MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS:
Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum

by:

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS

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ABSTRACT

“If the walls of the museum were to vanish, and with them their labels, what would happen to the works of art that the walls contain, the labels describe? Would these objects of aesthetic contemplation be liberated to a freedom they have lost, or would they become so much meaningless lumber?”

John Siegel, *Desire and Excess: The Nineteenth-Century Culture of Art* (2000)¹

Museum Without Artifacts (Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum) examines the relationship between the stories and narratives associated with artifacts, those stories being told by the museum, and the architectural implications of such a relationship. This thesis explores and questions the limitations of the walls which museums construct – both physically and abstractly. It seeks to reimagine the imaginative and historical storytelling opportunities when the walls of the modern museum are ‘broken down’ and the notion of a museum is explored on a city scale. Can we use the city to stage selected history

and create an architecture around that? The intention may then still be to provide the viewer what they might demand, whatever that may be. But seeking truth in objects, place, and time invites a challenging contemporary architectural response with potential new forms.

Three photographs (artifacts) from the Bytown Museum, Ottawa, were chosen to explore the possibility of retelling the story in a different way. The Bytown Museum collection is currently held in the Commissariat Building at the locks between the Chateau Laurier and the

Canadian Parliament Buildings in central Ottawa. The layout of the museum is that of the majority of museums; photographs from the old Bytown are displayed with a written text next to each image. However after research and enquiry, a new type of museum emerges conceptually and physically out of each photograph. Their 'lost' narratives are then reconstructed as three 'museums-on-site' dispersed throughout the Ottawa area resonating with the original photographs-as-artifacts. This thesis sees the built world present in each three photographs as narrative architecture. Each story has an established beginning. Present in each narrative are items that are found throughout the story (permanent) and those that leave (temporary).

ARTIFACT 1

Nepean Point

ARTIFACT 2

East Block at Parliament Hill

ARTIFACT 3

Old Ottawa Jail

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INTRODUCTION

Narrative Architecture

The act of remembering is synonymous with the past. According to John Berger in *About Looking*, we as humans are constantly seeking evidence that we have evolved: “Memory implies a certain act of redemption. What is remembered has been saved from nothingness. What is forgotten has been abandoned. If all events are seen, instantaneously, outside time, by a supernatural eye, the distinction between remembering and forgetting is transformed to an act of judgement...”² We document the past through things we deem significant enough to act as artifacts. We collect objects of significance, take them from their place of origin, display them, and allow a viewer to interpret their meaning. We have created a building function to hold the objects we

believe important enough to remember in the museum. Museums have become a strange intersection between past and present. Berger states “only that which narrates can make us understand.”³ The museum creates a fabricated and selected narrative which it has deemed best for the viewers to understand and comprehend an artifact.

Over the last 20 years, museums and the idea of ‘culture’ itself have become very popular. According to Donald Preziosi and Claire Farage in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, “more has been written about museums in the past decade, it seems, than in the previous century.”⁵ Many debates have of course been sparked around the

Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum
taken from: <http://archidialog.com/2011/10/08/daniel-libeskind-inspiration-sources-the-crystal-buildings/>

Narrative Architecture implies two combined meanings. A narrative is a spoken or written account of connected events; often described as a story. However, narrative architecture has come to mean an art of designing and constructing space in order to be able to tell a story.⁴

design of museums. For example, Daniel Libeskind has written about architecture itself rather than the artifacts narrating the story of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany⁶. Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain has sparked endless discussion around the museum as an icon rather than a place to hold artifacts.

We do not intend this argument as a rejection of the current museum condition, but rather an exploration of the stories and narratives that a museum could tell. Can the museum and its artifacts' stories be told outside the walls of the museum? Can we test this idea through the deconstruction and reconstruction of the Bytown Museum in Ottawa, Ontario? The intention of both the deconstruction and reconstruction can help us identify what might be lost in the stories and history when they are limited to

the physical museum space and what can be gained when these walls are broken down.

Part I will contextualize the museum in contemporary society and Part II will deconstruct the Bytown Museum. For this purpose, to 'deconstruct' will be used in its more normal accepted meaning, as breaking something down into its simplest constituent parts and then re-assembling them elsewhere for a new understanding. In the Bytown Museum, these parts can be categorized as place, time and the viewer. Through each of these parts, the intention is to consider how a critical architecture can contribute to a 'deconstructed' museum, which then goes on to use the city as the artifact creating another architecture around that. Part III will involve the reconstruction of three 'museums' based around the narrative of the three photographs or

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum
taken from: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/mar/03/frank-gehry-economy-architecture>

The Bytown Museum in Ottawa, Ontario
S.Bite October 2014

Deconstruct verb
*analyze (a text or a linguistic or conceptual system) by deconstruction, typically in order to expose its hidden internal assumptions and contradictions and subvert its apparent significance or unity.*⁷

(For this thesis deconstruct will be taken to mean to *break something into its simplest constituent parts.*)

Reconstruct verb
*reorganize (something) form an impression, model, or re-enactment of (a past event or thing) from the available evidence.*⁸

(To reconstruct in this thesis means to *rebuild after something has been broken down.*)

artifacts found currently at the Bytown Museum. To reconstruct does not mean to rebuild from the same properties as those deconstructed, but rather to synthesize the information from the deconstruction and use what is appropriate to tell a new story. This becomes a projection, the exploration of a methodology in order to discover the story behind the photographs and responding to these through architecture. And finally, Part IV will involve the transfer to architecture – what we might call a translation- and the realization of the narratives in an architectural space and form.

STRUCTURAL MAPPING

3. (RE) CONSTRUCT

verb
reorganize (something)

form an impression, model, or re-enactment of (a past event or thing) from the available evidence.

To reconstruct in this thesis means to rebuild after something has been broken down. The contemporary museum condition has been deconstructed into place, time and built form. These properties and their successes and failures will assist in the rebuilding of 3 new museums based on 3 photographs (artifacts) from the Bytown museum.

4. ARCHITECTURAL TRANSLATIONS

ARTIFACT 1
Nepean Point

MUSEUM 1
A Bridge

ARTIFACT 2
East Block

MUSEUM 2
A Bus Shelter

ARTIFACT 3
Ottawa Jail

MUSEUM 3
A Gallery

PART 1: THE CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM

1.1 Defining Museums: Forms and Uses

When one begins to attempt to describe or define a museum, the terms: *collection*, *preservation*, *archiving* and *exhibition* come to mind. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) provides a similar yet more detailed definition, “a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches and communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.”⁹ While collecting, preservation and archiving play an important role in the museum, exhibiting and curating are chosen to be examined here in more detail.

