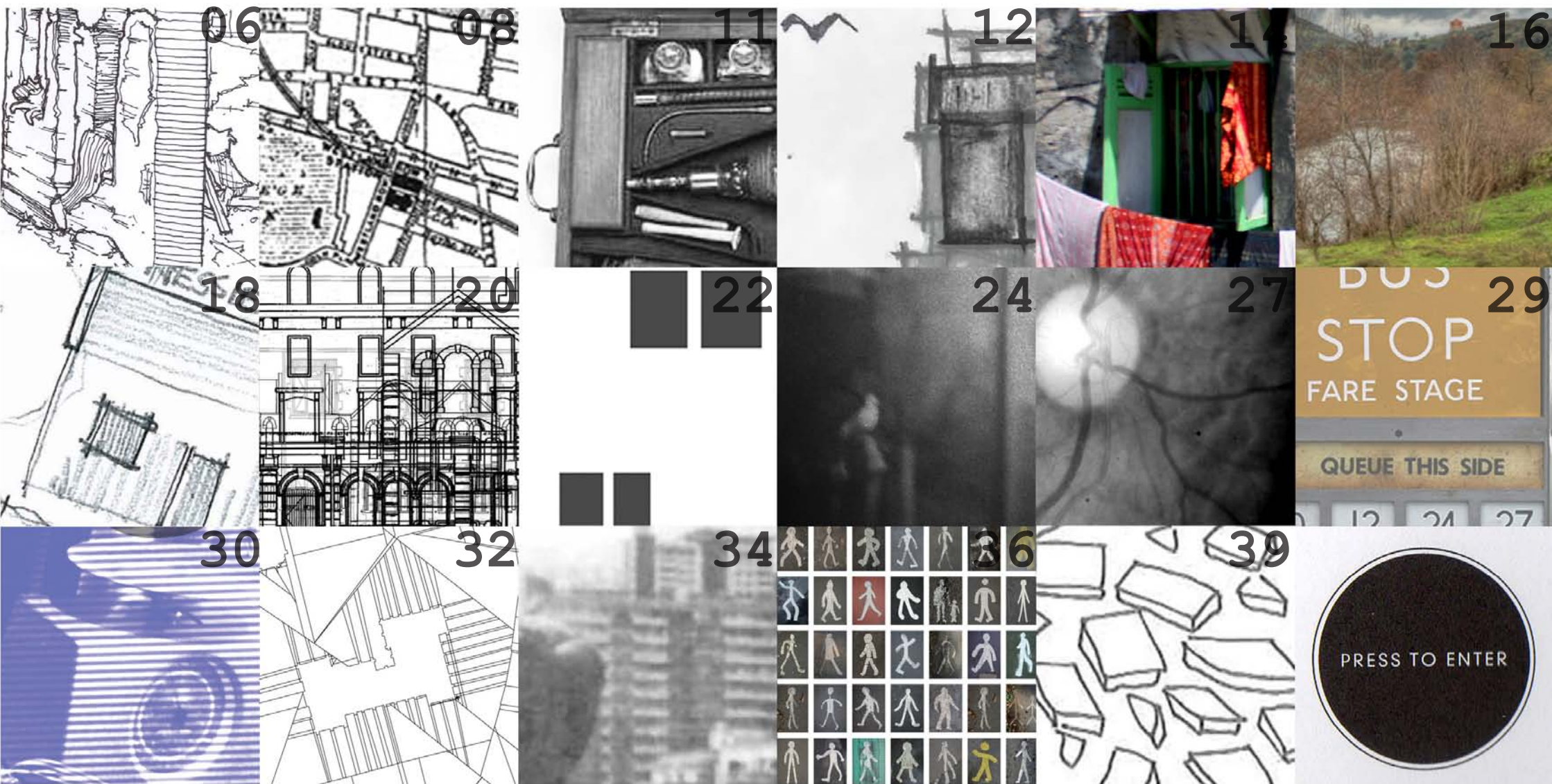


matzine

issue #08
domestic exotic



anthropology
archeology
architecture
art
bakery
photography
psycho geography
storytelling



'I've been thinking,' I said,
'about the Hollow Earth. Do you
know about the Mole Man of Mortimer
Road? Or Edmond Halley's demolished
manor house?'¹

There is something to be said for
assuming the role of tourist in the
most familiar of surroundings : of
assembling the pieces of an infinite
jigsaw, of being kept on your toes.

As Goethe said, we cannot know
our own language until we learn
a foreign one, so this issue of
matzine relishes the position of
the outsider. After all, it is on
the periphery where questions are
asked and answers are researched.

What lies ahead comprises seventeen
individual readings of a question,
seventeen different holes dug.
Collected together, we hold the
archives.

Welcome to DOMESTIC EXOTIC.

Esme Fieldhouse, editor

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matzine is a conduit for
collaborative practice, welcoming
submissions from anyone who is
game. The editorship, along with
the theme, is ever-shifting with
each issue.

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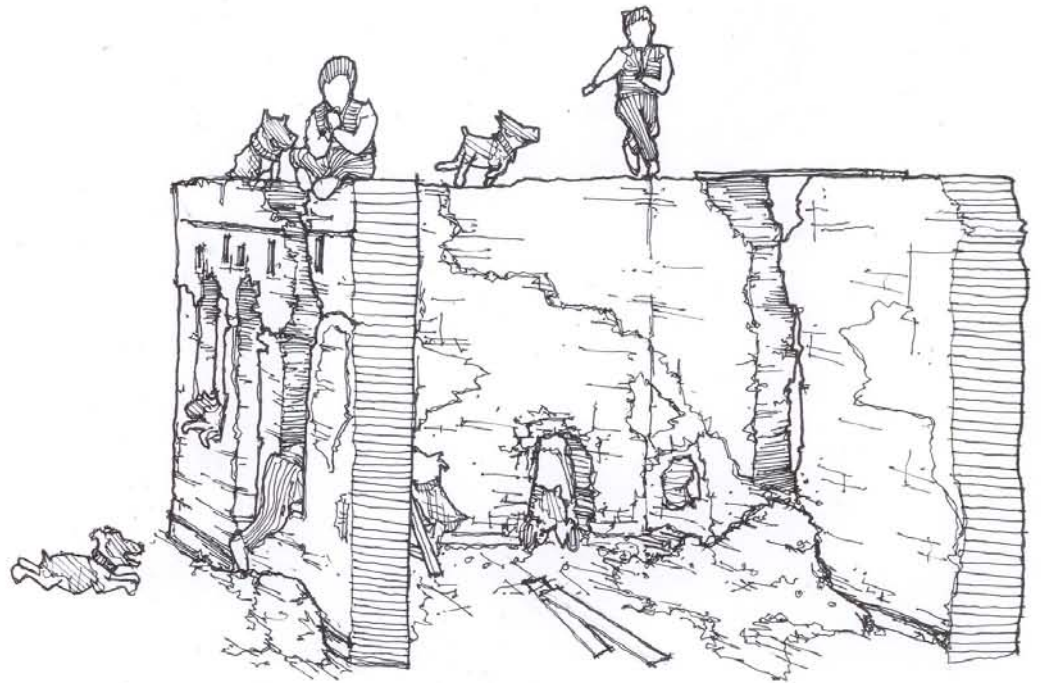
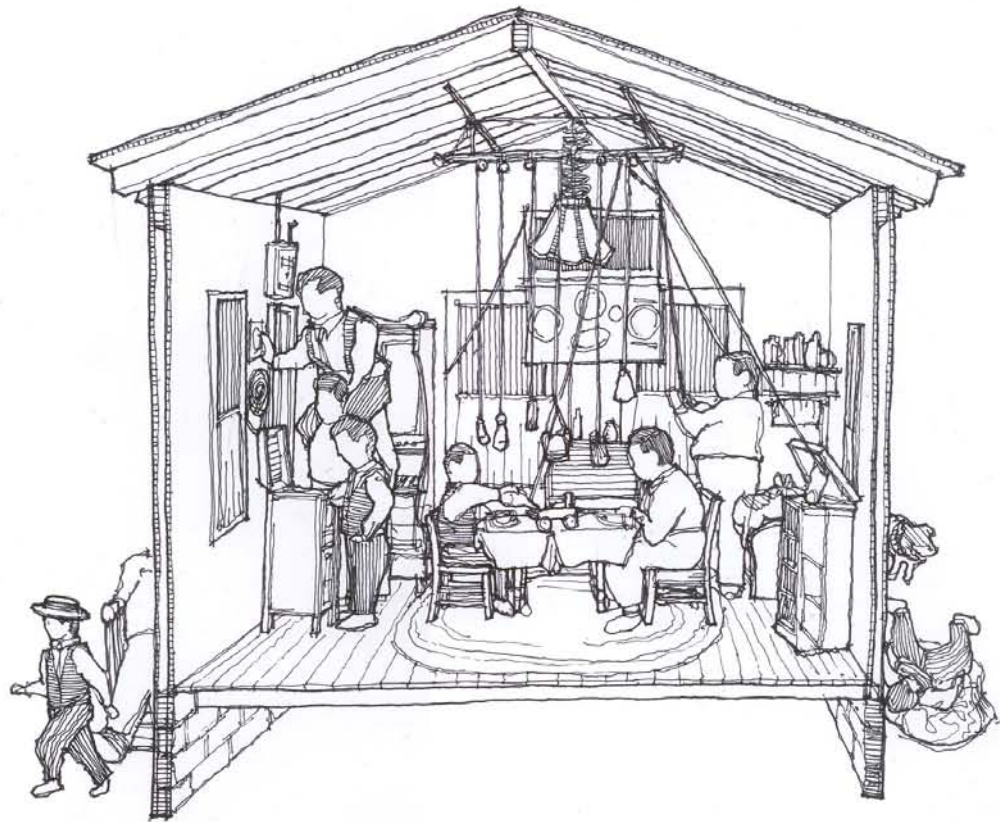
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BUSTER'S MACHINES FOR LIVING IN
from *The Scarecrow* (1920 Dir. E.F. Cline & B. Keaton)
guy woodhouse

