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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Cassius Merrill Moter IV entitled "Towards an Architecture of Engagement." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Architecture, with a major in architecture.

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

# Towards an Architecture of Engagement

A Thesis  
Presented for the  
Masters of Architecture  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Cassius Merrill Moter IV  
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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Polly and Merrill, their support and guidance made this possible.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the members of committee, Scott Wall, George Dodds, and Adam Drisin. Their guidance was invaluable in the formation of this document.

## Abstract

Architecture of experience transforms the user of a building into an active participant of architecture, reawakening the user to the built environment. The prevalence of architecture as a sign for the purpose of commodification has in part led to a “state of distraction” (Benjamin) that needs to be refocused to make more valuable constructs.

To make this transformation one must become, according to Rainer Rilke, “as fully conscious as possible of our existence.” Our lives are experienced in culturally constructed space, both physical and conceptual, yet based in the extramental. It is not merely a mental projection; it is based in the objective and subjective. To design and envision space we must understand the elements, and their meanings, from which the fabric of experience is woven.

This document shows how increasing “our area of responsible choices” (Jencks 13) in architectural experience, rather than manipulation of a user, will help the architect create more meaningful compositions.

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### Terms:

- Semiology: the theory of signs (Meaning in Arch pg. 8)
- Signifier/signified: The signifier is a representation of an idea or thought which is signified. In arch: the form would be the signifier and the content the signified.
- Context/metaphor: there are two ways that a sign achieves meaning- through its relation to all the other signs in a context and through the other signs for which it has become a metaphor by association.
- Langue/Parole: All signs in a society taken together constitute the langue or total resource (not modifiable). Each selection from this totality is the parole (malleable).
- Percept: what is being perceived, Referent, denotatum, thing (p. 15)
- Concept: notion, idea, thought, content, signified (15)
- Representation: symbol, form word signifier (15)
- Metamorphosis: successive changes of form from birth to adulthood, a transformation, any complete change in appearance or character.
- Subjectivity: belonging to the thinking subject rather than to the object of thought, 2) relying upon one's personal feelings or opinions
- Sentient: (adj.) able to perceive by the senses. 2) Experiencing sensation or feeling
- Objectivity: belonging to the object of perception or thought. 2) not affected by personal feeling or prejudice. 3) Dealing with things external to the mind rather than with thoughts or feelings.
- Parody: A literary, artistic, musical, or architectural work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule.
- Pastiche: A literary, artistic, musical, or architectural work that imitates the style of previous work.

## Chapter

# 1

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*The taste of the apple... lies in the contact of the fruit to the palate, not in the fruit itself; poetry lies in the meeting of the poem and reader, not in the lines of symbols printed on the pages of a book.*

*Jorge Luis Borges  
Forward to Obra Poetica*

### Introduction

Architecture today has been reduced to a commodity, an object or setting that is consumed and discarded. The appropriateness of a building is no longer a professional or cultural concern. What is of concern is the creation of a symbol or sign as a vehicle to sell products. This leads to the creation of architecture that is a strange parody of itself. A condition where the same “country store” appears on the side of every interstate from New York to California, complete with rocking chairs out front, and the entire decor is for sale.

*Architecture is perceived by  
“a collectivity in a state of  
distraction.”*

*Walter Benjamin*

Commodification creates a condition in our cities where there are so many signs, that much of the built environment is indistinguishable from its surroundings because of the lack of hierarchy in the order. This leaves architecture, as Walter Benjamin comments, to be perceived by “a collectivity in a state of distraction.”

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*“The task of architecture it to... concretize and structure man’s being in the world.”*

*Steven Holl  
Questions of Perception*

There is hope however; distraction can be focused with the creation of architecture that “structures man’s being in the world” (Holl, 38).

Study in the role of perception in architectural production can explain how participants engage a building in the “physical phenomena of architecture (Holl, 41).” And by exploring “how things become things” (MP, 181) it is possible to begin to understand how a user of a building can be transformed into a participant of architecture.

#### A Condition of Distraction

In *Learning from Las Vegas*, Robert Venturi argues that people are much more reliant on symbols and signs to maintain orientation than ever before. The contradictions in everyday life, such as cloverleaf exits, where a driver turns right to go left, requires unquestioned obedience to signs.

Entrepreneurs and designers have of course noticed this reliance on signs, and they design buildings to accommodate and to take advantage of it. The prevalent trend is build to communicate from the road and at speed what is being “sold” within, with the use of an eclectic mix of traditions or pastiche.

The acceptance of this trend has led to a constant bombardment with signs that are simultaneously stimulating and sedating. William



Figure 1.1 Distraction of Las Vegas

Kowinski has dubbed this side effect as the “mal de mall” (Crawford, 14), a state of disorientation, anxiety, and apathy. As a response to the “mal” it is rare that anything is allowed to rise to the foreground of perception (Fig 1.1).

To combat this condition, architecture must redefine the role of the user from a passive receptor to an active participant. In the spirit of Jorge Luis Borges, architecture lies in the meeting of building and person. To accomplish this, one must first understand how perception of symbols is structured. Then with this knowledge, create an architecture that breaks through the ubiquitous state of distraction by providing choices with which the participant can be engaged.

### Perception

Philosophy’s current understanding of physical perception started more than a century ago with Edmund Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* in 1900. Since that time other philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have continued his work, criticizing the idea of dualism and advocating thinking beyond the “dividing lines” that separate being and becoming, I and other, activity and passivity, subjective and objective, etc., creating a view of perception that intertwines the relationships between perception, expression, and creation. (Mullen, xi)

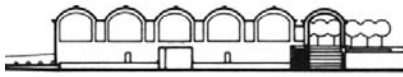
The idea of intentionality is one of the major bases of these philosophers' work. Intentionality is essentially that every experience is the "consciousness of" or an "experience of" some "thing." Previous traditions of Decartes, Hobbes, and Locke tell us that consciousness is primarily awareness of our own ideas or ourselves. They say that experience is internal and logic bound. "I think therefore I am." Husserl removes this egocentric focus and replaces it with a view of the world that is extra-mental. That is the idea that the "real world" is neither an illusion nor merely a subjective projection, nor an objective reception of information. There is a reversibility of the world that gives birth to perception, and metamorphosises humans from "the given to creative, from silent to the expressive, visible to invisible, and back again." (Mullen, 66)

In order to create an architecture of engagement it is important to define the two extremes of perception, objectivity and subjectivity. This way the oscillation between the two can be better understood,

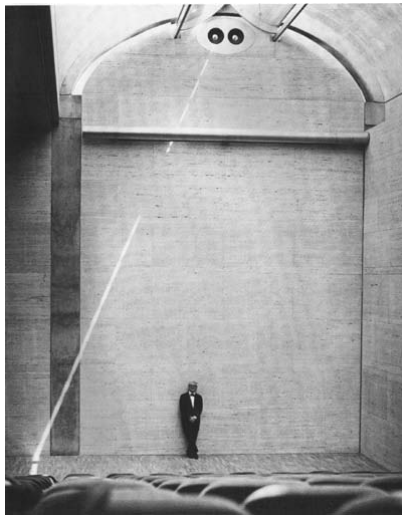
Objective Structures of  
Perception

All things are perceived objectively in numerous ways. There are three major structures utilized for this analysis of perception: identity in manifolds, presence and absence, and parts and wholes. Each of these modes helps to define the object, its aspects and meaning.

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*Figure 1.2 Kimbell  
Diagrammatic Section  
(Clark)*



*Figure 1.3 Kahn in Auditorium  
(Brownlee)*

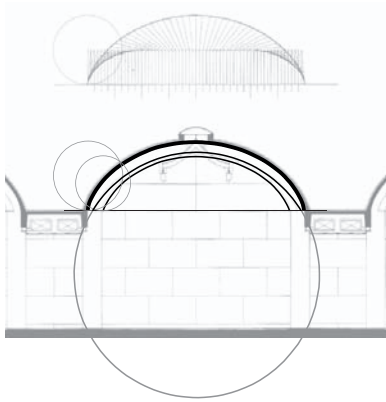


*Figure 1.4 Kimbell Library  
(Futagawa, 33)*

The identity of an object, table, chair, etc., is presented through an infinite number of aspects. It is important to first make the distinction between what is expressed and the expression itself. Just as a sentence can be written in numerous ways and in different languages, an object can be expressed in an infinite number of ways.

The identity of an object transcends its presentations. The identity is, as Plato explains, an absolute ideal. The object “table” is a copy of the ideal or absolute “table” which exists “in the realm of ideas.” (Jencks, 14) Identity is not merely the sum of different expressions of an object but the characteristics that they all contain, the assumed constants of a “table.” By an analysis of how an object is perceived, the identity of an object can be understood.

Take, for instance, the Kimbell Art Museum, which is composed of a series of repetitious vaulted spaces. (Fig. 1.2) Each vault is identical in shape and size from the exterior. Inside, however, each vault responds to the different functions. The floor is removed in the auditorium to create a two-story space (Fig 1.3), while in the library an additional floor is added to create a much lower, more intimate space. (Fig 1.4) In many cases the lighting changes, partitions are rearranged and so on, until it could be said that no two vaults are the



*Figure 1.5 Cycloid and Ellipse*  
(Author)

same. Despite these changes, we still understand their identity to be this cycloidal vault expressed in a variety of ways.

Intentionality through presence and absence is correlated to the conditions of “filled” and “empty” perception. Absence is when perception is targeted at something that is not there. For instance, discussing a baseball game that will be happening in the future or has occurred in the past, is intentioning an empty perception.

In architecture, empty perception is when an expected aspect is missing but alluded to. For instance, in the Kimbell Art Museum, Kahn uses the absence of the repetition, the juxtaposition of two similar but different shapes (arch and cycloid), to accentuate the individual presence of each. (Fig. 1.5 and Fig. 1.6)



*Figure 1.6 Cycloid Detail*  
(Author)

Presence and absence can be further broken down into culminative and additive fulfillment. Culminative fulfillment is a sequence of experiences, for example, from hearing a person’s name, to seeing a sketch, to watching a film of the person, to finally encountering the person. While additive fulfillment is perceiving different profiles of a person, different sides of an object, different definitions of a term, etc. until it is fully experienced.

The third structure of intention is perception through parts and wholes. Every object is a whole that is



*Figure 1.7 Space between  
Vaults*  
(Author)



*Figure 1.8 Kimbell's  
collection of Vaults*  
(Author)

created from a series of pieces. Some of these pieces are defined as “parts”, which have an identity separate from the whole. A branch or acorn is a “part” of a tree. Pieces from the whole, on the other hand, may also be defined as “moments.” These are aspects of the whole that do not have an embodied identity without the whole, such as color, texture, or vision. Moments cannot be truly understood without a corresponding whole.

Gillo Dorfes discusses this similar concept in *Structuralism & Semiology in Architecture*. He proposes that each element in a composition has its own meaning alone but elements have “precise and non-arbitrary characteristics” that are owed “to the presence of their reciprocal relationships.” Just as each word in a sentence has meaning alone, when considered in context it creates a different meaning. The words together gain a meaning to the reader by their juxtaposition.

In architecture, a building is not solely a single whole but a collection of parts in a system. The Kimbell expresses this relationship much in the same manner as a sentence is composed. The vaults (the pieces) are not placed directly adjacent to each other as expected; they are separated by a seven-foot gap (Fig 1.7 and 1.8). In utilitarian terms, this gap provides Kahn with a “servant” space in the interior; although they can also be understood in a more meaningful way. This gap also



*Figure 1.9 Exterior Elevation (Author)*

creates a “pause” in spatial experience which allows the observer to see each vault as an individual whole, as well as part of a larger system. This is similar to the way we use the pauses in speech to allow us to understand the words, the spaces are there to allow us to understand the vaults.

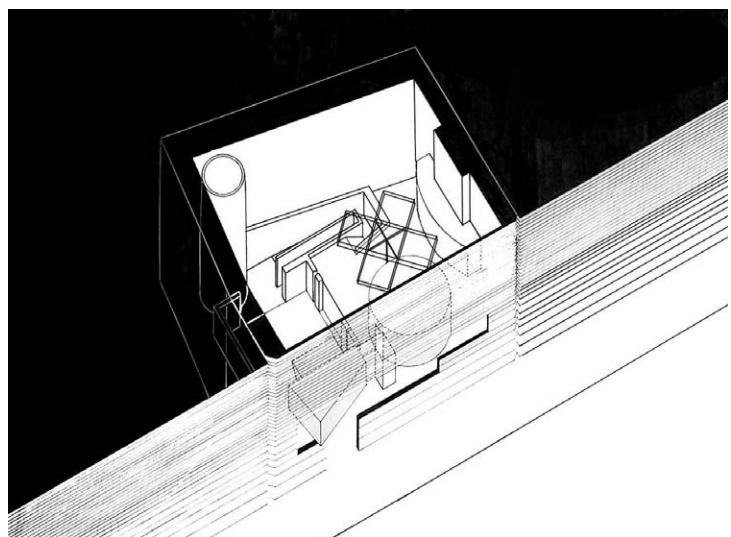
In a more urban scale, the British Embassy in Berlin by Michael Wilford (Fig 1.9), takes much effort to become a part of the existing fabric of the street, while also maintaining its own identity and presence.

