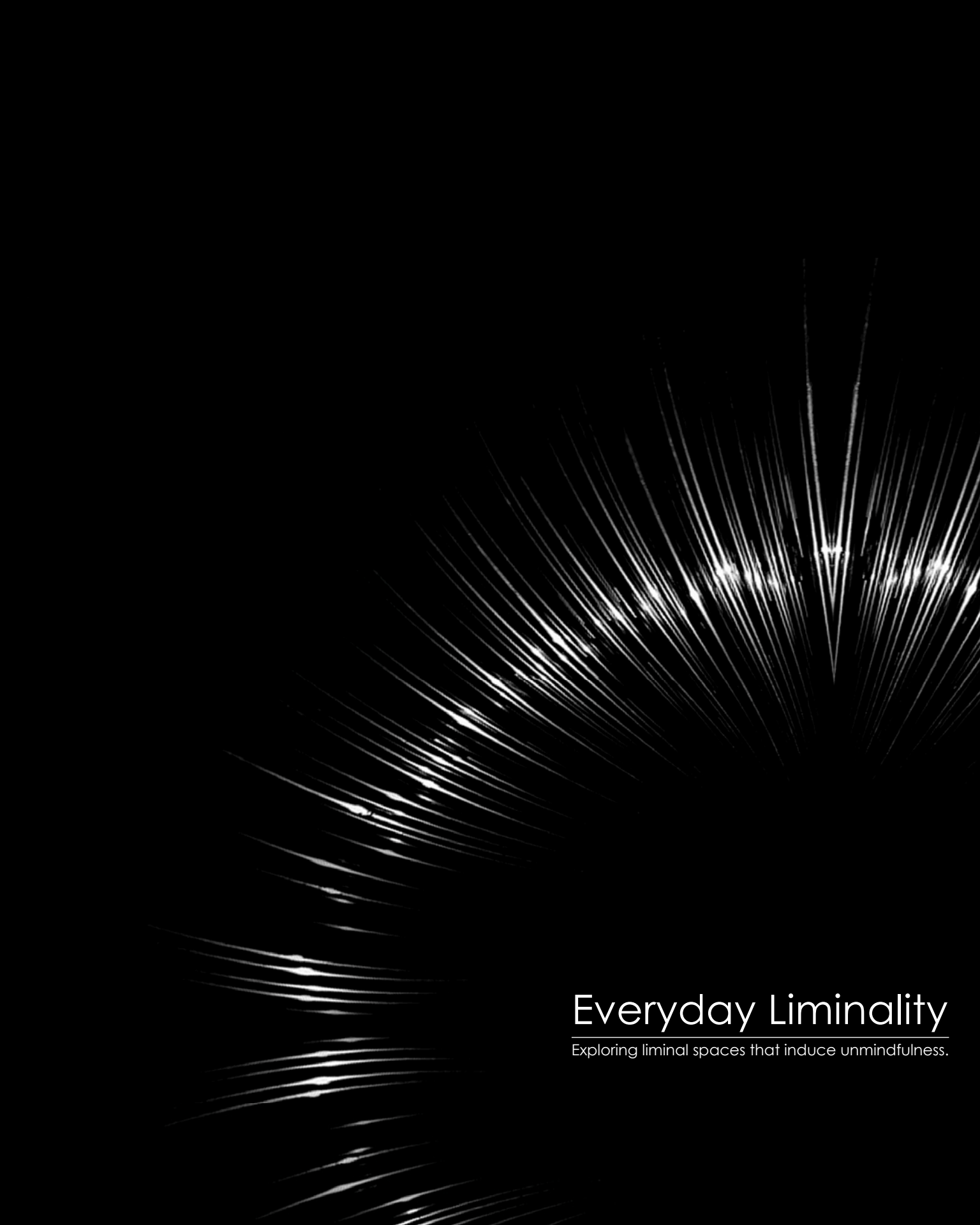

Everyday Liminality

Exploring liminal spaces that induce unmindfulness.

Everyday Liminality
Exploring liminal spaces that induce unmindfulness.

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Arch 5100/5200 – Fall 2019/Winter 2020
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Preface

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Abstract

Introduction

Acknowledgments

To my family

To my friends

To my professors

To my advisors

To my mentors

The journey has been a long one thus far with its seemingly endless highs and lows, each questioning my own sanity. You have created an infinite source of encouragement, support, and inspiration for my determination to run with. I hope to exceed expectations, but for now I can only say...

Thank you.

Abstract

Throughout life one is presented with moments of heightened experience, but they are all connected by a seemingly infinite amount of in-between moments. The combination of these in-between moments creates a concept of everydayness, or typical routines lived through day in and day out. These routines construct and assign a sense of intelligibility to the lived world. Growing from infant to toddler and through childhood one constructs intelligibility of the lived world. It is how one learns and makes sense of what they experience in the world. Without that intelligibility, life would simply be chaos. Living through these everyday routines one finds that their mind can be easily distracted and floats adrift. The routine activity happens so frequently that it becomes mundane and no longer requires one's undivided attention. Their mind travels back and forth in time, remembering past events or thinking ahead to what the future holds whether it be the day ahead or a more rewarding payoff. They become so quickly fixated on small details, what's ahead or behind them, that they forget to pay attention to the entire picture as it lies before them. This unmindfulness, while not always viewed as positive, is an unavoidable byproduct of one's lived experience. It provides an escape from constant perceptual experience. Within the built environment experienced daily, opportunities for unmindfulness present themselves frequently as liminal spaces. These spaces are neither here nor there. They truly are in-between spaces. They can be as small as a peep hole or as large as the night sky. They influence our behaviors and promote the unmindful drifts of those that visit them in their search for meaning in the lived world.

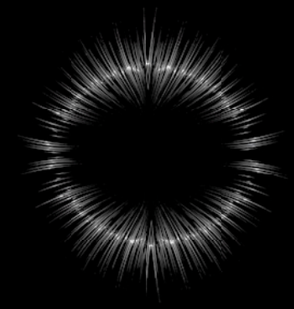
Introduction

Everyday Liminality is a discourse which investigates liminal spaces within the built environment; more specifically, how they relate to us and influence our perceptions. However, before arriving at this concept, the thesis was aimed at investigating the relationship between architecture and cinema. Thorough research was performed dissecting articles and essays by philosophers, architects and prominent film theorists, such as Sergei Eisenstein. The thesis looked not only at theories behind film and its relationship to architecture, but also some of its more technical aspects. The history of storytelling and its implementation within architecture was briefly explored as well as techniques used by cinematographers to visually tell the stories of their respective directors. While not much of this information found its way into this main body of work and eventual thesis, it did have a large influence on how qualitative investigation studies were performed and captured using a camera to produce short films used as a medium for conveying and investigating conceptual ideas, answering questions, and posing new ones. Those initial investigations served as steppingstones which led to the discovery of *Cinematic Aided Design* by Francois Penz.

Penz, a professor of architecture and the moving image at the University of Cambridge, has been investigating and teaching the intersection of architecture and cinema for over two decades. In *Cinematic Aided Design* he forms a relationship between cinema and architecture through the concept of everydayness. He references numerous philosophers and architects who have written on the subject; but most prominently, he reflects on the theories and writing of Henri Lefebvre. A French philosopher and sociologist, Lefebvre, is best known for his theories and critique of everyday life. A few of his best-known works are: *The Production of Space*, *Critique of Everyday Life*, and *Rhythmanalysis*. However, his essay, *The Everyday and Everydayness*, served as reference and inspiration for the foundational concepts explored by this thesis. Lefebvre asks, "Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?" (Lefebvre, 1987). Through the study of everydayness, one can start to recognize the foundation and connections it provides in life. Everydayness hosts a mundane nature, but it can have varied effects on how one might perceive their relationship with time. Therefore, the thesis first explains different concepts of time and attempts to understand our perceptions of it to assist in understanding everydayness and the concepts that follow it.

Notes:
0.1 Lefebvre, "The Everyday and Everydayness"

Figures:
0.1 Simple Cycle
0.2 Ethos
0.3 Nautilus Shell



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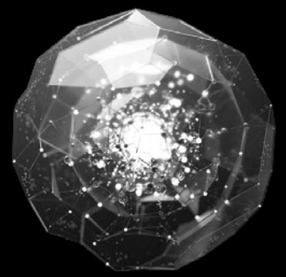


0.2

0.3

Understanding one's perception of time, specifically how it relates to their everydayness, unmindfulness reveals itself as byproduct. Everydayness in its very nature is repetitive, to the point that one is no longer required nor captivated enough to pay full attention to the task at hand or surrounding environment. The mind is, perhaps unintentionally, allowed to drift or become distracted. This unmindfulness can translate to one's perception of time in two distinct results of either acceleration of stagnation. After understanding the possible variations of perceived time, the essay *On Slowness*, by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, lends insight to how one perceives the built environment. As architects they understand that no two experiences of a space can be the same because of all the distractions that circulate and come unfiltered into one's mind. These distractions, and their resulting unmindfulness, happen most often during those routine times or as we travel through in-between spaces.

Neither here nor there, Marc Augé refers to these in-between spaces as non-places. Augé, a French anthropologist, coined the term to describe these spaces that lie as contradictions to anthropological places. Just as the space is clean of any history, relation, or identity, its users assume a collective identity, being stripped of their personal one, unconsciously offering it to the powers that govern these spaces. Broadening Augé's term, this thesis finds its focus on liminal spaces. These spaces are central in connecting the places one travels to, day in and day out. Augé has recognized that these spaces have expanded as civilization has grown.

Recognizing their expansion, a better understanding of how they work in relation to human behavior could imply the necessity for more strategic execution in the placement and design of these spaces in order to achieve design and user experience goals.

Time

Time as Linear

Time as Cyclical

Time as Perception

"Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external."

-Sir Isaac Newton

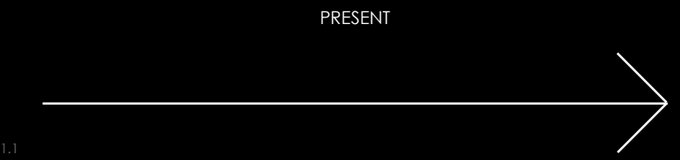
Time as Linear

Time, regardless of how one rationalizes it, always moves in a linear fashion. Sir Isaac Newton recognized this as absolute time. He defines this concept with the following quote, "Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external." (Newton, 1687). To put it simply, Newton is claiming that if all matter were to cease existing, time would still move in the same fashion it always has, linearly. While one lives alongside it, time itself is an entity separate from one's being. It is always in the present, each moment constantly fleeting and followed by another. There is neither past nor future, for time, there is only the present. Rationalizing it's unidirectional and uncontested progression, one can only reference phenomena which can be immediately perceived: something hot becomes cold, living things die and decay, machines created from physical material wear out.

As an uncontrollable substance it instead becomes a tool for measuring when events have happened or will happen in proximity to one another, establishing past and future along with what is already present. Graphically, these events become represented in the form of timelines, which there are countless examples of in almost every discipline of study. Across all these disciplines however, the timeline, being used as a measurement tool to observe a phenomenon as it progresses from point A to point B, only distinguishes specific events which relate to the topic of concern. There is no recognition of what happens between those specific events other than the passing of time. It is obvious that those gaps in time do not hold information deemed valuable enough to be explored or explained by the timeline in conjunction with the specific events that are, but these gaps form a contradistinction to those highlighted events. These timelines all measure progression and respect a linear concept of time. Related to the natural world however, there are instances which exhibit progression and perhaps an end, but they also see a renewal.

Notes:
1.1 Newton, "Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica"

Figures:
1.1 Linear time graphic
1.2 Measuring time graphic



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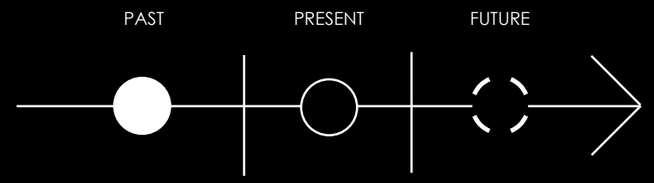
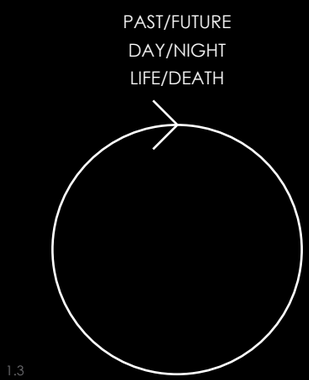


1.2

Time as Cyclical

The linear, or absolute, concept of time is considered rational; but there is a cyclical concept of time which is dominant in nature. Any analog clock can be referenced to easily understand this concept of time. The clock represents the measurement of a single day and night cycle which can be broken down or stacked up to inform reference points of smaller or larger cycles observed within nature, such as the seasons or cycles of the moon. While the clock references and gives recognition to nature as a higher power, it is also a way for one to rationalize and break down those cycles to inform an intelligibility and create order for oneself. Building upon that order, weeks, months, and yearly calendars become further points of reference. All these examples have perceived ends, but they also provide promised renewals. In the linear concept of time, the present can be cut off at any moment with no promised future. The cyclical concept always promises a future through renewal even if an ending is met. The promise that there will be a tomorrow enforces one's need for order today. This order, which provides today and prepares for tomorrow, also gives one comfort in fear of the unknown; because while one can predict the probability of tomorrow, it is not guaranteed. This is where an intersection of the two concepts begin to relate to one's perception and lived experience.

Figures:
1.3 Cyclical time graphic

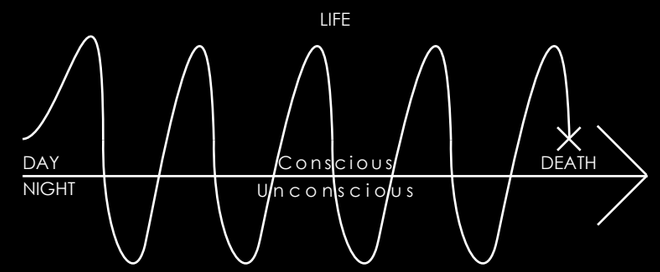


1.3

Time as Perception

Combining linear and cyclical concepts of time start to show how one not only rationalizes time to understand it and construct intelligibility, but they also inform how one perceives it. As time moves linearly, always in the present, one's perception rotates around time's axis introducing the cyclical. While the repeating cycles appear to be the same day to day, it is known that they are in fact not the same, as larger cycles require more time to reveal slower progression. Rotating around time's axis, one's perceptions start to reveal oppositions in their relationship with time.

Along time's axis there can be an imagined plane that separates simple oppositions such as night and day or being conscious and unconscious. While unconscious, one is neither aware of the present nor the amount of time that passes until they are conscious again. It might seem that one's perceptions are turned off during that time, but they are still running with lower awareness as one might wake up to an external stimulation such as a loud noise. There is also the subconscious and dreams which propose that one is somewhat conscious while asleep, but the perception of time is altered by utopian dreams and dystopian nightmares. Returning to consciousness, there are more minute oppositions that can be observed. Heightened and mundane experiences distinguish the highs and lows of consciousness through perceptual experiences. Any timeframe can be referenced, whether it be a singular day, a week, a month etc., to recount a personal experience. In any case, the memory of that experience becomes selective of the highlights versus the in-between moments which house the mundane. The moments of heightened experience become recounted more so than the mundane because of the way they activate an awareness of one's senses. With more awareness of one's perceptions, there comes an unawareness of time; and these moments appear to come and go faster than those which precede and succeed them. The in-between moments become overshadowed by looking ahead to the next heightened experience causing them to feel either stagnant or too fast. Henri Lefebvre recognizes this and says, "Some people cry out against the acceleration of time, others cry out against its stagnation. They're both right." (Lefebvre, 1987). So much time and energy is spent looking ahead to the future that the present isn't appreciated for its own value. Perceptual experience is subjective to each individual. Whether time is perceived as slow or fast is entirely up to the individual. In any case, the opposition of these moments over extended periods of time start to reveal rhythms of life and lived experience. While the heightened experiences gain recognition through memories, the mundane moments in-between create a foundation and connections between those experiences. These mundane moments form one's everydayness.



Figures:
1.4 Perceived time graphic

Everydayness

Abstracting

Forces

Shifting Routine

Wait and Payoff

Comfort

"The everyday is situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition: the cyclical, which dominates in nature, and the linear, which dominates in processes known as rational."

-Henri Lefebvre

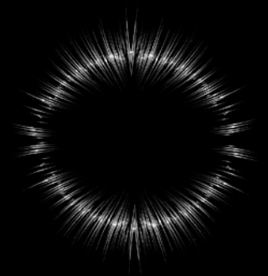
Abstracting

As explained in the previous chapter, humans started to construct intelligibility and order by recognizing the cycles in nature and establishing their understanding of time. According to Henri Lefebvre, "The everyday is situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition: the cyclical, which dominates in nature, and the linear, which dominates in processes known as "rational"." (Lefebvre, 1987). Just as an order was constructed to make sense of time, further order is constructed to organize and spend that time. Heightened experiences do not happen constantly. If they were constant, they would not be considered heightened. The mundane provides the foundation from which those heightened experiences happen. It also serves as the connection between those experiences. The repetition of an experience is what causes it to become mundane. Routines, for example, are a series of tasks performed ritualistically at a given time. After carrying out the series of tasks the first few times, they become second nature or a habit of being. The tasks are performed and repeated day in and day out without question or thought regarding them. Along with routine tasks, there are also routine places and spaces traveled through that relate to the mundane. Both the routine tasks and spaces contribute to the concept of everydayness.

Lefebvre defines this further, "…as a set of functions which connect and join together systems that might appear to be distinct." (Lefebvre, 1987). The repetition of these functions informs the stagnation or acceleration of perceived time described in the last chapter. Visualizing one's perception of time and everydayness, both incorporating the linear and cyclical concepts of time, a slinky comes to mind. From one perspective it appears as a simple circle, but from another perspective it stretches out linearly revealing a repetition of circles connected to one another. However, there is a malleability to a slinky which allows it to stretch out in multiple directions, create kinks, or become twisted and tangled. Continuing with the analogy, these possible deformities can start to represent experiences which stand as outliers from everydayness. Not only do they stand as outliers deviating from one's everydayness, but they can also have extended effects on one's everydayness.

Notes:
2.1 Lefebvre, "The Everyday and Everydayness"

Figures:
2.1 Everyday Cycle
2.2 Perception of Cycles
2.3 Day'n'Night
2.4 Madness Spiral
2.5 A Lifetime of Cycles



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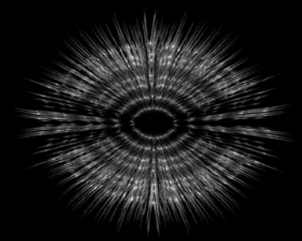

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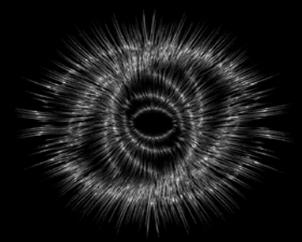

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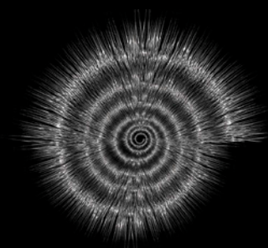


2.5

The possible effects could cause for a slow return to the typical routines or require them to change completely. To provide an example of each, a concert on a weeknight could throw one off for the remainder of the week. A typical night in is substituted for a fun night out. The possibilities of the night present one with choices that become decisions. Those decisions then become consequences which are paid for the next day. One might find themselves late for work the next day, and the lack of sleep affects not only that day but the day after as well. There are a few days which serve as an adjustment period to return to everydayness. On a more extreme level, there are instances which require one to change their everydayness completely in favor of new routines. Possible examples could be: changing jobs or career paths, moving an extreme distance, unfortunate tragedies, or fortunate blessings. Any of these examples would call for an extended adjustment period for any individual as there may be new tasks to learn, new places to travel to, or emotions to cope with. While figures 2.1 through 2.5 represent abstractions of everydayness as a slinky, they also allude to possible tensions or outlying forces that either push one in and out of their everydayness.

Introduction to Forces

As one lives out their days, their most basic routines serve their biological needs, eating and sleeping. These needs act as the only two forces which are recognizable and universal to everyone's everydayness. Beyond these instinctual forces, there are a variety of forces which influence everyone's everydayness. "This diversity has never been well acknowledged or recognized as such; it has resisted a rational kind of interpretation which has only come about in our own time by interfering with and destroying that diversity." (Lefebvre, 1987). While Lefebvre seems to recognize diversity, he also claims that it is destroyed, seeming to imply that there is a collective everydayness. In today's social climate however, diversity is not only something that is pushed to be accepted, it is something to be celebrated.

