



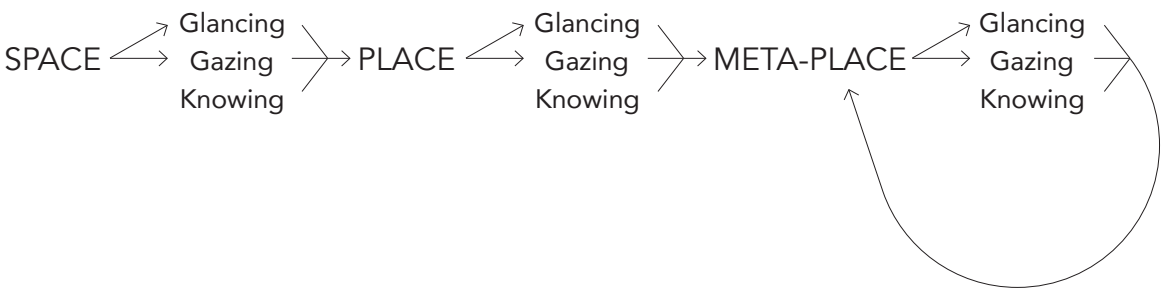
BECOMING THE OUROBOROS
INVESTIGATIONS IN META-PLACE

INTRODUCTION

Every experience in life is a perception. We perceive the things we do, within the spaces we inhabit and in doing so build a world of our own. But often architecture cannot just serve one person and their world, instead it must be able to relate to many intersecting realities, that can exist complementarily, incongruently or paradoxically to one another. This project explores the way in which this world of many worlds or place of many places (meta-place) can be produced, understood and operationalised. Further I am exploring the role of personal distance in catalysing and fostering the meta-place, with out the blinding light of my own memory of a site. In doing so research in the meta-place allows my intervention to better reflect the communal reality of place and in turn produce a valuable architectural intervention.

“The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight.”

John Berger

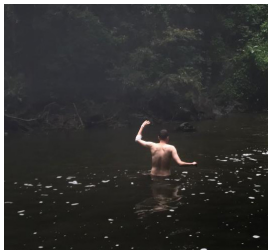
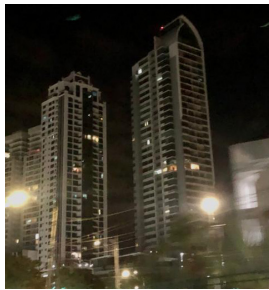


THE META-PLACE

Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities begins in the unrelatable shoes of an emperor. With a melancholic voice, Kublai khan accepts that despite his rule over a vast empire, he must give up “any thought of knowing and understanding” the spaces that are his (Calvino, 1974). Through a collage of poems Calvino goes on to describe fifty-five cities, presented as “places” in the extensive Mongol empire. However, throughout the book it becomes apparent that each description is just a facet of one city – Venice. With each page Calvino introduces a new perceptual angle. Somehow, the readers understanding is pushed further from the spatial reality, yet they begin to uncover the essence of Venice as they learn of the truths, falsities, paradoxes and opinions it is formed upon. Like the Khan, the reader must accept that they may never know the space but can still learn of the realities that have been spun from it. this constellation of places produces what I have donned the meta-place, a way of seeing a space for what it implies, rather than just what is there or what one experiences.

Invisible cities presents one example of meta-place. Therefore, what are the mechanics of

such a construct and how do they form? Put simply, place forms when a space is sensed by the body and then interpreted through the lens of one’s existing knowledge. To do this we employ two key methods of observation – glancing and gazing. Using the senses (sight, hearing, touch etc.) the glance takes an unconscious, wholistic approach to interpreting reality, ensuring things are how we expect them to be. The gaze compliments this by actively investigating what the glance identifies as abnormal, as well as what we consciously choose to examine. Within this process of observing and interpreting space, physical surfaces (space) are converted into usable information (knowledge). As meta-place is a place of places, it is formed when we glance and gaze upon place (instead of space), and similarly interpret the findings through pre-existing knowledge. however, instead of translating the physical into the informational, this process interprets existing knowledge to produce more knowledge. Therefore, a meta-place can be continuously glanced and gazed upon to produce a more developed meta-place. It’s production catalyses a self-perpetuating system that can repeat infinitely to expand the understanding of a site.



Along with answering questions each colleague sent me one photo they felt encapsulated their experience with Panama.

PANAMANIAN META-PLACE

Producing Panama as a meta-space involved manipulating the methods of observation, gazing and glancing, to uncover new facets of place. Initially, through the group mapping research and production of PANAMANIA!, Panama began to form as an amalgamation of sequenced interactions that compete, complement and perpetuate each other. Following this my studio colleagues visited Panama City, Colon and their surroundings. Travelling with them was a notebook I provided with the request that a different person each day of the trip answer predefined questions about their experience. Concurrently, I found and visited Panamanian artefacts in the Netherlands, hoping to answer the same questions myself. My experience was quite unfruitful. As I gazed upon Panamanian objects attempting to create a place (new knowledge) from a distance I instead branded them with the identity of “Panamanian”. Contrastingly, the answers of my colleagues presented these salient gazes upon their individual place of Panama, in a way mirroring invisible cities. Yet because of the fragmented nature of what they shared (answers to six distinct questions), they became more interpretable than Calvino’s prose, promoting me to more radically speculate their common spatial thread through iterations of narratives and embellished collages. The following are the answers provided by my colleagues.

EXP: 30-10-23

1. “What are your first impressions of Panama, and is this different from what you expected?” - It’s a really poor Dirty and empty post colonial city. I expected it to be a little more orderly however we have only explored a small part [part] of it so far.
2. I wore my regular sneakers that are slowly falling apart, a black t-shirt and airy black shorts that made the heat and humidity bearable [.] I carried a Fanny pack which made it feel safer to walk around because I kept my money and documents in there [.] I also carried a camera however I took more pictures with my phone because it seemed more socially acceptable to shoot this way.
3. Main Street of a sketchy neighbourhood. One of it [the] many streets that is alive/ where shops are open along the whole length of the street. Colourful post colonial architecture in juxtaposition with modern architecture also painted in lively colors. There were many poor people that spend their days there and stands [stand] with both men and women selling lottery tickets.
4. I spoke to Louis who was one of the few locals that spoke really good English [.] he randomly started telling us the story of the waterfront in front of our house, rather passive but I crossed him again and have [gave] him some change later that day and he gave more tips about getting round the city [.] Lady in bakery told us to not leave our phones on the

tables because they disappear ‘rapido’ gave the feeling that some people look out for foreigners despite majority trying to scam you [.] Similarly police made us turn back from a treet through which a protest would go on at night which seemed a genuine concern for our safety.

5. Smell [-] bunch o [of] trash rotting due to humidity and heat [.] -Hearing [-] kids laughing in the street [.] Sight [-] downtowns expensive towers far and the overgrown buildings in the vicinity [.] Taste [-] bottled purified water tastes like lake water [.] Balance [-] sitting on the ledge of a rooftop Casa [.] Touch [-] the dry rough hand of a beggar who shook my hand after playing salsa on a bucket [.]
6. Rainy

EXP: 31-10-23

1. “List and describe the most prominent demographics of people you have observed in public spaces?” - One of

the most prominent demographics that I have seen is that of the yellow taxi driver. They circle neighbourhoods like vultures and honk at you to get your attention. Besides this, there are many police and/ or military personnel in different uniforms (black “policia”, and camo-gear guys). They stand at checkpoints and patrol on motorbikes or in cars. There are many beggars, and also informal street vendors, both in public squares as well as beside three-lane highways.

Yesterday I wore ASICS sneakers, shorts a T-shirt and my standard assembly of wristbands, watch, and hair-tie. I carried my belongings in a fanny pack (passport, wallet, phone, cigarettes) and also carried my camera: a Pentacon SIX-TL. The contact of these two objects on my body resulted in the saturation of my T-shirt in sweat. The hair-tie has proven to be essential-however my neck is badly sun burnt.