The height and rustication of the immediate context is honored but in a mannerist fashion. The coursing in the stone facade is spaced to give the impression of a rusticated, three-part facade, aligning to the adjacent buildings (Fig 1.10 and 1.11). The cornice height is also followed, because of local building



*Figure 1.10 Exterior Elevation Close (Author)*

*Figure 1.11 Analytical Drawing of the British Embassy in Berlin (Author)*



guidelines, which aides in the continuation of the city fabric.

In an attempt to set the embassy apart, a pause is created along the edges, similarly to the Kimbell. This triangular cutout allows the embassy to be understood as a “piece” of the street wall. This gives the embassy its own identity but it is also a fitting part of the whole of the street.

These three structures of perception provide the framework for our understanding how things are presented to us. But this is only one aspect of perception, the objective extreme. There is also an end to the spectrum, the subjective.

#### Subjective Structures of Perception

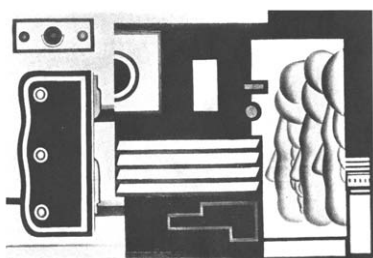
Subjectivity is relying on one’s own opinions and feelings. The term implies that the experience belongs to the one that is experiencing rather than the object itself. Each person brings to each experience a host of memories and past experiences that tint all future experiences.

As an architect it is impossible to predict what each person will bring to a building, since each will be different. What is important is to create a potential for the participant to become aware of what they are experiencing and what objective qualities are helping to create that.

### Oscillation in Perception

*If one sees two or more figures overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlap part, then one is confronted with a contradiction of spatial dimensions. To resolve this contradiction one must assume the presence of a new optical quality. The figures are endowed with transparency: that is, they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. Transparency however implies more than an optical characteristic, it implies a broader spatial order. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer, now as the further one.*

Gyorgy Krepes  
*Language of Vision*

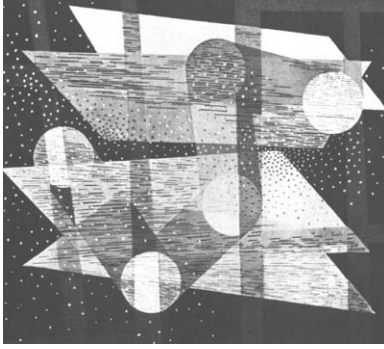


*Figure 1.12 Three Faces by Fernand Léger (Rowe, plate 64)*

Gyorgy Krepes's explanation of transparency from *Language of Vision* illustrates how it can be possible to create a reversibility of subjectivity and objectivity that can give birth to perception. He does not, however, explain the important differences between literal and phenomenal transparency. The former is a matter of an object's material and the latter is a matter of interaction of the subjective viewing of the objective qualities of a form.

Because phenomenal transparency can be difficult to explain, it will first be explored in two dimensions, using paintings, then in three dimensions with architecture.

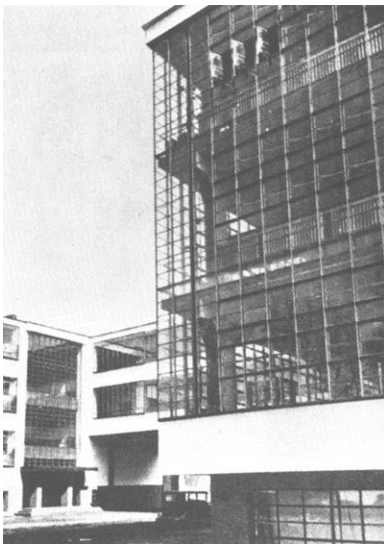
Colin Rowe explains these differences in his essay in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa*, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal." He uses Fernand Léger's 1929 painting, *Three Faces* (Fig. 1.12) as compared to



*Figure 1.13 La Sarraz by László Moholy-Nagy (Rowe, plate 63)*

László Moholy-Nagy's 1930 painting, *La Sarraz* (Fig 1.13) to illustrate these differences.

Rowe describes *La Sarraz*, as seeming “to have flung open a window onto some private version of outer space” (Rowe, 166). Moholy-Nagy creates the perception of a foreground, middle ground and background with overlapping transparent planes zigzagging in a S-shaped band. And by doing so, he creates only one reading of depth. Conversely, Leger, working in practically a two-dimensional scheme, provides numerous readings. The overlapping faces and the strong contrast of the abstract figures allow for an oscillation between what is figure and what is ground, what is solid and what is void, what is foreground and what background. While Moholy-Nagy is primarily working with the material and light to create his transparency, both qualities of the object, Leger is interested in the different readings created by “the structure of form.” (Rowe, 166)



*Figure 1.14 Bauhaus, Dessau. Walter Gropius 1925-26 (Rowe, plate 65)*

In terms of architecture, phenomenal transparency is much more difficult because painting can only imply the third dimension and architecture can not suppress it. But as in painting, there are numerous examples of both literal and phenomenal transparency.

Literal transparency, as in painting, is simply an issue of material and only allows for one reading. Walter Gropius's Bauhaus (Fig 1.14), for instance, is a

perfect example of transparency that is only objective. While much of the exterior walls are transparent glass and allow for a clear view through the building, there is only one possible reading of the structure. Because the transparency is so clear there is not an oscillation between the subjective and objective view points; it is all objective.

Works such as Michelangelo's proposal for San Lorenzo in Venice or I.M. Pei's Mile High Center in Denver, Colorado show how architects have the capacity to create "figures that interpenetrate without optical destruction of each other." (Krepes)

San Lorenzo's configuration allows for a plethora of readings, all present in the same space in an overlap.

A few of these reading include:

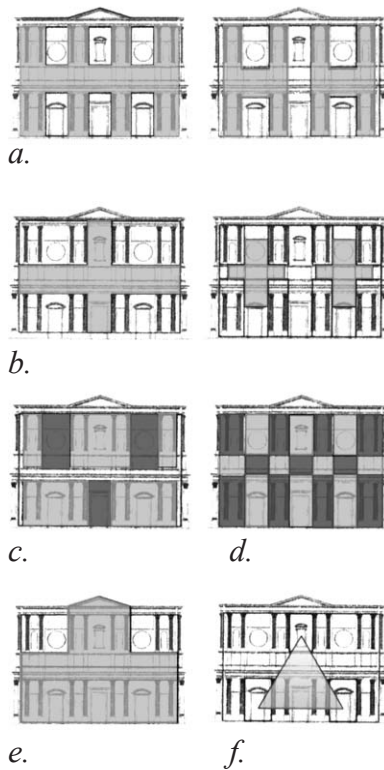


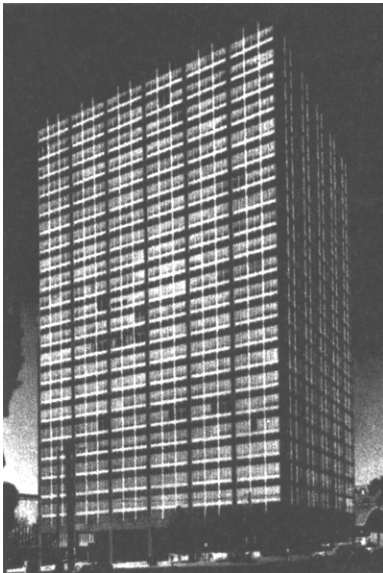
Figure 1.15 Diagrams of San Lorenzo (Author; based on drawings by Rowe and Slutzky, *Transparency.. II*)

1. A fluctuating series of H-shaped figures, which are promoted by the intersection of the narrow bays and the attic pedestal. (Fig 1.15a)
2. An expanding series of cruciform figures, which are derived from the intersection of the attic-pedestal and the upper window (Fig 1.15b).
3. A checker board reading, which is created by three segmental pediments of the outer doors and of the upper window. (Fig 1.15c)
4. An inverted checker board, which overlaps the preceding one which is derived from the two circular plaques with their connected niches. (Fig 1.15d)
5. A T-shaped figure generated by the impact of the

pediment above and the high-relief development below, which comprises some kind of reflection of the volume of the building lying behind, and is presumably a residue of earlier studies. (Fig 1.15e)

6. The underscaling of the upper-story window in relation to the first-story windows creates an implied depth, creating the assumption that it is at a greater distance. (Fig 1.15f)

Rowe and Slutzky  
*Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal... Part II*



*Figure 1.16* Mile High Center, I.M. Pei (Rowe and Slutzky, *Transparency.. II*)

I.M. Pei's Mile High Center also offers several readings of depths within a relatively small dimension. The structural frame becomes an interwoven fabric. The black structural members, because of their dimension and color assert themselves and are thereby seen in the foreground. The blue structural members visually pass behind the vertical members, while pressing forward past the horizontal. (Fig 1.16) Thus this flat surface becomes full of depths as each of the two systems become dominant for the observer.

In both cases a series of objective readings are evident to the subjective observer, which allows the user of architecture to become engaged as the overlapping systems subtly assert themselves. This subtle assertive quality is what will be explored more fully through the coming architectural project.



*Figure 2.1 Downtown Vehicular Circulation (Author)*



*Figure 2.2 Downtown Neighborhoods (Author)*

*Figure 2.3 Downtown Neighborhoods 2 (Author)*

In recent years Cincinnati's city leaders have revitalized their downtown in an attempt to maintain its status as a cultural center. The area along Walnut Street (red area in Fig. 2.2) is emerging as an arts district with the completion of projects in downtown (Fig 2.1) like the Arnoff Center for the Arts and the Rosenthal Contemporary Arts Museum (CAC) (Fig 2.3 top right orange and lower left orange respectively). With its high concentration of cultural activities, this area lends itself