In *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, Hilde S. Hein considers zoos, botanical gardens and libraries as museums as each function involves a form of *collection*, *preservation*, *archiving* and *exhibition*¹⁰. While the objectives of a museum compared to a zoo may appear to be quite different, it is important to see the parallels between these cultural institutions. Research regarding the museum can be extended outward towards cultural institutions when examining image theory leading to an approachable ecology of images. A parallel between this and John Berger’s ‘Why We Look at Animals’ in *About Looking* will be discussed later with respect to such an ecology of images.

London Zoo

taken from: <http://www.brainpickings.org/2014/04/01/why-look-at-animals-john-berger-about-looking/>

Extending this definition of museums, there then may be museums of people, museums of science, museums of art, museums of history and museums of place. The Bytown Museum in Ottawa established in 1898 is a museum of history and place. These museums of place and museums of history according to Hein “generally maintain collections of objects valued for their record of the past inscribed in them rather than for their intrinsic aesthetic or material worth,”¹¹. Clearly different when compared to a painting in an art museum, which may be valued at millions of dollars. Here, in a museum of place or history, the artifacts are chosen based on their relation and ability to narrate a specific place or time. History museums are unique as they present the facts of the past while also attempting to evoke a more personal connection to the memories and the ‘presence’ the artifacts once had. A science museum brings about

knowledge and learning. Two Canadian exhibitions illustrate the difference between museums of science and museums of art. Both exhibitions were displayed at publically-run museums, but the museum of art exhibition was created by an independent artist, Janet Cardiff. The other, an exhibition on display from January 2014 – July 2014 at the Ontario Science Centre titled “Solar Now”, allegedly teaches the viewer about “our nearest star and try your eye at spotting exotic surface features, including sunspots, spicules, and prominences”.¹²

Art museums, like museums of history, vary between knowledge and feeling; yet often shift more towards the aesthetic. The installation at the National Gallery of Canada titled *Forty-Part Motet* by Janet Cardiff attempts to evoke a more personal message as described by the artist in her description of

Ontario Science Centre: Solar Now Exhibit
taken from: <http://www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/Tour/Space>

Janet Cardiff's Forty-Part Motet
taken from: <http://chicagoartreview.com/2011/03/16/seven-artists-of-the-week-standards/janet-cardiff-forty-part-motet/>

the piece, “even in a live concert the audience is separated from the individual voices. Only the performers are able to hear the person standing next to them singing a different harmony. I wanted to be able to climb inside the music.”¹³ Her piece has forty speakers placed strategically playing individual voices throughout the space. Rather than hearing a collection of voices that a normal audience member would hear, the viewer or listener, depending on where they stand, would hear individual voices similar to the viewpoint of the singer. The piece brings into question the relationship between singer and audience rather than any facts about the past. The message becomes more about feeling than knowledge.

It is difficult to believe that in a museum of history, artifacts can tell both the selected facts of past and the more personal narrative the artifact once ‘lived’. Combining the

museum of science (facts) and an art museum (personal messages), could a museum present the facts of the past while evoking a critical ‘feeling’ or ‘stance’? According to Hein

“objects, like language, serve as principle media for the formation, expression and confirmation of human relationships, and so museums are mines of knowledge about the workings of human societies. Historians and museum scholars, working at semiotic meta-levels, discover narrative veins within their collections and extract their meaning for visitors by applying epistemically effective exhibition strategies to them. Museums thus bear multiple responsibility for their collection and reassemblage of items that represent intended stories....Their mission can neither be simply connoisseurship – the appreciation of unique aesthetic quality – nor, in the manner attributed to natural history museums, can it be chiefly taxonomic. All stories and strategies

announce design. They are once at its product and the means of its realization.”¹⁴

The museum then must attempt to express the narrative of the past in a way that is accessible to the present. The present will then, of course, affect the past. The stories the artifacts tell in a museum of history are partly told by themselves and partly told by the present museum. A curated display on the process of building the Rideau Canal Locks, for example, will tell a different narrative than an individual tool used to mine the stone which is then used in the building of the locks.

The narrative then is the product of a person or group of persons rather than the viewer or audience. However, the museum is what a curator or viewer can control. What is left out from the story is thus a product of human interventions, meaning human

intervention may both show the facts of the past and the lost narrative associated with a narrative. Can the viewer become an active curator in the narrative of a museum? Can the viewer becoming the curator be the solution to the constructed narrative?

1.2 The Current Museum Condition: Museums in the 21st Century

Canada's museum industry can be related back primarily to the history of museums in the United States rather than Europe, as most Canadian museums were founded based on private collections or by private groups such as the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa (WCHSO) which founded the collection of the Bytown Museum¹⁵. The idea of collecting artifacts began as private collections. The first phenomena of **personal collections** began in the 17th century with the 'cabinet of curiosities'. Families would display collections of artifacts to showcase their wealth. The cabinets were the precursors to the museum. Museums only emerged as an industry in North America in the mid-nineteenth century. As we see further from Hein:

"The major American museums were

founded idealistically, often fostered by philanthropic interests and concern for the betterment of humankind....The American museum movement began in the mid-nineteenth century when private charitable gift giving, testifying to the spirit of the individual initiative, played a large part in the country's growth.... Most museums are thus quasi-public institutions, incorporated along with hospitals churches and various education and service agencies as non-profit organizations. In principal they are thus nominally independent of government supervision, unlike their nationalized European counterparts."¹⁶

Hein implies here that many of the collections are then an accumulation of individual private collections curated by another party. The personal narrative associated with certain artifacts may then become lost. However,

Cabinet of Curiosity
taken from: http://www.macroevolution.net/cabinet-of-curiosities.html#VRr0mvnF_X4

recently many museums have received financial support from governments, which in turn implies certain control and influence over museums. Museums that are solely owned and operated by the Canadian National Government are The National Gallery of Canada, The Canadian Museum of Civilization, The Canadian Museum of Nature, The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and The Canadian Science and Technology Museum¹⁷. Most other Canadian museums rely on partial funding from municipal, provincial and the federal government along with corporate sponsors. According to a 2007 article in the Ottawa Citizen regarding the Bytown Museum, “More than \$150,000 from various levels of government and private donors was raised so the museum in Ottawa’s oldest stone building-- 180 years old-- could have more professional display cases, lighting

and audiovisual equipment to tell the story of the early days of the Bytown and Ottawa,” .

