The Unfamiliar Familiar | An Exploration into the Architectural Uncanny

Jessica P. Peters
jpeter69@vols.utk.edu

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Architecture has long aimed to facilitate feelings of calm, cool, and collective. There have been extensive studies of lighting, color theory, and material investigation. Architects know that daylighting is good for the soul, and the color green is restorative, and that wood is a warm natural material. We have asked all the right questions: How can architecture foster feelings of connectedness throughout communities? How can architecture amplify positive emotions to create spaces that users want to inhabit?

These questions have been asked enough. It is time to ask a new set of questions.

Do architects really get to decide which emotions are worth designing for? If architecture is designed for positive emotions, architecture should also design for negative emotions.

There is as much to learn from negative architecture as there is from positive architecture. In positivity, design is optimistic and idealistic, but in negativity, it is pragmatic and realistic. A negative architecture is the essential foil for the world as it stands in the moment.

The natural progression of thought when contemplating negativity is horror. This genre, whether in cinema, literature, or art, is one of the only places that we see architecture painted as a deliberate antagonist. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes more obvious that the architecture itself is not horrible, as in of horror, but instead is the uncanny backdrop for horrible things to happen.

Imagine- the decrepit house is not the one inflicting psychological stress on our protagonist. Perhaps the rotting boards and shuttered windows provide an unease, but what is truly creating horror is the specter that inhabits the house.

The unease caused by the built environment of the haunted house narrative- that is the uncanny.

The uncanny, as a concept, is nebulus at best. It is a topic that has its stake in several fields of thought. In recent history, it has been regarded in terms of “The Uncanny Valley” (discussed on page 32). In terms of the built, it is time for a reevaluation of what it means to design for an uncanny architecture.

The following research aims to gather the existing realms of thought regarding the uncanny, categorize them, and then distill them into a concept fitting of the current day and age.

Using this updated definition of the uncanny, architecture can then be questioned and reconsidered: How can the uncanny be utilized to create a moment of pause in a user? Can it be used to bring attention to differing states of the human body, of culture, or even bring attention to the architecture itself?

How can uncanny architecture become less of a backdrop and more of a main antagonist?

Unease and discomfort can be used to the advantage of a designer. It is not something to shy away from. It is time to question the idealistic nature of design and create a new realm of perception and experience that expands our understanding of the world.
Architecture is a part of every life, of every story, of every memory. It is the background character that no one pays much attention to.

But, in discussing the uncanny, this character rises to the forefront. Being the backdrop for something to happen begins to play more of a role than it ever has before.

Consider the images above, they are unassuming scenes. Designed each to be a nostalgia and a future, but both are one in the same in their ability to create a place for plotline to play out.

Architecture has to be prepared for anything to happen. Whether a crisis of heart or a gruesome crime.
The uncanny is a defamiliarization of something fundamentally familiar. This could exist in cases of the repressed becoming expressed, the inanimate questioning its animation, reality blurring the lines of dream, technology splintering reality, or the domestic being altered. Defamiliarization can come in the form of conditional duality like in moments of intense contrast or drastic change; it could be taking expectations and negating them. These defamiliarizations create an unease and discomfort that, while not intolerable, is unsettling and off-putting to varying degrees.

When the repressed becomes expressed, the primordial idea of sorcery is applied to the unexplainable, and humanity must deal with a new unfamiliar cognitive dissonance.

When the inanimate questions its animation, a mannequin becomes too human-like, and humanity must deal with the possible unfamiliar threat.

When reality blurs the line of dream, the human scale is ignored, and humanity must deal with the unfamiliar shift in scale, no longer being the basis for proportion.

When technology splinters reality, virtual reality provides a unperfect duplication, and humanity must deal with the reconciliation of two planes of reality at once.

When the domestic is being altered, the home is being invaded by rot and decay, and humanity must deal with the nostalgia and implications for their futures.

This, of course, is a list of bare examples. The uncanny relies heavily on political, cultural, and environmental climates of a certain epoch, and therefore can not be generalized in its entirety.

Vidler writes that “[i]f there is a single premise to be derived from the study of the uncanny in modern culture, it is that there is no such thing as an uncanny architecture, but simply architecture that, from time to time and for different purposes, is invested with uncanny qualities.”¹ (Vidler is further discussed on page 18).

To Vidler, I say perhaps. Maybe there is not such thing as an entirely uncanny architecture. Maybe it is too specific to person, to time, to culture- but there are some things that are universally familiar enough that can be made unfamiliar enough that the uncanny can transcend some of these issues.

The idea of the uncanny interweaves itself with the notion of the surreal, magical realism and the sublime in some cases, and in creating a definition specific to this point in history, technology and its ability to alter and environment will play a large role in experimentation.

Determining how to create an architecture that unsettles as much as it is beautiful, even in a grotesque way- I believe this is where the potential lies moving forward with the research.

¹ Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, 12
SUPPORTING
The supporting portion of this research was critical. In trying to redefine the uncanny, it was imperative to absorb as many different realms of thought as possible. This section carried more weight than the methodology section in importance because of this.

The research started with *Horror in Architecture* when the research topic was still centered around horror as a genre. Special thanks must be given to Professor George Dodds who saw me reading this book and then pointed me in the direction of *The Architectural Uncanny*. It was *The Architectural Uncanny* that really aimed the research going forward. It provided fantastic examples of precedents and a list of more intellectual allies (discussed further starting on page 39).

The work of Jentsch and Freud were necessary after they were heavily mentioned in Vidler’s work. Freud builds off of Jentsch’s work, as he thought it was wildly understated. Almost all work after 1919 mentions Freud’s *Das Unheimliche* in some way. To understand the uncanny in any sense, these two works were required reading.

The rest of the readings were found by happenstance looking in nearby areas at Hodges library and in related reading suggestions. There is a wide berth of content in these readings, but they relate to the uncanny in different ways.

The precedents included range from art, to video, to architecture, to technology. The uncanny can be observed in a variety of disciplines— that is what makes it so special. While it is subjective, there are some precedents that cause an unease in most viewers. The following research discusses each precedent’s purpose and merit within this research. While some may not directly relate to the field of architecture, it is important to look at adjacencies within the uncanny that can be applied to architecture in less literal ways.

Comaroff and Ker-Shing were detrimental to the shift of this research moving from a deep dive into horror to a deep dive into the uncanny. They make an important distinction between the two— that the uncanny is much more subtle and abstracted than horror. While the uncanny may not be as apparent as horror, many of the elements of horrible architecture can also be applied to the uncanny: “doubling, reiteration, disproportion, formlessness, shifts of scale, excess parts or openings, [and] solidarity.” Horror in architecture they describe as “the techniques of one historical moment are applied to the needs of another.” This is the main point at which I think the book fails itself. The statement feels too much of a binary and leaves little room for experimentation with the mixing of historical and contemporary.

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1 Comaroff & Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture*, 15-30
2 Comaroff & Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture*, 16
3 Comaroff & Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture*, 32
The Architectural Uncanny
Anthony Vidler
1992

“Architecture has been intimately linked to the notion of the uncanny since the end of the eighteenth century. At one level, the house has provided a site for endless representations of haunting, doubling, dismembering, and other terrors and literature and art. At another level, the labyrinthine spaces of the modern city had been construed as the sources of modern anxiety, from revolution an epidemic to phobia and alienation.”

