure, characteristic elements and spaces are restored. However where Távora's project is more focused on the relationship with the landscape, Chipperfield focused more on the interior.

The outcome is a "patina" within the interior that we normally see on the exterior of buildings. The patina is created by merging, as it were, the layers of old and new and leaving burned marks and peeled off plaster and stone as is. Traces of gun bullets are preserved, this brings up an ethical question of how the architect deals with traces of war. Chipperfield chooses not to hide them but instead renders the "scars of war" permanently, as if they were ornaments.

Traces of bullet holes are kept within parts of the building
Photograph: António Fragoeiro

Part of the east and west façade, that Chipperfield had to rebuild, shows a mimicking effect of the old façade. The brick and its color is almost the same. However, small details such as the stepped vertical alignment make us aware that it is new.

West façade mimicking the old. Photograph: Christian Richters

In the Neues Museum the traces of past and present become more diffuse. Chipperfield chooses to use the war traces and its inherent aspect of eroded materials as an architectural expression and patina for the interior, thereby showing the many layers and surfaces of the building.

111
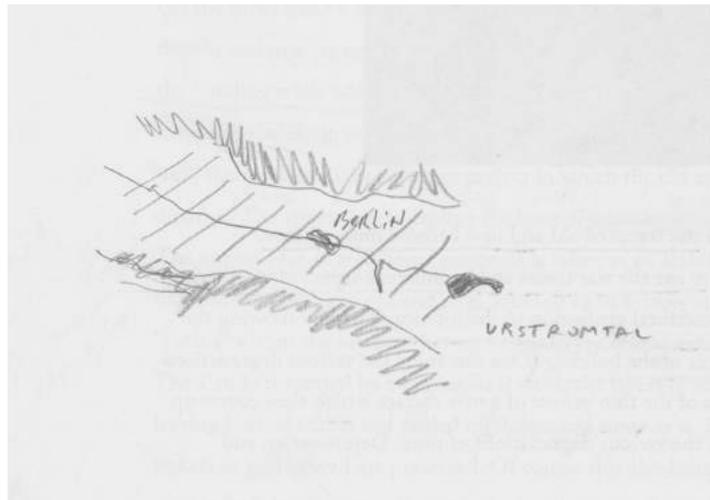
t: Aerial view of Berlin with the river Spree and the Museum Island marked
b: Sketch of the Urstromtal; the valley in which Berlin is situated
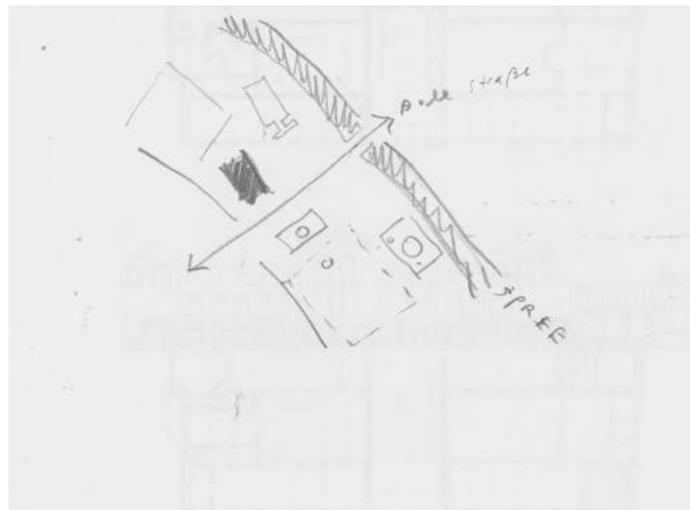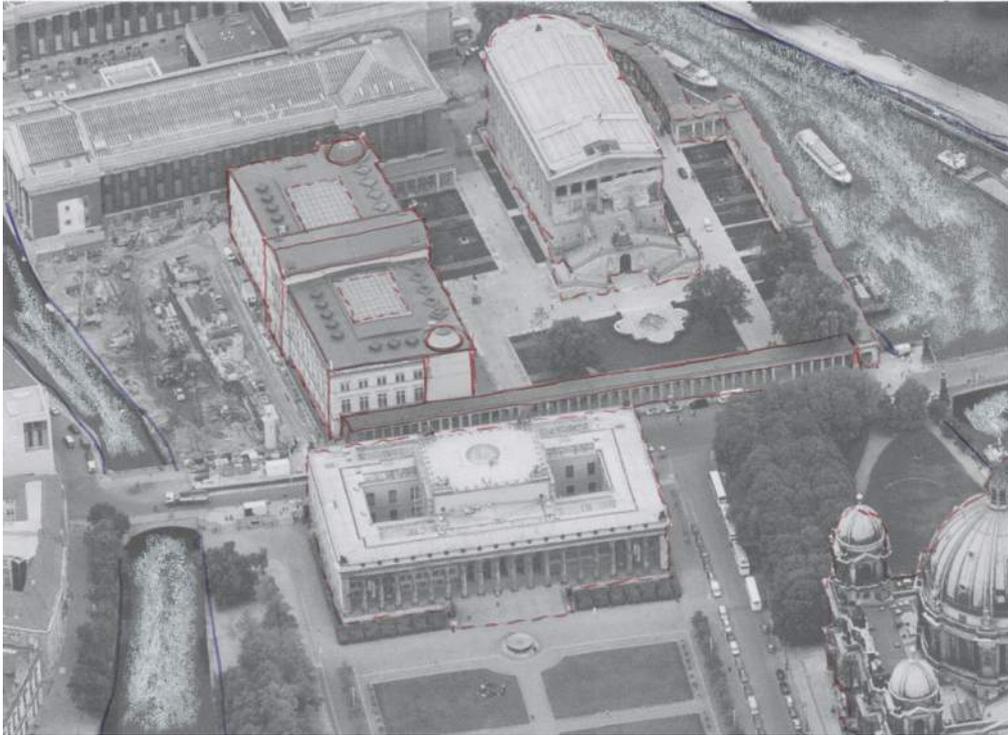
t: Birds eye view of a fragment of the museum island with the Berliner Dom, Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Alte National Gallery and the Islamic Museum
b: Sketch of the Museum Island showing the road, river and the buildings
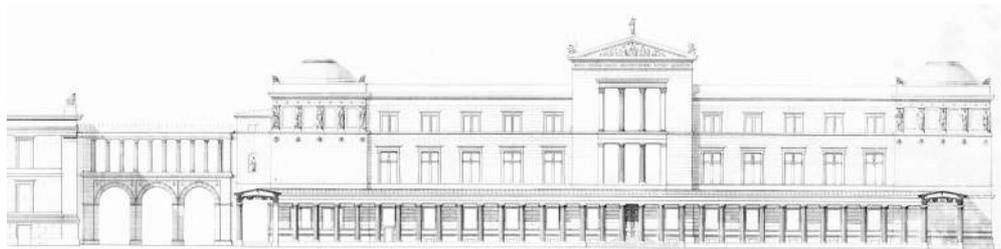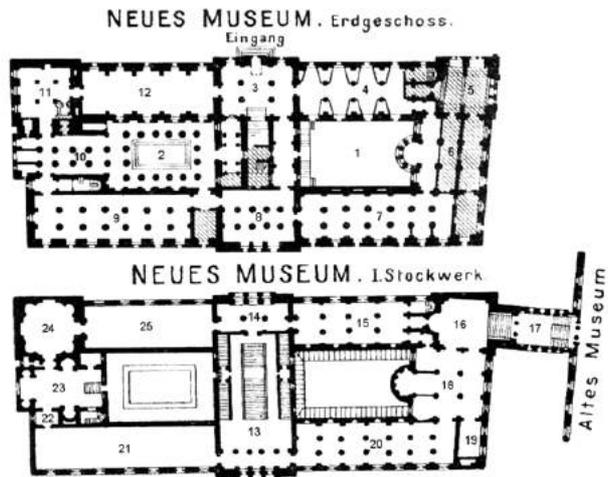
t: Friedrich August Stüler, original plan of the Neues Museum
b: Friedrich August Stüler, original façade of the Neues Museum
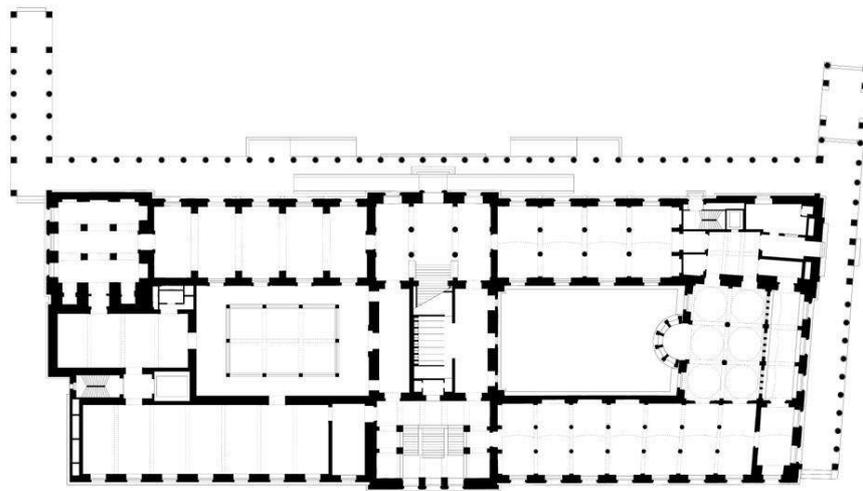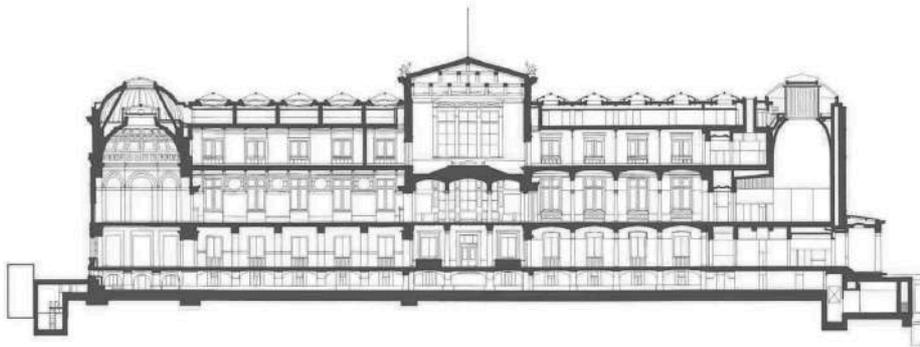
t: David Chipperfield, longitudinal section of the Neues Museum
b: David Chipperfield, ground floor plan of the Neues Museum

