

the hourglass issue
matzine #07

dear reader

here-in: the hourglass issue;
the effect time has on you;
how it and you are 'twine

here-on will test your eye-sight [there is a lot of small text]
where image, prose, thought just might
spur questions in like kind.

so read, scan and ponder
upon content of times yonder;
the contributors' resplendent list

the hourglass becomes a symbol,
an object which asks;
"after all, does the present exist?"

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mat.zine is a conduit for collaborative practice, and welcomes
submissions from anybody who is interested. this edition
includes submissions from artists, architects, an illustrator and
an archaeologist. the editorship changes with each edition, as
does the theme.

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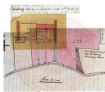
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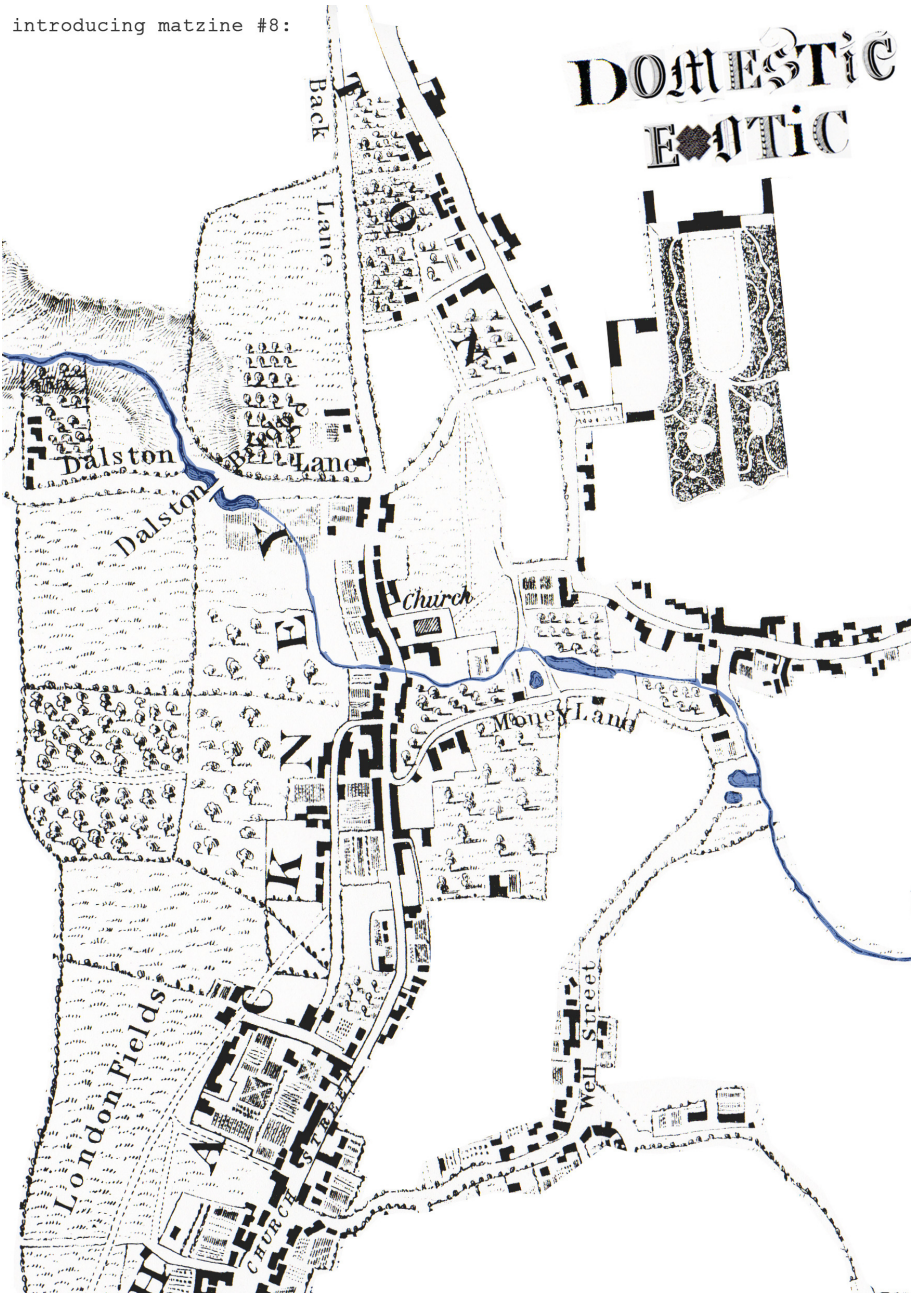