*Figure 2.4 6th and Walnut Panorama (Author)*



*Figure 2.5 View of 6th St and Vine St. (Author)*



*Figure 2.6 Fountain Square Elevation (Author)*

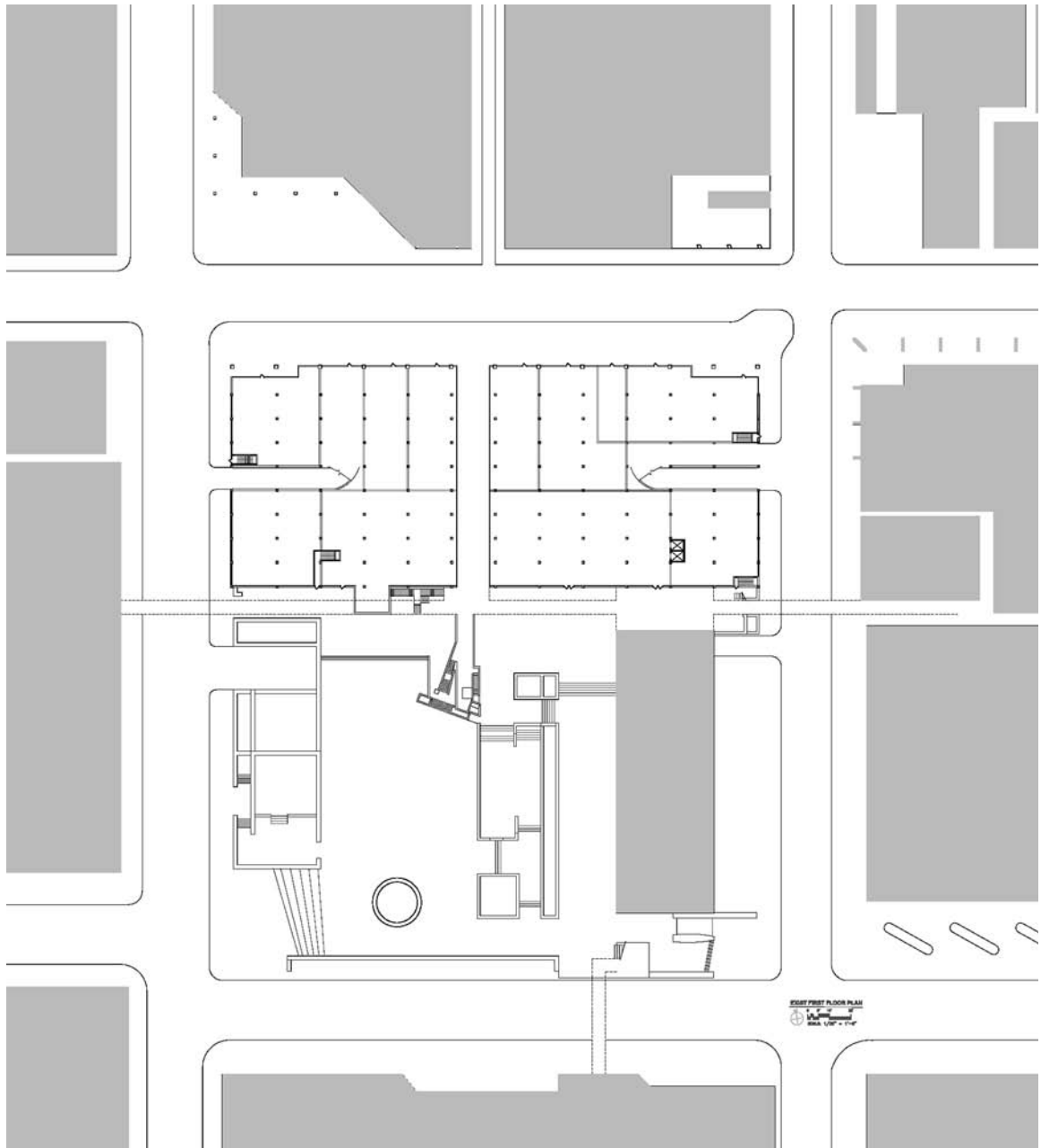


*Figure 2.7 Mid-block cut throughs and alleys (Author)*

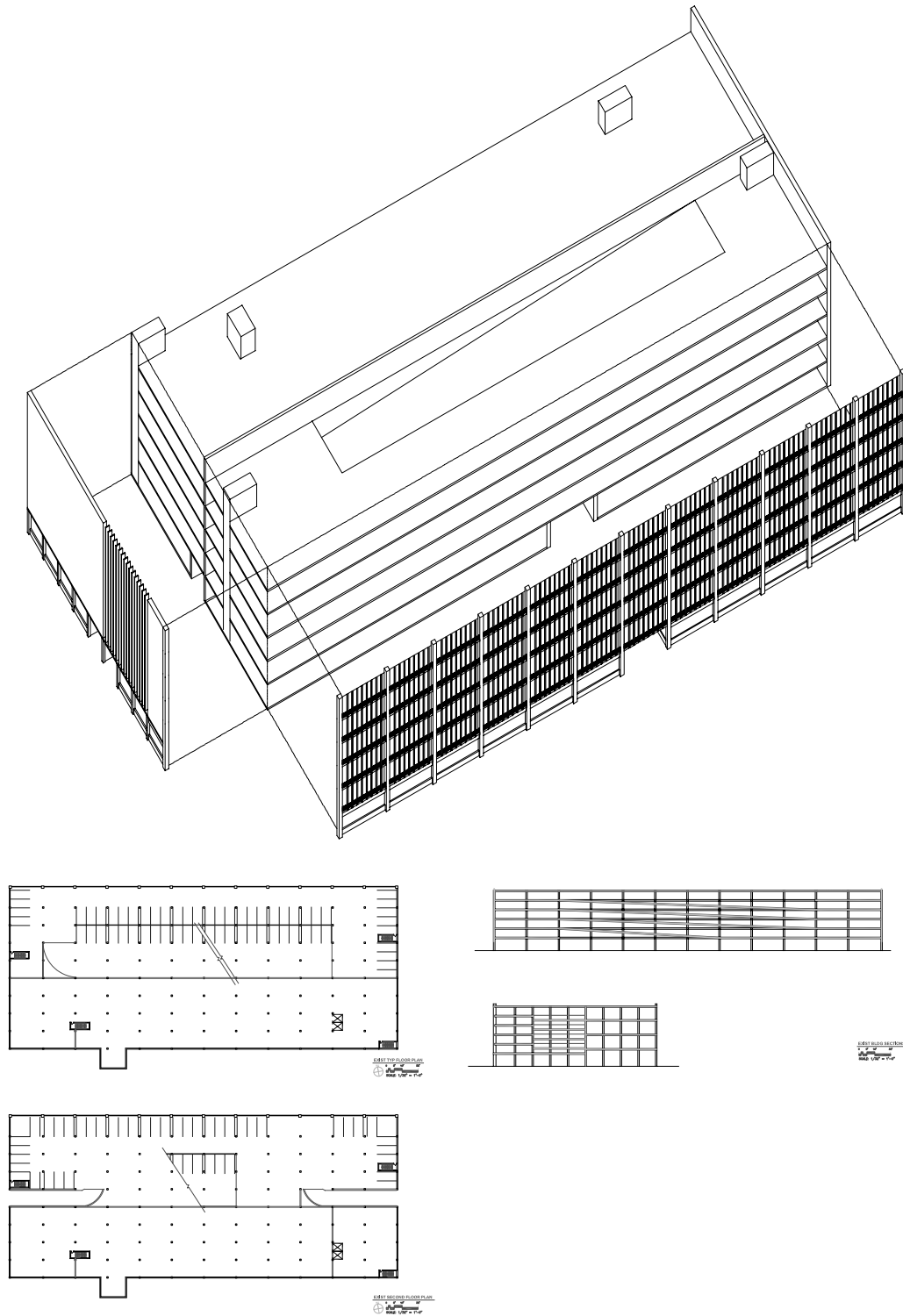
well to a small college for the arts. The Art Academy will be located at the southern terminus of this district, between Fountain Square and 6th Street. This is the primary public space for Cincinnati, a space centrally located between the various districts, retail, government, commercial (Fig 2.2). This location provides great potential for class trips nearby will benefit the Academy's students, as well as provide a setting for the outreach program to add to the community.

The particular site that is proposed for the Academy will occupy is on the corner of Walnut and 6th Street, which is immediately adjacent to the CAC and the Aronoff Performing Arts Center (Fig 2.4). The site spans the entire block along 6th Street to Vine Street (Fig 2.5), as well as fronts the Fountain Square Plaza (Fig 2.6). The site is currently occupied by a six-story parking garage fronting 6th street, a five-story office building fronting Fountain Plaza and retail shopping beneath both (Fig 2.8 and 2.9).

The street grid of Cincinnati is composed of blocks that are approximately 400 x 400 ft. square, which is rather large, especially for pedestrian movement. To mitigate this a series of mid-block cut throughs and alleys have been incorporated in a random configuration (Fig 2.7) The corners of many of the buildings throughout the city are cut away at the street level to provide visual



*Figure 2.8 Existing Site Plan*  
*(Author)*



*Figure 2.9 Axonometric, plans and sections of the existing structure (Author)*



*Figure 2.10 Corner cut away of CAC (Author)*



*Figure 2.11 Corner cut away at 6th and Vine Sts. (Author)*

or physical connection to the middle of the adjacent sidewalk (Fig 2.10 and 2.11).

There is currently a disconnect of the elements in both the city and the building on the site. This site provides the to opportunity to connect the Arts district and the Plaza in front the Arnoff Center to Fountain Square Plaza both physically and perceptually. The disconnect of the existing building also provides an opportunity for design. By incorporating a fourth element throughout the structure the other three elements will begin to be expressed as a whole rather than a collection of parts.

The site also has potential because of it proximity to the recently completed Contemporary Arts Museum designed by Zaha Hadid. This location will create not only an interesting interrelationship with the museum but also an opportunity to critique Hadid's building, which is intended to be an architecture of engagement. The juxtaposition of a building intended for displaying art with a building to create art will create an interesting dialog concerning the current state of art.

Since the current program, formal response and facade treatment no longer seem appropriate to the area's new identity the project will not only be concerned with the Art Academy but also the configuration and appearance the existing program. Since there is currently a program that is occupying the structure, the project

will co-op the existing structure rather than require a full demolition. Where possible the area of the structure not needed for the Academy will remain an office building and a parking structure.



*Figure 3.1 Art Academy of Cincinnati Logo (AAC Website)*

The Art Academy of Cincinnati has outgrown its current location, which currently consist of three smaller buildings in northwest Cincinnati. The Academy's enrollment from 1887 to 1978 was typically 100 students; however, the current enrollment has grown to 220 students. The inability to expand their existing buildings has spurred a search for a new location.

The Academy has decided to relocate to the downtown area. While the school has already chosen a site (a warehouse building in northern downtown) for the purposes of this project the site Fountain Square site was more appropriate and provided more opportunity.

A wide range of courses are offered at the Academy including: electronic imaging, etching and lithography, sculpture, painting, drawing, glass blowing, research methods, packaging design, a variety of history and writing courses (Fig 3.1). This variety of types of art work produced in the Academy calls for a number of different studio spaces, classrooms, lecture halls and galleries.

The Academy currently has 14 full-time and 33 part-time faculty and 42 staff. Each faculty will need an individual securable office and the staff will need the appropriate amount of space for their respective positions. (See Table 3.1)

The Academy also has a community outreach program that provides classes for all age groups and skill levels. Since the Academy is a smaller college there is a need to utilize the other facilities in the neighborhood, such as the Cincinnati Library, Cincinnati Art Museum and Performing Art Centers. The Academy's outreach courses are envisioned as a way to offer services back to the community.

On the following pages is a table that shows a breakdown of the spaces that are needed in the new facility. (Table 3.1)

*Table 3.1 Program breakdown*  
(Author)

|                           |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|----------------|--|-------|
| Art Academy of Cincinnati |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Room type                        | Required # | Required sq-ft |  | Sq-ft |
| Faculty Offices           |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Full Time                        | 14         | 120            |  | 1680  |
|                           | Part Time                        | 33         | 120            |  | 3960  |
| Staff                     |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Pres.                            | 1          | 300            |  | 300   |
|                           | Dean                             | 2          | 200            |  | 400   |
|                           | Administrators                   | 3          | 150            |  | 450   |
|                           | Secretaries                      | 4          | 60             |  | 240   |
|                           | Admissions                       | 8          | 150            |  | 1200  |
|                           | Maintenance                      | 8          | 120            |  | 960   |
|                           |                                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Community                        | 4          | 150            |  | 600   |
|                           | Finance                          | 4          | 150            |  | 600   |
|                           | Secretaries                      | 8          | 60             |  | 480   |
|                           |                                  |            |                |  |       |
| Departments               | <b>Paint/Drawing Rooms</b>       | 3          | 500            |  | 1500  |
|                           | <b>Sculpture</b>                 |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Sculpture Rooms                  | 1          | 500            |  | 500   |
|                           | Sculpture Office                 | 1          | 100            |  | 100   |
|                           | Kiln Room                        | 1          | 500            |  | 500   |
|                           | Kiln Drying and Supplies         | 1          | 300            |  | 300   |
|                           | <b>Print Making</b>              | 1          | 1000           |  | 1000  |
|                           | <b>Photography</b>               |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Dark rooms                       | 2          | 200            |  | 400   |
|                           | Class rooms                      | 2          | 200            |  | 400   |
|                           | <b>Computer</b>                  |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Computer Office                  | 1          | 150            |  | 150   |
|                           | Computer Labs                    | 1          | 1350           |  | 1350  |
|                           | Printing Facilities              | 1          | 600            |  | 600   |
|                           | <b>Shops</b>                     |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Metal Shop                       | 1          | 5000           |  | 5000  |
|                           | Wood Shop                        | 1          | 5000           |  | 5000  |
|                           | Glass Shop                       | 1          | 5000           |  | 5000  |
|                           | <b>Class Space</b>               |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Shared Studio Space              | 50         | 45             |  | 2250  |
|                           | Individual Studio Space (jr &sr) | 90         | 45             |  | 4050  |
|                           | Lecture Spaces (100+)            | 1          | 1000           |  | 1000  |
|                           | Lecture Rooms (30+)              | 3          | 300            |  | 900   |
|                           | <b>Common Spaces</b>             |            |                |  |       |
|                           | Art Supply Store                 | 1          | 500            |  | 500   |
|                           | Cafeteria/ Commons               | 1          | 600            |  | 600   |
|                           | Gallery Spaces (one outdoor)     | 3          | 1000           |  | 3000  |