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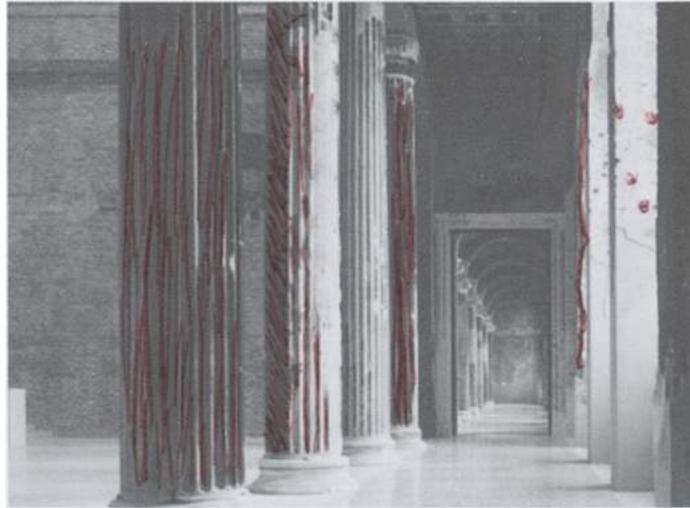
t: Fire marks are left untreated on the columns along with gun bullets and creates a patina

b: Former windows are closed due to programmatic implications, remains of peeled off surfaces suggest that the brick wall had been covered in the past
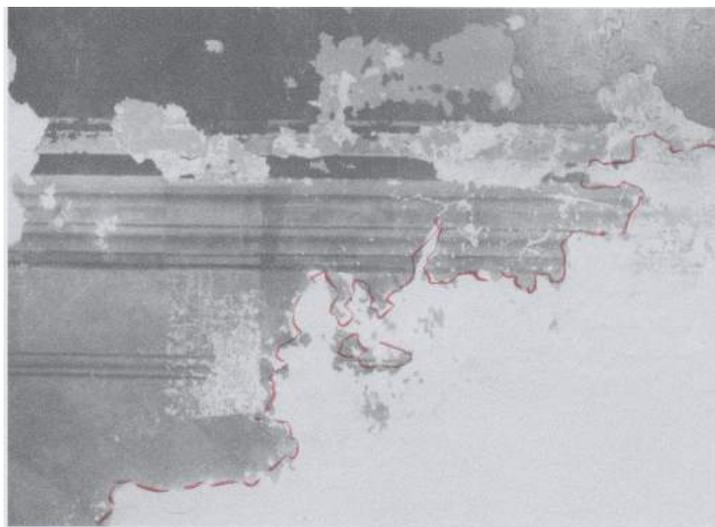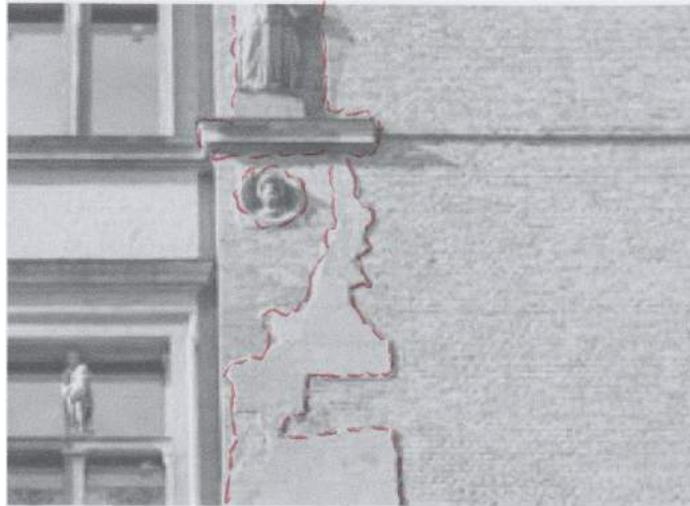
t: The idea of peeled off surfaces is also used on the exterior of the building, creating an almost ornamental expression
b: The traces of deteriorated paint is left untreated and becomes a pattern
Underlying photographs: David Chipperfield Architects
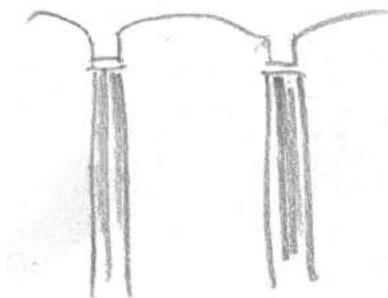
t: The new situation clearly resonances to the former state. The characteristic columns and arches
beams are restored. Photograph: Christian Richters
b: Sketch showing the restored element of the column and beam
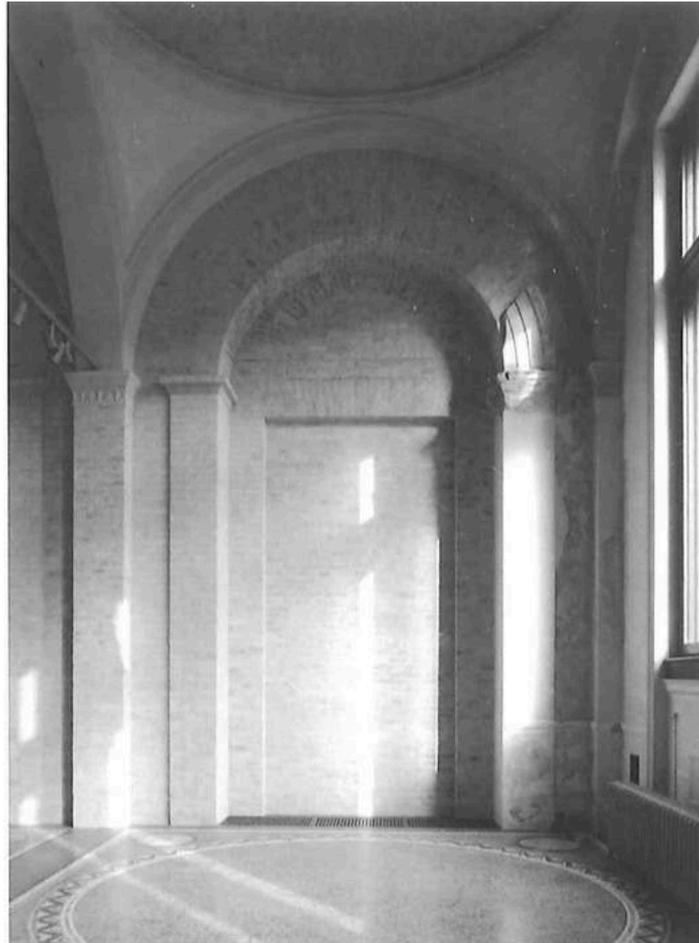
The niche, floor and arched ceiling are restored to its former state
Photograph: Christian Richters

V. MATERIALITY

"Time itself is a material"

- Sverre Fehn, 1997

When one debates about palimpsest, the notion of materiality becomes imperative. It was due to the material specifications of parchment to which text was inscribed that kept its memory over time. Concerning materials, one should consider the <u>quality of natural materials that age well</u> (wood, weathered steel, granite, stone, brick), the <u>juxtaposition</u> of different materials, the <u>manipulation</u> of a material and <u>traditional construction techniques</u>. Craftsmanship, nature, color and atmosphere are also very important aspects.
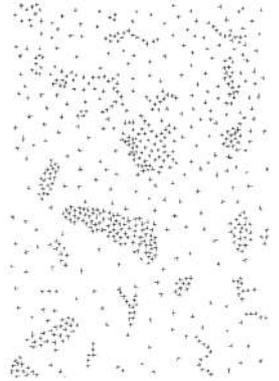
I am interested in materials that provide a <u>layering</u> or <u>depth</u>. For instance materials that have a porosity, roughness, color nuances, soberness and so on. The concept of layering is best portrayed in the Dutch translation "gelaagdheid". Layers in architecture can both be seen from its physical and immaterial[105] perspective. In the book *Gelaagdheid en poezie in de architectuur* Hans Cornelissen indicates that poetry can contain layering. Poems have their lines, and architecture has its strategies and instruments.[106] Robert Smithson's poem A Heap of Language is a perfect example of a stratified text. In his drawing the words become almost materialized, like a small building stone.
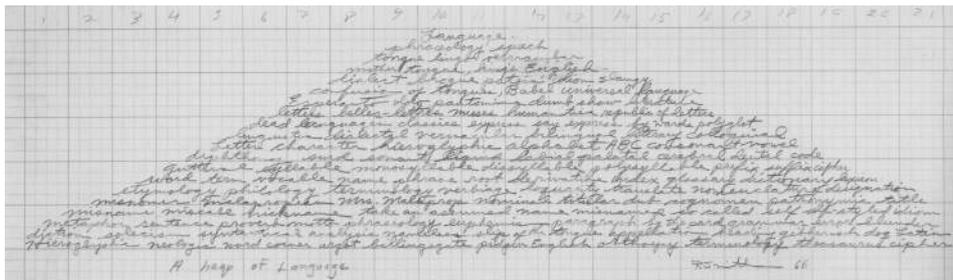
Robert Smithson, A Heap of Language, 1966

In music the aspect of layers is on hand. The music of Iannis Xenakis is very palimpsestuous as it is layered, dense, complex and time-related. Multiple

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[105] For example: "layers of meaning". It also means that elements are seen as fragments that contribute to the whole of the project, giving them more meaning and relevance. Just as the palimpsest parchment was layered of successive texts that later preserved a part of history.
[106] Cornelissen, Hans. *Poezie en gelaagdheid in architectuur*. Delft: Delft University Press, 2000, p. 9.

instruments, tones and rhythms collide into a chaotic structure. Music has the capacity to go directly to your soul and gets to you without words. Materials can have the same effect and thus they should be regarded as an <u>essential aspect of architecture</u>.

Iannis Xenakis, music score Palimpsest, 1979

As mentioned previously, one can read a palimpsest on various scale levels. The one that is considerably important is the <u>scale of the detail</u>. In fact, on this level everything comes together. Regarding materiality, detailing is fundamental in order to experience spaces. Materials can speak, bear traces, indicate changes in time and trigger our memory.

The work of Caruso St John is characterized by a strong presence of materiality. The renovation project for a private house in Isle of Wight speaks for a serene atmosphere. The existing barn sits among a group of farm buildings located in a small valley. The transformation of the barn into a house is done as simple as possible. The character of the barn is retained and only a few new openings in the stone wall are made together with a wooden structure - "as if it were a large table standing between the lime-washed stone walls"[107] - that creates a second floor in the house. The power of the materiality lies in the combination of different materials next to each other: stone against wood, glass against wood and stone against steel. The juxtaposition of materials triggers a positive <u>physical reaction</u>.

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[107] From project description, see: www.carusostjohn.com.

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Caruso St John, private house, Isle of Wight, 1992. Photographs: Caruso St John
l: Aerial view, r: Interior of the renovated house

In another project, by Caruso St John, for a square in the center of Kalmar in Sweden, the quality of materials again is expressed. As mentioned by the architects: "the project is intended to be a model of imaginative renovation in a situation of national historic significance".[108] For the project old roads and pavements had to be removed and the old surface of granite stones that was first used in the square were re-established. The square is a collage of different stones, colors, and textures, almost like an assemblage of hatches and tones.

Caruso St John, Stortorget, Kalmar, 1999-2003. Photograph: Hélène Binet

A major inspiration to Caruso St John was the Swedish architect Sigurd Lewerentz. In an article named *Sigurd Lewerentz: materiality as the source of form* Adam Caruso links the aspect of materials to its overall form. The work of Lewerentz is exemplary of the architect as master builder in the twentieth century. Lewerentz spent approximately three days a week on the construction site. Most details were invented here together with the craftsmen.[109] Lewerentz's attitude is closely linked to the idea of the architect as a craftsman, one who works on all scales, from designing to building.

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Cornelissen, p. 152.

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Sigurd Lewerentz, laying bricks in Klippan. Photograph: St. Petri Church

When working with the notion of materiality, it means a certain involvement is needed, not only in the design process but also in the process of making. This suggests exploring different building techniques and (re)using traditional techniques for example. The concept of palimpsest makes us aware of the choice of using traditional materials and reinterpreting them in a contemporary way. Lewerentz's brick architecture has shown us how a "forgotten" material can be extremely contemporary and expressive.
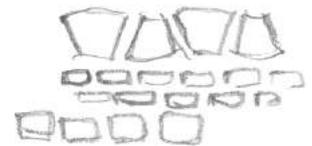
l: Sigurd Lewerentz, St. Mark Church, Stockholm, 1956-63. Photograph: Josep Maria Torra
r: Sketch of a fragment of the façade depicting various types of stones

Another aspect concerning materiality, is the influence of light. A play with light can also create an extra layer such as in the case of the stone brick wall of the St. Mark Church by Lewerentz. The rough and sober texture of the wall, when hit by light, remind us of traditional craftsmanship and the sensory aspects of materiality.