This book was crucial to the various realms of thought regarding the uncanny. Vidler does an amazing job pulling thinkers from multiple disciplines and discussing their views in relation to architecture and design. Many of the names he includes in his work are included in a catalog in the methodology section of this research. Vidler’s writing was key to figuring out how this research was going to develop. In part, the uncanny is highly reliant on the day and age, the current climate. So, being written in 1992, while still valid, Vidler’s research is already outdated. The political, social, and technological climate of the world has changed dramatically since 1992, and that is important to keep in mind while discussing Vidler’s thoughts.

On the Psychology of the Uncanny
Ernst Jentsch
1906

“No-one in the world is surprised under usual circumstances when he sees the sun rise in the morning...it is only when one deliberately removes such a problem from the usual way of looking at it- for the activity of understanding is accustomed to remain insensitive to such enigmas, as a consequence of the power behind the habitual- that a particular feeling of uncertainty quite often presents itself.”

Jentsch was one of the first intellectuals to discuss the uncanny in his work. However, he concluded quite quickly that defining the essence of the uncanny is not helpful since it is too subjective and personalized to be a universal definition. Instead, he discusses where in everyday life he sees the uncanny. He describes the feeling as an unease due to a "lack of orientation." Freud draws heavily on this research regarding the discussion of automaton and whether a subject is alive and animate or not. This would be where the uncanniness of corpses, skeletons, and human-likenesses come from.
Das Unheimliche (The Uncanny)
Sigmund Freud
1919

“...we can understand why German usage allows the familiar (das Heimlich, the ‘homely’) to switch to its opposite, the uncanny (das Unheimlich, the ‘unhomely’) ... for this the uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed.”

Freud mentions Jentsch in his research, but almost all research moving forward references Freud’s work in Das Unheimliche. Defining heimlich as homely, and unheimliche as the unhomely, at its core, is defined as the difference between being a familiar home and an unfamiliar place. This is also described as the repressed, what should stay hidden, and the uncovered brought to light. Freud brings up questions of the domestic, the death drive, fear of castration, wanting to return to the womb, and modern nostalgia. Freud’s fondness for dreams invades the uncanny as well, discussing how the uncanny is more than just the unhomely it is defamiliarization to the point of almost becoming a dream. This suggests there is also a connection between the uncanny and surrealism.

The Uncanny and the Afterlife of the Gothic
Manuela D’Amore
2021

“His interior is ruled by absence: absence of anecdotes, its inhabitants as well as the artist’s psyche. Therefore, the uncanniness of his interiors does not arise from the exposed psyche of the painter... but from the interior itself.”

Though a compilation of essays, I focused on Jun Mita’s “The Mechanism of the Uncanny in Vilhelm Hammershøi’s Interior Paintings” and Katherine O’Connor’s “The Haunted Reality of the Animated Form”. Mita discusses the mechanisms through which the uncanny is formed, which he believes that Freud neglected, and derives that “…the subject (what) evokes an uncanny sensation because of the factor (why) which is triggered by the agent (how).” O’Connor’s discussion of the uncanny in animation relates less to architecture than Mita and was mostly for my own interest. She discusses how animation “…flirts endlessly with the uncanny, not only in the bringing to life inanimate objects, but through the familiar and yet unfamiliar representations of our reality.”
Karandinou writes that “...the limitations of digital media provoke thought around the sensuous too. The sensuous is brought to attention by the uncanny and fragmented realities that digital media create.” If the uncanny is a blurring of boundary between the familiar and unfamiliar, reality and the dream, then digital media is accepting and catalyzing that boundary disappearance. Karandinou also discusses more tangible methods of the uncanny in the digital media like the camera and the microphone that create an unease in the midst of surveillance. There is mention of Mark Wigley and his thoughts about “…cities presenting themselves as a package of images and symbols, something that seems uncanny.” This connects to Walter Benjamin claiming the uncanny was born out of the rise of great cities.

Ruins are ideal: the perceiver’s attitudes counts so heavily that one is tempted to say ruins are a way of seeing. Of course they actually exist, but since the eighteenth century they are never just problems of maintenance. Rather, practically any human thing slipping into dereliction, the forecast of ruin, engages our feelings about where we see ourselves in history, early or late, and (in poignant cases) our feeling about how the world will end.
The paintings of Hammershøi were previously mentioned in the discussion of Mita's article in The Uncanny and the Afterlife of the Gothic. Mita considers the connection between the unease created by Hammershøi's mysterious interiors and Freud's definition of the gothic.

"...there are no crucial motives from which uncanniness arises in [Hammershøi's] interior, such as a dead person (e.g. Munch), a ghost-like or deformed human (e.g. Vuillard, Max Beckmann) or a murderer (e.g. Otto Dix). Hammershøi's interior is mostly deserted and vacant, and as mentioned above, it is characterized by the lack of an anecdote even though a human figure is depicted.... His interior is ruled by absence: absence of anecdotes, its inhabitants as well as the artist's psyche. Therefore, the uncanniness of his interiors does not arise from the exposed psyche of the painter as Adolphs indicates, but from the interior itself."  

The viewer looking at these paintings is immediately filled with questions: Where is this place? What time of day is it? Who is that? What is she doing? Will she turn around? It is these questions that are symptoms of the uncanny created by Hammershøi. The viewer is uncomfortable because they simply do not know what is happening in a scene that should be familiar and comfortable.

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Mita, The Mechanism of the Uncanny in Vilhelm Hammershøi's Interior Paintings, 89-90
In this proof-of-concept short film, a man living in a future Mexico City starts to remember a past that he does not recognize. He sees a woman and realizes that she is missing from his life.18 This internal conflict is amplified by the surreal environment around him. The architecture has evolved to rebuild itself when it is damaged. In creating duplicate copies of itself, small errors that are inevitable in copies start to morph the architecture into something unfamiliar. That is where the uncanny appears. The architecture becomes unrecognizable and unfamiliar with repeated iterations. In the end, what remains is a sort of surreal glitch architecture.

SUNDAYS
MISCHA ROZEMA
2015

This precedent was discovered purely by coincidence, but it is a great example of how common the uncanny is in popular culture.

“Guest” is a horror short film on YouTube that follows a young woman trying to escape this creature. She breaks into a home, and when the creature reaches her, she harms herself to rid herself of her senses in aims to not perceive the creature anymore.19

The creature is what makes this short film horrendously creepy. It is incredibly uncanny. It looks human enough—same facial structure, same body structure, but there is also something wrong with it. It is unsettling that it could be human, but it is so obviously not. According to Mori, this unease “...is an integral part of our instinct for self-preservation.”20 (Mori is further discussed on page 32).

This is how popular culture often displays the uncanny, in terms of The Uncanny Valley.

THE GUEST
FINN CALLAN
2020

20 Masahiro Mori, The Uncanny Valley: The Original Essay, 5

Here, Vidler would be proven correct (in reference to the mention on page 13). The Seattle Public Library is not entirely uncanny, but it has one moment of the uncanny in this red hall. It is a singular moment, but that moment, that contrast between red and not red, that almost emphasizes the uncanny of the moment.

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
LMN & OMA
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
2004

This was actually a suggestion from Professor Mark Stanley as a place that he believed was particularly uncanny. He mentioned that when he was in the space, he forgot about his location and was absorbed completely in the red-light atmosphere.21

This is a good example of defamiliarization of atmosphere while maintaining the familiar structure of a hall.

21 Mark Stanley, 2021
The Jewish Museum is not a pleasant place to be, and that is by design. It does not seem like the intention of the design is to be uncanny, but in portraying a journey through a horrible part of history, the uncanny makes itself known.

