

/The assemble

A complementation of the transition space

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/Interlude

The assets in Architecture

To investigate further the Transition space/liminal phase as an architectural concept, it should include the discussion in relation with some indispensable architectural elements; the floor, wall, roof and column. Admitting that these elements rarely appear individually in our (built) environment, they do spatially take control of the built environment.

The subsequent paragraph is an interlude within the conceptualization of transition space, deliberating the individual architectural element in relation to movement (transition). The performance which will define this element in action will be movement. The goal of this interlude is an understanding of the element and what it can afford towards its relation with the individual.

A 'place' is established by a configuration of architectural elements that seems (to the mind informed by its senses) to accommodate, or offer the possibility of accommodation to, a person, an object, an activity, a mood, a spirit, a god. (Simon Unwin, p.33)

“le Corbusier also reduced modern architecture to five fundamental elements, the flat roof, stilts, elongated windows, the free façade, and the free plan” (Bernard Cache)



Casa Wabi | Tadao Ando | Mexico

In making for ourselves a place to live, we spread a parasol to throw a shadow on earth, and in the pale light of the shadow we put together a house (Tanizaki, 1977, p.17)



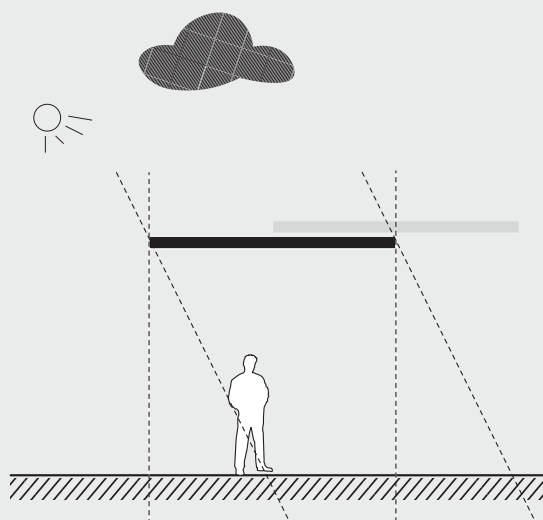
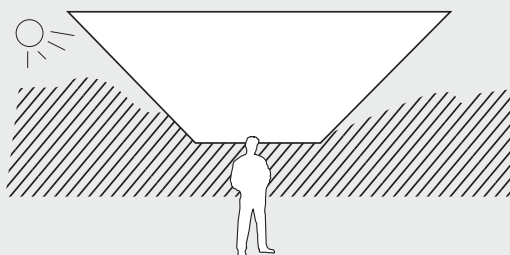
Lisbon, park | Photograph by Author

/The roof

The protector of our activities, the roof has the quality of dividing, creating shelter and to imply areas of ground. The field of shadow, field of dry, or the direct surface underneath the roof. As Tanzaki mentioned in his book “In praise of Shadows” (1977), where he specifies on traditional architecture and its aesthetics, he shows the contrast with western Cultures and their use of elements. He raises the interesting note that Japanese architects see the roof as one of the most important elements. The large eaves of the roofs, the use of material, which has as well aesthetic reasons, eject their shadows on everything which is below creating an elementary space of playing with darkness and light that manifest place of inhabitation and intimacy.

This mediation of the elements in Japanese architecture plays with papered panels, doors and walls. The external conditions which create interesting and specific connotations and views on the roof as concept.

This shows as well the different interpretations and degrees of importance of the architectural elements in a cultural framework. The gravity of the roof always needs a way of support, which is provided by the two other assets, the column and/or the wall.



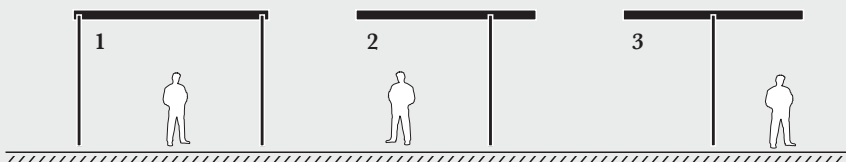
Basic features of the roof | Illustration by Author

Imagining; The Roof

As I was imagining the different moments in which a roof could appear I could not stop drawing, they are endless. Below I drew the most basic possibilities, which are still open for interpretation and are not related to specific situations. Although, I could think of some possibilities;

1. The roof with two structural elements, is most common and could be related to our enclosed homes, workspaces and so on...
2. As one of the sides is opened, it gives me the feeling of being semi-outside and the roof could be functioning as a protector but as well affords gathering and hospitality with the passer-by.
3. In the middle a divider, but at the same time being a connector or maybe a bus stop where the bus could stop on both sides. As well an exhibition could take place and so on...