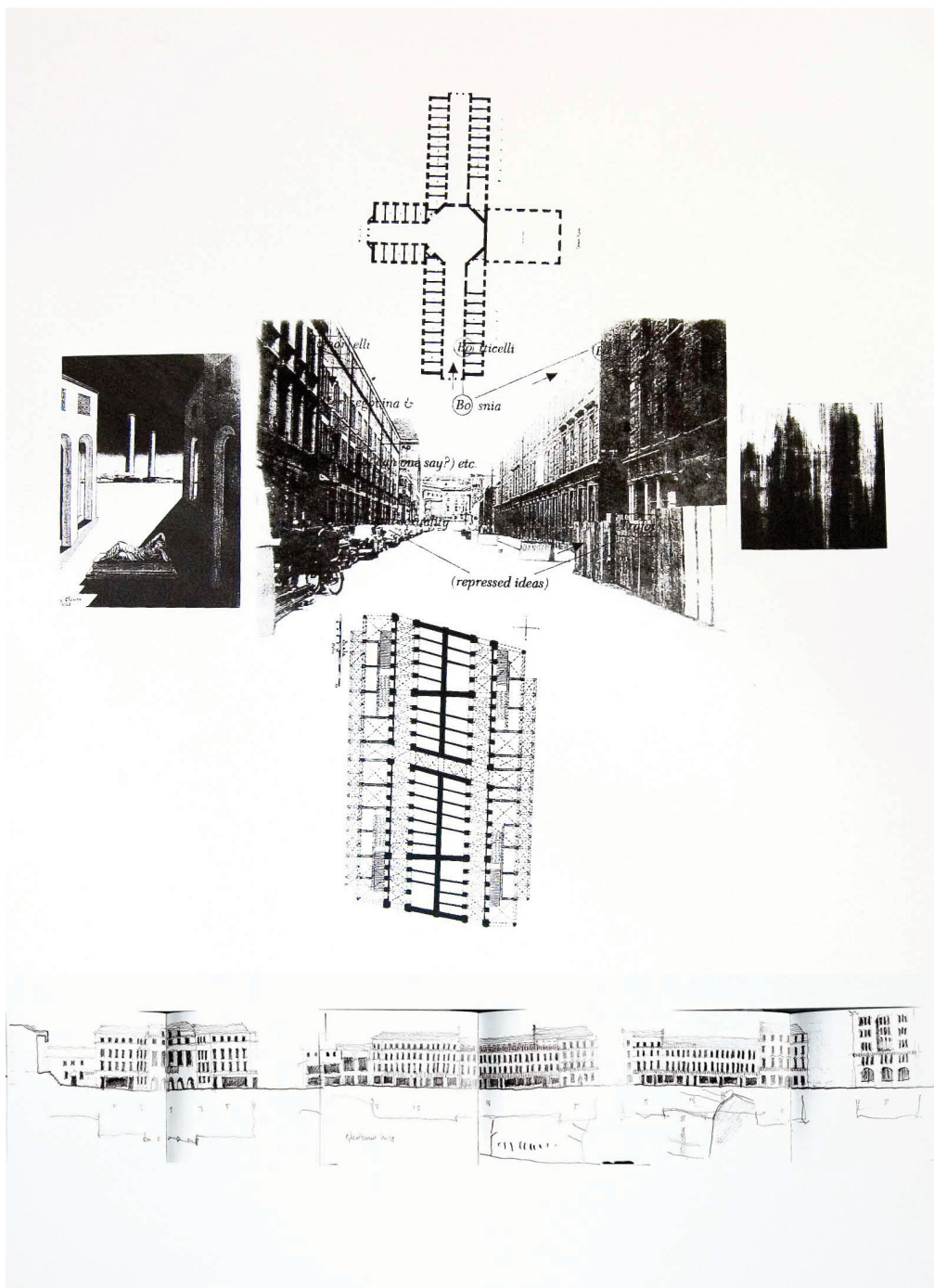
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past presents



introducing matzine #8:

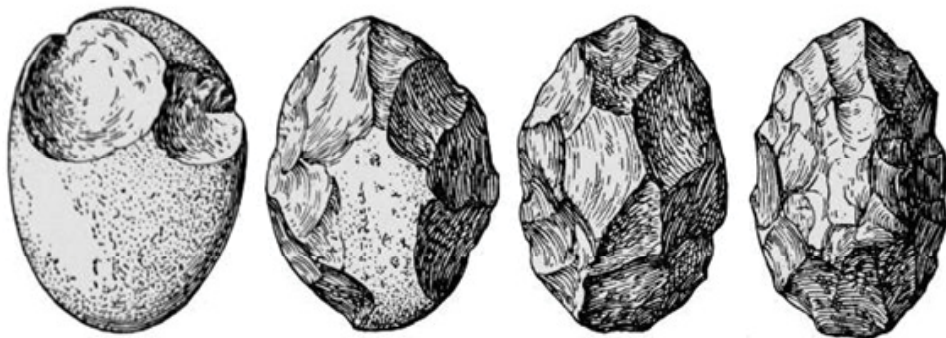




The knapping of a stone, the coiling of clay to form ceramics, or the division/creation of space through the fabrication of structures has occurred physically, but the webs of meaning with which these physical actions were intertwined with never existed in any material sense at all. The impossibility of recovering the ways of 'being in the world' that were part of these physical actions means we must recognise 'the space between' the past and the present/future which we create in interpretation (our complete ignorance of many material necessities, for example, the disposal of the overwhelming majority of the dead in the past, is demonstrative of the necessity of this). This 'space between' which we study is our past,

but not an objective one (since none exist), it exists, created by our interpretations as a past that is directly and constantly being altered by our present.

Our search for origin stories (of what we have categorised as agriculture, or religion, for example), images of the past, points of reference on a teleological scale of development, or even the idea of an objective past, can be said to be a by-product of the categorization of all things by modernity. In this case, the past is lost, not because we cannot uncover its meaning, but perhaps because it never existed as 'the past' but as a sequence of past presents which are now obscured by the space between, or our present's past.



Past Presents

Or the present's past(s)...

As we attempt to think about what happened in pre-history, even with the advent of modern techniques such as carbon-14 dating we cannot think of a specific, definable point, which is classifiable in our time system (lunchtime on a Wednesday, or even a specific year, for example) when an action occurred. Even when we consider such things as the creation of a stone tool, which can be defined at a very basic level as a physical or mechanical process (but perhaps it is never possible to separate the intricacies of meaning from the physical), we are creating an image or succession of images which do not correspond to a particular 'point' in time, but instead to our idea of that time.

The people of the past appear to conveniently

pop into history to undertake specific tasks before once again returning to nothingness, or archaeological invisibility. These images of our past can be said to exist outside of the actual past present and in turn are isolated from the past of that point in time. It is through the creation of these images of solitary, unrelated moments in time, that we create a past that is not necessarily false, but also not 'the real past', if such a thing can be said to exist.

It is the continuous dialogue between our own presents and our own present's pasts on the one hand, and past presents and past pasts on the other, that is responsible for the narrative we create for ourselves.

Temporal thinking and serial form

The montage shows North Lindsay Street, Dundee as a dense part of the city in which the Palazzo della Ragione is conceptually located and over which Freud's repressed thoughts are superimposed. The cells of an unbuilt Dundee prison suggest a serial arrangement like the market hall in Padua. The repeated rhythm of adjacent Reform Street encloses the site edge.

Seriality is implied as both a critical reflective practice, like in Rembrandt's eighty-six self portraits and Aldo Rossi's built and drawn work; and also a formal strategy, like the photographs of Eadwaerd Muybridge and the "specific objects" of Donald Judd.