The majority of museums in Canada are now seeing an increasing level of popularity, investment and visitors. In 1992, according to the study *Museums and Art Gallery Attendance in Canada and the Province* (funded by the Canadian Council for the Arts), Canadian museums saw 19 million visits annually; in 1998, 22 million visits annually; in 2002 31.6 million visited and 35 million in 2004.¹⁹ Finally, in 2013 the Canadian government reported that “Canada has more than 2,400 museums and receives nearly 54 million visits annually.”²⁰

This shift and popularity is seen not only in Canada, but around the world. The museum has become a spectacular icon of place, often leaving behind the individual artifacts and

FIGURE 1: CANADIAN MUSEUM VISITS ANNUALLY

becoming an artifact itself, as mentioned previously in Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, completed in 1997. A report on the visitors and tourists to the Bilbao Guggenheim stated that "KPMG estimated that it had generated a net

inflow of tourists of 97,525 during June/ July 1998."²¹ The Guggenheim museum in Bilbao is now not only a gallery, but a tourist attraction, an economic generator and an icon of place. Beatriz Plaza's article in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional*

Research states “the museum has succeeded as a tourist magnet and an image-making device.”²² The function of the museum and the idea of culture were used as a way to reinvigorate the city. The museum itself is now used as a function within the city leaving behind its narrative and historical storytelling properties. This leaves us to ask the obvious question: should the museum serve the stories of artifacts it exhibits or function as a place making entity in the present city; or can it do both?

The concept, role and identity of museums and galleries now have great importance in the fabric of the contemporary city. With this change, a discussion has emerged around the roles and functions of the museum. Does the current condition of these museums and recent research suggest the need for a re-think? If we read Preziosi and Farrago,

it can be seen that, “any museological collection is, by definition, only made possible by dismembering another context and reassembling a new museological whole. The social practice of publically viewing art in museums that evolved around the turn of the nineteenth century simultaneously atomized social exchange at the level of individual experience and redefined community in terms of the same practice.”²³

How have humans transformed themselves by way of the museum and become dependent on representation? It is often stated that our era prefers the image to the thing or the representation to the reality. The Bytown Museum uses photographs of the Canadian Parliament to illustrate Ottawa’s history as Canada’s capital. Rather than using the real to understand the happened past, the museum appears to use images to understand the past.

But what is that 'real'? Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, John Berger, Walter Benjamin and Susan Sontag have all written extensively on the implication of images and our imagined past. In *Grasping the World*, Preziosi and Farrago ask "Is a museum an answer to a question? Fact or Fiction? An effect of a proposition mooted?"²⁴ Thus we must pose ourselves the following question: as humans, will our fascination with the past continue and how? If the museum is likely to continue to function, how will the discussions and questions around the change and implications of its function evolve? We have chosen not a history of museums here, but rather an exploration into the imagined past that museums tell us, and their role in illustrating the city, especially in the case of the Bytown Museum.

Imagination (noun)
*the ability to imagine things that are not real : the ability to form a picture in your mind of something that you have not seen or experienced.*²⁵

Past (adjective) (noun)
*gone by in time and no longer existing. the time or a period of time before the moment of speaking or writing.*²⁶

Imagination can therefore function without the past, but the past draws upon imagination – something that is not real.

PART 2: DECONSTRUCTING THE BYTOWN MUSEUM

2.1 The Bytown Museum: History of the Collection and Building

The Bytown Museum, Ottawa, began with the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa (WCHSO), founded in 1898.

The Society began accumulating artifacts relating to the history of Bytown and soon a collection was established.²⁷ In 1917 the Bytown Museum officially opened. The museum is owned and operated by what the WCHSO has now become, the *Historical Society of Ottawa*. It has since moved locations to the Commissariat Building at the locks between the Chateau Laurier and the Parliament Buildings. The museum is adjacent to the flight of eight locks connecting the Ottawa River and the Rideau Canal. It was originally a military building and not initially intended to be a museum

and is the oldest stone building still standing in Ottawa.

Work began in 1827 and the building was to serve as a warehouse for military supplies as well as tools and equipment for the construction of the Rideau Canal. Being a military function, the walls are almost one meter thick in case of attack and constructed of limestone. The beams are red pine with a cedar shake roof. Stone for the building was quarried on site by Scottish stonemasons; today the quarry is the site of the Chateau Laurier parking garage.²⁸ The building saw many additions and renovations; in 1870 a shed was added and in 1881 and 1901 two separate armourer's sheds. These additions

LOCATION PLAN + ADDITION SUMMARY

1.

3.

1. View of the Commissariat Building from across the Rideau Canal Locks. Drawn. 1827. Drawing by Colonel By. Image taken from Mika, Nick and Helma, Bytown: The Early Days of Ottawa. Belleville: Mika Publishing Company, 1982. Print.

2. View of the Rideau Canal Locks including the Commissariat Building. Drawn 1839. Water Colour by Henry Francis Ainslie. Image taken from Mika, Nick and Helma, Bytown: The Early Days of Ottawa. Belleville: Mika Publishing Company, 1982. Print.

2.

4.

3. View of the Warehouse addition at the Commissariat Building. Drawn 1870. Author Unknown. Image taken from http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/activ/sentier_trail/sentier_trail_ottawa.aspx

4. View of the Commissariat Building. Image taken October 9, 2014. S. Bite

have since been demolished. It remained a military storehouse up until 1922. The building is still owned by the Government of Canada and, in 1951, the building was converted into the Bytown Museum, changing very little to the form of the building.

Let us continue this exercise to deconstruct and reconstruct. The first floor is open to the public and focuses specifically on the construction of the locks. The second and third floor house a permanent exhibition titled “Where Ottawa Begins...” The

1. "WHERE OTTAWA BEGINS..."

Permanent Collection

3. "FRONT: FIRST WORLD WAR LANDSCAPE – A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE."

Temporary Exhibit

2. "OTTAWA ANSWERS THE CALL"

Temporary Exhibit

Interior: Bytown Museum, S. Bite, October 2014

exhibition covers "the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel John By and the construction of the Rideau Canal to the naming of Ottawa as the nation's capital."²⁹ The second floor also houses two temporary exhibitions, one titled "Ottawa Answers the Call" which depicts Canada's participation in the First World War. The second is titled "Front: First World War Landscape – A Canadian perspective." This exhibition displays photographs by Remi Theriault taken in 2011 and "illustrates the passage of time over the rich historic

landscapes of the First World War."³⁰ The layout of the Bytown Museum is that of a typical museum – with artifacts in glass cases and written text beside. The museum is full of physical artifacts, photographs, videos and texts attempting to depict the story of the Bytown.

Typical Museum:

Only until recent digital development, the museum exhibition is normally an object or artifact with an accompanying text beside or below the artifact providing an additional description and information. Recently, audio/visual aids have become additional exhibition techniques.