The roof is an element, which could offer so much more than just a protection. It could activate social encounter or a moment of rest



/The floor

The guide through our daily life, it affords us as individuals to move through the environment. The negotiator of the body and the surface, each step is connected to its surface. The most ordinary element in architecture is perhaps the floor, the general assumption and often a starting point during daily life.

The definition of “floor” arises from Middle English, but founded in the Old English as “Flor” (1.000 AD) with the collective meaning of floor, ground, pavement and bottom (of the sea/lake), which is as well related to indoors and outdoor conditions (Oxford English dictionary).



Olafur Eliasson | the sun | Tate modern

Where laying on the floor becomes the most appropriate place for seeing art

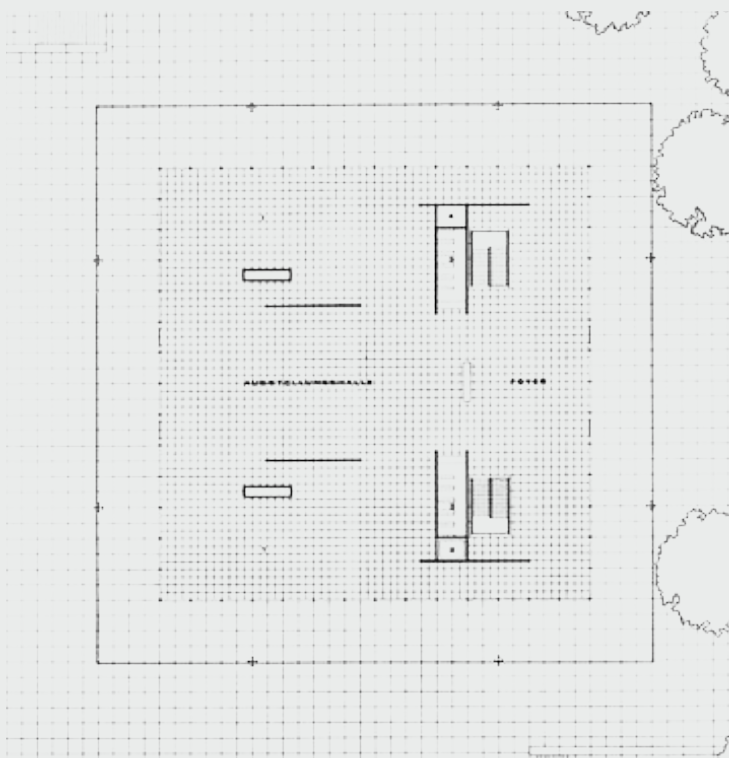


Olafur Eliasson | the sun | Tate modern

Beside affording us to move through space, the floor as well can be seen as a communicator in space. It can communicate and indicate new spaces by level change or different patterns (Koolhaas, 2013). As well the floor, with or without tiling it is the support towards the vertical connection. It works as a container for the more primal or/and compelling desires.

As floors, without change of levels, are also used to indicate a direction, difference of function or belonging. We get more creative and the role of the floor became again more important as architectural element. (Latour, 1993).

The floor can also be seen as a platform (moment of separating the dirt from the clean), the strength it create in religious setting, courtyards, an universal technology for separation (Koolhaas, 2013) and the indication of something new/different.



Mies van der Rohe | Plan of the Neue National Gallery

Imagining; The Floor

The floor, the main object of transition, is everywhere. Outside, inside in the bathroom and so on... The materials and patterns which form the visible and perceptible perspective of the floor. It gives us information of where to walk, to cycle and to wait for the bus. But also the change of flooring gives us information and can indicate functions. This can be visible and feasible in haptic changes, but visual patterns can create this difference either.