When Rossi writes that "analogy" is a logical-formal operation that can be translated as a design method, perhaps inherent in the statement is temporal thinking and serial form. A series is a "set of sequentially ordered elements, each related to the preceding in a specifiable way by the logical conditions of a finite progression:" each with a predecessor and successor. When serial form is combined with temporal thinking, then the result is inferred to be an analogical operation.

IF ORDER OCCURS BEFORE DISORDER

FIG 01

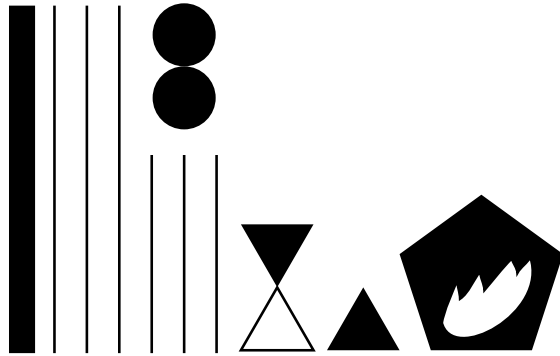
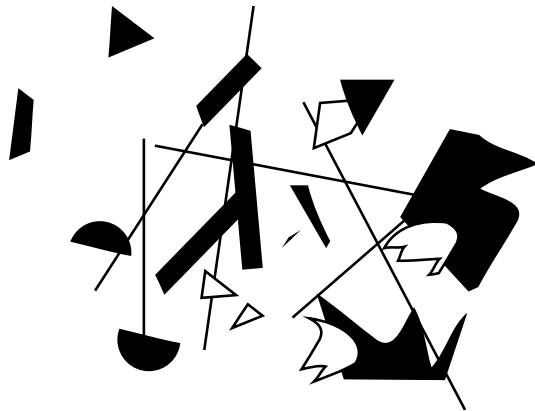


FIG 02



WE UNDERSTAND THAT DISORDER IS CONSTRUCTED
'UNCONSCIOUSLY' FROM ORDER.

TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VISUAL
IMPACT OF CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS CONSTRUCTION,
ONE MUST STUDY TWO POINTS IN TIME; ONE BEFORE AND ONE
AFTER. THE ILLUSTRATIONS HERE SHOW THE EFFECT OF BOTH
SCENARIOS.



IF DISORDER OCCURS BEFORE ORDER

FIG 03

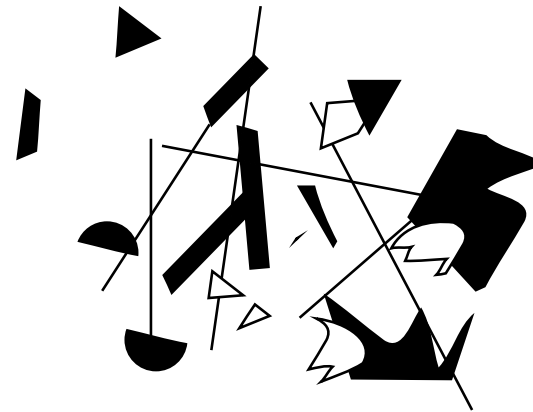
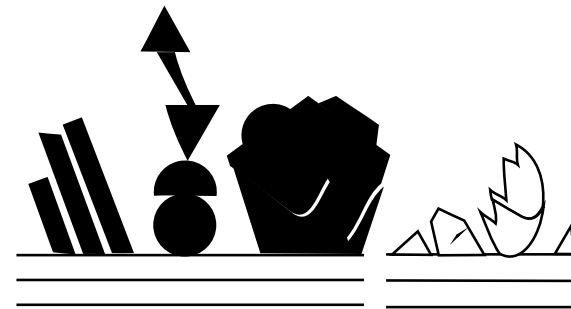
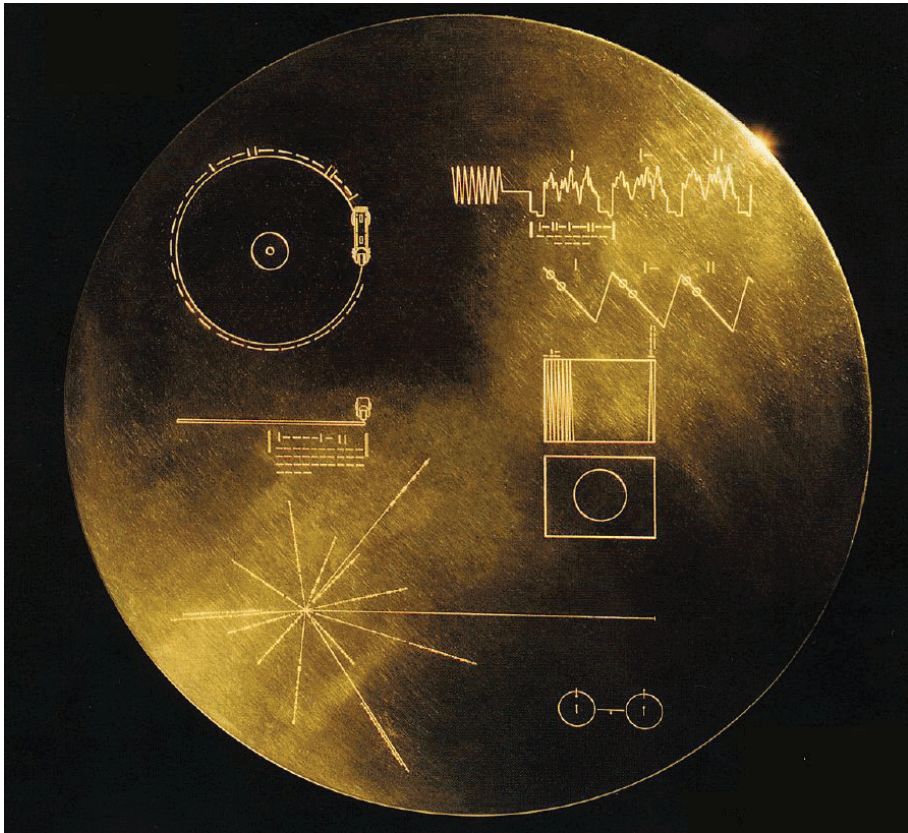


FIG 04



WE UNDERSTAND THAT ORDER IS CONSTRUCTED
'CONSCIOUSLY' FROM DISORDER.