Sigurd Lewerentz, stone wall hit by light in the St. Mark Church. Photograph: Hélène Binet

Palimpestuous through materiality in architecture can imply the (re)use of traditional building methods and/or local and bare materials. The architecture of Rudolf Schwarz is exemplary to this. The interior of the St. Albrecht church in Leversbach is traditional yet modern. The wooden columns and roof structure contrast with the walls made of reused stones. Light breaks through in the back of the space, the whole setting creates a moment of timelessness in which the person becomes the center of this micro cosmos. The wooden structure is offset from the stone wall and allows for the later to breath. It reflects the reciprocal phenomena of one material needing another material, in this case wood and stone.
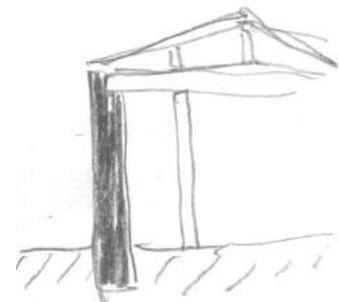
l: Rudolf Schwarz, St. Albrecht, Leversbach, 1931-32. Photograph from: Strohl 1997
r: Sketch of the stone wall and the separate wooden structure

Material is always bonded to context. Within a certain landscape there are colors, tones and textures that are representative to the site. Using local materials in combination with the existing landscape can provide a coherent and serene whole. To establish an architecture that is strongly embedded in its surroundings, Souto de Moura worked mainly with local granite stones, quoting the character of the Portuguese landscape.

Eduardo Souto de Moura, site of the House Porto Manso, Baião, 1990-93
Photograph: Thom Andersen

In the project for the Thermal Baths in Vals, Peter Zumthor used local bricks from a quarry nearby. The horizontal stones refer to the mountain landscape of the Swiss Alpes. The stone wall generate a layered structure, almost like the stratification of mountains, while at the same time the stones relate to the element of water.

Peter Zumthor, Thermal Baths, Vals, 1996. Photograph: Hélène Binet

To conclude, the body of architecture is experienced through its materials. Architecture is not primarily about form. It is about site, construction and materials. What surrounds a human in a space, is materials. There is a relationship between the material architectural body and our physical body. Materials creates atmosphere. Let them speak by keeping them "naked". Through its materials, architecture can grow, like nature.

Rudolf Schwarz

St. Annakirche, Düren, Germany

1951–56
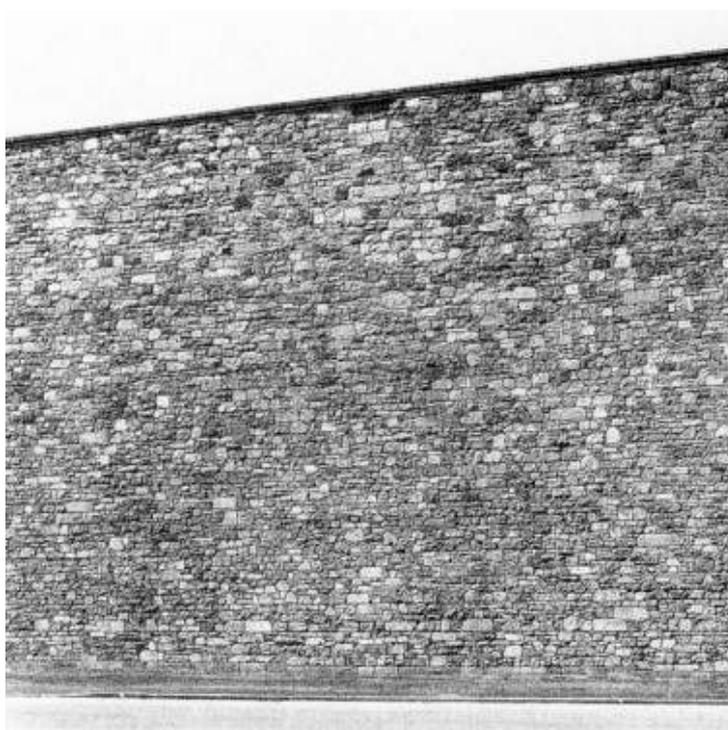
Wall made of rubble from the ruin of the previous church. Photograph: Artur Pfau

Materiality

Historical overview of Düren and the St. Annakirche:

Roman era	Celts inhabited the area and first called the city Durum (meaning castle). Later Romans invaded the town and Durum became a supply area for the rapid growing Roman city of Cologne
5th century	Fall of the Roman empire, the Franks settled in Düren. <u>Their castle was built where the St. Annakirche is located today</u>
13th century	Düren obtained city rights and construction of the city walls started (12 towers and 5 gates)
15th century	Drapery and metal industry grew
1505	Former church Saint Martin was renamed to church of Saint Anna (St. Annakirche)
1506	<u>Düren became the main place of pilgrimage for Saint Anna when Pope Julius II declared that the relics should be kept there</u>
17th century	Paper industry grew, mainly thanks to the "soft" water of the Rur river
1642	Düren was involved in the Thirty Years War and was largely destroyed
1648	End of the Thirty Years War
1679	Due to various attacks, the city Düren was partly destroyed again
1755	A series of earthquakes occurred around the area of Düren and Aachen
1794	The city was occupied by French revolution troops
1900	Düren became one of Germany's richest cities
1944	Battle for Hürtgenwald took place on Düren district area
1944 (Nov. 16)	<u>Düren was almost completely destroyed by Allied air bombings</u>
1951	Start construction St. Annakirche by Rudolf Schwarz
1956	St. Annakirche was finished

The German architect Rudolf Schwarz presented a fundamental position on creating emotional spaces by a serene use of materials. His architecture holds the quality that it seems to have been there for many years. The quality that weathering or ageing can add to a building is something that in the projects of Schwarz is present from the start. This is because he worked with ideas of context, nuances, gradients, light, textures and nature. Apart from that, his sensitive architecture is sincere. The spaces he creates hold an affection to landscape and nature, due to the making of an "underworld" and the use of earth-like materials.
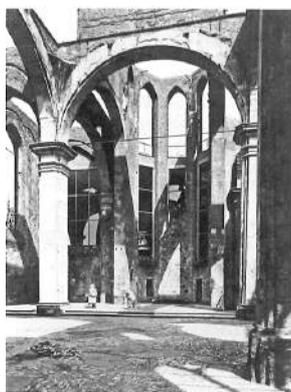
Rudolf Schwarz, ruin of St. Alban, Cologne, 1949-55
Photograph from: Schwarz 1960

Throughout the work of Rudolf Schwarz there is an evident trace of history. In 1929 he wrote the essay *Wegweisung der Technik* in which he introduces a possible attitude towards technical inventions that is different from the common modernistic faith of the same period concerning the idea of progress.[110] In this regard, Christoph Grafe writes the following about Schwarz's essay:

> "*He does not reject technology but embraces the new possibilities with enthusiasm. He feels that the developments resulting from technological innovations need some control, linking them to a historically rooted and philosophically motivated significance.*"[111]

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[110] Schwarz, Rudolf. *Wegweisung der Technik* (1929). Cologne: Walther König, 2008. This text was of great influence to Mies van der Rohe who called it "a breaking point in my development". Schwarz was one of Mies teachers, later Mies wrote the introduction for the English translation of his book Vom Bau der Kirche. After the death of Schwarz Mies wrote an "in memoriam" on the "thinking architect".
[111] Grafe, Christoph. "Kale waarheid: Fysieke ervaring en essentie in de architectuur van Rudolf Schwarz", in: *Oase*, no. 45/46 (January 1997), pp. 2-27.

Schwarz's affirmation for history comes forward in the many renovation and restoration projects he did. Since he built a huge amount of churches after the destruction of many German cities after the Second World War, the ruin is a returning element in his *oeuvre*. The context of the city is something Schwarz often worked with. He saw the city as an <u>organic creature</u> - one that grows and moves - and stressed the relevance of history in the city: "Jede Stadt hat eine andere Geschichte und eine andere Wuchsform. Städtebau ist keine Sache der Wissenschaft, sondern der Geschichte".[112]
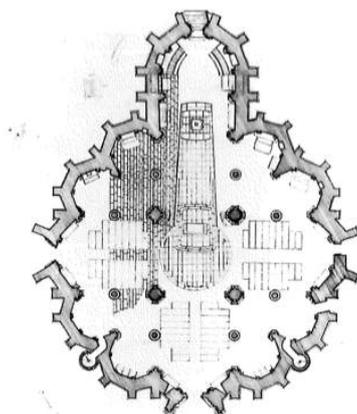
Rudolf Schwarz, Liebfrauenkirche, Trier, 1950-53

Schwarz was also an architect who tried to engage in a dialogue with the surroundings, not only the architectural form or the positioning of the building were tools to do this, <u>but more likely materiality was the source to initiate a conversation with the context</u>. The no-nonsense and <u>elementary</u> aesthetic of the material use, finds its origin probably in the German landscape. In a text called *Von der Bebauung der Erde* from 1949, Schwarz describes the small village of Lothringen that inspired him very much, and wrote:

> "*Das Lothringer Land ist sanft und schön. In unendlichem Gleichklang schwingen seine milden Höhenzüge, und in ihre Buchten schmiegen sich die Dörfer wie hellrote Hügel. Mit ganz schmalen zweistöckigen Stirnen drängen sich die Häuser um einen riesigen Platz, in dem die Menschen wie in einem gemainsamen Werkraum ihre Arbeit verrichten.*"[113]

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[112] Dyroff, Hans-Dieter and Tümena, Paul. *Rudolf Schwarz*. Düsseldorf: Akad. D. architektenkammer Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1981, p. 68.
[113] Ibid., p. 71.

Rudolf Schwarz, Lothringen, from *Der Bebauung der Erde*, 1949. Photograph: Emill Steffann

His design for the St. Annakirche in Düren, constructed from 1951 till 1956, is an interesting precedent of materiality. The commission came because the city of Düren was heavily bombed by the end of the Second World War. Of the existing St. Annakirche only a ruin remained. Nowadays the town lies on the edge of a landscape that is strongly transformed by brown coal mining activities.

l: Rudolf Schwarz, St. Annakirche, Düren, 1951-56; postcard from 1962 showing the L-shaped volume. Photograph: Düren Rheinland
r: Postcard of the former St. Annakirche, Düren, 1915. Photograph: Düren Rheinland

Instead of reusing the existing structure of the church and to extent it with a new part, he proposed to built an entirely new church out of the rubble of the destroyed one. Schwarz rearranged the building stones into a serene whole of the new building, conveying a precision in detail devoted to the overall gesture.[114] The building has a rough character due to the mix of stones in color nuances, size and shape. Later when the church was completed, a tower was added. The L-shape organization of the church is a gesture that comes back in other projects by Schwarz - also in the work of Scarpa, Lewerentz and others - and is a very powerful architectural motive. The L-shape entails a feeling of enclosure, of an engulfing arm. Schwarz then also introduced this gesture in the section of the

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[114] Grafe, p. 21.