These forces give recognition to the diversity of everydayness. They include, but are not limited to: geographical, cultural, social, economical, psychological, physiological, and technological forces. On the following pages some of these forces are briefly explored to create an understanding of each of their impacts. Psychological, physiological, and technological forces are not reflected on in the following pages, but it is recognized that these could have immense impacts on one's everydayness. Physiological forces might inform how one perceives the lived world through their senses. Psychological forces will determine how one interprets those perceptions. This thesis recognizes that technology is a large part of life today but did not explore the possibilities of its effects on everydayness. Its presence and influence on one's everydayness will only increase as time goes on and it continues to advance. The everydayness of someone in 2020 differs greatly from someone's in the year 2000 and will differ greatly from someone's in the year 2040 just based off technology's influence alone.

Each of the remaining forces: geographical, cultural, economical, and social explored by figures 2.6 through 2.9 show the diversity represented in each force alone. They can be understood as having a top down relationship. Starting with geography and working down, it can be seen how one informs the next and how they all relate to one another. Through the understanding of these forces and how they inform one's everydayness, they start to feel closely related to how one creates their own identity. These forces also inform one of the identities of the places they inhabit and how they might feel and interact with the world around them.

Notes:
2.2 Lefebvre, "The Everyday and Everydayness"

Figures:
2.6 Geographical Forces
2.7 Cultural Forces
2.8 Economical Forces
2.9 Social Forces

"This diversity has never been well acknowledged or recognized as such; it has resisted a rational kind of interpretation which has only come about in our own time by interfering with and destroying that diversity"

-Henri Lefebvre

Geographical Forces

Geographically, the specific landscapes or cityscapes of where one might live blend into the everyday seamlessly like a white noise; but if one travels to another destination, that place will hold their attention more than the one they reside in most days. This is nice for a long weekend or week-long vacation to provide a change of scenery; but thinking logically, if one were to completely relocate to that new place, it too would blend into their everyday as a new white noise. One other aspect of geography is the climate that plays into everydayness. In the Midwest of the United States for example, all four seasons can be experienced bringing slow and gradual changes to one's everyday throughout each year as opposed to climates which might only experience one or two seasons per year. Experiencing all four seasons requires the altering of the amount and style of clothing worn, as well as the increased use of fossil fuels to heat or cool one's home. Along with these seasons, there are also differences in the food or drinks one might consume throughout the year. Some of these variabilities start to allude to differences in the following force as well, which is culture.

Cultural Forces

Culturally, the world presents a wide diversity. There are large cultures often associated with specific geographic locations or religious affiliations, but there are also subcultures within those which bring together more closely aligned beliefs and common interests. On a broader scale, looking to a yearly calendar, a variety of holidays are presented. Each is affiliated with a specific culture. Some may have a few, while others may have numerous. These holidays were designated to happen on a specific day or at a specific time throughout the year based on the beliefs of the culture which designated them to happen at that time. Their beliefs result from different origins and affect counting systems which dictate how those holidays fall within the year. Each holiday then also comes with a set of customs, traditions, or rituals associated with it to represent and translate some of those beliefs. Zooming in, aside from yearly traditions, there are portions of culture not affiliated with belief systems, but rather reflect styles and ways of expression. This can be through visual and performing arts, music, fashion, and food. These portions of culture can inform who one might interact with socially; but before those affiliations can be made, one's economical forces are more influential.

Economic status is something that certainly affects one's everydayness and is perhaps the most influential force of all. While it is an unfortunate truth, monetary value is what makes the world go around and informs how one can live out their life. With more economic value comes more stability and possibilities to live the life one wishes. There are those born at the top who may never experience the struggles of the lower class, those in the middle who perhaps have the most possibility to float between the three, and then there are those at the bottom who may struggle to make their way up the ladder. Being a system that has been around since the beginning of mankind, there are not many differences in how these classes are set up regarding the culture they fall under. The governing powers which represent the beliefs of these cultures enforce laws put in place by those before them. These laws then start to dictate how these economic classes function and the possibilities of how one can fluctuate between classes. Without sufficient knowledge, it can be easier for one to fall from the top than it is to climb up. In the case of any class, where one falls within the three general classes will dictate almost every part of their everydayness. Starting with where they live, how they are raised, the schools they attend, the daily tasks they might have to perform, the means and methods of their daily travel, the job or career path they choose, and the people they associate with, leads to the last force explored in this section.

Social Forces

The evolution of mankind has developed a fast-paced lifestyle which has had some influence on how one interacts socially. Beyond a typical work or school schedule, one busies themselves with all kinds of extracurricular activities such as sports, hobbies, concerts, movies, going out to bars or other social places of gathering. Who one chooses to join in these activities with will be highly influenced by their economic alignment. Beyond that, it will rely on common interests associated with the cultural aspects mentioned earlier such as music, movie, art, and fashion taste. The endless planning of these activities not only distract one from the possibilities of the mundane, but they also create a more satisfying lived experience. By always being on the move, one can hardly slow down enough to enjoy a meal alone or with others. In addition, the way urban cities and suburbs are planned, along with technological advances, it has become increasingly easy to become socially isolated or selective. One can commute to their job in their car, which becomes a solitary place, and return to their home pulling right into the garage or driveway which is connected to or in close proximity to their house. This allows them to easily move from one to the other without having to acknowledge anyone that might be nearby. Everything can be ordered right to our doorstep these days. This further allows one to not step outside their home. Social media is meant to serve as a way of social connection, but it can also be used to virtually allow negative social interactions. Privacy is also something of concern with technology allowing everyone to carry a camera and microphone in their pocket. Beyond common interests, forces like economic class, city planning, and technology all have impacts on how one interacts socially and experiences the lived world.

Shifting Routine

Figures:
2.10 Shifting Routine

The variety of forces presented through the last few sections pull together and construct an order of everydayness unique to each individual, but what happens when that everydayness is completely uprooted and required to change? Mentioned in the abstraction section, it was explained that kinks can form in the slinky representing these possible events which might require adjustments to one's everydayness. The beginning of 2020 saw that happen. The novel coronavirus imposed these adjustments and hardships on every individual around the world. The coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic in mid-March for its rapid spread and immense death toll. With no vaccination developed, the only way to stop the spread of the virus was to self-quarantine and socially distance oneself from friends, family, and anyone else one might encounter daily. This brought about a shift in everyone's routines and everydayness. Before quarantine, enforced by governing powers, one would go out into the world every morning and traverse the cityscape to arrive at their place of work or school or wherever they carried out their daily activities. The spaces traveled through and places traveled to were not only larger in scale, but the possible choices and distractions met along the way were infinite. During quarantine, one became a "prisoner" to their own home. The possible space to be explored shrank in scale to the dimensions of their home. The distractions and temptations decreased in possibility but also became new daily challenges to deal with. Many were laid off; and those that normally worked in an office were forced to start working remotely, facing productivity challenges. Kids, pets, the TV, and no restrictions or physically apparent authority all attributed to those new challenges which required a new and necessary routine.

Wait and Payoff

From understanding one's perception of time and all the forces at play, there is the perception of stagnation while living through the cyclical everydayness that doesn't seem to end. One attempts to remedy this feeling by planning for heightened experiences in the future. Once a plan is in place, they then continue to move through time and space of everydayness; but their perceptions and focus are on the future heightened experience. Everydayness becomes a time of waiting while the heightened experience becomes a payoff that comes and goes with haste. Once the experience is over with, one recalls the memory of waiting so long for the payoff; but they change their view of the time spent in anticipation of the experience and feel that it fled from them just as fast as it came. The mundane tasks create repetitive situations where one is no longer mindful of the task at hand or the surrounding environment. The task becomes second nature or a type of muscle memory which no longer requires much of their attention causing the task to also be conceptualized as a waiting period.

To better capture the concept of wait and payoff, a video was produced around a meal as it involves one of everyone's basic needs and incorporates multiple layers of waiting. As one becomes hungry, they reach a point where they start to have anticipation of when or what their next meal might be. The video shows the process of this wait, but also reveals the dimension of waiting associated with carrying out repetitive, mundane tasks around the kitchen as part of meal preparation.

The video opens with a man waiting at what is presumably a dining room table. The shot changes to a perspective view, presumably the chef, overlooking a kitchen countertop. Tinfoil is stretched across a baking pan and a generously sized salmon filet is laid out. These perspective shots continue as the chef preparing the meal goes through motions of seasoning the fish. From each shot, distinctive sensory experiences can be acknowledged. The play of light and shadow can be visually appreciated as the hands go through repetitive motions of cutting fruit, twisting salt and pepper grinders, spreading herbs, and crinkling the foil. Different auditory experiences can be heard and even become more noticeable when they are overlaying one another, not matching the actions that are seen on the screen. Cutting from shot to shot, one can imagine, from their own experiences, performing similar tasks and the type of unmindfulness that comes with performing them. One can start to relate to the idea that the chef is also waiting for the finished product. They are carrying out actions they've performed countless times before. How much attention are they really paying to the tasks they're performing? Most likely not a whole lot.

They are presumably in an unmindfulness drift, not noticing the different sensory experiences that the audience of the video would experience. As the video continues, a few more curious shots come across the screen. The chef is shown pre-heating the oven and placing the timer once the fish is inside. A time-lapse shot from the floor tracks the chef's movements around the kitchen from task to task and even physically waiting as things cook. A glimpse as the stovetop is ignited is followed by more perspective shots of asparagus being prepped and then observed while it simmers in a pan full of oil. Finally, one last perspective shot shows strawberries being cut as the last portion of the meal to be prepped. With all the items ready, they are placed on a plate.

The hungry man is observed waiting at the dining room table again with his eating utensils ready and a cold, somewhat impatient glare across his face conveying that his hunger has increased since the beginning of the meal prep. The frame changes to color as the plate is placed in front of him. This signals the moment of payoff for both the man and the chef. The chef has created yet another picture-perfect meal, and the man has finally received the meal he was hungry for an hour prior. As he takes off a bit of the salmon placing it in his mouth, he slowly chews. The hint of a smile can be seen on his face as the payoff of a good meal was certainly worth the wait.

In presenting the video, a third dimension of waiting was experienced by the audience. Being four and a half minutes long of just a montage of meal preparation, the audience was forced to wait through its entirety just like the man waiting for his meal. That wait by the audience, however, was the payoff in itself as they were able to experience and recognize all of the sensory aspects through the cooking process that the chef was not able to experience at the time because of his unmindfulness.

2.11

exhale

2.15

crack *crack* *crack*

2.19

beep *beep* *beep*

2.23

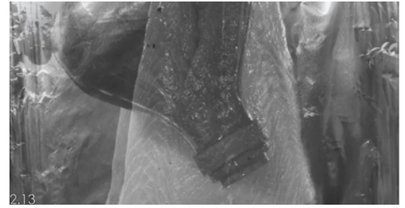
chop *chop* *chop* *chop* *chop*

2.27

slide

2.12

crinkle *crinkle* *crinkle*


2.13

2.14

crackle *crackle*

2.16

slice *slice* *slice*

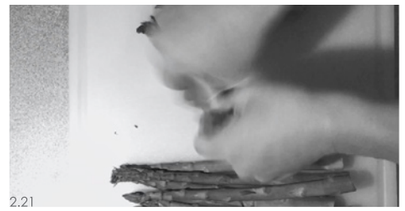
2.17

drip drip drip *drip* *drip*

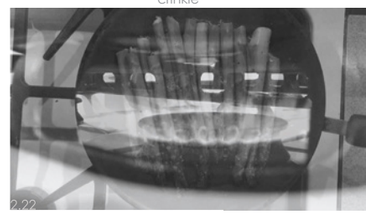
2.18

crinkle *crinkle* *crinkle*

2.20


2.21

SNAP *SNAP*


2.22

sizzle *sizzle*

2.24

2.25

2.26

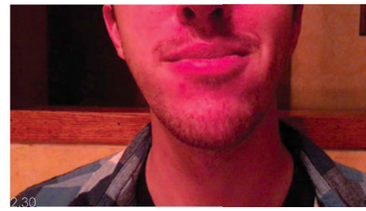
exhale

2.28

ting

2.29

scrape


2.30

silent smile

Figures:
2.11-2.30 Stills from *Wait and Payoff*

Figures 2.11 through 2.30 above, accompanied with text, show remnants of unique perceptual experiences that took place at the time of filming. For the participant in each shot, whether it be the cook or the hungry man, there are sensations which were paid attention to and there are those which were ignored. At the beginning of the video, the hungry man is most likely focused on that sensation, ignoring all other perceptions. A few shots later, the cook is spreading pepper, most likely focused on spreading it evenly over the salmon filet rather than listening to the crackle of the pepper as it leaves the grinding container. While chopping fruit, there is a mindfulness to not cut one's finger off, but there is an unmindfulness of the way light glistens off the pulp of the lemon or the chopping sound the knife makes as it hits the cutting board. At the end, the cook is satisfied with their work and the hungry man is hungry no more. While both characters found a definite payoff in the end, there was a collective unmindfulness of the smaller perceptions which led to those payoffs happening. Those small, possible perceptions surround and create the environment of one's everydayness. While they may not be "essential" to a lived experience, they are something to be appreciated.

Comfort

With all the forces at play and bouncing from one experience to the next, one's everydayness becomes a foundation under, and connection between, seemingly separated systems. One can return to their everydayness at the end of the day with certainty. Just as the cyclical concept of time promises a renewal to a perceived end, everydayness does the same thing. It is one's way to reorganize and again construct intelligibility to the chaos of a fast-paced life. Thinking of a long vacation as an example, one might grow tired of the constant excitement presented day to day by experiences they would not have on a typical day. Combined with the actual stress of long-distance travel, they start to long for their own bed. Physically manifested, everydayness could present itself as one's dwelling place or home where they physically rest; but it also serves as a mental point of rest. While the home is the physical place one resides for comfort, security, and rest, their everydayness is the routine which allows them to reset every day. While one might not acknowledge it, there is comfort in these routines. That feeling of comfort alone is something to be noticed and not taken for granted. They are simple, mundane tasks one performs day in and day out. Performed countless times before, these tasks do not ask anything new of oneself and one's mind is allowed to wander and wonder about the days to come or those that have already passed. There is a sense of freedom in this unmindfulness that can be therapeutic.

Unmindfulness

Mindfulness

Unmindfulness

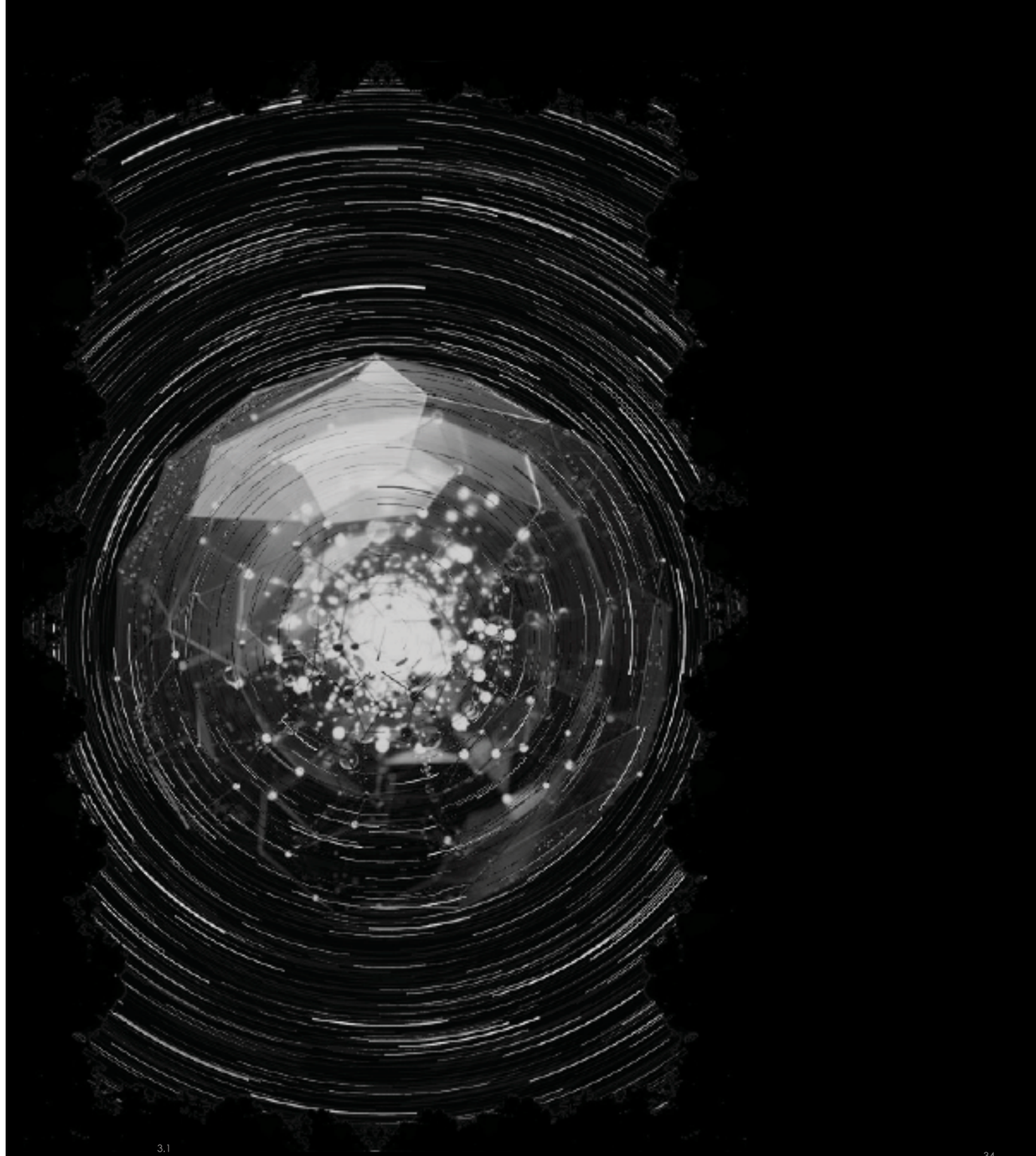
Wait of Forces

"A human eye scans panoramically, and then suddenly focuses down on a tiny point. You see the ocean, and then you see a grain of oddly colored sand. The boundaries of what one chooses to perceive are constantly expanding and contracting. And of course there are the myriad of stray thoughts, memories, and images that are called up by what you see in the color and shade of an actual space. There are the distractions (and perhaps one can also see them as positive additions) of sound, smell, shifting light, and the conversations of passers-by. This can only happen when you are there."

-Tod Williams and Billie Tsien

Mindfulness

Through the previous chapters and sketch video, it was explained and observed that one's perceptions discover oppositions between heightened experiences and everydayness creating a flowing relationship of wait and payoff periods. Establishing these oppositions, another can be conceived between mindfulness and unmindfulness. Abstracted in figures 3.1 and 3.2 on the following pages, these two concepts can be viewed. During times of mindfulness, one is fully conscious of the present. This happens most often during times of heightened experience when one is excited and overly stimulated by the event that they do not want to miss. Thinking of other things, such as the stresses that present during their everydayness, might cause for distraction; but during a heightened experience, they are taken away from their everydayness completely. While times of mindfulness mostly happen during heightened experiences, they do not remain there. They can also happen randomly during one's everydayness experiences. Perceptions can expand and contract while moving through a space, sometimes randomly. Just as one passes through a space, the space in turn passes through them as they observe particular details.



Figures:
3.1 Mindful Ethos

3.1

ndfulness
ndfulness
ndfulness

Wait of Forces

There are moments where one become fixated on a specific detail of an everyday space or the grand gesture of its entirety. Tod Williams and Billie Tsien brilliantly capture and explain this fluctuation between mindfulness and unmindfulness in their essay *On Slowness*. In the essay, Williams and Tsien spend most of it explaining the slowness of their design process. Each move is strategically thought out and pondered. There are no rash decisions or quick solutions deemed acceptable and set in stone. Every detail of the design serves a purpose and is drawn out by hand to be fully absorbed by the designer and client. There is no alienation of the design process experience between the designer and the design by way of a computer. The designer is in control the entire way through, allowing their hands and eye to be their most reliable tools. Moving through to the end of the essay, Williams and Tsien start to describe how someone might experience one of their buildings. They dive into how one perceives space and are quoted,

> *A human eye scans panoramically, and then suddenly focuses down on a tiny point. You see the ocean, and then you see a grain of oddly colored sand. The boundaries of what one chooses to perceive are constantly expanding and contracting. And of course, there are the myriad of stray thoughts, memories, and images that are called up by what you see in the color and shade of an actual space. There are the distractions (and perhaps one can also see them as positive additions) of sound, smell, shifting light, and the conversations of passers-by. This can only happen when you are there.* (Williams & Tsien, 1999).