In escapades through his dynamic,
device-laden farmhouse and a
passive, ruined barn,
Buster Keaton, perhaps
unwittingly, provides us with
contrasting approaches towards
creating an architecture capable
of rich experience, interaction
and encounter.



ian pollard

'He turned away and sauntered across the road. How did she walk with her sausages? Like that something. As he walked he took the folded *Freeman* from his sidepocket, unfolded it, rolled it lengthwise in a baton and tapped it at each sauntering step against his trouserleg. Careless air: just drop in to see. Per second per second. Per second for every second it means.'

(Leopold Bloom; *Lotus Eaters*. pp.68. *Ulysses*.)

'Man as civilized being, as intellectual nomad, is again wholly microcosmic, wholly homeless, as free intellectually as hunter and herdsman were free sensually'

(Spengler Vol.2 pp.125)

In Joyce's *Ulysses* we follow the peripatetic Leopold Bloom, our most ordinary hero, as he walks through the streets of Dublin in 1904. It is in *Ulysses*, through Bloom and his unstructured perambulations, that the reader is brought to experience a domestic psycho-geography of Dublin, which parallels Odysseus' epic journey through ancient Greece. In Homer's 'Odyssey', the valiant hero Odysseus travels for ten years, following the fall of Troy, to reach his home; Ithaca, and his wife Penelope. Bloom is on an epic journey too - although he is not aware of this - as he lives through the course of a single day. *Ulysses* is an encyclopedic glossary of a city, and its human geography, and Bloom is our *conscious* guide.

In the episode known as 'Lotus-Eaters' Bloom *saunters* along various streets as he visits the post office, the church, the chemist, and the public baths - these are diurnal rituals - yet his route is

complex, self-intersecting, and unpredictable. If he interacts with his fellow denizens, he does so with hesitation;

'Mc Coy. Get rid of him quickly. Take me out of my company. Hate company when you...

-Hello Bloom. Where are you off to?

-Hello McCoy. Nowhere in particular' (70)

Reading is by nature linear, and books static; but the way in which our consciousness receives and interprets experience is dynamic, and chaotic. Like his routes through Dublin, Bloom's thoughts self-intersect and collide together in incongruous juxtapositions; the immediate textures and smells of the places he encounters become woven between the memories that emerge, unannounced, from some other time;

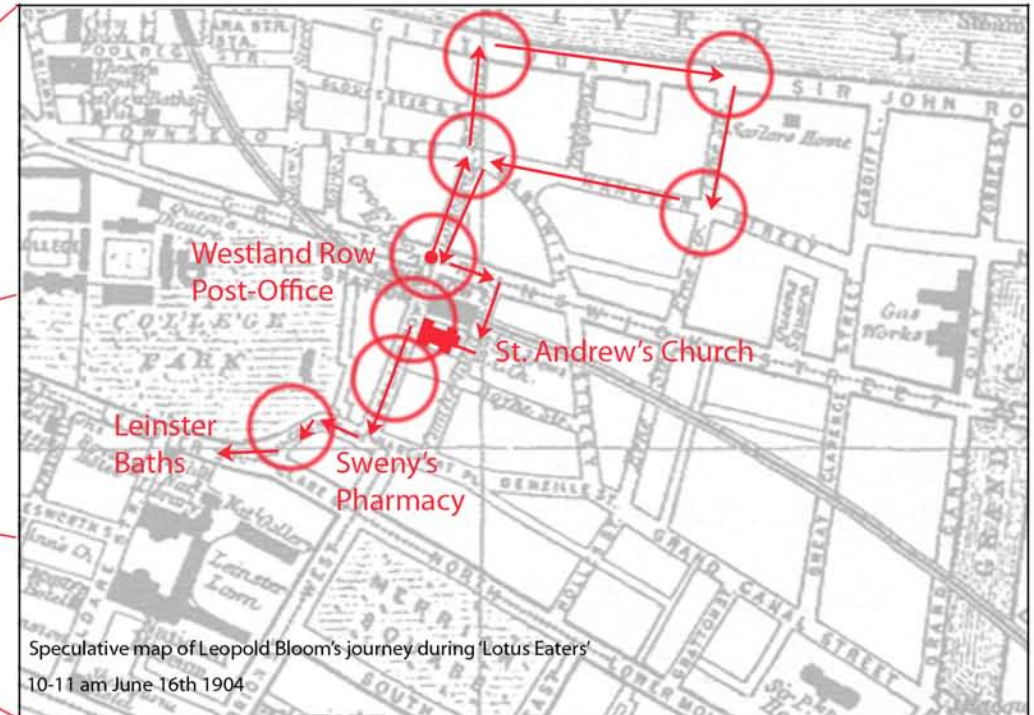
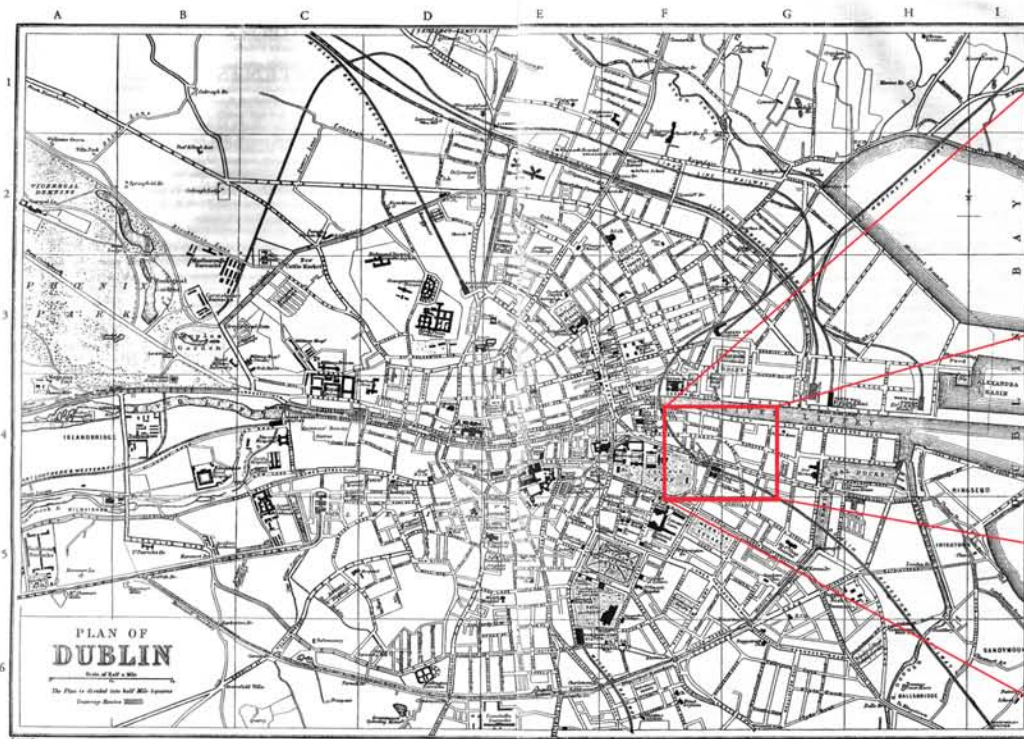
'The cold smell of sacred stone called him. He trod the worn steps, pushed the swingdoor and entered softly by the rere' (77)