The floor plan of the Neue National Gallery in Berlin from architect Mies van de Rohe, shows the typical details of the plan, like columns, walls. But here he decided, because of it's liminal use of elements to draw the floor tiles as well. Without this addition the drawing will be unreadable. This example shows the influence and importance of flooring for experience.

The materialisation, the precision of details and their influence on our perception and conception of space is as important as the implementations of the elements itself.





Monte Alban | Jorn Utzon

Imagining; The Floor as platform

A new perspective on the surroundings; 'platform'. It defines places, without enclosing it.

“By introducing the platform with its level at the same height as the jungle top, these people had suddenly obtained a new dimension of life... They had from here the sky, the clouds and the breeze, and suddenly the jungle roof had been converted into a great open plain —

— By this architectural trick they had completely changed the landscape and supplied their visual life with greatness, corresponding to the greatness of their Gods.” (J. Utzon, 1962)

The platform can create an extra dimension in the perception and the experience of a city, landscape, approach, building and the interior. It is the leader of thresholds.



Pier Vittorio & Martino Tattara | Stop city | 2017

/The wall & the Column

The wall has different meaning in relation to space and place, it provides structures (frameworks) and divides and separates. These two different functions can be separated as well; the wall as construction, separating the roof from the ground (Koolhaas, 2013); the partition wall, functioning as a container structuring the movement of people, resulting in different contained spaces.

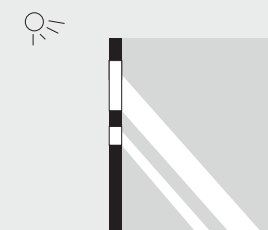
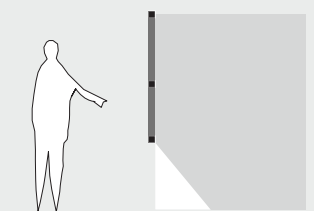
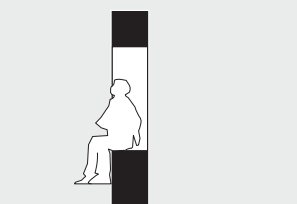
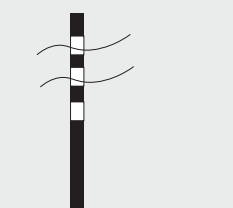
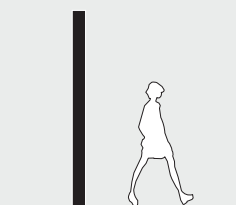
The wall as structure is in architecture needed to create shelter, in combination with the roof. Looking back in history, the wall relates to the hanging fabric of tents, where it suggested and defined communities. The more social spaces are seen as primary, suggesting its dynamics and temporality. The function of the wall evaluated over time and became a prime element in the household and the built environment, it divided the public from the private. The increasing standards of the modernization and individualism resulted in even more walls and more structured floor plans.

Related to the movie “playtime”, which is mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the wall had and still has different roles in the world of architecture. In the time of the fire place we had open plans, which were connected in a way to the central space, for heating. “The interiors of that time consisted of boxes beside or inside other boxes, called rooms” (Frank Lloyd Wright, ca. 1950). Like Adolf Loos, who designed villa Muller in Prague, he used the constructive wall as an interior element and with this created a pleasant open space.

In lots of papers the column and wall are discussed as being either the same or totally different. The two architectural elements have in common that they are both structural, supportive and load-bearing. As the walls are mainly used for the separation and enclosure of space, the column suggests doing the same but is seen as a more connecting and welcoming element in architecture, it visibly lost its role of being structural. To imagine that the column could be something different; A row of columns are not creating a wall, but at the same time have the capability of forming a boundary and a threshold, meaning that a multiplication of the architectural element can function as- and create a new entity. They create a boundary which is delimiting and at the same time permeable.