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THERE IS A THIRD POINT IN
TIME, EQUIDISTANT FROM THE BEGINNING AND THE
END, IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHETHER
DISORDER OR ORDER HAS BEEN IMPOSED FIRST?

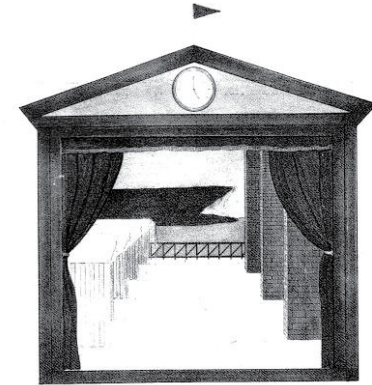


Dark was the night, cold was the ground

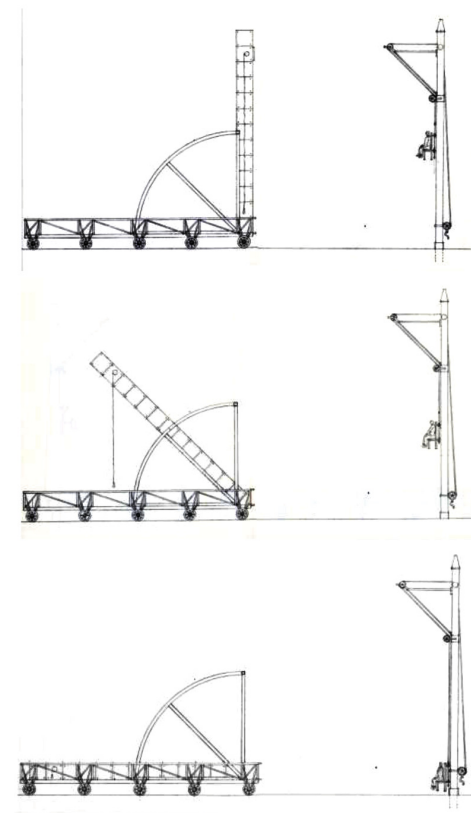
"I am currently 13 hrs 11 mins 23 secs of light-travel time from Earth"
{Voyager II, midnight, 20th January 2011, travelling at ~55,690km/h}

Having come across the '@Voyager2' feed on twitter, I was presented with the first line of text above - an intriguing semi-human communication.

Reading the text, while this years perigee Moon shone brightly in a clear winter sky, I was reminded of the golden record which the spacecraft Voyager 1 and 2 both carry. Each is an identical gold-plated copper phonograph containing material curated by a group led by astronomer Carl Sagan. On the records they chose to put a selection of natural sounds from earth, recorded greetings in fifty-five languages,



Rossi's *Tetrino Scientifico*



Hejduk's collapse of time

time projected

- 1 The case of projection of time in architecture is that of reminiscence and melancholy. If reality is history itself and time is drawn as a line, then there will be a point in time that is 'now' and a point at the other end that is 'then'. The point 'then' is a former state for architecture when it used withhold meaning in the symbolic representation of the human figure. However, the level of philosophy accumulated over the course of history outgrew the original meaning and resulted in the point 'now'. Therefore, 'now' is in a tormenting lack because of its unfulfilled meaning. Aldo Rossi's puppet theatre is that of time projected. The meaningful old forms are now replaced with meaninglessness. All that is left is an analogy of fathomable old forms rebuilt with new construction materials in a continuous lack and desire.

12

time introjected

- 11 It is indeed both ironic and unsettling that public clocks were often built by local coffin-makers. Also, clocks are historically considered as models for the universe more than they are time-measuring devices.
- 8
- 7 Like with Hejduk's "collapse of time", introjection of time in architecture is an acknowledgment of the temporality of both man and architecture. Time is introjected through living a momentary event. Living an event can only be described as an encounter between the self and the architecture other through imagination. Suddenly, everything makes sense. It is not just me experiencing the architecture, but I am also the architecture looking back at me... until the end of the encounter at least.

and a unique playlist of music from around our world. A collection of images and written messages from then U.S. President Jimmy Carter and U.N. Secretary General Waldheim accompanied the audio material, which were 'written' onto the phonograph in binary code.

Shown in the image above is the mysterious aluminium cover for the record, upon which is inscribed a set of diagrammatic instructions. These outline the origin of the interstellar vehicles, and how 'one' might attempt to 'play' the record. To the lower left can be noted basic directions to our solar system, while above you may detect a plan and elevation view of the record and its stylus. The symbol to the lower right describes the hydrogen atom, and above it is represented the process involved in viewing the 115 images and various messages contained therein.

The Golden Records have fascinated me since I first happened upon their intriguing descriptions. They are positively surreal. Within this exquisite capsule is the attempt to communicate some symbolic embodiment of our race, what Sagan described as "Murmurs of Earth". This dense fragment of humanity is, at a first glance, both optimistic and hopeful; 'optimistic' in the sense that it provides a positive view of our development, and 'hopeful' in the belief that was the impetus for the Golden Records - that they may be decoded, sometime, by some sentient others. As Sagan noted; "(...) the launching of this bottle into the cosmic ocean says something very hopeful about life on this planet"^[1].

However - every curatorial exercise is one of reduction and exclusion, and assessment of such is judged as much by what the curator excludes as that which they include. So, working within the spirit of optimism and hope that framed their choices, what did Sagan and his team exclude? What did they exclude from the golden records of our capacity for war; of disease; of our negative impact on the environment and our fellow inhabitants? What of the vast inequalities that have developed within in our own species as it developed across diverse geographies and resources? What of the other forms of life in whose extinction we have played a significant part? For it is these destructive forces - as much as what is creative and good - that constitute the human condition.