St. Annakirche. Furthermore, the slight rotation in the orientation of the building towards the main direction of the city plan puts the building a bit in the background.
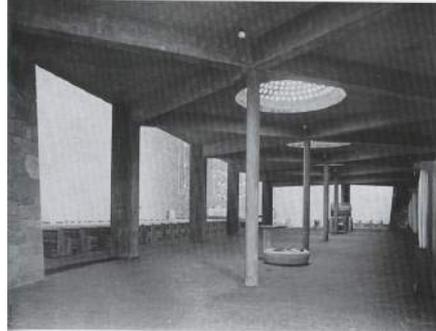
t: Interior of the St. Annakirche depicting the atmosphere of an underworld
Photograph: Arthur Pfau
b: The circular skylights enhance the feeling of being in a dark underworld

<u>For Rudolf Schwarz materializing space is like a continuity of history and nature. He creates a sort of underworld reflecting to the ruin and nature.</u> Materials were also a way to relate to contemplation, to relate to the body and mind of the human being. The St. Annakirche is stripped to almost its <u>bare</u> and <u>fundamental</u> forms.
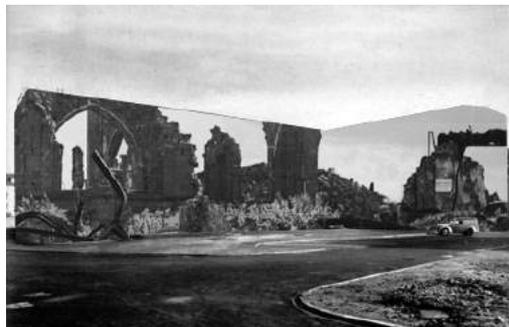
Collage showing the reflection of the ruin of the old church within the structure of the new

t: Aerial view of the landscape representing Düren along the river Rur and the Laubwald to the
south west
b: Photograph of the destroyed city of Düren after the bombing of the Second World War
Photograph: Geschichtswerkstatt Düren
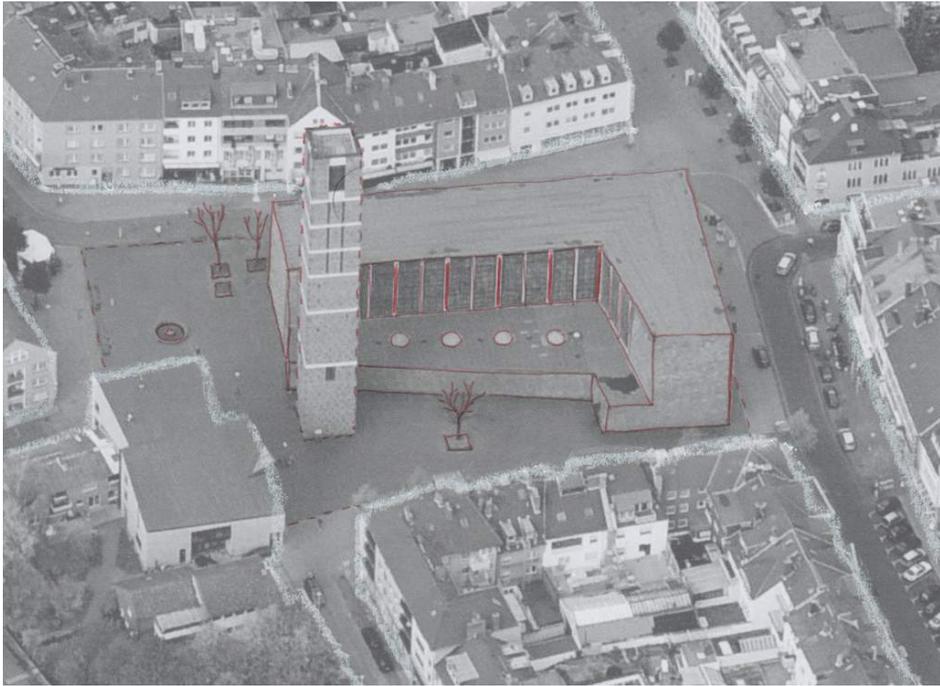
t: Birds eye view of St. Annakirche within the urban context
b: Aerial view of the urban context with a sketch of the rotated angle of the St. Annakirche
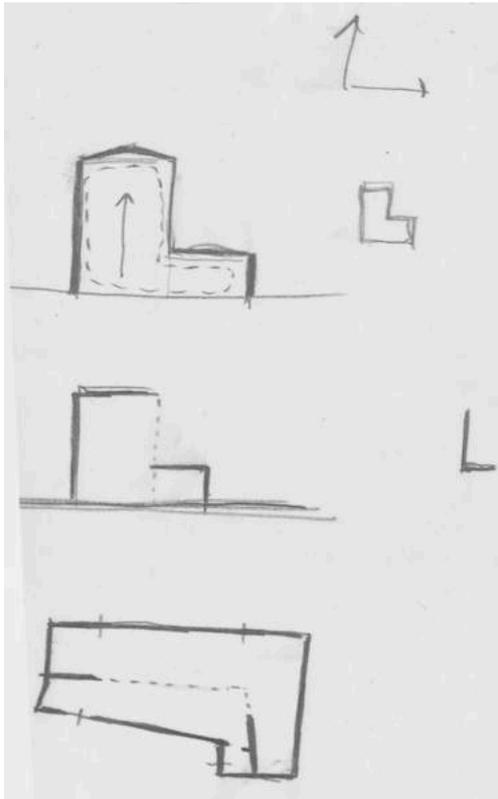
Sketches showing the engulfing gesture of the L-shape in both plan as section
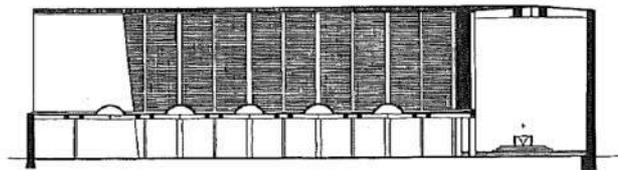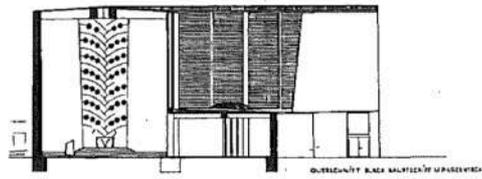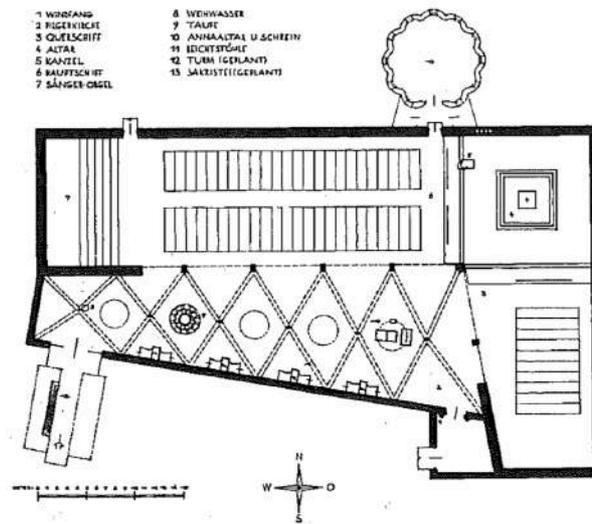
t: Cross section, longitudinal section and plan
b: Reused elements of the former church. Photographs: St. Annakirche
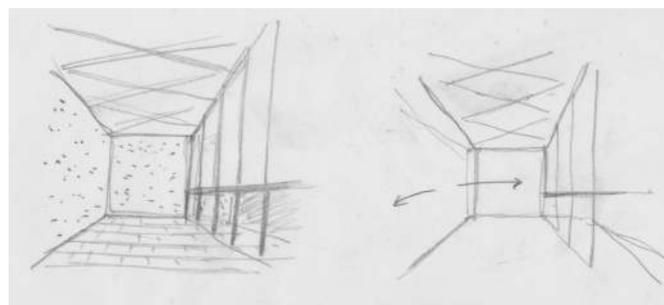
t: Main space of the church and its nave. Photograph: Artur Pfau
b: Sketch of the different use of materials that are juxtaposed and constitute a serene whole: floor
(tiles), wall (stone), roof (concrete), screen (glass) and colonnade (concrete)
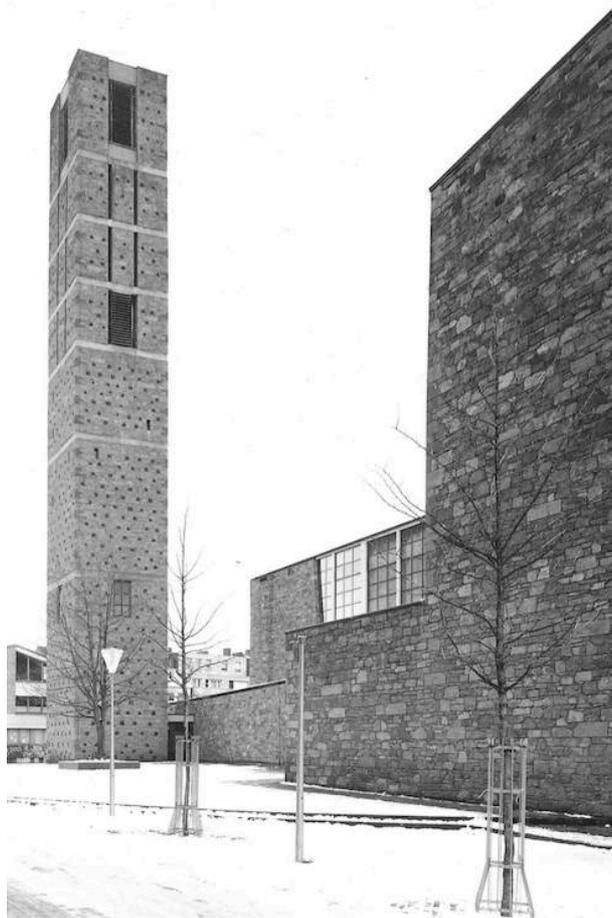
t: The tower was added later and still functions as an orientation point within the city
Photograph from: Strohl, 1997
b: Where the interior of the building is more oriented inwards, the slim and tall tower points to
the sky
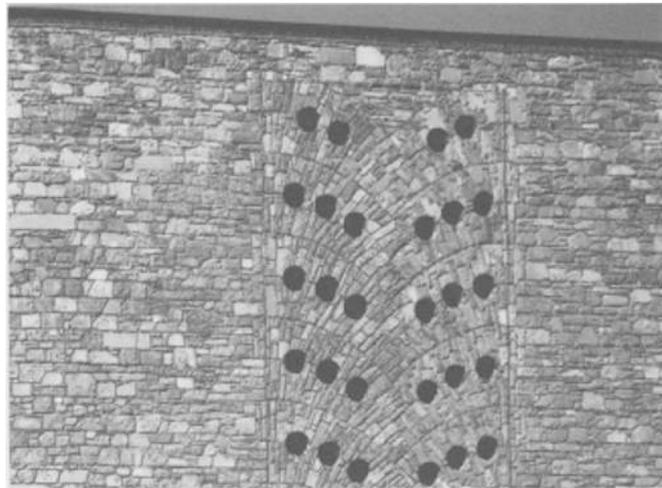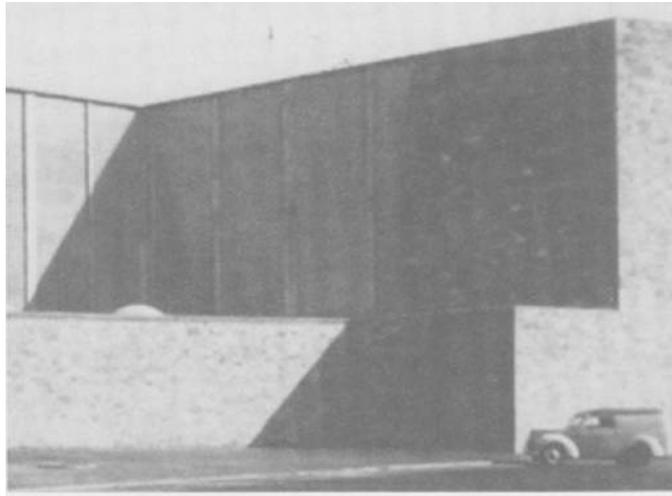
t: Sharp shadow lines enhance the sculptural body of the volume and strengthens the idea of the
mass as a sculptural piece of stone
b: Circular holes create a weaving pattern and allow for light to enter the chapel
Photographs: Artur Pfau

t: The dark tiles evoke a feeling of being underneath the ground and add to the feeling of being in
an inner world
b: The slightly raised chapel with its stairs generate the effect of a cascade
Photographs: Menno Homan

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VI. DIALOGUE

The final chapter of this book, my sixth observation, is on "dialogue". One could say that all projects discussed in this book - so far - engage in some dialogue (or conversation) with their context and their past, present and future. However, there are certain projects in which the idea of dialogue is extremely well articulated. A few of those projects will be discussed in this chapter.

Dialogue in architecture is most felt in the scale of the detail. Dialogue is in essence about the moment when two - or more - elements meet. One could also say: the moment when two or more time periods - old and new for example - come together. It is this moment that is somehow celebrated and has a reciprocal affinity - likewise to the successive texts of palimpsest that need each other.