Then, a paragraph later, as he watches the priest give the eucharist;

'The next one. Shut your eyes and open your mouth. What? *Corpus*. Body. Corpse. Good idea the Latin. Stupefies them first. Hospice for the dying' (77)

Bloom is evidently not ensconced in the rituals of the church - he seems to be here on a civic agenda, rather than a spiritual one - and his language suggests that he takes it to be a cryptic institution;

'I have sinned : or no : I have suffered, it is. And the other one? Iron nails ran in. [...]



Queer the whole atmosphere of the. Quite right. Perfectly right that is.' (78)

The episode concludes with Bloom enjoying the public baths; 'a clean trough of water, cool enamel, the gentle tepid stream. This is my body'. As he reflects on the encounters he has had up to this point in his day (11am), he muses; 'Always passing, the stream of life, which in the stream of life we trace is dearer than them all' (83).

This revelation is not unfolded in the privacy of his home - it is a passing thought, which emerges casually in a public bath, while he looks at his body. It is almost a civic ablution - as if he is being baptised into the fertile life of the city; '[he] foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth [...] and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower.' (83)

Bloom, it seems, exists forever between departure and arrival. In the spirit of the Flâneur, he is a detached observer, and he is highly sensitive to the minute pulses of a city. But he is not a dandy. He is self-aware, in the most modest of terms, yet he is never intentionally theatrical. His interactions with the world are measured and cautious, but they are rarely perfect, and only occasionally have their desired outcome. He is a man forever becoming the hero he already is, and the myriad spaces of the city serve as his stage.

A Jewish man in Dublin, Bloom is an exile in a country which was soon to become independent from British rule. These complex private and personal psychologies meet and become manifest in Ulysses, through the geography of the city, and in the humanity of Bloom. He is immersed in the spaces of the city, yet he is rarely becomes 'part' of them. In the meta-fiction of 'Ulysses' Bloom's casual remarks become the reader's epiphanic revelation. Patrick Kavanagh believed 'Ordinary things wear lovely wings'. Perhaps Bloom might have agreed.

In the race to absorb stimulants into the blood stream, smoking is second only to intravenous methods. Its effectiveness, in this capacity, may in part explain its continued prevalence over a generation after it was discovered to be linked to illnesses such as Cancer, and having yellow teeth.

The Native Americans, with their naturally occurring supply of tobacco, were the first to discover the superior osmotic properties of the lungs and were smoking behind the bike sheds before they knew what the sheds were for. As the use of tobacco spread north from the Andes, its consumers invented new justifications for its use and an equal number of ways to ingest it. This included bumways.

Its mild analgesic and antiseptic properties were used to treat minor ailments but it was also believed to cure other more serious illnesses. The Native Americans believed that illnesses were caused by spirits either intruding, or being absent from a body. In order to combat these illnesses, Shaman were trained up to rectify these spiritual imbalances.

Training consisted of smoking tobacco and other narcotics until the would-be Shaman was at the point of near death. If they managed to recover from this state, then by virtue of their being able to cure themselves, they entered Shamanship. By this logic, we all know at least one or two Shaman. If you can't think of someone, then it's probably you.

European physicians adopted the medical use of tobacco from the North Americans, and their preferred method of administering was the tobacco smoke enema; A tube inserted into the anus and attached to bellows, which would then force the smoke into the rectum.

The primary use of the tobacco enema was in the resuscitation of the nearly-drowned, as it was believed that the heat from the smoke would promote respiration. The practice was so well established that in the 1780s the Royal Humane Society installed resuscitation kits, containing smoke enemas, at various points along the River Thames.



These pioneering physicians, trapped in the psychoanal* stage of sexual development, genuinely believed in the powers of the smoke suppository despite there being doubts about this practice as early as 1600. Our poor ancestors endured two centuries of taking it up the arse before in 1811, a scientist named Benjamin Brodie demonstrated the ineffectiveness of anal fumigation and the practice declined.

And so, it is believed that doubts about the credibility of tobacco smoke enemas led to the phrase: 'blow smoke up your arse'.

*relating to a stage of psychosexual development during which the child's interest is concentrated on the anal region and excremental functions.

KATYN FOREST MASSACRE MEMORIAL

zbrodnia katyńska // Катынский расстрел
oliver sims

The Katyn Forest Massacre was a mass execution (21,768) of Polish nationals carried out by the Soviet secret police NKVD in April-May 1940. Professional workers were arrested for allegedly being: 'Intelligence agents, gendarmes, landowners, saboteurs, factory owners, lawyers, officials and priests'. If the prisoners did not adopt a pro-Soviet attitude, they were declared 'hardened and uncompromising enemies of Soviet authority' and sent to their death.