While this quote is intended to explain how someone might experience spaces designed by Williams and Tsien, it also describes how one perceives space generally, and in a beautiful way.

Notes:
3.1 Williams & Tsien, “On Slowness”

Figures:
3.3 Unmindfulness of Place and Company
3.4 Transient Unmindfulness

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 on the following pages bring together many of the concepts and forces explored in the previous chapters while also starting to question the possible spaces where unmindfulness occurs. The first shows the setting of a restaurant where the people are presumably waiting for a meal or, as the previous sections video depicted it, their next payoff. While waiting, the restaurant becomes one of these everyday spaces where they drift into unmindfulness and start thinking of all the other forces at play within them: their job, dreams and aspirations, fears, where they are, where they want to go, where they came from, whether they're worried about their finances, or thinking about the person across the table from them. There is no knowing what they are thinking, but it seems clear that they are not paying attention to their surrounding environment or each other as they are lost in a sea of their own thoughts. The collage following, depicts an airport and various people moving through it. A similar unmindfulness flows through the airport as each person is met with the stresses of travel. As they leave their home behind, they are looking to the experiences ahead. After an extended period, they return home via the airport again looking ahead to the comfort of their own home.

Through the collages, more types of spaces where waiting and unmindfulness occurs can be imagined. These types of spaces, finding themselves between one's specific destinations, can be thought of as thresholds. Just like one's perceptions, as described by Williams and Tsien, these types of threshold spaces expand and contract as liminal spaces.

THE LEX COLUMN
FINANCIAL TIMES
Barclays' firestorm rages

FINANCIAL TIMES

Liminal Space

Non-Place

Place v. Space

Liminality

Liminal Space

"This plurality of places... and the resulting feeling of 'disorientation' [(temporary)], cause a break or discontinuity between spectator and the space of the landscape he is contemplating or rushing through. This prevents him from perceiving it as a place, from being fully present in it, even though he may try to fill the gap with comprehensive and detailed information out of guidebooks... or journey narratives."

-Marc Auge

Non-Place

Following the research of the thesis so far, it has broken down the large concept of everydayness as a waiting period in a wait and payoff relationship. By observing more places where waiting occurs, physical manifestations of everydayness can be found within the built environment. Marc Augé, a French anthropologist, is coined with defining these in-between places as non-places in his book *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. Simply put, non-places are the opposite of anthropological places. Anthropological places assume an identity based off geographical, cultural, and historical contexts. Spaces which cannot be defined or recognized through these indicators sit as non-places. Places of circulation, consumption, and communication provide examples of the non-places Augé is observing and describing. He claims that there are an excess of events, space, and ego which add up to the multiplication of non-places. Described in the social force section, today's fast-paced lifestyles have one going from event to event with haste. Augé recognizes this excess of events as an effort for one to find or create meaning in the world. The excess of space serves as a paradox which also shrinks the planet. Because of technological advancements and space exploration, one can travel great distances in a matter of hours or view an event happening halfway across the globe instantaneously. The final element in excess is the ego, which causes one to want a world created and interpreted by themselves for themselves. The combination of these three elements in excess have created a pursuit for supermodernity which has caused a multiplication of non-places.

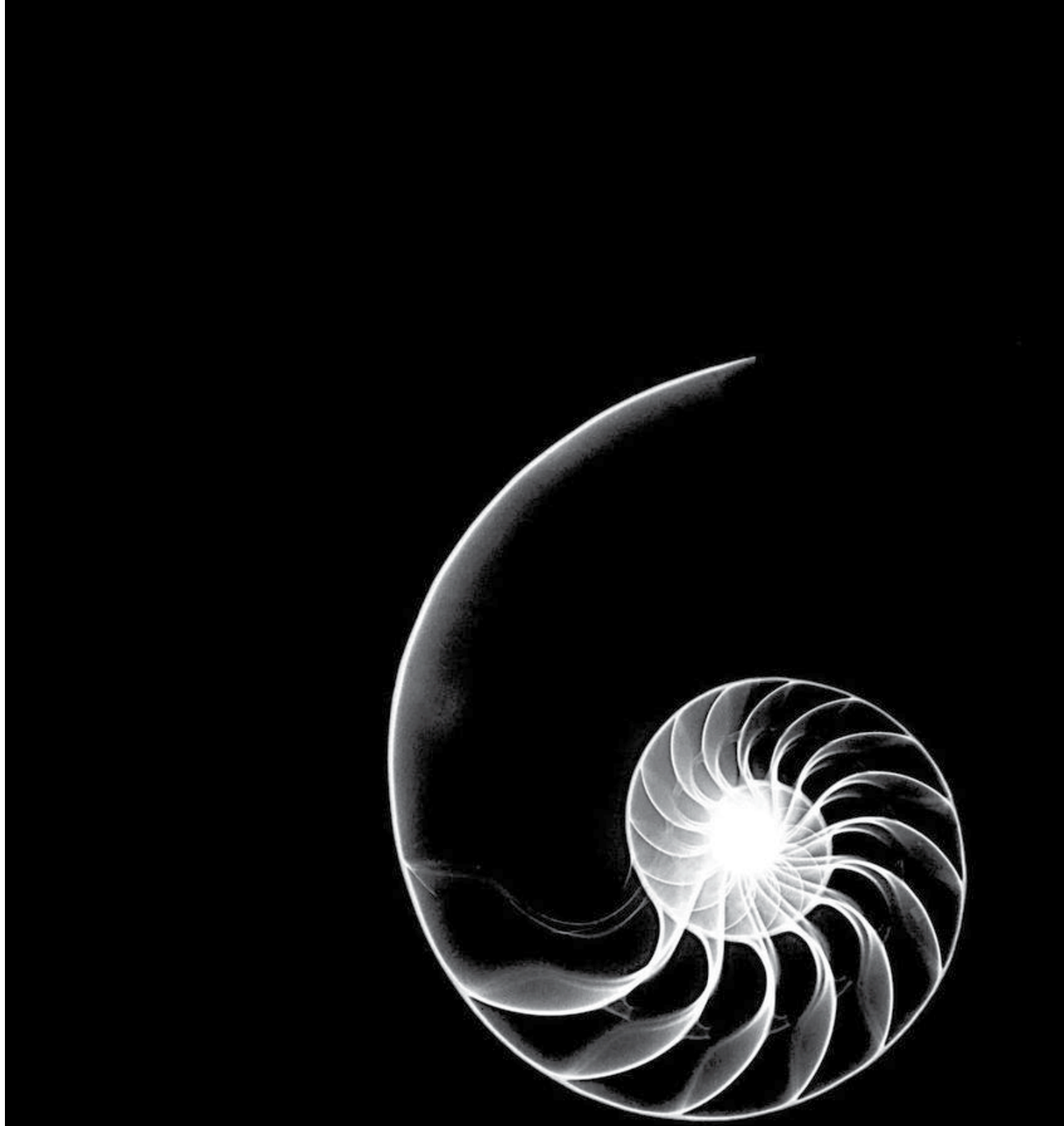
While anthropological places assume an identity reflective of its corresponding culture and context, the non-place lacks an identity. Instead, any user of a non-place surrenders their own identity for an assumed, collective identity of all the users of the space. As part of this collective identity, one is always proving their innocence to the powers that govern the non-place by obeying the prescriptive or prohibitive language put in place that dictates how or how not to use the non-place. Through the language used, these non-places create ephemeral and solitary experiences for their users. While Augé starts to define some of these in-between spaces and how they relate to oneself, he seems to stop the application of his term, non-place, at large programmed spaces. Digging deeper into the everyday human experience, these types of spaces can be discovered at smaller and larger scales or possessive of certain qualities which inform how one experiences the space as they traverse through it. His ideas of non-place can be expanded to better understand these types of spaces as liminal spaces.

Notes:

4.1 Augé, "Non-Place: An Introduction to Supermodernity"

Figures:

4.1 Nautilus Shell

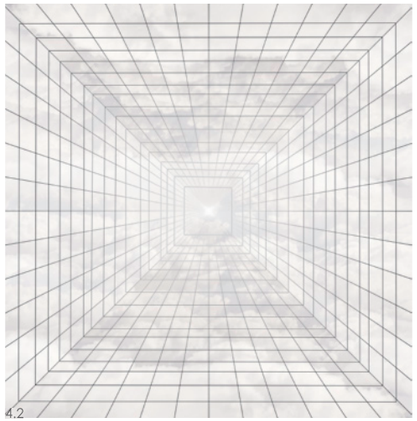


4.1

Place v. Space

Understanding the term liminal space must first begin with an explanation of how one can comprehend the distinction between the terms place and space. Starting with traditional definitions of the words, space is understood as a boundless and infinite area where no stable forms intersect or restrict anything from moving in any direction; and place is a space with a set of defining characteristics forming boundaries and assuming identity based off regional characteristics and historical context. The extra layer of information which helps to define space with an identity is what sets it apart as a place versus a non-place. Once a place or non-place is defined by stable objects, walls in most everyday cases, it then again becomes space with the animation of moving bodies activating it. Michel de Certeau defined space in this manner in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

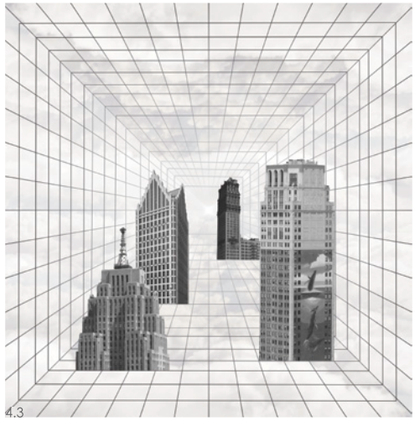
In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau defines place as an instantaneous configuration of positions. Place is defined by laws of "proper" and distinct locations of its elements which re-define location. Space then exists when considering vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. It is composed of intersections of mobile elements and has none of the stability of place as a result of "proper" positions. While place stands stagnant, space becomes active and comprised of objects and people which orient and temporalize it. Augé gives recognition to Certeau for this redefining use of the word space; but throughout *Non-Place: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, he uses it in the traditional sense of the word when defining his own contradistinctive term of non-place. In strict terms of language, non-place would still work as the direct opposite to place in the way that both he and Certeau define it; but the use of the word space seems to be more appropriate in broadening and further defining the non-places this thesis will explore.



4.2

Space

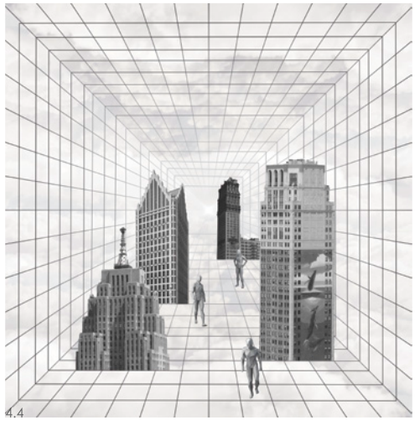
Infinite, boundless area.



4.3

Place

Influenced by Augé and Michel Certeau, this is any space which can be identified by the "proper" location and relationship of its elements related to context, history, culture etc. Place holds a particular identity and carries meaning for its domestic inhabitants as well as its visitors.



4.4

Space (2)

The introduction of moving objects animates a place creating space again. While place stands stagnant, space is lively, ever changing, and active due to those who move through it.

Notes:

4.2 Augé, "Non-Place: An Introduction to Supermodernity"
4.3 Certeau, "The Practice of Everyday Life"

Figures:

4.2 Space
4.3 Place
4.4 Space (2)

Liminality

Stemming from the Latin word līmen, which means threshold, limen or liminal finds its modern definition across multiple disciplines including but not limited to physiology, psychology, psychophysics and anthropology. Physiology, psychology, and psychophysics all define limen as the threshold point of physiological or psychological response. It defines one's boundaries of perception where on one side stimulus is perceivable, but on the other side it is not. Within anthropology, liminality is defined as the disorientation which occurs in the middle stage of a rite of passage. The individual lacks social status, shows obedience, and follows prescribed forms of conduct. Johnathan Hill and Gianni Vattimo, along with other architectural theorists and philosophers, "...define liminality as the conceptual and ephemeral relationship between people and spatial environments." (Smith, 2001). All these definitions have a rightful claim within their respective disciplines. Hill and Vattimo start to relate the concept of liminality to architectural space, but the meaning of it can be slightly expanded beyond just our perceptual experience.

Notes:

4.5 Smith, "Looking for Liminality in Architectural Space"

4.4 Augé, "Non-Place: An Introduction to Supermodernity"

Augé does not mention the concept of liminality; but as an anthropologist, he does talk about all aspects that would imply the concept. Augé refers to a disorientation that happens with the plurality of places that causes a temporary break in continuity between the traveler and the space of the landscape they are traveling. This prevents them from seeing it as place and being fully present. As a result, the traveler will fill their space narrative with details to make it comprehensive. He goes on to describe how a non-place relies on language to define its rules and regulations and provide instructions for its prescriptive use. This language may be explicitly known by all users of the non-place through signage or may be implicitly known based on the user's knowledge of the powers which govern the non-place. This language creates a shared identity among the users of the non-place and constantly reminds them how it is to be used and forces them to constantly prove their innocence. "The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude." (Augé, 1995).

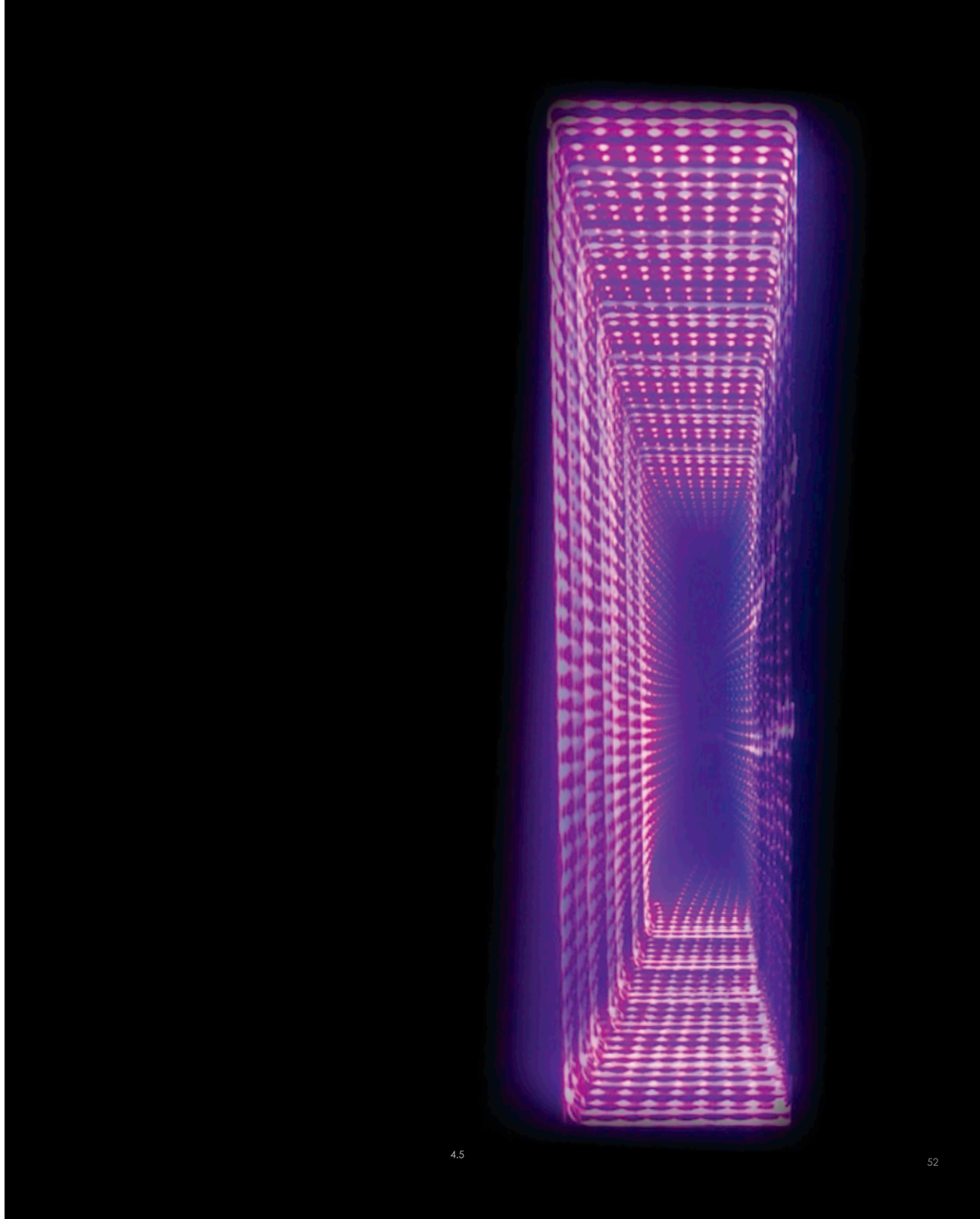
Augé touches on three of the major concepts of liminality's cross-discipline definitions. First, he speaks on the user's experience of the non-place in subjective terms relating it to both psychology and physiology. Second, while speaking of the experience in a subjective manner, he also refers to it as being disorienting as a solitude experience with emptying of individuality and fleeting images hypothesizing the past and future of the non-place. Lastly, he speaks of the user's knowledge of the powers which govern the non-place relating to the anthropological definition of liminality. While relying on Certeau's redefining of the word space, liminal appears to be a sufficient adjective in helping to redefine the non-places of this thesis.

Infinity Mirror

Using a typical door hung bedroom mirror, LED strip lighting, and acrylic with a reflective adhesive film applied to it, an infinity mirror was constructed to convey aspects of liminal space in a physical object that can be experienced. The reflective film, used for window privacy, was applied to the piece of acrylic. Depending on the position and direction light is coming from, one can look through one side while the other side reflects its surroundings. With the two-way acrylic piece only inches away from the completely reflective mirror and the LED lights sandwiched between, the combination creates an effect which makes the strip of lights appear to repeat. This creates the illusion of an infinitely extended space. While the illusion is not an everyday experience, it does convey some of qualities of liminality and the feelings they evoke. The perceived infinite extension of space replicates the multiplication and perceived extension of liminal spaces as they present themselves in the built environment. Because of the effect of the surfaces only reflecting the light within, the mirror within presents a placeless context. Explained by Michel Foucault in his essay, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, mirrors stand as utopias presenting placeless places or virtual realities of space which one cannot physically occupy. Although, as an infinity mirror, it hardly reflects the possible virtual place where one cannot be placed. Instead it only presents a black, endless void. The effect of this void however, in combination with the repetition of lights seemingly outlining a space, evokes feelings of suspension and displacement from reality. One can get caught in a gaze as they stare into the endless void of this placeless place which lies before them. It not only lies physically, but also lies to one's perceptions with false promise of a space that is present beyond the glass.