Table 3.1 Continued (Author)

|           | Service Spaces                 |   |       |  |             |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---|-------|--|-------------|
|           | Storage                        | 1 | 10000 |  | 10000       |
|           | Service                        | 1 | 10000 |  | 10000       |
|           | Facilities Supervisor's Office | 1 | 100   |  | 100         |
|           | Maintenance Supervisor         | 1 | 100   |  | 100         |
|           | Locker Rooms                   | 2 | 200   |  | 400         |
|           | Maintenance Shop               | 1 | 600   |  | 600         |
|           |                                |   |       |  |             |
|           | Total Number of Students       |   |       |  | Total Sq Ft |
| Freshman  | 75                             |   |       |  | 66170       |
| Sophomore | 60                             |   |       |  |             |
| Junior    | 50                             |   |       |  |             |
| Senior    | 40                             |   |       |  |             |
| Total     | 225                            |   |       |  |             |



*Figure 4.1 Party-wall Study 1  
(Author)*

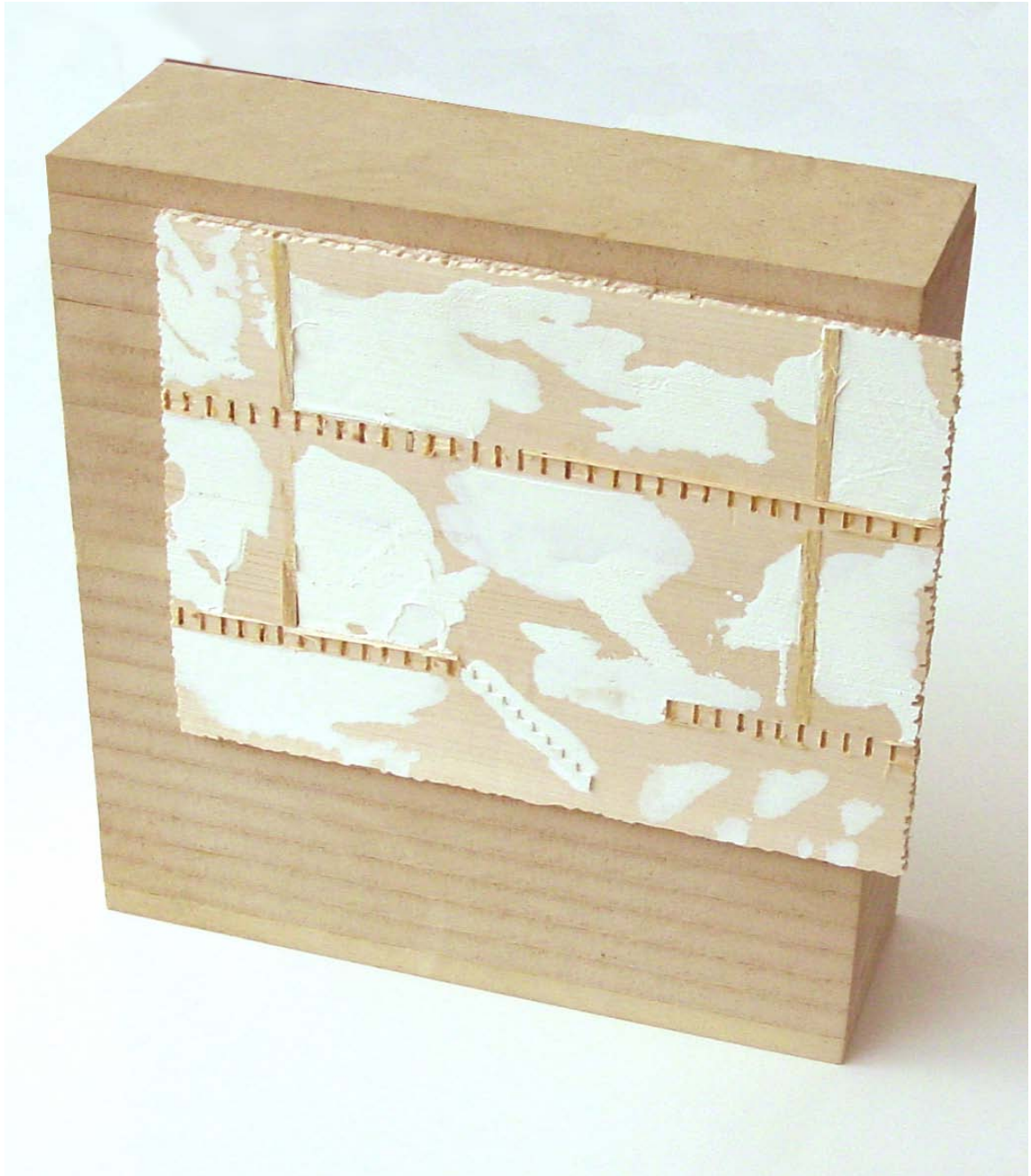


*Figure 4.2 Party-wall Study 2  
(Author)*

The objective of this thesis is to understand how perception shapes our understanding of things and how things shape our understanding of perception, in order to create an architecture of engagement. The document has discussed some of the processes of perception in the abstract, however perception is an something that can only be understood through experience. To further this exploration an existing experience that is engaging was documented and studied (Fig 4.1 and 4.2).

The experience of a party wall that bears the history and imprints of the structure that was once there is particularly engaging. While the wall gives clues to the history of the site, it leaves enough unanswered for someone to fill in the holes.

These walls in downtown Knoxville provided the inspiration of a sculpture that creates the experience both presence and absence, and a piece of a larger whole (Fig 4.3).



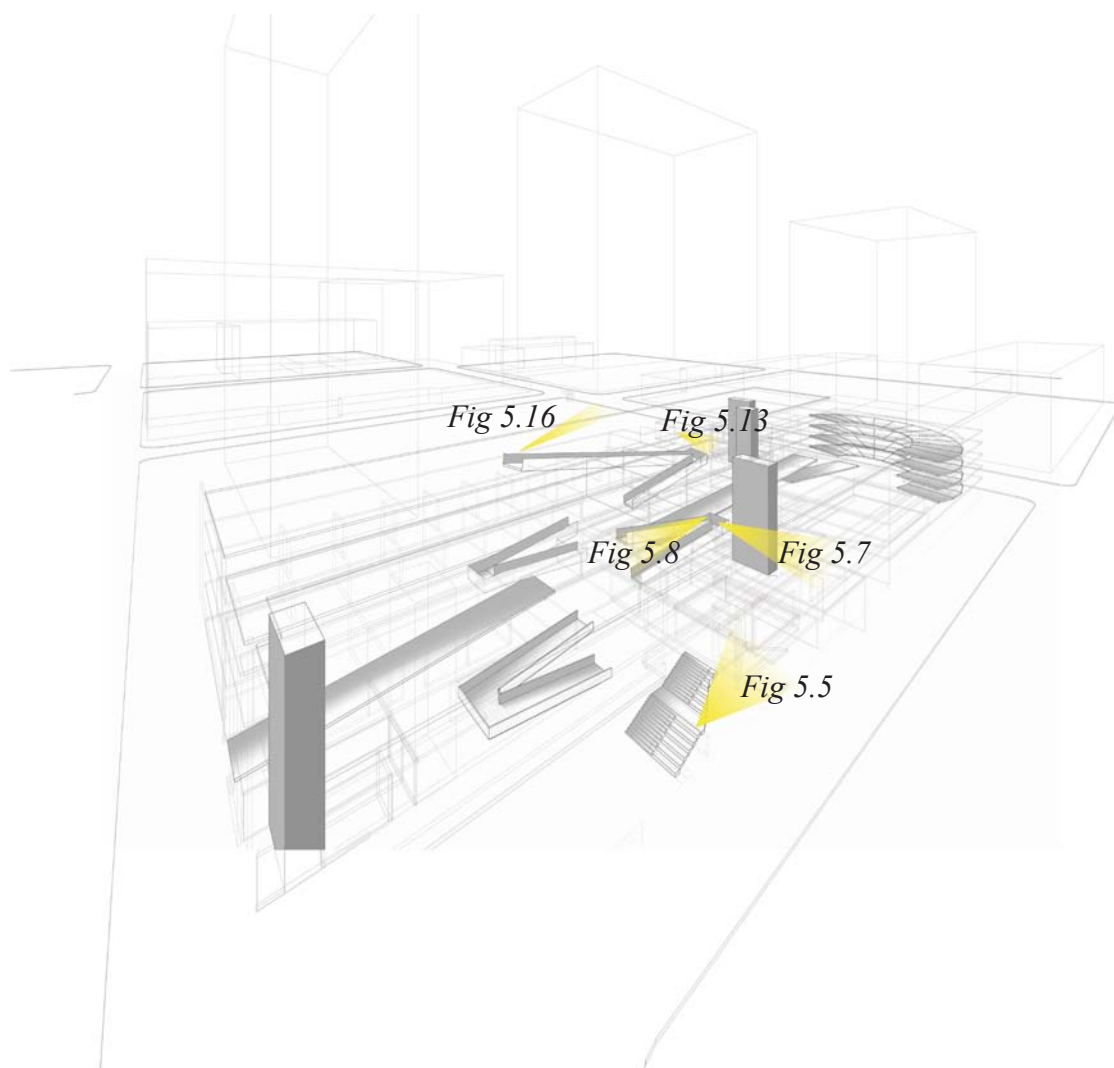
*Figure 4.3 Party-wall Study  
Sculpture (Author)*

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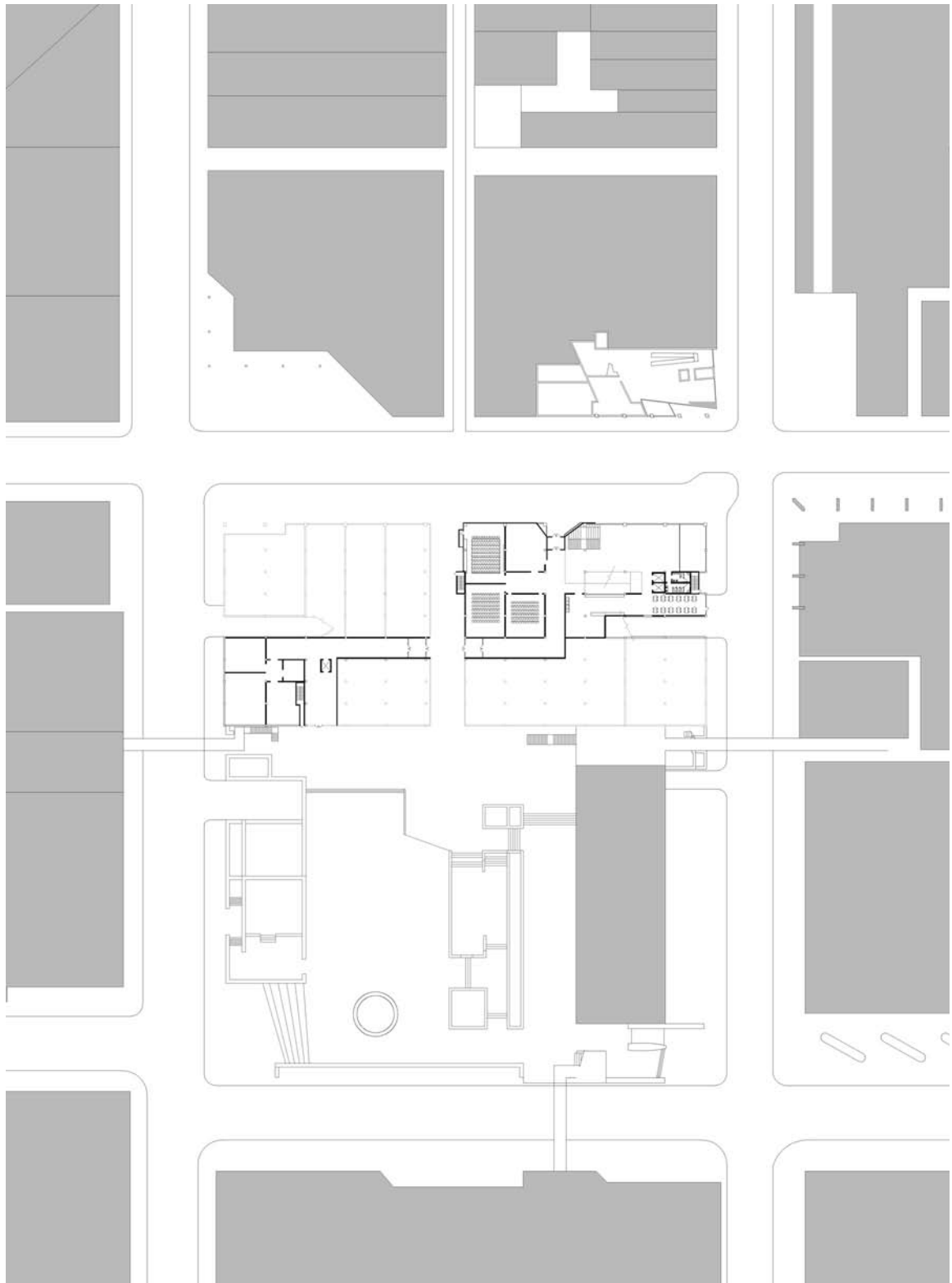
A primary strategy of slipping was employed in order to create an active engagement throughout this project. Spaces and materials are slipped past each other to differentiate old and new, office and school, and to allow simultaneous perception of multiple spaces. This strategy created a layering of spaces throughout the building and its context. Layering of these spaces provided views for the participant between the various spaces inside and outside of the building which provided a constant sense of orientation, despite the complexity within the plan and section (Fig 5.1).