2.2 *The Museum Condition as Narrated Through the Bytown Museum*

In the essay *Museum Making – Narratives, Architecture and Exhibitions* titled *Beyond Narrative*, Lee Skolnick recounts how museums and their storytelling properties are constantly compared to literary devices such as plot, climax and sequence. “Transposing devices of literature onto display-space making has rich creative potential.”³¹ Literary devices, besides books, have no other physical properties similar to a museum and its artifacts. If we have chosen objects rather than words as a way to remember the past in museums, then why must we use literary devices to realize and create the narratives found in museums? And if these objects and artifacts tell a story, why must we always provide a secondary text alongside? To find the story associated with the museum and its artifacts, we must then deconstruct it.

The Bytown Museum and its physical properties can be deconstructed in terms of the storytelling limitation of the modern museum condition through place, time and viewer. **Place** refers to the physical space the artifacts once inhabited and, particularly with a museum dedicated to a place such as the Bytown Museum, it is a reference to the site of the city. Place will be explored through place of origin vs. place of display. **Time** is more abstract. The Bytown Museum references what the place once was through a constructed narrative. The **viewer** is the relationship between the museum and visitor – the individual vs. the public.

Place (noun)
a particular position or point in space

Time (noun)
the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.

Viewer (noun)
a person who looks at or inspects something.

PLACE | *Place of Origin vs. Place of Display*

In *About Looking* (1980), Berger brings up the example of zoos and studying the life of animals in unnatural conditions. He states “here animals are not being used as reminders of origin, or as moral metaphors, they are being used en masse to ‘people’ situations.”³² What happens when an object is moved from its place of origin to its place of display? Here Berger suggests how the animals become dependent on their keeper and we can extend his idea for our own purpose. This can be paralleled in the Bytown Museum where the artifacts become dependent on the curator. On the second floor of the Bytown Museum, there is a section dedicated to the construction of the Rideau Canal. Tools from the construction are displayed in a glass case with a small text and image showing how a worker might have used the tool. The artifact in this case cannot function on its own. It is merely a piece in the wider story.

Are there moments where artifacts are not dependent on the curator? American Artist Donald Judd asked this question when he created the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. An article written in 2004 after Judd’s death describes the philosophy behind the Chinati Foundation, “his aim in Marfa was more than to create suitable spaces (for art) – his ultimate aim was to unite art, architecture and nature in an embodiment of his own philosophical outlook, which sought to avoid fragmentation and to promote coherence.”³³

The Chinati Foundation is a museum and gallery based around Judd’s philosophy that art should not be moved from its place of origin. Here Judd creates and builds his art already knowing the display setting. Place of origin and place of display becomes the same in terms of the art he creates – art, architecture and landscape are linked – they

Interior: Bytown Museum
S. Bile, October 2014

Sculptures by Donald Judd at the Chinati Foundation

are a coherent whole. **Yet you cannot build an object knowing it will be an artifact.**

Although there are clear links between art and artifacts, an artifact is not made the same way as art. Art accepts that is not an image – it accepts a level of interpretation. According to Hans George Gadamer in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, “the work (art) has no real use.”³⁴ Artifacts often had a real use and seek to bring about an image of the past with little room for interpretation. Can the artifact and the museum be the same? Can an object and artifact function as one similar to the Chinati Foundation? Donald Judd’s philosophy allows us to see the critical stance the artists see between their own work and the way in which a viewer will see their work. His own dissatisfaction with the display techniques of a museum or gallery calls into question the museum and the artifact.

TIME | *Narrative Time vs. Historical Time*

Museums in many ways tell us lies about time by allowing the viewer to believe that historical time and narrated time have no difference.

Museums do not exclude us from history; they try to bring us in. The viewer should be made aware of living in the present and living in the past – or be made aware of the differences between the real and the image of the real. Berger states, “Unlike memory, photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. They offer appearances- with all the credibility and gravity we normally lend to appearances – prosed away from their meanings.”³⁵ In the museum, this constructed time eliminates the viewer from the present and attempts to fully engage the viewer in the past. Berger goes on to say “The constructed narrated time needs to respect the process of memory which it hopes to stimulate.”³⁶

Interior: Bytown Museum
S. Bite, October 2014

Historical time has a social memory that can be linked to all viewers, while narrated time will offer a means coherent to all viewers and one that will be independent to each single viewer. When the viewer is experiencing both - historical and narrated time - perhaps that is when they can make the distinction between the two. Roland Barthes discusses historical and narrative time when he refers back to memory in photographs in *Camera Lucida*. He states that there are two types of stories in a photograph. There is the studium which is what we know from the photograph and the punctum, the personal or private message. Barthes states that the studium “refers to a classical body of information. The second element will break (or punctuate) the studium...A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me.”³⁷

A photograph of the Parliament buildings was on display at the Bytown Museum. From the

photograph we can tell it is an overcast day. The buildings are built in a Gothic Revival style, yet the photographer did not capture the full buildings, rather a view across the top of the buildings. We can conclude that this is the studium. The punctum is then brought back to the personal or private message or the message associated to only myself – myself in the present. If we are to look at this theory in terms of the museum’s overall story rather than an individual photograph’s story, a museum only presents the studium. In the Bytown Museum, the viewer is presented with the facts of the past. Could the present then become the punctum in the terms understood by Barthes?

VIEWER | *The Individual vs. The Public*

The Viewer can be (further) broken down into the relationship the viewer or visitor has to the museum and the relationship

Roland Barthes’ Studium and Punctum:
In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes makes the distinction between two parts of an image or photograph. The first, which he calls the studium, is the manifest subject, meaning and context of the photograph: everything that belongs to history, culture, even to art. “The studium is a kind of education,”³⁸ he writes. The second part he calls the punctum: that aspect (often a detail) of a photograph that holds our gaze and evokes a personal message.

the viewer has to an individual artifact. In “Exhibitionary Complex” by Tony Bennett, the experience of a gallery is compared to that of a prison in terms of Foucault. He states “they sought to allow the people, and en masse rather than individually, to know rather than be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge.”³⁹ By making the museum open to everyone at once and a collective experience, the crowd becomes controlled rather than the art or artifact. For example, with the Mona Lisa at the Louvre, we can say that the viewer never really ‘sees’ the painting itself. They are part of a crowd. The Bytown Museum scale is much smaller than the Louvre, but viewers are still controlled by way of movement – circulation and security – each floor is monitored through security cameras – the viewer is always watched and controlled. Forms of

control are implemented either literally or by consequence. According to Jeremy Till in *Curating Architecture and the City* “the exhibited object thus reproduces – or more precisely actually helps produce – a certain architectural value system in which the user is reduced to passive occupant and the building is conceived apart from contingent reality.”⁴⁰ The viewer is controlled through movement, people and stories just as in the nineteenth century ‘public’ museum.