Pezo von Ellrichshausen | labyrinthine pavilion



Illustrations of the Wall | Drawing by Author

Imagining; The affordances of the wall

A wall as being a static, a separator and at the same time a connector. The wall could be used as an element towards a more experimental architecture, it could be a/an; leader, attendant, blockage, seeker, divider, inclusion, seat and so on... “the wall” is used here as an abbreviation of different kinds of barrier dividing two different spaces, as well as the psychological barrier: the fence, dyke, moat, line... Different architectural elements have their power, but the wall is one which leads and contains the division. Often this is related to negatively; it restricts, directs you instead of allowing free movement.

As stated before the wall has different faces and interpretations, being structural and creating structure for the movement of people... But the wall sometimes can create an experiment, where you keep on searching and finding new spaces by movement. (Pezo von Ellrichhausen). Or the wall itself becomes a social place, because of the depth of the window, affording sitting, leaning or laying.

The wall, static as it is, it has the potential to become so much more than a separator. On the left a few imaginations of what a wall could be on its own...

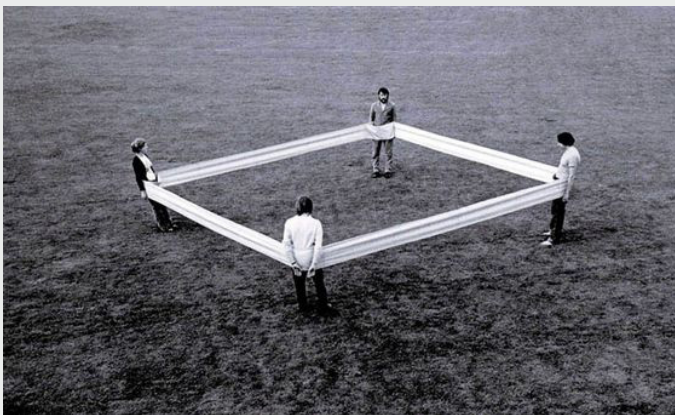


Guna house | Pezo von Ellrichshausen | Archello

Imagining; The individual Column

The Column, an object which is strongly related to structure. In combination with other architectural elements it arose in our environment.

You remember these moments of being young and building your own tents, using different points of reference in the room as a column; to keep the fabric lifted. Lifting a platform with a group of friends, we all become a column. To lift and to connect, we can create spaces underneath and around it. Such as the stick of the umbrella, the stick and the fabric are capable of protecting us. The column comes in all different kinds of scales; creating lifted highways, facilitating corridors, affording us to sit properly around the tabletop and so on...



Vier Körpergewichte (Four Body Weights) | Corps



Curtain Wall House| Tokyo | 1995

Completion

During transition, we are confronted by lots of different compositions of architectural elements. Because of this the understanding of the basic elements and their affordances is important while designing and thinking of space and place. Seeing these elements separate and in combination gives us information and allows imagination for new relations.

//The view on objects and relations

Bridge and door, by George Simmel

Georg Simmel in his essay discusses two different objects from the everyday life of the human being; the bridge and the door. He translates this object with the symbolic meaning behind them. Besides looking at the physical meaning of the object he refers also to the impact of human experience on space.

Simmel starts with the recognition of the bridge's function, connecting otherwise parted things. Acknowledging this fact, he seeks in-depth meaning and suggests that the real connectedness is the presence of underlining it's own essential. Perceiving the bridge, seeing a bridge lets people think of the separation it bridges, in the absence of a better word, while the viewer feels the connection of separation. The bridge represents always the emphasis unity or solidarity.

With the door however, the emphasis falls on the division of things rather than them being a unity. The door as element embodies the unity and the division and ultimately represents the capability of humans to express the configuration of space. The placing of the door which is done by humans emphasizes, isolates and confronts. The door as situated elements empowers the human. As well the door empowers the human to take control of it when the human wants to be isolated or connected.

“By virtue of the fact that the door forms, as it were, a linkage between the space of human beings and everything that remains outside it, it transcends the separation between the inner and the outer.” (George Simmel, 19..)



/Transitional objects as tool of thinking

The affordances of the system

This research shows, that the transition space is an important mediator; physically as well as mentally. The transition is possible by several architectural elements and compositions, which evolved and developed over time. Unconsciously, we use them every day, even as you read this. The different researches and insights during this journey, learned me how to look with lots of precision towards the broad world of architecture.