Notes:
4.6 Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias"

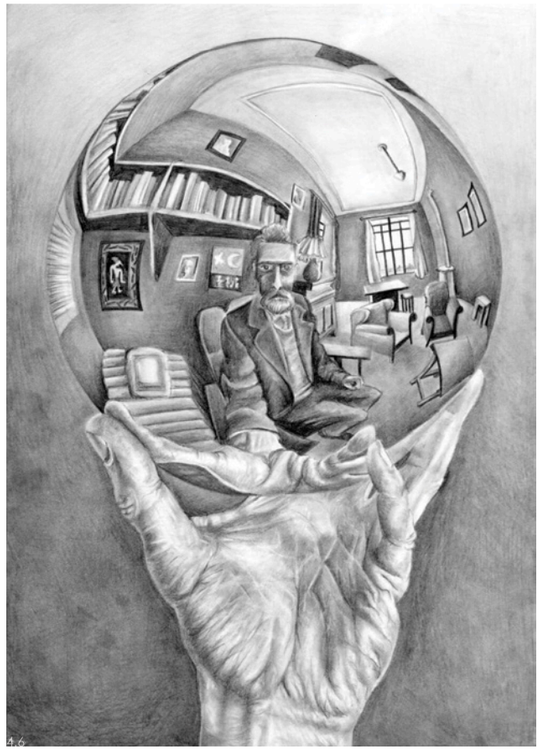
Figures:
1. Infinity Mirror



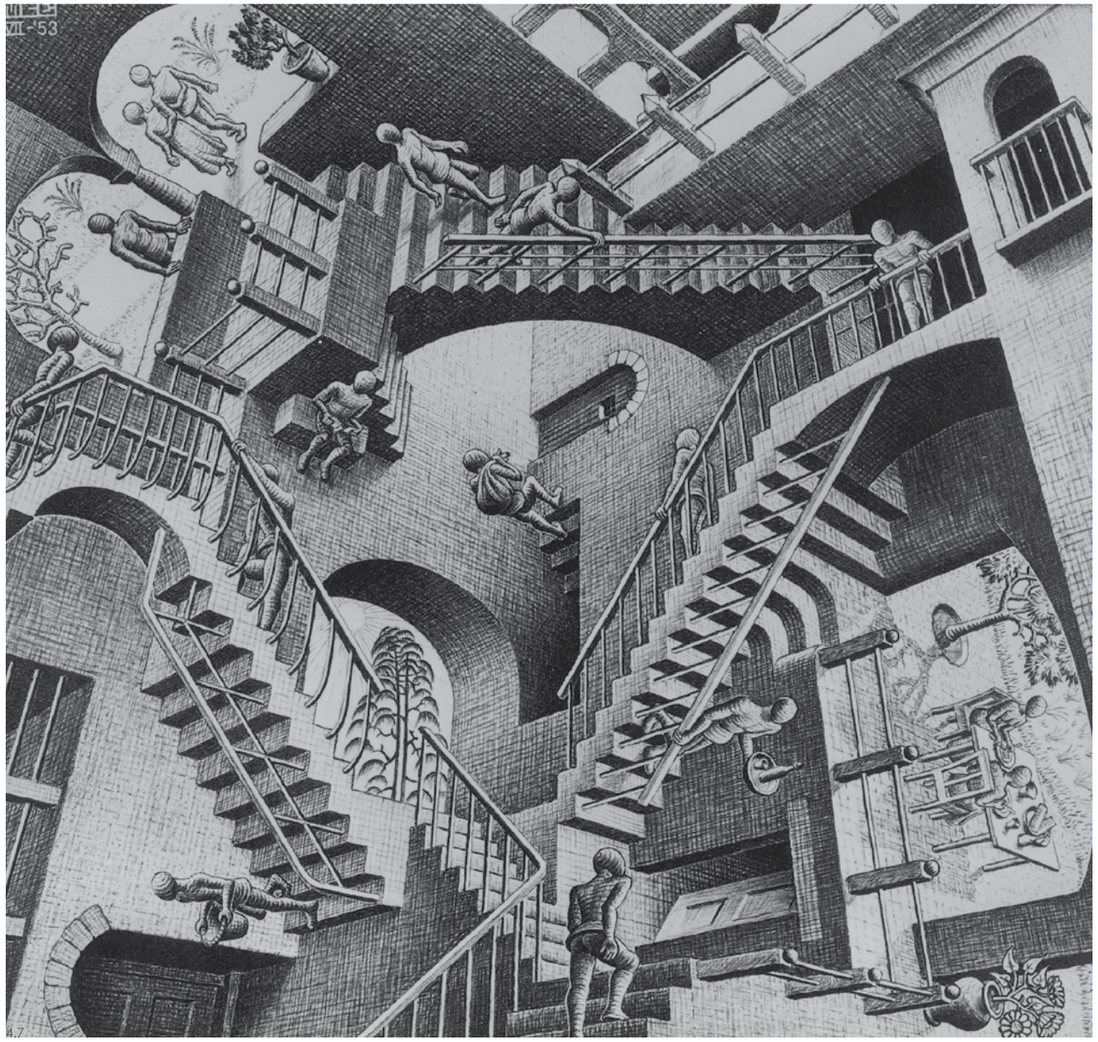
4.5

Escher Cubes

Inspired by M.C. Escher, three similar but distinct cubes were created, each further exploring the conceptual ideas of liminality and the possible spaces they present themselves. Looking to Escher's *Relativity* and *Hand with a Reflective Sphere* drawings, the cubes attempt to recreate some of what is seen in the drawings, but in a three-dimensional model. Stairs were chosen not only as reference to Escher's Relativity drawing, but they also present an everyday liminal space. Stairs confront one with a path that not only travels through space vertically but also horizontally, sometimes winding or changing direction causing the users perspective to shift. Stairs also require the most embodied energy of the user so that they may travel vertically and horizontally through the space to get from one level to the next. While the altering of each stairs position promotes some liminal representations, the materials used for each cube is altered through the series to further push feelings of liminality.



4.6



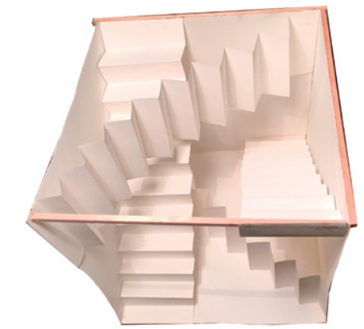
4.7

Figures:
4.6 Escher, "Hand with Reflecting Sphere"
4.7 Escher, "Relativity"

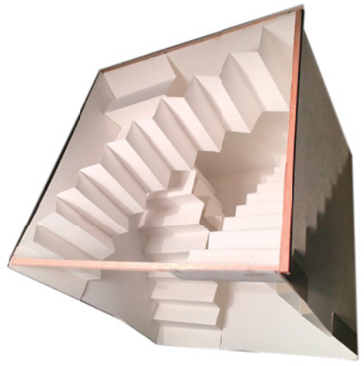
Seen in figures 4.8 through 4.10, the first cube in the series is simply made of paper. This was done to understand exact measurements the following cubes would take on. This cube, however, does start to establish some relationship with liminality even though it is a simple object created from a monochromatic material only for form's sake. The stairs, from one perspective, appear to just be heading in four separate directions; but as the cube is rotated or flipped on a different side, the stairs start to appear more tangled. The altered position makes the viewer take a second to re-absorb what they are looking at. The simple move of turning the cube on a perpendicular side mimic what flights of stairs do to their respective travelers, which is alter their perspectives as they travel through the stair's space.

While establishing a form with the first cube was the main objective, handling and experiencing it altered perspectives of the observer, proving to be representations of liminal space itself. The second cube, seen in figures 4.11 through 4.13, constructed in the same form starts to introduce different materials to develop the feeling of liminality even further. Four cardboard walls are connected with four wooden staircases connecting them in the same manner as they did in the paper model. The cardboard walls, however, are covered with a silver foil to create reflective surfaces. These surfaces bend light and reflect basic blobs of color, reminiscent of their original forms present in physical reality. The application of this foil cause the walls to appear rippled or wavy as the foil did not stick perfectly flat to the cardboard. However, this creates an interesting effect on the observed space of the cube.

Figures:
4.8-4.10 Paper Stair Model
4.11-4.13 Wood and Foil Stair Model



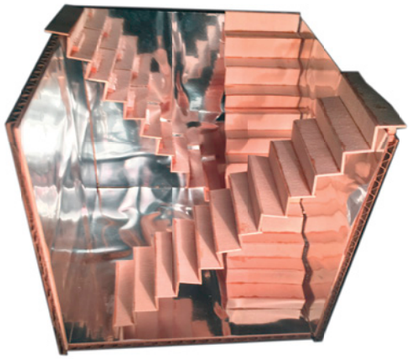
4.8



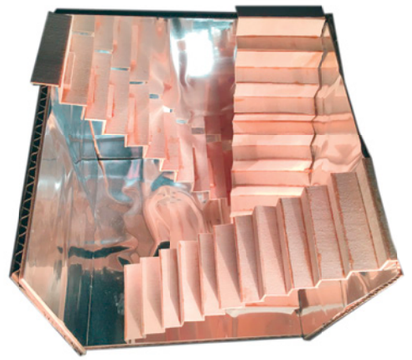
4.9

4.10

4.11



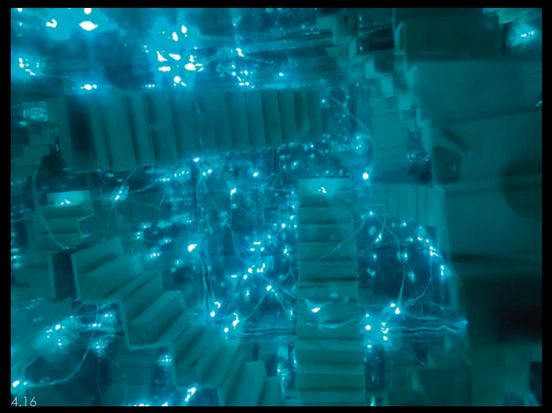
4.12



4.13

Figures 4.14 through 4.16 show the third and final cube created with the effect of the infinity mirror in mind. Three of its walls are one hundred percent reflective mirrors with opposing pieces of acrylic on the other three sides with seventy percent reflective film. The stairs modeled within were reduced in size so that they do not obstruct the infinite mirror effect. Small, blue LED lights were also placed inside as a light source for the mirror effect to take place. In relationship to liminality, this cube exhibits the most qualities. The varying materiality invites the beholder to stare into its cool blue and seemingly endless space of repeating stairs as long as they wish. Advocating for feelings of liminality within a single object, this cube is the most successful model with the use of the infinite mirror effect reflecting an impossible space.

4.15



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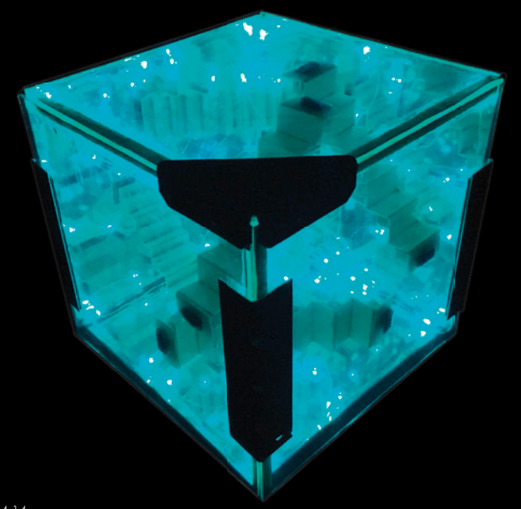


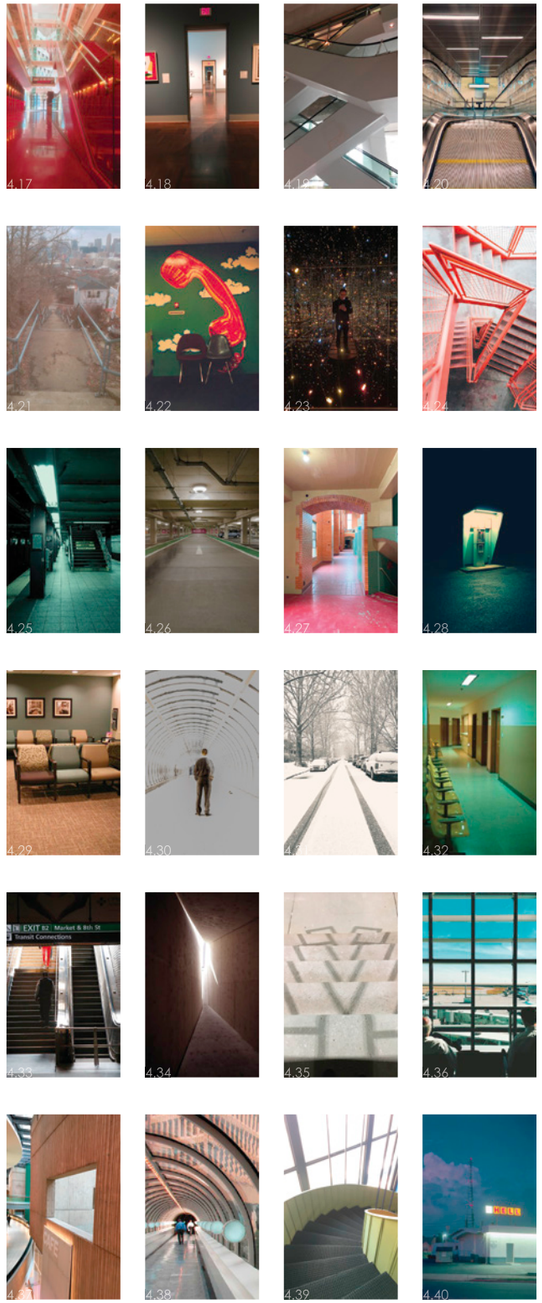
4.14

Figures:
4.14-4.16 Infinite Stair Model

Liminal Space

Although alluded to throughout the thesis, these spaces are finally defined as liminal spaces. The exploration of non-places and the concept of liminality situates where (or where not) these spaces are found in an urban environment. These in-between spaces are expanded and contracted thresholds that imply a type of "wait" between destinations or payoffs. Within the built environment, the most obvious place waiting occurs is in a waiting room. Here one becomes impatient and tries to fill their attention and minds with meaningless information from things like tabloid magazines, whatever daytime soap opera is on the waiting room television, or by staring into an abyss of social media present on each smartphone. Similar to how Augé describes the excess of events and how they are planned to help one in their search to apply meaning in the lived world, what one does in the waiting room is like this. They try to occupy their mind with excess information still in search of meaning. Within this liminal space there is an unmindful disregard for the space and a need to kill the time which seemingly stands still in these spaces. However, not all these spaces feel stagnant to the user, just as everydayness does not feel stagnant to everyone.

More examples of these spaces can imply a gradient of stagnant and accelerated feelings toward time as different spaces are traveled through. In any example of these spaces, unmindfulness and liminal perceptions still present themselves, but at varying degrees. To expand on some of these examples, these spaces can be simple door thresholds; more circulatory spaces like hallways, stairs, and elevators; or larger in scale like airports, bus and train stations, highways, and hotels. Figures 4.17 through 4.40 show some of these spaces. Some are simple and necessary to spread concentrations of activity. Others serve completely different and larger functions, but still do not serve as the definite destination. Instead, they serve as a means of getting there. Each of the examples are spaces of movement between destinations. While one is not always physically moving through these spaces, like in the example of the waiting room, they are not meant to remain in these spaces for long periods of time and have an ephemeral relationship with the space.



With some examples recognized, documentation of these spaces was gathered as raw data along with qualitative observations noted of not only qualities of these spaces, but the behaviors of others traveling through the space. This documentation became the majority of the thesis work and was analyzed in depth to discover the essential design qualities that advocate for or deviate from the spaces appearing as liminal. These liminal spaces do not have to be recognized as "good" or "bad", but it is evident that they have been increasing exponentially in civilization's pursuit for supermodernity as Augé described. Since these liminal spaces find themselves situated between places, there is a possible argument that if not handled or designed properly, they could become wasted spaces. While observed as a possible argument, it falls short because although not associated with any identity, these spaces still serve functions of connecting one between their separated places. Instead, these spaces can be observed in how they promote liminality and unmindfulness and to what extent they are promoted. From this understanding, they can be strategically planned to achieve design and user experience goals.

Figures:
4.17 University of Cincinnati by Brodrick Brozowski
4.18 Toledo Art Museum by Brodrick Brozowski
4.19 Escalators by Brodrick Brozowski
4.20 Escalator from pixabay.com
4.21 Cincinnati Stair by Brodrick Brozowski
4.22 Ghirri, Luigi. Lucerna (1973)
4.23 Infinity Room by Brodrick Brozowski
4.24 Stair from pinterest.com
4.25 Train Station from pinterest.com
4.26 Parking Garage from sarahpetersphotography.com
4.27 Hall by Natalie Maalouf
4.28 Phone Booth from pinterest.com
4.29 Waiting Room from pinterest.com
4.30 Nonplace from sarahpetersphotography.com
4.31 Snowy Road by Natalie Maalouf
4.32 Waiting Area from pinterest.com
4.33 Subway Stairs from sfgate.com
4.34 Path from pinterest.com
4.35 SOA Stairs by Brodrick Brozowski
4.36 Airport from medium.com
4.37 Renaissance Café by Brodrick Brozowski
4.38 Peachtree Skywalk from grahamfoundation.org
4.39 Stairs by Brodrick Brozowski
4.40 Hell from pinterest.com

Renaissance

Fragment of Utopia

Raw Data

Surrendering the Cityscape

Liminal Dichotomy

"We adore chaos because we love to produce order."

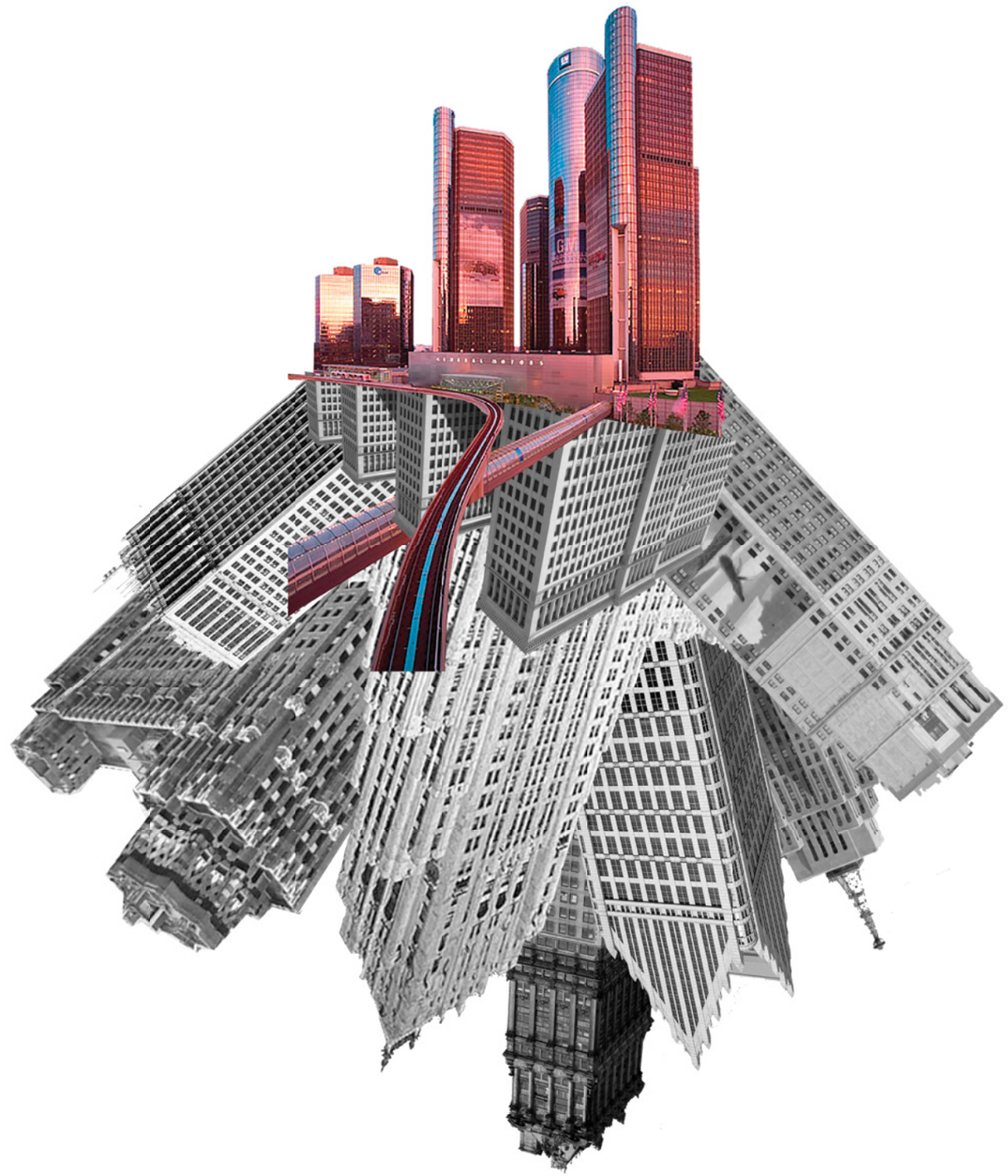
-M. C. Escher

Fragment of Utopia

Augé recognized world renowned buildings designed by well-known architects for towns which aspire to be noticed as part of the world network. These buildings reflect the design trends of their time and stand as monuments against the rest of their context. Referencing Rem Koolhaus' quote, "Fuck the context!" (Augé, 1995). Both Koolhaus and Augé recognize that these buildings gain prestige status because of their world recognition and not because of their historical or geographical context. Standing as fragments of utopia, these buildings represent a time that has not yet arrived but remains possible. This time is supermodernity. The Renaissance Center is a building that stands as an example of a fragment of utopia in Detroit. As the main site explored by this thesis, it reflect the hope for supermodernity, and has an excessive amount of liminal spaces.