The question asked in this chapter is how to articulate the moment of dialogue? There are different kinds of ways on how to deal with this: by leaving a gap in between, by touching, by cutting or excavating into another element.
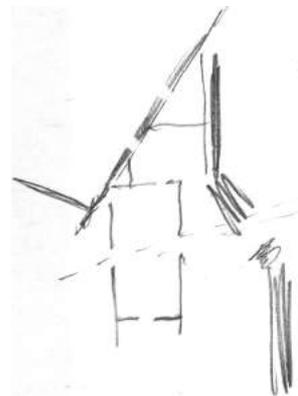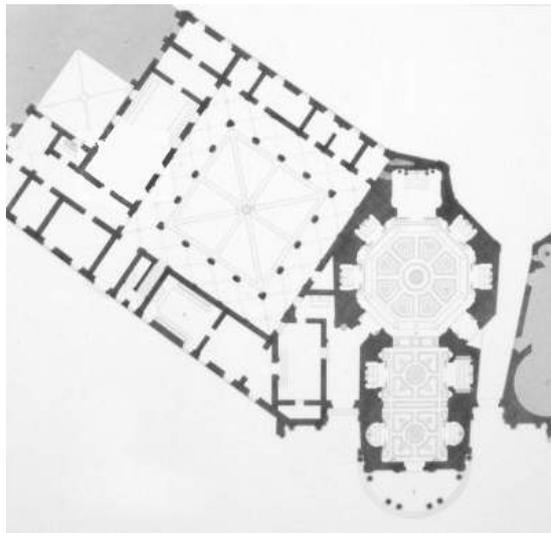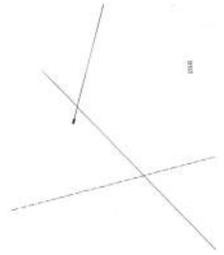
l: Santa Maria della Pace, Rome, first structure c. 1482
r: Sketch of the decompression zone between church and cloister (highlighted in grey)

The Italian renaissance architect Donato Bramante is perhaps one of the greatest masters in materializing dialogue. In the Santa Maria della Pace we can see dialogue on several scale levels. It is a sort of prosthesis architecture that has developed over the course of many years. The current building as it is still there was built on the foundations of the pre-existing church of Sant'Andrea de

Aquarizariis in 1482.[115] The rectangular addition of the cloister designed by Donato Bramante, was added to the old church around 1500. Bramante's addition is clearly new, it has another language, a different angle and organization, yet the two are in balance. It is as if they both need each other. Essentially the addition of Bramante is about touching and not touching. The rotation of the small room in the same direction as the church creates a transitional moment, a decompression zone between church and cloister.

l: Sverre Fehn, Hedmark Museum, Hamar, 1967-79. Photograph from: Postiglione 1997
r: Sverre Fehn, concept of the container and the contained, 1973

A recent architect who has worked frequently with the idea of dialogue is Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn. To some, Sverre Fehn has been described as a rougher version of Carlo Scarpa because of his considerable attention to detail and materials. The design of the Hedmark Museum in Hamar, completed in 1973, shows a radical position *vis-à-vis* the old ruin. Fehn's critical attitude towards conservation and preservation is expressed is the following statement:

> "*The religion of the present day is the denial of death. So, objects are not allowed to die either, but are preserved.*"[116]

In the renovation for the museum, Fehn is telling in this respect. He explored the relationship between "container" and "contained", the historic ruin is left untreated, as it is, to reveal a "story of change" without restoring the old

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[115] The author of the initial design is unknown, though Baccio Pontelli has been named. From 1656 to 1667 the edifice was restored by Pietro da Cortuna, who added the Baroque façade that almost simulates a theatrical set. In the interior of the building, Carlo Maferno worked on the high altar, Raphael on a fresco and Baldassare Peruzzi on a Renaissance fresco.
[116] Postiglione, Gennaro and Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Sverre Fehn: Works, Projects, Writings, 1949-1996*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, p. 246.

structures.[117] The walls are not reconstructed but merely maintained. He designs a long concrete passage that runs through the old building. This gesture is imagined by a sketch of a person sitting inside a vessel. His intervention is meant to show remains of the historic ruin "as found", without any form of mystification. The dialogue is thus in the gap that he creates between the old and the new. This is further expressed in the contrast of materials such as timber against concrete and stone and the direct placement of glass on the old stone wall. The detail of directly placing glass on stone is also done in a church in Klippan by Lewerentz where the windows appear to be attached on the outside of the façade, as "paintings on a wall" that reflect the surroundings.[118] The windows have a very thin frame that is connected on the masonry by four steel consoles.
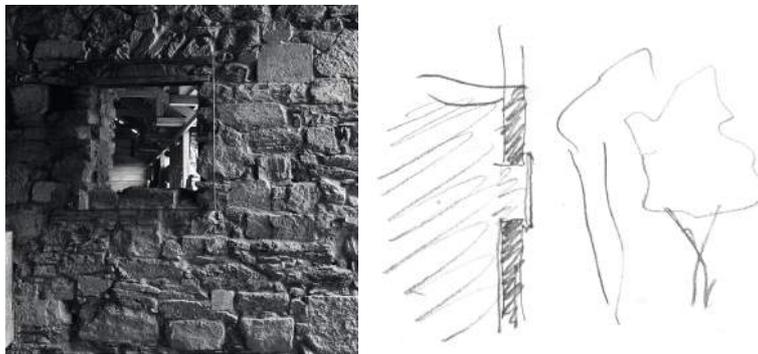
l: Window detail of the Hedmark Museum. Photograph: Hélène Binet
r: Sketch of the window detail of Lewerentz's St. Peter Church

The idea of the gap creates a desirable tension between two or more elements. This gesture of not touching also creates a sort of delay and therefore emphasizes the notion of time. The gap which in fact is immaterial (air), establishes layers. It allows for things to breath and creates a gesture of making something loose from something else. In the case of the Smithsons the step as a massive stone provides a "welcoming open hand" and a celebrated moment of entering the door. In the project for a small house by FNP Architekten, a separate structure is placed amidst the walls of an eighteenth century ruin of an abandoned pigsty. It is also an example of a paradoxical change of function.

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[117] Goffi, p. 165.
[118] Cornelissen, p. 150.

t: Detail of the entering step in the Upper Lawn Pavilion
Photograph: seier+seier
b: FNP Architekten, Pigsty, near Stuttgart, 2005. Photograph: FNP Architekten

Apart from leaving a gap, there is also a possibility of creating one by excavating into material in order to reveal hidden layers. The idea of geology - layers of sediments that gradually make the way up to rock and the actions of waves and sand and wind that erode into rock - provide an interesting reading of dialogue. We are conscious of geology being additive and subtractive. You can see the true nature of a building material by how you erode into it. The process of excavation, of cutting into material, is something done especially by land artists such as Michael Heizer, Gordon Matta Clark and Robert Smithson. In the project Double Negative by Heizer, a play of positive and negative - of material and immaterial - emerges. The negative provides space. The horizontal and vertical relations appear by excavating a part of a hill. The excavation creates a passage through which one could move.

Michael Heizer, Double Negative, Moapa Valley, 1969
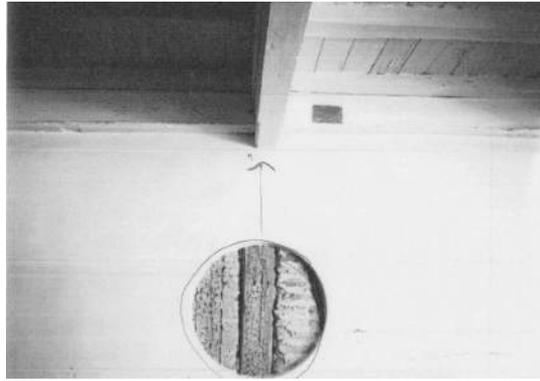
Fernando Távora, renovated house Rua Nova, Guimarães, 1985-87
Photograph: Alessandra Chemollo

The idea of excavation is also something Távora worked with in several of his projects. In the renovation of a house in Rua Nova, a circular cut-out reveals the meeting of three different materials of the wall. The middle one points up to the beam and shows the constructional logic. The excavation revealed the underlying layers of the restored building and thus another moment in time. By <u>framing</u> them, a dialogue between old and new appears.

Távora has also expressed the idea of <u>mediation</u>, of letting things grow side by side, in the design of the Municipal Park Quinta da Conceição. Here, an old tree is left untouched by interrupting a stone bench, a circular cutout permits the tree to breath and grow.

b: Fernando Távora, Municipal Park Quinta da Conceição, Matosinhos, 1956-60
Photograph: Alessandra Chemollo

A more literal project of dialogue through layering, nonetheless very beautiful, is the apartment by Le Corbusier designed from 1929 to 1931 in Paris. The added roof garden is clearly a new addition but fits very well into the context and is mimicking the previous structure. By allowing the addition of the roof terrace to step back, an open space in front of the addition is created and grants air to flow through.
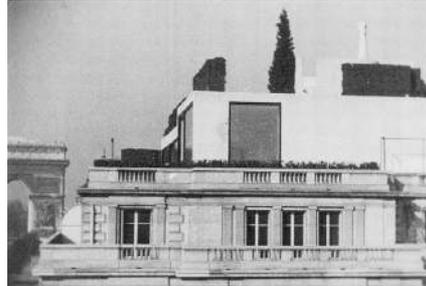
Le Corbusier, Beistegui apartment, Paris, 1929-31. Photograph: Fondation Le Corbusier

In the same way, for the extension of a small house by Peter Zumthor in Versam, a new addition is added mimicking the old structure in terms of material, texture and direction. The two participate in a dialogue. It almost looks as if one holds the other upright, creating a tension of gravity.

Peter Zumthor, renovation Truog House, Versam, 1994. Photograph: Hélène Binet

There are many ways to create dialogue in architecture. As presented in this chapter; rotation, the gap and excavation are ways to enhance and celebrate the meeting of two or more elements. Creating dialogue means working with details and fragments, but always tries to relate the fragment to the whole of the project in order to create one coherent story. Dialogue can also be a way to show layers of time.

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Carlo Scarpa

Restoration of the Castelvecchio museum, Verona, Italy

1953–65

Carlo Scarpa in front of the statue of Santa Cecilia in the Castelvecchio Museum
Photograph from: Murphy 2014

Dialogue

Historical overview of Verona and the Castelvecchio:

89 BC	Verona became a Roman colony
489	Theodoric the Great took over Verona, the Gothic domination began
951 – 957	Verona was under the control of the Duchy of Bavaria
12th century	Construction of the wall of the Castelvecchio started
12th century	Period as a free city republic
1354 – 1376	Construction of the Castelvecchio started along with the bridge by Lord Cangrande II della Scala and the Scaligeri family
1405	Verona was submitted to Venice
1796	The Castelvecchio was damaged by French troops during the Napoleonic Wars
1797	Fall of the Venetian empire, city was occupied by Napoleon
1802	The French completed the enclosure of the courtyard with the construction of a wall along the river
1806	Construction of the grand French staircase to the north-west corner of the Castelvecchio court and the L-shaped barrack were built
1815	Defeat of Napoleon, Verona became part of the Austrian Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.
1825	Opening of a road through the castle from the city to the bridge via the inner courtyard. For the first time it became a public ramp
1866	The Austrians evacuated Verona
1923	The castle was restored by Ferdinando Forlati and Antonio Avena
1926 (April 25)	The Castelvecchio Museum was first opened
1939 – 1945	Verona was one of the most bombed cities in the area at the end of the Second World War
1953 – 1965	Restoration by Scarpa

As mentioned in the previous essay, dialogue is about the moment when two or more elements meet. For architect Carlo Scarpa this moment of "coming together" is the most essential in architecture. It is no coincidence that Kenneth Frampton described Scarpa's work as the "adoration of the joint".[119] The precision in Scarpa's work resembles that of a surgeon. By working closely on the scale of the detail, he tried to celebrate the meeting of different materials, layers and moments of time and turned these almost into jewelry; a handcrafted architecture. The methods he used were marked by a series of cutting and excavating into materials, to which he introduced new components. Moreover, Scarpa's design language can be read through all kind of scales (the garden, the plan, the façade, the section, the object, the detail) and within these scales he used related architectural gestures. He also treated landscape, in most cases the garden, as an continuation of the interior spaces.[120]
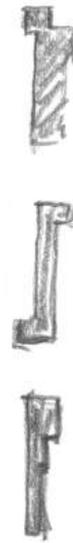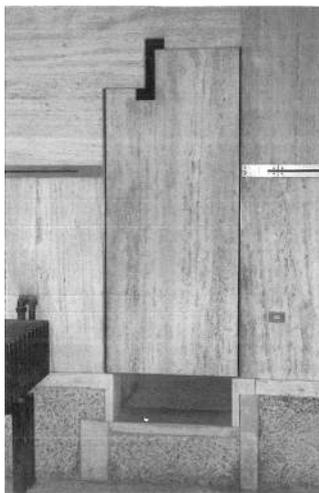
l: Carlo Scarpa, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1961-63; detail of the door
Photograph from: Frampton 1995
r: Sketch of excavated forms Scarpa used through all kind of scales

Working with existing buildings is a repetitive theme within Scarpa's *oeuvre*. His attention to traditional building methods and the art of craft is fundamental for him. For example, he reinvented the ancient technique of Venetian *stucco lucido* -

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[119] Frampton, p. 299. Quote: "The work of Carlo Scarpa may be seen as a watershed in the evolution of twentieth-century architecture, not only for the emphasis that he placed upon the joint but also for his particular use of montage as a strategy for integrating heterogeneous elements."
[120] Scarpa was inspired by Japanese architecture. The relation of building and nature probably derives from here.

a process of layering colored plaster to create a sheen like marble, hence Scarpa realized new forms through old techniques.

