

**Nomad in the City:  
Composing an Architectural Dissonance**

Rance Yan Ki Mok ©2010 Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

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To little Sally Walker,  
sitting in a flying saucer

I am grateful to all who have made this thesis possible, including my advisor, Kelly Crossman, my family, my friends, and the various Carleton faculty who have asked me hard questions along the way.

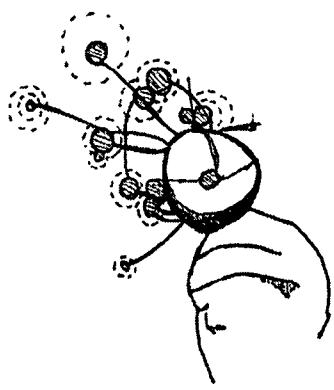
## Abstract

Does the young architect ever consider the ground that supports the roots of his or her production? Is there time to lift back the layers to reveal its hidden narratives, or is it another glance at the watch to realize that the next building deadline is quickly approaching?

In revealing various spatial myths behind the seemingly coherent histories of North American cities, the Nomad is explored as a personification of differences and eccentricities inherent to public culture. Alienated by the very society who invented him, his paradoxical identity is used as a device to derive alternative perspectives in thinking about spatial practices. Architectural compositions of contingent spaces are then proposed as a means of re-evaluating the role of the design process in the production of space.

## **Contents...**

- i     **Acknowledgements**
- ii    **Abstract**
- iv    **Introduction**
- 1     **Chapter 1:  
Myths of the Nomad**
- 11    **Chapter 2:  
(Un)Settling of the Nomad**
- 22    **Chapter 3:  
The Metallurgist and the Architect**
- 34    **Chapter 4:  
Nomadic Strategies for Architecture**
- 47    **Chapter 5:  
Compositions for the Musical Nomad**
- 87    **Coda:  
Unexpected Improvisations**
- 91    **The Potential**
- 92    **Works Cited**



## Introduction

"If you find Earth boring/Just the same old same thing/  
Come on and sign up with Outer Spaceways Incorporated"

-Sun Ra and his Intergalactic Solar Arkestra,  
a chant from the film *Space is the Place*.

**L**et me start by introducing a character who, though not the subject of this thesis, is a model for the Nomad that I have come to know.

- 1 He is a man known as Sun Ra, at once poet, performer, composer, scientist, archivist, teacher, corporation and, perhaps most importantly, self-activated myth. Most impressions of him usually fall into the polarized camps of either
- 2 "genius or charlatan", which I regard to be a very apt dichotomy to confront. Here is a musically prolific man who not only pioneered the use of electronic instruments and freeform compositions in jazz, worked with, composed
- 3 for, and influenced household names, but also extensively studied history, hermeneutics, linguistics, literature, science, and championed the civil rights movement and the liberation of African-Americans. At the same time, he boldly appropriated Egyptology to his own causes, dressed in elaborate
- 4 costume-like robes and outrageous hats, and proclaimed that he was born on Saturn in all seriousness. As an example of his more extravagant qualities, let
- 5 us refer to biographer John Szwed's description of his Arkestra performance

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1. Though his birth name was Herman Blount, Sun Ra was chosen as a name to reflect the complexities behind its possessor. The importance of adopting a name is further explored in the biography of the late jazz musician: Szwed, John. *Space is the Place*. (New York: De Capo Press, 1998) p79-87.

2. Szwed. Quoting a German newspaper. xvii.

3. For example, John Coltrane, Yusef Lateef, Duke Ellington, Archie Shepp, Fletcher Henderson, Dizzy Gillespie, George Clinton & Parliament...Sun Ra was paramount to the foundation of American Jazz, but also extended his influence to other genres of music as well.

4. I am barely scraping the surface of all the things he has participated in, and the influence he has offered up.

5. Arkestra: Sun Ra's ever-evolving repertoire of musicians; a play on the words orchestra and ark; the Arkestra "invites [the audience] to join [them] in marching off to Jupiter." SOURCE: Szwed xvii, p94.

at Swarthmore College in the Sixties:

