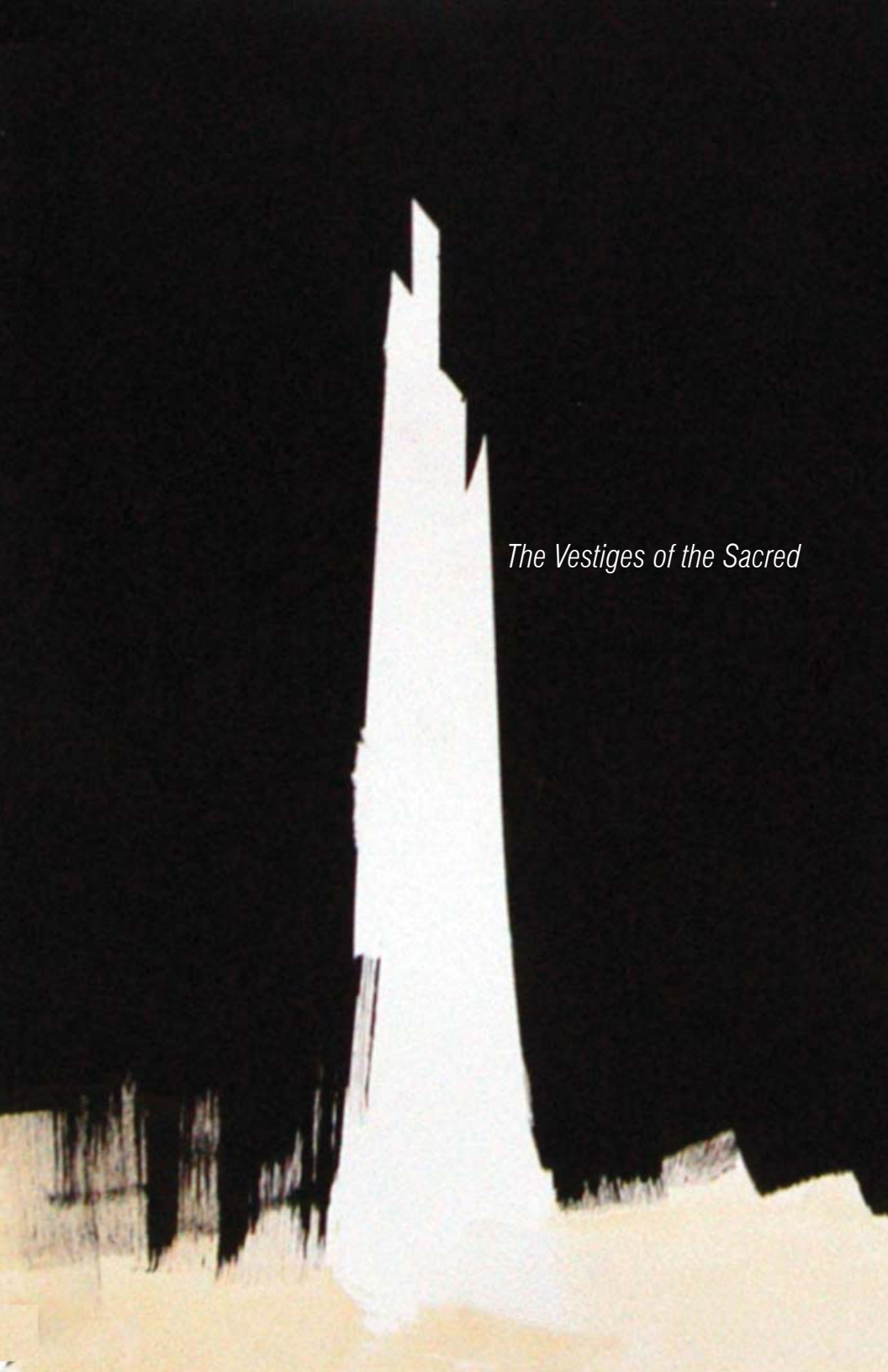




The Vestiges of the Sacred



Self Directed project
Professor Jennifer Akerman
Ben Wathen

01 Positioning

02 Framing

03 Crafting

04 Forming

05 Citations and Bibliography

06 Final Project Boards and Explanation



[Positioning]

Bridging [2.0]

The top portion is upside down in reference to the lower buildings. The purpose of this is to describe two different worlds and a position between the two, bridging the divide and thus sparking a conversation.

- i. "We have nothing if not belief."
– *The Dawn Treader*, C.S. Lewis
- ii. "The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities for action always present will remain with them and the foundation of cities is therefore the most important material prerequisite for power."
– *The Human Condition*, Arndt
- iii. "Architecture and its spaces do not change society, but through architecture and the understanding of its effect, we can accelerate processes of change underway."
– Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*

01 *Belief and the individual*

Belief is more powerful than argument.

However, communal belief is even more powerful than the individual notion. Real movement and real change manifest within the relationships between individuals. These beliefs do not necessarily need to be conscious within every individual, but merely reflected in the communal whole.

Power lies within communal belief.

These beliefs make up the solitary foundation of a community and form the tradition of maintaining the community perpetuating its goals and ambitions to the exterior world.

What is the role of communal belief in architecture?

The power in architecture lies in the belief of the user. Architecture plays off cultural attitudes and ideals to either reflect, enhance, or subtly negate the projected belief. This allows the possibility of architecture to change a culture, or to enrichen it.

The role of belief and of consciously recognizing these beliefs becomes paramount to creating an architecture that benefits the culture as a whole, and not merely creating discontinuities within the societal fabric.

- iv. *"The destruction of the established culture and the development of a revolutionary art form have traditionally been considered prerequisites to social and economic change. If it is doubtful that the development of a new formal language ever had an effect on the structure of society, it is clear that the destruction of the old language had."*
– Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjuncture*

- v. *"Even the best modern church architecture... seems too deliberate, too studied... too gimmicky... to convince worshipers that the building in which they are worshiping is worshiping with them precisely because the [premodern] builders were themselves worshippers."*
– Bess, *149 of Till We have Built Jerusalem*

01 *Belief and the community*

What is the scope of the "community" in question?

The size of the exemplar is important in so much as the underlying motivation behind the communal participation needs to be proportionate to the size. This assumes that human nature makes it more difficult for a human individual to relate to larger groups of people without a sufficient depth of motivation.

This implies a *hierarchy* to communal motivation. Some factors are stronger than others.

It is a question of the *necessity* of communal belonging that becomes tantamount for the individual and the community's survival.

The scope of the community then can be the family of five down the road to the global Catholic Church, each with a sufficiently motivating impetus.

Essentially, at the highest tier of motivation, the Sacred will perch.

vi. *"A single sentence will suffice for modern man. He fornicated and read the papers. After that vigorous definition, the subject will be, if I may say so, exhausted."*

Albert Camus, *The Fall*

01 Criticality

Wester culture today is rife with cultural punctures wrought from the conflicts encountered over the last few hundred years (graphic on following page). As a result, the foundational communal beliefs have been called into question resulting in a crippling confusion and polarization (See following page for graphic).

The responding public response has been to remove unifying communal belief in the spiritual or sacred in an effort to remove possibly divisive or offensive material from the national spotlight. Scientific, psychological, and utilitarian thought now drive the current cultural direction and the soul of the country becomes less of a question of what the culture finds most sacred and more of a productive means to an end (whatever that might be). It is no longer about preserving cultural principals as much as it is about "progress" and "accumulation of knowledge".

Beliefs are primarily a question of what a culture considers to be sacred. And if the culture in question no longer contains a unifying sense of sacrality, the beliefs no doubt deteriorate from the resulting fractures.

The end sum is one of apathy and a hesitation to publicly acknowledge any form of the sacred leading to a loss of the sense in future generations all together. The sacred becomes a hobby without any relation to public life.

The criticism is of modern apathy and banality toward the sacred and its resulting architectural manifestations.



Architectural Opportunity

BRAVE NEW WORLD
ALDOUS HUXLEY

WARSAW
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER - 1944

[3.0]

Tension and Polarization

[Framing]

02 Framing: *Polemic of Sacred Space*

We live in a therapeutic society.

As products of modernism followed later by the sexual revolution and the “me generation” of the baby boomers, a hedonistic attitude has developed that professes “self-assertion over self-sacrifice, revolt and entitlement over gratitude, the temporary over the durable, transgression over prohibition, autonomy and the pursuit of power over obedience to legitimate authority, and a deliberate blurring of distinctions over the desire to understand and order things in clear and right relationships to one another” (vii).

The resulting architectural consequences can be traced to the endless sprawl of suburbia without any discernible center or the complete break-down of the sacred order of cities involving the hierarchy of religious and governmental institutions.

The sacred spaces of a society are charged with the dissemination and preservation of the foundational cultural beliefs. Once these spaces are lost or marginalized, the culture ceases to be unified and begins to deteriorate.

However, before the culture can be built up, there must be a sense of what is sacred and an agreed norm of sacrality.

It is a question of what constitutes the sacred and how it is manifested.

[4.0]



Society of the Spectacle – Guy Debord

02 Framing: Distraction

Society worships distraction.

Whether through its own efforts to put up a new idol or the accidental consequences of an incredibly new piece of technology, the resulting tidal-wave of scientific advancement has altered the perceptions of contemporary American society in a fundamental way. The reliance on technology has resulted in its consummation of our lives as opposed to its priority as a tool to be utilized with discretion.

Combined with our own therapeutic nature and risk/pain aversion, the notions of the sacred have taken a back seat to other concerns, mainly that of what it simply might do for us, and *not* our experience of sacrificing and seeking:

“But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to the essence... Illusion only is sacred, truth profane. Nay, sacredness is to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness.” – Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord

viii.

Freud and his contemporaries taught us to look down instead of up at the hint of “love” and other mysterious notions of the sacred and sum it up as necessary means and ends formed within the merely physical/emotional nature of our bodies.

We are the sum of our parts.

*How can architecture revive a sense of the sacred?
Through communal belief and communal space?*

02 Framing: *Intent: The Problem of the Sacred*

What is the sacred?

To define the sacred is to encounter a mystery, something understood as other-worldly. The sacred is inherently conservative in nature. It is something to remain untouched and unchanged. It is not a question of whether it can be changed, but rather an understanding that it cannot be changed.

The sacred implies a value or an importance on an object, place, or idea. It implies a boundary by its very nature since, to define the sacred, is to inherently also define what is *not* sacred, and therefore profane.

Thus, there are multiple interpretations of the sacred: namely the objective, and the subjective, something that one holds value within, and something that *is* sacred unto itself.

The subjective form of sacrality is in inherently individual and not relevant to the discussion here. Architecture can build for the individual, but is more interested in addressing a culture or a larger scope. The cultural underpinnings of sacred imply a relationship between individuals and thus a communal understanding of *one* sacred.

The encounter with the sacred is universal. However, the response is not bound to be universal.

The purpose of this project is not to structure the response to the sacred but merely offer the opportunity to encounter the sacred. It is a simple invitation to remove the typical circumstances of everyday life and through the encounter allow an individual to focus on his own relationship to the sacred.

Then perhaps, though everyone may react slightly differently to the sacred, a conversation can begin as to how the community as a whole will react to the sacred.

The monolith, 2001: A Space Odyssey

[5.1] Appearance



[5.2] Fear



[5.3] Embrace



[5.4] Connection to Divine



02 Framing: *The sacred and the encounter*

Universally, at first encounter, the sacred inspires fear. It is commonly held among the saints that this fear (or rather a holy fear) is always the beginning of belief.

The following example of this encounter is taken from *The Space Odyssey 2001*.

During the first chapter of the movie, it shows the “Dawn of Man” and a camp of primitive men encamped in a cave. The men mill around for a while allowing the viewer to gain a sense of the slowness, of the daily activities conducted on the basis of pure survival.

The sun sets.

As the sun begins to rise, one of the primitive men awakens and begins to scream at the unknown object, alerting the rest of the group at some sign of trouble or danger.

An unknown object has appeared in the middle of the camp over night without any trace of origin or intent.

During the scene, a terrifying music plays in order to overcome the phenomenological limitations of cinema. The viewer is not there to embrace the whole of the implied physical world, therefore the music conveys the intended emotional impetus of urgency, unknowing, and terror.

The men are driven to fear the object. But, upon inspection, the men begin to approach, and touch the object in the midst of their fear.

This describes a process of encountering the sacred that is twofold: fear and embrace of mystery.



[6.0]

God Speaks to Moses in a Burning Bush

ix.

Revelation 1:17

And when I had seen him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying: Fear not. I am the First and the Last

x.

Luke 2:8-10

And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. 9 And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them and the brightness of God shone round about them: and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people

02 Framing: *Sacred Space*

In *The Sacred and Profane*, Mircea Eliade uses a phenomenological approach to understand the nature of religion and the believer's perception of the sacred.

Eliade explains the sacred in terms of *hierophany*. The hierophany is the manifestation of the sacred to mankind. Examples run throughout any primordial religion whether it is the sacred Uluru for the Aboriginies to the incarnation in Christianity.

The burning bush in the desert illustrates this notion of hierophany. The bush, simply a mere bush in nature, was transformed through a hierophany.

"The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshiped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred." -Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* xi.

Moses takes off his sandals when ordered by God to do so. This defines the act and the space as something other than the norm. The place becomes consecrated as something sacred as a result and the encounter stands as the orientation point for the society and culture that stem from it. To lose this is to lose everything.

The nature of Moses's encounter is very similar to that of the Space Odyssey. He is intrigued by this strange occurrence in the desert. Then, he encounters a voice that frightens him, and then beckons him.

However, the Biblical allusion provides more evidence and insight into the nature of the encounter with the sacred. At almost every instance of the appearance of an angel within the Bible (which qualifies as a hierophany), the beginning statement is "Do not be afraid" (see left).