The process of layering paint is also something adopted by the artist Mark Rothko[121], who Scarpa admired very much. "The intense colors are built up layer upon layer, creating an impression of depth and making the blocks of color appear to float in space".[122] The color scheme for most of Scarpa's designs were inspired by the paintings of Rothko.
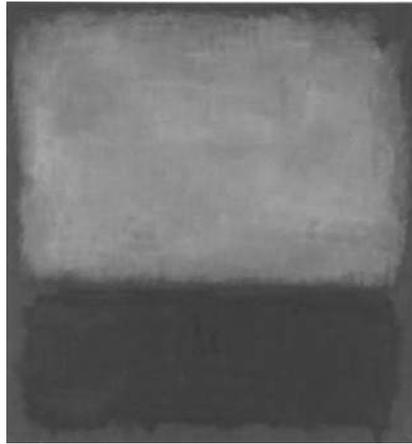
Mark Rothko, no. 14, 1960

Scarpa is considered as the grandfather of modern restoration design. As Richard Murphy stated: "It is through Scarpa that we now look to see how we might intervene with historic buildings to respect their history but also to give them a new life with an architecture that is completely of our own and time".[123] Maybe one of Scarpa's most palimpsestuous designs that articulates the idea of dialogue is the restoration project of the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona on which he worked for about thirteen years. The amount of time spent on the project shows evidences of Scarpa's care and will to control every detail of the project. Former director of the Castelvecchio Museum Licisco Magagnato has described the character and significance of Scarpa's work very beautifully, his words are well mentioning to quote here:

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[121] The huge paintings by Mark Rothko are placed near the ground and need dimmed light in order to engulf the viewer, to create a one-to-one encounter between spectator and canvas. The experience becomes a very intimate and human one, where the spectator is placed, as it were, in the picture.

[122] From the project description of the exposition "Mark Rothko" at the Gemeente Museum Den Haag in 2015.

[123] Murphy, 2014. Murphy also stated that Scarpa proved that working with existing buildings is a valid thing and that it should be regarded more within the architectural discourse, quote: "at the time when Scarpa was working on the Castelvecchio, working with existing buildings was not considered as something important in the architectural field, compared to nowadays."

"The critical approach used in the restoration work distinguishes between ancient and modern. The ancient is rigorously respected and highlighted were possible; the ravages of time and man have been painstakingly repaired, but work kept to a minimum. The modern has been used only when strictly necessary to the restored whole, and the architecture of our time has in this case been used unhesitatingly but with constant concern to compose old with new and to create thereby a harmonious whole."[124]

Scarpa's interventions for the Castelvecchio is so layered and complex that it would be very difficult to briefly discuss the complete vocabulary of Scarpa's forms and spaces accordingly to its rights, or to discuss it indeed in words at all. The Castelvecchio had changed shape many times throughout its life. One can identify five main eras of transformation. The first being the construction of the L-shaped wall located along the Adige river in the twelfth century. The second being the construction of the original castle in the fourteenth century by Lord Cangrande II della Scala and the Scaligeris family. When the Venetian republic fell into the hands of Napoleon in the eighteenth century the French built the L-shaped barracks and an enclosed courtyard was created. A monumental staircase was added along the wall that connected the bridge. In 1924 Antonio Avena restored the damaged castle and added a "fake" façade from borrowed Gothic windows and balconies rescued from demolished palaces. Finally, Scarpa restored the building in 1965.
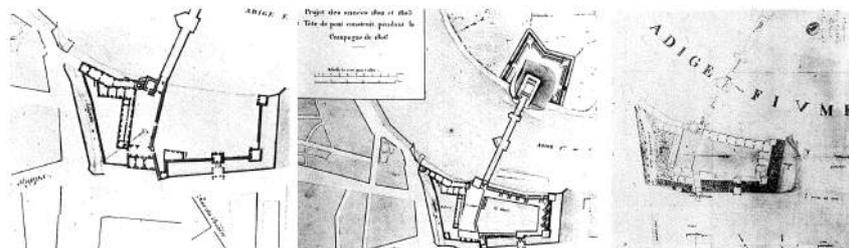
Drawings indicating three different phases of the Castelvecchio: 1801-1802-1806

From: Murphy 1990

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[124] Murphy, Richard. *Carlo Scarpa and the Castelvecchio*. London: Butterworth Architecture, 1990, p. iv.

The process of restoring the building could be described according to the geological processes of addition and subtraction.[125] Scarpa started in a work of excavating and taking apart various bits of history to engage in a dialogue to demonstrate the legacy of the original and the new. He re-layered elements both in the interior as in the exterior. He made value judgments on what to knock down and what not to knock down. He thus did not solely add a "new" geological layer to the building but also dig into the existing one.
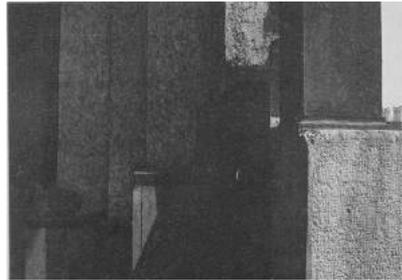
Carlo Scarpa, strata of a wall detail of the Castelvecchio Museum
Photograph from: Murphy 1990

His design changed along the way thanks to archaeological excavations made on site. One of the major interventions Scarpa made in the museum was the demolition of the corner and Napoleon's monumental staircase. By doing so he liberated the wall. For this intervention he had practical reasons of bringing in light to the gallery rooms of the east wing, but also historic reasons of showing once again the true structure of the ancient wall.
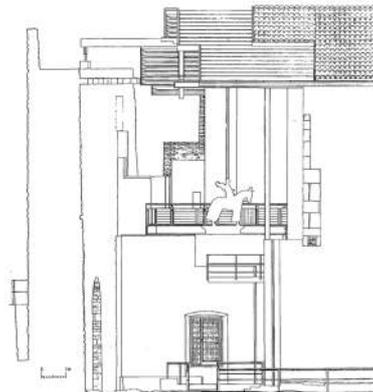
Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, 1953-65
l: Richard Murphy, redrawing of the section of the medieval wall, 1990
r: Photograph of the liberated medieval wall. Photograph from: Murphy 1990

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[125] See processes of erosion and accumulation.

What is striking in this project is the way the building is experienced through the combination of various materials: steel, wood, stone, marble, concrete, glass and tiles. Cheap and expensive materials are used next to each other. He also introduced new elements such as a staircase, bridge, fountain, water basin, terrace, sculpture, path, second window, openings, courtyard, lawn, roof, and so on. They are treated as <u>fragments</u>, yet contribute to the experience of the space as a whole. Frampton described the building as a "continuously unfolding promenade that would mark its progress through space by the discrete articulation of different elements".[126] Scarpa allowed the museum's art to unfold to the spectator. Its architecture is that of surprises and unraveling. The architectural tools he uses are: <u>the gesture of an inviting step</u>, or an <u>engulfing moment</u>, or steel that makes a <u>journey around the corner</u> and <u>does not touch</u> the existing wall, or the paving to define the <u>geometry of the space</u>. The rough walls stand in contrast to the polished concrete floor and are offset by a small ditch, so that the floor does not touch the wall. The polished concrete is enclosed by a thin line of stone making it a metaphor to a water basin. He made a secondary façade on the inside that <u>breaks the symmetry</u> of the windows and façade. This strengthens the idea that the outer layer is eroded and cut. The experience of the building is also enhanced by <u>moments of extension</u>. The garden of the Castelvecchio acts almost as a decompression zone, an in between moment of stillness.
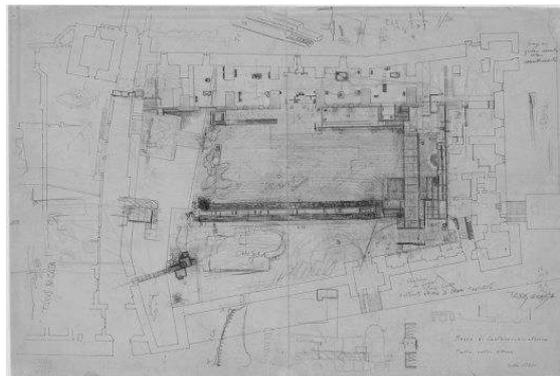
Carlo Scarpa, plan of the Castelvecchio with the garden

For Scarpa the drawing as a design tool was very important. His drawing techniques are quite complex and layered. One drawing is often a collection of multiple information and fragments from different scale. Sometimes he superimposed several elevations, floor plans or sections into one drawing. He

[126] Frampton, p. 321.

then colors the different layers in yellow or red to show what is on the foreground and background. His drawings are exemplary for palimpsestuous design and representation.
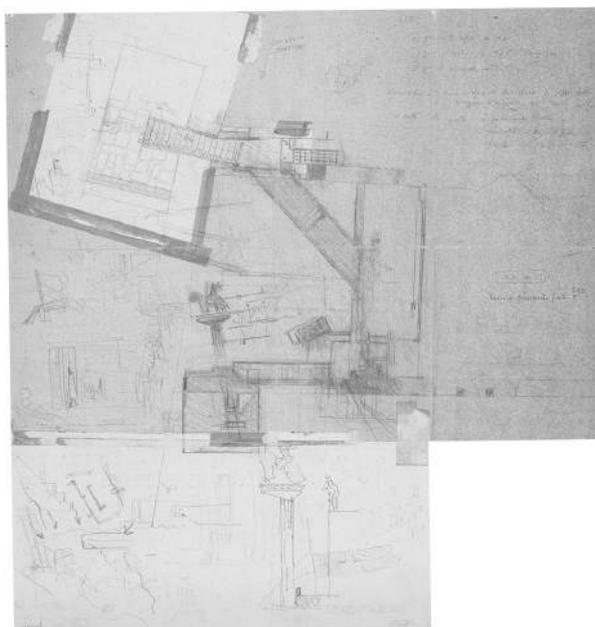
Carlo Scarpa, hybrid drawing of a fragment of the Castelvecchio depicting the Cangrande statue; several tracing papers are stitched together

To sum up, dialogue is created by showing the essence of what is going on underneath by adopting the geological processes of adding and subtracting. Scarpa was obsessed by showing the material and then later excavating into it. Scarpa's details are exemplary to that, he cuts into things to create small niches in places were two or more elements join. The attention to materials comes forward in the fragment of the detail and their relation to a larger whole. The element of time therefore becomes important to experience the spaces. Moments of delay are introduced to let the spectator participate in a sensory journey of spending some more time to record the different aspects, materials and layers. Scarpa puts forward the issue of scale: starting from the detail and then working his way up to the larger scale. The idea of the gap - of things not touching and delaying a moment - is expressed in the project. In the end the dialogue is created by carefully judging what to do with the many different elements of the old and the new to create a desired tension. This means that certain things that were damaged were also left untouched, conforming what Ruskin said: "better a crutch than a new leg".[127]