John Portman's design, commissioned by Henry Ford II on behalf of the newly formed Renaissance Foundation, was aimed at restoring economic stability to the city after the riots of 1967. On the contrary, the building set up more barriers and created more liminal space that was pedestrian specific, surrendering the streetscape to the automobile. The scale speaks directly to the corporate agenda and Augé's insight that well know architects are hired to design the biggest and the best they can for these towns that wish to gain world recognition. While Detroit was already known worldwide because of the auto industry, its economic struggles called for a resurgence of worldwide interest. The building made its mark defining the Detroit skyline separate from the already unique and defining buildings which came before it. The building is stripped of decorative elements and stands as one central glass tube with four surrounding towers separating it from the art and culture of the rest of Detroit.

Through studies aimed at exploring liminality through video and collage, the Renaissance Center was explored. While walking through and documenting the space, the aim was to maintain inspiration from Tsien and Williams Architects' essay *On Slowness*. Not only was the place itself observed, but the way in which others who normally occupy the space was also observed. Multiple videos were produced. Each documenting and relaying information of these liminal spaces in a different way. The first took on a subjective approach. Not only as strict visual perspective, but also in relaying the possible meandering thoughts provoked by the textures, materials, color palette, lighting quality, tempo and rhythm of the design elements, and overall feel of the spaces encountered. Another site visit occurred, producing a second video which documented these spaces strictly visually. Finally, with an abundance of raw data and a better understanding of these spaces, a third video was produced to show distinct differences between some of these spaces.



5.1

Notes:

5.1 Augé, "Non-Place: An Introduction to Supermodernity"
5.2 Williams & Tsien, "On Slowness"
5.3 Marshall, "The Renaissance Center: Henry Ford II's grand design to revive Detroit- a history of cities in 50 buildings, day 42

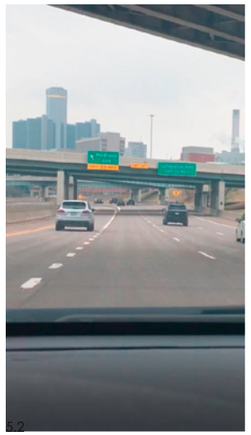
Figures:

5.1 Renaissance Fragment of Utopia

Raw Data

The initial sketch video, shown by figures 5.2 through 5.9, follows a path from the highway to the first steps within the built environment and then through the building's multitude of liminal spaces. The actual scale and amount of area covered by its first few floors open to the public are much grander in scale compared to what is captured in the video. As the video progresses, there is a subtle transition in the audio from a busy urban environment to calming sounds of nature. The beginning of the journey starts downtown; but as it travels through the building, it reaches the side which faces the Detroit River and is accompanied by a large glass atrium populated by artificial palm trees. Reflecting further on some of the material choices, they appear to be like those in any shopping mall across the United States. This overall aesthetic speaks to the corporate entities that have governed it throughout the years.

While analyzing the spaces through a purely architectural lens, there was also a lens by which the behavior of others was analyzed. While it stands as a place of work and a hotel, serving visitors of the city whether for business or pleasure, there was plenty of activity on the Tuesday afternoon it was visited. A lot of foot traffic was present throughout each of the spaces captured. Most people walked with a sense of intrepid purpose and haste. Its imagined that these individuals might have been in between meetings or heading to or from lunch as all aspects of a corporate lifestyle happen at an accelerated speed compared to those aimlessly meandering through the space at a relaxed pace. Within the central tower, a few individuals were observed walking around the circular concourse, endlessly getting their steps in, discussing business or socializing on their phone, or perhaps just allowing their mind to wander in between their different daily activities. Along the circular concourse there are also small nodes of additional space which allow for users to sit and work, take a coffee or lunch break, or socialize. The space serves its users in more ways than one, not only as a space of circulation between point A, B, C, and D, but also as an in-between space for their mind giving it a time to rest between different parts of their day.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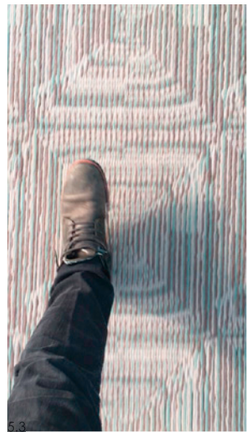
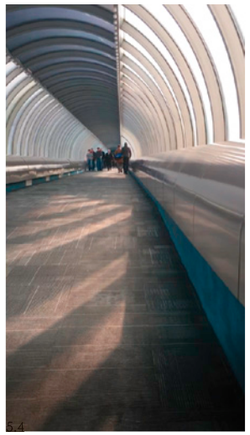

5.3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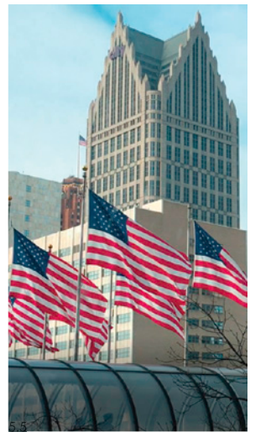
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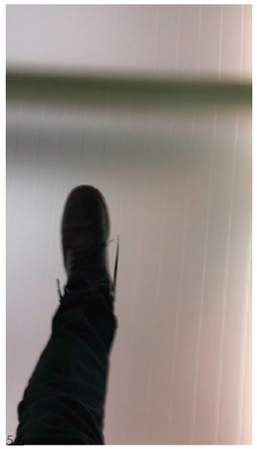
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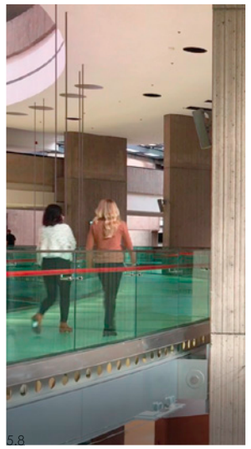
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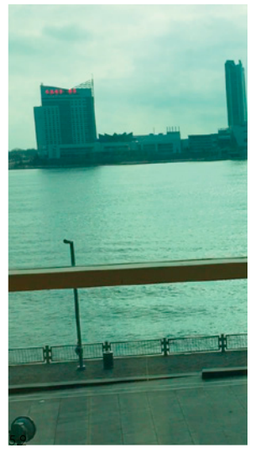
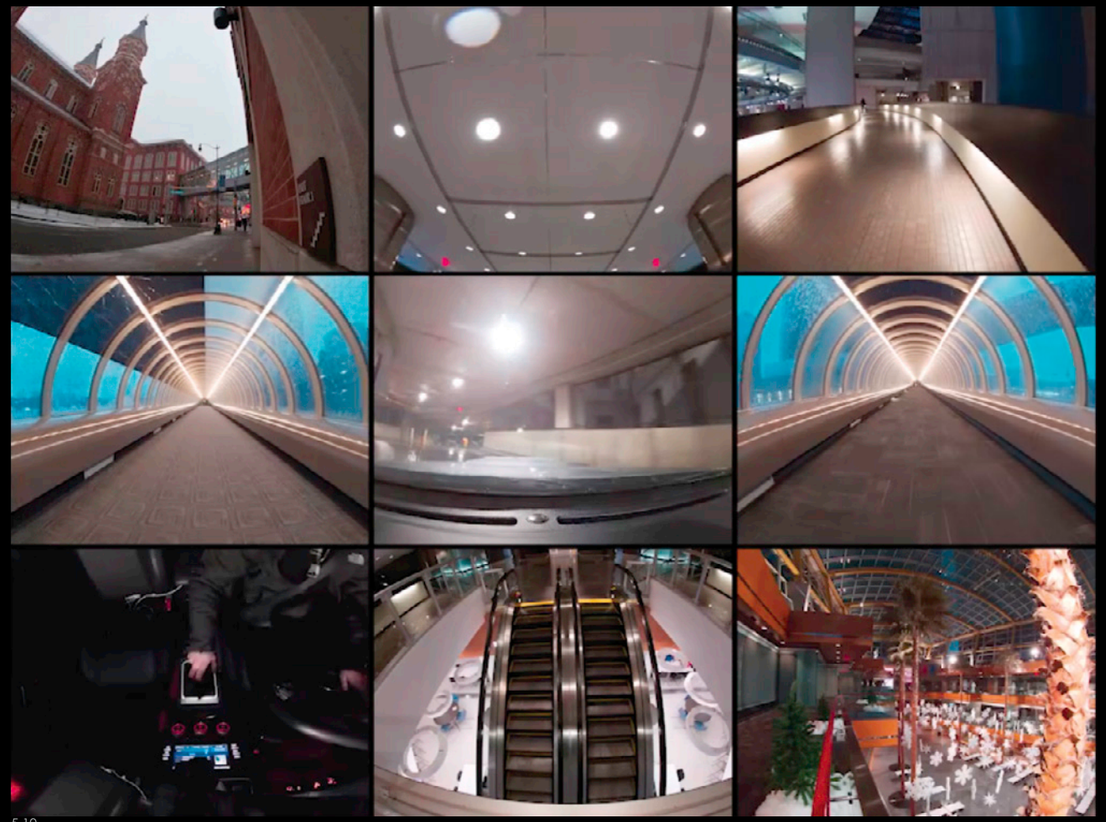

5.9

Figures:
5.2-5.9 Stills from Renaissance Sketch Video no.1

The second journey to the Renaissance Center looked to establish a new narrative separate from the first video and more expressive of the liminal spaces traveled through. However, once in the editing process, a strictly visual approach was taken. The distractions of audio overlays were not added to reduce possible sensory overload. The qualities of these spaces were the only thing to be observed through this gridded video. Each space was questioned in terms of how its physical design might provoke unmindfulness. Figure 5.10 shows a still of the three by three grid video depicting all aspects and scales of liminality encountered throughout the trip. This includes the highway, parking garage, walking through the city, the lobby of the building, various skywalks, and the large concourse within the central tower.

Playing for only 30 seconds, the eye is not given a chance to watch and capture every detail of the spaces being passed through or observed. This replicates the actual experience of travelling through the various liminal spaces. Each viewer of the video has limited time to view and observe different details of these spaces through the video just as if they were travelling through these spaces. Shots of the downtown environment capture the stillness of the city when not many are present, as well as other liminal spaces which can be seen alluding to them working together, bleeding from one into the next, forming an endless network of connectivity between separate programs. Shots of the paths within the Renaissance Center give a variety of spaces to be observed. Each using a variety of repetitious materials and lighting techniques to give the spaces a sense of rhythm or tempo as travelers move through them. There are also edges and boundaries of varying languages seen along these paths as endings to spaces, but also revealing other spaces which can be observed. The car is seen as a solitary place, but the little energy required to move it through vast amounts of space can be seen in the opposing shots of the dash style cam and the perspective from above the driver. Having established some basic differences between these spaces as well as different types of liminal spaces, the highway was selected to be investigated a little further before a final video was put together combing concepts of the first two sketch videos.



5.10

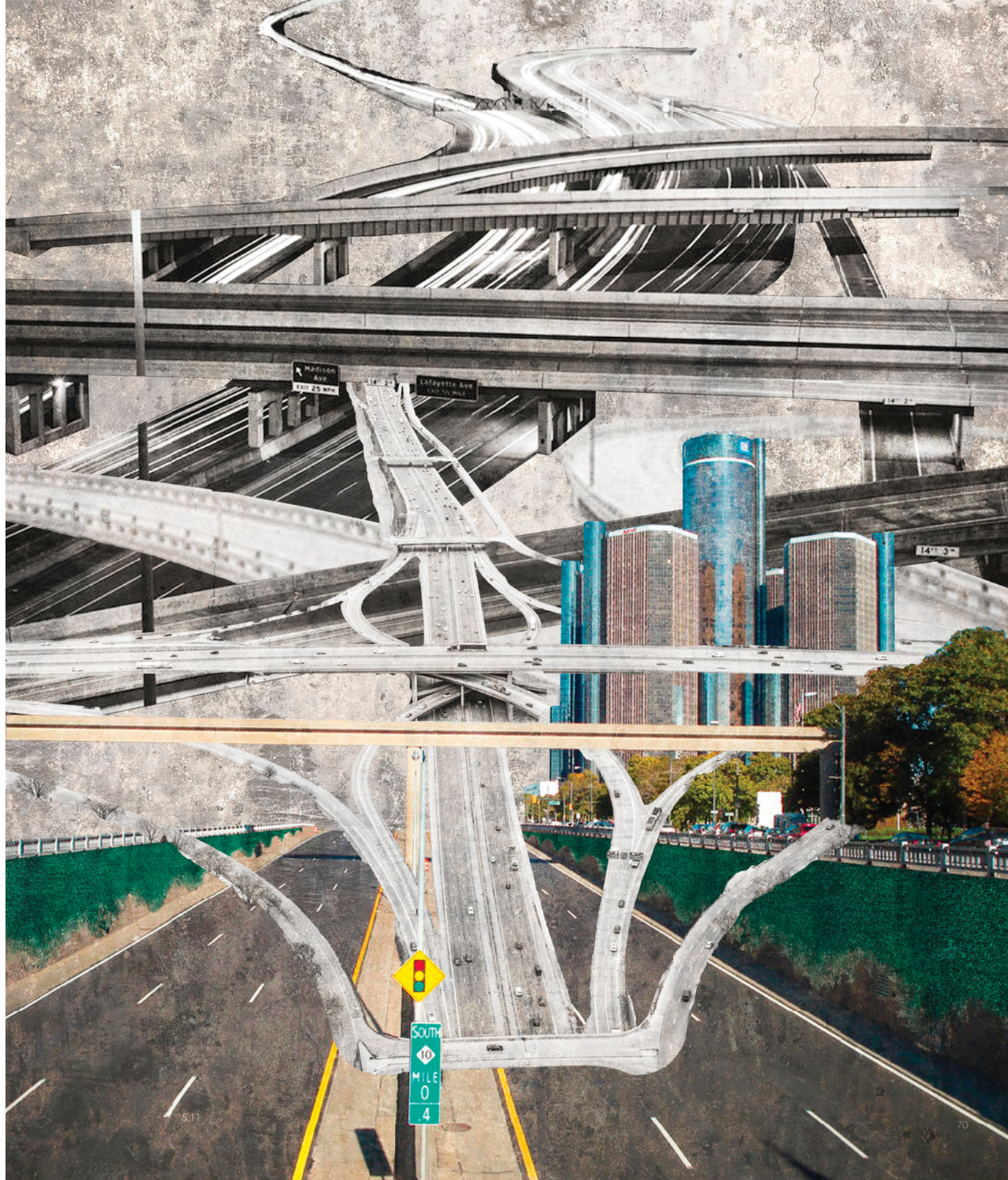
Figures:
5.10 Still from Renaissance Sketch Video no. 2

Surrendering the Cityscape

Besides its business relationship with the automotive companies which govern it, the Renaissance Center conceptually and physically stands as a sharp contrast to its surroundings. Conceptually, Portman designed the building to function as a city within a city. Physically this came in the form of separating it from the rest of the downtown's concentration and connecting it via skywalks. This design decision, ironically, surrendered the streetscape to the automobile; but still allowed pedestrians the ability to connect to the rest of the city in a form other than utilizing the sidewalks. The surrendering of the streetscape to the automobile over the last century has caused for the creation of one of the largest networks of liminal space within the built environment covered by this thesis. Today, it makes up a large portion of everyday life, causing daily tasks and activities to rely on that space functioning smoothly and properly. The system allowed for suburban sprawl to take place displacing inner city employees away from urban metropolis concentrations. The highway system increased the liminality main roads were already imposing on the city grid and planning. While it did not become a further space of exploration for this thesis, 10 years after the Renaissance Center was completed, another liminal space was opened to the public in the form of the people mover. This was built as another means of traveling within the city. The transit system itself, along with its individual stops implemented as parasites to some of Detroit's most prominent structures of its business district, created more liminality within the city.

Returning to the highway as a central focus of liminal space which dictates city planning and plays a large role in one's everydayness, the following page shows how one's field of vision is affected when traveling through spaces in an automobile.

Figures:
5.11 Surrendering the Cityscape



5.11

As a series, figures 5.12 through 5.14 observe three distinct field of vision studies which depict varying driving conditions to establish an understanding of the varied foci that occur when traveling through these spaces. Figure 5.12 shows the view of a parking garage. The way these spaces are built cause one feel condensed and encapsulated. The constriction of space in all directions forces drivers to proceed at a slower speed and cautiously. The ceiling is low and aisles are thin bringing parked cars in close proximity of one another as well as the aisles. With limited visibility and the possibility for pedestrians to stray within the aisle, a driver's field of vision widens as they move at a slow speed of ten to fifteen miles per hour. Increasing in scale and speed, a residential street is pictured in figure 5.13. The widening of the street for cars to move through as well as the increase in speed reduces the possibility of stray pedestrians wandering into the street. This causes a driver's field of vision to narrow slightly as both they and pedestrians are more aware of each other's presence. Jumping all the way up to the highway in figure 5.14, the driver's field of vision is as narrow as it can be. The scale and speed at which one travels through the highway are much greater than the prior two examples. These observations, combined with the programming of highways which only allow for one-way traffic and no opposing traffic by other vehicles or pedestrians, create a mindset that finds itself the most unmindful in comparison to the other spaces. Varying material and other decorative elements such as landscape are stripped away from the highway allowing the driver to focus on a tiny point in the distance that is constantly vanishing. Without clues of context atop these man-made valleys, or prescriptive language of mile markers and other signs which use language to let one know where they are in space, the driver could go on for long periods of time without knowing their exact location.

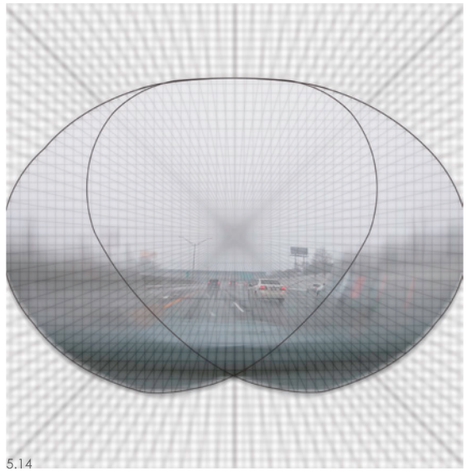
Figures:
5.12 Parking Garage Field of Vision
5.13 Residential Field of Vison
5.14 Highway Field of Vision

5.12

Parking Garage Field of Vision
10 mph

5.13

Residential Field of Vision
25 mph



5.14

Highway Field of Vision
75 mph

Defining Dichotomies

Having defined a wide variety of the qualities of the spaces captured while visiting the Renaissance Center, a final video was made. This third video utilizes some of the same strategies implemented by the other two videos, but in a more simplified manner to push understandings of liminality as it makes itself present in three different places. The first clip of the video shows the differences between driving through a residential neighborhood, the highway, and finally the parking garage. All the differences evident in just these three spaces were described through the field of vision studies. Some qualities observed were differences in scale, speed, prescribed language, materiality, and stimulation. The middle portion of the clip depicts an escalator. This shot alludes to qualities of varied edges both horizontal and vertical, prescribed language, and the little energy required to use it to travel through space. Finally, the last shot depicts the skywalk which goes over Jefferson Ave. The repetition of arched bands gives this space a latitude of edges which give it a rhythm as someone walks through as well as the perception that the space is a lot longer than it is. Most of the material is neutral and stripped of character, but the windows that line the space allow a traveler to look out and appreciate their suspended location, and the lights cause the space to glow as if it were out of a sci-fi film. As a whole, the video is overlaid with ambient audio that at first sounds like white noise but becomes more recognizable as a song with a defined tune, beat, and eventually a small portion of lyrics as the video reaches its conclusion. This was put in to reflect on the meandering thoughts and reflections one might have as they travel through these and other liminal spaces.

In a similar video, time was put into question with a narrative. It observed similar dichotomies questioning if the built environment can impact our sense of time or if there need to be other distractions present, such as people. Stills of this video are seen on the next page along with the accompanying narrative

5.15

Stripped of stimulation.
Seemingly endless.
Prescriptive language.
Minimal energy required.

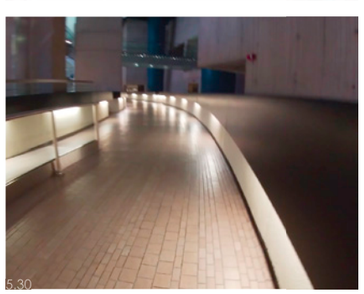
5.16

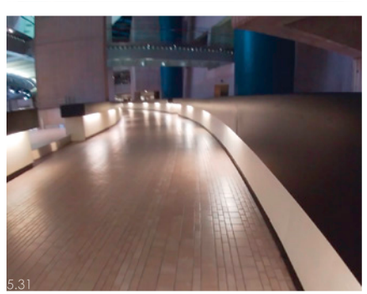
Some stimulation.
Some edges.
Implied language.
Some energy required.