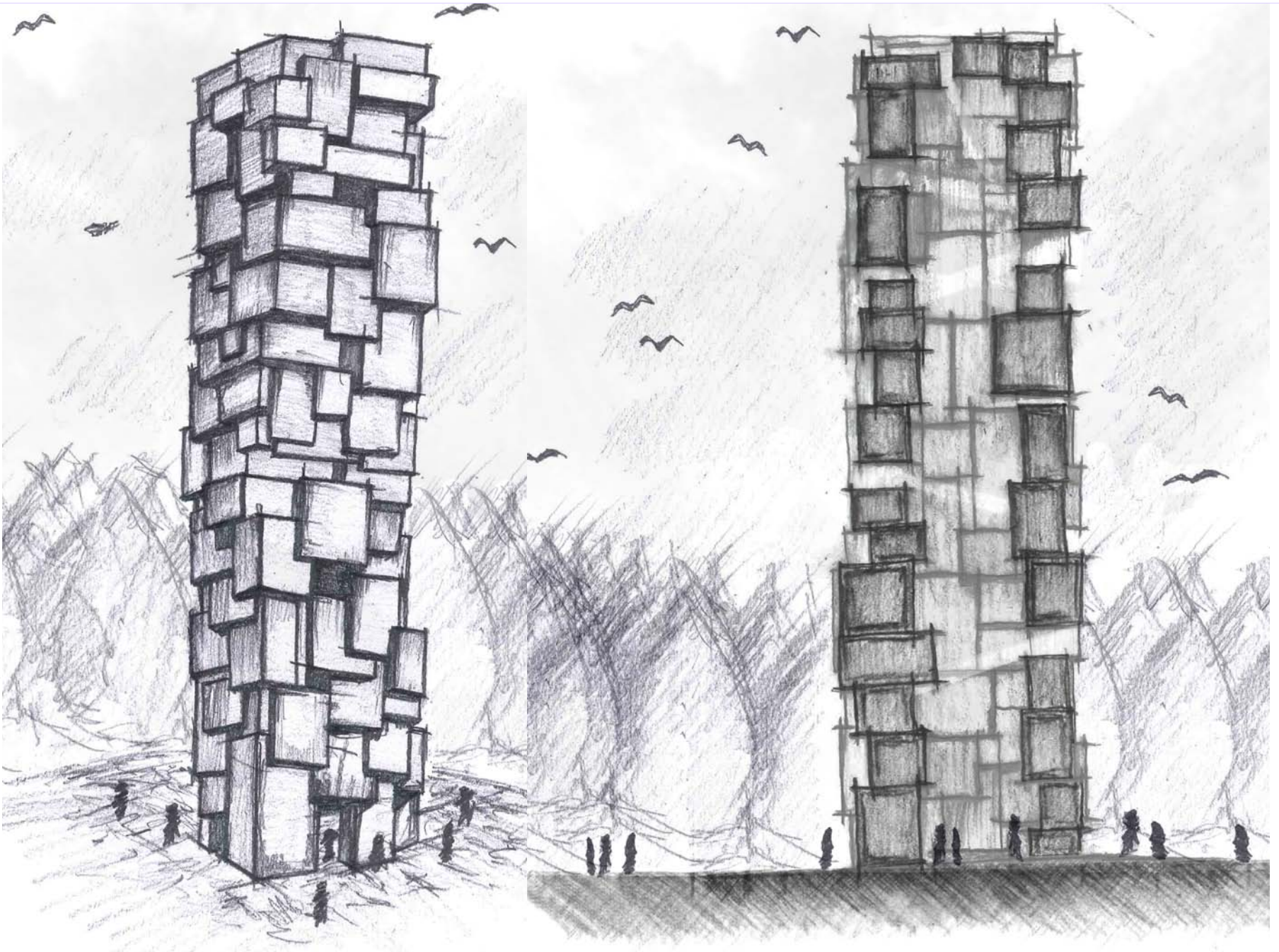
The memorial

From outside;

- The blocks are representative of the dead, 12-15 in depth as were the buried victims in their hastily arranged mass graves
- The varying size of the blocks are indicative of the plethora of backgrounds, professions and ages of the victims
- The voids indicate the survivors, at night lit from inside, acting as a beacon of remembrance and warning for the future

Once Inside;

- The light shining through the voids indicates the bright future of Poland, pushed forward by the survivors, while the darkness of the interior is a constant reminder of the past
- The echoic space, drawing sounds from outside through the voids - wind, shuffling of feet, whispers - will be like the victims speaking from the past.



ryan mcloughlin

D Monte Street, Bandra, Mumbai:

A 1.2 km snaking corridor, which binds Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities, is a clothes line where the inhabitants drape the activities of their everyday lives. On this street; a man is shaved beside a foraging goat, a worker sleeps under the shade of a street hawker's umbrella, a crowd peer into a living room TV to get the latest cricket score.

Here, miniscule habitualised events shape the urban landscape. This laneway becomes the physical manifestation of the society it serves.

There is little work for Architects in this cut and paste landscape.



andrew may

While maybe to some extent a means to an end, the view of the past presented by archaeologists, and to a much greater extent, the past as understood by the 'average person' is very much orientated around recognising points of reference, or of familiarity in the past. This is, of course, a normal way to deal with otherwise indescribable ancient objects or structures that seem to have close visual or conceptual relations to objects we can relate to, however, this is a fallacy and reveals more about the interpreter than it does about the evidence before us. Past material culture should not always be seen as being an earlier version of a now complete design. The search for the first instance of writing, the first nuclear family, or the first house has long been documented, and in the past was almost the ultimate goal of archaeology.

The famous 'houses' of Skara Brae in the Orkney Islands are a perfect example of this as they are almost always described as having beds and dressers or cupboards, which fit perfectly into our idea of 'the house' (or the bedroom), and thus the domestic. But when one looks at Skara Brae as a whole, both in a spatial and temporal sense, while that element of familiarity remains, it changes somewhat.