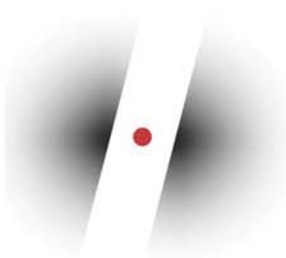


A hierophany occurs and is followed by a ritual that *solidifies* the sacred manifestation as the orientation point of a group or society. This determines an architectural manifestation, social structure, cultural traditions, etc. Everything from the highest traditions to the daily mundane meal are sanctified through the inclusion of the hierophany as the focal point of a society.

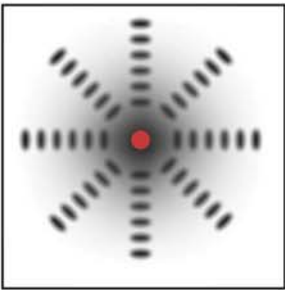
However, over time, this tradition or ritual of maintaining the mystery of the sacred can become distorted *or* enhanced. Part of the purpose of the orientating around the sacred is to learn more about it.

Yet, the ritual must be maintained in order to maintain the connection to the sacred, to remain within the realm of the sacred. To break the ritual is to break the connection and thus lost the sacred orientation.

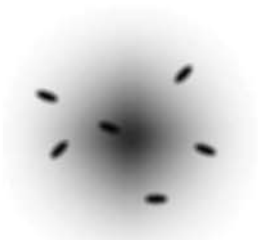
This graphic shows the cycle of the establishment and breakdown of sacred space.



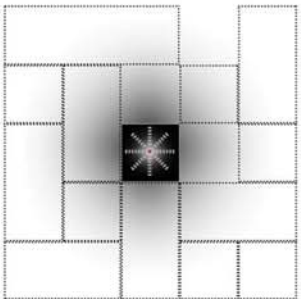
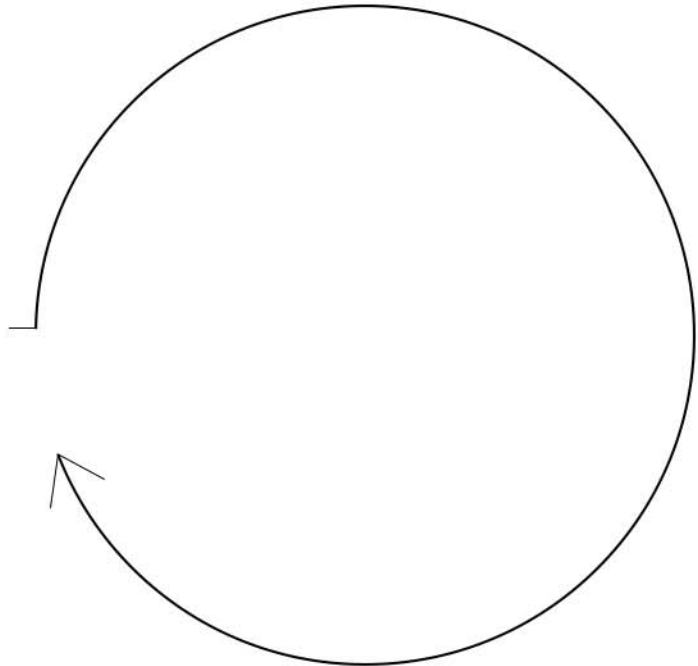
Heirophany



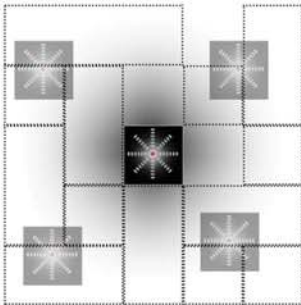
Orientation



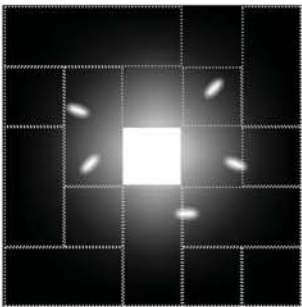
Homogeneous Space



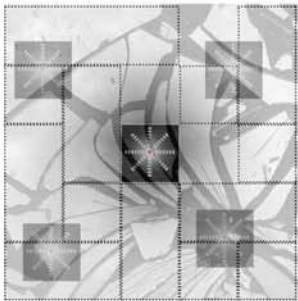
Organization and Build up



Confusion



Rejection and replacement



Break down and rejection

What Makes Your Generation Unique?

Millennial

1. Technology use (24%)
2. Music/Pop culture (11%)
3. Liberal/tolerant (7%)
4. Smarter (6%)
5. Clothes (5%)

Gen X

- Technology use (12%)
- Work ethic (11%)
- Conservative/Trad'l (7%)
- Smarter (6%)
- Respectful (5%)

Boomer

- Work ethic (17%)
- Respectful (14%)
- Values/Morals (8%)
- "Baby Boomers" (6%)
- Smarter (5%)

Silent

- WW II, Depression (14%)
- Smarter (13%)
- Honest (12%)
- Work ethic (10%)
- Values/Morals (10%)

Pew Forum xiii.

- xii. *"For modern consciousness, a physiological act... sex, eating, etc... is in sum only an organic phenomenon. But, for the primitive, such an act was never physiological; it is or can become a sacrament, that is, a communion with the sacred."*

- Eliade 14

02 Framing: Worship

What is the potential for architecture to induce a sacred experience or hint at one?

Through the cultural upheaval of the last hundred years, what is sacred and what is thought of as sacred has had to withstand the continuous onslaught of new technology, ideological revolutions, and traditional dis-juncture. Religious institutions have undergone significant doctrinal shifts severely altering their own understanding of the sacred and the results have led to a seminal attitude change within the population.

The above graph shows the cultural trends over the last five generations in regards to "what makes your generation unique". The findings indicate an interesting pattern within the previous generations that slowly shifts and finally change utterly with the new Millennial generation. The shift occurs within the *nature* of the generational signifier.

In almost every other generation one of the prevailing aspects of "uniqueness" is the moral aspect shown as either respect, values, morals, honest, work ethic, etc.

However, at the juncture of new century and the new generation, the identifying factor changed from the moral/ethical/ being questions to one of technology. In other words, the new unifying factor is one of the least depth, the profane, instead of the greatest, namely aspects or vestiges of the sacred.

This represents a breakdown of ritual on a large scale in Western culture and thus the subsequent identity crisis.

[9.0]



The Archdeacon looks down on Notre Dame

02 Framing: *The Problem of the eye*

"This will destroy That. The Book will destroy the Edifice."

-Victor Hugo, The Hunchback of Notre Dame

xiv.

The above quote represents a significant watershed moment for the world of the Sacred and the world of architecture.

The archdeacon of Notre Dame stands above cathedral holding the first printed bible in his hand. He points down at the church and prophetically tells how the mass production of the bible will destroy the church.

This has two implications.

The first is for the Church. A massive power shift was about to occur when Martin Luther would translate the Bible into German and ignite the Protestant Reformation. The Church would no longer be in the position of power to disseminate knowledge and control its interpretation. The masses would be able to ingest it privately, individually, and without community.

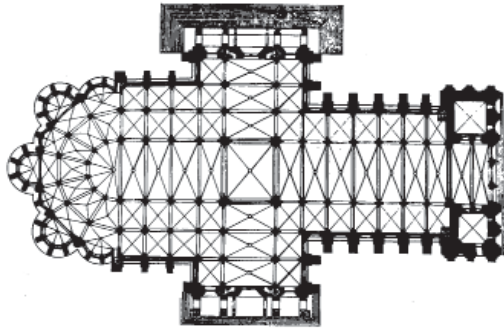
The second is for architecture. The printed book marked the fall of architecture from the same power. Architecture (primarily church architecture) represented power and was the means of solidifying knowledge over time. The edifice represented the magisterium or the *teaching power of the church*. This piece of technology, the mass produced book, replaced the vehicle through which the sacred was experienced and proliferated.

It laid the foundation for the protestant Reformation and the shattering of Christianity and represented the first major cultural shift away from the mystery of the and into the worship of a wholly different kind. It was a rationalization.

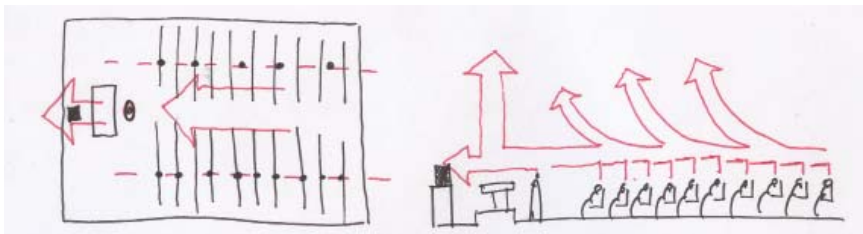


10.1]

Chartres Gothic Cathedral
Chartres, France



10.2]



10.3]

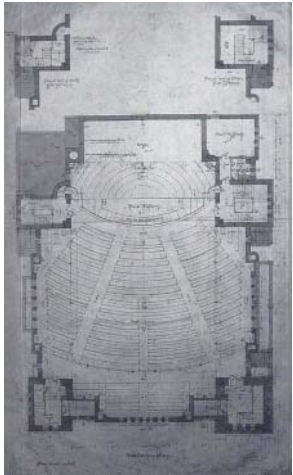
Gothic/ Renaissance

02 Framing: *Evolution of worship space*

The de-mystification of church space exemplifies the problem of rationalization of mystery. Spatially, it has to do with direction of focus and what is focused upon.

The Gothic/Renaissance worship space was linear in focus and kept everyone focused forward to the altar and tabernacle and upward toward heaven and God. This allegorically meant we aimed for heaven and perfection and not downward to minimal requirements and hell. The mystery of the encounter with the sacred (the altar and tabernacle) was the main focus and thus the central mystery of the incarnation manifest was at hand.

The key to the Church was the *wholistic* manifestation of the sacred. Even though the hierophany was not actually there (man has no control over such a thing), the ritual of maintaining the connection to the hierophany in a physical manner was there. Thus, the cultural continuum was maintained.

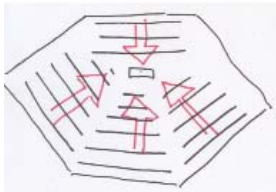


[11.1]



[11.2]

Trinity M. E. Church, Denver, Colorado



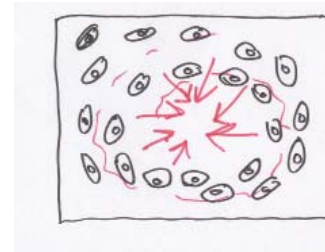
[11.3]

Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation rejected this doctrine and rationalized the mystery of Christianity down to Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura). While the intent was to lead back to the "true" church, the effect eventually was to remove the mysterious encounter with the sacred as the central focus and instead focus on the speaker or the book.

- xv. "The congregation's attention is concentrated upon the minister and as his function is entirely that of addressing the congregation, the whole architectural treatment should concentrate and lead up to this point. It is essentially a problem in which air, lights, comfort, seeing, and hearing must only not be interfered with, but dictate the forms and treatment."

- *When Church Became Theater*, Jeanne Halgren Kilde



Fellowship/ removal of sacred [11.4]



[11.5]

Further down the line, the modern church space has become more about the fellowship or community of people instead of the mystery of Christianity. This is the eventual consequence of the removal of the sacral encounter. (This is not to say that these spaces experiences are not highly emotional, but that is not strictly sacred. The sacral experience is inherently mysterious and terrifying and not focused on fellowship or ethics as a primary goal.)

The above example is of church held inside of a bar. This is described as a way to keep the community as the main focus, however, the sacral element has been removed as the main focal point. Intellectually, the idea may be there, but the physical relationship is not.

Instead, what if the solution today were to divide the community in worship through a series of walls in between seats. This would insure a single focus was physically still in community, but with the primary focus on the sacred and not just the fellowship. This is akin to putting blinders on a horse. It keeps it focused.



Singular focus and community [11.6]



[11.7]

[12.0]



02 Crafting: Architectural Semantics of the Sacred

What are the individual experiences of the sacred like?

The de-mystification of sacral space can be broken down into how the various senses perceive the sacral experience:

Seeing Darkness

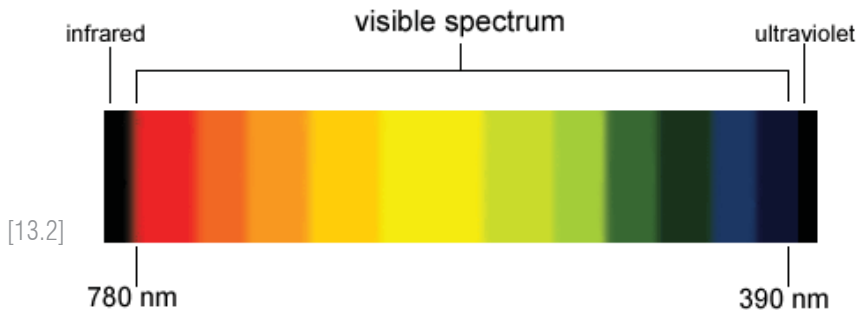
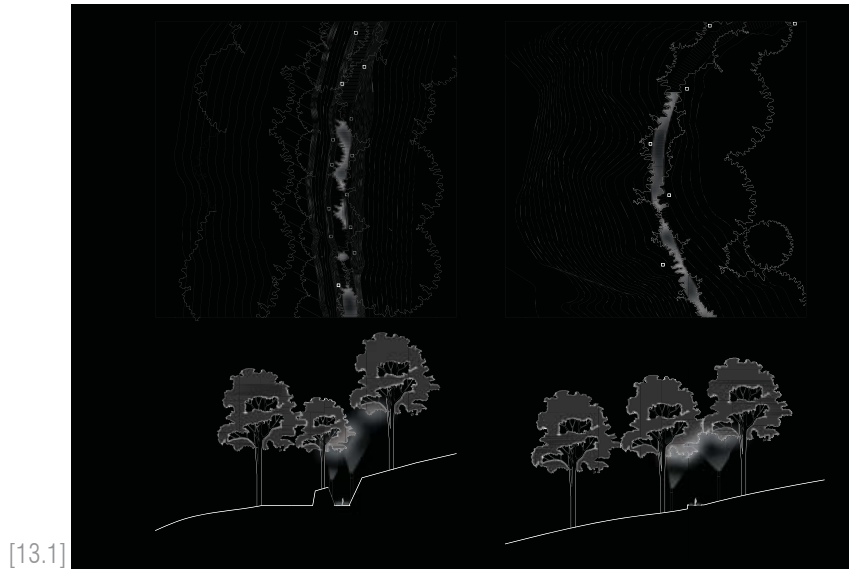
Hearing Silence

Sensing weight

Curiosity
the seen object

Perceived and actual boundary
visual
temperature

Each of these experiences can be found in sacred (mostly religious) spaces around the world. By breaking them down into individual pieces they become the Vestiges of the Sacred. The question becomes if these experiences are enough to induce a sacral experience, an encounter with a mystery.