The 75th floor is a peculiar space. Vultures circle the city below at eye height, sounds of wind, honking and elevators generate a surreal acoustic landscape, and the fire-escape is bathed in yellow from the tinted glass. Living in the clouds, the city and the landscape continuously is hidden and revealed. , An abandoned playground in-between some of the most kitsch neo-classical skyscrapers I’ve ever seen. Surrounded by a hedge/fence, a few sad, faded plastic jungle-gyms/equipment waits. An empty bird feeder hangs from a tree. Rich old white people walk their mini-poodles from their gated community/ privatised island, into the city.

Entering the skyscraper, Gosia and I decided to simply act as if we belonged. Following a small woman carrying toilet & cleaning supplies, a doorman holds the door open for us as we smile politely at each other “Gracias”. Entering a private Island – “build (design?) your home, your way.” – a security guy runs across the road controlled by traffic booms and stops us on foot. “touristas?” he asks, and then tells us its private and we may not enter.

Dead Fish – Smell, Grape Soda – Taste (taste like neo-purple), Panama in yellow, 75th floor – sight, car horns – hearing, thunder – Hearing (unlike any I’ve previously experienced), Crumbling soil/ stone – Touch, broken Pier – Balance

Panama (city) is a place both full of vibrant life, and at the verge of collapse – The junkie waits patiently to reclaim it all.

EXP: 01-11-23

- “Describe the interaction between forest and city” - Everything is a bit city and a bit forest. Birds sing on the rooftops, machines hum in the wild. Many buildings are just ruined envelopes which surround little forests inside. The city seems dense but there is more plants living between those walls than people.
- White t shirt, black shorts, white asics sneakers, black Fanny bag, green cap,

grey metallic Kia rio. In the trunk of the car I carried my lunch which was a pack of Takkis, a pack of almonds, a pack of bruschetta bake crisps and a bottle of mineral water.

- The magnificent crane, the neighbourhood in the jungle populated mostly by kapibara-like creatures, the dam, the territorial machine larger than the neighbouring towns, the mythical origin of the canal, the landscape of copy and paste identical houses [.]
- Two policeman with exposed guns pulled our car on the side of the road in the middle of rural Panama, east from the Dam. They checked my driving licence, ask about our plans and told us to take care. They seemed genuinely concerned with our safety and well being. It made me think that its good to be European when you encounter Panamanian police [.]
- Endless road surrounded by trees and hills, no smells, dull and beautiful sound of the cement factory, slippery rock in the rainforest, Sour Takkis, a feeling of hitting the hard asphalt surface after I fell [.]
- Panama is obsessed with control [.]

EXP: 02-11-23

- “How does Panama City feel to navigate, from the perspective of a woman? (safety/ experience wise)” - I feel like here, if I was to feel unsafe about something, it would be more about my background, rather than gender. The only safety concerns I had so far were always related to me being a tourist, a foreigner, a fool easy to trick. I felt like my fear of the unknown, of this culture gap, and the chaos made me vulnerable way more than me being a woman.
- OOTD: comfy shoes, cargo pants and a top. But with me I had my whole backpack with things like rain poncho, rain backpack cover, my knee bandages, water, sunglasses, sketchbooks, apples, swimsuit and a towel. The rain stuff definitely came in handy in the walk through the city. Even though at the end I was all wet. At least for the rain vibes. Water & towels served well when washing the tear gas away from our faces [.]
- We went to see how humans attempted to connect back what they initially divided and how Panamanians repurposed what USA left behind. Last was a walk through the chaos of different worlds mixing.
- It was a day with not many interactions. Most of them were greetings “Buenas”, “Hola” [scribble] “Hermana”, “Bonita” ... other than that, the necessary ones while ordering food. Those were super oute [cute?], and went beyond just food ordering, to “how are you” “wow rain rly got u”, ... All the interactions make me feel more & more safe.
- Sight & Smell - tear gas, hearing – protest, touch – beach sand, taste – dodgy street food, rice & meat, Balance Slipped & fell twice
- It’s [Panama] an old money heiress dressed in Gucci and a homeless man walking next to each other. Each their own path. Sometimes the lady throws a

coin on the floor for the homeless guy, but only to distract him for a while to take his (nicer) part of the path

EXP: 03-11-23

- “Describe and reflect upon rituals formed or observed at your own meal times and among Panamanians, how is food present in daily life?” - Lots of rice! For these past 6 days we of course end up eating at wherever is in our proximity. Evening No 1 was a hard scavange haunt that ended with us cooking pasta with water we found at some shop that was open. We now know that it was an expensive spot despite it being a very undecorated & simple shop. Actually I noticed how conditioned I am to associate a nice looking spot with great food. But I think that perception has been shattered by my experience here in Panama. No 2 lunch was my first time trying Panamanian food & I truly loved it. Ate plantain for the first time & dripped lemon juice all over my hands so now I carry wet wipes everywhere. No 3 lunch Mcdonalds ritualistically my first order was their special mcflury flavour. Strawberry cheesecake. Loved it! No 4 Dinner. Clams for the first time. Dripped juice everywhere but this time I came prepared. Wet wipes! No 5 Lunch. Left the best impression! My guess is that it was Chinese fusion place. many Chinese/ mix-chinese people here that have brought with them some food options. A plate full of rice! Some lentils (cooked it a way that reminded me of a Lebanese dish I usually dread eating but appreciated it in Panama) & 1 peace of pork spices by an Asian style sauce. A buffet-like serving technique where we pointed to what we wanted. Simple! (saw this at other spots too). No 6 dinner at a very simple looking place close to our house. A mountain of rice with some shrimp. I appreciate how the servents here (in Panama) serve the whole table at once. So the eating ritual starts as a collective. No 7 Lunch. Wendys for the first time. Burger. No 8 Dinner at the same small spot. Really missed vegetables! No salads! Maybe from the road closures? No vegetables at markets/supermarkets. Feeling the need to get refreshed. Ate fish & chips? But they also serve rice as a side dish. No 9 Lunch Panamanian chicken soup! Corn! Yams (first time) I felt refreshed! Finally. Served rice as a side dish again. Confession I don’t like rice.
- White shirt: Bad option was super dirty by the end of the day. Transparent enough to show my [fanny pack]. Body fannypack: that I wear under my clothes makes me feel a lot more secure. I put my passport/cards/money (backup) in them. Disadvantage make me look fat, but I don’t care. Jeans: packed very badly. Needed shorts! I associate rain with cold weather. First time sweating under the rain. I felt unsafe about wearing shorts in a foreign country as a girl, but the weather is shorts weather. Sneakers: not so rain friendly but comfortable so I am okay with them. Vintage mini bag: fits everything. I love it, but the clasp

opens easily so I get paranoid & have to constantly check it. Umbrella: after losing my umbrella that I brought from NL, I had to buy a new one for \$10, great investment! Short sleeves + umbrella. I think I’ve uncracked it.

- I remember the car ride mostly because I was in the middle seat & had a hard time avoiding motion sickness instead of focusing on the scenes. Stopped in the middle of the road a lot. I have the image of the car parked like that the most because I was scared that we’d be annoying people/ other drivers. Today I realised that I only remember the second dam we saw yesterday, even though we stopped at the first one longer. I think I was distracted by the car doors being open & the car unlocked & the van driver exercising next to us with loud music at the viewing spot. Had been noticing the sharp contrast in area in proximity a lot! But yesterday I saw that the most. I really had to take a bathroom break but didn’t feel comfortable to announce that until we passed by a “subway” restaurant.
- Yesterdays interactions were brief. Simple Holas & payment. Except for when I felt we were the center of attention in a public area as “white” people. I even felt made fun of when I was goofing around to take photos. Sharp contrast to my previous day’s interactions where everyone was so warm & friendly & tried helping me under the rain as I struggled with not having my umbrella. I don’t know if it is a gender thing. I felt judged by the men in the public space, but very cared for by women on the streets. Could also be a regional attitude! I am not sure. But I really loved those women.
- Sight: black smoke. Smell: bathrooms. Hearing: car music. Touch: Sand under by [my] shoes. Taste: local jam pastrie [pastry]. Balance: car middle seat.
- Panama is contrasting (it was hard answering these without sketching things for clarity)

EXP: 04-11-23

- “Identify and describe reflections of culture in your experiences, what has felt deeply panamanian?” - In the little time I spent in Panama I think I experienced a deeply Panamaian [Panamanian] moment yesterday. I entered a supermarket to buy a large bottle of purified water for our household. I know Szymon hates the purified water, but that was the only large bottle I could find. As I was approaching the cashiers, I stood in line behind what looked like a family with a mother and two sons. The sons were loading their groceries on the counter, the mother stood ready with some cash in her hands. The lady behind the cash machine was clearly not in the mood for her job, however the employee packing up the products managed to get a smile out of her with his comments. Some of the products seemed to not be scannable. A few minutes later the whole scanning process was still going on, which led to me crossing my line of impatience and walking to another line. There was just one guy in the line who was having a casual conversation with

the cashier as she was taking forever to scan his two products. When she was finally done, the exchanged a few more sentences until she eventually acknowledged my existence and in a deeply relaxed manner scanned my one vig bottle of purified water. I payed [paid] in cash, said ‘thank you’ and started walking away. When I hear her calling for me. I need to to [delete] take the receipt to show at the entrance as proof of having payed for my bottle of purified water.