As stated, compared to many of the more recent museum designs such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the MOMA, the Louvre and even the National Art Gallery of Canada, the Bytown Museum is small in size. Yet, even at its current scale, problems arise. The viewer is presented with artifact after artifact, or image after image after image. There are flags, jewelry, boots,

Crowds viewing the Mona Lisa at the Louvre.
Image taken from <http://traveljapanblog.com/wordpress/2008/08/the-louvre/>

Interior: Bytown Museum
S. Bite, October 2014

tools, and clothes on display. The museum, in a way, pushes the viewer forward to the next artifact without ever really seeing or understanding the previous. There is pressure to move forward in the modern museum, leaving no place for reflection on a single artifact. The modern museum has become more about accommodating as many people as possible to view as many pieces as possible, rather than a single experience between the viewer and the piece. It seems neither viewer nor artifacts can stand alone.

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By deconstructing the Bytown Museum into its simplest constitute parts such as place, time and viewer, the following questions arise: when do we start looking at objects as artifacts; how can the museum tell 'truths' about imagined time, and how can

the museum give the individual viewer and artifact what they demand. An answer might be that the city could become a museum without artifacts. The City of Ottawa would then become a single evolving artifact with a narrative architecture created around it.

PLACE

How can an object be both object and artifact?

TIME

How can the museum tell truths about time?

VIEWER

How can the museum give the individual artifact and viewer what is demanded?

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CITY AS THE ARTIFACT

PART 3: RECONSTRUCTING THE BYTOWN MUSEUM

3.1 Three Artifacts

Many of the artifacts found in the museum were photographs of the Bytown's past. The photographs were fascinating as many of the images could be traced back to places I knew myself and held some memories. As the photographs were clearly the past, my memories seemed to become the present, yet there was no link between the two, no partial or even complete narrative. This suggested a study of such a narrative; in this case a narrative of the Bytown, or what is now extended to the City of Ottawa. Three photographs (artifacts) on display at the Bytown Museum provided our conceptual departure for this.

How can we determine through such photographs if there is some part of the story

that is lost or cannot be seen through this format? What is lost when viewing artifacts in a glass case or reading from the walls? Perhaps with an artifact or a photograph there is a beginning to the story as they are static moments, but where and when is the rest of the story told? Is it told by the description on the wall beside the photographs? Is it suggested from our association to the photograph? Both of these leave an untold and incomplete story. If we return to Berger, "Photographs are relics of the past, traces of what has happened. If the living take the past upon themselves, if the past becomes an integral part of the process of people making their own history, then all photographs would require a living context, they would continue to exist in time, instead of being arrested

moments.”⁴¹ How can the photographs then require a living context rather than being arrested moments in time?

Several of the photographs found at the museum were documented and were followed up by a return to the site of each photograph to capture the site’s current condition. Both the ‘past’ photograph and the ‘present’ photograph were printed out. With many of the sites and photographs, a common entity existed. This became the start of the narrative. How could the remaining ‘present’ objects be combined to ‘past’ photographs? One could simply Photoshop them in, of course, but the connection between past and present would not be felt. Instead the new ‘manmade’ objects were literally stitched into the old photograph. The common entity or start of the story is what the remaining objects are stitched into.

PAST

Medium: Photography
Date: Post 1841
Location: Bytown Museum

PRESENT

Medium: Photography
Date: S. Bite, October 2014

STITCHED

Medium: Photography and thread

ARTIFACT 1: NEPEAN POINT | *Alexandra Bridge*

The first photograph found on display was of Nepean Point, a hill located on the Ottawa side where the Alexandra Bridge connects Ottawa and Gatineau. It serves as a lookout to Parliament Hill and the surrounding Ottawa area. Its' main features include the statue of Samuel de Champlain, who explored the Ottawa River in 1613. It is also "home to the Astrolabe Theatre. The Theatre was built in

preparation for Canada's Centennial (1967) and served as a viewing point for the sound and light show on Parliament Hill."⁴²

Many of the photographs had a common **manmade** entity that became the start of each artifact's story. This site had no common entity as the 'past' image was largely landscape, with the 'present' image showcasing many new manmade objects. The new items which

A man-made object is born from the natural. All object/artifacts can be linked to nature and to humans. To understand the past then we must look to the man made as the man made is subject to the influence of humans not the natural.

Nepean Point seen from aerial view

STITCHED PHOTOGRAPH

LOCATION PLAN

included the Alexandra Bridge, the Samuel de Champlain Statue and the National Art Gallery of Canada, were stitched off the page. As no start to the story existed, the end also came into question. Can we not say in this case

that museums are in a state of concluding; removing an object from its origin and rendering it an artifact could imply that the story has ended.

PAST

Medium: Photography
Date: 1897
Location: Bytown Museum

PRESENT

Medium: Photography
Date: S. Bite, October 2014

STITCHED

Medium: Photography and thread

ARTIFACT 2: EAST BLOCK | *Parliament Hill*

The next artifact is located at the East Block of the Canadian Parliament Buildings. East block is one of the three main buildings of the Canadian Parliament Buildings, the other being West Block and Centre Block. The original Parliament Buildings were built between 1859 and 1866. A devastating fire occurred in 1916. The East Block as well as the library of Centre Block were the only buildings to have not been damaged

beyond repair. The structure of East Block is load bearing masonry walls meaning the base of each wall can be up to two meters thick. Here the tower became the common entity between the two images. The items that were stitched into the 'past' photograph are actually temporary items such as a construction fence or crane. It seems the site of this artifact remains largely unchanged and, rather than stitching items in, a few items should be subtracted.

Construction on East Block and East Block when completed.

STITCHED PHOTOGRAPH

LOCATION PLAN

PAST

Medium: Photography
Date: Post 1870
Location: Bytown Museum

PRESENT

Medium: Photography
Date: S. Bite, October 2014

STITCHED

Medium: Photography and thread

ARTIFACT 3: OLD OTTAWA JAIL | *Nicholas Street*

The last photograph found on display was of the exterior of the Carleton County Jail or Ottawa Jail. It is now a hostel and is located on Nicolas Street below the Mackenzie King Bridge. According to Michelle Nash, “The former jail was in operation from 1862 to 1972 and throughout that time only five official hangings were ever recorded, but it’s reputed that the eighth floor, death row, may have been filled with more than 150 inmates, based on unmarked graves found during construction of

the Mackenzie King Bridge and surrounding area.

The county jail has since been turned into Hostel International Ottawa Jail-Hostel.”⁴³

In this case, the arc in the stone wall was the common entity between the ‘past’ and ‘present’ photographs. The ‘present’ items stitched in include an addition to the jail hostel, a stone wall, the Novotel hotel building and a lamp post. This allows us to understand the narrative of the permanence and impermanence of the constructed world in each site or photograph.