Despite the necessary optimism of the project brief, the music of the records contain a more complex story. The playlist includes representative selections from each continent, and traverses several genres, including blues & jazz, and what is usually described as 'ethnic' and 'world' music. From Mozart and Bach to Stravinsky, however, 'Western' Classical music clearly dominates the list ^[2]. While most of the choices merit individual analysis not possible here, the most illustrative example is Stravinsky's *Le Sacre Du Printemps* (The Rite of Spring). In *Le Sacre du Printemps* we witness something rather unusual - a point at which the elite sophistication of classical music returns to the primal, the savage; it depicts the dance of a girl to her death, offered as she is a pagan sacrifice to the god of Spring. It is at once terrifying and uplifting, and there is something unnerving about how Stravinsky sets the rare

and delicate craftsmanship of violins, tubas and cellos against the cruelty and violence of human ritual. This is beautiful music that soars; yet as it moves toward denouement in the strange rhythms of the 'Sacrificial Dance', it bores down into Dantean circles of suffering.

The very fact that humans made the golden records will 'tell' future generations as much about us as the data they contain - as they were perhaps made as much for us as for any other sentient beings. In the spirit of a *memento mori*, the covers for the golden discs serve as a reminder to our own frail mortality. Electroplated with enriched uranium - with a half-life of approximately four and a half billion years - the aluminum covers are solid-state clocks, where the hourglass' sand is replaced by the measurable decay rate of unstable atoms.

In the environment of a global culture polarised between a data-driven and 'transient' digital culture, and an underdeveloped world where many lives pass completely unrecorded, these records exist within multiple levels of

significance. But above all they exist to serve the recording of time - whether it be through the violent crotchets and minims of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre Du Printemps*, or the slow demise of uranium particles employed in their unique duty.

It will be approximately forty-thousand years before Voyager II reaches another planetary system. So until then, it will be travelling in an unknown emptiness of space, carrying its most unusual cargo. What will Blind Willie Johnson's transcendental 'Dark was the Night' sound like in the great vacuum, ten thousand years from now? Or even one billion? Perhaps we should have kept a few copies for ourselves. Sometime in the distant future, someone may choose to listen back to these 'murmurs', and like Proust's proverbial madelines, in a cascade of involuntary remembrance, may recall from whence we came - as the records "bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection"^[3].

NOTES

An extended, annotated version of this article is available at ianjwpollard.wordpress.com

- Image: 'Voyagers' Golden Record Cover' Image ©NASA

1. Murmurs of Earth - The Voyager Interstellar Record. Sagan, C. et al. 1978

2. Available at <http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/spacecraft/goldenrec.html>

3. Remembrance of Things Past. Proust, M. Vintage. 2009 (Translated from 1927 French edition)

Poetry and Event

In 1908, as part of his paper entitled *The Unreality of Time*, J. M. E. McTaggart proposed that time was composed of three parts. The A series is a scale of the past, present and future - since every event will occur, is occurring and has occurred. The B series is an incremental measurement of time - since every event happens sequentially. The C series is an order of events - since event two will happen after event one.

The poet Fernando Pessoa began creating heteronyms at the age of six and, by the end of his lifetime in 1935, had 72 names under which he wrote in different manners. These were neither multiple nom de plume, since they were characters with histories, nor were they the result of schizophrenia. His three major homonyms were Alberto Caeiro, Alvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. The outlook of each of these individuals relates to time in a different way - Reis works from the stoic past, Caeiro ignores everything but the present and de Campos speaks on the vagaries of the future.

These three characters fit within the framework of McTaggart's three notions of time, as Campos' poetry embodies the A stream that constantly moves towards the future, the only changing part. Caeiro's deals purely with events and thus refers to the C series. Finally Reis' poetry constantly measures itself against the

never-changing past, giving it a relationship to the B series.

These three notions of time, as regarded by three heteronyms of a poet, helped to inform the creation of the spaces that surround an architectural discussion between the past and the future. This discussion centres round a diving board and the event of a diver jumping, falling and hitting a deep pool of seawater below.

The first space is Reis' Steam Room, which contains the preparation for the dive. Classically proportioned, repeated rooms relate to both Reis' stanzas and McTaggart's B Stream. Moving into Caeiro's Diving Pool concentrates the diver on the present. A simple, stone faced void hones the diver in on the event, the now. After the event, Campos' Promenade is for reflection on how the next dive will be better and how technique can be improved.

By using Pessoa's poetry as a metaphor for McTaggart's writing, the practical implications of the three components of time can be understood. Thus, writing is used as a tool to tease out the architectural possibilities from the complex nature of time.