- As every day so far I was wearing my black jorts (jean shorts), a black t-shirt, black socks and black leather shoes. I was carrying my Fuji camera with a vintage canon lens. I also had my green and pink coloured Susan Bijl bag with my passport, an A6 sketchbook and a powerbank inside it. Having my camera proved useful, however I didn’t use anything that was in my bag.
- Yesterday I spent the afternoon alone. I needed some time to collect my thoughts and mentally prepare for the second week. After some time in our apartment I went out to walk to the place that I feel has been calling me the whole week. Anywhere we went in the city, by foot or by car the past week, I would see this place. I walked through a few narrow back streets. Kids were playing football. Trash and decay was omnipresent. I finally reached a wider street, which was as lively as I haven’t seen it so far. I then turned into a street that google maps was leading me to, which was barricaded with large steel scaffolds. I rerouted using a narrow passage , trying to get back on track just to see that all other streets, leading me to the place that had been calling me, were also closed off. I decided to walk back to the apartment and try my luck another day. I stopped at a supermarket on my way back.
- I was walking back to the apartment from the supermarket carrying the large bottle of water when a middle aged guy sitting on the side of the street called out to me, asking where I am from. I answered. He wasn’t expecting me to engage with him, but quickly signed for me to come over. I didn’t have anything better to do at that moment so I did. After exchanging a few sentences he asked me about my camera, and wether [whether] taking photos was my hobby. I said that it was. He was excited about our little interaction and told me to take a photo of him I was just as excited about it and I took his portrait. He wished me blessings as I walked away. I thanked him looking back one more time.
- Sight – Panamanian flag ; Smell – Trash ; Hearing – Megaphone ; Touch -greasy Arepas ; taste – beer can ; Balance – pedestrian bridge.
- Panama is a mess

EXP: 05-11-23

- “Identify and describe the kinds of history that are spatially present in Panama City, what can you see remnants of? (Indigenous, colonial, American etc.)” - History. Panama city indeed is a mic of multiple historic

layers that reminds me of a wall of an old apartment that has been painted multiple times and the paint starts to weak [flake] off and unfold the hidden. Colonial architecture seems to shine in the most touristic places such as casco Viejo. You can also see that this type of architecture is the most preserved and restored, newly painted, therefore it does not always reflect its authenticity. You can also clearly see the American footprint that leads most of the architecture from the xx century until today. Starting from car based infrastructure and following this wild capitalistic postmodern urban jungle, covered in beige colors. Unfortunately not many traces of indigenous in Panama city, but you can clearly see the timeless nature that has been nurturing way before cities were born and it is always ready to bring it all back. Constant fight between natural and non natural. Maybe not a fight but more of a dialogue.

- I was wearing green shorts, black t-shirt and black west [vest], which was comfortable because it had multiple pockets that I could use for my belongings. Also socks and hiking shoes for a comfort and unexpected landscape scenarios. Small bag with wallet, passport, tissues, mosquito spray, allergy pills, battery charger, phone, sunglasses. I also brough swimsuit and a towel because we were planning to stop by Caribbean see [sea] or Gatun lake. I was also carrying my notebook and a pen for notes, sketches, but the trip was quite demanding, a lot of movement on the car, walking, running, photographing, and truly, no time for a calm moment to reflect on a piece of paper. Not in a bad way, though, It’s just a time to absorb it all with my eyes, hands, feet, nose, skin. I document places that are oak [speak] to me with my phone camera, bom [?] pictures and a lot of videos, lets see what comes out of that!
- I visited a very industrial, empty, static, polluted area, as a first stip of our Sunday trip. I felt intimidated by a place a little bit because it seemed to be over static, planar and non-sensitive. Concrete wall , glass objects behind the glass seemed lonely and forgotten, stored. Later on we moved to a place to see water and large storing objects floating on it. Second half of the day was way more refreshing. More water, I went to swim, water was extremely salty and warm. In the horizon I approached abandoned ship and tress in the shoreline. Later on we moved further and faced weird local neighbourhood. The further we went the more compressed the area looked like, everything was covered with fences. One guy who lived in the area was modest to us and opened this fence to his backyard. At that moment I felt happy and shocked, the place was revealed. Large space, wide and open, light and welcoming. That was a highlight of my day or even my whole trip. Day finished, we went back home.
- I bought food in the supermarket. There were a few trays of warm rice, some

vegetables and protein. I always get anxious when I need to explain or ask for things because I don't know Spanish. So, I was just smiling and pointing my finger to the ingredients I wanted to be in my plate. It all went smooth. My other biggest interaction of the day was people from that last special place. although they were confused what am I doing here, they tried to understand. I said hola and smiled and they did likewise. Without a single word they understood why I was strolling around their houses and they were kind enough to share this special place with me. I wished I knew more Spanish to explain how important it was for me.

5. Sight – wide and endless lake with soaking tree trunks in it and a woman swimming in the lake. Same location – I smelt some kind of burnt plastic and for a moment frightened me later we realised that someone used a generous amount of mosquito spray on their skin. So that was probably it. I heard locally played music. A looot of local people enjoyed their time and at least 10 spots played music at the same time, but it worked. I touched extra salty water that was almost a bit like a soap. My skin was extra hydrated. Taste – I had the most amazing cappuccino from the supermarket. Perfect sweetness and foam. Balance – I was floating in the water, salt was pushing my body up, a bit of a dead sea experience.

6. Panama feels sometimes brutal raw, but homely, delicious, welcoming, warming. Many times, it feels like we were on the edge, or that we were not supposed to be where we are, but at times it was surprisingly simple, accepting and non-judgemental. A whole palette of feelings.

EXP: 06-11-23

1. “Describe your most interesting or relevant observation, or perception, of Panama City” - I guess that the most relevant observation/perception for me was in result of this speculations, these empty skyscrapers, dark vacant towers. It was interesting to see how many buildings are actually vacant, by night its really dark. But then you have this city building speculation super empty, combined with this central American Latina culture which is extremely vibrant. So there is these voids in the buildings with extremely lively public spaces which makes a kind of interesting image of the city.
2. White t-shirt and white shorts, with zipped pockets (to keep my wallet safe), colourful long socks (I always love them) and black running shoes. On the day I was going to a safe neighbourhood (safer neighbourhood) so I took my digital camera with me, there are certain areas of the city I don't take it because I am worried about it.
3. I visited one of the few public parks in the city, the life is really different from where we live [stayed], like they speak English instead of Spanish in the streets, there's much more international community, way

higher standard of living, skyscrapers with condos all around the park, nice cafes etc.

4. The morning I didn't have actually any, I was just walking through the park, so no really relevant discussions apart from maybe a short chat with the uber driver on the way back. But in the afternoon, we met the local architect in the larger group and she gave some very interesting insights into the city. For my research it was interesting that she said that they live in the bubbles in Panama City, then I was asking her if there's any architectural or built environment foundation for them creating the bubbles, and she said it was a very complex topic.
5. Sight – I was amazed by this skyline, I have never been in a city with these skyscrapers apart from maybe like London, but here it is completely different, there is so many of them so the skyline has had a big impact on me. Smell – We lived near [Spanish Name] which is quite a dodgy neighbourhood and there is not a proper waste management or good water management, so its very humid and they have a lot of garbage stuff in the street, so the smell is always very intense, kind of fried food and high humidity that gave the strongest sensory experience. Hearing – I would really love to be in a more silent space, we were right on the street so it was very loud in our apartment, especially these yellow taxis, you know I'm a total gringo here so they always bumped [honked] at me to try and get me as a client. Touch – the high humidity so the 30 degrees rain meant my T-shirt was very wet stuck to me. Taste – Lebanese restaurant in the evening was the taste experience of the day. Balance – I'm not sure exactly what you mean but definitely a city of not balance, in balance in every sense, it is really cliché, it is a city of extremes so there is no object of balance as I didn't see any balance.
6. It is the weirdest place I have ever visited, on the one hand you have this very kitsch production of space which follows this banal imagining, the skyline the apartments that face the ocean, the balustrades, this super high class, but still in a bad state, not full of super rich but those who try to somehow stretch their dollar. They have these kind of spaces that follow behind as a result of this numeral desire, which is extremely vibrant Latina culture.