Seeing Darkness

How can architecture convey reverence within a space? Through isolation and focus.

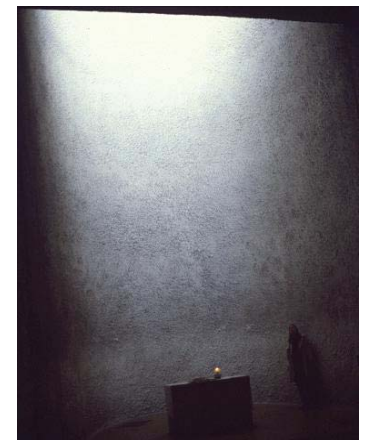
Reverence is inspired when the focus is no longer on oneself and the conditions subdue the viewer into a quiet state. In many ways, anything can be made to be revered if no preconceived idea exists as to what is viewed. Lighting is integral to this experience in generating a focus on some key object (or non-object) and heightening the visual awareness of self in looking at that object.

The diagram to the top left describes this experience. Lighting is applied to the ground at the feet and at the under-canopy. This generates two planes of light that bound the viewer, but do not allow for a relationship to develop at eye level with any other object. This isolates and subdues the person into a reverent state. They see darkness.

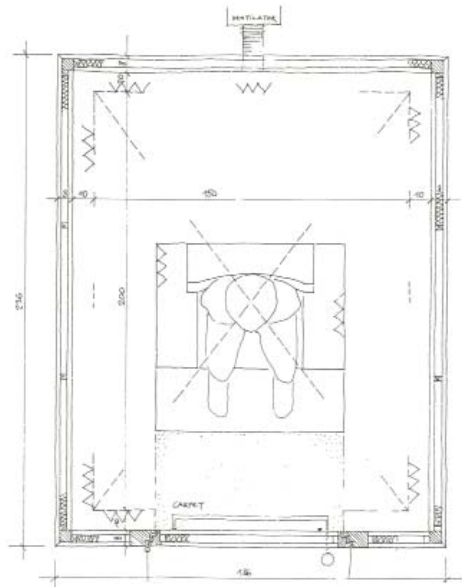
The light color also plays a role in this. Candle light exists on the lower end of the spectrum and is easier on the eyes in the long run but also reveals less since it is not as close to an ultraviolet light (florescent). It also subdues and if done correctly, highlights the darkness.



Le Corbusier
Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp



[14.1]



Hearing Silence

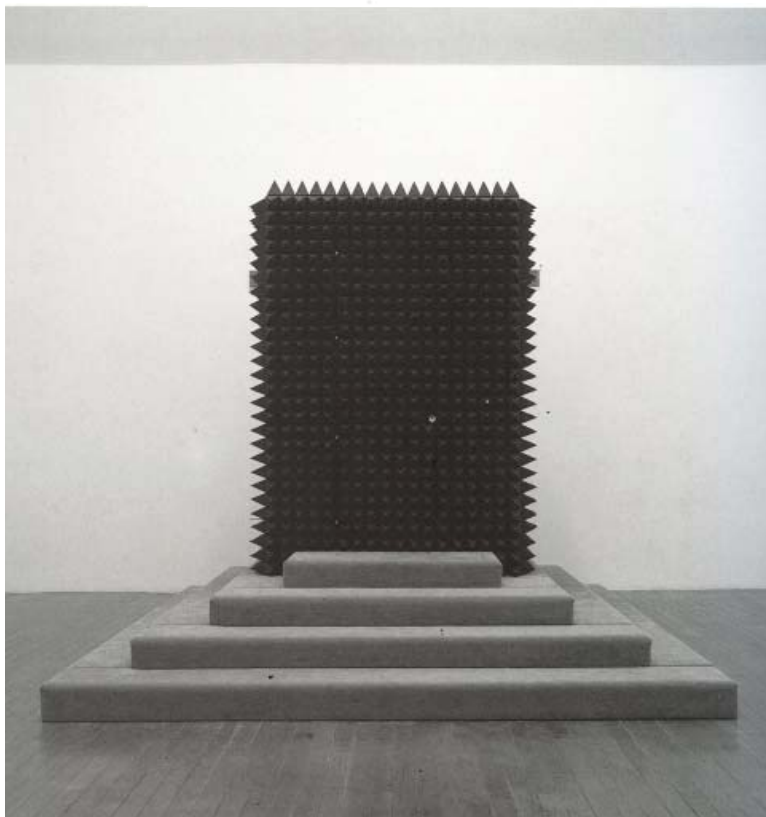
Sound also plays a critical role in the experience of the sacred. Decibel levels are largely experienced through threshold and the listener's awareness of white noise. One could feel isolated in a crowd if sufficient time were given for the threshold experience of entering the crowd to wear off.

The same exists for extremely quiet environments. To the left is a James Turrel experiment with a sounds chamber. The intention is to lower the decibel level into the *negatives*. This highlights the usual white noise that accompanies everyday environments: the sounds running electricity, humming lights, the AC, merely moving air, etc.

This chamber removes so much exterior sound that the participant begins to hear hide own bodily noises. The person is not doubt disturbed and no one has readily wanted to relive the experience, but it serves the highlight the thresholds of sound and the relativity of it.

The sacral experience involves a perceived silence in a contemplative space that is a product of white noise and a almost a felt weight of sound bearing down. Once again, a sublime reverence is inspired through a subduing silence of white noise.

[14.2]





[15.1]

Sensing Weight

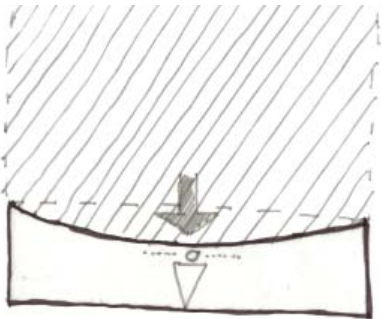
The weight felt in sacred space plays an important part in inferred *permanence and stillness*.

The weight can be disquieting especially in direct contemplation, much like the experience of the monolith. It is partly a product of subtractive space vs additive space, and partly a question of cultural norm. The Colosseum is not impressive from a size standpoint until the person views it through the lens of a Roman citizen.

The first image is from a Hindu temple of the Thanjavur complex. It is hewn out of single solid stone that took countless generations to complete and as a result conveys a sense of permanence and stillness in the structure. This helps convey the meaning of the sacral experience in the Hindu culture as a vessel for holding the sacred.

The next image is of Levitated Mass by artist Michael Heizer. This is an exhibit that also conveys a sense of weight however, instead of an implied stillness from the weight meeting the ground, it is designed to feel precarious and unstable. This is in sharp contrast to more traditional sacral space. It becomes about a harmony vs discord.

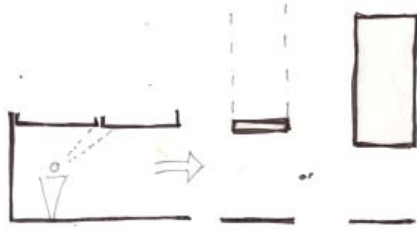
The final example is from the Thermal Vals by Peter Zumthor. The phenomenological aspect of this project is important for the means for conveying a sense of weight. The ideas of carving into a mountain and as a vessel for holding water both subtly convey a quiet, still sense of weight. The details, such as the slits of light carved through the ceiling help to create this sense through calling into question the depth of material shown (diagram left).



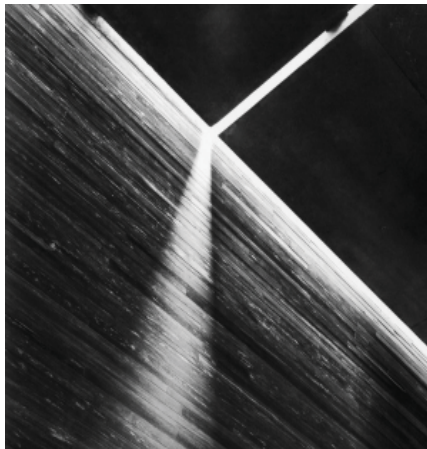
[15.2]



[15.3]



[15.4]



[15.5]

[16.1]



[16.2]



Curiosity

The idea of curiosity and the seen object is seen in sacrality from the altar or tabernacle in the Roman catholic Church to the exterior of the cathedral acting as a lantern leading the viewer on a journey or focussing the attention from afar.

The Monolith, from Space Odyssey 2001, illustrates the idea of contrast to achieve an importance with an object. A curiosity is aroused when the user perceives the object in contrast with the surrounding environment.

The second image provides a very similar exploration with one added element: the boundary. Similar to providing a bridge or space that everyone can see, the path is obstructed to the contrasting to element. This provokes a curiosity that spurs on adult through the architectural procession.

"Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost."

Inferno I, lines 1-3



[17.1]

Disorientation and Reorientation

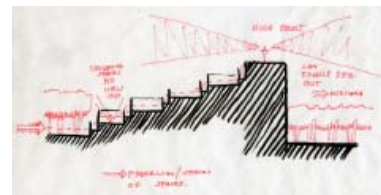
A procession is necessary to allow for a sufficient encounter with the sacred.
Along this, procession,

The panel [left] is from *The Divine Comedy*. It depicts the first three lines in the entire epic describing Dante having wandered into a forest. This is an allegory for two things. The first is for the darkness of the spiritual journey through life: we may be guided by a light but all else appears to be darkness. He was led into the forest by forces outside of his control. This was specifically in order to prepare him for the second point: an obscuring of the path in order that he might be shown hell, purgatory, and heaven. He simply found himself lost and was set upon a journey to delve more deeply into a clarifying experience.

A *disorientation* was necessary before the *reorientation* could occur.

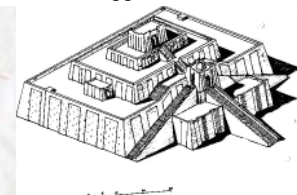
Such a phenomena exists within the Ziggurat at Ur (lower) or in the procession in Borobudur. In the Buddhist temple of Borobudur, the one is led up a mountain like structure through a series of spaces that do not let one see out back into the landscape. This disorients the user and he loses a sense of his surroundings thus withdrawing mentally and being engulfed into the experience of his immediate environment. It is only at the apex of the climb that the user is reoriented to his surroundings and is impressed by it. The experience lingers in the mind of the viewer and as a result the intentions conveyed lubricate the path to change.

Borobudur

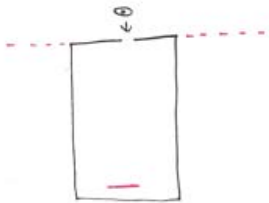


[17.2]

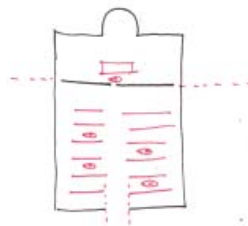
Ziggurat at Ur



[17.3]



[18.1]



[18.2]



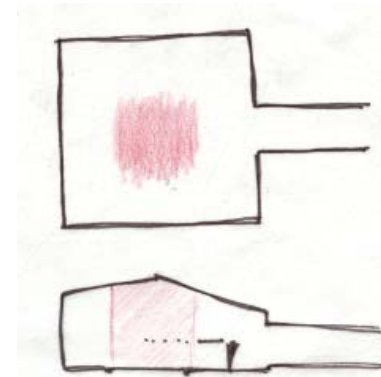
Boundary: Perceived vs actual

The notion of boundary is essential to understanding the sacral experience since the sacred by nature is “set apart”. That is what it means to be sacred.

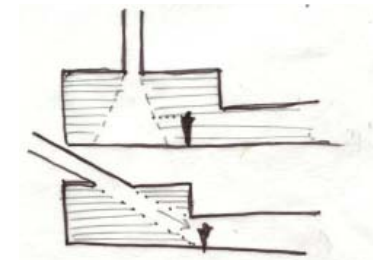
The sacral examples such as the Ise Shrine or an Eastern Orthodox Church both utilize this perceived boundary to heighten the sacral experience of space. It becomes a threshold that one does not cross and creates a sense of mystery.

However, in order to create this architecturally in a non-religious setting, the idea is how to use non-material as a means to perceive a boundary. The diagram (bottom left) illustrates the potential for a temperature differential to begin to define a different space set apart through a non-visual means. The subtlety of such a tactic is questionable however.

The second option utilizes light as a means to “blind the viewer to the spatial implications that lie beyond by taking advantage of the iris's natural ability to contract at bright light. This is similar tactic in many James Turrell projects and how through a lit contrast, space is mystified and delineated.