As mentioned in the chapter 2, one of the main concerns in the design was to connect the two existing public spaces, Fountain Square and Arnoff Plaza (Fig. 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). And although the Academy is privately funded, the site and function of the project called for a civic presence in the city. To accomplish this a third public space was created in the lobby of the academy. To fulfill this need the first three floors of at that corner were eroded to create an enclosed “plaza” that could be opened up to the sidewalk when the weather permitted.

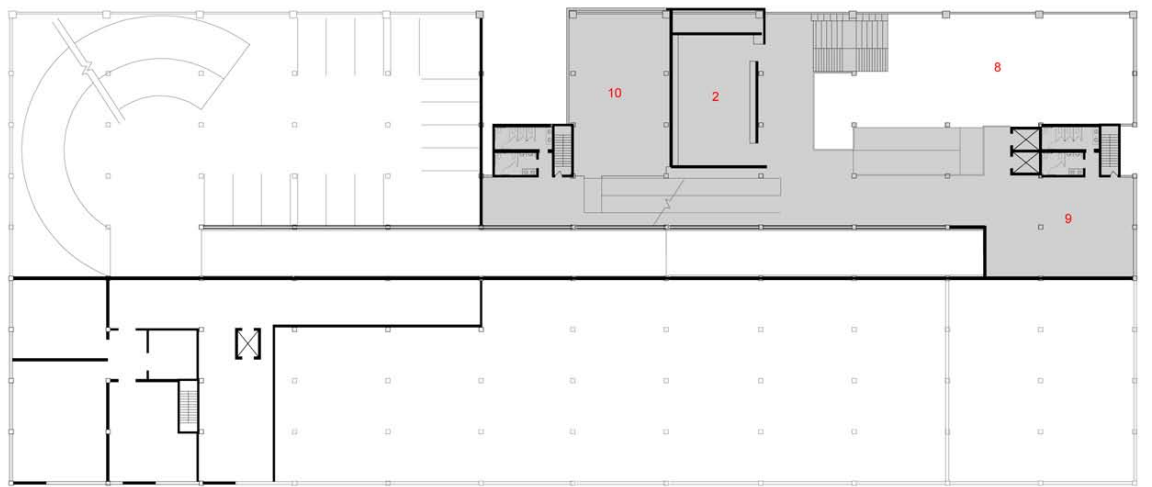
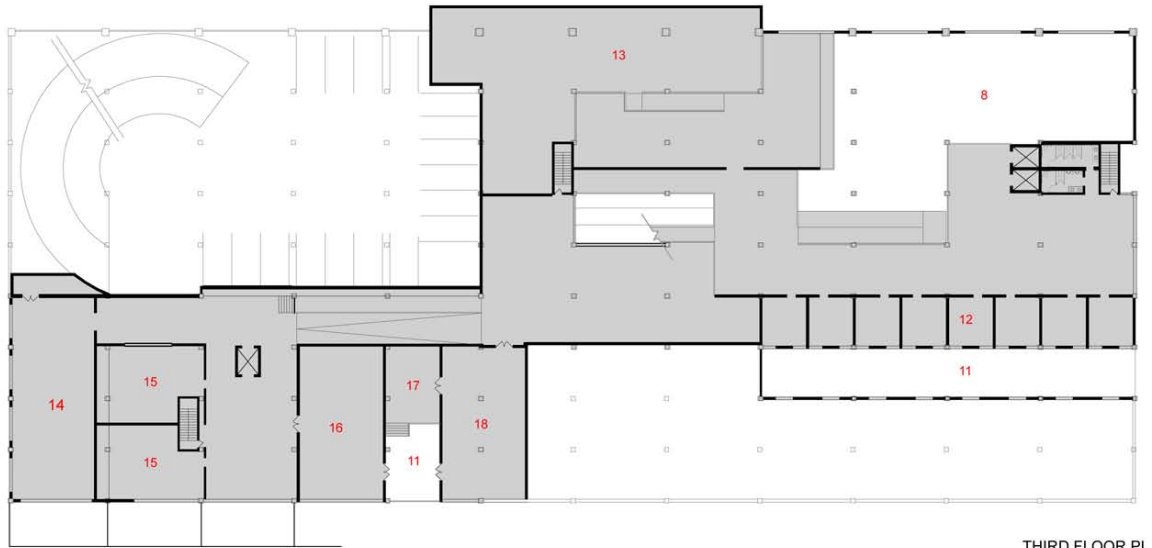
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*Figure 5.1* Building perspective showing moments of orientation (Author)



*Figure 5.2* First Floor Plan  
(Author)



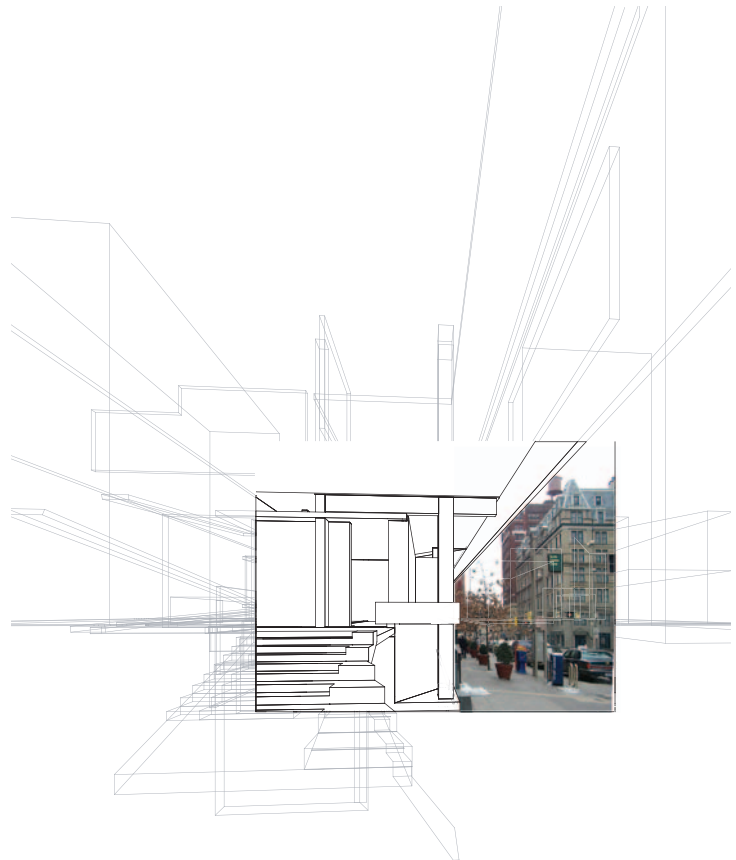
*Figure 5.3 Second and Third Floor Plan (Author)*



*Figure 5.4 Fourth Floor and Roof Plan (Author)*

The primary entrance to the project is set back into the building along sixth street. By moving the entrance away from Walnut Street, the passer-by was forced to slide across a three story glass wall until encountering a bench lined recess in the facade. This glass facade would allow for the city to view sculpture and art work displayed in the lobby (Fig 5.5).

The entry is a low one story space that opens up into the main lobby to the left and the lower gallery to the right. There are two interior galleries (upper and lower) which are stacked one above the other (Fig 5.6)



*Figure 5.5 Entry View*  
*(Author)*

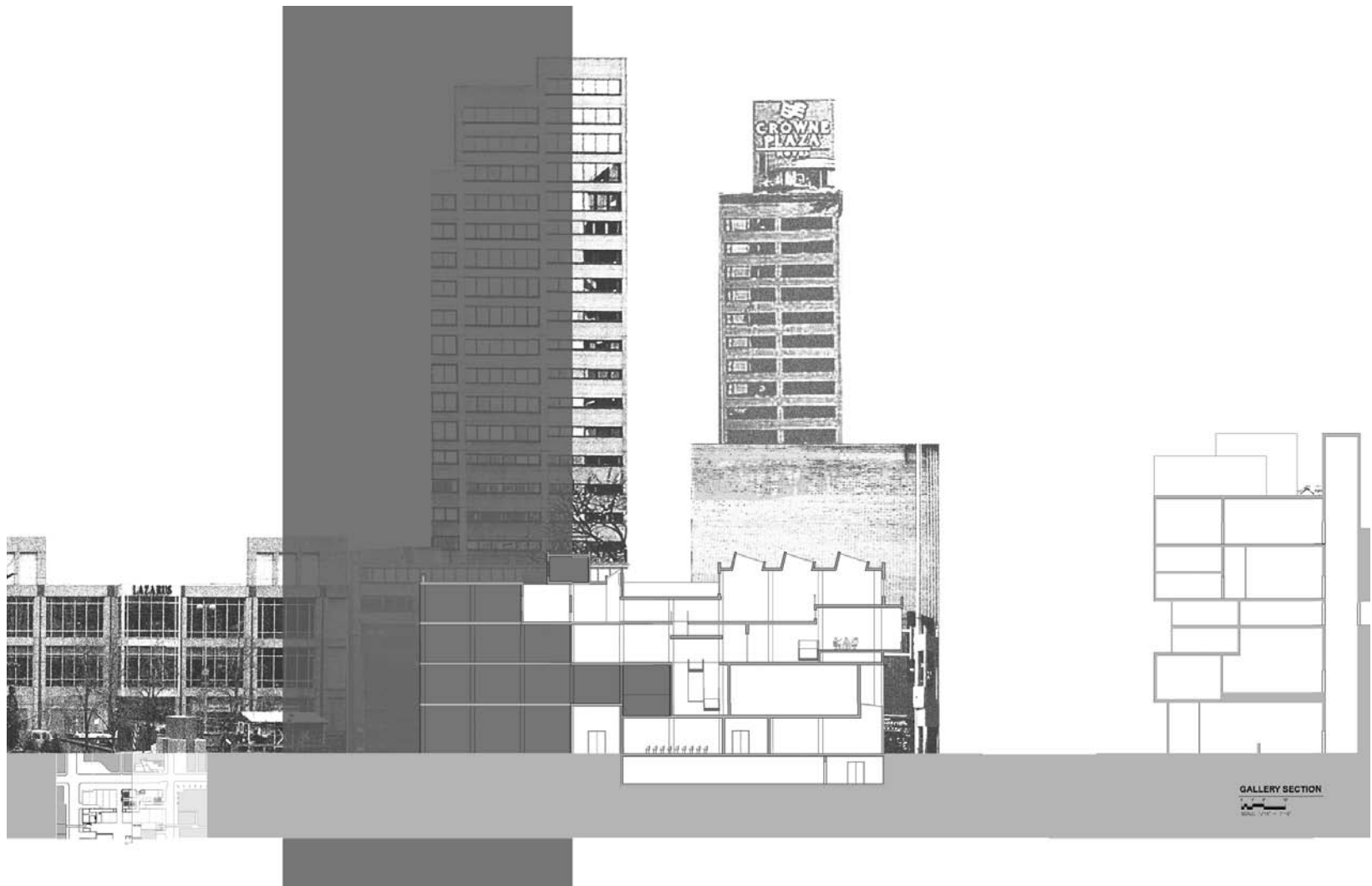


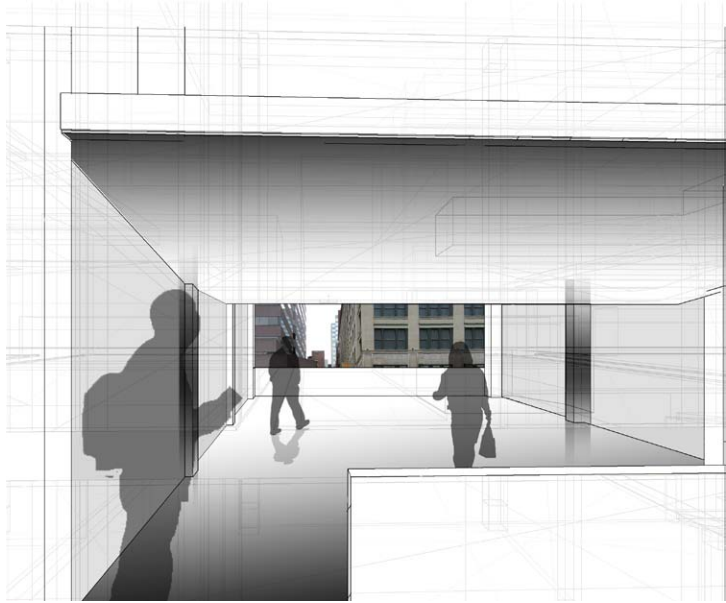
Figure 5.6 Gallery Section (Author)

connected by a ramp and a grand stair. The galleries are also connected visually by a structural glass flooring. The flooring in the upper gallery is pulled away from the walls and replaced with a structural glass flooring to allow the participants to not only view the art displayed but also to see the other participants viewing the art.