One attribute of the unheimliche is that it is something that was repressed that has now come to light. That was a design goal with this project. The Jewish Studio Libeskind history and presence in Berlin had been repressed, and with its uncovering left an uncanny experience to be had.

In the design, there is the void whose floor is covered in 10,000 iron faces, reminiscent of the lives lost in the Holocaust. This brings to question the automaton and Jentsch's ideas of the uncanny and animation.

Overall, the experience is confusing and as unfamiliar as it could get for a museum. It seems like Studio Libeskind designed for educational uncanny without calling it by name.
The Uncanny Valley, as previously mentioned in the precedent review of "Guest", was first introduced by Masahiro Mori in 1970 in an article of the same name. At the time, Mori was a robotics professor at a Japanese university researching "...the proposed relation between the human likeness of an entity and the perceiver's affinity for it."²³

He found that affinity for an entity increases as the entity becomes more human-like, but dips dramatically at a certain point. This point is what he deemed The Uncanny Valley.

The valley indicates a break in the suspended disbelief of the perceiver. Mori uses the example of the prosthetic hand:

“One might say that the prosthetic hand has achieved a degree of resemblance to the human form, perhaps on a par with false teeth. However, when we realize the hand, which at first site looked real, is in fact artificial, we experience an eerie sensation. For example, we could be startled during a handshake by its limp boneless grip together with its texture and coldness. When this happens, we lose our sense of affinity, and the hand becomes uncanny.”²⁴

While this does not directly relate to architecture, I believe it is a necessary branch of the uncanny to discuss. It is, in part, one of the ways to make the definition of the uncanny more contemporary. Our world is being changed by technology every day, and this Uncanny Valley is going to become a larger part of the conversation.

Personally, I believe that this valley, too close to human to be comfortable, has to do with the lack of a soul. Humanity craves soul, that is why we find solace in each other, and when something that looks like it should have a human soul does not, that is where the discomfort is created. Of course, there is no way to prove this, it is simply conjecture, but this lack of a soul is how I believe this could begin to apply to architecture.
During the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States began testing nuclear weapons in the Nevada desert, among other places.

To test the effects of nuclear weapons, scientists constructed prop towns, named Doom Towns, that would stand in for the average American city. There were houses, grocery stores, schools, industrial buildings, all of differing construction methods. The towns had full utilities. The buildings were filled with mannequins to imitate the human conditions in these locations.25

During the tests, these buildings and mannequins were, if close enough to ground zero, incinerated, or farther away, burned and dismantled by the force of the weapon.

This architecture is where The Uncanny Valley appears. These buildings were meant to be destroyed immediately after construction. They were filled with fake humans frozen in false existences. There is no soul.

Doom Towns are too close to normal domesticity for comfort. Seeing pictures of it now creates a sense of unease, whether because the viewer knows the fate or because they see a peripheral version of themselves.

Doom Towns were an issue of mortality. Their very existence validated a threat that loomed over the country. Seeing what happens to Doom Town shows what could happen to any American family living anywhere in the country. This was not necessarily by intent, the creation of Doom Towns meant that scientists would learn how to protect the public from the damage that Doom Town withstood. But, this fear of death that is so fundamental to humans being expressed in the open, that is the uncanny.
METHODOLOGY
METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

While the supporting section of this research carried more weight in terms of time and information gathered, the methodology section contains the categorization of that information. This categorization led to both a developing understanding of the uncanny and new resources to look into.

What follows is a list of intellectual allies. These names came from two books, *Horror in Architecture* and *The Architectural Uncanny*. These names pop up in almost every other reading listed in the literature review. To aid the resource process, I set out to list an occupation and significant quote for each name. This then led to three different diagrams, one biographical, one occupational, and one topical. These diagrams operate similar to a Venn Diagram, showing similarities and differences between names by proximity.

After the intellectual allies, there are a selection of case studies based on suggestions of moves in horrible architecture in *The Architectural Uncanny*.

Truthfully, I believe methodology will play a greater part in this project in the upcoming spring semester. In redefining a concept, I put the emphasis on absorbing as many types of information as I could, gathering any sense of what the uncanny was- what it could be. Perhaps the supporting section could double as the methodology section in this case.

What I have produced is not a drawing or a beautiful object. What I have created is a well-rounded conceptual understanding. It is that understanding which can be used to propel design moving forward.

List of Intellectual Allies

**THEODOR W. ADORNO**
Philosopher, sociologist, psychologist, musicologist, composer
*"...the uncanny is uncanny only because it is secretly all too familiar, which is why it is repressed."*2

**JEAN BAUDRILLARD**
Philosopher, cultural theorist
*"...[the uncanny's] propensity for the double, for the elision between reality and fiction, its insistent trompe l'oeil, gives it a central role in the explication of the simulacrum..."*2

**WALTER BENJAMIN**
Philosopher, cultural critic, essayist
*"...the uncanny...was also born out of the rise of the great cities, their disturbingly heterogeneous crowds and newly scaled space is demanding a point of reference..."*2

**EDMUND BURKE**
Statesman, economist, philosopher
*"...[sublime horrors] led to ...astonishment, that ‘state of the soul in which all emotions are suspended, with some degree of horror.'"1
*"...the painful fear inherent in the sublime is quickly converted to pleasure, as we realize we are not in actual danger. It is sublimated in relief."*1

**ROGER CALLOIS**
Intellectual
*Following the psychological studies of Pierre Janet, Caillois compared such a disturbance to that experienced by certain schizophrenics when, in response to the question ‘where are you?’, they invariably responded ‘I know where I am, but I do not feel as though I’m at the spot where I find myself.’..."*2

**DAVID CARROLL**
Philosopher
*Paraesthetics indicates something like an aesthetics turned against itself, or pushed beyond or beside itself, a faulty, irregular, disordered,
improper aesthetics- one not content to remain within the area defined by the aesthetic.”²

JACQUES DERRIDA
Philosopher
“...the uncanny lurks behind the unstable links between signifier and signified, the author and the text...”²

SIGMUND FREUD
Neurologist, Psychoanalyst
“This uncanny...is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar an old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression...the uncanny [is] something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.”²

ERNST JENTSCH
Psychiatrist
“Jentsch attributed the feeling of uncanniness to a fundamental insecurity brought about by a ‘lack of orientation’, a sense of something new, foreign, and hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world...”²

IMMANUEL KANT
Philosopher
“...[horror] was an element of the sublime...a mode of feeling that would skirt rationality and speak directly to our inner nature. The terrible was one form of sublimity, alongside the noble and the splendid.”¹

SARAH KOFMAN
Philosopher
“Repetition, like repression, is originary, and serves to fill an originary lack as well as to veil it: The double does not double a presence but rather supplements it, allowing one to read, as in a mirror, originary ‘difference’, castration, death, and at the same time the necessity of erasing them.”²

JACQUES LACAN
Psychoanalyst, psychiatrist
“...the uncanny formed the starting point for his examination of anxiety, the very ‘image of the lack’...”²

HERMAN MELVILLE
Novelist, poet
“...the divisions, while still essentially embodied in physical spaces and objects, are less clear: between literal concealment and projected fantasy, settled comfort and lurking dread, the smoke raised an ill-defined wall.”²

FRANCO MORETTI
Historian, theorist
“...the monster ‘serves to displace the antagonisms and horrors evidenced within society outside society itself’.”¹

CHARLES NODIER
Author, librarian
“...Nodier distinguishes the general space of the sublime...from that of the uncanny...that mental space where temporality and spatiality collapse. The Vertigo of the sublime is placed side by side with the claustrophobia of the uncanny.”²

THEODORE REIK
Psychoanalyst
“...the unsolved murder is uncanny...”²

ANTONIO ROCCO
Priest, philosophy teacher, writer
“...we should look at problematic subjects because they are instructive.”¹
“...horrors in particular- putrefaction, decay, distortion, and dissymmetry among others- are sites of fertility, change, and invention.”¹
Mahmoud Sami-Ali
Psychologist
“...taking Lacan’s notion of the mirror stage and arguing that the proximity, noted by Freud, of the familiar in the strange causes ‘a profound modification of the object, which from the familiar is transformed into the strange, and is strange something that provokes disquiet because of its absolute proximity’.”