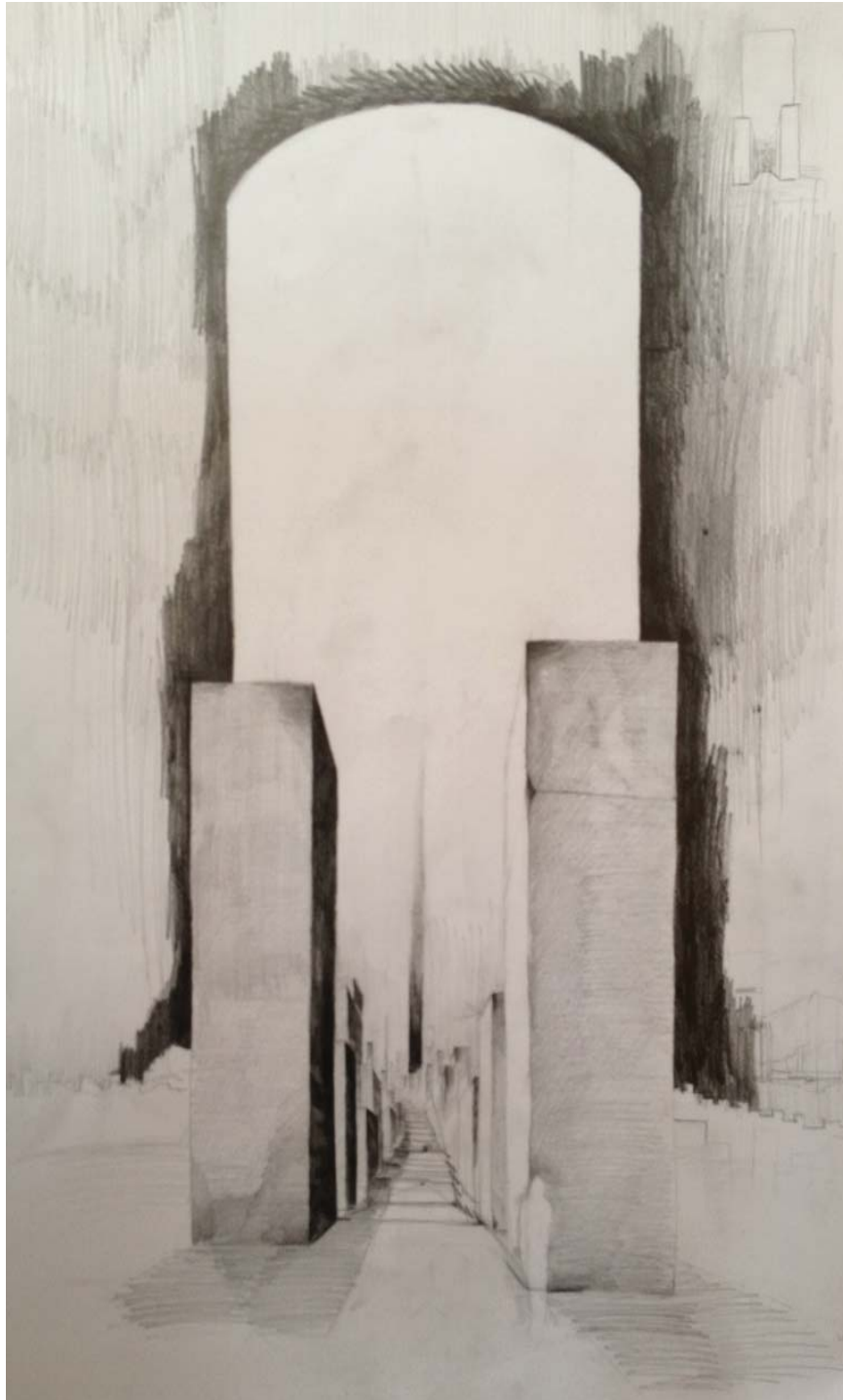


[18.3]



[18.4]

[crafting]



Phenomenal Archive and Lowline

See a mystery, choreograph discovery

03 Crafting: Testing

How can architecture provide a person with the opportunity to experience the sacred?

The experience of the sacred can be approximated by the sense of mystery. How can architecture provide an experience of mystery?

The program has two objects: an archive of sacral qualities and a pedestrian path

The first objective of the program would be to provide the participants with a series of spaces or chambers each dedicated toward one aspect of the phenomenology of the sacred. The phenomenal observatory operates very much like a museum with various exhibits and experiences strewn throughout a procession. The qualities of sound, light and dark, and other sensory phenomena would be the main contenders for the exhibits.

The goal of this project would be to draw people to the site via a mystery. Something is seen that provokes the curiosity of the viewer and creates the desire to investigate. The observatory's entries would be hidden and encountered almost stumbled upon. Then, the viewer would traverse through the underground procession, experience these various sensory deprivations, and arrive on the other side wondering about the mysteries they just encountered.

The second goal of the project is the underground pathway (more info in locating). The pathway would act as an anchor for the program allowing travel to take place between the two sides of the river. This would provide a more spontaneous opportunity to interact with the sacral spaces under the river.

The image to left conveys this journey of mystery and discover. The tower in the distance stands as the icon and point of focus and mystery. The viewer sees this and is compelled towards it through a path. The continual embrace and of drawing someone into a mystery is inherent, but the understanding is not so much about realizing the mysterious as no longer mysterious, but as continually knowing it more deeply as a mystery.

03 Crafting: Spaces Primary

Lobby/ Vestibule	2000 sf x 2
Reception	
Card check	
Phenomenal Chambers	5(or more) x 3000 sf
Underground path	
Public Park	40,000 sf
Event Spaces	3000 sf
Viewing platform	3000 sf

03 Crafting: Spaces Tertiary

Bathrooms	300 sf x 2
Office and Administration (curator/ steward)	4 x 150 sf
Conference Room	1000 sf
Research Laboratory	3000 sf
Residences	
Housing	250 sf x 10
Community Kitchen	1500 sf
Community gathering space	2000 sf
Mechanical (complex)	3000 sf
Storage	2000 sf

This place is not about understanding a mystery so much as it is about encountering one. When a miracle happens, and is later explained by science, does it de-mystify it? Or does it maintain its mystery?

03 Crafting: Spaces Explanation

Lobby/ Vestibule

The purpose of the lobby is to mark the entry of the underground pathway to the other side of the river, act as reception for the archive, and to act as a toll booth like choke point. The river acts as an international boundary, but most people purchase a card that allows quick access to one side of the river or the other. This would be where the cards would be scanned.

Public Park

There is already a public park in Windsor, however, the lot by Detroit is empty and an opportunity to turn it into a public park presents itself. This would serve as a grove of trees hiding the entry to the underground path (much like Dante and the Divine Comedy). This would attract more people to the Detroit South Waterfront and bring more attention to the project. It would also encompass a public event space as part of the park landscape.

Underground path

The underground path is the spine of the project that stretches from Detroit to Windsor. It would allow pedestrian access to the other side of the river which does not currently exist and allow for a manipulable procession in which to prepare to experience the mystery of the sacred.

Phenomenal Chambers

The Phenomenal Chambers would be where the various experiences of the sacred were installed. These would house anything sensory in nature much like a James Turrell Skybox or a small chapel space. They would begin to poke up above the water provoking a curiosity as to what exists below the river. Thus, the mystery is established and the viewer goes on a journey of discovery.

Currently, there are five proposed chambers, each dedicated to one of the phenomena explored earlier in the book, namely: seeing darkness, sensing weight, hearing silence, perceiving a boundary, and curiosity. However, this list can be shortened or expanded pending further research.

Office and Administration (curator/ steward)

The office would be for the administration of the underground pass and archive.

Conference

The conference spaces would be for meeting with potential donors or artist's proposing further installations.

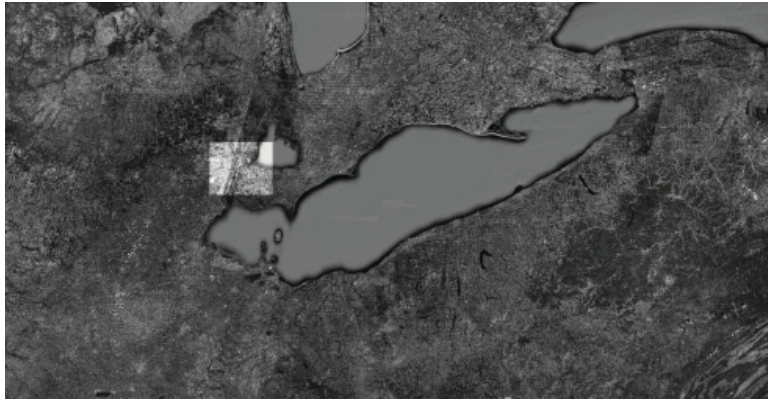
Research Laboratory

The research laboratory works in conjunction with the residences who work on site to investigate the phenomenological properties of the sacred and refine the exhibits or change them.

Residences

The residences would temporarily house artists and researchers in residence who have interests in the investigation of the sacral experience.

[20.1]



[20.2]



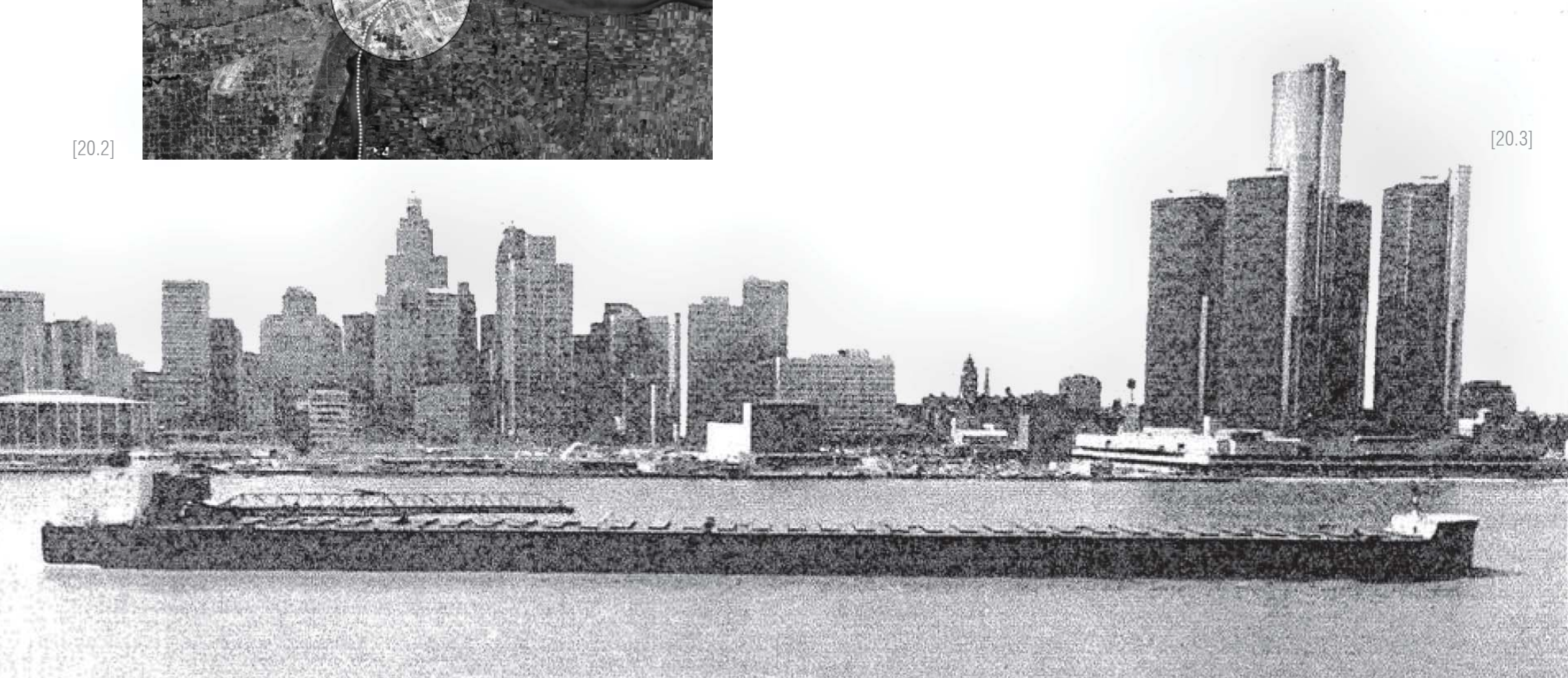
03 Crafting: Locating *Detroit/ Windsor Rail Tunnel*

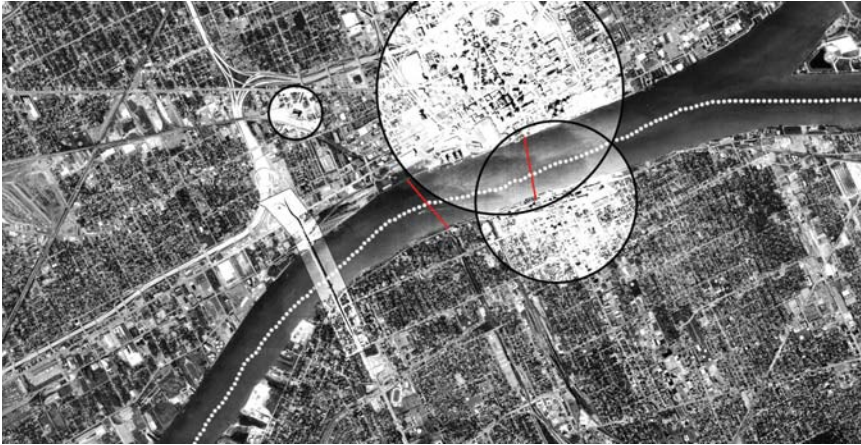
The chosen site is the abandoned tunnel between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario. The objectives of the site:

- to locate in a urban context to have a larger audience and more interaction
- to still have a lengthy journey in an urban context
- to find and utilize the natural qualities of the site to enhance the experience of the sacred
- and to locate near major public space, "to hide in plain site"

The site chosen provides the ideal opportunity to occupy an underground tunnel as natural pedestrian crossing and in the process create an archive of sacral experiences. The urban setting of Detroit and Windsor provides an excellent view-ership but still locates the experiences a little ways away in the creating another world in a sense.