Moving into the lobby, there are several ways to reach the second floor: the ramp immediately off the entry, the elevator located at the end of the lobby, or the grand stair which doubles back over the entry. The third way is the most interesting, designed to provide movement as well as seating for presentations or performances. But because its design and location along the exterior facade and above the entry it also provides orientation because of the simultaneous views back to the city, into the entry portico, into the upper gallery, and up into the rest of the building (Fig. 5.5)

A third gallery, the outdoor gallery, is located just beyond the upper gallery. As mentioned before, the upper gallery is slipped back from the street. This allows natural northern light to penetrate into the lower gallery as well as allow for a more full view in the outdoor gallery (Fig 5.6 and 5.7). The outdoor gallery space (Fig 5.7) is configured to open out to the city. The sloped roof extends past the facade, out over the sidewalk which could encourage interaction with the art exhibited there

*Figure 5.7 Outdoor Gallery View (Author)*



and the street. The rooms configuration provides a both a horizontal panorama of the adjacent street facades as well as a long view down the alley walkway across 6th Street. By juxtaposing these two primary ways of viewing an urban city environment the participant may start to become aware of both the urban environment as well as the space that frames this view.

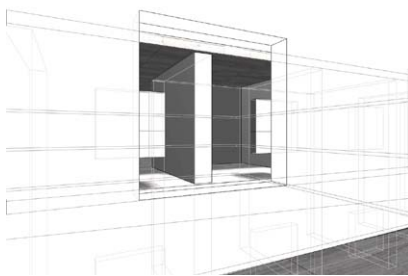
The first hint of the parking garage becomes evident as the participant continues up the ramp past the outdoor gallery. A frosted glass wall reveals the silhouette of the passing cars as they slid through the back of the school down the exit ramp (Fig. 5.8). By allowing a piece of the garage to remain and be expressed, the participant not only becomes aware of the former identity of the building but also provides a moment of orientation. By

*Figure 5.8 Juxtaposition of pedestrian and vehicular ramps (Author)*



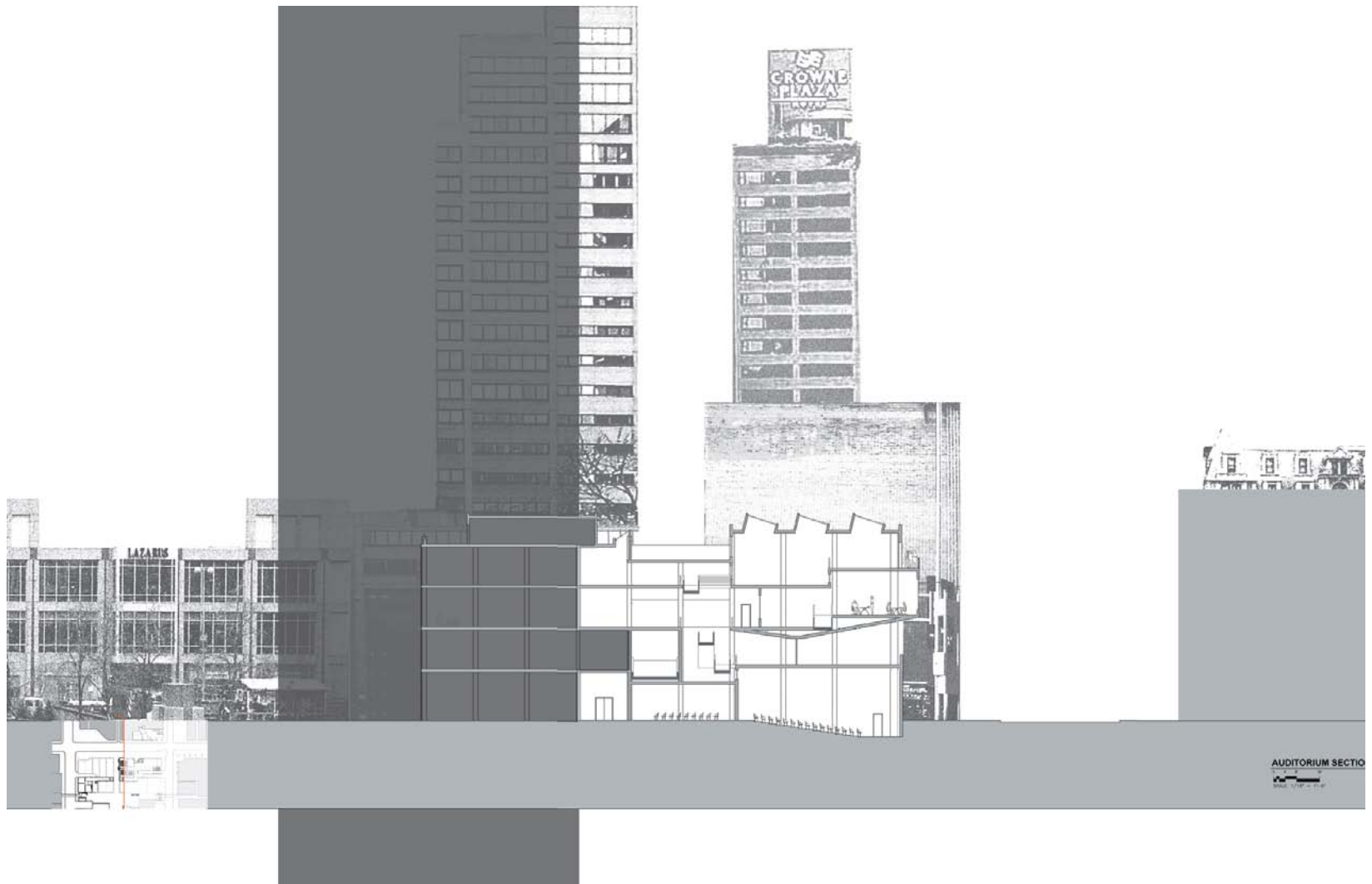
expressing, rather than concealing, the ramp there is a feeling of the building being a whole composed of parts rather than just a collection of separate buildings.

Similarly, the juxtaposition of the bank offices and the faculty offices provided a sense of orientation. The faculty offices are located along an exterior courtyard that not only provides light for this deep building but also allows views back and forth between the bank and the academy (Fig 5.9 and 5.10). This visual connection brings into question both the current state of art, its producers and patrons, as well as serving as a reminder of the commodification of art.



*Figure 5.9 View from bank offices into the faculty offices (Author)*

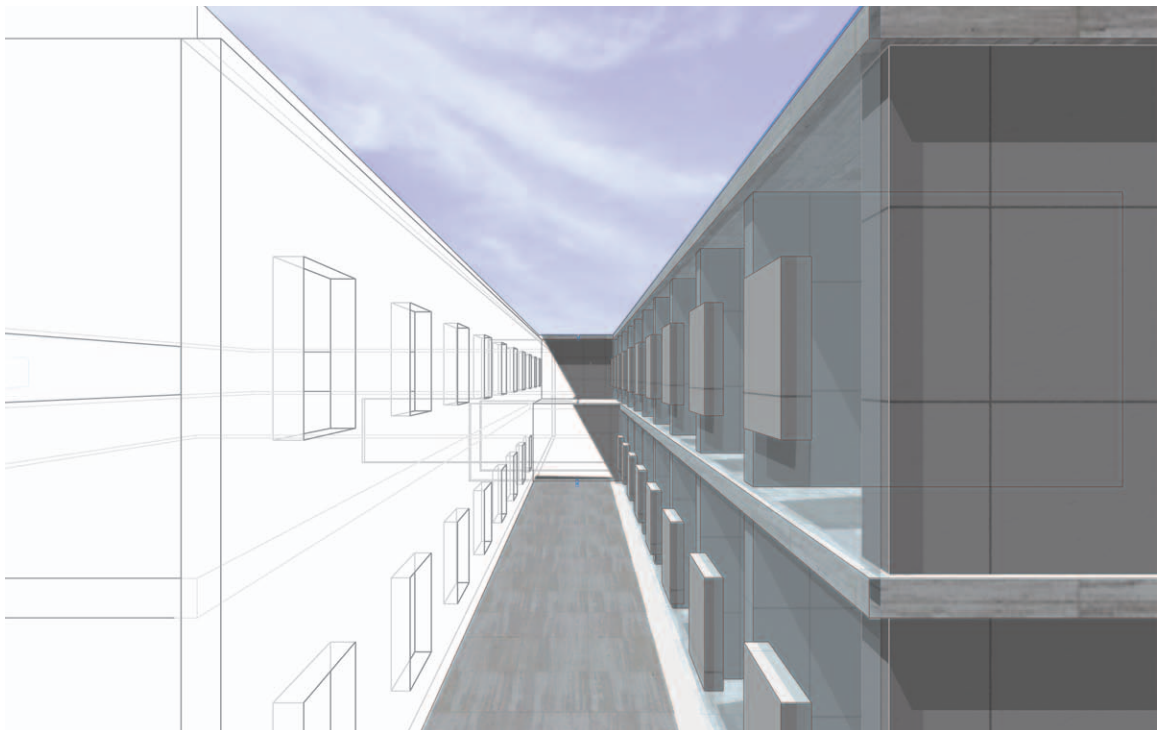
The interconnection of these two worlds, artist and patron, is however necessary and therefore expressed in the articulation of the walls and opens of the offices onto the court. The walls of the bank are a traditional punch hole system. The walls of the