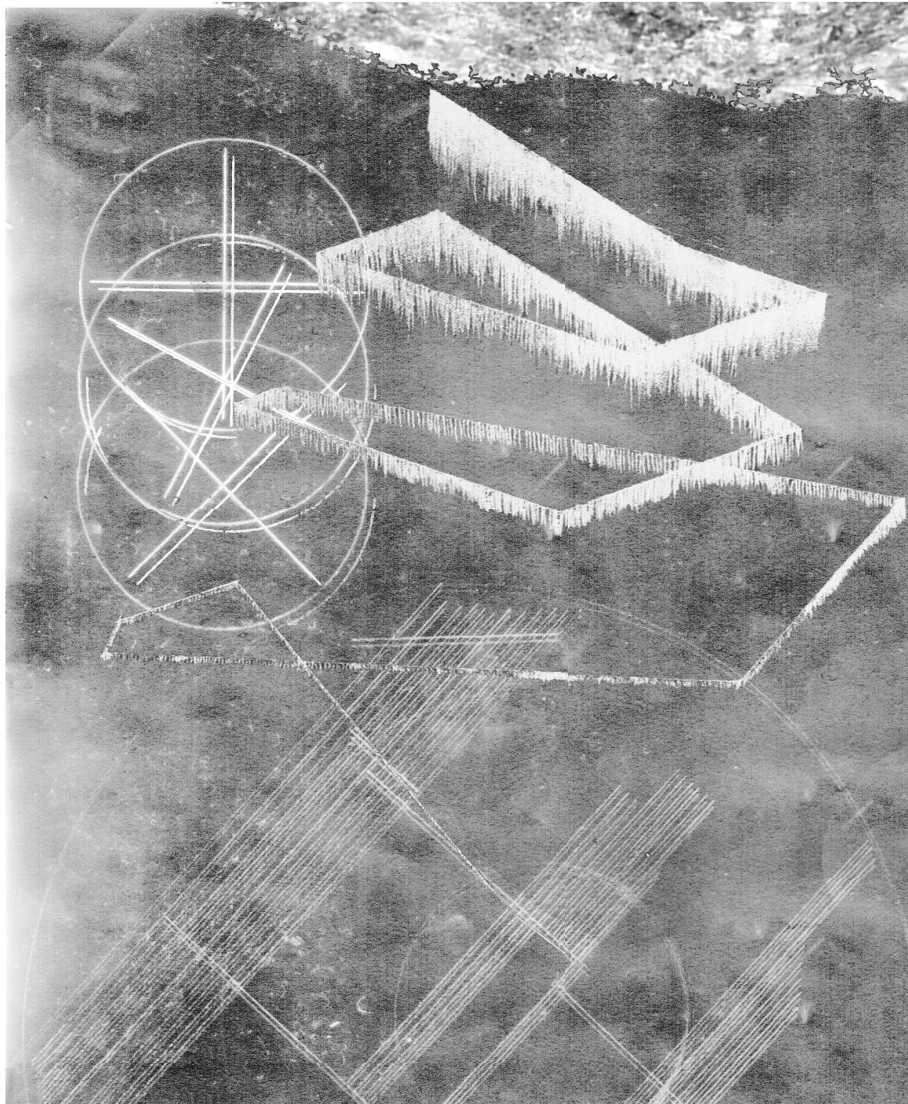
Don't plot your destiny, for you are not future.
Between the cup you empty and the same cup
Refilled, who knows whether your fortune
Won't interpose the abyss?
- Ricardo Reis

The essential thing is to know how to see,
To know how to see without thinking,
To know how to see then one sees,
And neither to think when one sees
Nor see when one thinks.
- Alberto Caeiro

I always want to be the thing I feel kinship with
. . .To feel everything in every way,
To hold all opinions,
To be sincere contradicting oneself every minute . . .
- Alvaro de Campos

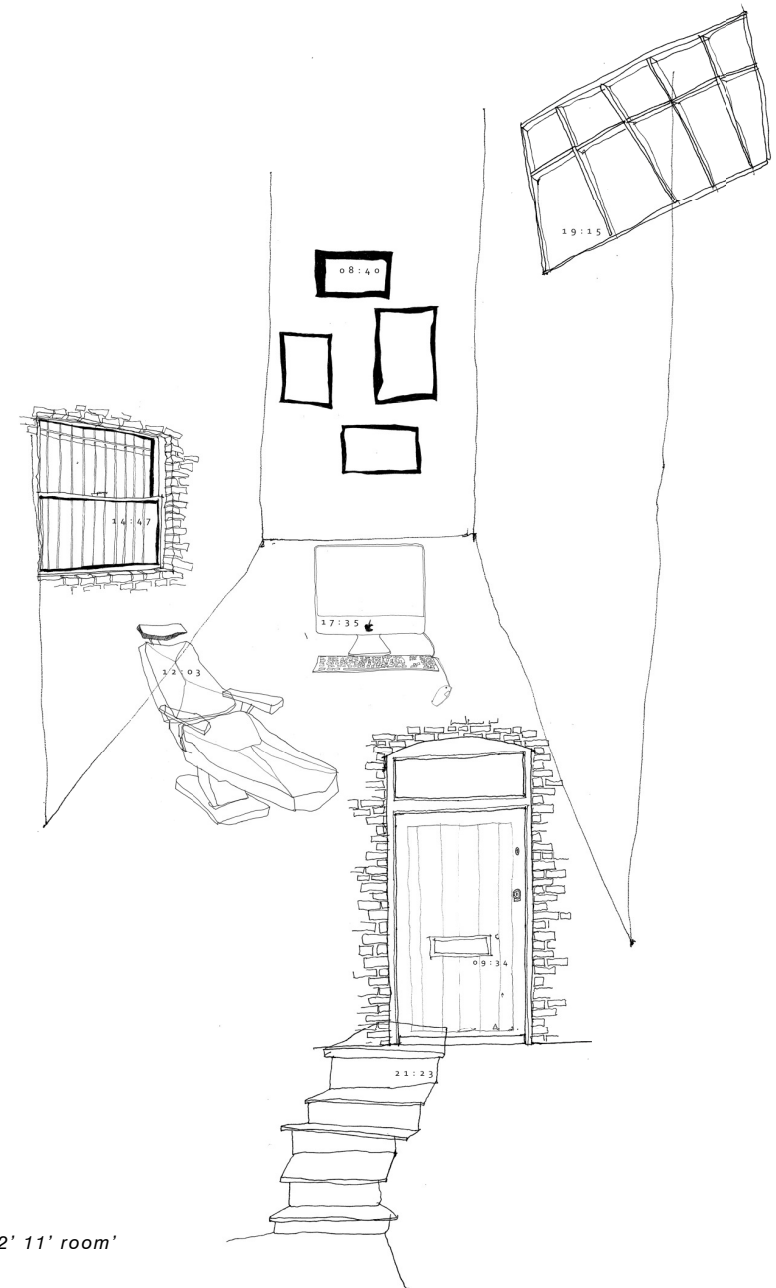
This image captures 3 seconds of forgotten space in the centre of Glasgow, illustrating the progress of a lone car speeding under the M8's vast concrete structure. This image is taken from a series of photographs taken over the course of a year, exploring forgotten urban spaces in and around Glasgow. There are many forgotten areas in Glasgow's urban fabric, which have been created through decades of change and modernisation. Much of this left over space creates interesting un-designed spaces forgotten and unseen by most.