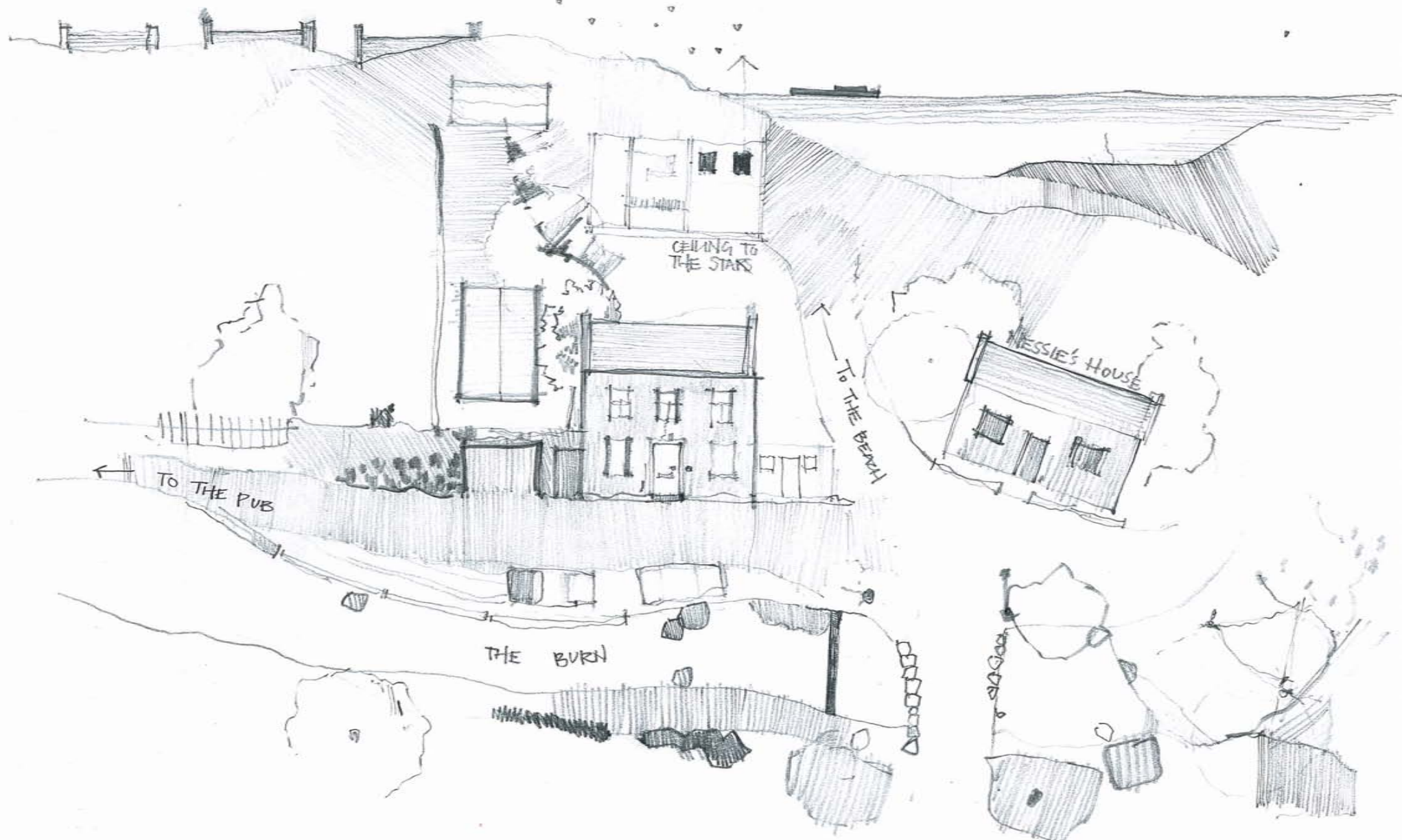


How then can we describe the domestic, other than that which is familiar? The domestic is that which is opposed to *the other* (the exotic or the wild), something pertaining to the symbolic house (*domus*) or the home. But when we look at the past (which is perhaps both wild and exotic), we unintentionally strive to see the familiar, and in essence end up domesticating the past. But why is it that our ideas of the past are tainted by this longing to recognise in other people that with which we are accustomed? In considering Ian Hodder's (1990) discussions of the domestication of humans, we can perhaps view the domestic from the outside in. Humans, before the advent of sedentary agriculture and permanent housing, lived without our modern dichotomy of the domestic/wild. With the arrival of agriculture and more substantial permanent structures, these new facets of life became a focal point and so the gradual shift from the *agrios* (the wild), to the *domus* began. People became domesticated by their increasing attachment to 'delayed-return agricultural systems',

among other things. To the people who lived at this point in time, and were affected by this transition to what we can now recognise as houses, (although certainly the reality would have been different), this would surely have been very strange.

When we look deeper, we understand that what we see in the past is not in fact the domestic, nor domesticated, nor something with which we are perfectly comfortable, that what has happened is that we have been tricked by our very familiarity or closeness with things into thinking this way. It is upon our very realisation of this fact that the image that we are seeing (or maybe creating) takes on a strange quality. How can these people, who were biologically the same as us, have had these things which we have assigned meaning to throughout our lives (again to reference Skara Brae's, 'beds', 'dressers' and 'houses'), yet they are not what we think? We always have some similarities, but what we are left with is the ephemeral and the uncanny; the recognisable but the strange.







REDUCTION SUBTRACTION ABSTRACTION

looking to see

rowan mackinnon-pryde

noticing the *minutia*, framing instances of, otherwise overlooked, beauty, recognising abstract patterns, compositions and relationships: each of these instances contribute to a portfolio of understanding. it is the ability to see beyond the obvious, the everyday, the explicit; to abstract, reduce and extract; seeing at once each fragment and the whole, which develops imagination and expands possibilities.



as conscious conditioners of the constructed landscape, we must be aware of the continuum, or progressive tradition, in which we work, but we must also resist the restrictions implied by terms like 'sensitivity', 'tradition', 'vernacular'. sensitivity to context does not necessitate replication of style or form, but recognises the importance of both contrast and continuity.

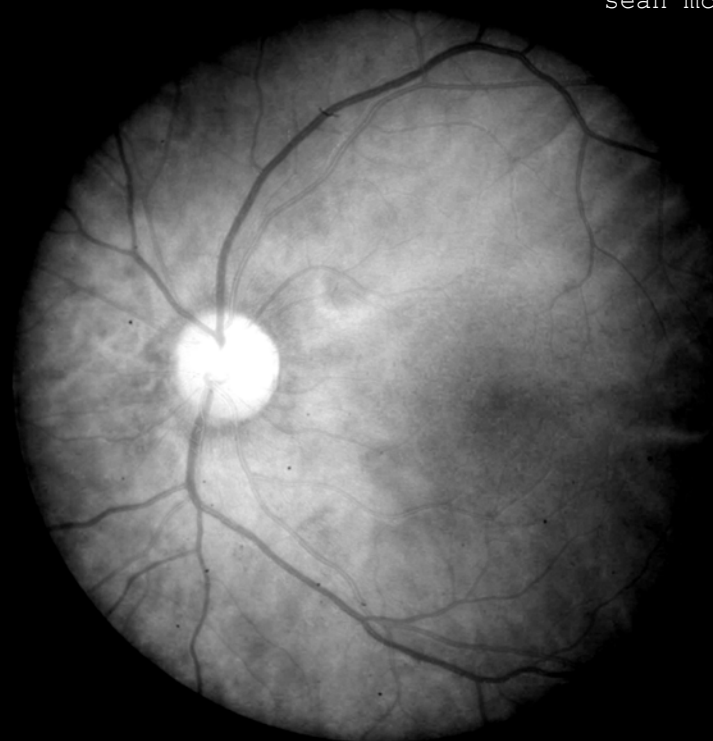
24

SEAGULL |1030x875 mk|
constructing the image
adam currie





The largest plate/film camera
within the UK [possibly Europe]



like clockwork, étienne + i would spend two long days a month in studio monoculaire. always, the first studio day was the first friday of the month; the second, the second saturday

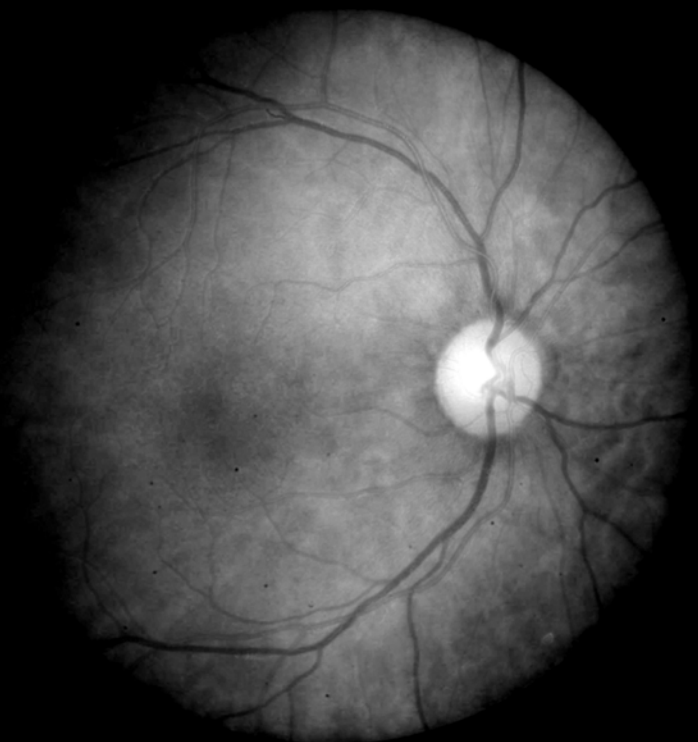
in turns, one would fall asleep, or employ chloroform. meanwhile the other, thirty three minutes later, would shake his friend awake, whereupon the dreamer would take his dream and put them on a page; the dimensions of their studio wall.

friday, my turn, i inhaled fully and closed my eye. a moment passed before i opened again. absurdly, both étienne and the fresh, wall-sized page were nowhere to be seen.

eight days following, in studio monoculaire, étienne and i met again, rather upset with one another. an emphatic, erratic explosion of airborne blame ensued. étienne defended that the previous friday it had been his turn to capture his dream on the page. only, when he opened *his* eye the room was empty of both partner and page.

disturbed and irreconcilable, we could agree on only one thing; to meet again twenty days later.

friday, the first day of the month, with little trust or patience surviving, we hung the



page along the centre beam of the studio, ready to take a dream on both surfaces. we entered our respective unconsciousnesses simultaneously.

i was in a heavily-dark place; a vast and dense chamber. there was a sense of minutes passing, then hours. i navigated every permutation of turn and stride [if one could call indeterminate movements navigation; my residual self-image was unrestrained, yet unable to *move to anywhere*]. a numb intuition said my partner shared this space with me, just as the excited thought skimmed across the void; we had found it!