"So slowly that it seems not even to be happening, the lights begin to come up. A single drummer in dark glasses, hood, and sparkling tunic, who can just be made out standing behind a six-foot carved drum, raises two strangely shaped sticks and begins a rhythm; others who can now be seen around him, in robes, weird hats, all in dark glasses, take up his beat and add to it until the rhythm becomes a polyrhythmic snarl. And as the lights continue to rise it becomes clear that a kind of procession is under way: dancers in flowing gowns hold richly dyed silks in front of changing colored lights; others parade before the audience paintings of Egyptian scenes or of monsters coiled around their victims. A conversation of flutes begins; the musicians sway in fabulously shimmering robes; tinted lights scatter amorphous shapes across the walls and ceiling; a film begins, projected silently on the wall behind them, showing the same musicians on some other occasion. Now the horns are heard, one by one, then all in a knot of dissonance, a trumpet piercing the air above them. Smoke begins to slither across the floor as a dancer enters carrying a large glowing ball like some turn-of-the-century art study. A woman with a beatific smile seems to float to the front, and begins to sing until she is joined by others who look like some crazed monks lost in time:

When the world was in darkness/ Darkness  
is ignorance/  
Along came Ra..../  
The living myth, the living myth/  
The living Mister Re.

And there in the middle of it all, his face impassive, sits a stocky

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PHOTO: Arkestra at WHYY television station studios. By Lepley, R. Andrew (1990). SOURCE: Space is the Place (New York: De Capo Press, 1998) Plate xviii.



PHOTO: June Tyson and Arkestra at Roger Williams Park, Providence. By Nahigan, Alan (1985). SOURCE: Space is the Place. Plate xvii.



6

middle-aged black man in a cockpit of electronics. On his head is a cap which appears to be a working model of the solar system. He fingers, then thrashes the keyboards around him with his fists and forearms. And so it would go on for the next four or five hours, though a generous number of students have fled the hall immediately and would not know this.”

Such observations make it far too easy to question his sanity.

7 Yet, he epitomizes the multiple permutations of the self that demand reinterpretations of existing histories and timelines. Behind his supposed madness, there lies a very conscious articulation of the need to challenge everything we assume to be truth. He “had the uncanny ability for making the 8 everyday seem strange”. He continually defied boundaries and social norms, 9 choosing to embrace difference as a virtue, by adopting the furthest frontier we know, outer space, as his home. This stance is more than just lunacy; it is a polemical response to a historically persistent narrative of exclusion. His exaggerated displays of a revisionist history and a science fiction future sought to break stereotypes and place African Americans as an ever-present 10 and deserving element within the social landscape. As Ajay Heble, professor of English at University of Guelph and founder of the Guelph Jazz Festival writes, Sun Ra and his Arkestra actively invite their audience to “envision new models 11 for an aesthetic of resistance, to generate a space outside the very framework of domination.” Opportunities are materialized in a visual and experiential

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6. I, unfortunately, have never witnessed one of Sun Ra's performances, but having heard his music, and read descriptions such as these, I can only surmise the range of reactions to a treat of such an occasion. SOURCE: Szwed xvi.

7. These permutations do not exclude inconsistencies — they are important in that they reject a singular reading of his identity. A sample: despite belief in social progress and what his extravagant performances may suggest, he was an extremely conservative person and demanded complete discipline from those who worked with him, including the ban of alcohol, drugs, and sex. SOURCE: Szwed p347

8. Szwed xviii.

9. The use of 'frontier' considers the years in which Sun Ra developed musical concepts of outer space, in the 60s and early 70s, when the hysteria of the Space Race took hold, as nations rushed to claim the “new land” as their own. Seeing how much we are mesmerized by outer space, the position he took is still relevant. By inventing an “alien” culture to which he belonged, Sun Ra effectively criticized the recurring narratives of racial tensions and colonization, but more so, empowered the Other side of the line with new perspectives on what it means to be different. SOURCE: Szwed p138.

10. Though African-Americans were a major concern in Sun Ra's work, his concepts extended beyond race, religion, and other social constructs that are taken for granted.

11. Heble, Ajay. "Space is the Place: Jazz, Voice and Resistance." *Landing on the Wrong Note*. (New York: Routledge, 2000) p125.

manner, through the use of music, costume, performance, and participation.

Unwittingly, Sun Ra's narrative poses a dilemma for architecture: if

architecture is a predominant mode of cultural production and operates with

- 12 responsibility towards people, and not structures, as it has claimed in the past, then how can it be inclusive of alternate readings of society? More specifically, can there be a space designed to house the Arkestra and its Intergalactic ideas? The built environment is saturated with the effects of the dominant
- 13 sociopolitical powers, as society and its laws would not exist without the physical spaces that support them. Architecture is unavoidably embedded within the hierarchies imposed by the city and its various institutions, as space is heavily regulated and monitored, and the design of space itself is often
- 14 employed to limit types of congregation. One of the most disconcerting parts of current design practices is how willingly approved uses and guidelines
- 15 are internalized, as if fences, closed doors, and empty buildings at night are natural occurrences.