EXP: 07-11-23

1. “Describe the salient sounds of the night in Panama City” - I think sounds are not something I was consciously aware of here, but I'll try to give an overview. To keep in mind we didn't spend (almost) any time in the night outside of Cases Viejo, so the sounds I can recall come from a very specific privileged context. They include: Subtle rolling of car tires on the newly refurbished brick pavements, occasional random shouts from residents at the end of our street, kids shouting and running around, habitual (double) honking of passing taxi drivers, checking if one needs a ride, music playing from

the balcony of Mojo Dojo with the occasional unmistakable laugh of Gosia.

2. OOTD: Plain white T-shirt / black shorts / white socks / black sneakers, black fanny bag. I brought 2 black & 4 white t-shirts which mean that I almost had a bit of a uniform thing going on. It's the lightest stuff I own which is very helpful as the last couple of days it was really hot [hot]
3. Yesterday I visited “the hill”. It is monumental and dramatic for its size, beautifully printed with antennas and a flag on its gently sloped to a “plateau”, covered in a dense forest while dominating and organising the city around its slopes.
4. We were quickly stopped at a police checkpoint in El Chorillo. I had my passport and drivers licence ready, lowered my window, said “Buenas” to the (militaristically looking) grumpy policeman. He only pointed to the back window and gestured to lower it, peeked suspiciously into the car and after let us pass. I was a little anxious but also strangely excited. But quickly forgot about it.
5. Sight – coastal wetlands in low tide on the pacific; wide, brown-grey, crossed by streams; seemingly dead next to a dense forest but very beautiful. Smell – Strong smell of garbage fouling in the midday heat. Hearing – deafening roar of a backup diesel generator on the ground floor of an office tower which suddenly appeared during a blackout. Touch – Itchy office carpet in the conference room of a local architecture firm (I sat on the floor). Taste – bitter yet amazing coffee at 7am while half asleep. Balance – sitting on the wall / balustrade at the tip of cuaco Viejo, Facing ships anchored and waiting to pass the canal while the sun is about to set behind some massive clouds to the right.
6. Panama is exciting yet not charming

EXP: 08-11-23

1. “Describe some key observations of violence and/or it traces in Panama” - Yesterday we were stopped (me, Caleb and Szymon) on our key trip to colon. Almost at Colon, the highway was blocked and we attempted to get to our destination through another secondary road. All was well initially, but as we made our way closer to the destination traffic was getting way worse. People were using stumps and car tyres (tires) to block the road. These locals appeared frustrated and had to feel some sense of power. They would stop us and let us wait for an arbitrarily long time and then let us through when ever they felt like it. After passing about six of these roadblocks, we encountered a particularly zealous figure who claimed to have killed two “gringo” professors before. After that moment we felt we had to return. But this return was anything but straight forward; again we had to pass through all the roadblocks but now on our way back. Caleb and I did not experience the situation as particularly tense since most locals that were not participating in the protests appeared to go about their business as usual. Szymon, however, felt really

trapped in the whole situation, because when stuff would get really tense there would be no way out. The best strategy appeared to be to let people have their moment of power and just calmly follow their instructions. After we made it back to the first road block, the police appeared to have finally arrived. Fire, shotguns and gasmasks calmed Szymon down as we finally felt this nonsensical operation was shut down.

2. I was wearing short cargo pants, a t-shirt and a bandana that shields my neck. Also some tactical sandals and a fanny pack with my essentials. Everyday I would carry my field recorder with me, but this day I planned to do my final rithmal in colon. So a bright Henryks JBL speaker, my laptop, my rain hat overalls, tripod, and finally my clarinet. Which in the end were pretty useless since we were too tired after the whole roadblock incident.
3. A shitshow on a local road. A whole new landscape that can only be visited during ebs [?].
4. We talked to these protestors, which was active I suppose. Most made us feel calm but this on guy kind of freaked us out. Also chilled with scott and his cousin for a bit at scott's pots.
5. Sight, a landscape wosuilly [usually] unseen. Smell, burning tyres [tires]. Hearing, little sea snails crawling back into the water. Touch, sticky restaurant tables. Taste, decent Korean food with actual vegetables. Balance unstable rocks at the exposed sea floor
6. N/A

EXP: 09-11-23

1. “Describe the place in Panama that has made you feel the calmest, in doing so reflect on the spatial, environmental and social conditions of this space” - I was actually thinking about this in the last two days and I was struggling to find a place like this. I would say it would either be my Airbnb room when no one is home or ‘the loop’. The loop is a bridge connecting the center to the southern side of Panama city, from there you see the entirety of Casco Viejo and view on the skyscrapers. There is a car lane, separated by a greenery from the cycling and pedestrian lane. There was always a couple of people (only men) running, it's a good spot for running, cause its quite long (and also I usually went there in the evening, around the time of a sunset), but there is very little shade, there are only these weird ‘bus stop’ looking bits, where you can supposedly sit and observe but because the pedestrian path is in the inner circle, it directs you to look at the city, not the sea, I could also observe the changing tide from the loop. I felt calm, because I was not surrounded by honking cars and a lot of people and dirt and just the whole I was just removed from the whole intensity of the city.
2. I was mostly wearing a swimsuit and part of the days shorts or just a towel around my waist. When we were moving I had my bag with me with 2 sandwiches we made at home for the beach, and they were a bit annoying on the way to the island, because we didn't have a proper

bag or container to carry them, we had to put them in a plastic bag and close it very tight. My camera is also a bit too heavy, so my shoulder was red from carrying it around. In my bag, I had a pencil case, notebook, bag with cards and money, gum, Icebreakers, mosquito spray, water and earphones, but I don't think this item has really impacted my comfort.

3. I don't even know the name I think! Haha. We were on a beach that was extended to the sea, connecting a small island and you could access the sea from both sides of the beach and for a second it made me think is it Atlantic on one side and Pacific on the other? Haha of course it wasn't it just made me kinda laugh in my head, how stupid of a thought this was.
4. There was this 40 something year old guy in the beach checking the shit out of me, which was flattering at first, but then, it became a bit creepy and weird, cause he was just smiling at me from [for] ages (and he was by himself) and not doing anything. (but this was a non-verbal interaction). Not approaching me or anything. But tbh I have not really talked to many locals in that day, or foreigners, only in services, but it was not a very memorable conversation.
5. Sight – the amount of ships entering the canal, we saw them from the ferry. Smell – I keep smelling this disgusting smell from the shops, smelling maybe like disinfection, but worse, artificial and I just cant figure what it is. Hearing – The waves, and the wind in the beach, quit heavy. Touch – The sand, all over my body, because it was super windy, I still have bits in my hair. Taste – The food I was making for people here, veggies, tomato sauce, capers, raisins a lot of white wine, honey, O and a pretty good job with limited amounts of ingredients.
6. I can't say how Panama is because I have mostly only seen Panama city, but from what I understood so far, very socially divided, capitalistic as fuck with people living in their own bubbles, very poor, frustrated and angry.

EXP: 10-11-23

1. “Describe some of the key physical traces of Panamanian globalisation” - It seems to me that globalisation here manifests itself the strongest in the juxtaposition of the globally known brands (starbucks, Takis etc), western design practices (skyscrapers, interiors of restaurants) with the miserable living standards of the local population.
2. Yesterday I wore shorts and a T-shirt. I try to keep it simple coz I spend a lot of time in a not very safe district. I already stand out when I go into not touristy places. I like to wear flip flops, no bag, just necessities in my pockets. I'm trying to emulate this ‘ Just walked out my house for a second’ type of a look.
3. I came back yesterday to one of my favourite places in Panama city. I wanted to show it to other students. It is just a ‘shack’ with music and drinks. Very DIY sort of place where locals come to chill together. It consists of two sheds between the trees an couple of improvised tables. What is notable about

it is the true love for music of the owner. You can also experience the community brought by the shared living situation and need to find escape from brutal life.