STITCHED PHOTOGRAPH

LOCATION PLAN

From this systematic process, I was able to begin and understand the narrative in each photograph. The old appearance of the 'past' photographs is juxtaposed with the new objects and even more so the sharp lines of the thread. Rather than each photograph being 'arrested moments' in time, the links and stories become more apparent. If we are to connect these stories to Roland Barthes' reflections on photography, specifically the **studium** and the **punctum**, the photographs that are stitched in become the studium – what we know from the image- and the punctum, the stitch itself, the personal or private message that connects these two images.

In response to the stitched photographs, the translation to architecture will now question the constructed built world and the idea of permanence and Barthes' studium and punctum. As previously noted, humans are

constantly seeking evidence that they have evolved⁴⁴, and with that, constantly seeking evidence that our built or constructed world has evolved. Without questioning myself, I took only the manmade items from the 'present' photograph and stitched them in the 'past' photograph. But why the manmade? Is it obvious to say that, to see human evolution one must examine a constructed building rather than a growing tree? In all the photographs the natural world has also evolved, but how do we now see this constructed world as an extension of human evolution, and how then can an architectural re-location and intervention re-focus on the built rather than the natural?

Similar to stitching and collaging images from 'past' and 'present', the city is a collage of time, always in process. There are items that have been in the developing image of the city for centuries; those that seem permanent,

those that have just been built but will most likely stand for some time, and those that are temporary with an impermanent presence. The permanent structures usually orient us; they are stagnant. As a tourist or resident, can we tell which items will remain? And others, less permanent, provide a dynamic built world in which the change and evolution from human impacts become more obvious.

Each re-located and stitched work can now offer itself as a museum. These sites should not just capture a moment in time, but could rather facilitate a narrative. In each of the three sites the built world can offer and even provoke meaning, whereby each design could become an intervention in the accepted narrative. To do this, we will use the recognizable (studium) and the unknown (punctum) to narrate our stories. But, we must ask, what has been curated already, what have we analysed, and

how can this now be used in design of the three new museums?

The constructed world and the idea of permanence are physically present on each site. Other than Nepean Point, the start of each site is defined by a manmade object – an object of permanence as proven by its presence in the ‘past’ and ‘present’ photograph. Each re-located world is also constructed from a material with respect to new and old building technologies that further conceptualizes the idea of permanence – that is, the narrative of stone in central Ottawa.

NARRATIVE ARCHITECTURE

noun

1. a spoken or written account of connected events; a story.

This thesis sees the built world present in each 3 photographs as narrative architecture. Each story has an established beginning. Present in each narrative are items that are found throughout the story- permanent and those that leave - are temporary. The narrative architecture uses the orienting architecture to tell it's story. Each narrative architecture site is present in different urban conditions, yet opportunity for intervention is present in each.

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3 BUILT WORLD NARRATIVES

NARRATIVE 1

Nepean Point

NARRATIVE 2

East Block

NARRATIVE 3

Ottawa Jail

ORIENTING ARCHITECTURE

verb

1. align or position (something) relative to the points of a compass or other specified positions.

This thesis will define *orienting architecture* as the structure that allows the viewer or inhabitant of Ottawa to establish the story that will be told from the narrative architecture of the 3 photographs. The orienting architecture works with the narrative architecture, but can also function on its own.

These structures will act as museums, but will hold other functions as they will be integrated into the network of the city - linking past, present and future. The museums 'second' function will hold relevance to the narrative, site and Ottawa as a whole.

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3 MUSEUMS IN OTTAWA

MUSEUM 1

Ottawa Jail

MUSEUM 2

Nepean Point

MUSEUM 3

East Block

MUSEUM 1

MUSEUM 2

MUSEUM 3

NARRATIVE ARCHITECTURE
The Image

ORIENTING ARCHITECTURE
The Camera

PART 4: ARCHITECTURAL TRANSLATIONS

4.1 Museums Without Artifacts

PHYSICAL SITE MODEL

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Stitched Urbanism

This model explores the relationship between the orienting architecture and the narrative architecture as well as the need to link the Bytown Museum to the *Museums Without Artifacts*.

We now go on to see three museums designed in conjunction with the stitched photograph. What makes each site interesting is that they are close in proximity and yet represent incredibly different urban conditions. Nepean Point is the least dense with a surrounding park and pedestrian trails. East Block is part of Ottawa's most prominent landmark and a highly active site. The Jail Hostel is located on the densest site, yet is tucked in from the main circulation paths and therefore less active than East Block. Each site is also a developed site – yet opportunity for intervention is present in each. The

architecture must be built around or 'on-top of' the existing conditions.

The architecture can be broken down into the narrative architecture; that which is present in the stitched photographs and the orienting architecture, and that which will be created to facilitate the telling of the narrative architecture's story. The built world present in each of the three photographs is the *narrative architecture*. Each story has an established beginning. Present in each narrative are items that are found throughout the story (permanent) and items that leave

(temporary). The narrative architecture uses the orienting architecture or the architecture that will be created to tell its story. *Orienting architecture* is defined as the structure that allows the viewer or inhabitant of Ottawa to establish the story that will be told from the narrative architecture embedded in the three photographs. The orienting architecture works with the narrative architecture, but can also function on its own. These structures will act as museums, but will hold other functions (elements of pragmatism) as they will be integrated into the network of the city- linking past, present and future. The museums 'second' function will hold relevance to the narrative, site and City of Ottawa as a whole.

To link the museum, the process of developing an image will be used as a conceptual framework in the 3 museums and the Bytown Museum. The three museums will transform

the **unseen** manmade history of the Bytown or City of Ottawa into a visible museum of the city. The three museums will follow the steps within developing a photograph – **the exposure, the negative, the development** and **the image** - as a way to uncover the rich past of the Bytown.

The image is the final product and most static as it is a single captured moment in time.

The first museum- the exposure- will be a bridge or something crossed over. The second museum – the negative – will be a bus shelter, something waited in. The third museum – the development and the closest to the image - will be a gallery, something inhabited. The image or final product is then the Bytown Museum as a museum is an interpretation of the real or past- an image.

MUSEUM 1

SOMETHING YOU CROSS OVER

BRIDGE

MUSEUM 2

SOMETHING YOU WAIT IN

BUS SHELTER

MUSEUM 3

SOMETHING YOU INHABIT

GALLERY

BYTOWN MUSEUM

THE EXPOSURE + THE NEGATIVE + THE DEVELOPMENT = THE IMAGE

Ephemeral ————— *Plagiant*

STREET TYPOLOGIES

- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road

VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

- Buildings
- Vehicular Circulation
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Bus Stops and Routes

SITE ANALYSIS

The museums designs will be explored here as if an inhabitant of the city exploring the Bytown or current city of Ottawa. Each museum will be explored as if on a daily journey. The viewer will explore first the bridge, then the bus shelter, then the gallery and then finally the Bytown Museum. We will begin with Museum 1, the bridge.