[20.3]





[21.1]

Detroit and Windsor plus underground tunnels

The site has several layers to consider.

The Detroit South waterfront has been neglected as of late, and one of the proposed aspects of the project is to develop large public space on the riverfront that works in conjunction with the rest of the cities public spaces. Windsor already developed their waterfront into a successful sculptural park. The tunnel would plug into both of these opportunities.

Currently, there are two major vehicular crossings, but no pedestrian friendly one. This project proposed that pedestrian crossing. However, this is an international boundary, and border crossing becomes an issue. This is resolved through the use of a card system already in place for many people in Detroit. The card is used for quick access to either side of river. This would be the same system utilized in the tunnel.

[21.2]



Central Business District, Detroit

boardwalk

proposed park

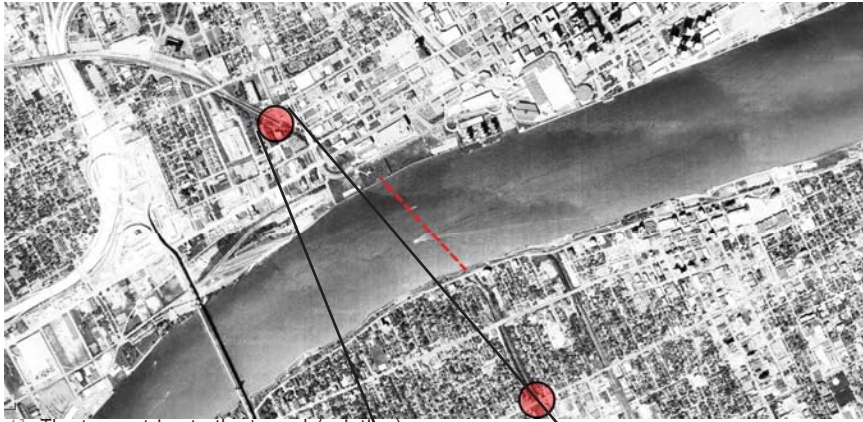
existing park

Metropolitan, Windsor

The underwater portion of the tunnel runs about 2600 feet in length, park to proposed park.
The skyline in the distance shows the major audience of the project to be the downtown districts of Detroit and Windsor.

[22.0]





[23.1] The two entries to the tunnel (existing)

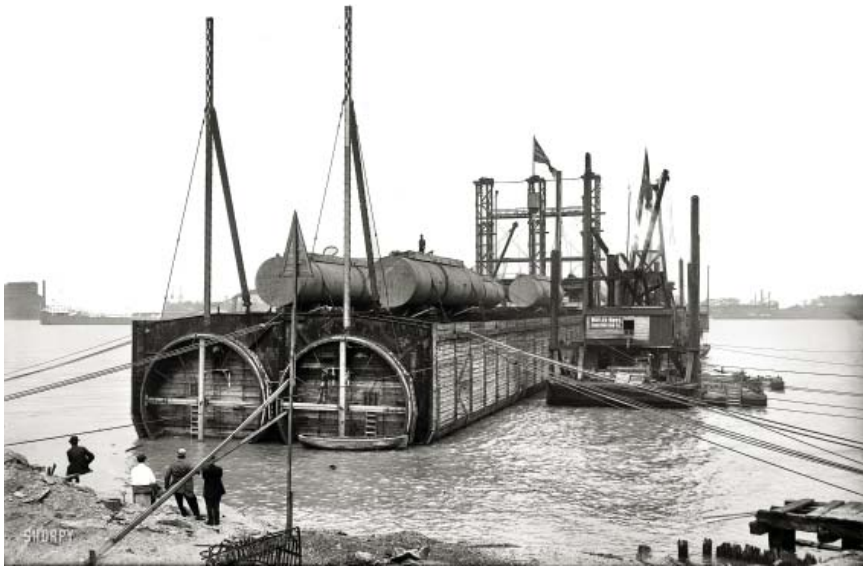
[23.2]



The tunnel exists as an old railway that was put out of use about 40 years ago (1972) because the new train cars could no longer fit inside. As a result, the tunnel was abandoned and the infrastructure was left to deteriorate (such as the Michigan Rail Central Station).

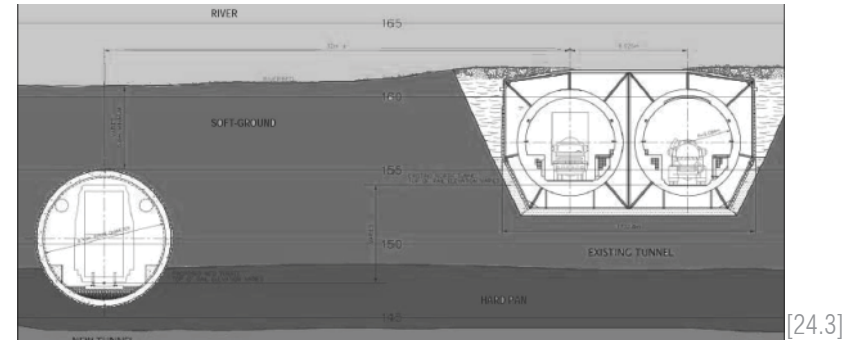
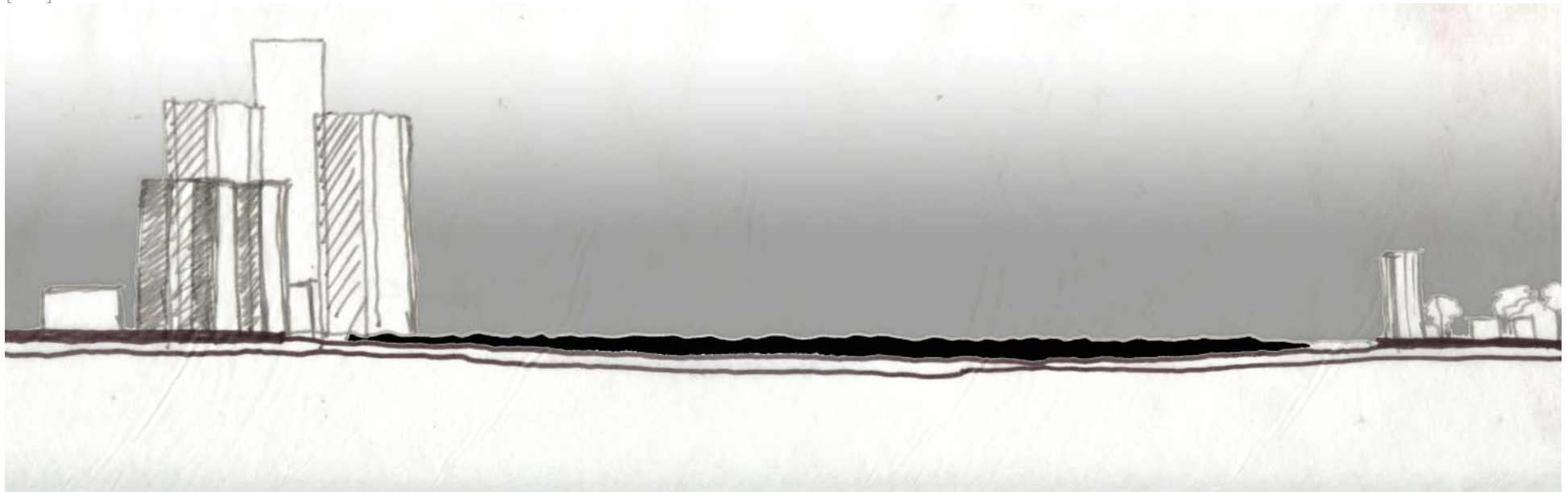
The tunnel since then has had to be patrolled daily by policemen in order to stop potential crime as well as prevent curious people from getting hurt inside of the tunnel (deaths are not uncommon annually).

The actual penetrations into the earth (seen below) do not occur at the river but rather between 1 to 2 miles back from the river shore. This is a little too long for a pedestrian crossing underground however and the entries into the pedestrian crossing would be



[24.1] "Sinking the tunnel"

[24.2] Site section



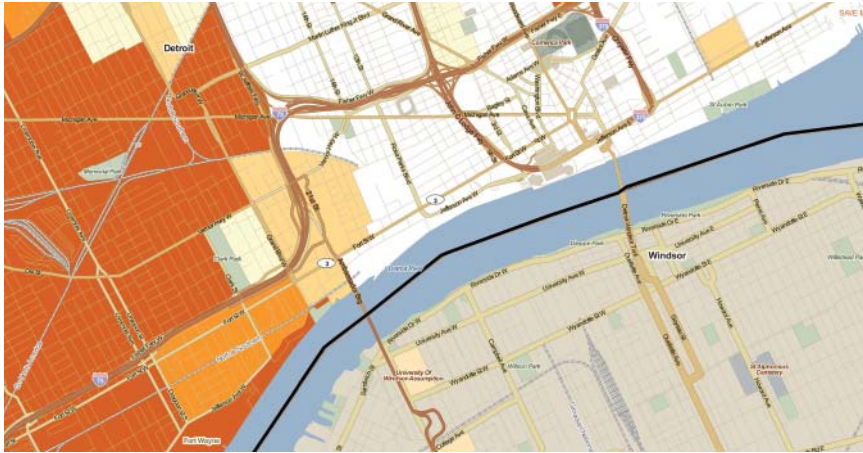
[24.3]

The tunnel was constructed around 1910 via cutting out part of the river and weighting down the tunnel until it could be secured. This made construction easier due to the prefabricated nature of the pieces. They could built off site then floated down the river to the tunnel location.

The tunnel resides at the river bottom and is about 17 meters wide overall measuring from tunnel wall to tunnel wall. This has the potential to allow for a less linear path through the tunnel although this is questionable due to still limited movement this allows.

The Detroit River runs relatively flat at its deepest running about 40 feet deep. this makes for a very wide and shallow section. The proposed pedestrian crossing would benefit from this flatter path though since the already disconcerting feeling of being under a river is enough to put some at unease.

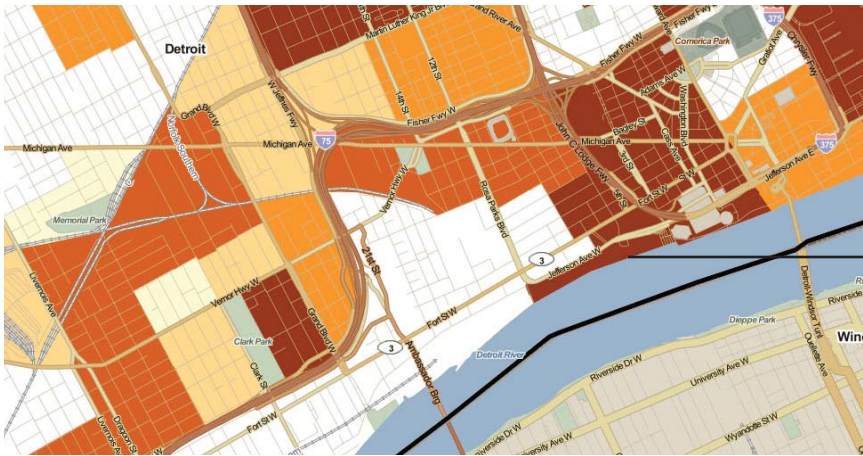
[25.1]



These drawings show more demographic information on the relevant regions of Detroit.

The first diagram shows the density of housing based upon the number of occupants. The majority of families live to the west of the downtown district relative to the site). This means that most would take the metro to the downtown district although some could walk the mile or two if they chose to.

[25.2]



However, the density of housing units places a larger chunk of the population much closer to the site. The riverfront apartments especially (see previous pages) exemplify the typical condition of the city dwelling around the area.

[25.3]

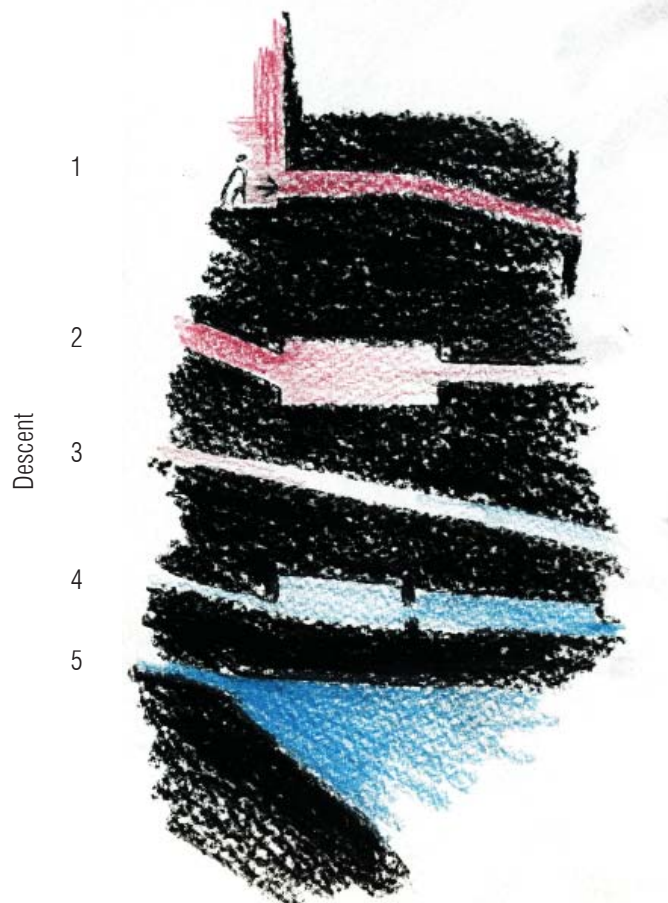


The final diagram shows the density of border crossing card carriers. The highest densities exist around the Ambassador Bridge and the Underground vehicular crossing. However, the primary pedestrian audience of downtown Detroit would be able to utilize the crossing without any problems.