4. In the ‘shack’ I interacted with the locals. Since I've been here before, the owner recognised me & greeted us. he was super welcoming and said his place is our home. What really touched me is that although they are probably struggling financially, they gave us free round of beers and even one of them climbed up a palm tree to give us coconuts for free. Me and other students also danced with one of them. At the end we all hugged.
5. Sight: I saw whole districts consisting of ruined houses. Some of them were just skeletons filled with piles of rubble. Smell: Ripe, sweet smell of pineapple that was added to the fish sauce. Hearing: music, lots of music, coming out of almost every building in one of districts. Touch: glossy, hard coconut shell. Taste: fresh coconut water straight from coconut. Balance: tripped and ended up with my bare feet in a puddle, was slippery coz sewage is running down the streets.
6. Panama is a hard place to live for most of its population. There is not only poverty, but also crime. There is a lack of basic infrastructure. People live in half-demolished houses that doesn't even fully protect them from the environment.

EXP: 11-11-23

1. “Where is Panama?” - Panama, as an idea, manifests everywhere, seemingly arriving and leaving like an arcade wack-a-mole. A flight lands, a boat leaves, an exhibition opens, and an animal dies, territorially defined and tied objects exist extraterritorially.
2. I wore blue jeans, a green T-shirt with a cream half-zip jumper on top. My shoes are brown-cream pumas. I carried a woven Jumbo bag (like a potato sack) it helped me collect my groceries. Sometimes I wore a scarf or a coat, though it was so windy it often didn't help.
3. A park with many animals from across the world (from home as well), A building full of artefacts of different peoples, a field with long straight bitumen and multicoloured tails, a waterway with large boats, a suburb with town houses & apartments and many flags.
4. I spoke to Enzo about his trip to Panama, he had gone also to Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Panama city was very different to the rest of the region he said. I guess so tall maybe? I read many stories of Panama in La Prensa, and many ads.
5. Sight – Pottery I would imagine was similar to that of pre-Columbian Panama. Smell – The musty humid smell of an aquariums open pools. Hearing – The creaking automatic door that opened every time I moved. Touch – slippery/oily touch screen of a museum information stand. Taste - Plain white rice (as expected). Balance – wobbling as a I quickly slowed my bike, passing the embassy.
6. Panama is a stamp, I press upon experience.

REITERATING META-PLACE

Using my colleagues experiences as a base I reiterated the meta-place further by speculating the platial conditions as a narrative and embellished collages.

Panama is the exposed carcass, of a bastard creature, perhaps, not quite right; a mishmash & Frankensteinian interpretation of Dubai, or New York, or Madrid, or Shanghai, failed in its electrical reanimation. Though unscrupulously it lingers, as a haven for the global microbes and vermin. A body hijacked by alien predators that in their digestion, erase the tissue and ligatures of identity. Another bridge with a dying troll, whose riddle is only becoming less coherent.



However, blood seems to shift, still, under the warming hide. Flowing backwards or forwards, nervous twitches cause macroscopic shifts in the hulking mass. Perhaps this body is an autoamputated tail, in vain it awaits the regrowth of its lizard; or instead, she is the still fighting carapace of a lace-weaving spider, her children bite but she continues to squirm. Is she destined for consumption?



Either way her name, is the stamp we press upon experience, what is Panamanian, what is "of Panama". This cloud becomes Panama, and this fish; this tree too, the pots and figures on the museum display screen bear her nametag, and the boats and planes her signature. These images have her coordinates tapped to .jpg. But this room doesn't. It's Africa, Indonesia, and Australia; Wait, we have reached the Maya and Aztecs. "Central American, perhaps close enough" I say as I plant the red and blue stars. You see typical Panamanian Architecture looks just like a Dutch townhouse, its endemic mangroves just like the Port Jackson wetlands, its towers just like the condos of Marina Bay and its people just like the Cariocas of Rio, because Panama is what it isn't, when you're standing here.

Her exquisite corpse is a serrated collection of foreign surfaces, that delineate the atomic edges of our habitat. Her inroads desecrate the land, and the biotic desecrates her. This mess is the intrigue, partly because of its imminence; the jungle invades faster than the prairie or the temperate forest. The ruined is beautiful until we can see in it 'our' homes, and shops and schools. The human condition overrides the divinity of nature and as our control is lost, we recede back to the caves and wheels and fires from which we came. Scared creatures haunted by a food chain in which we are once again included.

Perhaps the junkie will reclaim it all, but what will he have, an empty cage of fleshless bone? Or can the mess auto-regulate? Can we exist in a place of pushing and pulling that in its territorial gradation might not be a mess after all? Or will we forever appropriate ourselves as the exception, outside of the ecosystem but on the land we have taken from it, batting away the hand nature extends and specifying the world as a milky oyster we seek to season and slurp.



This further investigation of meta-place clarified Panama as an intersection of temporal and spatial contests. It exists not just between extremes but because of these active tensions of the extremes. For example, the logical grid of the city competes against the creeping tendrils of the jungle, the high-rise expat community contests the urban local society, the longitudinal path of the Panama Canal competes against the latitudinal path of the landmass etc. Further, these studies not only produced meta-place, but they also highlighted its value. My attempt to create place from a distance was not constructive, whereas the meta-place informed by my colleagues allowed my preconceptions to be challenged adjacent to physically experiencing a site, while also providing a more wholistic image.



THEORY COLLECTION

While my theoretical position had been evolving from the beginning of this project, I formalised my threads of interest in the below fragments of text. At this point my position continues to evolve, as I learn more about the site and my project develops.

MY PLACE OR YOURS?

“My place or yours?” is a mundane organisational query I have often shot from my lips, without a second thought. However once removed from its conversational context it morphs into a geospatial dilemma in which we question whose world we live in? who gets to shape it? And the role of the architect within it all. To answer these we must first understand how the individual defines and produces ‘place’ in service of their habitation.

In the mid-1950’s psychologist George Kelly proposed Personal Construct Theory (PCT), the idea that in our perception and experience of the world people actually construct knowledge (*Fransella (ed.), 2003, pp.21-32*) This idea was a sharp departure from the previously accepted belief that we passively absorb pre-constructed knowledge, and has since become particularly valued in education and clinical psychology. Kelly’s key analogy asserts that humans act as benign scientists in their interaction with the ontic, hypothesising, experimenting and reassessing experiences as they navigate the world. In doing so they assess what Kelly referred to as ‘constructs’ (what we may call concepts) (*Shaw & Gaines, 1992*) against bipolarities. These Bipolarities exist like bricks in a building, each brick constructing our knowledge, (*Jones, 2022*) that knowledge

being our own known reality (*Towner, 2022*) He went further to geometrise this framework of understanding further clarifying his theory as he presented a representation of our mental space. Finally, he hypothesises how this mechanism of knowledge formation produces our emotions and state of being. His work challenged the discourse of the time, particularly as it unified the psychological assessment consistently across societal divisions. Rather than viewing the ambitions of people as inherent traits to them (*Fransella (ed.), 2003, pp. 41-49*) (a king was born to rule, or a slave to serve), or separating the impetus of the scientist from the common person (*Fransella (ed.), 2003, pp. 33-39*) (Plato asserting that only the philosopher could see beyond the shadows on the cave wall(*Cohen, 2006*)), Kelly presented a theory in which humanity can be assessed in its totality and importantly views the individual as neither good or evil, but mobile in our ethics and being. This is important as it consequently implies that not only can our being change, but so can our knowledge and perceived reality.