although consciously imperceptible at the time, an afterimage of the dream persisted - whole and familiar - though strictly unknowable. a double, a mirror, the eye that can view itself directly.

now awake, days later, stylus and knife in hands, both sides of the page were black with lead scratchings. there was no page left unwarped, only two un-placable, unfathomable maps; uncanny in dissymmetries; the city of oedipus

that surface | étienne | my left retina
this surface | i | my right retina

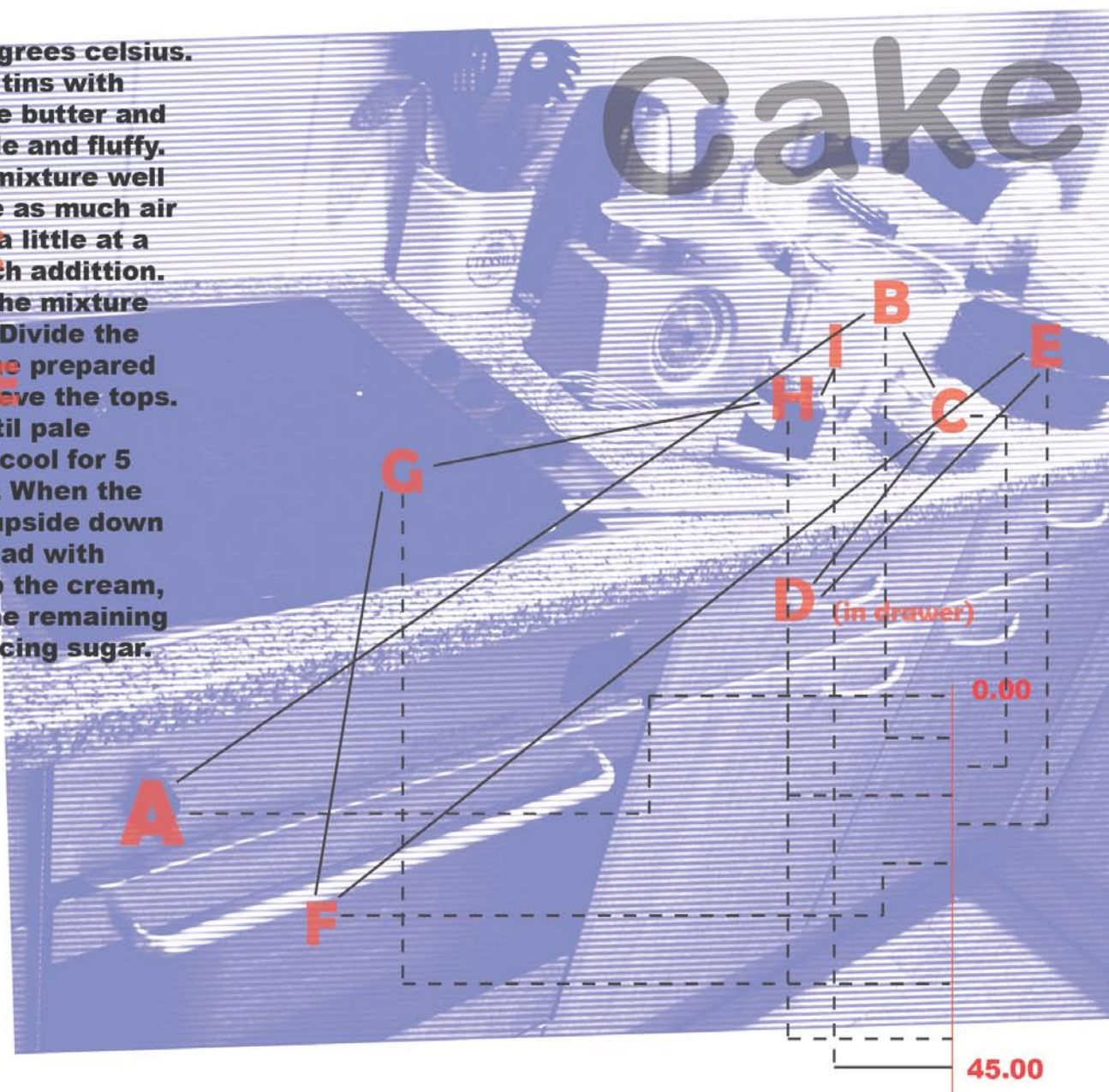
He had been walking for a long time it occurred to him. He also realised that he was completely unfamiliar with where he was. But it didn't seem to bother him all that much. He felt sleepy so he wandered into a sheltered area between two buildings, near a canal. He lay down, clutching his briefcase to his body. But it was a bit too windy for sleep, stupefied as he was. He got up and continued to walk.

Later he was nearby a building he recognised. Except he couldn't be sure if it was the one he knew or if it was merely a building impersonating the one he thought he knew. He couldn't seem to orient himself despite his supposed familiarity with the building.

He felt vague alarm when he saw a guesthouse with a banner outside. It had a telephone number on it but he didn't recognise the area code. So he was no longer in Edinburgh. He approached a nearby bus stop to try to determine where he was. The sign read 'Buses From City' as opposed to 'To City'. Which meant he had been heading in completely the wrong direction. He tried to recall how long he had been walking this road. At least an hour, potentially longer. He would have to turn back now. He found this prospect to be almost totally debilitating. The streets were empty. No traffic or pedestrians, just the wind. He wandered towards some nearby trees and lay amongst them, clutching his briefcase to his body.

Preheat the oven to 190 degrees celsius. Lightly grease and line the tins with greaseproof paper. Beat the butter and the sugar together until pale and fluffy. It is important to beat the mixture well at this stage to incorporate as much air as possible. Add the eggs, a little at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift the flour and fold into the mixture using a large metal spoon. Divide the mixture equally between the prepared tins, and spread evenly to level the tops. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until pale golden. Allow the cakes to cool for 5 minutes before turning out. When the cakes are cool, place one upside down on a serving plate and spread with raspberry jam. Lightly whip the cream, spread over the jam, add the remaining cake and dust lightly with icing sugar.

**175g Butter
175g caster sugar
3 eggs
175g self raising flour
6-8 tbsp raspberry jam
150 ml double cream
Icing sugar**



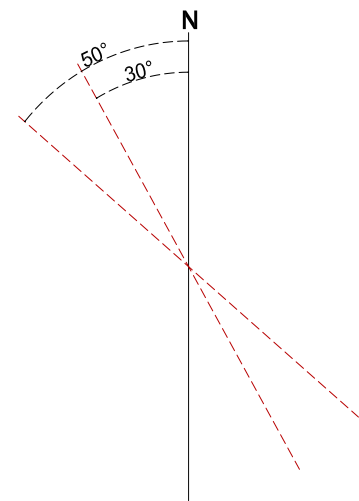


david mc nabb

The syntactical drawing aims to
expose the lack of a grid and
order in the city

The city is Dundee

The lines are a tool, a
tool for thinking and making



A STRANGELY FAMILIAR METHODOLOGY

De Certeau and the Practice of Everyday Life

nora wuttke

The Practice of Everyday Life by the French scholar Michel de Certeau (1984) is an influential work in the field of social sciences. In his exploration of the practices of everyday life, de Certeau develops a sound methodology for social analysis, reaching beyond ideas developed by Bourdieu and Foucault. Through borrowing the methodology from a social theorist for analysing the built environment, it is possible to open up a discussion formerly neglected in the architectural profession.

The chapter, Walking the City, explores a methodology for analysing urban environments with a different take on the prevailing analysis in the architecture profession. De Certeau's main interest lies in the gap between, what he calls the production of an image and its processes of utilisation (de Certeau 1984:xiii), the fissure between the representation and the actions of social groups.