+ MUSEUM 1: THE EXPOSURE

+ MUSEUM 2: THE NEGATIVE

+ MUSEUM 3: THE DEVELOPMENT

+ THE BYTOWN MUSEUM

MUSEUM 1 : THE EXPOSURE

Bridge - Something you cross over

Exposure (noun)

The revelation of an identity or fact, especially one that is concealed or likely to arouse disapproval.⁴⁵ In photography, exposure is the amount of light per unit area reaching a photographic film, as determined by shutter speed, lens aperture and scene luminance. The exposure is the first step in the act of developing an image.⁴⁶

Exposure is defined as it relates to photography. **Exposure** is the amount of light per unit area reaching a photographic film, as determined by shutter speed, lens aperture and scene luminance. The exposure is the first step in the act of developing an image. The bridge will cross over the street towards the Alexandra Bridge that links Gatineau and Ottawa. The bridge is a programmatic function that implies movement. Something you cross over to get somewhere and, therefore, not the end destination. The bridge begins on the south side of the road at grade. The bridge then

slopes slightly upwards through a ramp crossing over the road to the Alexandra Bridge. The viewer will have a view of the Bytown or City of Ottawa before the narrative of each story unfolds. The bridge then continues so that when you cross to the north side, you are below grade and the earth, which is then made into useful man-made objects, is exposed. The form of the bridge in plan diverges similar to the stitches in the photographs. When the viewer enters the underground portion, openings on the ceiling and walls reveal the narrative architecture present in the

stitched photograph, but while directly under the opening no architecture is present – only the sky. The viewer must look forward, or backward, to reveal the narrative architecture. They then turn a sharp corner and exit the museum to reveal the Samuel de Champlain Statue. The exit of the bridge cannot be seen from the beginning as the narrative is continuous rather than a beginning and end.

each opening that ‘frames’ the narrative architecture. The heavy concrete will be paired with a lighter material. A coloured metal material will be used in the bridge and bus shelter as a secondary material. The colour will coincide with the colour of thread from each photograph’s stitch. The gallery’s secondary material will be a translucent turquoise glass.

It is intended that each museum be explored in this order from exposure, to negative, to development, and finally to image. However, it is possible that the procession of the viewer will be out of order. Linking factors that are not conceptual, but are rather obvious, will be present in each museum. They will allow the viewer’s memory to connect each museum as they are visited. Concrete will be used to frame

MUSEUM 1 : SITE PLAN 1:3000

NARRATIVE ARCHITECTURE

When the viewer enters the underground portion, openings on the ceiling and walls reveal the narrative architecture present in the stitched photograph, but while directly under the opening no architecture is present – only the sky. The viewer must look forward, or backward, to reveal the narrative architecture- the Alexandra Bridge and the National Art Gallery of Canada. They then turn a sharp corner and exit the museum to reveal the Samuel de Champlain Statue.

MUSEUM 1 :NARRATIVE 1:3000

MUSEUM 1 : SECTION 1:3000

MUSEUM 1 : AXONOMETRIC + CONNECTION DETAIL

MUSEUM 1 : RENDERING

MUSEUM 1 : RENDERING

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum*

MUSEUM 1 : RENDERING

PHYSICAL SITE MODEL

MUSEUM 2 : THE NEGATIVE

Bus Shelter- Something you wait in

Negative (adjective)

consisting in or characterized by the absence rather than the presence of distinguishing features.⁴⁷

In photography the negative can be defined as the graphic image that reproduces the bright portions of the photographed subject as dark and the dark parts as light areas. Negatives are usually formed on a transparent material, such as plastic or glass.⁴⁸

The Negative can be defined as the graphic image that reproduces the bright portions of the photographed subject as dark and the dark parts as light areas. The Negative museum functions as a bus shelter, something you wait in or spend a short amount of time in. The function hints at the cab stand present in the 'past' photograph. Rather than being the typical form of a bus shelter, the form cuts negative spaces in which the person waits in. The majority of the bus shelter will be made from concrete. The negative spaces in the concrete bus shelter point the viewer to other elements present in the stitched photograph. Some of the spaces

will point you to temporary items or ones that will disappear, such as the crane. The negative spaces speak to chipping away at the earth to create useful objects, materials or tools. The red metal covering on the shelter points to the beginning of the story, the East Block Tower. The metal covering of the bus shelter appears on the East Block as a balcony becoming part of the story, yet still appears as an attachment or something built on top of the narrative. The two parts begin to speak to each other, the bus shelter and the balcony, yet a large break between the two forms hints at the negative and absence of linking factor in each narrative.

MUSEUM 2: SITE PLAN 1:2500

NARRATIVE ARCHITECTURE

The negative spaces in the concrete bus shelter point the viewer to other elements present in the stitched photograph. Some of the spaces will point you to temporary items or ones that will disappear, such as the crane. The negative spaces speak to chipping away at the earth to create useful objects, materials or tools. The red metal covering on the shelter points to the beginning of the story, the East Block Tower. The metal covering of the bus shelter appears on the East Block as a balcony becoming part of the story, yet still appears as an attachment or something built on top of the narrative

MUSEUM 2: NARRATIVE 1:2500

MUSEUM 2 : ELEVATION 1:2500

MUSEUM 2 : AXONOMETRIC + WALL CONNECTION DETAIL

MUSEUM 2: RENDERINGS

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum*

PHYSICAL SITE MODEL

MUSEUM 3 : THE DEVELOPMENT

Gallery- Something you inhabit

The Development (verb)

grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate.⁴⁹

To process (a photosensitive medium such as exposed film) in order to produce a photographic image.⁵⁰

The development is to process (a photosensitive medium) in order to produce a photographic image. It is the last step to the realization of an image. The most manipulation to the image happens at this stage. The development museum will function as a gallery, something you inhabit. The Gallery is not yet the static image, like the Bytown Museum, as it will have an evolving or rotating exhibit. Manipulation and flexibility is still present in the gallery. The Gallery reaches up over the top of the Mackenzie King Bridge, literally connecting the two sides still appearing as an overlay to the narrative. The gallery's form is a statement about the new built world overshadowing

the old. The new can draw upon elements in the context of the old, creating a presence of its own without overwhelming the past. Rather than building on top of the existing narrative architecture, like the bus shelter, the gallery becomes integrated into the story – an intervention in the narrative. It uses the stone wall with the arc, the start of the story, as one of the walls that encloses the gallery. With each museum, the museum becomes more and more a part of the narrative. The entrance to the gallery is directly in line with the arc in the stone wall and this will be the first image, art piece, the viewer sees. The materiality of the gallery is a translucent glass other than the

stone wall and three small transparent, glazed openings. When the viewer stands in the centre of the gallery, the narrative is revealed through the transparent openings- the jail hostel, the Novotel Hotel and a street lamp. The openings speak to individual characteristics in each narrative item. The opening is long and thin for the lamp post and, in contrast, larger and rectangular for the Novotel Hotel. This is true for all the openings in the bridge and the negative spaces in the bus shelter. The viewer may then explore the upper floor where the openings can still be seen. Here, the viewer can manipulate what is seen. A thick concrete wall in the gallery draws upon the context of existing stone walls and separates the support spaces such as stairs, washroom and storage closet from the gallery area.