Kellys Theory of Personal Constructs can be advanced to better understand how we interpret space. Space, once perceived, can exist in our minds as a knowledge on the same dichotic planes as all other concepts described by Kelly. This perception of a space

(stimuli) and its transformation into knowledge (percept) requires classification, which inherently causes the perceiver to project part of their being onto the space. For example, if you were to enter my residence you may subconsciously label it ‘a house’ whereas from my perspective I would see ‘a home’, though it is a subtle difference, the language comes with distinct connotations which in themselves are unique to the individual. This constitutes a naming or an identifying of a delineated region of space which I see as producing ‘place’. The discourse surrounding the definition of Place is expansive from Aristotle (*Matthen, 2003, June 2*) to Doreen Massey, (*Hubbard et al. (ed.), 2004, pp. 219-225*) many having attempted to either encapsulate the concept or at least define a partial sect. Multiple Phenomenologists have addressed Place, like Edward S. Casey (*Casey, 1997*) and David Seamon. The latter rebutting multiple positivist definitions of Place that he believed stripped the concept of its “experiential aspects” which he asserts the phenomenological understanding of Place as an ‘essence’ does not (*Seamon, 1987*). Even in the field of diction the understanding of Place is ambiguous, with the Merriam-webster synonymising it with space (*Merriam-Webster, n.d.*) and Cambridge dictionary defining it as “an area, town, building, etc.:" (*Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.*) leaving the reader to infer the blanks. Perhaps, this is part of the allure of place, its expanse of discussion and impact juxtaposed by its undefinable (or at least unagreeable) nature. Therefore, rather than working from a set definition of what Place is, I am presenting place as an inevitable consequence perception. It is a product of interpretation, meaning that while common ideas shared among collectives can contribute to place, the actual physical ‘Place’ exists as a purely individual and automatic interpretation of space. We have now wandered back to the main

question “My place or yours?”. If the places we make are unique to the individual, how can the architect ever be expected to intervene correctly in someone else’s ‘place’? I believe the architects role is to go beyond. Not to exclude themselves but instead actively form their own place composed of other places, rather than space, a meta-place. Like a translator infers the meaning of a sentence rather than directly translating it, the architect must curate the meaning of the meta-place, by understanding the many individual places it grafts, and weight these truths accordingly.

SLURPING THE OYSTER

Thanks to William Shakespeare, (*MIT international students office, n.d.*) the phrase “the world is your oyster” has been recited to a great mass of anglophone teenagers during their transition into adulthood. While it may seem benign, the same metaphor used to encourage us to seize life’s opportunities can also be used to denote the horrifying imbalance consumerist global society continues to punish the planet with. We have already extracted the pearl, and as we continue to heavy handedly stretch the shell, we will find ourselves left with nothing but a milky mollusc to fight over. But what has led us here and what does it mean for the Places we inhabit, and the people who design them?

As humanity hunches over the greatest prey of its existence, teeth bared, ready for dinner (perhaps the last one we will ever have), we sport the same face and predatory instinct we have spent so long attempting to banish to the animal kingdom. One Google search and you can find hundreds of articles, from universities (*Stockholm University, 2023*) and newspapers (*Rutherford, 2018*) to social media (*Reddit, n.d.*) and blogs (*Buskell, 2016*)

explaining what makes us so different from the lowly fauna that surrounds us. Many of these articles presenting age old western ideas of the human ability of “logos”, (*Samuelson, .n.d.*) divine rights imparted upon us (*Britannica, n.d.*) or other vague distinguishing aspects that define our anthropological superiority. However, perhaps it is not the differences we should be so deeply focused upon. Our story is still that of survival, despite not having a predator to compete against. We are attempting to not just preserve our status but to grow larger and more powerful. We see this among nations as we attempt to build bigger economies (*Goodley, 2023*), bigger territories (*Cano & Coto, 2023*) and bigger militaries (*Murakami, 2023*). Perpetuating this idea that if we extract more we can produce more and we will be more. Concurrently, our instinct to overcome a threat that is no longer there becomes evident in the habitation of humanity as a whole. The particularly western ideal of environmental domination (projected globally due to western hegemony (*Gamble, 2009*)) means we are pacifying our ecosystems, reducing biodiversity, apex predator numbers and conveniently neglecting our own role in them. This can be seen in South-East Australia where the banning of indigenous land management techniques has completely altered what is considered ‘natural’ and potentially contributed to worsening catastrophic bushfires (*Fletcher et al., 2021*). Similarly, deforestation in Amazonia is having a noticeable effect upon the continuing drought in Central America and the Amazon, with the loss of tree cover impacting the water retention of the soil and the weather patterns the rainforests immense size creates (*De Castro, 2023*). Towering upon our precipice we look down saying “we must continue to grow sustainably!” but at the height we have reached is that even possible? We are

destroying the planet now, any taller and like Icarus we will have reached the sun. We already exist and consume at a size that ensure even sustainable moves damage planetary systems, or even worse create unknown change. Like in the North Sea where the great density of wind farms is altering wind patterns (*Akhtar et al., 2022*). In order to grow we inevitably destroy, whether that be the planet or us, by nuclear war, climate disaster, the biodiversity collapse or another item listed among the 90 seconds we have left until midnight (*Mecklin, 2023*).

Humanity becomes the Ouroboros, consuming ourselves in our consumption. But perhaps this can become our solution. Like the Ouroboros, we can ask, once consumed do we disappear? or do we become more of ourselves? This is a conscious decision for humanity to make, to live outside of the ecosystem only seems to ensure we disappear, but to be within it not only would we be fighting for our survival but so would the world we are currently destroying. To be apart of the ecosystem is to create balance, becoming more of ourself in our consumption.

I WENT TO PANAMA AND ALL I GOT WERE PERCEPTIONS!

A dark leather Moleskine sealed by twine, opens via a dissected central laceration, revealing that “I went to Panama and all I got were perceptions!” (*Jerome, 2023*). It is this notebook that entered the Republic of Panama while it was myself who received the perceptions, handed to me as a jumble of answered questions, Panamanian artefacts, and extra-territorial representations. My perception of Place-Panama exists only as a conglomeration of other Places, or as I’ve previously defined, Panama the meta-place. In this way it manifests as both an omnispatial

and aspatial gradation of experienced conditions. But how is this meta-place actually produced? And with what rigor can we be certain the reality of Panama is encapsulated? John Berger’s series *Ways of Seeing*, explores the reality of art as a repercievable representation (*Berger, 1972*). Depending on your perspective, and the works context, the meaning inferred changes. This concept can be advanced upon the rest of reality, for example if I were to find a couch in the middle of a remote forest, the initial connotations of relaxation, comfort, and home may be overturned by its contextual juxtaposition instead becoming, unsettling, uncomfortable and haunting. However, in its removal from its ‘regular’ context (the living room), the object becomes clearer in its being with perhaps fabric stains, or the plumpness of the pillows becoming more salient. This kind of information is often gathered automatically and almost instantaneously by the neurotypical brain (*Oxford Reference, n.d.*). As you perceive the world, your brain enforces presemantic classifications upon scenes and objects within them (*Castelhano & Krzyś, 2020*) and particularly when you meet experiences that challenge your subconscious expectations, your brain will seek further information to reach a classification.

To do this, we employ two key ways of sensing, the gaze, and the glance. While often associated with vision exclusively, I will be referring to these concepts in relation to all our senses. The glance is any moment in which we perceive a space without gazing upon it, rather than a neatly definable action (*Bredlau, 2007*). It is the short few seconds that we provide presemantic definition to reality (*Fei Fei et al., 2007*), I know I am writing in my dining room because upon my entry to the space I glanced its reality as the dining room. Therefore, the glance exists as a perception of the breadth of

our proximal reality, defining our expectations for the space and in turn our reaction when these expectations are challenged (*Shawn & Gaines, 1992*). Conversely, the gaze is a measure of the depth of reality. Objects within are focused upon more intentionally, whether that be triggered autonomously or by the glance itself (*Gronau, 2020*). We gaze upon items to seek further understanding and knowledge, and in doing so recategorize or create new categories to define the item in mental space. Edward S. Casey presents these two concepts as the antithesis to one another, the glance being an exploratory encapsulation of reality, and the gaze a lingering divisionary of reality (*Bredlau, 2007*). But in this way, they become a complementary duo, one no more necessary than the other. When combined the glance delineates place, and the gaze gives it volume.