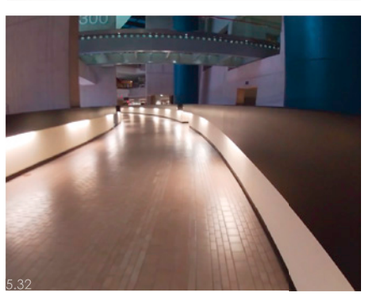
5.17

Most stimulation.
Multiple edges.
Less implied language.
More energy required.

Figures:
5.15-5.17 Stills from Renaissance Sketch Video no. 3







Figures:
5.18-5.33 Stills from Renaissance Sketch Video no. 4

Architecture is strategically designed and constructed by us.

It's our attempt to control the limitless possibilities of our world.

The only outlying phenomena is time.

It exists outside the laws of physics and matter.

It will undoubtedly go on forever.

There is no controlling it.

Our perceptions however...

...while they can't be controlled, they can be fooled.

Perhaps we can create a false sense that we have control

Over the one thing we never seem to have enough of.

For some it drags onward.

For others it leave them behind.

How does architecture influence these perceptions?

Through architecture can we feel as if we control time?

Triangulating

Triangulating Concepts

Triangulating Methods

Triangulating Methods

Before moving to some of the concluding products, the diagrams on the following pages were made to map out the conceptual framework this thesis has gone through. Throughout this thesis a variety of products were created to not only represent the ideas of the conceptual framework, but to also put it in question as well as ask new questions in order to move the thesis forward. Everydayness was described and understood best as routine tasks and frequented places. Its importance as providing a foundation to one's life was seen between the two collages of the shifting routine section that explained the impact of a pandemic causing quarantine and social distancing. Everydayness and unmindfulness were both addressed in the wait and payoff video which recorded routine tasks and emulated some of the perceptual experiences missed by those carrying out the task. This then directly inspired the unmindfulness collages that lead to liminal spaces as the spaces where this and everydayness can occur. Multiple models, videos, and collages were created to expand on the research of the three concepts in order to understand them better and draw implications from the design of liminal spaces to analyze how they provoke unmindfulness. As a result, a taxonomy was put together to define these qualities and behaviors of those who come in contact with liminal space.

6.1

Figures:
6.1 Triangulating Products

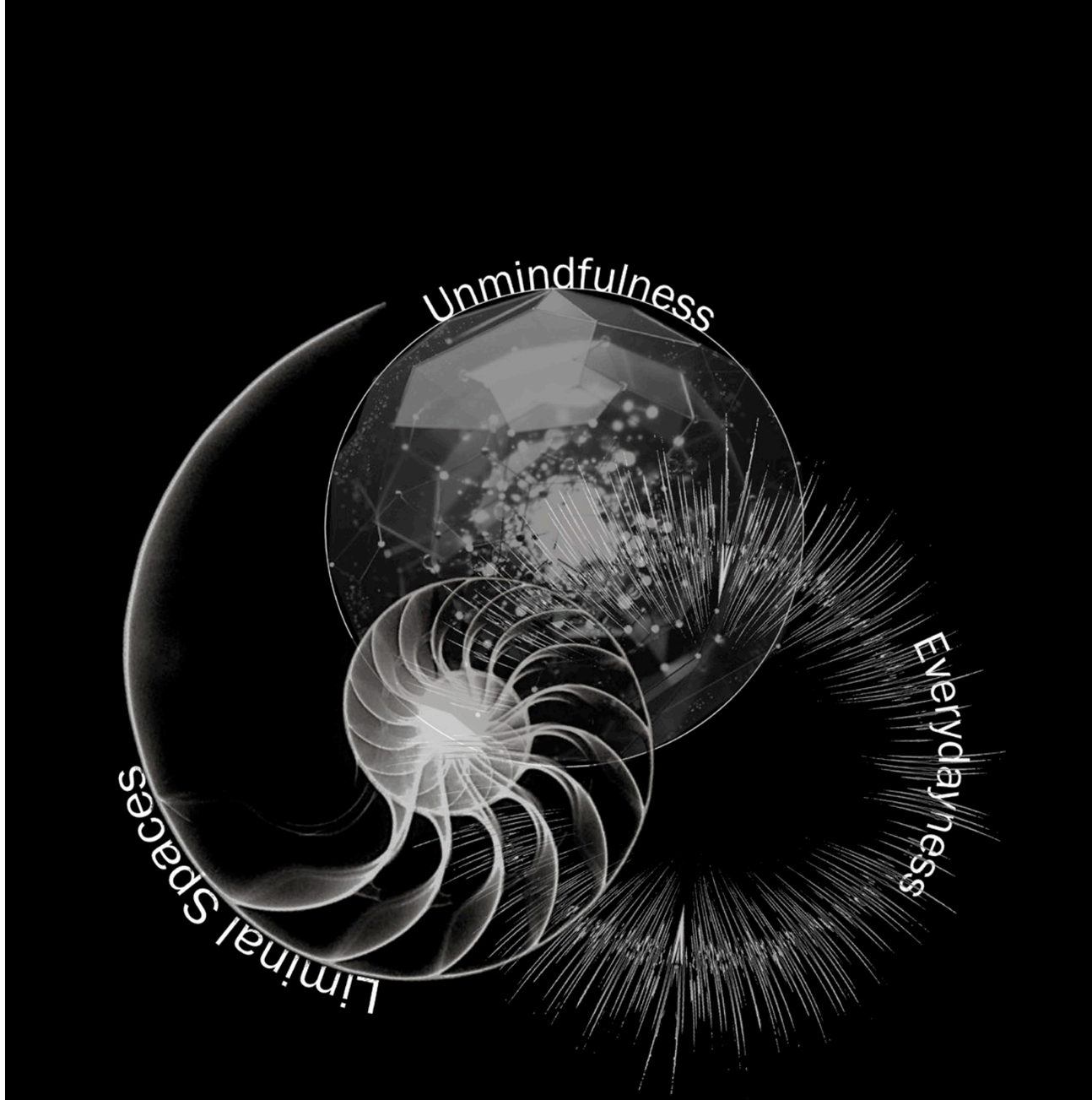
Triangulating Concepts

Pictured in figure 6.2, the symbols used to describe each concept are shown slightly overlapping. Depicted by an abstraction of a slinky, everydayness finds itself at the intersection of the linear and cyclical concepts of time. Much like the concept itself did for this thesis, everydayness provides a foundation and the connection between separate systems and modes of existence. It houses the mundane and gives recognition to the ordinary aspects of life. Beyond one's routines and typical schedule, everydayness provides a comfort that there are in-between moments when one can rest their mind. The varying points and edges created allude to the forces, both inward and outward, at play as one moves from place to place through liminal spaces. As everydayness takes one through the routines of their daily life and the mundane spaces between their destinations, they find themselves unmindful of the environment around them and sometimes the people who accompany them through these times and spaces.

Depicted by an ethos type sphere, unmindfulness finds itself as a byproduct of both everydayness and liminal spaces. Through heightened experiences and some random occurrences when traveling through mundane spaces, one can be mindful of small details or the entire picture before them. Just as one passes through these spaces, they in turn pass through the traveler. Mindfulness, however, does not remain constant. There needs to be times in-between mindfulness when one's mind can rest between stimulating experiences. The mundane provides these moments by not always grabbing or holding one's attention allowing them to become unmindful of the space and people around them. One's perceptions are constantly expanding and contracting between these two modes of consciousness. In unmindfulness, they retreat into their own mind, daydreaming while thinking about the past or future. They find their minds traveling to anywhere but the present moment. From everydayness and its resulting unmindfulness, liminal spaces were discovered to be the spaces of the built environment which house and provoke both concepts.

Depicted by a nautilus shell, liminal space has grown exponentially as man has evolved and civilization has grown. The shell, being a symbol of expansion and renewal, can correlate directly with the way these spaces have expanded as a vast network connected the world and its systems together. Similarly, the shell relates to people. As one grows, they search for meaning in the lived world. While anthropological places serve meaning to many of its inhabitants, liminal space is where one becomes unmindful of the environment around them and instead becomes mindful of themselves as they avidly search the world for meaning.

Figures:
6.2 Triangulating Concepts



6.2

The Void

Concept

Layering

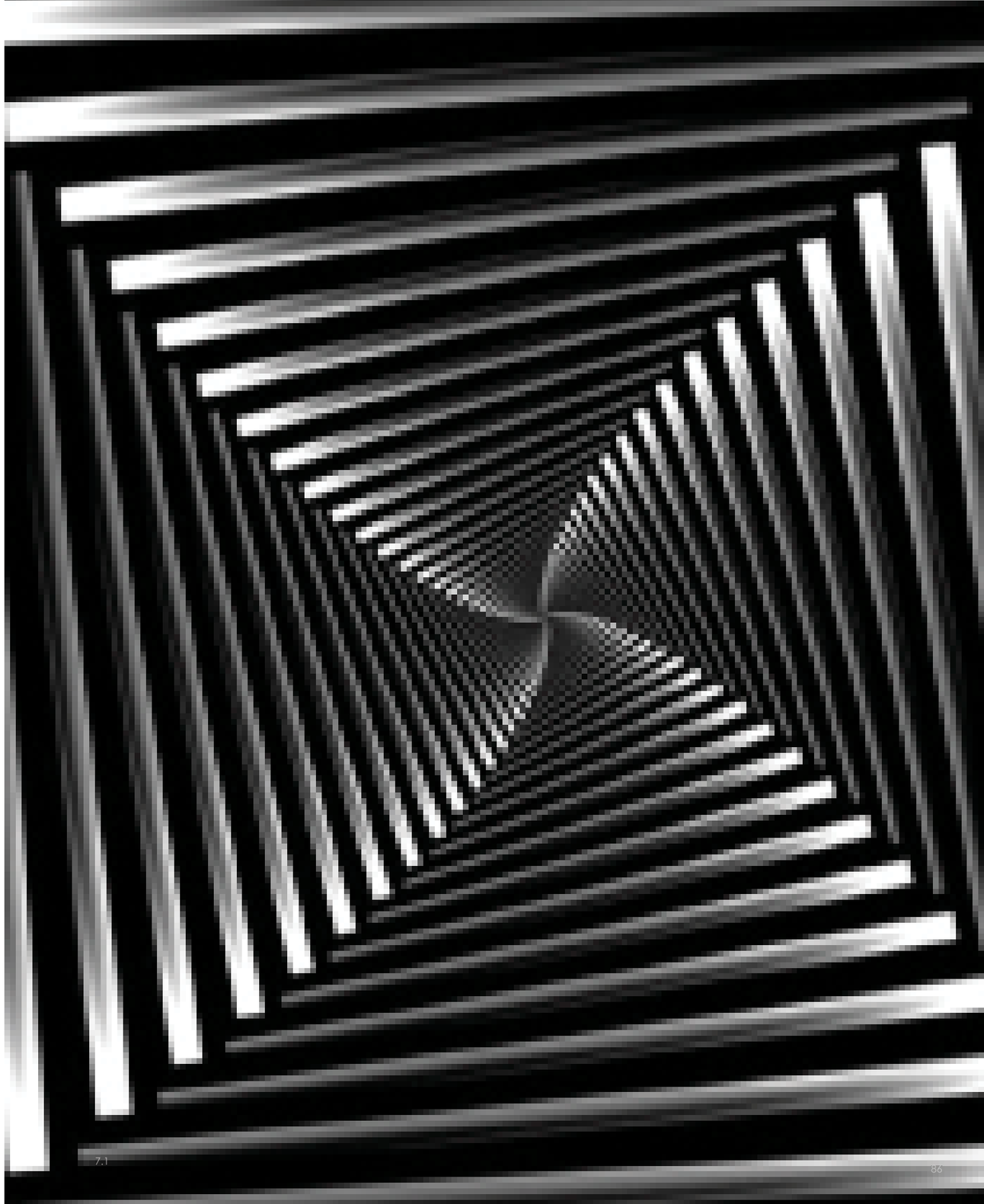
Encroachment on Place

Expansion of Space

Concept

Increasing scale from the mirror and cube models constructed, an installation was built to encapsulate a traveler within a seemingly liminal space and evoke perceptions of displacement and suspension. Constructed from two by fours and sheets of plywood, a box was built to be eight feet long by four feet wide on one end and roughly three and a half feet wide on the other by seven feet tall. Its interior was painted to be completely black. A typical residential door was added to the exterior to add a layer of experience to the space that also relates back to the concept of everydayness. One other addition to the space was a mirrored medicine cabinet on the back wall as an additional piece relating to everydayness once inside the space as well as a reflective material for what would be projected into the space. With the space constructed, a projector was used to project the image seen in figure 7.1. As it was projected, it rotated at a slow rate creating a gradual sensation of rotation as one would approach the end of the box from the door. However, this was only to create feelings of suspension and displacement. Further experimentation with projection lead to more intriguing experiences.

Figures:
7.1 The Void Graphic



7.1

Layering

Experimenting further with projection, liminal spaces captured with a GoPro at Somerset Mall were projected into the space. The wide, almost fish like lens of the GoPro created beautiful shots of the liminal spaces captured. Projected into the box, they helped to create a more encapsulating environment for the traveler as they experienced the space of not only the box, but of the liminal spaces projected. Projecting onto the black walls made the space appear expanded to the bounds of the space presented by the projections. Through its construction and resulting experiences, it presented more layers of liminality than originally expected. The box itself was constructed and placed in a backyard. The backyard, being defined by the house and garage identify it as a specific place. The box itself then represented liminal space as its interior was completely void of any stimulation or identifiable elements. It once again became a place using projection. While it may have become a virtual place rather than a real one, it still became more distinguished than it was as just a blank, placeless void. The use of projection helped to re-ground the traveler within another place.

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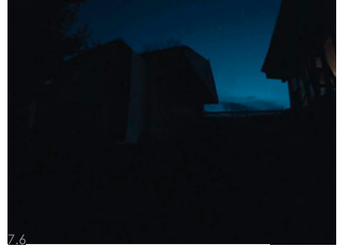
Figures:
7.2 The Void Place
7.3 The Void Liminal Space
7.4 The Void RePlace

7.5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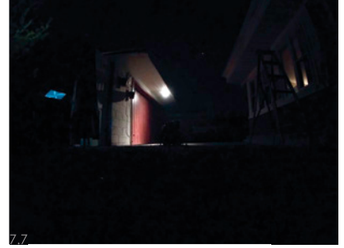
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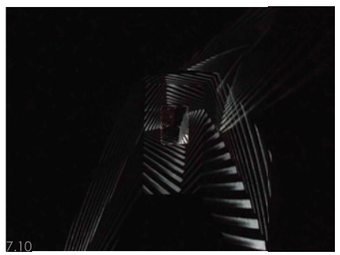
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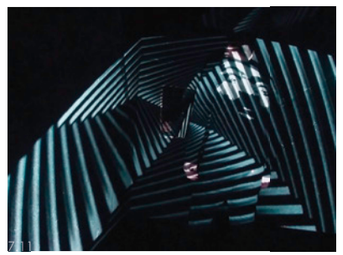
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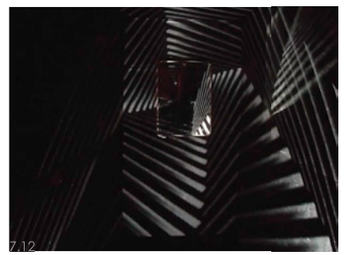
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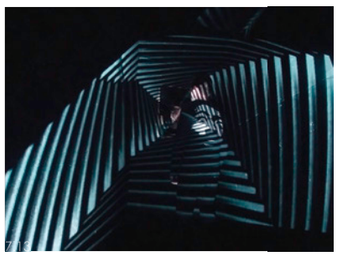
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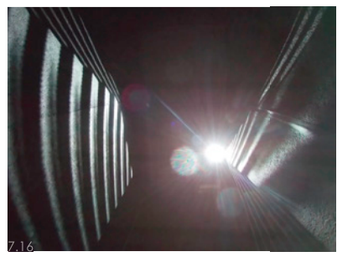
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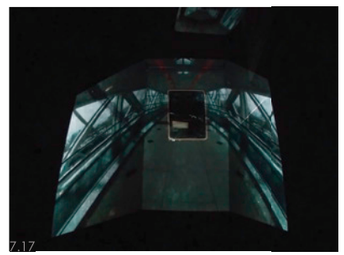
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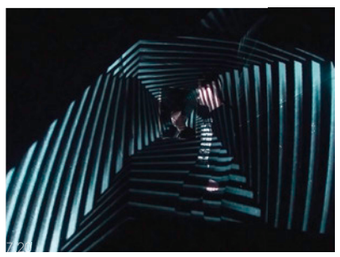
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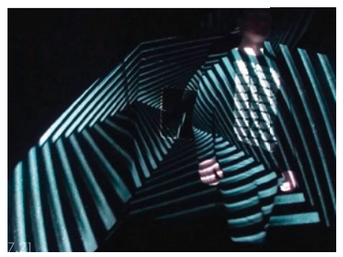
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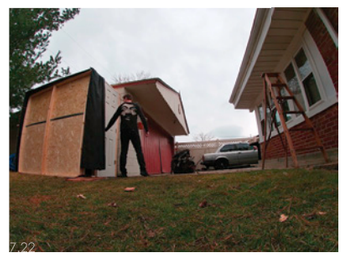
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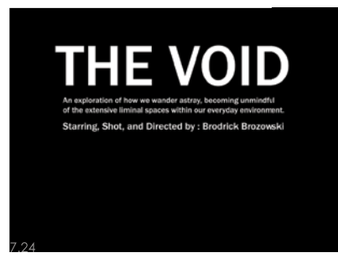

7.24

Figures:
7.5-7.24 Stills from *The Void*

To show the experience of the box, a two-minute video was montaged together. Besides the experience of the box, the video also observed an acceleration of time with a time lapse of the sun setting to start the video. As night falls, someone flips a light on inside the house and then on the exterior of the garage. The person who presumably flipped on the lights steps out into view approaching the box with direct intention and determination. They open the door and linger there for a few seconds before entering the void. Shots of the space from a corner close to the ground and perspective shots from the person's perspective interchange on the screen with one another, showing the person who has entered the void approach the end of the space with slow steps. Once they arrive at the end of the box, shots of the space being altered with projections of liminal spaces follows. It almost feels as if these are the projections of what is going on in the person's mind. These shots are interrupted with a curious shot looking back toward the entrance from the other side of the void. The rotating image can be seen projected onto the walls before cutting to more shots of liminal spaces projected into the space. The shots cut to the person as they exit the void. Back outside, the sun has risen; and it is presumably mid-morning implying that the person has spent an entire night within the liminal space of the void. Cut together as a final montage, the video was an exploration on how one wanders astray, becoming unmindful of the extensive liminal spaces found within one's everyday built environment. Besides the provocation of unmindfulness observed in the video from the projections of liminal space, the video also showed large time jumps implying the amount of time spent in these spaces is quite a bit. The entrance and exit of the void show that encountering these types of spaces is inevitable in one's everyday life, but there is always a return to anthropological place and one's home.

Encroachment on Place

Stripping the installation of the projection, the mirror in the back of the space made the space appear expanded even without the projection. While it was only a small medicine cabinet mirror, it still managed to achieve this effect. The mirror reflected the place presented just outside the door of the box, expanding its space into its own. This repetition and expansion continued further as one stepped back from the box viewing the edge of the box punctuated by the door. Stepping back into the house, there was a window almost perfectly in line with the box. This caused for a layered effect of edges from the window to the door and then to the mirror and back again in its reflection. On the following pages, figures 7.29 through 7.40 can be viewed and flipped through quickly to see the effects of traveling through these three distinct liminal spaces. These images were combined into an animation that looped endlessly, revealing the layered edges and their repetition as the view enters the mirror and repeats the path from the window to the mirror endlessly. Combining all of the layers at which the installation worked and emulated some of the defining principles of non-places as defined by Augé, the box was photoshopped into universally recognizable places around the globe as seen in figures 7.25 through 7.28. Surrounded by context, the landmark of these places can be viewed in the mirror of the box as it becomes an extension of these places. These collages hint to Augé's claims that as civilization has grown, so have these liminal spaces.