MUSEUM 3: SITE PLAN 1:1000

BASEMENT PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

MUSEUM 3 : FLOOR PLANS 1:500

MUSEUM 3: NARRATIVE 1:1000

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum*

NARRATIVE ARCHITECTURE

Rather than building on top of the existing narrative architecture, like the bus shelter, the gallery becomes integrated into the story – an intervention in the narrative. It uses the stone wall with the arc, the start of the story, as one of the walls that encloses the gallery. With each museum, the museum becomes more and more a part of the narrative. The entrance to the gallery is directly in line with the arc in the stone wall and this will be the first image, art piece, the viewer sees. The materiality of the gallery is a translucent glass other than the stone wall and three small transparent, glazed openings. When the viewer stands in the centre of the gallery, the narrative is revealed through the transparent openings- the jail hostel, the Novotel Hotel and a street lamp. The openings speak to individual characterizes in each narrative item. The opening is long and thin for the lamp post and, in contrast, larger and rectangular for the Novotel Hotel. This is true for all the openings in the bridge and the negative spaces in the bus shelter

MUSEUM 3: SECTION 1:1000

MUSEUM 3: ELEVATION 1:1000

MUSEUM 3: AXONOMETRIC + WALL CONNECTION DETAIL

MUSEUM 3: EXTERIOR RENDERING

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum*

MUSEUM 3: INTERIOR RENDERING

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bylew Museum*

PHYSICAL SITE MODEL

1. Blue metal cladding

2. Concrete frame around apertures

3. Stainless steel handrails

4. Red metal cladding

5. Concrete base with 'negative' apertures

6. Turquoise translucent cladding

7. Concrete frame around apertures

MATERIALITY

BYTOWN MUSEUM: THE IMAGE

Image (noun)

a representation of the external form of a person or thing in art

a visible impression obtained by a camera, telescope, microscope, or other device, or displayed on a computer or video screen.⁵¹

To summarize; we have seen three museums built on the conceptual framework of developing a photograph or image, with the Bytown Museum being the final product or the image itself. If we return to the definition of an image, “a representation of the external form of a person or thing in art,” the museum, specifically the Bytown Museum, attempts to convey the stories and narratives in Ottawa’s past, yet it is still a representation of the past and it is not real. The Museums Without Artifacts use the real to convey the narrative’s past in a building form that functions in the present. The museum is the ‘ultimate’ image. As the Museums Without Artifacts work together with the Bytown Museum (as showcased though the conceptual

framework), the Bytown Museum will tie the museums together by implementing an exhibit on the Museums without Artifacts. The exhibition will display past photographs, present photographs and eventually future photographs of each of the sites as well as the Museums Without Artifacts. This furthers the idea of the Bytown Museum as an image and the development of each site, and now the museums on site, into an image. The Bytown museum will reframe each site again as an image. The juxtaposition of a viewer from seeing the site, museum on site, and then the image begins to create a critical discussion around place, time and viewer. What happens when you have seen the real and then you see the real as an image?

PART 5: POST SCRIPT

5.1 Reflections

This thesis was always intended to be a speculative project, but over time a level of realism seemed to seep through, particularly in the architectural translations. The balance between whether these ‘museums’ could function pragmatically and tell a narrative began to shift into something I saw as truly possible. With the development of each form, bridge, bus shelter and gallery, there was a balance between pragmatic function and narrative function. The narrative function, however, is only a small part in the wider definition of museums. Perhaps the narratives have more truth in the Museums Without Artifacts, but the function of a museum sees other purposes as well. As stated, the ICOM

defines museums as “a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches and communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.” It was discussed at the beginning of the thesis that exhibition and curation were the main topics to be explored, but to function successfully as a ‘museum’, other categories must be addressed. The Museums Without Artifacts function successfully as an exploration of extending the notion of exhibition and curation beyond the museum and into the city through new spatial and conceptual practices. Where it

does not function as a true 'museum' is in its contribution to acquiring, researching and archiving. No new 'artifacts' are acquired or collected through the new museums. The research through the new museums is theoretical and conceptual. It provides no facts of the past that are not already known. This is due to each museum being 'built on top' or as an overlay to what is already present. Each museum uses what is already present in the photographs such as the National Gallery of Canada, the Alexandra Bridge, the Samuel de Champlain Statue, the Parliament East Block and the old Ottawa Jail Hostel. Each of these items can also be explored without the new museums. The new museums do not offer any opportunity for archiving. There is no physical repository for new narratives; rather the museums offer memories to the viewer.

The Museums Without Artifacts also ask for an active participation of the viewers which is demanding and complex, but offers a dynamic way of engaging with the narrative of the Bytown or City of Ottawa. Is it then valid to name the architecture created "Museums without Artifacts"? These 'museums' require no payment, they are open to the public, have no artifacts, and do not address the full definition of museums used by the ICOM. Perhaps this evidence then showcases my own struggle to define what I believe is a museum. Is the highline in New York City, New York, a museum? I believe that the city is a museum. We just need the tools or frame to see the cultural and significant value inscribed in each item. At one point, the architectural translations were to be called 'Stitched Urbanism', but my research began with museums and I feel as though it was

appropriate to end with this new definition and exploration of the museum.

The linking of museums through the conceptual framework of developing an image was successful as a linking factor. Where the failure may be seen is in the design and programmatic function of Museum 3, The Development. The gallery function seems to operate too closely to the Bytown Museum and displays some of the same mistakes addressed in the deconstruction of the Bytown Museum. The jump from bridge to a programmatic function that provided a level of habitation proved difficult. If a redesign were to occur, the gallery would function less as a building and more as a pavilion.

Although conservation was not the main topic, the thesis did address the conservation of the city and its importance. The thesis began as an

exploration of museums, but evolved into the narratives of the city and, therefore, the conservation of existing architecture that facilitates the narratives. If research was to continue, the theme and theories behind conservation could be explored more in depth in parallel with the Museum of Artifacts. However we have begun to re-stitch the city into its present.

"All that once was directly lived has become mere representation."
Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (1967)

S.Bite March 2015

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MUSEUM WITHOUT ARTIFACTS | *Narrative Architecture in the Bytown Museum*

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