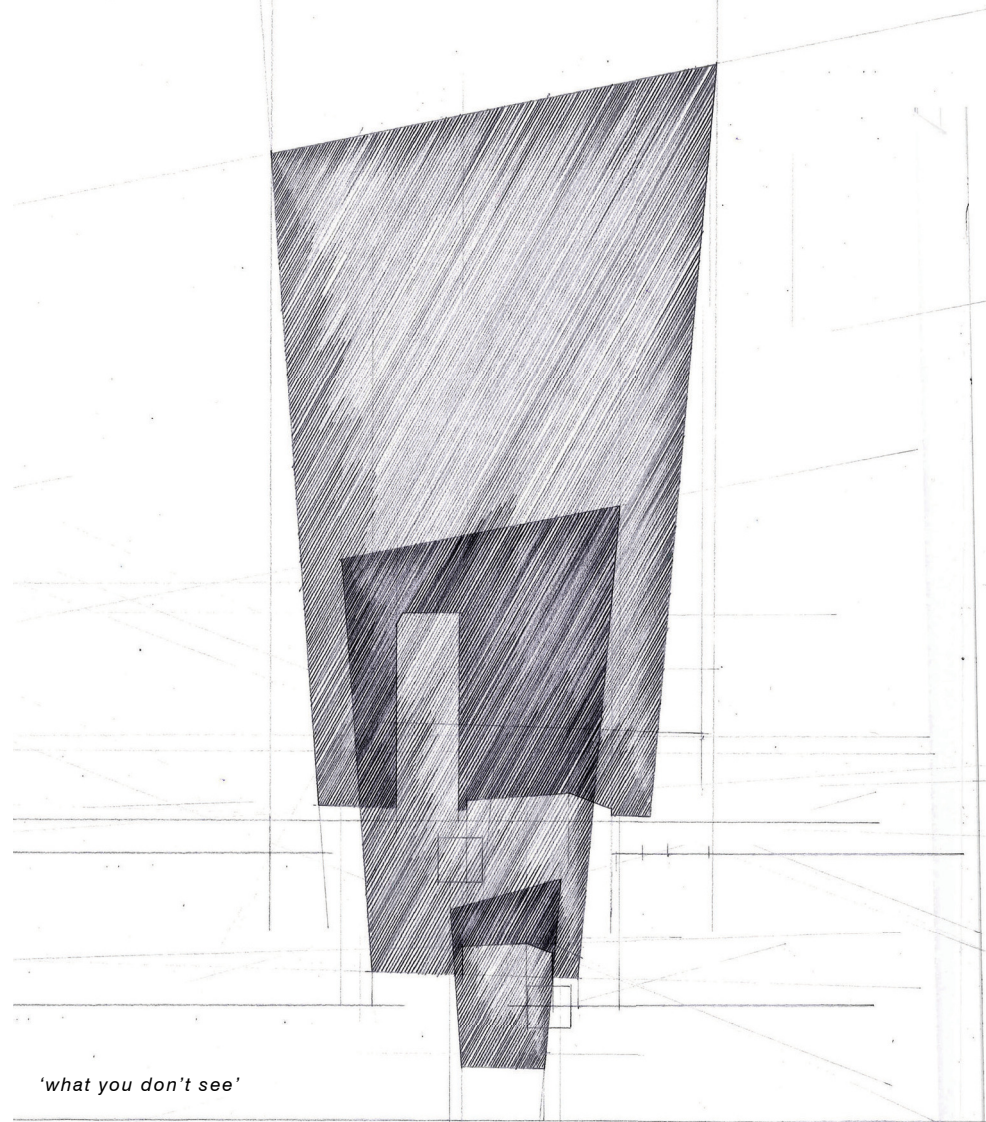
human evolutionary history from homo sapiens stretches back 200,000 years (give or take), with civilised human history more evidently recorded as far back as 5000 years (give or take again). onkalo, a nuclear waste repository under construction under Finland, hopes to last and for 100,000 years, protecting people and the atmosphere from nuclear sources until they can pose minimal harm. the timespans to allow these materials to deplete continues beyond calculated ice ages and further than any building has ever lasted ever before. communication with cultures on the far reaches of this timescale is a mystifying task... signals from differing present cultures give conflicting reactions, so are efforts to signal danger into the realm of an anti-ancient futile? can one create symbols so primal as to transverse evolution of man, the advancement or degradation of language and knowledge? alternatively, does an unmarked burial deepen the chance of removing the repository from the worlds consciousness?

x



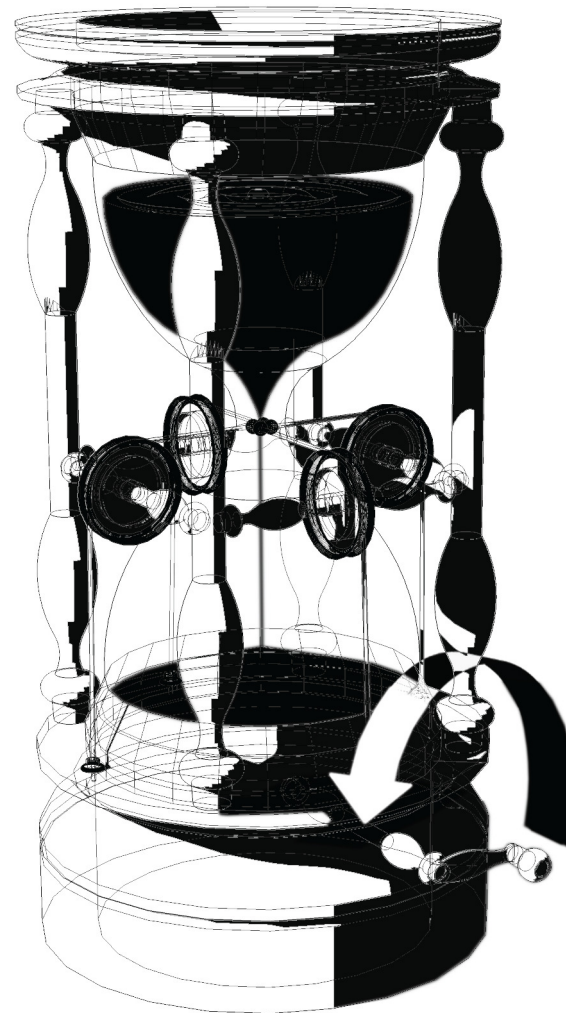
'my 08' 02' 11' room'