7.25

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Figures:
7.25 The Void in Athens
7.26 The Void in Sydney
7.27 The Void in London
7.28 The Void in Paris

Expansion of Space

Figures:
7.29-7.40 The Void Animation

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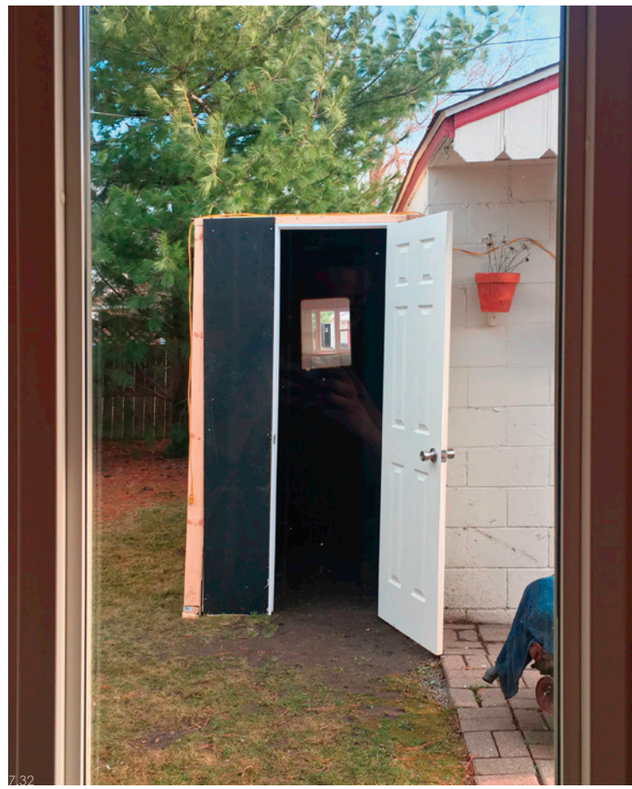

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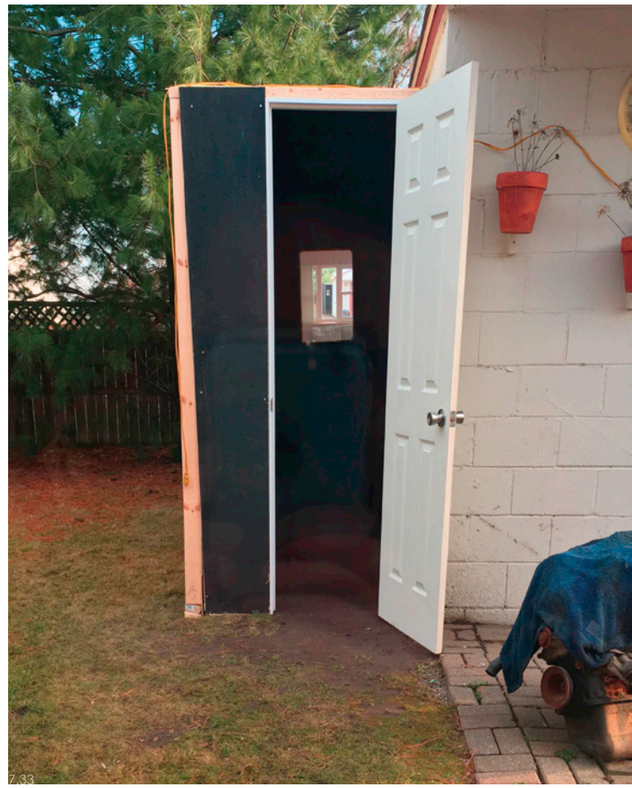

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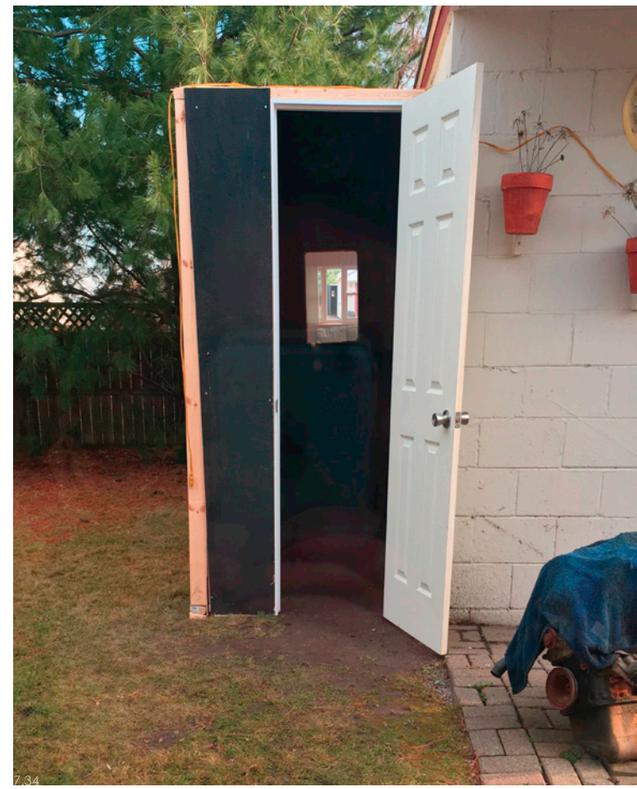

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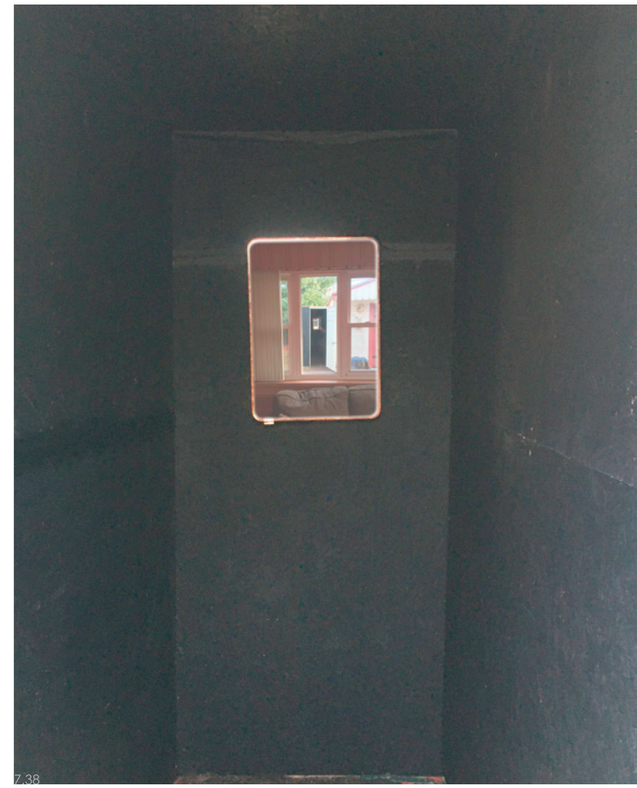

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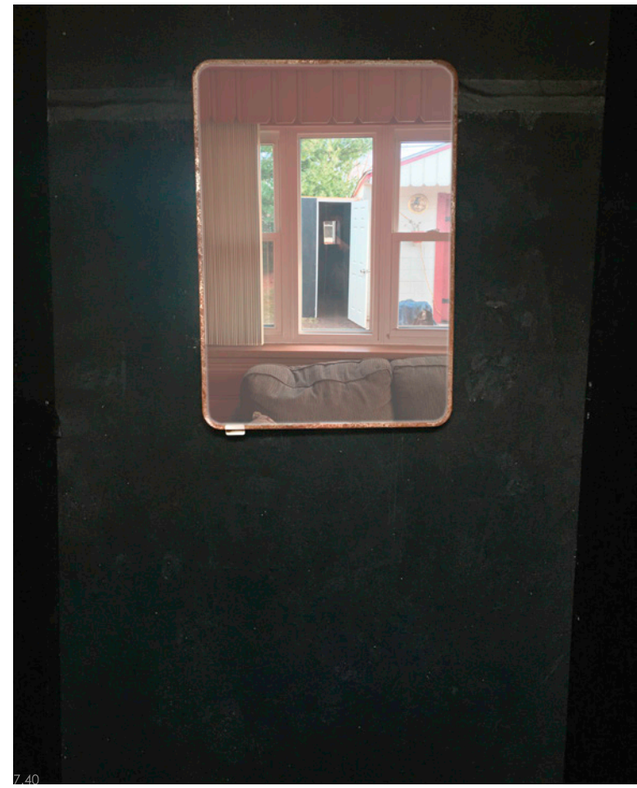


Taxonomies

Introduction to Taxonomies

Scale

Materiality

Prescriptive Language

Perceived Edges

Stimulation

Choice

Density

Stamina

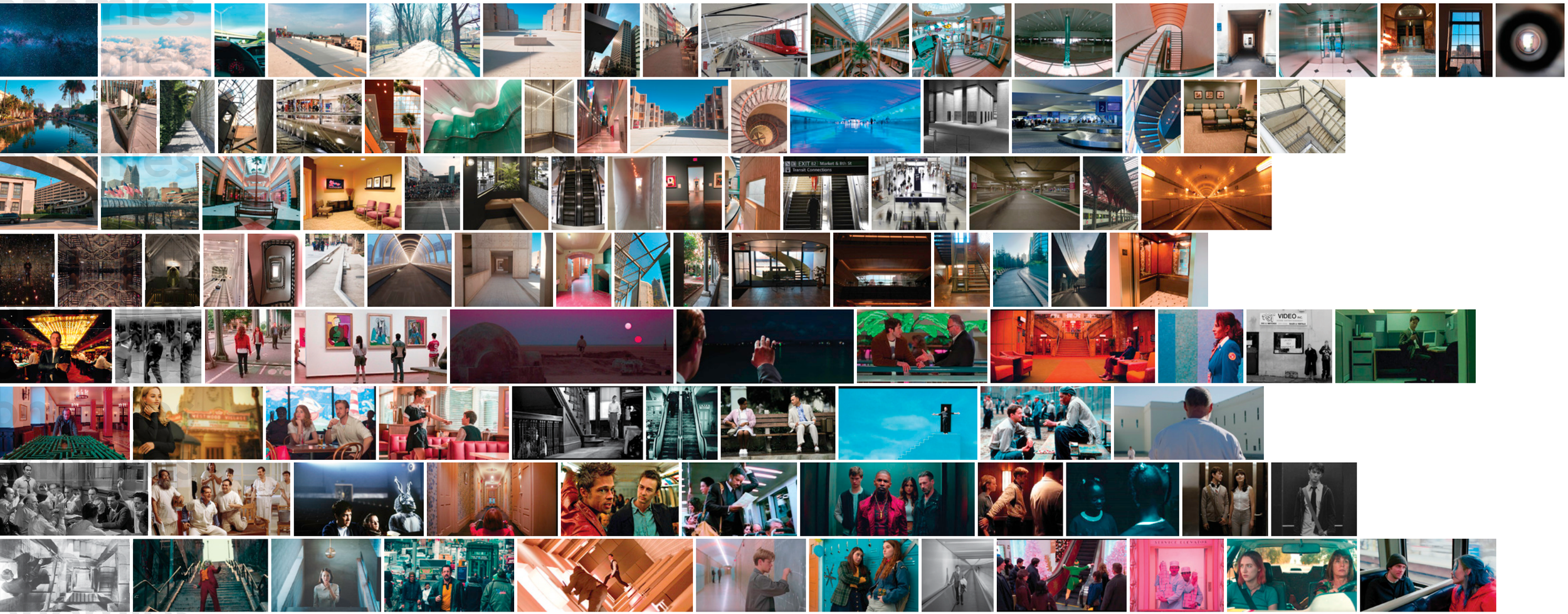
Introduction to Taxonomies

Documenting the Renaissance Center, other liminal spaces, and the mundane, the following taxonomies were put together. They start to pull out distinct qualities of liminal spaces, as well as resulting behavior exhibited in these spaces from the use and perceptions of those qualities. Each category described within the two taxonomies are explained through imagery set up in attempted gradients to show how the wide variety of these spaces can be organized or understood according to those categories and how they push feelings of liminality and unmindfulness. The taxonomy which organizes qualities of liminal spaces is made up of imagery showing these spaces mostly empty of people so that the actual qualities of these spaces may be assessed rather than people's behaviors in these spaces. The behavior taxonomy uses imagery from cinema to supplement the explanations of how people may behave in these spaces in reaction to the qualities of the space or because of other outlying forces.

Since the thesis started on a track exploring cinema and architecture's relationship, it seemed appropriate to utilize some of the information researched to assist in explaining this taxonomy. Architecture and cinema are two art forms that are constantly intersecting. In his essay on frame, shot, and montage, film theorist Sergei Eisenstein says that architecture is the undoubted ancestor to film. Architecture is an art form that defines spatial relationships to encourage specific human action. Cinema, a modern art form, then tell stories by capturing these spaces and introducing the fourth dimension, time. Both artforms interweave in their relationship to space, time, and a spectator or traveler. In *Cinematic Aided Design*, Francois Penz proposes the study of cinema to aid architects in design. He specifically notes its ability to capture everydayness which gives the audience a foundation and draws them in. That foundation of recognizable contexts and social situations is then disrupted to build a story which takes the audience away for their everydayness, presenting false realities. The presence of everydayness sits not only at the beginning of the film, but also in the slower moments of the plot which connects the more dramatic or action scenes. Coined by Brian McGrath and Jean Gardner, cinemetrics is an attempt to pull data from films and visualize them as informational graphics. While cinemetrics was established to study visual information, this taxonomy aims to utilize cinema as a way to recognize typical behaviors in liminal spaces.

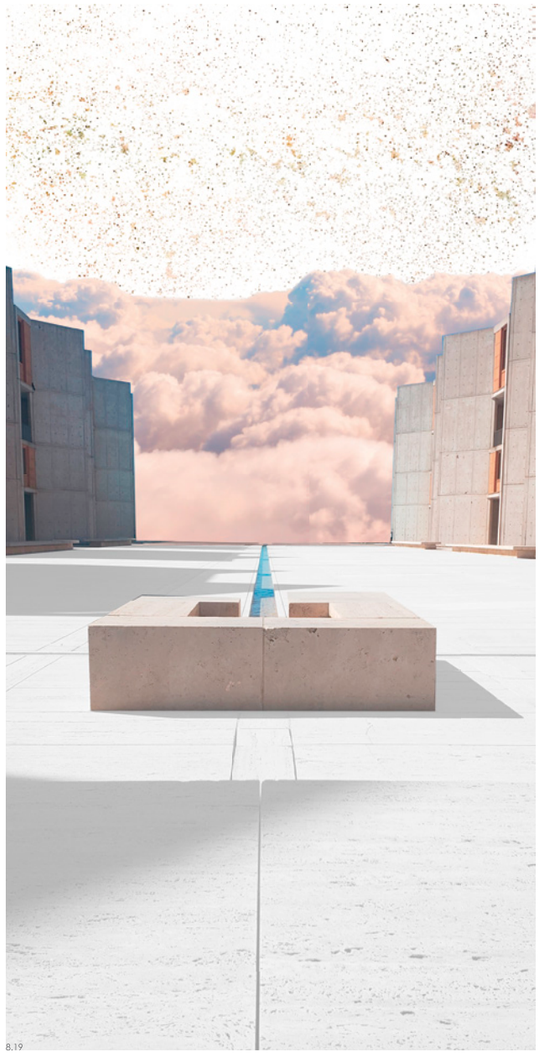
The taxonomies start to uncover many different aspects of these spaces, but there are limitations. Each category may be broken down into further subcategories as one grows to understand each category and how it is laid out. There is also the acknowledgment that there could be more categories, but this thesis focuses on some of the main ones. It is not only based on the understanding of liminality and how Augé defined non-places, but how they presented themselves through the case studies and documentation.

Notes:
1. Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture"
2. McGrath and Gardner, "Cinemetrics: Architectural Drawing Today"


EXIT R2 Market & 8th St
Transit Connections
VIDEO INC.

Scale

Perhaps the quality with the most range is scale. The measurement of this quality not only measures the space itself from largest to smallest, but also acknowledges the scale of other objects that surround or make their way into the space. There are the elements which define the space for what it is, but then there are the outlying objects which can influence how that space is perceived. Some of these seemingly separate objects can in fact become some of the defining elements that create the sense of scale in these spaces. The largest being the nighttime sky is the closest to representing infinite, boundless space as one is able to view it. Without light from the sun, the eye can see stars burning millions of light years away. The sky becomes a more defined space as light meets Earth's atmosphere. The stars become invisible to the naked eye and clouds become defining points in the sky, but they are always on the move. Experienced from a plane, the sky becomes a different kind of liminal space as one move through it rather than observing it from below. Clouds become more tangible elements and views of cityscapes below give insight to how small one really is when compared to the vast liminality of the sky. Coming down to earth, the highway is the largest built liminal space encountered daily for most people. Decreasing in scale further, the spaces move from exterior to interior. The exterior spaces become more defined by built elements coming closer together condensing space. This happens as one moves from the suburbs, parks, or courtyards to more dense urban areas. Interior spaces can present space just as wide as some cityscapes but are encapsulated with roofs that can limit the view of the sky or cut it off completely. Interior spaces become smaller, both vertically and horizontally, until the smallest space that can be traveled through normally is just a door threshold. Smaller than that, but still presenting a perceived space, is a window. Similar to a window, the smallest liminal space is a peep hole. The quality of scale strongly captures not only the range of liminal spaces, but also relates back to how one's perceptions expand and contract. One can observe seemingly infinite spaces such as the sky or focus in on minute details as small as a peep hole.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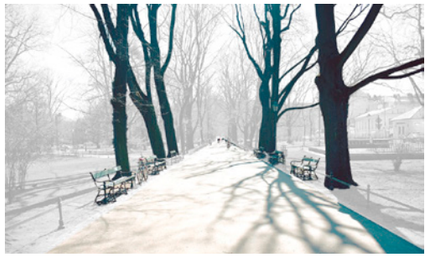
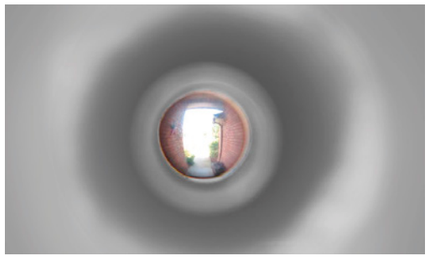
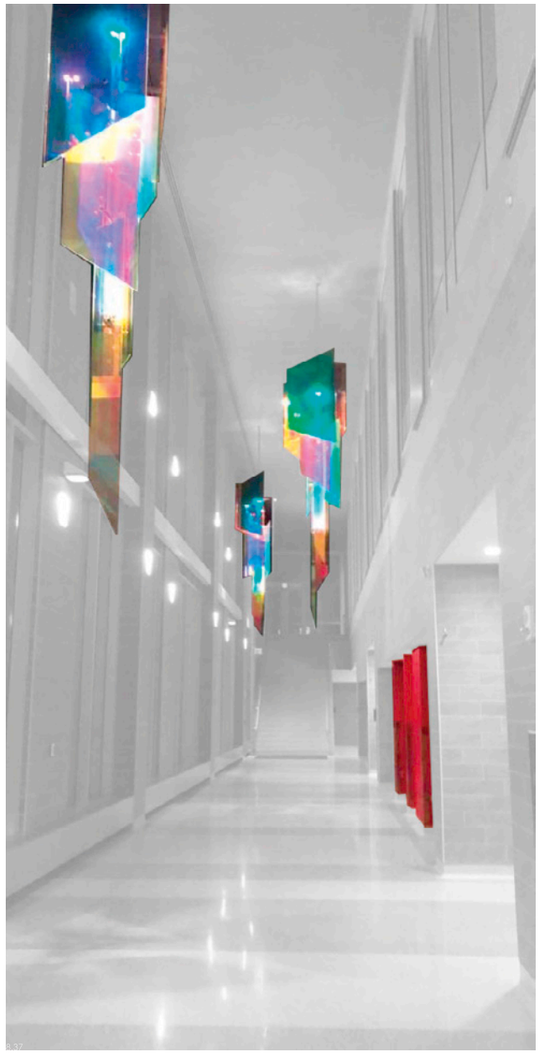




Figures:
8.1 Starry Sky from pixabay.com
8.2 Clouds from Earth.com
8.3 Highway by Brodrick Brozowski
8.4 Parking Deck by Brodrick Brozowski
8.5 Path by Natalie Maalouf
8.6 Salk Institute by Juan Arias
8.7 Downtown Detroit by Brodrick Brozowski
8.8 City Walk by Natalie Maalouf
8.9 DTW Airport from travel-mi.com
8.10 Somerset Mall by Brodrick Brozowski
8.11 Somerset Mall by Brodrick Brozowski
8.12 Somerset garage by Brodrick Brozowski
8.13 Somerset Mall by Brodrick Brozowksi
8.14 Exterior Hall by Natalie Maalouf
8.15 Somerset elevator by Brodrick Brozowski
8.16 SOA entrance by Brodrick Brozowski
8.17 SOA window by Brodrick Brozowski
8.18 Peep Hole from itstactical.com
8.19 Highlighted Scale

Materiality

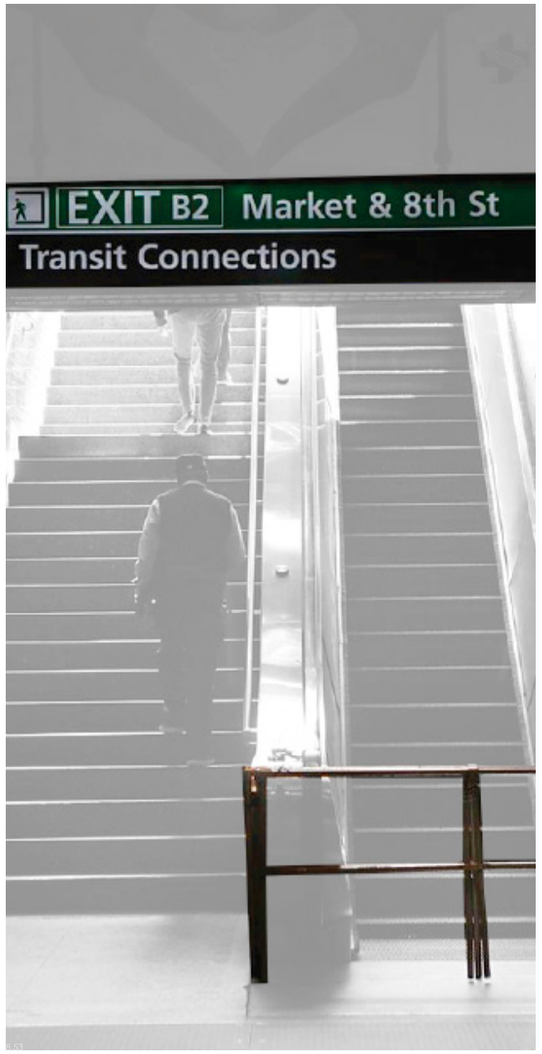
While scale captured the infinite range of these spaces, materiality starts to measure the wide diversity of these spaces. Perhaps the most difficult quality to measure, materiality was organized on a basis of how engaging the material or combination of materials might be to someone. The imagery used presents a wide variety of spaces and materials. In each there are concerns of color, lighting, natural versus artificial, reflectivity, transparency, and texture. Recognizing the presence of these qualities reveals that further investigation of this category could result in either more categories more specifically defined or subcategories which still fall under materiality. Falling to the least engaging side of the spectrum are spaces designed with little to no material differentiation. These spaces present neutral tones from artificial, mass produced, cheap looking materials, that create a space which feels just as mundane and bone dry as the function the space is there for. Moving up the spectrum, the next few images present more variety in material, both artificial and natural, and some brighter colors which stand out against the flat, neutral colors of other materials in the space. Further up, the most engaging spaces present more natural materials, replication of natural elements, materials which reflect or fragment light, and a greater diversity of materials used together in the space. Overall, there are countless combinations of materials which can make a space feel liminal.