In de Certeau's theory, an image can be multiple things - a television programme, a city square, a chair, a newspaper - but inherent to all those images is a proper locus: a place. This gap becomes explicit and observable in the analysis of everyday life, which he does not see as the 'obscure background of social activity' (de Certeau 1984:xi) but rather as the catalyst of social relations, which he understands as culture (ibid.).

In order to approach an understanding of this gap, he proposes a polemological analysis of everyday life, uncovering the conflicting nature of the meanings and relationships of strategies and tactics (de Certeau 1984:34). Rather than observing the production of images and behaviour of social groups and their inherent power systems (de Certeau 1984:49), since they have been analysed extensively (de Certeau 1984:xii/43), he argues social analysis should follow the processes of utilisation.

To understand de Certeau's theory of the practices of everyday life, it is important to establish the meaning of his notion of place and space, the connected concepts of strategy and tactic and further his understanding of hidden production and consumption, both being continuous from his conceptualisation of tactic.

Places and Spaces

Most fundamental to understanding de Certeau's methodology is his conceptualisation of place and space, since they are inherent to his understanding of cultural patterns. De Certeau sees place as singular and a synchronic proper loci, abiding with the law of the 'proper' (de Certeau 1984:117). The term 'proper' refers to any kind of institutionalised convention. Places are static, not sustaining tactics and no two things can be in the same location (ibid.). Places have boundaries, are challenged and threatened by the 'other', which they resist with strategies (de Certeau 1984:36). Spaces, in contrast, have no definite spatial situation (De Certeau 1984:xix). Places precede spaces, since in de Certeau's understanding, 'space is a practiced place' (ibid.). Places turn into spaces through the application of strategies (de Certeau 1984:30). A space is layered and 'takes into consideration vectors of direction and time variables' (de Certeau 1984:117), therefore space is diachronic and layers different instances in time (ibid.). Place is spatially defined, whereas space is temporal.

Strategy and Tactic

To fully understand this transformation of place into space and furthermore, as I will argue, into anthropological space, it is crucial to examine the concepts of strategies and tactics. Strategies are forced by systems of power, for example a city and its planning legislation and social conventions coinciding them. Strategies are actions within the boundaries of a distinct exterior



(de Certeau 1984:xix), complying with rules and conventions, and in turn reinforcing them. Contrasting strategies are tactics, which are embedded in space, creating anthropological spaces. This term is borrowed from Merleau-Ponty (de Certeau 1984:117), using it in a different sense, in order to get to the bottom of the analysis of everyday life, which I believe takes us beyond spaces.

Tactics are calculated actions, outside of a proper locus, existing within an anthropological space or 'space of the other' (de Certeau 1984:37). They are fluid and temporal, and have no spatial definition, relying on opportunities and using the cracks in the surveillance of power (ibid.). They are resisting the systems of power and therefore are highly political, entering the practices of everyday life into a political realm (de Certeau 1984:xvii).

Tactics are manipulations of spaces, turning them, as argued earlier, into anthropological spaces. Tactics make use of spaces and accredit them with individual meaning. They are inherent to the process of utilisation. Therefore, de Certeau sees the analysis and uncovering of tactics as the key to the problem of the gap between production of images and their consumption by the common people.

An example of the transformation from place to space can be found in the concept of the city. A city can be understood as being a place catering to the multiple needs of people, built in accordance with planning legislation and land rights - the law of the proper. Strategies, 'proper' actions, such as walking in the street, turn this place, the city, into a space. Numerous different tactics, for example sitting on public stairs, an action that can be considered consumption or, a form of hidden production, building garages in backyards, both temporal actions, turn the city into an anthropological space. The scale of such a continuum, as demonstrated on the basis of the example above, can vary from an urban to an architectural, and further into a detailed material, scale.

Hidden Production and Consumption

De Certeau sees tactics as the power of the weak, reliant on a 'clever utilisation of time' (de Certeau 1984:39). This becomes more apparent when exploring the two dimensions of tactics, hidden production and consumption, two modalities under the umbrella of tactics.

Hidden Production is the processing ('make' or 'do') of the products of systems or social phenomena, such as books, bureaucracies and, less obviously, cities. Hidden production is part of popular culture and should not be confused with the production of images, which is associated with elites (de Certeau 1984:xiii). The concept of hidden production and consumption is that the former leaves a mark behind, for example graffiti on a wall whereas the latter is almost invisible (de Certeau 1984:xii), such as leaning against a wall.

De Certeau's focal point lies in the analysis of tactics, since he defines everyday acts as tactics (de Certeau 1984:40). This means, focusing social analysis on processes of utilisation, also referred to as anti-discipline (de Certeau 1984:xv), highlighting the gap between production of images and processes of utilisation, showing the tactics and degree of manipulation of representations or images (de Certeau 1984:xiii). By uncovering tactics, de Certeau hopes to achieve a deeper understanding of what I call anthropological space.

Production of Urban Text

De Certeau calls for an analysis of urban patterns from a street perspective, which allows for 'an anthropological, poetic and mythic experience of space' (de Certeau 1984:93), rather than a bird's-eye view, employed by many planners and architects.

For de Certeau, inhabitants of cities walk the city and follow the structure of the city with their bodies, producing an urban text, constantly 'writ[ing] without being able to read it' (de Certeau 1984:93), conceptualising footsteps as the needle weaving the urban fabric (de Certeau 1984:97). To come back to the analysis of the relationship between tactics and strategies, having its focus on the tactical aspect in order to uncover and understand anti-discipline, tactics are the act of speech, using the system and the linked strategies as grammar.

This sound methodological approach helps to understand the relationships underlying material culture, such as the built environment. Conceptualising tactics as active and fluid is highly important, however when engaged with analysis, staying focused on the nature of tactics is elemental. Moreover, it is interesting to consider the product of this analysis, urban text, as a medium for further study.

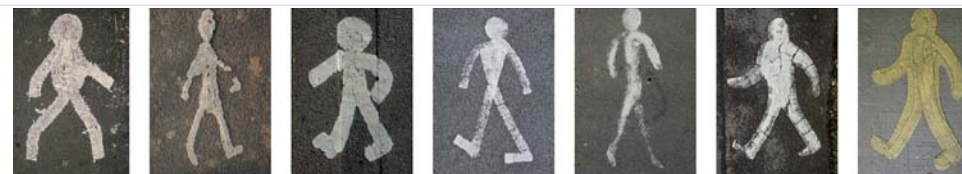
It seems that the 'production of urban text' is often inferior to the analysis of this text. Focusing on the production of text firstly, with a strong methodology for a backbone, can prove very fruitful. As an architect, with a professional training in 'seeing' the city, fixed assumptions and ideas of what this text is supposed to be, I often feel caught in this web of assumptions.

By employing de Certeau's methodology I have discovered the most interesting anthropological spaces, formerly unexcavated. This 'poaching' from foreign academic fields illustrates that relationships are much more important than size and material expression, developing an understanding of the technical thinking behind building processes. Tracing place to space and finally uncovering the anthropological city space brings to light the broad gap between the planning process and processes of utilisation. This fissure is readily developed through the neglect of the social relationships that weave the urban cloth: disregarding architecture as only the fabric, never the dress.

It is important to recognise that the discussed methodology excavates anthropological spaces, rendering architectural and urban planning a human project, sharpening the understanding of architecture as an inherent human activity, concerned with humans and for humans. All architecture is for utilisation. Even if not planned that way, it will be utilised, as de Certeau shows in his work. This process is often forgotten and de Certeau's theory of the practices of everyday life brings this notion back into the architectural realm.