Architecture provides well for the regular citizen, who sleeps normal hours and drinks eight glasses of water a day, but in doing so, suppresses the eccentricities that are waiting to emerge. Take, for example, the segregation of sound. Quiet zones, libraries, most residential areas and apartments are enforced by law and therefore observed as immutable, while noisy zones are

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12. Le Corbusier's Radiant City is an example, where people's habitation is not designated by class, but by size and needs, or the Bauhaus' rejection of "bourgeois" ornamentation, demanding that architecture be reflective of the working class.

13. This is a very brief summary of the implications of delineated spaces and the societies that form them. It will be expanded upon in Chapter 2 in an architectural context, but for an in depth discussion, refer to the works of geographer Nicholas Blomley and urban theorist Mike Davis.

14. Refer to Haussmann's urban planning of Paris.

15. Being an architecture student, I simply cannot accept the idea of an empty building at night. The university, unfortunately, disagrees with our nighttime practices.

either an inevitable byproduct, such as airports and highways, or socially determined, such as in the clustered areas of bars and restaurants. Rarely are there distributed examples of regularly expected noisy spaces, save the outdoor elementary school playground. Choose any apartment building in Ottawa, and the expectation of silence is usually taken as fact; the assumption is that each unit on each floor will be inhabited by equally quiet people, when in reality it is often not the case. But should quietness be compulsory at the expense of people who enjoy a bit of loudness?

Let me be clear: architects are not in direct control of the values, accepted or questionable, that are enacted upon space, and cannot coerce people to act in a certain way without alienating them from the experience. They can, however, suggest alternative modes of engaging with space through the introduction of other spatial orders. If, say, the apartment building mentioned above was designed with noisiness kept in mind, perhaps with designated noisy floors, how might its spaces differ, and how might noisy activities be tolerated? It may not be necessary to hold on so tightly to the parameters and expectations of pre-supposed lifestyles.

Sun Ra is invoked here as a departure point for architecture to *anticipate* difference, to provide “purposeful alternatives to socially and institutionally

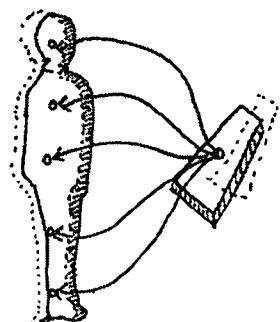
## 16    constituted frameworks of intelligibility. Architecture and experimentation

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16. Sun Ra is able to “opt out of the codes of representation”, by playing indeterminate notes and pushing the envelope of what is considered music. Similarly, architecture may be able to create spaces that can be used in ways that are unexpected. SOURCE: Heble p125.

are already familiar friends for a variety of purposes, from efficiency to sustainability, but they safely remain within social boundaries. Can architecture, as a tool, be lifted away from its normative societal role as a dispenser of order to relish in a bit of havoc? In other words, how might architecture extend itself to celebrate traits that are not so easily tolerated? Enter the Nomad, who personifies the very idea of difference to Western society. The Nomad's unsettled, and perhaps unsettling, ways are understood to be in direct opposition to an established social order, where the idea of constant migration is deemed either exotic or foolish. However, on closer inspection, the Nomad may have something to lend to the reinterpretation of the city...

---



1

## Myths of the Nomad

To truly dissect the value of the Nomad within the context of architecture, we must first understand who is referenced when the term 'Nomad' is invoked. At first glance, knowledge about the Nomad seems fairly simple, and asked for a definition, a typical response might involve a 1 standard dictionary blurb, in which the Nomad is situated as a "member of a people who have no fixed residence but move from place to place... [an] individual who roams about." On further consultation with the standardized 2 Internet resource Wikipedia, nomads are summarized with statistics, etymology, quantified lists of known nomadic groups, and the categorized economics of hunter-gatherer, pastoral, and craft-trade. However, behind a supposed brief and objective presentation of knowledge reflects a much-accepted flat representation of the Nomad. Tents, yurts, and tepees are pictured 3 in front of spacious, empty landscapes of mountains or deserts, bringing to mind the long cultivated thoughts of foreignness and primitivism, perhaps unintentional and factually justifiable. The idea of someone consciously

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1. The definition quoted above is found at: "Nomad", Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Merriam-webster.com (2010).

2. Wikipedia, "a free web-based encyclopedia", is referenced because it is a well-used resource that quickly serves accessible condensed 'knowledge' to contemporary information seekers. The popular site, written and edited collaboratively by numerous volunteers, represents common, if brief, perspectives of its subjects. For more information, refer to Wikipedia's entry on itself: "Wikipedia"; Wikipedia.org (2010).