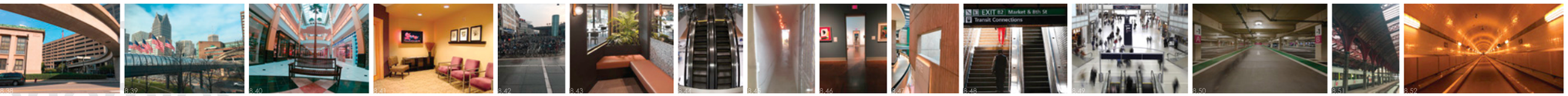
Figures:
8.20 Balboa Park by Juan Arias
8.21 Downtown Detroit by Brodrick Brozowski
8.22 Path by Natalie Maalouf
8.23 Renaissance Center by Brodrick Brozowski
8.24 DTW Airport from yelp.com
8.25 Renaissance Center by Brodrick Brozowski
8.26 Renaissance Center by Brodrick Brozowski
8.27 Elevator from pinterest.com
8.28 WMU by Mike Kapala
8.29 Salk Institute by Juan Arias
8.30 Stairs by Natalie Maalouf
8.31 DTW Airport from pinterest.com
8.32 Elevators from archdaily.com
8.33 DTW baggage claim from metroairport.com
8.34 Stairs by Brodrick Brozowski
8.35 Waiting Room from pinterst.com
8.36 Stairs from pinterst.com
8.37 Highlighted Materiality

Prescriptive Language

In describing non-places, Augé refers to the collective identity all travelers assume when visiting these spaces. This is to surrender their personal identity to the powers that govern those spaces and constantly proving their innocence by following the prescriptive language of these spaces which prohibit certain behaviors or inform how the space is to be used. Prescriptive language can mostly easily be identified by wayfinding systems. These systems use exact language to not only inform someone of how the space is used, but also to identify important locations, give directions, and let the traveler know their exact location. Depending on the programming of the space, wayfinding systems can be very explicit with numerous signs alluding to all its rules, directions, and locations; or they can be laidback allowing users to use the space "as they wish." Even though there might not be a wayfinding system which tells users how a space is to be used, there are certain design elements or non-architectural elements that can be placed to imply how a space is to be used. Implied design moves can relate to some of the other qualities such as scale or perceived edges which may promote constant movement or allow for space where one can stop and pause. Non-architectural elements could be furniture. Seating may be provided prompting travelers to sit. Depending on quantity and spacing, the chairs may not always beckon that someone sit; and if the space allows one could stand if they choose.

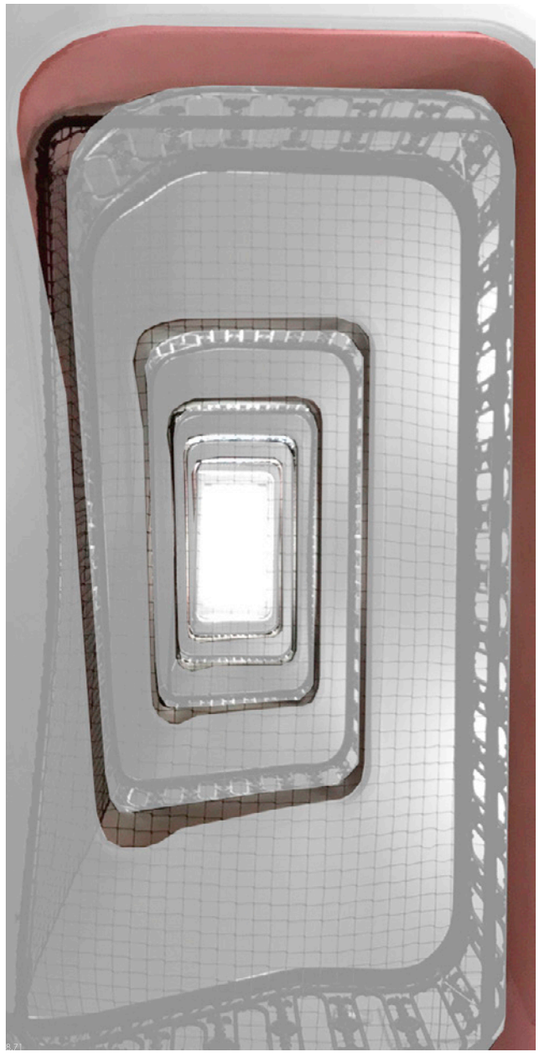


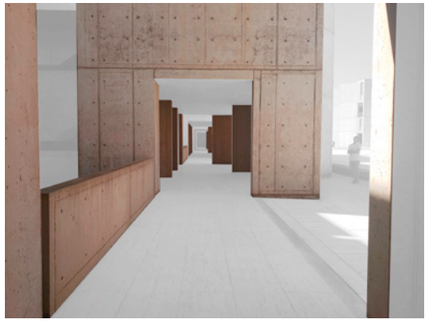
Figures:
8.38 Downtown Detroit by Brodrick Brozowski
8.39 Downtown Detroit by Brodrick Brozowski
8.40 Somerset Mall by Brodrick Brozowski
8.41 Waiting Room from pinterst.com
8.42 Bikes by Natalie Maalouf
8.43 Waiting from pinterst.com
8.44 Renaissance Escalators by Brodrick Brozowski
8.45 Exterior Hall by Brodrick Brozowski
8.46 Toledo Art Museum by Brodrick Brozowski
8.47 Renaissance Café by Brodrick Brozowski
8.48 Subway Stairs from sfgate.com
8.49 DTW Airport from detroitnews.com
8.50 Parking Garage from sarahpetersphotography.com
8.51 Train Station by Natalie Maalouf
8.52 Tunnel from shutterstock.com
8.53 Highlighted Prescriptive Language



Perceived Edges

Edges, similar to scale, can help to define the bounds of these spaces. Not only can edges define the bound, but they can also imply paths through, along, or around the space. These edges can be straight, curved, or jagged, creating different feelings of the space. Edges do not always have to be concrete, physical bounds. Instead, they can be implied by transparent planes or multitudes of the same object in a row implying separation from one space to the next. They can align a horizontal space implying a rhythm or tempo along a path as well as causing the space to appear longer than it is or possibly infinite. They can also align a space vertically revealing information of numerous levels above or below the one that the traveler is on. There are also edges or planes that can reflect the space, revealing a space beyond the travelers current one that does not exist. Edges can be used to either reveal or imply information, but they can also be used to conceal it, allowing the traveler to explore and discover the unknown that lies beyond a space's edges.





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8.66 Downtown Detroit by Brodrick Brozowski
8.67 SOA Stairs by Brodrick Brozowski
8.68 Sales Force Park by Juan Arias
8.69 Sun Reflection by Natalie Maalouf
8.70 Elevator from wdwinfo.com
8.71 Highlighted Edges

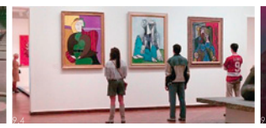
Stimulation

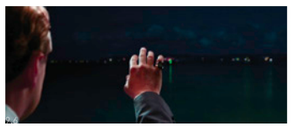
The qualities of liminal space taxonomy explored in gradient measures scale, materiality, prescriptive language, and perceived edges. While all these qualities overlap and interact with one another, some have more of a direct influence on resulting behaviors than others as seen through this next taxonomy. The first, stimulation, observes over stimulation versus under stimulation. This category may be more closely related to one's perceptions rather than an observed behavior. Either way, experience of liminal spaces can result in a gradient of stimulations which may be mostly influenced by materiality.

Overly stimulated situations may be more closely related to heightened experiences rather than the mundane, but there are still some liminal spaces within larger programmed spaces that can maintain their own definition of being an in-between space while exhibiting the qualities of the place around it. Casinos for example, as shown by the image from *Casino* (Scorsese, 1995), present chaotic, overwhelming places; but there is still space for a winding path to cut through the gambling floor. This path starts to feel liminal as one is suspended between a lot of excitement and different games going on. They are traveling through a placeless place which does not observe the varied times of the day and begs them to stay. With no straight shot through the game floor, the path twists and turns presenting them with a new game or slot machine at every turn. While the social excitement may play a role in their over stimulation, the bright and elegant materials combined with the playful flashing of lights influence these perceptions just as strongly.

Decreasing stimulation, the use of reflective surfaces against one another, create seemingly endless spaces in movies like *Inception* (Nolan, 2010). Lights far off on the horizon stimulate a longing for adventure, meaning, and love in movies like *Star Wars: A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977) and *The Great Gatsby* (Luhrmann, 2013). Stripping more material and capturing more monochromatic spaces create less stimulating, mundane, everyday environments for the characters of movies like *Jackie Brown* (Tarantino, 1997), *Clerks* (Smith, 1994) , and the beginning of *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999).

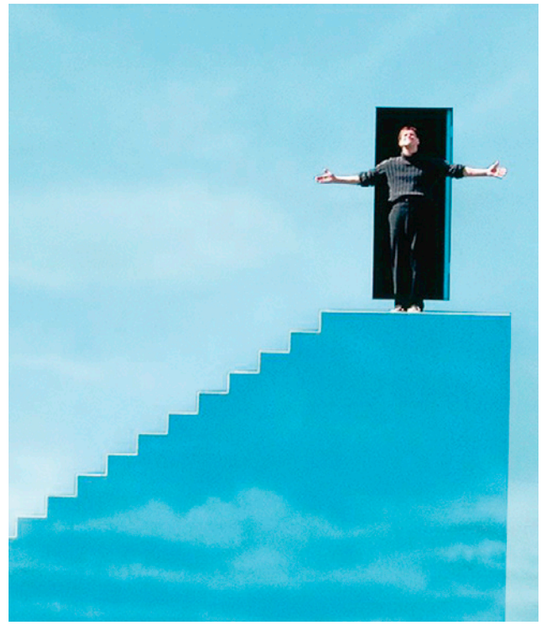
Figures:
9.1 Scorsese, Casino (1995)
9.2 Chaplin, The Circus (1928)
9.3 Nolan, Inception (2013)
9.4 Hughes, Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)
9.5 Lucas, Star Wars: A New Hope (1977)
9.6 Luhrmann, The Great Gatsby (2013)
9.7 Smith, Mallrats (1995)
9.8 Anderson, The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014)
9.9 Tarantino, Jackie Brown (1997)
9.10 Smith, Clerks (1994)
9.11 The Wachowski Brothers, The Matrix (1999)





Choice

The second series of images observes characters within liminal spaces that allow or strip the characters of their ability to make choices. Some have complete freedom to choose and do as they wish while others are stripped of these freedoms and they are not given choices. Instead, decisions are forced upon them. They are forced to inhabit particular spaces at the same time every day. Spaces where these freedoms are stripped away can be seen in movies like *Halloween* (Green, 2018) and *The Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont, 1994). These characters, serving time for crimes they may or may not have committed, are forced into a space where they are displaced from society. In The Truman Show, the main character was also displaced from society, but without his knowledge. These three examples are met with spaces that are defined by hard edges and may provoke rebelling behavior. However, in relation to some of the other examples in this series, prescriptive language is the dominant quality that allows or prohibits the freedom of choices. The prescriptive language of these first three spaces is implied by those hard edges that are drawn. With exception to *The Truman Show* (Weir, 1998), the spaces of the other two are stripped of any material and surrounded with high walls and fences of barbed wire, mostly to keep prisoners within, but also to keep others out. The remaining images are more closely related to the majority populations in everyday life. Not all incorporate wayfinding systems as discussed with prescriptive language, but they have different elements which imply their possible uses. Similar to the waiting rooms seen in the prescriptive language taxonomy, spaces like bus stops and restaurants provide limited seating. A bus stop provides seating allowing those who will be riding to sit and wait, or they have the freedom to stand. Depending on one's choice, they may find themselves in conversation with a nearby stranger as seen in *Forrest Gump* (Zemeckis, 1994). Restaurants, aside from the choices of their menu, provide a variety of seating options that can be accustomed to various customers. Lastly, there are spaces which can provide a variety of choices, and traveling through the lived world itself can provide one with unlimited choices as they travel from place to place through liminal spaces.



Figures:
9.12 Kubrick, The Shining (1980)
9.13 Tarantino, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (2019)
9.14 Chazelle, La La Land (2016)
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9.16 Hitchcock, Psycho (1960)
9.17 Chaplin, Modern Times (1936)
9.18 Zemeckis, Forrest Gump (1994)
9.19 Weir, The Truman Show (1998)
9.20 Darabont, The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
9.21 Green, Halloween (2018)

Density

The third category, density, may obviously be most closely correlated with scale. The relative size of these spaces will dictate how many people con congregate within them. The more or less dense a space by moving bodies can lead to varied feelings or possibilities for liminal perceptions and unmindfulness. More people does not always equate to social engagements. These liminal spaces still stand in-between people's destinations. All assuming the collective identity, as described by Augé, for spaces such as these promote solitude even in the presence of others. In the case of *(500) Days of Summer* (Webb, 2009), this does not prove true as the two characters do force themselves to engage in social interaction because of their close proximity. In the case of *Baby Driver* (Wright, 2017) however, the four on the elevator all maintain their own headspace as they are merely acquaintances and nothing more. The same goes for Will Smith's character in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (Muccino, 2006) as he is depicted on a crowded train paying no mind to anyone around him. Increasing scale, but reducing the number of people occupying a space, can push the suspended feelings of liminality more as one finds themselves not within close proximity of fixed elements as they stand in space.

Figures:
9.22 Lumet, 12 Angry Men (1957)
9.23 Forman, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)
9.24 Kelly, Donnie Darko (2001)
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Stamina

The final behavioral quality explored by this taxonomy is stamina. This measures the amount of energy required for one to travel through a given amount of space. These levels of stamina may allow one to be more or less mindful, not only of the space they are traveling through, but also to how their body may be reacting to the space and how it is requiring them to move. Some of these liminal spaces or programs require nothing from the user and they are then transported through space to their destination. They become only a passenger to the liminal space itself. The bus scene for example from *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Gondry, 2004) shows the characters engaging in conversation while the bus takes them to their respective destinations. One's personal vehicle can support similar behavior, but a little more input is needed from the driver to control the car. Similarly, elevators and other mechanical devices allow people to use them with minimal effort getting them from point A to point B without breaking a sweat or lifting a finger. Spaces which do not have mechanisms that move the users in them, allow for more variety in how they can be used. The hallway for example is a circulation element that connects places horizontally, but it does not always force its users to move through. They are wide enough to allow for some to remain while others pass through. These behaviors can be seen in movies such as *Booksmart* (Wilde, 2019) and *Good Will Hunting* (Sant, 1997) which replicate stories that take place at schools. The same principles apply to the city sidewalk, but they provide connection to a wider variety of programs found in a downtown context. This can be seen as *Uncut Gems* (Safdie Brothers, 2019) star, Adam Sandler, runs around New York city throughout the movie. Finally, there are endless examples of stairs used in movies. These are the most physically engaging liminal spaces one can encounter. Not only do they require the most energy, but they provide for the most variety of space to be travelled through and experienced. Both horizontal and vertical, these spaces also make turns altering their user's perspectives constantly. Stairs provide suspense, excitement, and energy for the films they are portrayed in. Examples are seen in movies like *Parasite* (Ho, 2019), *Joker* (Phillips, 2019), and *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958). The behavioral measurement finds its strongest correlated qualities to be edges and prescriptive language. The design of these spaces imply how much energy is required of a user to travel through them; and the implication of edges further dictate whether one will stay stationary, travel horizontally, vertically, or both.

Figures:
9.33 Hitchcock, Vertigo (1958)
9.34 Phillips, Joker (2019)
9.35 Ho, Parasite (2019)
9.36 Safdie Brothers, Uncut Gems (2019)
9.37 Nolan, Inception (2010)
9.38 Sant, Good Will Hunting (1997)
9.39 Wilde, Booksmart (2019)
9.40 Nichols, The Graduate (1967)
9.41 Favreau, Elf (2003)
9.42 Anderson, The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014)
9.43 Gerwig, Lady Bird (2017)

Closing Thoughts

Life provides plenty of opportunity to experience extraordinary things, but all of it is connected by the ordinary. While one extraordinary moment might make up for a lifelong supply of ordinary moments, one still finds themselves living through the ordinary in their everydayness. Without it, the extraordinary would no longer be considered extraordinary. Quoting Henri Lefebvre one last time, "Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?" (Lefebvre, 1987). As one learns to study and observe, they become more aware of the details found in in-between moments. These moments can be painfully mundane moving by at such a seemingly slow rate that one starts to feel frozen in time. These moments can also fly by in the blink of an eye as one spends so much time focused on the past or future that they forget about the present moments. In any case, one can almost always find something to be appreciated in these moments.

These in-between moments may vary depending on the situation. In a social context, one could feel appreciation of those around them; but this thesis focused on analyzing personal perceptions as one travels through in-between spaces that promote solitude and similitude. This thesis broke down further the non-place as defined by Marc Augé and discovered liminal space. These expanded and contracted thresholds are insurmountable within one's built environment. They form an extensive network that finds itself bleeding from place to place, serving as the foundation and connections from which one experiences the world. As one grows, they travel through these spaces uncovering the unknown and discovering the world as they search for meaning. Along the way, these discoveries build an extensive archive in the recesses of one's mind. Continuing to move through the world and its liminal spaces, one can find themselves unmindful of the present as they feel they are caught in the mundane.

Recognizing the excessive amount of liminal space present in one's everydayness, one can start to observe and reflect on not only their own experiences of these spaces; but they can start to observe the behaviors of others experiencing these spaces. From those observations, liminal spaces can be designed to suspend travelers between mindfulness and unmindfulness. In their unmindfulness, they search the archives of their mind to reminisce the past or imagine the future; but the presentation of a subtle detail can pull them back into the present moment so that they can once again discover the unknown. As an architect, not only can liminal spaces of the built environment be designed; but the liminal space of the traveler's mind can be influenced to lead them in and out of unmindfulness.

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