The literary as well as the physical research extracted different important architectural elements which forms these transition spaces. Seeing these elements on photographs or in daily situations doesn't allow you to see the potential of the element or composition. For this, a few of the transition elements are selected, which arise from the research and are formed into several small plaster models. The five selected elements are; the arch, ramps, stairs, wall, floor and roof. These elements are duplicated to increase the possibilities and variety of compositions.

These models are made to show and to use as design tool. It shows the interminable of the elements and its compositions. Also, it gives the opportunity to look beyond the architectural element and bring forward the affordances.

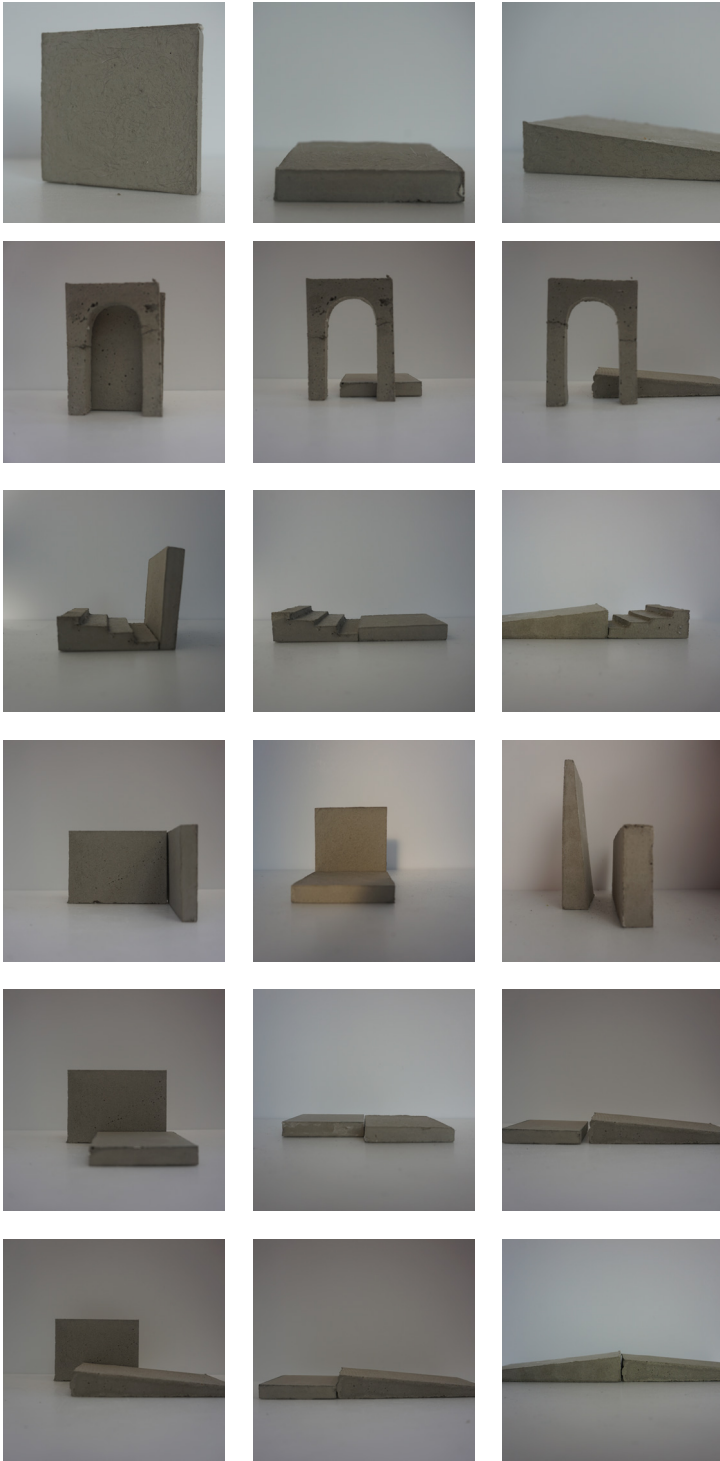


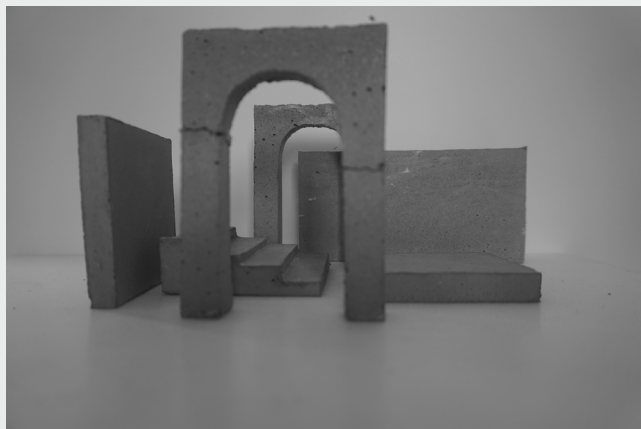
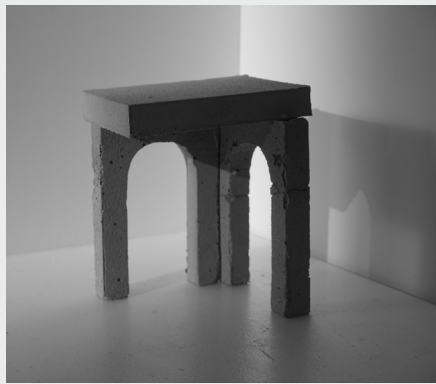
The Arch and the stairs | Photograph by Author

/Matrix of elements

A never ending exploration







Imagining; The affordances of the elements

To have a better understanding of the form and possible function, I used these elements in combination of separately for experimentations with new possible combinations.

These combinations are endless but trigger the creative mind for new affordances. These elements, separately and in combination will be used in the design process to express ideas and to inspire others.



/Complementation

What is learned and what to use towards a more experimental architecture

The transition spaces can be a multiplicity of things and can perform in lots of diverse ways.

Often they are more static or even formalised, but when you think about them they are also dynamic.

In its formalised form, space could be experienced and delimit different environments spatially. Its delimitation, in the form of architecture, influences the behavioural domain, it becomes ordinary. Here these formalised spaces are used to limit, affect and have control over our behaviour, physically and mentally. Our direct environment forms the way we are, it can be seen as a reflection of our behaviour