Daniel Sanders
Lexicographer
“Sanders had even produced a citation that demonstrated ‘that among its different shades of meaning the word heimlich exhibits one which is identical with its opposite unheimlich.’”

Georg Simmel
Sociologist, philosopher, critic
“...the result of its unity and repose, asymmetry that rendered all the more expressive than even slight distortion of one of its parts...the structure of the face makes any too-exaggerated transformation at any one of its parts impossible without positively unaesthetic, almost inhuman results.”
INTELLECTUAL ALLIES OCCUPATIONAL MAPPING

RESEARCHERS
Theodore Reik
Ernst Jentsch
Sigmund Freud
Jacques Lacan
Daniel Sanders
Mahmoud Sami-Ali
Franco Moretti
Charles Nodier
Georg Simmel
Theodor W. Adorno

INTELLECTUAL ALLIES TOPICAL MAPPING

CREATIVES
Herman Melville
Edmund Burke
Antonio Rocco
Sarah Kofman
Walter Benjamin
Roger Caillois
Jean Baudrillard
David Carroll

INTELLECTUALS
Jacques Derrida
Immanuel Kant

SUBLIME | HORROR
Edmund Burke
Jean Baudrillard
Theodore Reik
Immanuel Kant
Georg Simmel
Charles Nodier
Antonio Rocco

AESTHETICS
Jacques Derrida
Herman Melville
Roger Caillois
David Carroll

LACK OF ORIENTATION
Jean Baudrillard
Jacques Lacan
Sarah Kofman

UNFAMILIAR | REPRESSION
Sigmund Freud
Theodor W. Adorno

METHODOLOGY

44
In *Horror in Architecture*, the authors put forward ideas of what specific moves can create a horrible atmosphere in architecture:

“These contain varied elements of the ‘horrible,’ such as doubling, reiteration, disproportion, formlessness, shifts of scale, excess parts or openings, solidarity, and the like.”

“Rocco claimed that horrors in particular—putrefaction, decay, distortion, and dissymmetry among others—are sites of fertility, change, and invention.”

While the uncanny is not horror per se, these moves are important to look at to see if they can fit the uncanny as well. These buildings are interesting in themselves, and that is something to be aware of.

This is considered methodology over supporting because these precedents were gathered for a mid-point class presentation. They are not nearly as strong as the precedents in supporting.

Listed to the right are the works and their “elements of the ‘horrible’.” Above are three schematic diagrams of how these design moves could become more visual. This will continue as an investigation into representation in the spring semester.

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3 Comaroff & Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture*, 46
4 Comaroff & Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture*, 9
LOCATING
It is difficult to find a place for the uncanny. It is everywhere. It is the everyday turned unfamiliar - that is what makes it so impactful. So how can we begin to narrow down where an uncanny architecture would be most impactful?

In general terms, the project could be most impactful in a metropolitan area. Walter Benjamin said “…the uncanny... was also born out of the rise of the great cities, their disturbingly heterogeneous crowds and newly scaled space is demanding a point of reference that, while not refuting a certain instability, nevertheless serve to dominate it aesthetically.”¹ While great cities are not as impactful today since they are no longer novel, cities are still a place for “…lack of orientation...”²

Being in crowded cities allows for an architecture of surprise. It is the contrast between what the public expects of a city and what the designer gives them that can create a new uncanny. Imagine a space that does not seem possible in the space allotted and the unease that could create.

Due to the reliance on cultural understanding, this project would be best situated in an American city. Realistically, a semester is not enough time to fully grasp the nuances of another culture while designing and experimenting. By situating the project in a familiar culture, this opens the door for greater opportunities within the time frame.

The uncanny is a defamiliarization of something fundamentally familiar. This could exist in cases of the repressed becoming expressed, the inanimate questioning its animation, reality blurring the lines of dream, technology splintering reality, or the domestic being altered. Defamiliarization can come in the form of conditional duality like in moments of intense contrast or drastic change. These defamiliarizations creates an unease and discomfort that, while not intolerable, is unsettling and off-putting to varying degrees.

This definition of the uncanny leads to a set of new questions: How can construction become a player in narrative? Can inanimate parts of an architecture be given life and movement? Can architecture draw inspiration from surrealism and create a waking dreamscape? Can domesticity be altered in the way users interact with a building? Can the nervous system be shocked by contrasting sensations? Hot to cold? Dark to light? Enclosed to open? Noisy to silent? Slick to textured?

This is a question of materiality, of lighting, and of mechanical systems. This is new light under which to study experience and procession through a space.

This also a question of program: What program can be defamiliarized but still functional? Is an uncanny architecture emphasized by the atmosphere? Or is the uncanny atmosphere emphasized by the architecture?

Moving forward, this research is going to require experimentation. Experimentation of program, of form and materiality, and of representation among others.

How can this project be represented in a way in that the uncanny is understood? Can it be made tangible? Representation is going to play a large part in how this project develops.

In the coming semester, based on this research, this project has the opportunity to flip architecture on its head and create a new way of understanding. Perhaps uncanny architecture is not the future of the field. Perhaps the uncanny is simply a foil with which to better understand architecture as it exists now.

¹ Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, 4
² Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, 23
The term Surrealism was originally used in 1917. Guillaume Apollinaire, a French avant-garde poet, used it in the preface of a play he wrote.\[^1\] It was not until André Breton wrote the Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924 that the term was given a definition. It is a wide definition, proving what would be argued in the future— that surrealism is subjective. Breton defines the term as

“Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express --verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.” \[^2\]

He goes on to explain a bit further that “surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought.” \[^2\] Breton works in the realm of literature, being a writer and a poet, but his basis for the non-rational definition of surrealism will be proven valuable throughout Spanish Surrealism in art and its influence in architecture.

The surrealist movement flourished in France long before it did in Spain. Paul Ilie, a researcher at the University of Michigan, put the blame on a war that blocked the dissemination of French surrealism; second, there was the disappearance of surrealist writings of books in print and the almost total absence of translations; third, there prevailed a timidity on the part of a very sedate, generation which shied away from works that in journalistic views had been deemed frivolous and shocking.\[^3\]

People in Barcelona had read Breton’s manifesto in 1922, but the movement became more heavily influential right before and during the Spanish Civil War.\[^1\] Ilie illustrates several Spanish writers that employed Surrealist techniques in their literary works that progressed the movement as a whole: Antonio Machado, José Gutiérrez Solana, Rafael Alberti, Guillermo de Torre, and most interestingly Salvador Dalí. Despite being more successful in his artistic work, Dalí also wrote in a surrealist manner, coining his contribution “critical paranoia” which is a deconstruction of identity and subjectivity.\[^3\]

Architecture has a long history in the surrealist movement. Dalí is one of the most well-known surrealist artists. As surrealism aims to blur the boundaries between reality and dream, engaging the built environment is one of the most efficient ways to accomplish this. In something as familiar as a house, small changes can create a feeling of uncanny and unreality. It was this sort of emotion that Dalí and other surrealist artists worked with. Dalí took it a step further however and created Mae West’s Face which May be Used as a Surrealist Apartment (1934–1935) with the help of Edward James.\[^4\] Here, Dalí specifically moves from the idea of surrealist two-dimensional art to a more conceptually inhabitable built environment of surrealism.