3. First image on the Wikipedia page of 'nomad' presents a Tibetan pastoral woman by her lone-some, a tiny figure on a flat uninhabited plain, against a mountainous backdrop.

PHOTO: Nomad near Namtso, Tibet. By Philipp Roelli (2005). SOURCE: "Nomad"; Wikipedia.org (2010).



2  
Myths of the Nomad

existing without a 'fixed residence' remains a *terra incognita*, vaguely projected upon some faraway land with an assumed minimal knowledge of industrialized urbanism.

Yet, the Nomad appears quite frequently in developed cities. Traces of a 4 longstanding curiosity have been passed along and redistributed into limited instances rather than a consistently composed history. The Nomad shows 5 himself at different times as a traveler, an explorer, a homeless person, a student, or a schizophrenic. All are involved in the act of purposeful wandering in cities, an act that stems from common involvement in contemporary society, meaning that most city dwellers, at one point or another, have encountered, or have taken the role of, the Nomad. To extract the possibilities for nomadic aspects to surface in the lives of city inhabitants, various myths of the Nomad must be recognized. The narratives of the Nomad are necessarily 6 composed of 'myths' rather than 'histories' because they are assemblages of both facts and fictions, just as myths are socially generated convictions that sometimes emerge as generalized beliefs, in which their realities are largely supported by widespread acceptance rather than factual evidence. Yet the possible falsities of myths and of the Nomad's narratives are often too memorable to be discarded because they are infused into the very identity of their subject through common usage, making them just as powerful as

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4. Architect and author Bernard Rudofsky, in studying the history of non-pedigreed architecture, attributes this curiosity to a number of travellers who transcribed foreign practices into Western texts, such as Herodotus and Marco Polo. It is deemed 'curiosity' because though Nomads and mobile habitation were subjects of interest, no Western society seriously applied such concepts to their own built environment. SOURCE: Rudofsky, Bernard. "Mobile Architecture." *The Prodigious Builders* (New York & London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977). p128-157.

5. In no way is the Nomad gender specific. It is open to all. However, since I have Sun Ra as a primary model, I will be referring to the Nomad in the male format. Though gender is, of course, an important element in discussing spatial issues, the specificity it requires would demand another thesis in itself.

6. The term 'myth' that is referenced here is used broadly to incorporate all conceptions and misconceptions of the idea of Nomad. It is meant to emphasize that 'truths' are often muddled, and not as a reference to other more theoretical approaches to the subject. For a brief look at the almost endless ways of approaching 'myth', refer to: Segal, Robert A. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

histories. Therefore, the analysis of the Nomad must include readings of myths, in order to appropriately convey his character.

One such fact-or-fiction of the Nomad concerns the origin and subsequent usage of the word ‘nomad’ itself. Derived from the Latin word ‘nomas’, with other variations in Middle French and Greek that may have been developed 7 much earlier, the English word was first used in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, in a colonial era that prided in the discovery and conquest of land. As explorers 8 came across tribes that did not have an ascribed nation, their particular transience was marked by the categorization of ‘nomad’. Its original usage provided a true description of the specific practice of “wandering to find pastures” by pastoral tribes, but it has since evolved to signify something very different. A Nomad is deemed different from the norm by way of his spatial practice. The pastoral aspect of “nomad” has been discarded in some cases to apply more generally to anyone who constantly moves, somehow equating it to ‘vagabond’ or ‘wanderer’. The changing of the meanings of “nomad” cannot be pinpointed to single events, but it can be traced through the compilation of myths that have emerged.

Within the contemporary context, three myths emerge as most descriptive of its current shifted meanings: the foreign Nomad, the exotic Nomad, and the dissonant Nomad. Each describes a perspective of the Nomad, reflective of

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7. Origin of the word found in the Merriam-Webster article on “Nomad.”

8. Nation: “a community of people composed of one or more nationalities and possessing a more or less defined territory and government.” SOURCE: “Nation”; Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Merriam-webster.com (2010).

the surrounding society that has been incorporated into his identity. Within the timeline of Western civilization, it is the foreign Nomad who was the first to emerge. He embodies the traditional aspects of the Nomad as witnessed 9 in tribes of antiquity like the Huns, or those in present-day such as the Bedouin. Their pastoral characteristics remain intact, but are represented, in Western views, as undermining to the viability of their incorporation into a more 'sophisticated' civilization. Ironically, the foreign Nomad does not and cannot fully exist outside (or perhaps depending on where you stand, *inside*) the bounds that are drawn for him by those who have deemed him to be nomadic. The concept of his existence relies precisely on forever belonging to a preconceived group that is defined as being alien.