The basic architectural elements, separately or in composition, create these enclosed spaces. These define structures and regulate our behavioural systems. Besides being formalised, they can also become conceptual structures. Being in a formalised form, they enable the possibility to stimulate new things to happen. The organised systems and rhythms, creates this hierarchy in our built environment. The disposition of these architectural elements can change our behaviour and possibly our lives. New structures and compositions could change our frame of reference and make spaces for a more dynamic, complex and relational architecture. These changes could open up instabilities, create and afford possible new interpretations of place and space. Besides looking at the elements or compositions, the influence of haptic conditions in this situation could add information and change the physical and mental experience. Those conditions are strongly related, in the sense that they encourage new relations and unconscious behaviour.

Each of these changes or additions give extra meaning to a more perceptible and conceptual transitional architecture opposed the current formalised state. A transition space is space we forget and take for granted over time. This space could be the first step towards more relation and could act as a mediator between static functions.



Infinite motif series | Pezo von Ellrichhausen

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/The sensitivity and precision of the experience

You began by following a gently winding path to the left of which there rose up, very gradually, with an extreme nonchalance even, a slight declivity that was oblique to start with but which slowly approached the vertical. Bit by bit, as if by chance, without thinking, without your having any right at any given moment to declare that you had remarked anything like a transition, an interruption, a passage, a break in continuity, the path became stony, that's to say that at first there was only grass, then there began to be stones in the middle of the grass, then there were a few more stones and it became like a paved, grassy walkway, while on your left, the slope of the ground began to resemble, very vaguely, a low wall, then a wall made of crazy paving. Then there appeared something like an open-work roof that was practically indissociable from the vegetation that had invaded it. In actual fact, it was already too late to know whether you were indoors or out. At the end of the path, the paving stones were set edge to edge and you found yourself in what is customarily called an entrance-hall, which opened directly on to a fairly enormous room that ended in one direction on a terrace graced by a large swimming pool.

Georges Perec, (1997)