My study of Panama, has leveraged both to best inform the meta-place. In my collection of data, I asked a set of questions to a different colleague every day they travelled there. These exist as my glance upon their place, what they wrote are the few seconds I must sense, and what I have left is a classifiable impression of place which I cannot gaze upon in the same dimension. However, I may gaze upon the text-object itself, attempting to infer more information from the formation of the provided glance. Concurrently I searched for Panamanian artefacts, both virtually and in physically which I was able to gaze upon, whether that be an Iguana in a zoo, or textile in a museum, these objects are inspected as residents of Panama providing depth to place. Territorial extensions were also identified, like the Panamanian Embassy and sighting a Panamanian flagged ship, these again act as glanced scene that received the classification of ‘Panama’. Finally, standard research upon the place act as an enduring gaze, in which

I continue to deepen the meta-place. This conglomeration of tactics gazing and glancing upon place become not just a collage, but an exquisite corpse.

The exquisite corpse is a surrealist production method in which multiple creators produce and then conceal part of their work before passing it to the next person (*MOMA, n.d.*).

The final product becomes I direct expression of each person's whim at that time, arbitrary in its expression. Though it is often disregarded, arbitrariness is a common thread in the fabric of reality. Like the accepted randomness of Meiosis within sex cells (*Scitable by nature education, n.d.*), the existentialist belief in the inherent absurdity of the world (*Burnham, n.d.*) or the religiously associated understanding of fate. Humans have taken randomness and in one way or another treated it with a divine, unknowable, and anti-anthropological quality. Taking a more phenomenological approach (*Kidd, 2014*) to this study, I'm not seeking to remove the intuitive nature of production, but instead understand and even elevate the divine mess it creates. Because inherently place as previously discussed forms from a knowledge of space, but like all knowledge I cannot know what I do not know, without knowing it first (*Towner, 2011*). Further I can seek knowledge, but I cannot know what I will find. Meaning in the production of place and in turn the production of meta-place, the absurdity inherent in acquiring knowledge is always present, and perhaps contributory to what make Places so important. The sense that we can continue to discover more or that we may know a secret knowledge about a Place, is part of its desirable quality as a construct (*Harbison, 1977*). Therefore, the very act of continuously seeking knowledge about Panama will never be enough to encapsulate the grand entirety of it as a 'place', but even capturing a sliver using this methodology is enough to retain its Platian quality and define a path of intervention.

MODI OPERANDI 1

At this point, Panama's meta-place defines an overarching tension (contest) between a centralised, top-down, facet that counters a decentralised bottom-up facet. To further explore this as part of the Modi Operandi workshop, I focused on re-perceiving aspects of the meta-place in relation to a specific site. Boca la Caja is a suburb in Panama City that has the urban structure of an informal settlement. It is surrounded by the vast towers and urban grids of the city with the previously described tension playing out on its fringes. To explore this within the framework of meta-place I first carved the multi-angular roofscape of Boca La Caja into a plate of linoleum. I cut deep through the unstructured, brittle linoleum to the stretchy grided burlap backing. To retain the carved relationships of the top layer, the bottom layer needed to be kept intact, but to do this the top layer had to be retained in specific locations. Like the contests of Panama, the two layers have antithetical properties, yet rather than competing they are incapable of functioning without one another.

Boca La Caja roofscape
Carved in Linoleum.



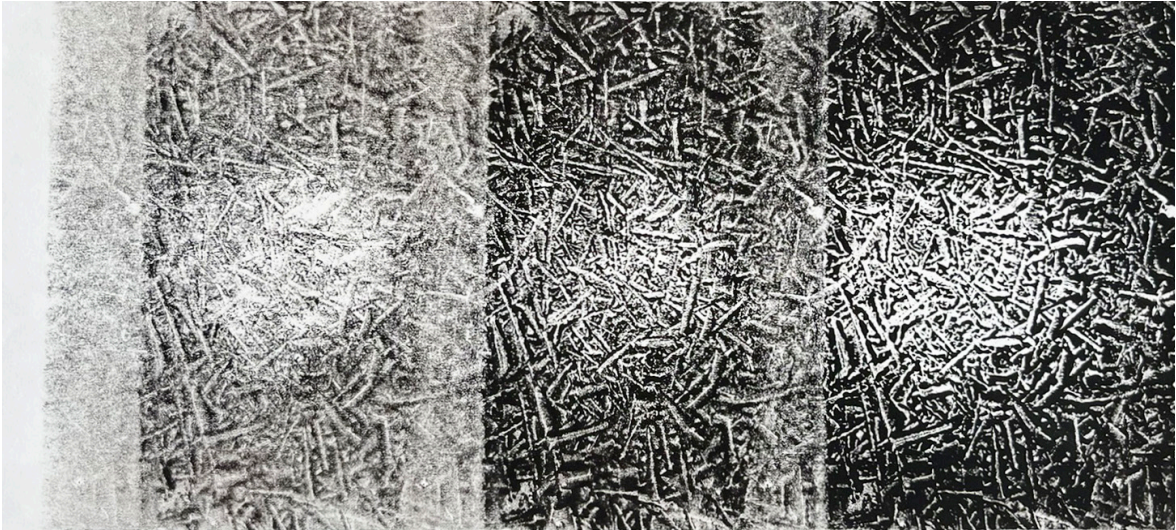
MODI OPERANDI 2

Expanding on this I repeated the task, but rather than taking the direct platial conditions uncovered by gazing at Boca la Caja, I took the glanced understanding of the roofscape and intuitively carved it into the einstein shape, which I then printed with ink on paper. The geometric properties of this shape produced both a non-repeating pattern, and a random but repeating image. Not only does this reiterate the previous finding, like Panama, it is evident the printed linoleum could not exist as the same object without the antithetical forces it produces.

Non-repeating regular print of Einstein shape.



Boca La Caja inspired roofscape carved into linoleum Einstein shape.



Repeating regular print from inking the Einstein shape.

MODI OPERANDI 3

Finally, I took this idea of inevitable production, and created a fabric torus, that could roll inwards. I added ink to my hands and as I rolled printed onto the surface of object. Concurrently, the folding of the object at its centre meant it would also print onto itself, in a unique fashion each time. In doing so, the once antithetical forces of production united and began to not only produce each other but also the object. What was originally a contest had become more so a cycle.



Map of proposed site (colour) at the contested edge of Boca La Caja.



PROJECT ADVANCEMENT

The collection of these meta-place studies uncovers that Panama produces and is produced by contests between antithetical forces. Further within the contests each force would not exist without the other, and Panama would not be itself without the contests. Finally, a contest implies the possibility of a winner, but winning would be mutually destructive for all parties. Viewing Boca La Caja through this knowledge reidentifies the site as an integral yet waning urban system being consumed by the production of grids and towers. Therefore, in order to retain the competition, and retain Panama, Boca La Caja must be able to consume back.

Printed fabric torus under mechanical rotation.