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[127] Murphy, 2014.
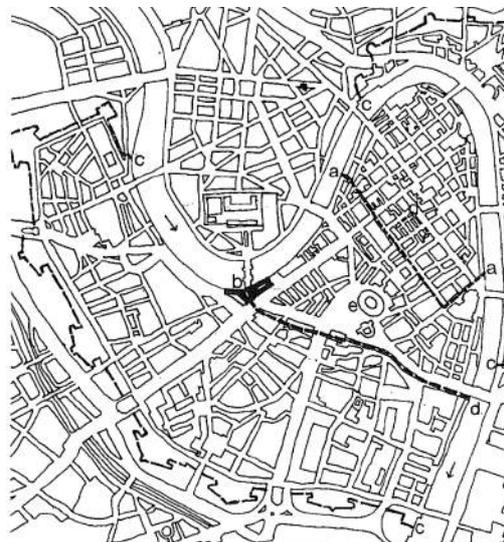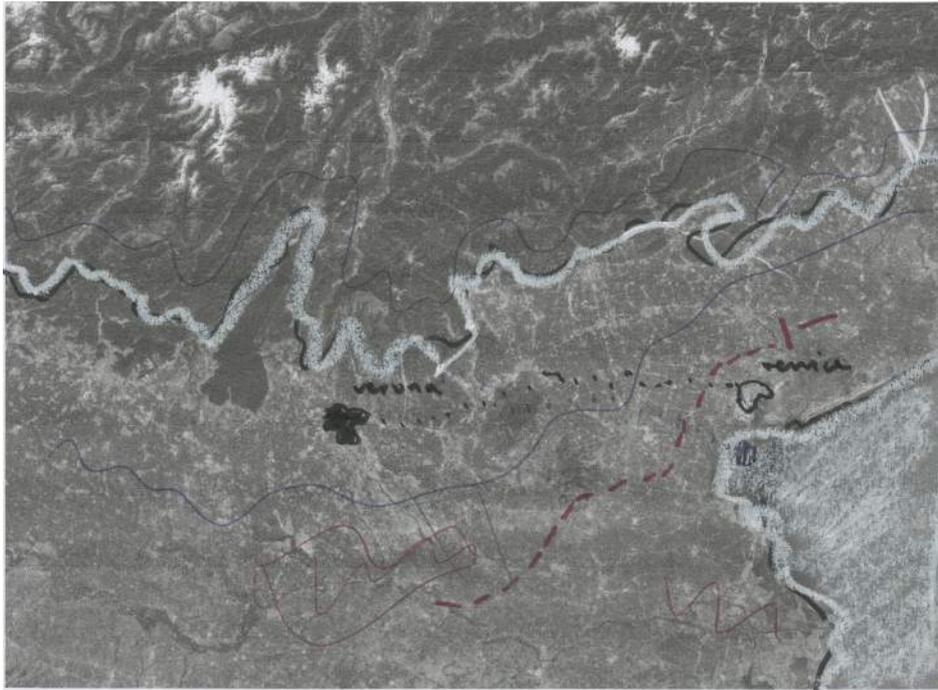
t: Aerial view of the landscape around Verona and Venice with the Swiss Alpes to the north
b: Site plan of the Castelvecchio within the context of Verona presenting three stages of the medieval wall
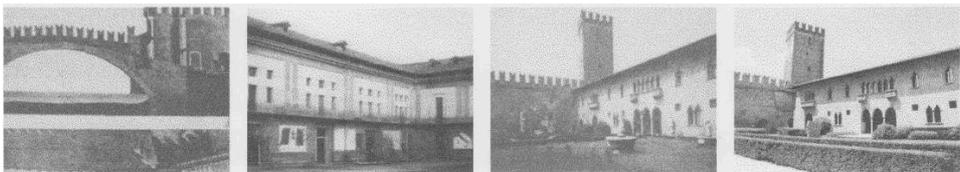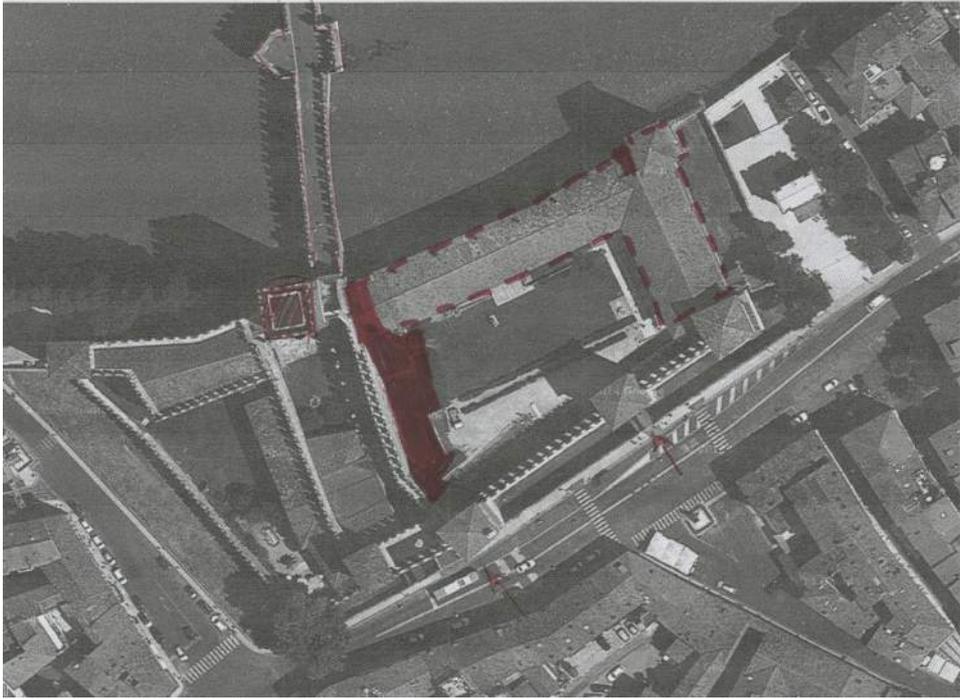
t: Top view of the Castelvecchio with the bridge, the river Adige, and the streets surrounding the building
m: The Castelvecchio along the Adige river. Photograph: Municipality of Verona
b: Life of the building, showing the four transformative stages of the building

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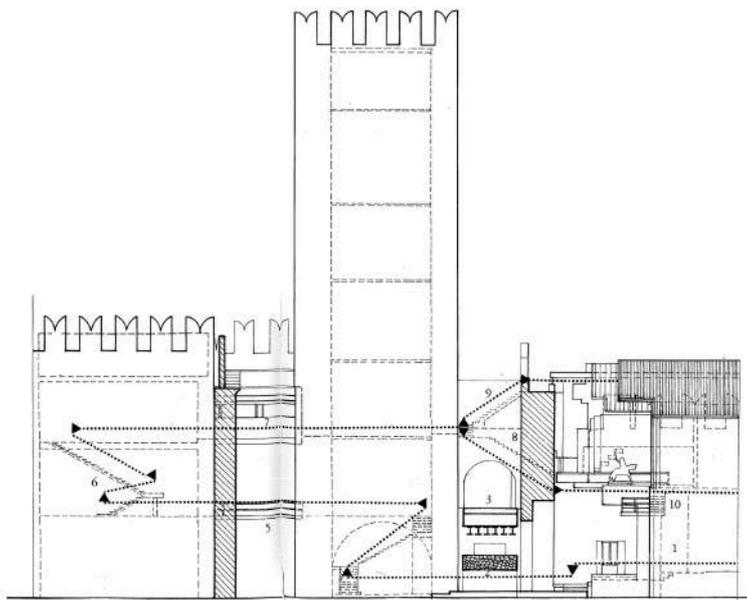
t: Section of the tower with the medieval wall to the right. Redrawn by Murphy
b: Sketch showing the idea that one moves from moment to moment

t: Plans of the ground floor, first floor and the wall. Redrawn by Murphy
b: The L-shape of the building encloses the garden