[26.1]



The Nameless City



[26.2]

03 Crafting Referencing: The Nameless City

H.P. Lovecraft was an Edgar Allen Poe contemporary and part of the romantic horror movement. He sensed that there was certain sense of the sacred or as the movement would refer to it as the “uncanny”. Similar to how the pastoral was a reaction to the railroad, the uncanny was the reaction against the de-mystification of life.

This experience described in one short story, *The Nameless City*, is of one man’s encounter with the sacred.

It begins with the man seeking the nameless city in the middle of the desert that no one will acknowledge. He eventually finds this city, a complete ruin, without possibility of telling its age.

He explores the city and slowly progresses through to the older sections, discovering a small religious space. He enters through a small hole in the back amidst a terrifying howl escaping from the opening. It is a downward descent without perceivable end.

He moves downward into the darkness his torch eventually dying. He crawls at times, stands at others and is slowly consumed by the environment.

The light that originally lit his path slowly dies and is replaced by a different sort of light that emanates from deeper region of descent. Along the way, the man encounters a series of antechambers covered in hieroglyphics and tell a story that unsettles him.

But then, he discovers to source of the light at the very end of the final chamber. It is a mystery to him. He creeps forward to investigate and discovers a huge metal door that is utilized to cover the entry to the light. And right when he is about crawl into the chamber of light, a terrifying howl rushes past him slamming the door shut. The man does not recall how he made it out.

The point of the story is the mystery and discovery of that mystery, not necessarily the solving of it. The change in section and of light contribute to this journey and spatially emphasize the hierarchy and discovery. w



[27.1]



[27.2]

Krakow Square Museum Krkow, Poland

In the main square of Krakow, a small glass pyramid pokes up out of the ground. It is a mystery as to what exactly it is or what it does. It provokes a desire to investigate the source of this protrusion. This begins a journey of discovery through which the viewer scours the square for the entry ultimately discovering the Krakow Square underground museum.

The museum hides on plain site beneath the primary space of the entire city. The idea behind this is the juxtaposition of the mystery with the extremely mundane nature of the public space. The proposed project seeks to take advantage of this same mechanic (to a degree).

[28.1]



[28.2]



[28.3]

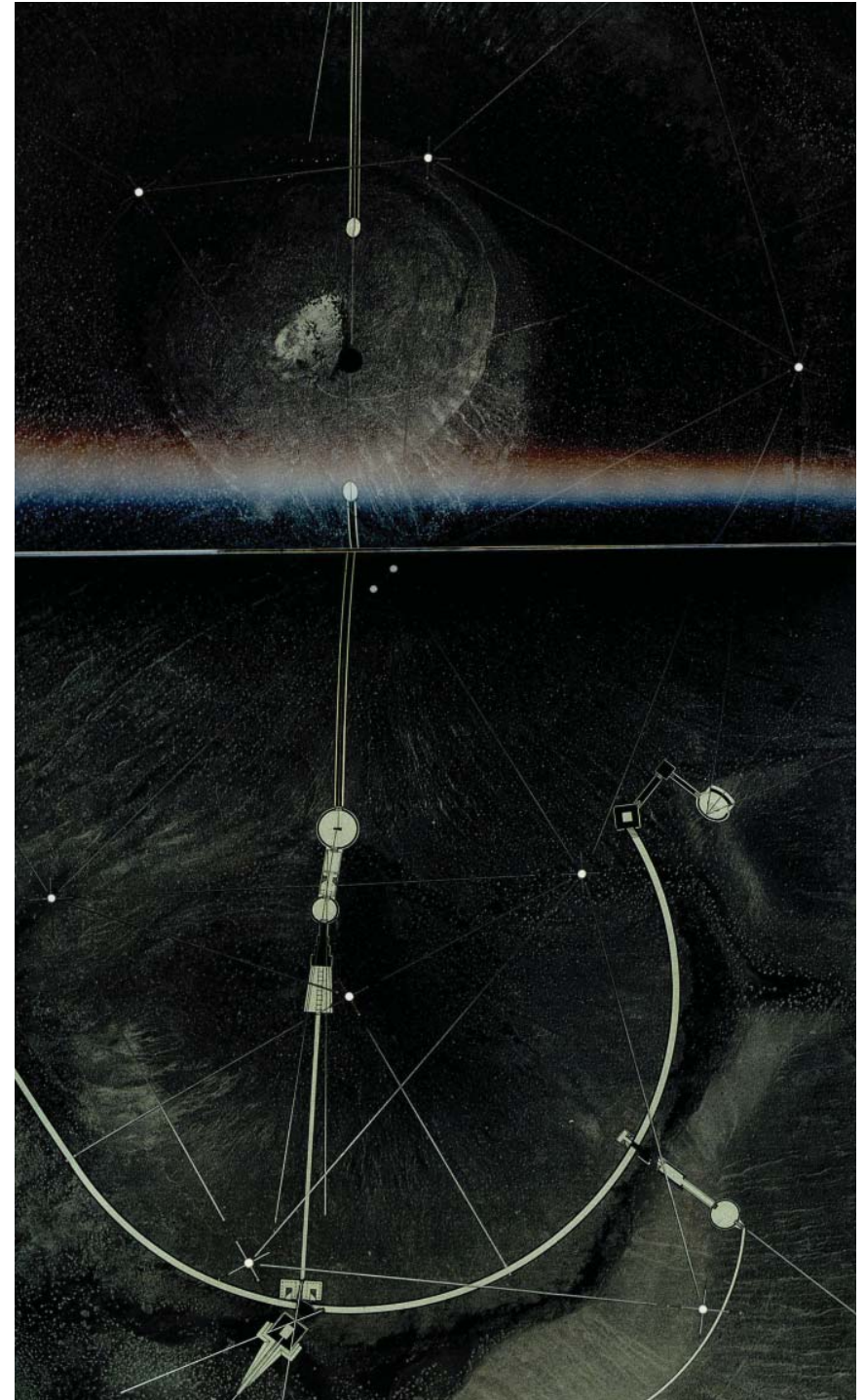


The Roden Crater
James Turrell

This project provides one example of the procession to site through a labyrinth of spatial and visual manipulation.

In order to experience the full “celestial vaulting” in the crater, one must venture into the desert environment and proceed by foot through a series of tunnels and anti-chambers with various visual manipulations. The intent is to give the viewer multiple perceptions of the sky from various orientations either on a Cartesian system or for more rare celestial phenomena such as an eclipse.

This builds up an anticipation before the climax and allows for the possibility of satisfaction due to the participants effort in getting there.



[28.4]



[29.1]

03 referencing: 9/11 Memorial

The 9/11 Memorial provides another contemporary example of the hint of the sacred within Western Society. The memorial represents the two towers footprints within the city fabric and the remembrance of them is solidified in water.

However, while one can see the bottom of the main pools, there exists a second hole in the center that one cannot see the bottom of, hinting at the abyss and at the unknowing mystery of the tragedy and death caused so many to question the sacred and being.



[29.2]

[30.1]



The Judd Compound - Marfa, Texas
Donald Judd

The Judd compound provides another example very similar to that of the Roden Crater. The purpose of Judd's moving to Marfa was to do art on "art's on terms". The town is remote and away from the baggage of New York City.

The compound features several more phenomenological experiences. A series of concrete boxes (1 km long) line the right hand side of the map. These are a series of experiments meant to be processed through having various degrees of views in and out and interacting with the sun at different times throughout the day.

Inside the barrack (the U shaped buildings to the left), a series of installations exists from various other artists such as Dan Flavin all playing off the secluded exclusive context of Marfa.

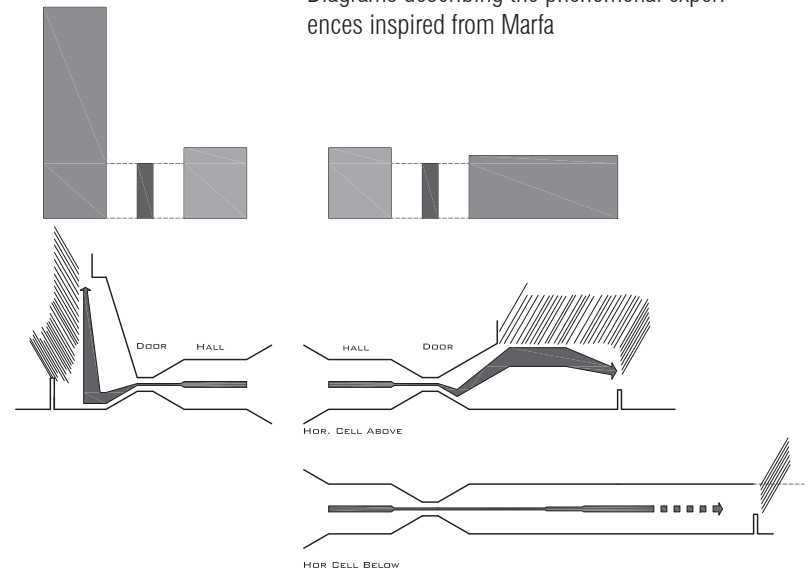


Flavin lights

[30.2]

[30.3]

Diagrams describing the phenomenal experiences inspired from Marfa



[30.4]



Judd Boxes

[30.5]

[30.6]

[31.1]

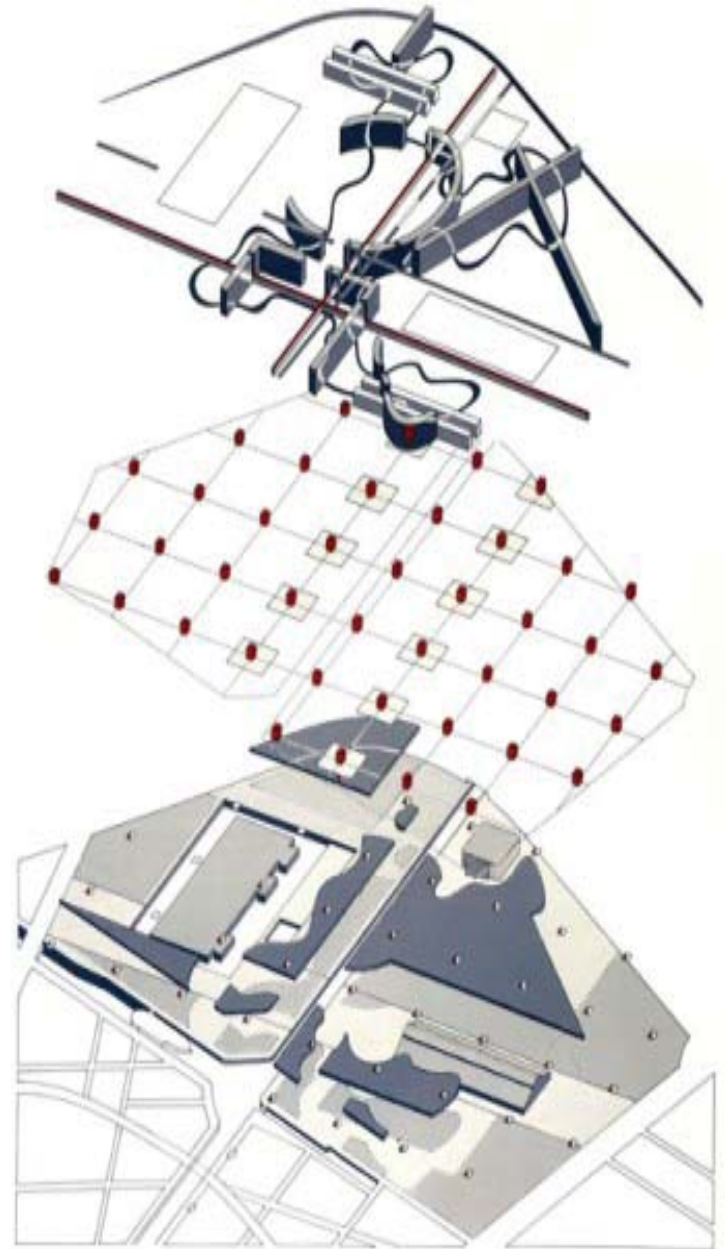


Parc de la Villette
-Bernard Tschumi

The Parc de la Villette contains a number of architectural follies in addition to theaters, playgrounds, etc. These follies are a visual spectacle and mental puzzle for both adults and children as they move through the park.

Due to the size of the project, it is more useful as an analogy for a “variety of experiences” in succession. Each folly presents a different quality than the last correlating with perhaps a succession of rooms with various sensory experiences. These are simply more movement dependent.

The relevant part of this project is the idea of the series of experiences and the non-linear fashion they are arranged in. The project proposal engages in a series of spaces and the mechanic of how to organize them whether linear or as a series of options remains to be explored.



[31.2]



High Line by Diller-Scofidio
New York City, New York

The high line is a walking park utilizing an existing raised railway infrastructure. The park meanders around the city penetrating in and around buildings with a more or less arbitrary series of sub-moments interspersed throughout the walk.