Stepping forward in the historical timeline to the present day, Victor Enrich is keeping the Spanish Surrealist movement alive, but not quite under that title. Born in Barcelona, Enrich was educated at the Barcelona School of Architecture.\[^5\] Enrich was inspired by Dalí’s...
surrealist paintings, and the sweeping forms of Frank Gehry, which lead him to photography projects like “NHDK” that focus on “…the absurdity of the architectural form”. Though he in no way calls himself a Surrealist, it is undeniable that his work crosses the line between reality and dream (see figures 1 and 2). Enrich’s work is a great connection between the art of surrealism, and the architecture that is inspired by it. His work is still rather impossible, and that makes it all the more surreal. The art form of Spanish Surrealism survives in the shadows of inspiration, and architecture draws on it to mold its own version of surrealism conceptuality.

Architecture, as it exists now, is not surreal. Architecture itself is not a surrealist work. What architecture is, however, is an amalgamation of surreal moments. An entire building considered surreal may result in being overwhelmed and even sensory exhaustion, but with episodic surrealism, architecture can be both destabilizing and subversive. It creates an unfamiliar but familiar environment. Perhaps as close as architecture may get to a fully surreal building is the work of Antoni Gaudí. Esther Raventós-Pons, an assistant professor at Glendon College, York University, claims that Gaudí’s work is a combination of commonplace language and of poetic language. She writes,

“Clara Gari believes that ‘Parque Güell is a place where architecture and nature meet and work together in a way that is infrequent in our western architecture. Gaudí’s constructions put the most irrational and primitive part of our sensibility into relief, and accentuates what civilization still has in common with the arts’ elementary forces.’

It is in places like these, like Parque Güell (see figure 3) and Casa Batlló and Casa Milá, that are so highly designed that they almost lose all sense of normalcy.

It is difficult for the average person to imagine living in such a designed place. Maybe these places are more nature-like, without straight lines and ninety-degree angles, but they also destabilize the current state of domesticity. The interior layouts of his housing are not anything unique. With a slight tilt of the head, the floor plans are just like every other Barcelona housing plan, but it is wrapped in a layer of façade unique to Gaudí. He has essentially recreated the quintessential surrealist icon: the fur-lined teacup. Gaudí creates an architectural brand of Spanish Surrealism that flirts the line between reality and unreality and paves the way for surrealism to make itself known in other architectural projects to follow.
Several architects have drawn on Spanish Surrealism as an opportunity to insert inspiration into moments of surrealism in their work. Bernard Tschumi is a fair example of an architect who uses surrealism in both a physical way in his work and a metaphorical way in his more conceptual work. If surrealism is partially defined as subversive, Tschumi is all for it. His Advertisements for Architecture in the 1970s “...aimed at disrupting the orthodoxy of architectural criticism and re-aligning architectural practice with a more destructive and revolutionary current.” Tschumi’s Advertisements for Architecture (see figures 4 and 5) suggest murder as a way to understand architecture or that decay is interesting, that sensuality overcomes architectural rationality. Tschumi operates off a mindset that clearly aims to destabilize the contemporary thoughts about architecture. Tsunami was fully aware of this as well. When writing his essay about Surrealism and Architecture, Tschumi “…argued for a contemporaneous reinvigoration of Dada and Surrealist concepts and had, presciently, singled out the marginalized and discursive practices that lay beneath Dada and Surrealism as the archaeological foundation through which this project might find inspiration.” The Manhattan Transcripts produce a similar kind of surrealism as the advertisements do. Tschumi operates in film strip format, which in and of itself stands to disrupt conventional architectural representation, but the idea behind the project, to show a new architectural representation of reality, blurs the line of what we experience and what we could possibly experience. Surrealism is the creating by means of automatic thought, and Tschumi’s conceptual work does that by turning how we think about architecture on its head. He does something similar in a more physical way with the Parc de la Villette in which he deconstructs what it means to be a folly in a park. These works among his other work show that surrealism and emotion and experience all play a large part in what makes Tschumi’s work so memorable.

Rem Koolhaas comes from a similar realm of thought that Tschumi finds his niche, not to mention they share a method of working in a filmic manner. Koolhaas’ criticism of the Berlin Wall sparked an anti-establishment sentiment in his work: “…both Tschumi and Koolhaas [had] to seek to liberate architecture from itself, to destabilize and deconstruct the discipline’s will to order space and society.” There is the surrealism tendency to destabilize that which already exists. The surrealism of Koolhaas is no better emphasized than it is in Delirious New York. He claims that Manhattan was “...an entrepreneurial blend of fantasy and pragmatism... [that] has been devoted to the most rational, efficient, and utilitarian pursuit of the irrational.” It was this idea of a surreal Manhattan that inspires much of Koolhaas’s work. He was also a large subscriber of Dali’s aforementioned critical paranoia method, which connects him more
directly to the original surrealism movement. In terms of his more physical work, Koolhaas has create some works of strangeness. Strangeness in this case used not as a negative adjective, but as a way to describe a surreal nature of experience. The CCTV Headquarters in Beijing (see figure 6)\textsuperscript{14} is surreal in both its scale and form. It takes the idea of a gridded efficient office space and turns the idea on its head and creates a building that can be viewed in different ways from different angles, creating a spectacle for the outside viewer. Similarly, the design for the Seattle Public Library (see figure 7)\textsuperscript{15} is a completely atypical design for a library. The exterior provides strange form for the passerby to observe, but the inside is an experience of light, transparency, and spatial organization unlike most libraries in existence today. It is buildings like these, buildings that take a familiar program and make the built environment around it completely unfamiliar that keeps surrealism alive in today’s design world.

Tschumi and Koolhaas undoubtedly have inspirational roots in the surrealism movement, but there are also Spanish architects still doing the same. One office, Cruz y Ortiz, have moments of surrealism in some of their buildings. The Contemporary Arts Creation Center in Cordoba (see figures 8 and 9)\textsuperscript{16} makes several moves that question the previous understanding of architecture. On one hand, the project questions what it means to have a singular front entrance to a building. This building is massive, and these arms extending out of the central grid of the building work to break up the entrance into multiple parts. It destabilizes not only the entrance, but the grid in plan as well. This is the only place in the plan where additional angles are added to the orthogonal design. In terms of the grid, the center grid questions what it means to be a ceiling or roof. It is an open-air space while still having the feeling of a defined enclosed space.

Another Spanish architect to discuss is Iñaki Carnicero. His design for the Polytechnich Building C.E.U in Madrid appears fairly regular on the outside, but on the inside, there are these brilliant moments of light that change the entire project (see figures 10 and 11)\textsuperscript{17}. The lighting conditions create an almost dream-like atmosphere, something at the core of surrealism. It removes you from your current reality. These moments are so isolated, they are almost reminiscent of magical realism, where the entire building is normative, but there is one aspect, in this case the lighting, that is beyond possibility. These buildings, each in their own ways, have both been inspired by Spain’s rich surrealist history.