157
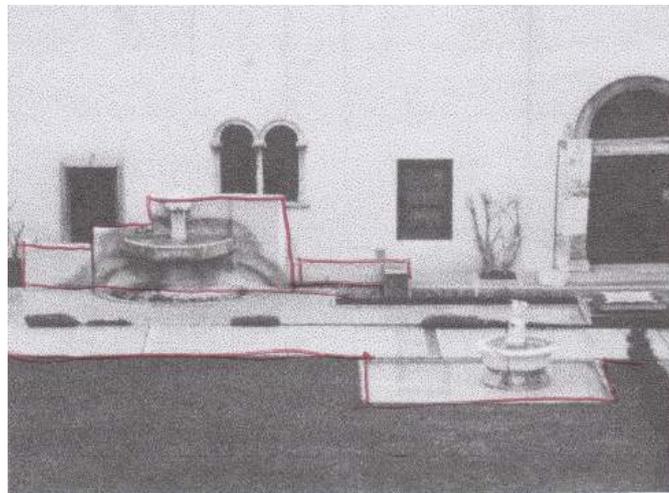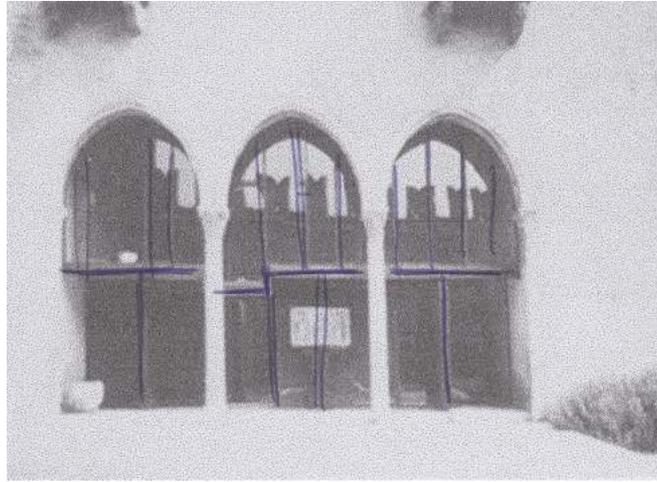
t: The second façade is placed in the back of the existing façade, creating a layer to break the symmetry
b: The paving of the garden is fragmented in a horizontal and vertical manner creating an effect of unfolding as a welcoming gesture
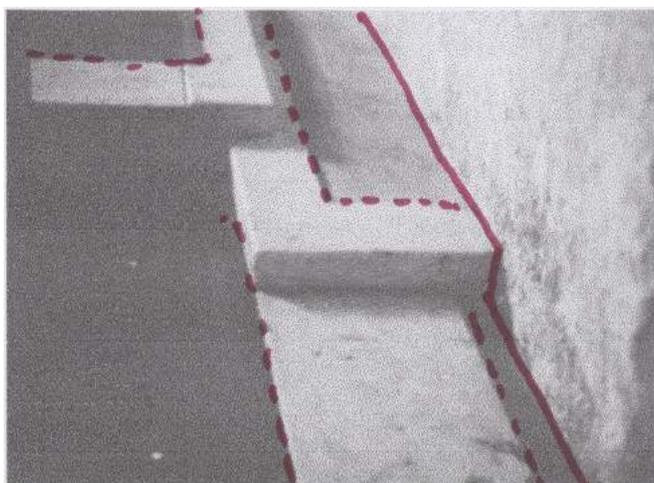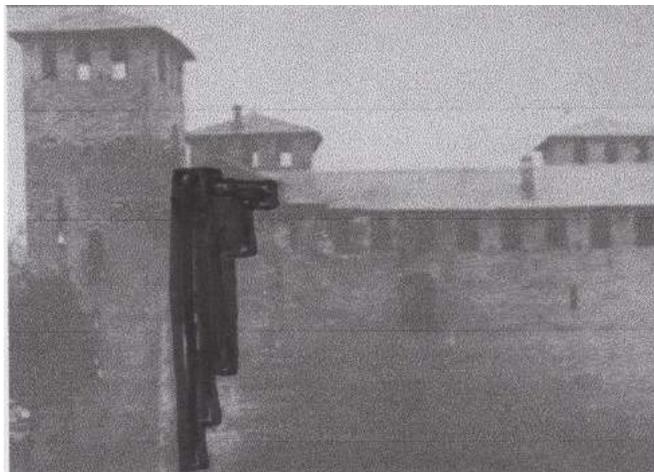
t: Excavation of the wall in order to reveal the different periods of time and liberating the wall
m: Sketches of other excavated forms Scarpa used for several other projects
b: The steps are liberated from the wall by a "terracing" gesture
Underlying photographs from: Murphy 1990
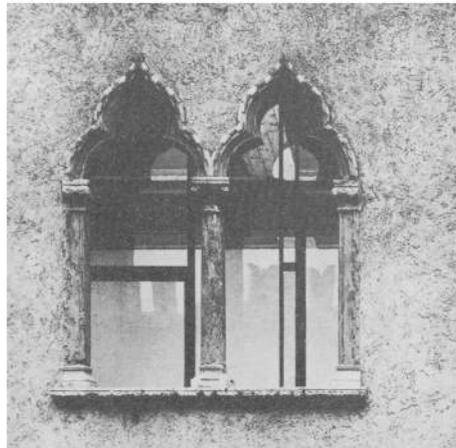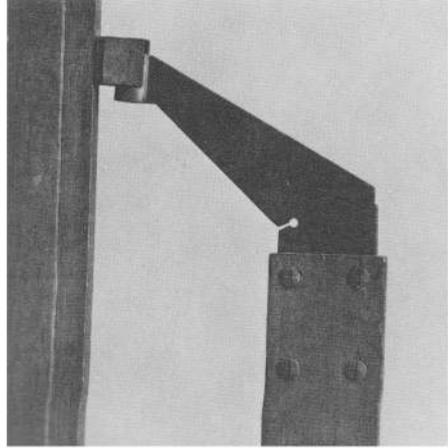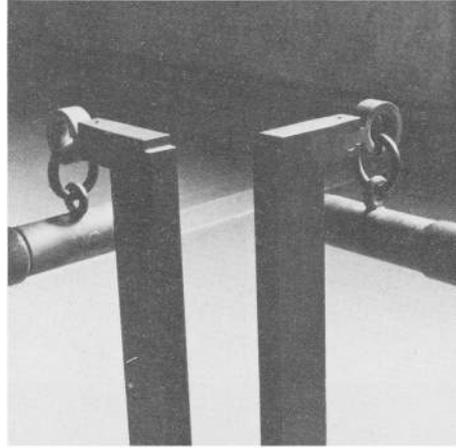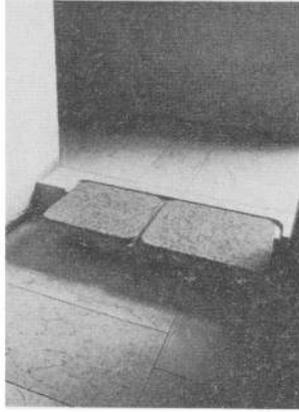
A collage of fragmented details
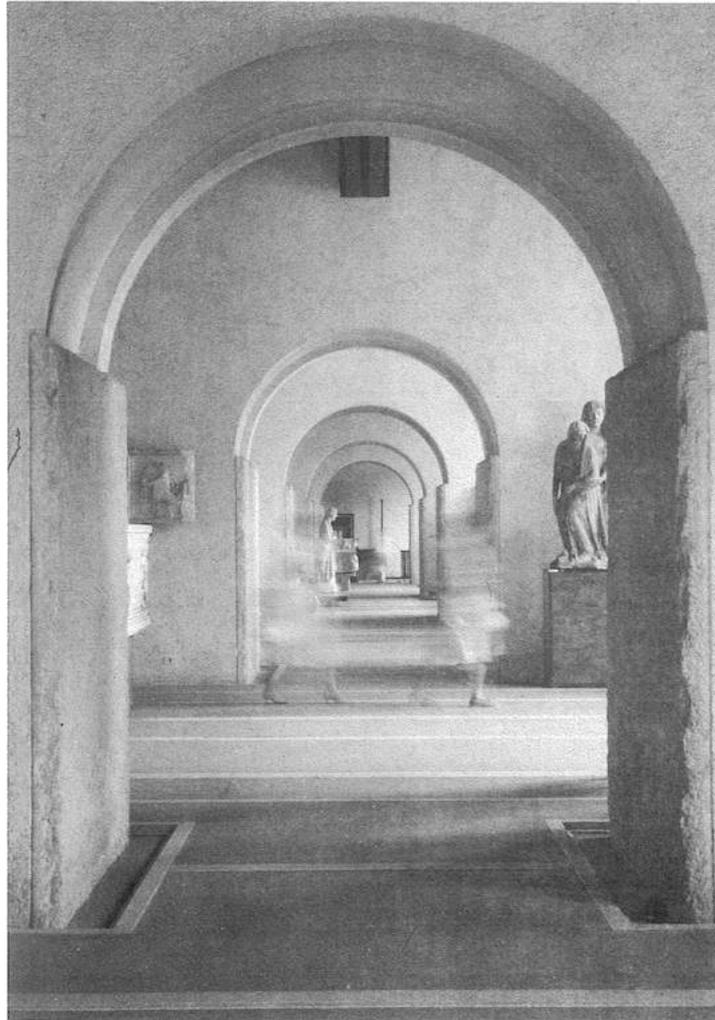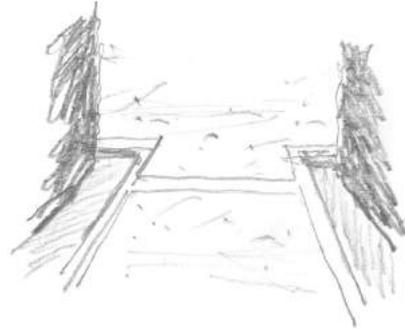
t: Sketch showing how the wall is separated from the floor
b: Image of the same fragment, the floor becomes almost a tapestry of marble
Photographs from: Murphy 1990

EPILOGUE

In this research I have portrayed a variety of key projects from different disciplines, both classical and contemporary, to reveal notions of palimpsest. Palimpsest is a method of bringing depth that works on all scale levels (landscape, city, building and detail). Designing landscapes, buildings and objects involves in fact the same philosophy. Within my research, I have identified buildings as part of landscape and thereby considered the specificity of place and its inherent history. I have also discussed the material quality of buildings and places. What is important to me is to bring different scales together: to regard landscape, architecture and details as more or less the same, without giving more significance to one or the other.

In order to describe how palimpsest is present in architecture, I have identified six personal observations: place, reuse, memory, traces, materiality and dialogue. These observations are all very much related; they can work together, be overlapped or used individually. Although this research reflects my personal interests to a large extend, the six themes are also intended to reveal new design strategies and attitudes that can inform the design practice. In order to translate the knowledge - which the themes provided - to the design, six case studies were analyzed in depth. Consequently, I have noticed a few design strategies that stand out: Távora's remodeling of a *pousada* and garden preserves the inscribed elements of place and adds to that; Pikionis' project for the Acropolis is a contemporary example of the use of *spolia*, where local materials and stones are reused in a way of collage to create a topographic continuum; in Mérida, Moneo reinterpreted tradition in a modern way by conserving the memory of a Roman archaeological site and enclosing the existing ruins and remains, hereby creating layers of memory; in the Neues Museum, Chipperfield takes apart bits of the deteriorated building by peeling off various layers to reveal traces of erosion that creates a patina while inconspicuously adding new layers; in Düren, Schwarz uses materiality as a fundamental basis to relate to nature and to create an inner world that emerges out of the landscape; in the renovation of the Castelvecchio, Scarpa starts at the scale of the detail, working his way back to the larger whole and engages in a dialogue of revealing layers of time by excavating into parts of the building.

The case studies also provide certain attitudes architects can adopt to create depth, such as: the architect as a poet, collector, archaeologist, historian or craftsman. Furthermore, Sverre Fehn and Souto de Moura presented an interesting attitude, confirming the idea of building with time. In Souto de Moura's *pousada* he chooses to keep part of the ruin as found. Similarly, for the project in Hamar, Fehn adds an independent structure that allows the walls of the ruin to further fade away.

What should be taken into account, is that most of the case studies discussed have a certain archaeological or monumental value. However I believe that the concept of palimpsest can also be applied to the design of new landscapes, buildings and objects.[128] It is not about creating a palimpsestuous aesthetic but to recognize its philosophy: a sensitive attitude towards dealing with the past, present and future. The palimpsest is about a delicate layering of the different stages of being through time: both as material and immaterial.

Now, what makes a building or place "palimpsestuous"? One has to pay attention to the existing elements, study them and carefully add new ones to them. Architecture is often treated as an artifact, detached from the elements of time, becoming an artificial object. The palimpsest is a very time conscious concept that due to its sensitive attitude is very important nowadays in an economical and efficiency dominant society.

What I hope to have shown is the full scope in which the notion of palimpsest is present in our environment. I started my research by considering the six personal observations, discussed in the different chapters, as equals. Throughout the research I noticed a slight appreciation for some observations that - to me - became more important than others. The final chapter, on dialogue, became the most fundamental of the research. The reason is probably because through dialogue I see all my ideas coming together. It reflects, my vision towards a palimpsestuous architecture in which we shape the meeting of different elements, time periods, materials, ideas and so on. How to articulate this reciprocal dialogue is perhaps the essence of architecture. Architecture is about a creating and a recreating as we progress through time, as a palimpsest, without ignoring the past.

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[128] For further research it would be interesting to see how ideas of palimpsest can be used to give depth to the creation of new landscapes, cities, buildings and objects. Think of fast developing countries in Africa or China were history is often erased and methods of tabula rasa are dominant.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Overview of the case studies

I. PLACE · *Fernando Távora*

II. REUSE · *Dimitris Pikionis*
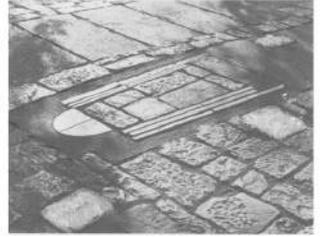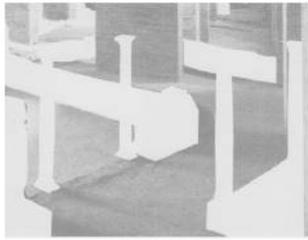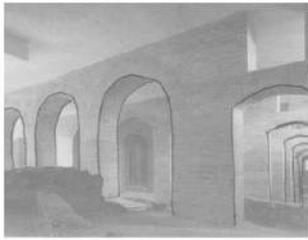

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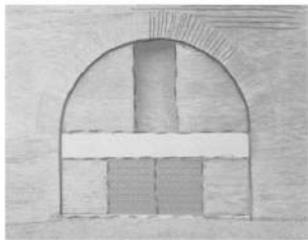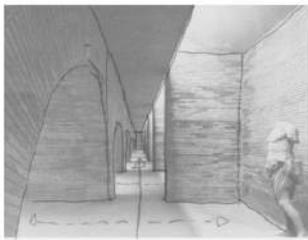

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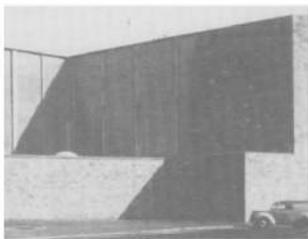
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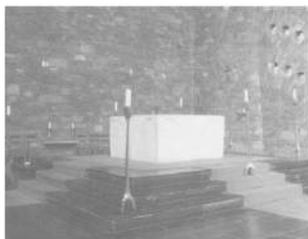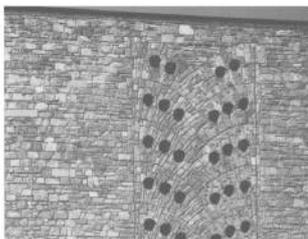
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