The relevant parts are the reuse of existing infrastructure and the walking park idea. The only difference with the proposal is that it resides underground. The useful bits of information such as the interspersed “still moments” (seen above) are extremely site specific and make use of natural views and existing elements.

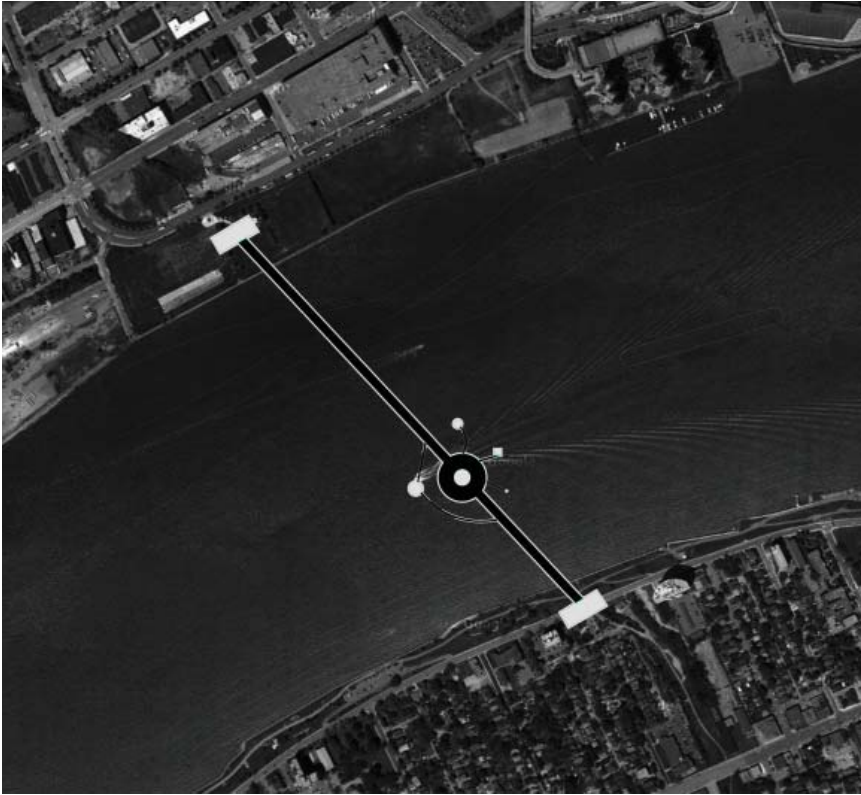
The underground proposal has the inherent problem of having no views and relatively little to relate to in an exterior way, so the interstitial moments would need to be related to a more abstract idea, such as a series of chapels in which to watch the sky in various ways, since the only visual relationship is up.



[forming]

From the city, a series of protrusions would be seen rising from the river provoking a curiosity as to what was there. This is the mystery of the program. These protrusions reflect the spaces beneath: either the phenomenal chambers or other various spaces depending on the procession through the tunnel. Some of these spaces would be inhabitable, others, merely about looking or perceiving the weight of the river above.





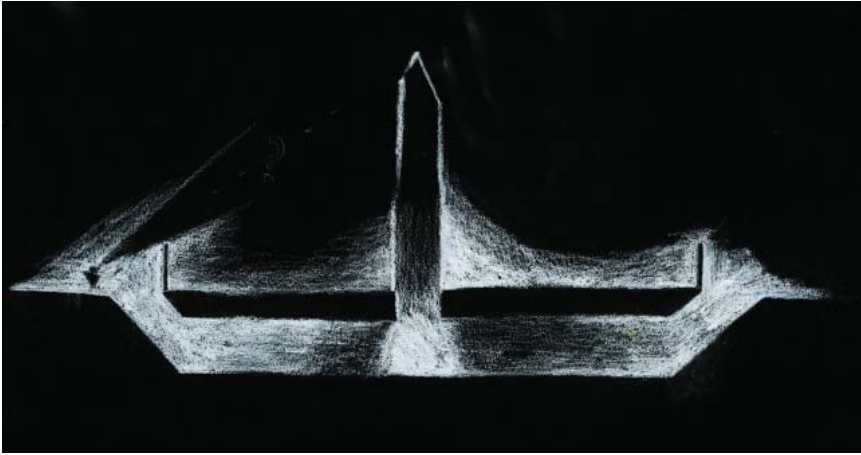
These two possible organizations show how the experiences may be laid out along the procession.

The first concentrates the experiences into one area making it a central hub. This would consolidate the experience into one area as a destination along a path. Right now, it is biased toward the Windsor side of the river. The intention is to poke up above the water and appeal more to the view of the Detroit Skyline, which is more prominent.

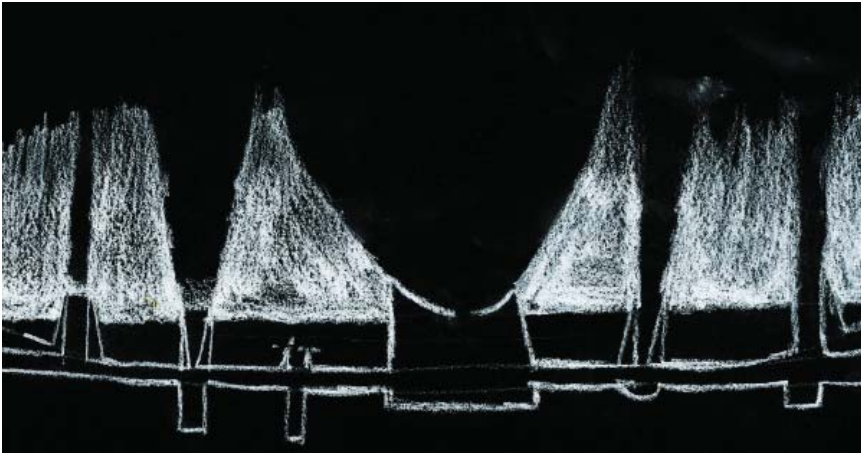


The second possible organization shows a more linear sequence of experiences. The viewer would walk along the path and pass by a series of doorways. This “stumbling upon” becomes a part of the mystery-discovery experience that started above water.

There would be two connections on either side of the river rising up into the public spaces that inhabit both sides of the river. The procession would allow for a seen object (the protrusions), an exploration down into the water and path to investigate, a discovery, and then a coming back out on top to once again look at the protrusions. The reconciliation is difficult since the towers cannot be approached on eye level.



This is an example of the irreconcilability of the tower. The tower is concealed through distance and the lack of equal approach. The person sees the tower, investigates the mystery, but never fully realizes the connection in reality, but merely mentally.



This is one potential section across the river. It shows potential forms for poking out of the water and allowing light to penetrate down into the tunnel. Some protrusions also penetrate down into the earth likening to the 9/11 memorial and the hint at something further.

[works cited and bibliography]

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- [1.0] Cover image – *Vestiges of the Sacred* – personal drawing
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- [29.1] Perceived hole in 9/11 monument
- [29.2] photograph of 9/11 monument – common property
- [30.1] map of Judd Compound from Google maps and Photoshop
- [30.2, 30.3, 30.4, 30.5] personal photographs and drawings
- [31.1, 31.2] Tschumi, Bernard. Parc De La Villette. Digital image. Arch Daily. N.p., 9 Jan. 2011. Web. 8 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.archdaily.com/92321/ad-classics-parc-de-la-villette-bernard-tschumi/>>.
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- [32.2, 32.3] – personal photographs of High Line
- [32.4] Diller-Scofidio. *The Highline*. 2006-Present. New York City, New York. For Love of Exploration. Web. 10 Dec. 2012.

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[final project]

The Vestiges of the Sacred

As religiosity fades from Western society, a general apathy has begun to pervade contemporary life. The role of religion as the orientation point of life (for many people) has vanished leaving voids within the cultural fabric. The post-modern movement epitomized this well through the embrace of a life devoid of purposeful meaning and infinite interpretation. Through this we have lost the sense of the sacred and the careful reverence of things higher than ourselves.

How can architecture induce this sense of the sacred?

Site: Abandoned Railway Tunnel (Detroit to Windsor)

Program: Pedestrian crossing and Contemplative Park

Goal: design a daily ritual journey for the people of Detroit and Windsor

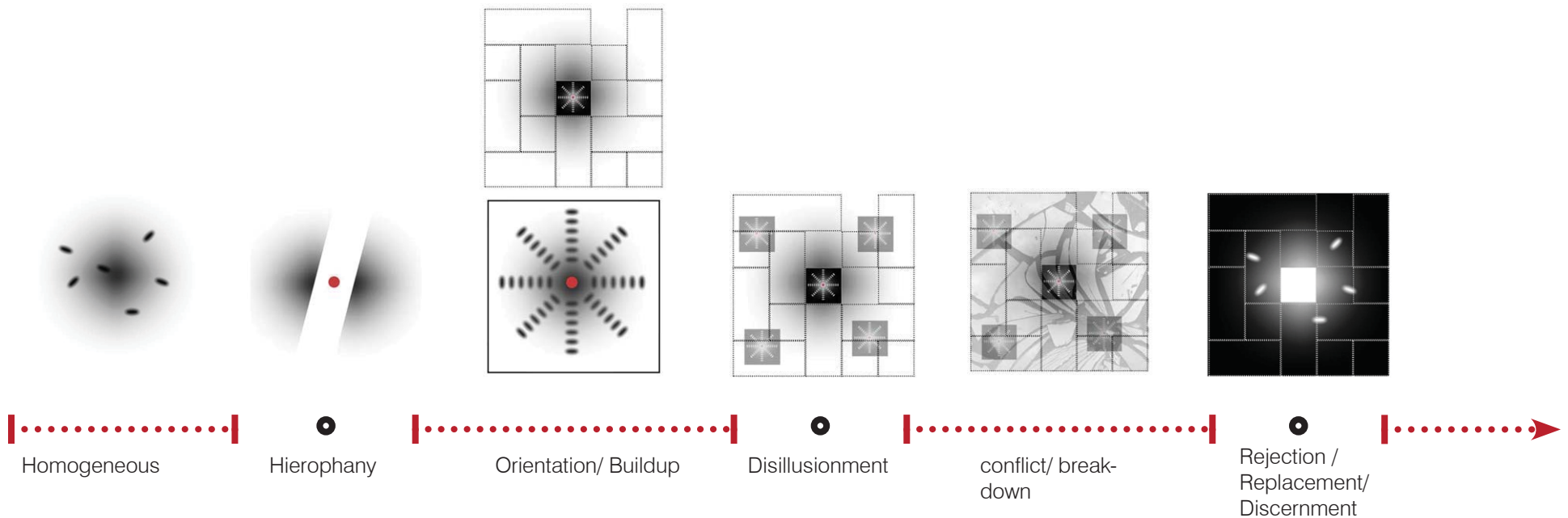
The tunnel is devoid of context. The viewer has no immediate connection with the outside world, priming them for an emotionally altering experience. As the viewer makes his way through the tunnel, he experiences various aspects of the sacred (silence, isolation, darkness, edifice, and the sublime) with the hopes that these experiences over time would prompt contemplation on a daily basis.

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Program

Border Crossing Stations (Two)	
Vestibule	2000 sf
Checkpoints (office + open window)	4 x 200 sf 2x 800 sf
Bathrooms	
Administration	3 x 150 sf
office	800 sf
conference	200 sf
storage	
Space of Disillusionment	
Restaurant	3000 sf
kitchen	1500 sf
Art Galleries	20 x 500 sf
River amphitheater	3000 sf
Space of the Hierophany (main spaces)	
Theater Space	10000 sf
Exhibition Space	6000 sf
Observation Tower	2000 sf
Vestibule	5000 sf





Explanation

The evolution of the sacred, or rather a culture's understanding of the sacred is the same as any human relationship. In the beginning, there is nothing, or homogeneity in life and living. Then, the hierophany occurs shattering the homogeneity of living. This is equated with falling in love or an infatuation.

A culture or relationship is built upon said event and this becomes the basis for being.

However, after a period of time disillusionment overcomes the original infatuation. Doubt enters in and a questioning begins.

Culture breaks down, relationships break off, and the Israelites worship a golden calf.