Surrealism did not start in Spain, and it definitely did not stay...
contained there either. In no simple terms, the basis of Surrealism, destabilization, subversiveness, blurring boundaries between reality and unreality, all continue to be inspirations for designers in all disciplines all over the world. Architecture, being one of the most utilitarian disciplines, is often branded strange or unlikable when the surreal is grasped too firmly. To bring architecture into the realm of the surreal is to convince the public that architecture exists outside of the ruleset it is confined to. If no one had to exist in an architecture, it would be much easier to make it surreal- being unused may give it an aspect of surrealism in itself. The field of architecture has a long way to go until it understands how to balance humanity, utilitarianism, and surrealism into an architecture the public will accept. Or, maybe, that is the beauty of the surreal- maybe it does not need to be accepted at all.

Footnotes

[10] Professor George Dodds
For my option studio in Fall 2021, I was placed in Brian Ambroziak’s ALTER EGO /// SECOND SKINS 2.0 studio. We began the semester by creating thesis cards regarding aspects of Las Vegas and Death Valley that interested us. We were then placed in groups of four to create a prosthetic. My group, Gun Metal Disco, created a prosthetic that protected the weak point of the body while also educating about those points. For fall break, we took a studio trip to Las Vegas and Death Valley, spending two nights at each. Our final project was to create a motel in Badwater Basin in Death Valley.

My final project, entitled Mortem Motel¹, was a preliminary attempt at creating an uncanny architecture. I did not describe the project as uncanny. I did not want to put that pressure on the design while my research was still in progress. Instead, I focused on taking expectations of the motel and turning them on their head. I attempted to create moments of pause and moments of discomfort. While there are many design consideration and nuances in the project, I will only be detailing the relevant expectation-defying examples.

The lobby of the motel is situated 20 feet below the salt flat. There is a ramp descending downwards into the lobby before you are met with a large scaleless space. There are two pools that are walled in glass to eliminate the private/public boundary. There are multiple moments of water, the pools themselves, and then the pool dripping into the center puddle of the lobby. There is nothing quite as out of place as water is in the desert.

⁰ Jessica Peters, Mortem Motel, 2021
APPENDIX
ARCH 496 | STUDIO | ALTER EGO /// SECOND SKINS 2.0

The red lighting that runs throughout the building is in part to create an unsettling atmosphere, but it also allows the eyes to be better adjusted for stargazing. The hallway creates a forced perspective; the roof shortens from twenty feet tall to ten feet tall. In the bar, a mechanical bar rotates around a center point, creating informal divisions of space. There are also sections of the floor that drop down to allow for more programming.

The main moment that is about turning the idea of the motel on its head is the individual room.

The individual room is situated on a floor plate that is self-contained in terms of temperature regulation and electricity. When triggered, the room begins to move along the rail until it gets forty feet from the main hallway. Here, the guest can put up curtains to create some semblance of privacy. This move is to create ghosts in the landscape.

This is perhaps the most uncanny moment of the project. The individual room becomes animate unexpectedly, becoming a ghost, a corpse of the walls the room once had. This could create moments of discomfort at the strangeness and the lack of privacy.

The idea of the "curtain ghost" is repeated multiple times throughout the project.
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The **UNFAMILIAR FAMILIAR**

*An Exploration into the Architectural Uncanny*

**SPRING 2022**
**SELF-DIRECTED DESIGN AND RESEARCH**
**University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Jessica Patrice Peters
This project became something I never imagined. It evolved into something greater than the fall’s research could have imagined.

To understand the work as it is presented after the spring semester, it is imperative to understand the research that went into the foundation of the mindset.

In the Fall of 2021, I spent a semester redefining the Uncanny. I wanted to explore the darker, more uncomfortable side of architecture and found myself focusing on the Uncanny as a method to make architecture more “negative”.

Through an in-depth literary analysis of existing research on the Uncanny, plus pop culture references and case studies in other fields of thought, I accumulated an applicable working definition of the Uncanny.

Using this definition I then began studio work that delved into three main arenas: uncanny spaces, uncanny atmospheres, and uncanny representations.

The work that followed was not anticipated by the previous research at all. It took on a life of its own and became narrative of its own volition.

What follows in the remainder of this foundation section is an excerpt from the previous research book that explains the conclusion of the research and then a new, updated abstract regarding the spring semester’s work.

Following the foundation section will be a catalog of the final work. It begins with more over-arching thematic pieces then moving into specifics.

This compilation relies heavily on narrative. What comes after is as much a story as it is a portfolio.
The uncanny is a defamiliarization of something fundamentally familiar. This could exist in cases of the repressed becoming expressed, the inanimate questioning its animation, reality blurring the lines of dream, technology splintering reality, or the domestic being altered. Defamiliarization can come in the form of conditional duality like in moments of intense contrast or drastic change; it could be taking expectations and negating them. These defamiliarizations create an unease and discomfort that, while not intolerable, is unsettling and off-putting to varying degrees.

When the repressed becomes expressed, the primordial idea of sorcery is applied to the unexplainable, and humanity must deal with a new unfamiliar cognitive dissonance.

When the inanimate questions its animation, a mannequin becomes too human-like, and humanity must deal with the possible unfamiliar threat.

When reality blurs the line of dream, the human scale is ignored, and humanity must deal with the unfamiliar shift in scale, no longer being the basis for proportion.

When technology splinters reality, virtual reality provides an imperfect duplication, and humanity must deal with the reconciliation of two planes of reality at once.

When the domestic is being altered, the home is being invaded by rot and decay, and humanity must deal with the nostalgia and implications for their futures.

This, of course, is a list of bare examples. The uncanny relies heavily on political, cultural, and environmental climates of a certain epoch, and therefore can not be generalized in its entirety. Vidler writes that “[i]f there is a single premise to be derived from the study of the uncanny in modern culture, it is that there is no such thing as an uncanny architecture, but simply architecture that, from time to time and for different purposes, is invested with uncanny qualities.”¹ (Vidler is further discussed on page 18).

To Vidler, I say perhaps. Maybe there is not such thing as an entirely uncanny architecture. Maybe it is too specific to person, to time, to culture—but there are some things that are universally familiar enough that can be made unfamiliar enough that the uncanny can transcend some of these issues.

The idea of the uncanny interweaves itself with the notion of the surreal, magical realism and the sublime in some cases, and in creating a definition specific to this point in history, technology and its ability to alter and environment will play a large role in experimentation.

Determining how to create an architecture that unsettles as much as it is beautiful, even in a grotesque way— I believe this is where the potential lies moving forward with the research.

¹ Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, 12
This is an evolution of the question “why?” Architecture often focuses on the positive emotions of comfort and safety, but why do designers not give the same amount of thought to their more negative counterparts? Why is architecture not questioning what it means to be uneasy and uncomfortable? To understand what makes users uncomfortable is to better understand the definition of comfort. A negative architecture is the essential foil to how positive architecture is understood.

The Uncanny is one method used to create a more negative architecture. The Fall 2021 semester’s worth of research was centered around synthesizing, organizing, and categorizing the existing realms of thought regarding the Uncanny. The conclusion of the research was a twenty-first century working definition of the Uncanny that could then be used to create uncanny spaces, atmospheres, and representations.

The Uncanny is a defamiliarization of something fundamentally familiar. This could exist in cases of the repressed becoming expressed, the inanimate questioning its animation, reality blurring the lines of dream, technology splintering reality, or the domestic being altered. Defamiliarization can come in the form of conditional duality like in moments of intense contrast or drastic change. These defamiliarizations create an unease and discomfort that, while not intolerable, is unsettling and off-putting to varying degrees.