PROPOSED INTERVENTION

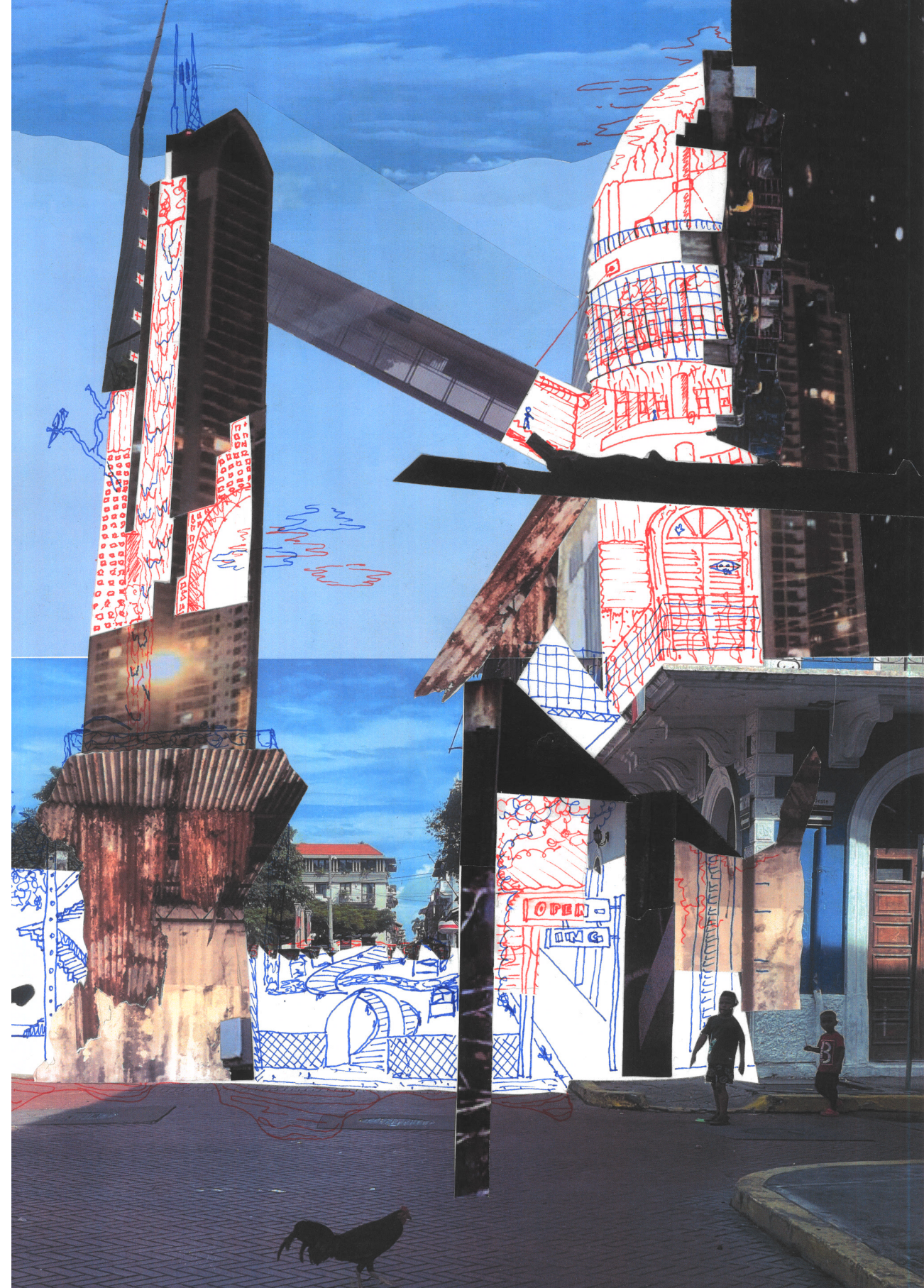
I intend to produce an architectural intervention that will assist the growth of Boca La Caja's urban system by actively consuming its grided competitor. However, the grids and towers will remain capable of consuming boca la Caja. Rather than one side winning, both will win, and both will lose, reforming the competition from a linear battle to a cycle of change. It becomes the Ouroboros, renewing itself rather than straddling destruction. Learning from the production of meta-place, I intend for my structure to be a catalyst rather than a facilitator of this cycle. Therefore, after initiating the self-perpetuation, it would be consumed by that same system.

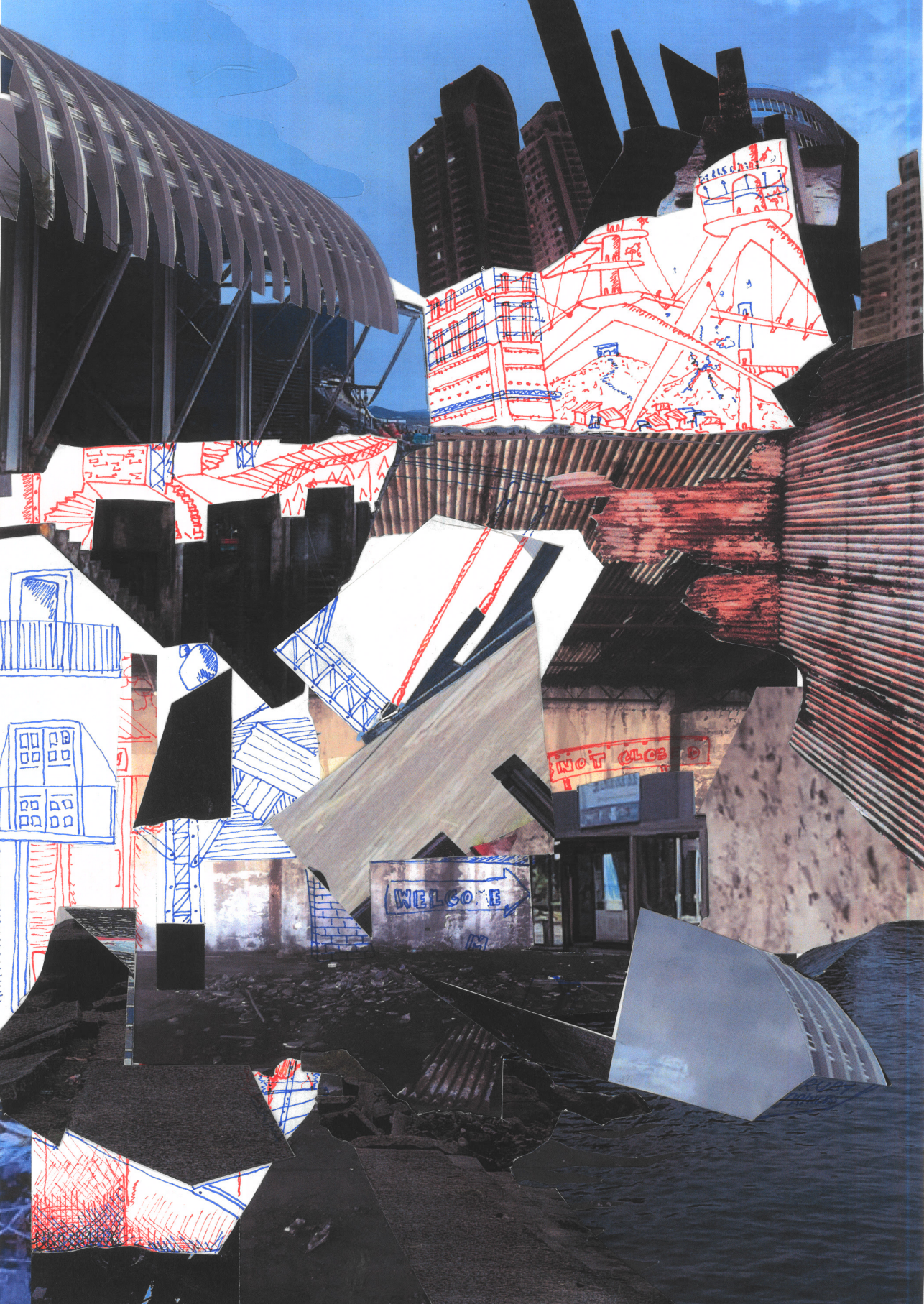
The program will consist of three functions:

1. A monitoring station – This will utilise the glance and the gaze as wholistic techniques of observation to monitor the tension of the contest, ensuring both urban systems are moving towards balance.
2. Tool of destruction – This system will actively destroy or alter parts of the city that are delineated by the perpetuation lab. It will not consist of one method of destruction but will facilitate a multiplicity of yet to be defined ways of destroying, that prioritise reuse of material. It can be thought of as recycling centre.
3. Perpetuation Lab – This space will focus on ensuring the systems longevity and growth. Therefore, they will study the outcomes of the process in order to alter it with the goal of self-perpetuation. Further they will use a yet to be defined system to decide on which parts of the city to destroy. Its goal is not destruction for destructions sake, instead destruction for revitalisation, balance and the retention of the competitive cycle.

All three structures will be located on the current territorial edge between Boca La Caja and its surrounding grid. After catalysing the first cycle of destruction, the buildings themselves will be consumed. The idea being that they are the first and last step in producing a self-perpetuating system. Therefore, the design of the structures will keep in mind its eventual destruction. An example of a building that functions similarly is the Temple at Burning Man Festival, which facilitates the festival experience only for it to be burnt to the ground on the final day. Moving forward, I will locate the exact site of these structures as I better define the systems that will facilitate their function, like the rationale for areas to be destroyed and the method of destruction. Further I will be designing all three structures using architectural systems that reflect their function as protectors of the cities essence rather than destroyers of its form. The final forms should also reflect their origin as findings from the meta-place by assisting in the production of new facets of place, actively contributing to the meta-place.

Front page, right, & back are all collaged examples of how layers of destruction and reconstruction will alter the experience of the city.





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