08:40 - picture frames, 09:34 - a locked door, 12:03 - dentists chair, 14:47 - window with bars, 17:35 - computer, 19:15 - large window, 21:23 - steps



'what you don't see'

someone could have a chronographic memory,
not in the recount of experienced visual detail,
but rather with a sense of the cascading, meticulous
sequence of things;
a sense of causality



Flexi-time

prototype desktop novelty; aids perceived distortion of
space-time continuum

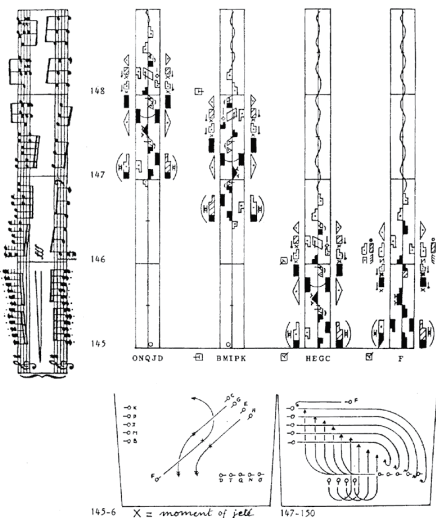
For me the delights of architectural education have always been the insights that reveal the fluid, dynamic, changing and cyclic nature of architecture. Let us consider architecture as a process and as a unique creative act that happens, not only as a part of the architect's design methodologies but also as a cognitive act that is fundamental to our perception and subjective experience of space. In this light architecture can be seen as a time based art that exists in space like a continual piece of music or a perpetual performance.

When we start to see architecture not as inert spaces that we occupy but rather spaces created by our occupation, a complex reciprocal relationship between people and space, culture and architecture becomes apparent. Architecture can now be seen as a time based art that is inseparable from the way people perceive and use it. This cyclic relationship between human activity and architecture sees architecture as an event or series of events in time much like a performance complete with characters and protagonists both human and architectural.

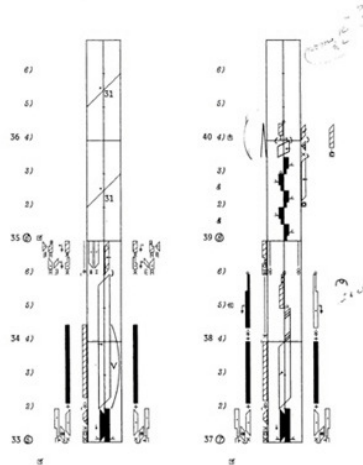
In representing architecture the traditional drawing methods employed by architects transcribe and precisely construct a seemingly clear and scientifically objective representation of the piece of built work to be realised. These modes of representation continually improve with precision as our technology continues to expand. However they serve to reaffirm an assumption of a directly mapped correspondence between drawings and completed built form. This is incredibly useful

for the swift translation of an idea into a built work but it will struggle to elucidate the time based nature of architecture.

This is no easy task, but perhaps lessons can be learned from other time based arts such as music and dance where the development of a graphical notation has had a significant effect on the development of these arts. Musical notation can be seen as a representation of space. Crotchets, quavers and semibreves are spatial divisions of a beat that denote rhythm and a passage of notes describes a set of musical intervals in time. Labanotation is a form of graphical notation describing a spatial geometry used in dance. Its originator Rudolph Laban defined a geometry utilising the limits of the of the outstretched body, which mark twenty seven points in space that tilt and rotate with movement.



Labanotation - a graphical tool used by dancers to describe human motion. Here movement is set along side a score.



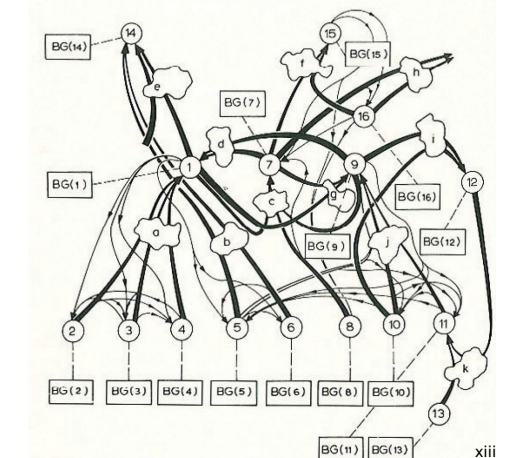
These systems acknowledge the presence and necessity of a performer in order for the work to exist. This important acknowledgment allows a space for interpretation, indeterminacy, and the unexpected – this is improvisation. Can architectural representation relinquish its assumed Cartesian solidity and allow for a time based architecture to emerge that acknowledges the activity of those who use and perceive it as being its creative impetus?

Digital technologies may provide a possible future for an improvised architecture that undermines the traditional position of the architect as originator of the object. Genetic algorithms, self perpetuating systems and other digital drawing systems are being employed and developed that allow for an organic architecture to emerge. However the attitude we adopt as designers is as a powerful tool. Actors, musicians and performers strive for *complicité* within a performance. *Complicité* is a shared sense of unity, heightened awareness and sensitivity to those around you. An architectural *complicité* can be achieved within creative teams when ideas are given space,

where personal ownership is relinquished and personal expression is encouraged. This environment is highly conducive to creativity, spontaneity and can be seen as the opening acts of an architectural event.

The polymath Gordon Pask developed his Conversation Theory to describe the interaction between two or more cognitive systems or distinct perspectives within one individual, and how they engage in a dialogue over a given concept and identify differences in how they understand it. Recognising that this intimate relationship of creation exists between people and their environment Pask extended his theory to architecture. He conceived of an architecture that would be in constant conversation and dialogue with its users.

Understanding architecture as a time based art and representing it through a conversational loop unveils the potential of an exciting and organic architecture of participation, interaction and creation.



Paskian Feedback loop diagram