Unease and discomfort can be used to the advantage of a designer. It is not something to shy away from. It is time to question the idealistic nature of design and create a new realm of perception and experience that expands our understanding of the world.

... Framed as the work of the American Temporal, Spatial, and Aesthetic Agency (ATSAA), artifacts of the research question several realms of the uncanny. Work begins with visualizations of uncanny tactics and atmospheres, then moving into analysis of both fictional and existing spaces, finishing with an exploration of representation.

Using narrative to create an immersive presentation and interactive artifacts, this endeavor was as much about world-building as it was about research.

The Agents and Operatives of ATSAA appreciate your continued support.
On the XX of XXXXXXXX, 20XX, board members and ranking officials have been invited to the Quarter 4 Oversight Committee Meeting. The goal of today’s meeting is to review the work of the American Temporal, Spatial, and Aesthetic Agency (ATSAA) and determine if the Agency is fulfilling its purpose to the degree of expectation.

The work included here today comes in a variety of forms. The research that is behind the findings can be requested from Agents in the Requisitions Office. The Agency has put their effort into understanding INSTANCES 001-010 and that is the information being presented today.

INSTANCES 001-003 were reported to Agents who assessed their validity and urgency before passing them onto Operatives. These INSTANCES were not particularly harmful or dangerous, and therefore can be revisited as needed. Further information can be found in their case files.

INSTANCES 004-010 were discovered originally in a found footage documentation. The ATSAA acquired this documentation through the mail from an unknown sender and was unsure of its validity. Agents spent some time documenting the footage and analyzing the media. Operatives were not immediately sent to investigate due to lack of knowledge regarding their precise location. However, the ATSAA began to receive reports of INSTANCES in the coming months that seemed vaguely familiar.

Upon sending Operatives to investigate, the new INSTANCES were found to be the same ones documented in the footage. Explorations led by Operatives were not deemed repeatable due to unsafe psychological circumstances at the INSTANCES. Because of this danger, case files contain brief field notes of an initial site visit and then images from the found footage. The INSTANCES have been quarantined to stop any further visitation.

After INSTANCES 001-010 were recorded to the best abilities of both involved Agents and Operatives, Agents in the Department of Delineations began to create new visualizations of the INSTANCES that incorporate both research from initial Agents and documentation from Operatives. These visualizations attempt to create artifacts with which uninvolved Agents and Operatives, as well as board members and officials, could begin to comprehend the uncanny nature of these INSTANCES. Operatives can be better equipped to neutralize or monitor uncanny INSTANCES if they are familiar with their essence. These visualizations are good for training measures as well as for redefining what it means for the ATSAA to document these INSTANCES. These visualizations can be found in the appropriate case files.

Please feel free to review the case files and the various forms of documentation presented here today. Questions will be fielded towards the end of the committee meeting.

The ATSAA Agents and Operatives appreciate your continued support.
A Grid of Uncanny Tactics
Agents 056 and 924

The Agency acquired two new agents who were first assigned to the research division. The agents synthesized research from academic literature and pop culture alike to create a grid of tactics that are commonly found in unsettling and uncanny subjects. Other agents then used this network to help inspire varying representations of INSTANCES. This is also a useful visual for community outreach and civilian encounters.

METHODOLOGY
QUARTER 2 BRIEFING FOOTAGE

Please see the ATSAA Narrative introduction, paragraph 4 on page 16, for explanation of the following images.

This is a compilation of stills from the found footage as well as three graphs of empirical analysis regarding the footage completed by agents.
INSTANCE 001

ALIAS: The Butcher’s Storm Cellar

DATE DISCOVERED: XX / XX / XXXX

LOCATION: Private farm land in __________, __________ on parcel ___ in the Northeastern sector

SENTIENCE: Biologically responsive but shows no signs of cognition

OPERATIVES: Operatives 047, 251, and 308

FIELD NOTES

Researchers discovered INSTANCE 001 after [redacted] gas readings became abnormal in the area. Field Operatives arrived on site to the cooperation of landowners [redacted] and [redacted]. The superstructure was unknown to landowners (it is unclear whether that means the structure was recently constructed or not). After securing the area, Operatives entered the substructure with researching gear. The substructure is mostly rock of a sedimentary variety. Upon exploration, Operatives encountered what could only be described as ducts, seemingly made of a [redacted] material. It was at this point that the Operatives began experiencing pulmonary distress. They were evacuated and evaluated by medical personnel. The area has been sectioned off and is under close evaluation.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Outhouses are common conveniences in areas with little infrastructure.

Be cautious of passage that you do not know the destination of.

Extended exposure to fumes produced by corpuscle ducts can cause pulmonary lesions.
REPORTS OF INSTANCE 002 CAME AFTER CALLS WERE MADE FROM CIVILIANS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. LOCAL CASE FILES NOTE THAT CIVILIANS REPORT BEING TRAPPED AND UNABLE TO XXXXX FROM THE XXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX. OPERATIVES WERE CALLED ONTO THE SCENE WHEN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DETERMINED THIS WAS BEYOND THEIR RANGE OF EXPERTISE. DUE TO THE NATURE OF INSTANCE 002, OPERATIVES WERE ADVISED TO USE XXXXX AND XXXXX IN THEIR EXPLORATION. MAINTAINING RADIO CONTACT WITH BASE, OPERATIVES FOUND THEMSELVES IN A XXXX-XXXX SPACE. THEY ENCOUNTERED AN INDIVIDUAL AFTER SOME TIME. THE INDIVIDUAL WAS XXXXX WITH XXXXXXX XXXXX. HE ASKED THE OPERATIVES IF XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX. BASE TRANSMITTED THE BEGINNING OF OPERATIVE 457’S RESPONSE BEFORE CONTACT WAS LOST. AERIAL RESCUE MISSIONS WERE ATTEMPTED WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. THE AREA HAS BEEN SECTIONED OFF AND IS UNDER CLOSE EVALUATION.

CIVILIANS WHO INHABIT INSTANCE 002 AS A HOMESTEAD WERE GIVEN ALTERNATIVE HOUSING.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Communities operate well within structure and order.

When lost, it is a common strategy to take continuous right turns to find your origin point.

If an individual asks if you are lost, ignore them. Do not give them an answer and do not make eye contact. Keep walking.
INSTANCE 003

ALIAS: The Funhouse Hall of Illusions

DATE DISCOVERED: XX / XX / XXXX

LOCATION: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SENTIENCE: XXXXXXX indicates a presence but details are still unknown

OPERATIVES: Operatives 128, 324, and 812

FIELD NOTES

Report of INSTANCE 003 came from Operative □. The Operative found themselves in the interior of INSTANCE 003 unprovoked. The location is unknown, only having been accessed by Operative □ the one time. The Operative describes a distortion of interior space—like a maze attempting to find the path through the space. Walls were distorted and confused for empty space. Ill-defined walls such as curtains separated the space further. The Operative is quite adamant that there is some type of sentient presence in the space but made no contact no received visual confirmation of that. Researchers are working diligently to retrace Operative □’s steps before the interaction and determine the exact location of INSTANCE 003.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Short lapses in judgment are normal in human cognition.

If you find yourself suddenly in an unknown environment, stay calm. Keep your breathing even.