Having explored de Certeau's work on the everyday life it became apparent that tactics are a form of raiding in the realm of the law of the proper, constantly challenging the common discourse. By focusing our analysis on tactics, we can move towards a more open, relative and relational consideration of our built environment.

a conversation with Stephen Wragg about walking men
esme fieldhouse



EF: What were your reasons for beginning the project?

SW: I was commissioned to design a map for the new cycle routes, so I saw lots of 'walking men' soon after they were painted, and quickly realised how different they all were. Taking one stretch of path, you can even work out in which order they were done, the first starting tentatively, and then gaining in confidence as the style was established.



EF: The emergence of the walking men is a recent phenomenon - is it part of a societal push to be more environmentally aware?

SW: The surge in cyclepaths has created ambiguous territory between pavement and road. So the cycle symbol was designed for marking these lanes. No one anticipated that where you walk needed to be explicitly marked. The 'walking man' design, that we see on signs and as the green man, was never intended to be painted on the ground. The little details like hands and feet are awkward for painting tools, which produce lines of uniform width.

EF: Why men and not bikes?

SW: I have taken pictures of the companion 'cycle' design too, but generally they are much more 'correct' so from my perspective, less interesting. I think the reason is, no one can instantly draw a bike, so they carefully scrutinise the design, and mark it out carefully on the ground in chalk before starting.

Conversely, ask anyone to draw a man and people think that's easy, and set to it.



EF: What conclusions have you drawn from the photographs?

This is an artistic expression, where one is not intended. Officially these should be bland and uniform, yet because of poor quality control or visual illiteracy, this extraordinary phenomenon has been allowed to spread. I also think it says something about how we view ourselves, how we depict ourselves, that we recognise a wide diversity of images as a 'walking man'.



EF: How have your methods and ideas evolved over the past seven years?

SW: At first, I just recorded the images in a stamp collection way, then it developed into an art project, though I think it crosses boundaries; photography, art project, record of urban design. I am happy for it to be viewed in all these ways. Without being too geeky, I've fitted the project into normal life, half an eye always on the roadside.



EF: The men can't help but bring a smile to your face - how do you engage with the viewer other than being humorous?

SW: I started to interact with the subject more than simply the 'top down' image - by including some of the context, I was able to insert an emotional narrative. So, depending on how I frame a photograph, I can create a humorous, serious or tragic image.



EF: Do you have a favourite walking man?

SW: Probably my most recent discovery from a series in Leicester. The painter has superimposed his on top of a previous one, and so they now each have up to eight limbs. How can someone walk away from something that looks like an alien and be satisfied?

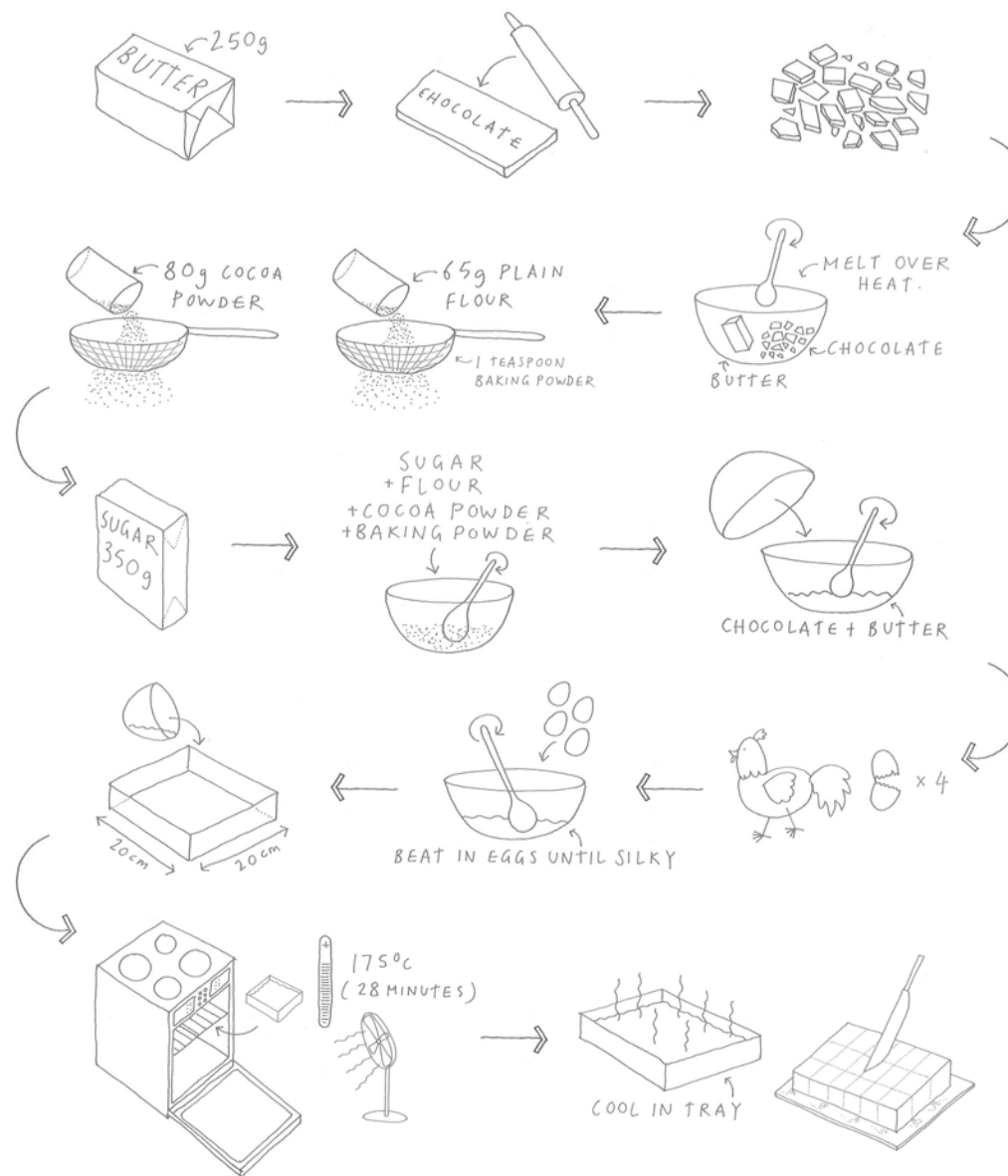
EF: Have you thought about your own intervention - repairing some of the men perhaps?

SW: I would love for a massive walking man to fill the floor of Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, and for everyone to initially ask 'what is this?', then when they realise, they go and seek out their own.

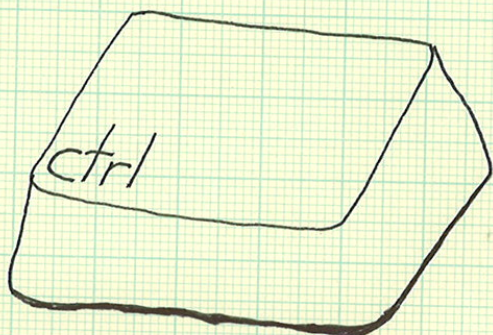
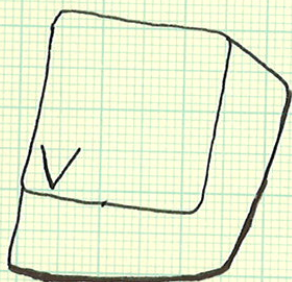
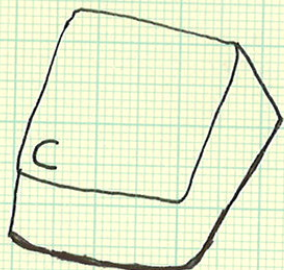


EF: Where is the end point in an infinite amount of recording?

SW: The end point is when the phenomenon disappears. Opening up the project to the public could unfortunately lead to its demise as Highways smarten up their act. I feel like an archaeologist: when you uncover something, you can't help destroying it.



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