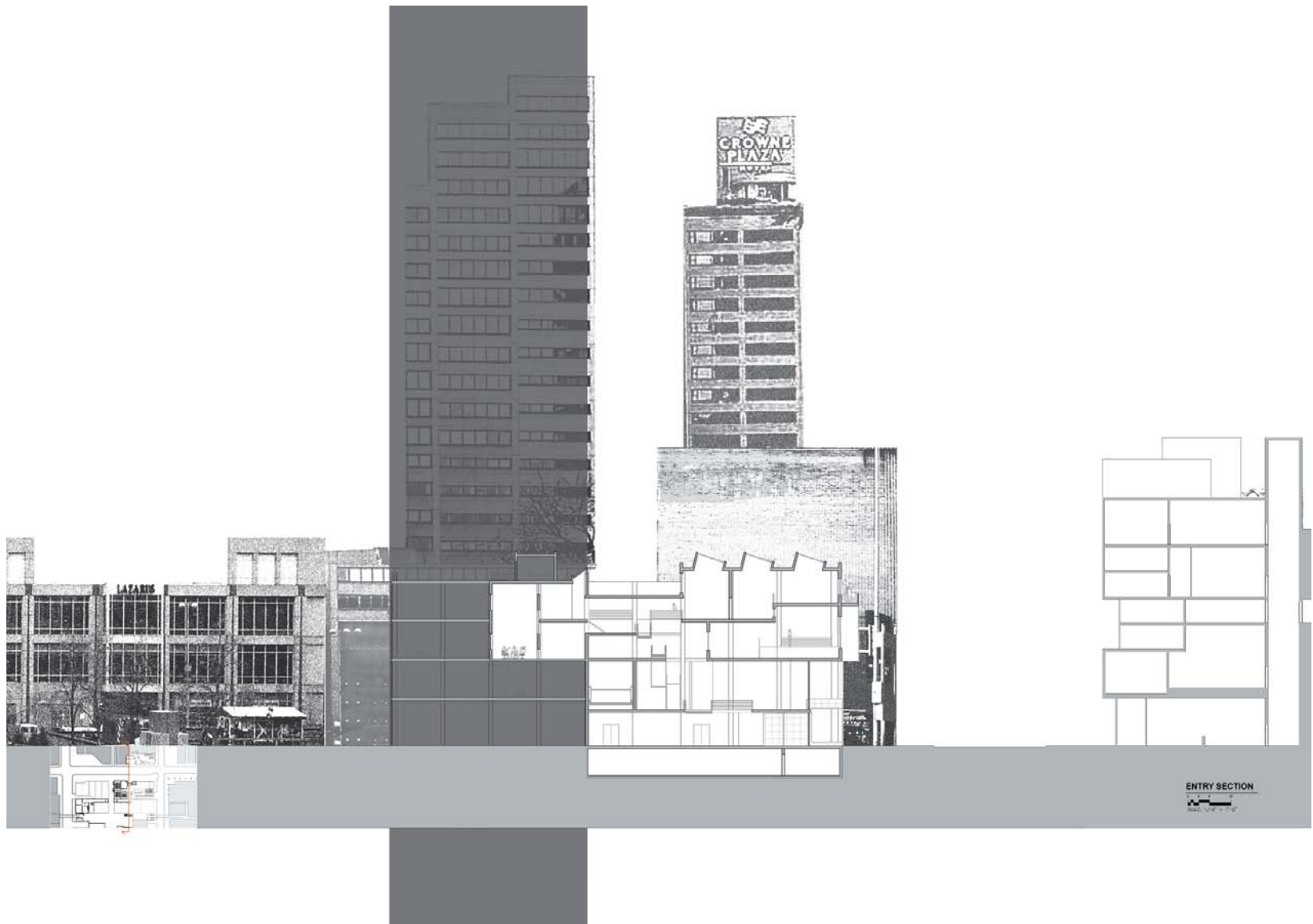
*Figure 5.10 Auditorium Section (Author)*

academy, on the other hand, are composed of a curtain wall system, glass where the banks walls are solid and solid where the bank's walls are open (Fig 5.11 and 5.12) This configuration expresses both oppositional nature of the relationship as well as their interdependence.

The strategy of slippage is again incorporated in the Fountain Plaza lobby, but in a more material way. This lobby is located at a point where the bank and the materials shops meet, once again a strange juxtaposition. To reflect this meeting the use of material and its relationship to the existing column structure has been employed. Instead of simply infilling the structure, the bank wall, a smooth, clean, white surface, is pulled



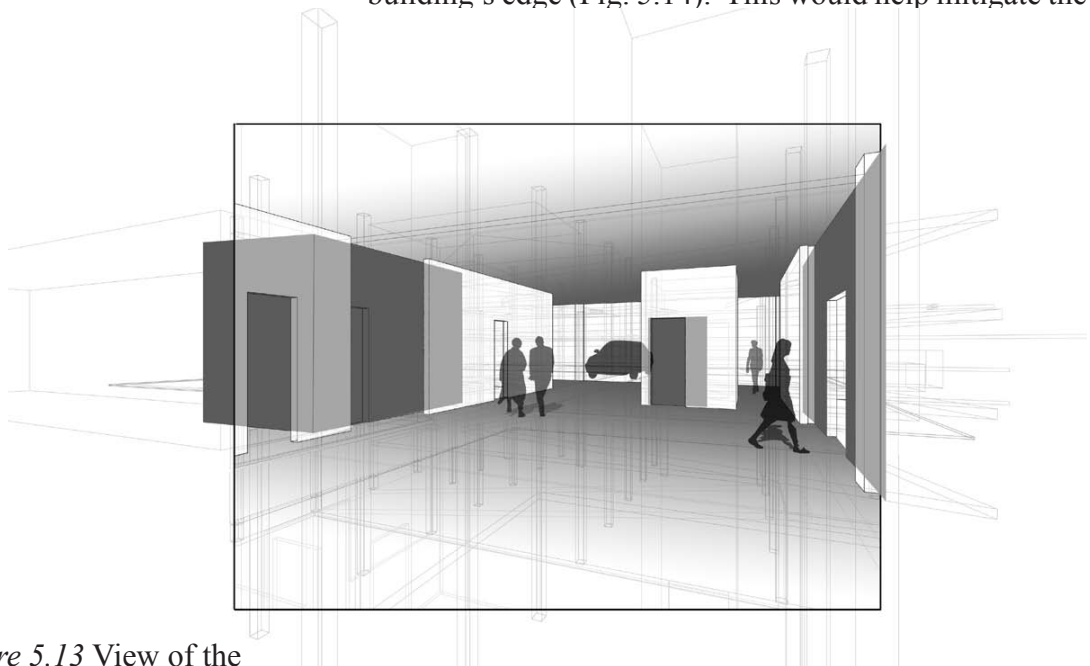
*Figure 5.11 View of the court between the bank offices and the faculty offices (Author)*



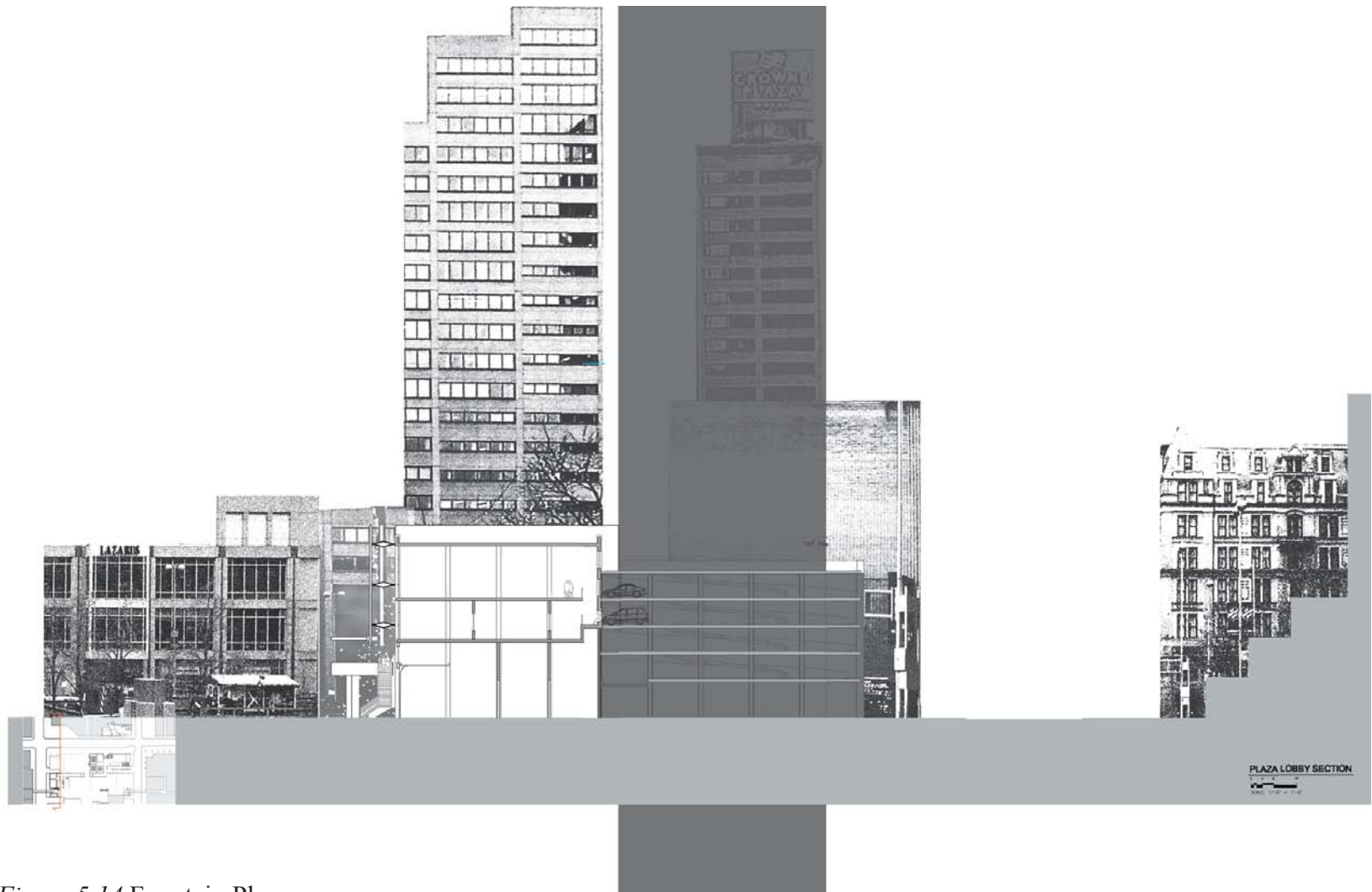
*Figure 5.12 Entry Section (Author)*

out into the lobby and while the shop wall, a rough, grey concrete masonry unit system, is push back beyond the structure. The slipping of these walls leaves the elevator strangely slid to the side of the lobby, despite its center location in relation to the columns. This sliding of materials continues up throughout the full height of this portion of the building, smooth clean materials sliding in front and behind of rough raw stone (Fig 5.13). Each of these movements corresponding to the function of the spaces they enclose.

The slipping that is incorporated on the interior as a metaphor is incorporated on the exterior in a more literal manner. The plaza elevation is composed of metal screens that slide and pivot along and out from the building's edge (Fig. 5.14). This would help mitigate the



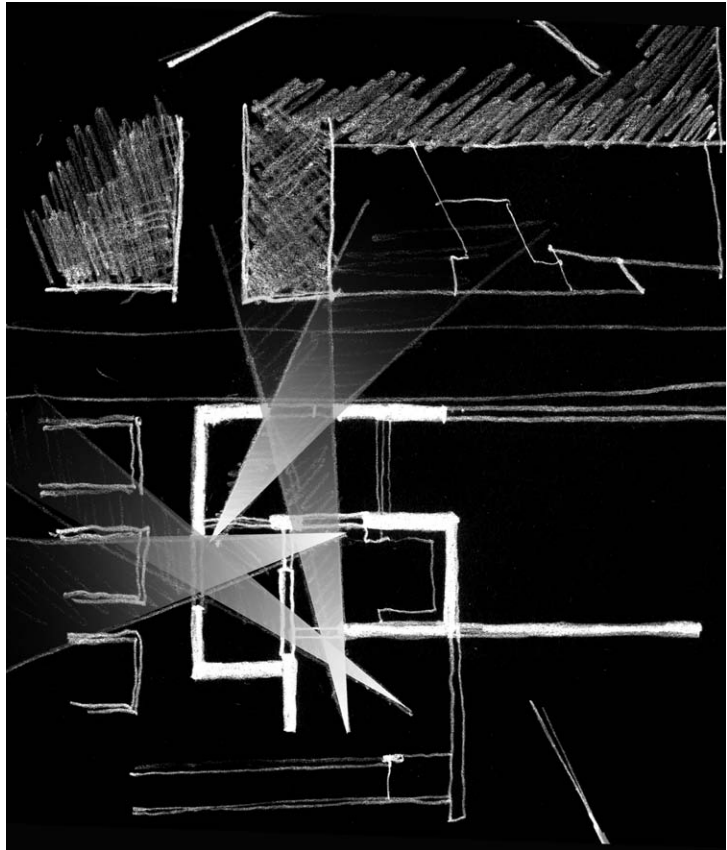
*Figure 5.13* View of the Fountain Plaza side elevator lobby (Author)



*Figure 5.14 Fountain Plaza  
Lobby Section (Author)*

harsh southern sun and allow the users of the spaces to adjust it according to the activities of the day.

The building is capped off with a roof terrace on the 6th street side. The terrace is composed of a series of spaces with controlled views that guide the participant through the spaces (Fig 5.15). The views are concealed by high walls that drop down to reveal portions of the cityscape that surround the building (Fig 5.16). These walls serve as a guide through smaller more enclosed spaces until reaching the final large open space directly above the 6th Street lobby. This main space is the highest point on the roof and allows for a full panorama



*Figure 5.15 Plan of the views from the roof terrace (Author)*



*Figure 5.16* Perspective from the roof terrace (*Author*)

of the cityscape as well as a view back down to the entry and street. These spaces would provide a the students and faculty of the school with a quiet retreat from their studies.

This interconnected relationship and simultaneous perception of spaces found throughout the building lent itself well to the way the education is structured, especially in the arts. The educational system is intended to flow from one activity to the next seamlessly, with no clear demarcation. The study of precedence, production of work in perhaps more than one media, reflection on that work, and revision are all intended to happen simultaneously.