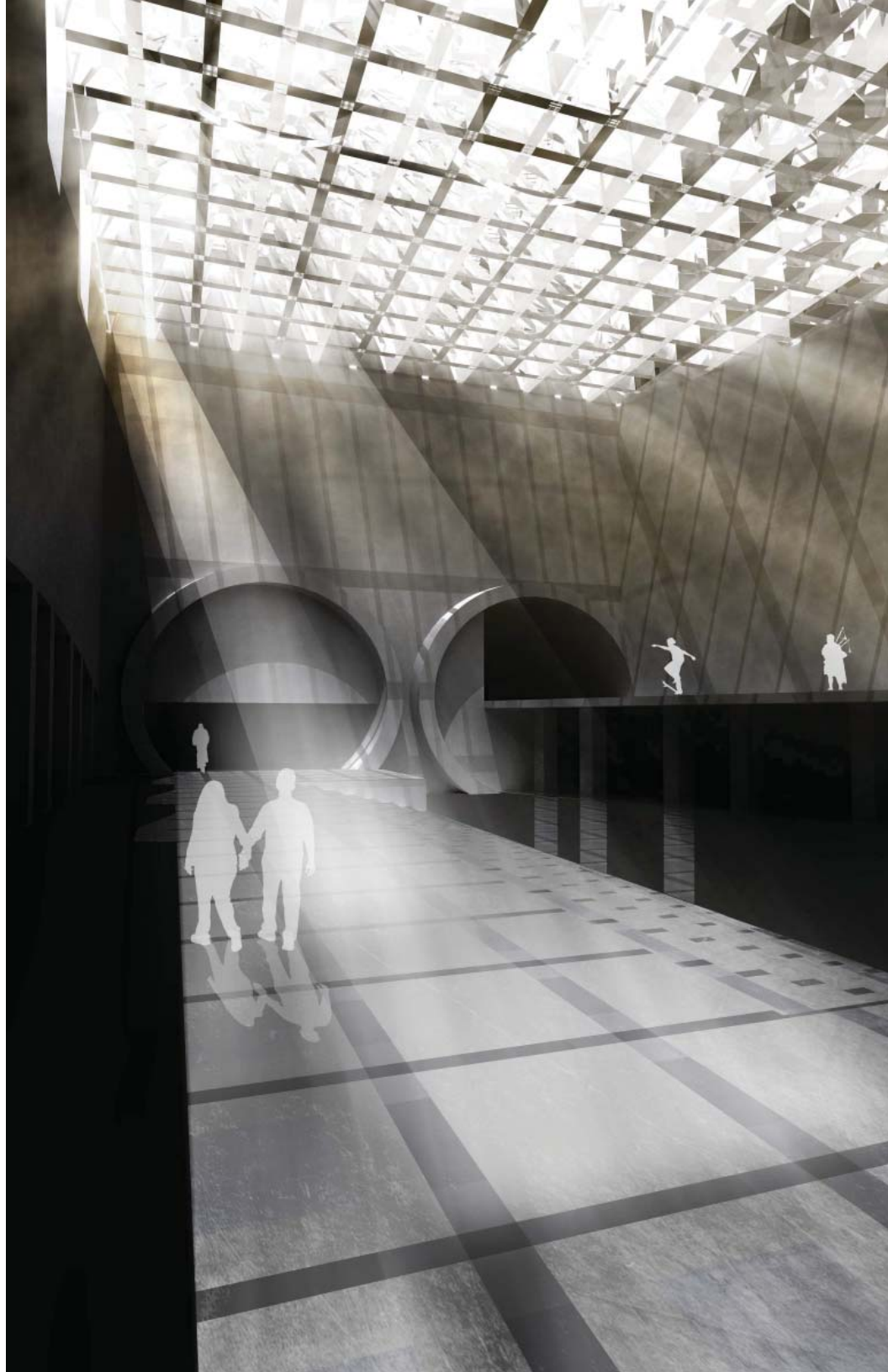


The Main View

The tunnel was selected out of its jarring contextual change. It is in close proximity to the city, but still very far away psychologically.

This view from the city represents a mystery to the people. It provokes a curiosity, perhaps not in a childlike joyful sense, but somewhat forboding.

This sense of mystery shrouds the tunnel and primes the visitors for a life altering experience involving the sacred.



The Border Crossing Station

How is this space elevated to enhance the experience of the sacred?

This space embodies a power cathedral sense of lighting that conveys not only the grandeur of the tunnel but a more ethereal, timeless atmosphere. This is important to juxtapose the Detroit city life “the city of fear” with a place that not only may offer a leisurely escape, but address the city in a more universal sense. What do you say to a city so consumed with its own problems?



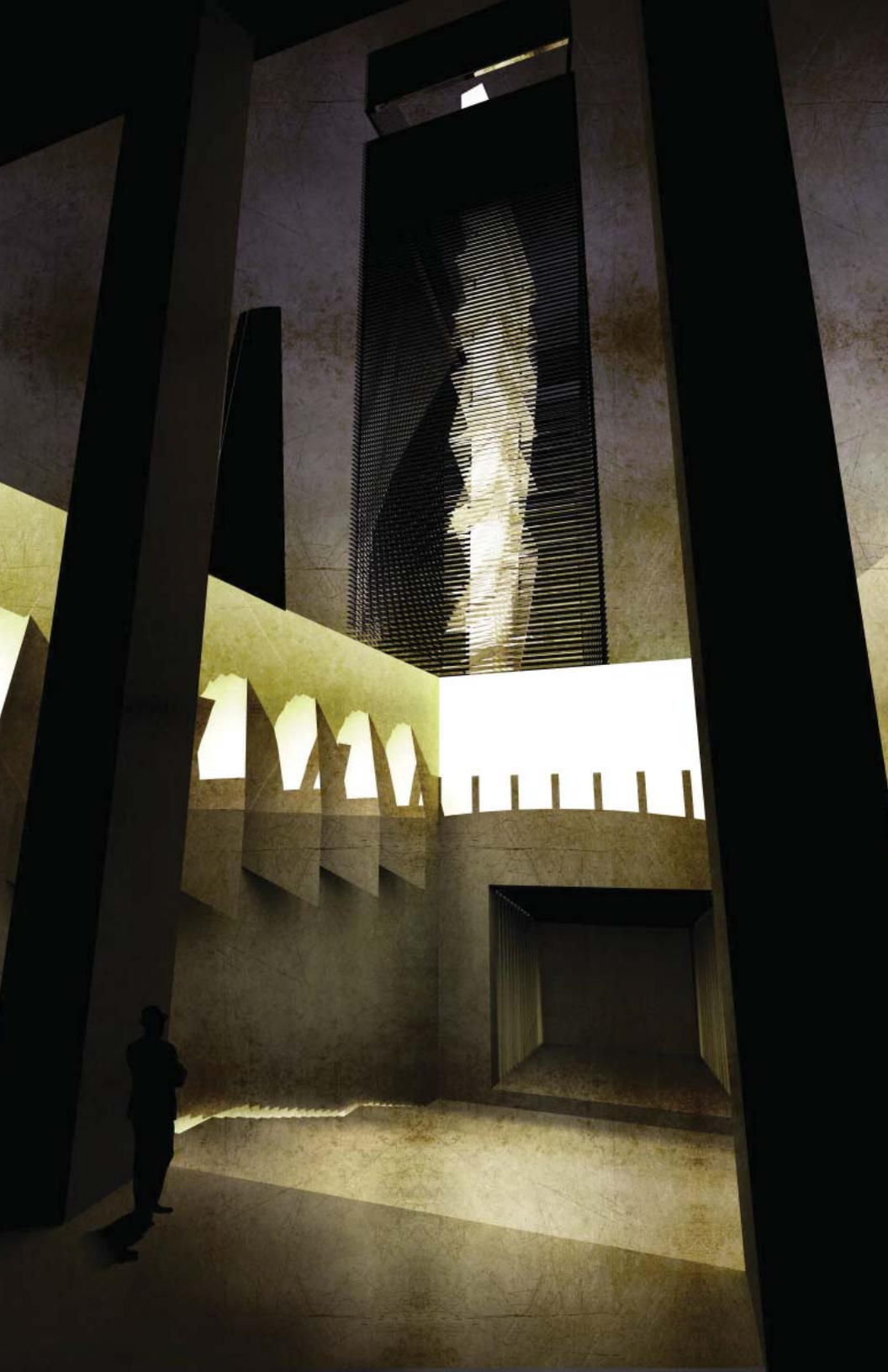
The space of Disillusionment

The modern movement effectively destroyed a large portion of ritual and tradition built up over over centuries. This rejection of historical continuity eventually led us to where we are today, an existential crisis where we have embodied a purely scientific material standard of living.

This space tries to convey this crisis of living through demonstrating the disunity and discontinuities within contemporary culture. The idea is to create a heterarchy. As opposed to hierarchy, a heterarchy denies the existence of order and ultimately the sacred. In fact, the idea of the sacred is foundational to the discovery of hierarchy.

The heterarchy has no climactic experience, and no real aim.

The question is whether it is possible to truly design a heterarchy? This space has a path running through it implying direction denying the truest sense of heterarchy.



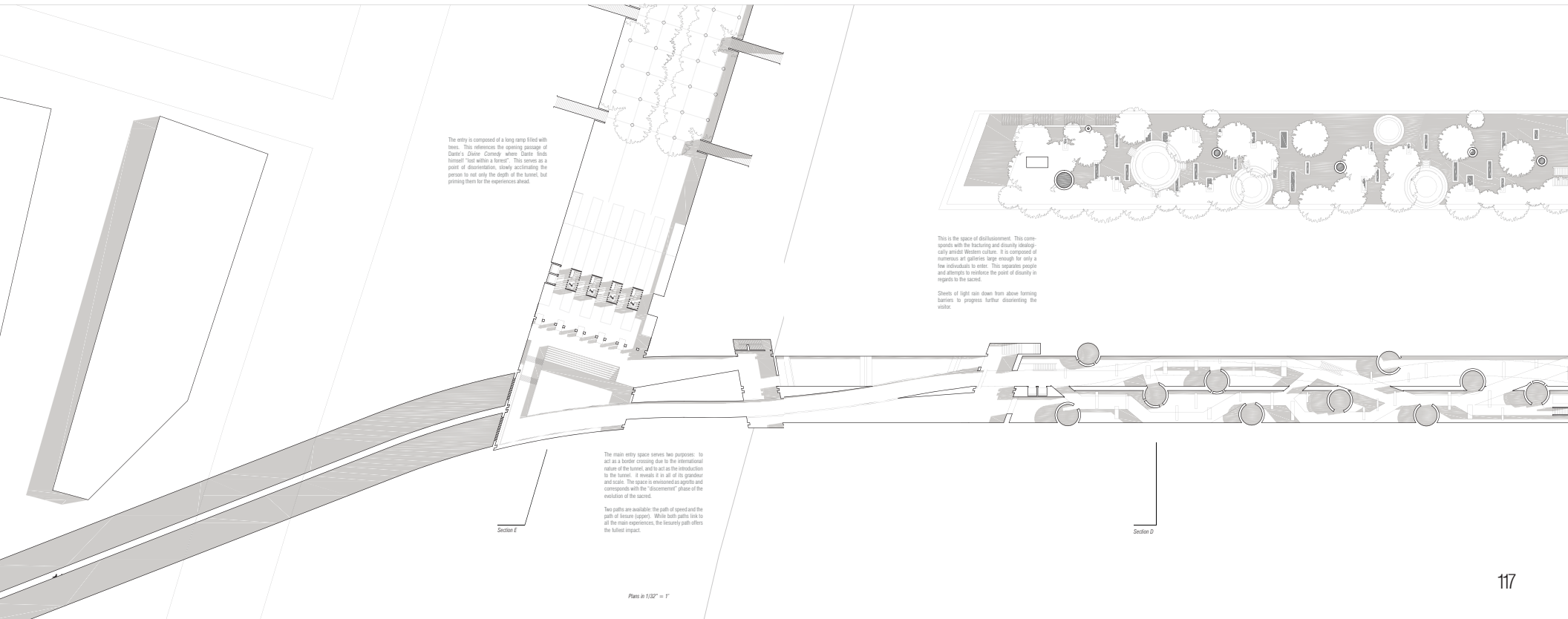
Hierophany

It is impossible to create a hierophany, a manifestation of the sacred. We can establish ritual and remembrance around such events and realities, but we cannot control or manipulate it.

This space acts in an allegorical sense of hierophany. It references other forms, emotions, and ideals to present a hierophanous space.

The theatre as unified experience and unified worship acts as a mediator between the idea of a hierophany and the individual.

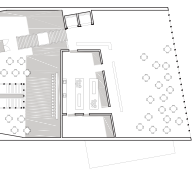
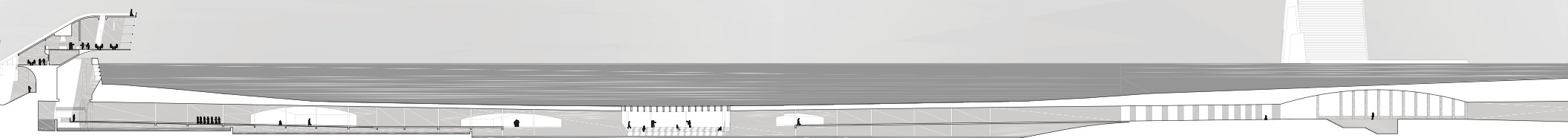
If the goal of this project is to link the modern man to the sacred, how many barriers of experience have to be broken to strike the chord of change?



A field exists above the space of disavowment that is not part of the main procession, but instead accommodates a more mundane recreational need for leisure. The air galleries connect to the surface and it becomes a park filled with foliage.

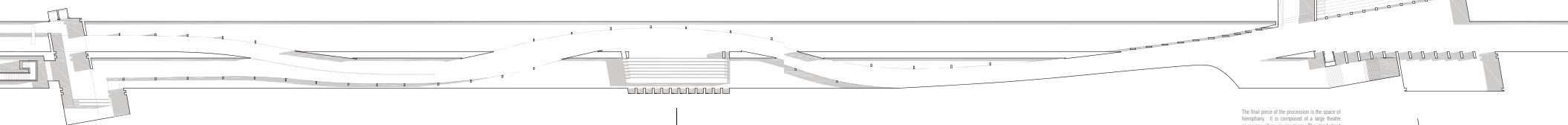
A restaurant exists at the end that frames the road stop of the procession and marks the edge of the shopping lane as well as the existence of a program under the river.

A waterfall also forms below creating a spatial threshold that follows the visitor under the river.



This piece of the tunnel is the tensile moment in the project. It tries to convey a sense of weight and suspense within the drama.

A small amphitheater with a broken roof (see section to right) reveals the depth and weight of the water as well as acting as an underwater viewing platform for passing barges.



The final piece of the procession is the space of hemisphericity. It is composed of a large theater space as well as viewing tower. The idea behind the hemisphericity is a hierarchy. The tower marks the moment within the river and acts as the climactic experience. The theater counteracts the individual air galleries with a group experience (unity). The relationship is much more allegorical or symbolic especially in reference to older classics (Egyptian pyramids, Roman Catholic bell towers, minarets, or the monolith from the Space Odyssey).

Section C

Section B

Section A