Rustling in dark corners and heavy shadows should be ignored entirely.
INSTANCE 004

ALIAS: Racquetball Alley

DATE DISCOVERED:  XX / XX / XXXX

LOCATION: Lower levels of a XXXXX XXXXXX

SENTIENCE: Disembodied voices and possible affect[ing] equipment

OPERATIVES: Operatives 997, 239, and 899

FIELD NOTES

INSTANCE 004 was discovered after reports of phantom audio was heard from [redacted]. Operatives confirmed the reports, documenting cases of juvenile voices, distorted adult voices, and sneakers squeaking. Certain noises from the INSTANCE were not consistent with its materiality, leading Operatives to question the construction and structural stability of the INSTANCE. Operatives were met with no civilian resistance, in fact, they were not met with any civilians at all. The INSTANCE seemed out of date and practically abandoned. Concern rose when Operative [redacted] found themselves lost in the lower level of the INSTANCE. The Operative lost contact with the others, all equipment losing contact, and was found only by chance after wandering for [redacted]. The Operatives then exited the INSTANCE, blocking off the entrance and [redacted].
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Community centers are beneficial to the health of the public.

Always be aware of exits and be spatially conscious in case of emergency.

If you hear audio deviations coming from an undisclosed location, do not investigate.
Discovered by the exploration of INSTANCE 004, this INSTANCE was described by Operative [XXX] as “a drug trip gone wrong”. Operatives were unnerved by auditory stimuli that implied there was a [XXXXXX] in the INSTANCE besides the Operatives themselves. Conversing voices, running water, and the appearance of altered footsteps can be heard throughout the INSTANCE. Operatives reported feeling watched or followed. Operative [XXX] tested the facilities and deemed everything in working order, but utilities presented a pitch shifting audio and well as a disconnected fire alarm ringing. Despite this, there were no civilians observed during the documentation of the following observance. Because of the threatening aura, Operatives have designated this an INSTANCE to be closely observed.

**INSTANCE 005**

**ALIAS:** Jazzercise Backroom

**DATE DISCOVERED:** [XX] / [XX] / [XX]

**LOCATION:** [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX]

**SENTIENCE:** Highly probable sentience, possibly dangerous

**OPERATIVES:** Operatives 076, 343, and 768
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Publicly-provided sanitation locations can be utilized as necessary.

Equipment should be functioning to a usable level.

Do not remove items you do not own or that seemingly have no owner—they do.
This INSTANCE was reported directly to ATSAA by civilian [REDACTED] who had been apart of INSTANCE [REDACTED]. He reached out after fearing for his safety while in an enclosed transportation system. He was overcome with the orange hue of the INSTANCE and even reported feeling threatened by it. Operatives responded to the report, confirming most of Mr. [REDACTED]'s comments. When documenting the INSTANCE several auditory and visual stimuli were captured on [REDACTED] but not by the Operatives themselves. There seemed to be some sort of distorted elevator music that played faintly in the background of recordings as well as several still images that disrupt the visual stream. The sounds from the INSTANCE itself seem to fluctuate in pitch and volume those of which were observed by Operatives in real time. Operatives were eager to remove themselves from the INSTANCE as soon as possible.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Vertical transportation is important for ease of access.

Always be aware of the location of the transport.

Prepare an escape plan for when the doors do not open.
INSTANCE 007

ALIAS: Poseidon’s Domain

DATE DISCOVERED: ___ / ___ / ______

LOCATION: Community Center at ______ ______

SENTIENCE: Auditory sentience with slight visual manipulation

OPERATIVES: Operatives 577, 425, and 548

FIELD NOTES

Reported because of auditory disruptions, INSTANCE 007 frequently presents sounds that have no discernible origin. Children playing, diving, and adults speaking can be heard echoing throughout the empty space. However, when the origin of the audio is apparent, there will be a greater distortion of the sound. There is an aura of abandonment despite not being abandoned at all. The INSTANCE seems to display itself contrary to its reality. There is also a major color spectrum shift, with the color blue becoming the dominant visual feature. The INSTANCE feels outdated and ______ but is still a useful fixture in the community. Operative ______ has been assigned occasional check-in duty to reassess these findings.
**Preliminary Notice for Operatives**

Swimming is a wonderful exercise for health and wellness.

Sound waves reflect off of water differently than other material, especially at high pitches.

Beware the water’s depth.
Reported because of auditory disruptions, INSTANCE 007 frequently presents sounds that have no discernible origin. Children playing, diving, and adults speaking can be heard echoing throughout the empty space. However, when the origin of the audio is apparent, there will be a greater distortion of the sound. There is an aura of abandonment despite not being abandoned at all. The INSTANCE seems to display itself contrary to its reality. There is also a major color spectrum shift, with the color blue becoming the dominant visual feature. The INSTANCE feels outdated and but is still a useful fixture in the community. Operative has been assigned occasional check-in duty to reassess these findings.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Mechanical access areas are necessary in buildings.

Service ladders can be left to age and withstand the weather.

Always check to make sure there is a way out once you are in.
Located in a metropolitan area, the exterior of INSTANCE 009 was experiencing fluctuations in auditory stimuli. The interior was similarly plagued while also suffering from an air of abandonment. While there were female human voices, Operatives were not able to locate any humans save for an adult human male, who seemed to not notice the Operatives at all. There seemed to be an aura of temporal manipulation in the vicinity of the INSTANCE. Time seemed to be XXXXXXX XXXXX XXX XXXX XXXX XXX XXXX. The layout of the INSTANCE did not make sense. The Operatives found themselves documenting the same area more than once. This INSTANCE is not a danger to the public as it can be easily secluded. It seems to have been long out of use.
Preliminary Notice for Operatives

Occasionally, buildings are left empty without their original purpose.

Spaces left empty can take on a life of their own.

Be observant of space that reject your presence.
 INSTANCE 010

ALIAS: Girl’s Only Club

DATE DISCOVERED:  /  /  

LOCATION: Outdoor access area near 

SENTIENCE: None

OPERATIVES: Operatives 081 and 692

FIELD NOTES

INSTANCE 010 presents with strong visual disturbances when captured by . Warping, skipping, blurring and color spectrum shifting can be observed. There also seems to be a temporal shift in multiple areas on the INSTANCE. One area even shifts past to present and back again. Scale, the solidity of materiality, and these disturbance unseen by the naked eye have created a dangerous situation for nearby civilians. To avoid mass panic in this populated area, capturing of the INSTANCE by must be highly regulated. Operatives and have been stationed nearby to help monitor the public.
**Preliminary Notice for Operatives**

Concrete makes for a good structure material in many different types of spaces.

In tall spaces, care should be taken that nothing falls into the space.

Concrete creates a unified slate: take care when you are the only organic.
The Emphasized Void
_A Material Exploration of the Void_

Agents 234 and 579

As per the acquired footage, INSTANCE 006 is only seen in one view. The exterior of the INSTANCE is unknown, though agents have inferred what exists in the void. Two materials indicated the truly unknown void and the inferred void.

The Shattered Explosion
_A Deconstructed Exploded Axon_

Agents 498 and 374

In an attempt to capture the separated nature of INSTANCE 005, agents deconstructed drawing showing the different parts of the INSTANCE. Uncanny tactics include dissymmetry, excessive parts, and shifts of scale.
A Plan of Distinction

Agents 975 and 154

Agents grappled with trying to connect the spaces in the available footage. Despite puring over the footage frames, no connection could be determined, and thus the two plans are separated by a void.

A Planar Perspective

Agents 675 and 239

Agents attempted to boil down what it means to have a view of INSTANCE 004. Color, lighting, disproportion, obscured vision, and warped perspective all contribute to the encompassing nature of INSTANCE 004.
Cover

Terminology Network