This system helped to strengthen the metaphors of “slipping” throughout the building. The studio spaces is interrupted by the library, the lobby is interrupted by the bank, the outdoor gallery is interrupted by the street. There is not one space that is closed off and completely defined in terms of visual boundaries.

This is program and site allowed for the building to fully reflect the ideas of the thesis. The project as a whole provided the opportunity to explore these ideas and create a building that reflected the function of the

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building without simply drawing direct aesthetic and organizational clues in a deterministic manner.

While this thesis has drawn many conclusions it also raises questions that have yet to be answered. For instance, since this project was a visual arts school many of the modes of perception dealt with were in the visual realm. How would one create an architecture of engagement in a music school, or even a simple speculative office building? These are issues that will help to propel architecture into the next generation.

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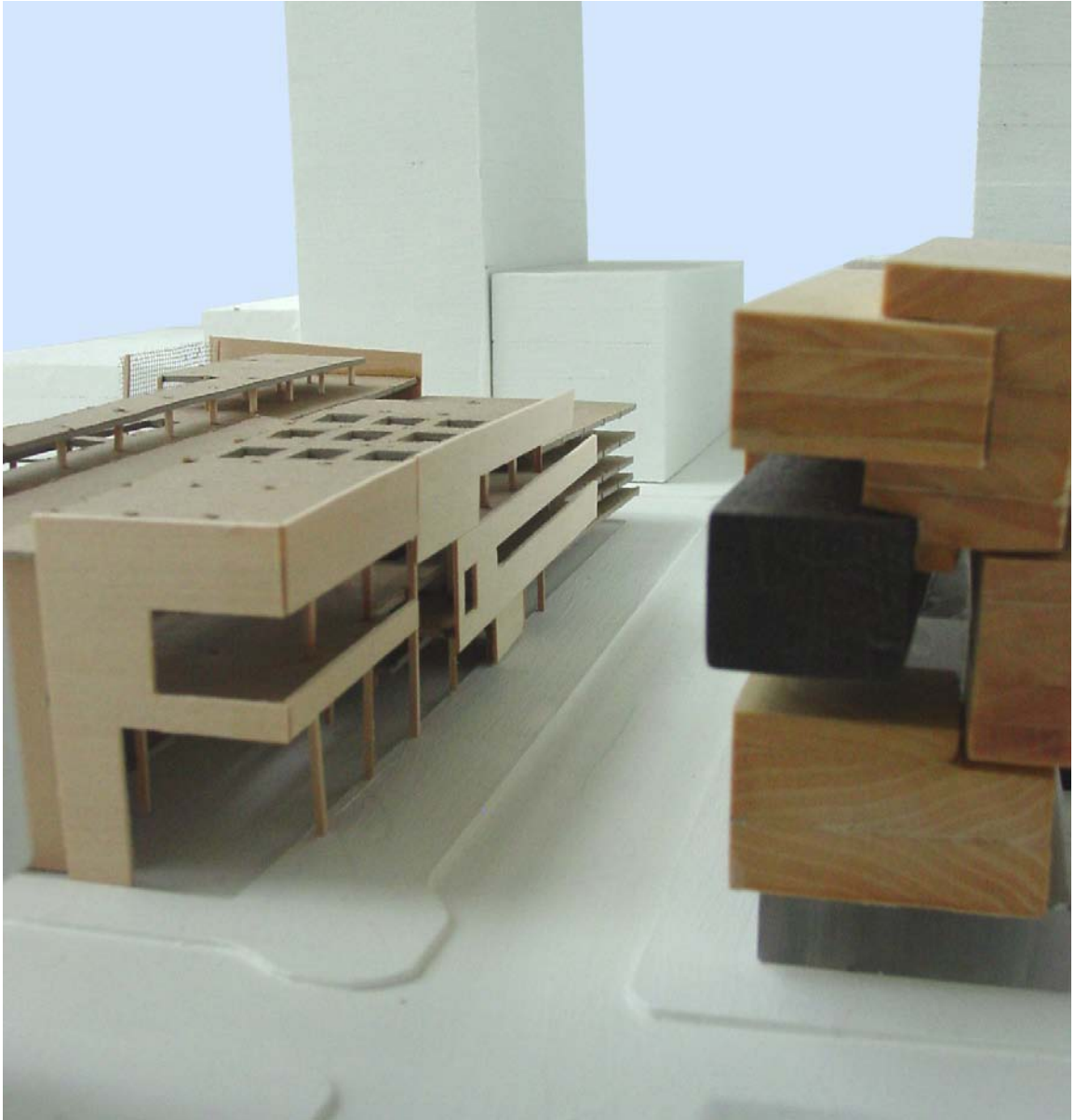
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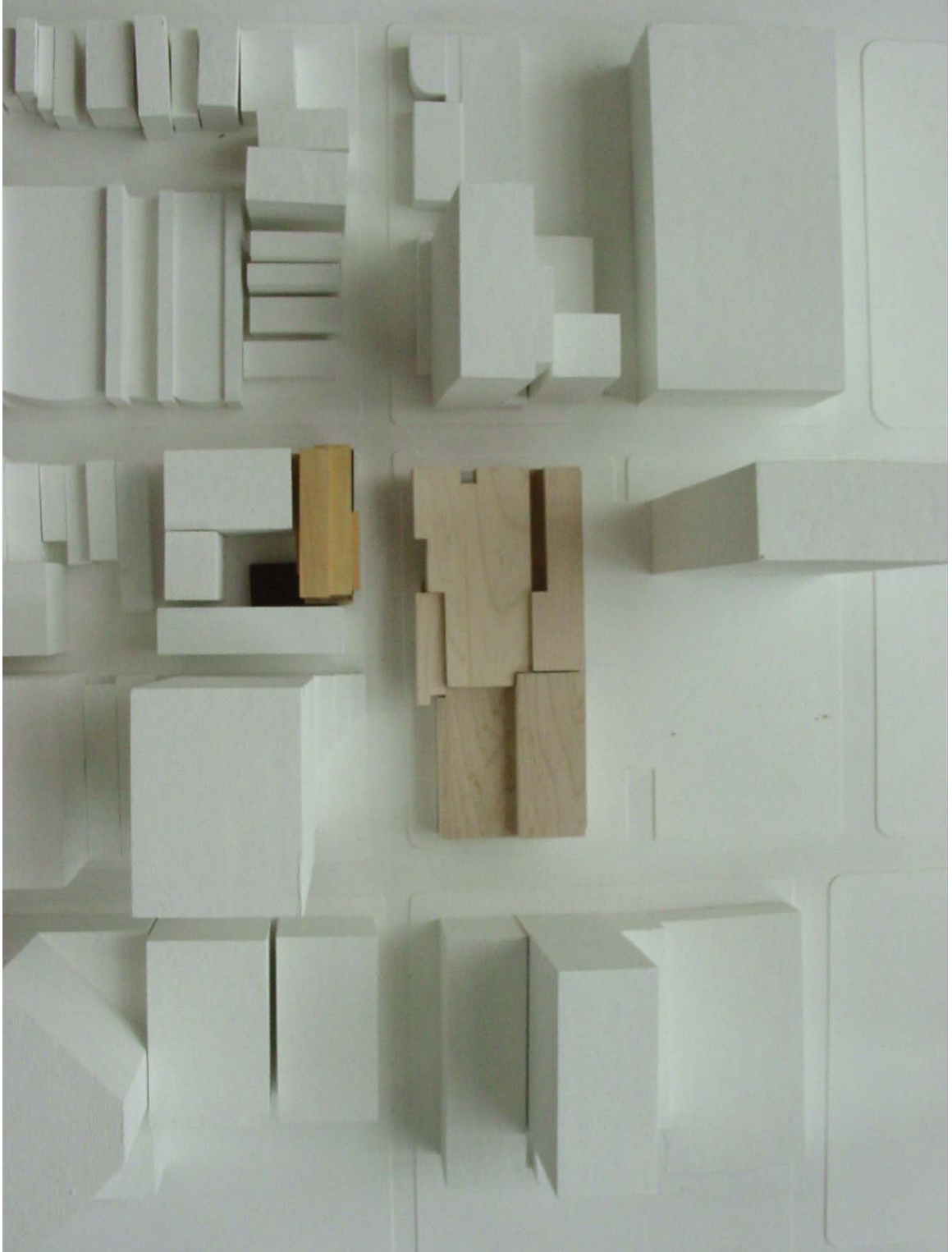
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## Appendix

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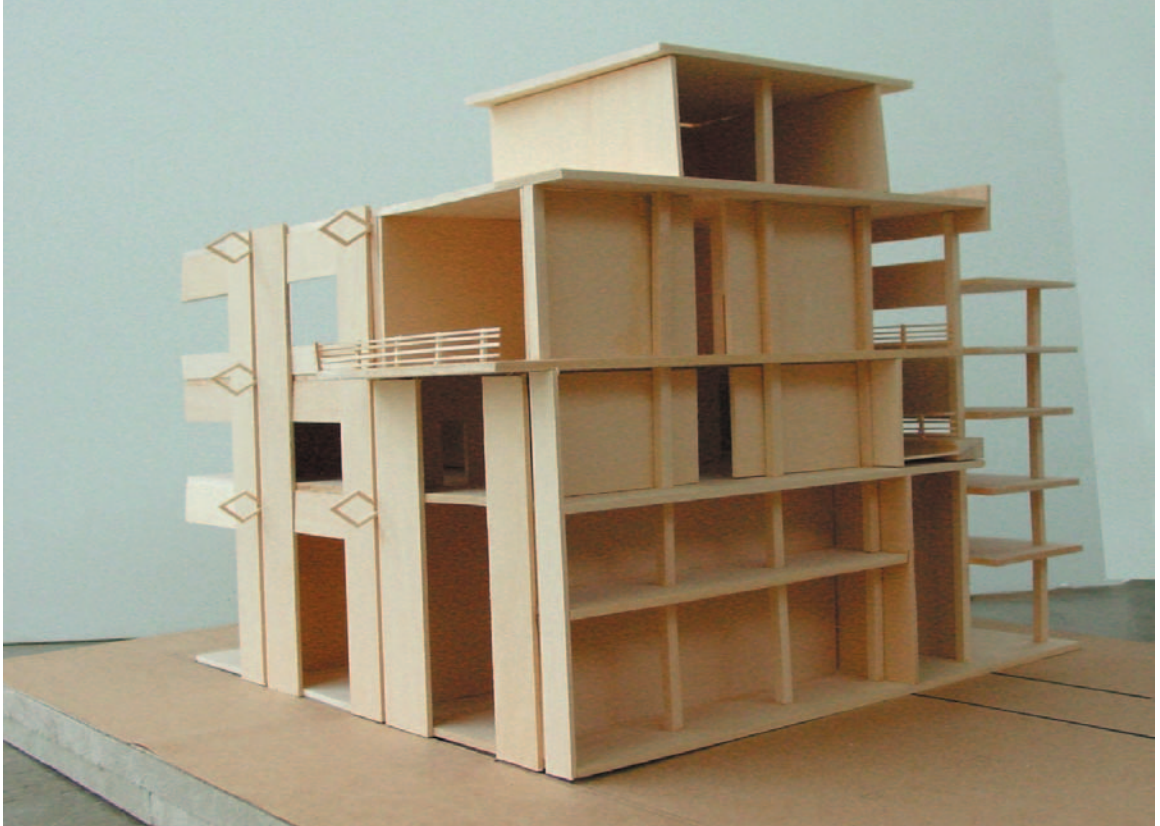
*Figure A.1* Site Model 1  
(Author)



*Figure A.2* Site Model 2  
(Author)



*Figure A.3 6th St Section  
Model (Author)*



*Figure A.4 Fountain Plaza  
Section Model (Author)*

## Vita

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Cassius “Cash” Moter was born in Louisville, KY. in 1980 the second child to Polly and Merrill Moter.

Cash began studying architecture at Clemson University in the fall 1998. While attending Clemson he was fortunate enough to spend the spring of his junior year in Genoa, Italy studying architecture throughout the country and the rest of Europe. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Design degree in the spring of 2002. After a summer interning with a firm in Louisville, he began his first semester at the University of Tennessee in the Masters of Architecture program. While at Tennessee he held a graduate assistantship for Mark Dekay and Traci Mori-McClean for a year. He completed his degree in August of 2004.

After graduation he will be returning to Louisville to accept a position with Joseph and Joseph Architects.

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