Parts of the foreign Nomad's identity have, however, been transferred and used within contemporary Western society. Looking to historical examples, mobile living has frequently offered brief glimpses into other possibilities of habitation, as well as pieces of knowledge that have been adopted across borders and time. For example, the tent stands as one of the most recognizable forms of mobile architecture. Bernard Rudofsky places its beginnings as 10 man seeking shelter under a tree dating back to the ancient Scythians and Assyrians. Most notable examples are in Asia, where one can track the evolution of tent structures to the earliest of civilizations, from the very

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9. The Huns were perhaps the most well-known, and perhaps, because of their violent invasions of Europe in the 4th and 5th century, contributed to the perception of nomads as savages. In more recent discourses, it is believed that "Huns" were synonymous to "barbarians", and that they were grouped by principle and reputation rather than ethnicity. This is suggestive of the power of a heterogeneous group to transcend the idea of settled nations. SOURCE: Pohl, Walter. "Huns." Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World. (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1999) p501-502.

10. Rudofsky, referring to Herodotus' Historiae (4.23), describes the practices of the Scythians and Assyrians as covering trees with white felt cloths during the winter. SOURCE: Rudofsky p132-133.

simple to an intricate collection of different typologies. The Muslim 'heaven' is even described to consist of "seventy thousand tents", as opposed to a

11 Western representation of a cloud-filled open space. Through the travel accounts of explorers such as Marco Polo, Europeans were introduced to

12 the possibility of grandeur in the construction of non-permanent structures. These perceived 'unusual' wonders were sometimes reproduced in Europe, if only for curiosity's sake. Though ideas of the tent did not transfer into primary forms of inhabitation for European cultures or North American settlers, they did influence particular facets of everyday life. The most comparable

13 reification of an ancient Chinese or Mongolian tent 'metropolis' can perhaps be exemplified by the contemporaneous squatters' tent-city, in that the identity of the community is tied to physical presence of tents. More common usage, however, can be demonstrated within the contexts of the military, disaster relief, and leisure, in which the tent is regarded as one of the prevailing models for shelter in situations requiring constant mobility or temporary housing.

Such nomadic living has not emerged as anything more than curiosity or fantasy for most, and it is because a certain stigma that the foreign Nomad must contend with when spoken about in Western culture. The problem with translating the foreign Nomad into a locally viable one lies deeper than his

11. Rudofsky states that "Heaven is represented as a pall of stratocumulus", lacking architectural order. SOURCE: p137 Alternately, in the Apocalypse of Muhammed: "the Prophet perceives, close to the throne of Allah, seventy thousand tents, each as large as the world, separated from each other by the distance of 70,000 years, in each of which are 50,000 angels who adore Allah". SOURCE: Blochet, Edgar. Musulman Painting. (London: Methuen, 1929) plate lxxvi.

12. In China, the more luxurious constructions of tents involved rare animal hides, embroidered silk, and carved wood, while in Japan, villagers built giant 4-ton kites as a pastime. SOURCE: Rudofsky p135-139.

13. Derived from Marco Polo's description of Kublai Kahn's tents when travelling to Cachar Modun: "One would think the Khan was in his finest city." SOURCE: Polo, Marco. The Travels of Marco Polo. ed. L.F. Benedetto. (London: Routledge, 2005) p144.



IMAGE: Engraving of a Chinese military camp in the image of a town. By Cochin, C.N. SOURCE: The Prodigious Builders p135.

pastoral economics, at the heart of his perceived way of living. His behaviour of “roaming about” implies a sense of restlessness and impermanence, perhaps because his relationship to the land seems less defined than that of the propertied system. This constant moving has been regarded as a bizarre and inconvenient lifestyle, and our dictionary-blurb definition gives the impression that the Nomad moves for the sake of moving. Recently, different establishments have taken up this particular language of movement, most 14 notably of advertising and tourism, to proclaim glamour and exoticism in jet-setting trends as well as permitting a celebration of human impulse rather than seriously looking at the possibilities of the Nomad. The assumptions behind movement as principle and movement as consequence are confused. Thus, the exotic Nomad is allowed to materialize.

In their treatise on Nomadology, a revisionist interpretation of the history of nomads, French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 15 counter the idea of the ever-moving ‘nomos’ which is a revised and purified notion of the foreign Nomad. They argue that “the nomad is one who does not depart...who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe or the desert advance, and who invents nomadism as a response to 16 this challenge.” The foreign Nomad’s movement is not without reason. Rather than economics, the foreign Nomad is concerned with an *ecology* of living.

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14. Ikem Okoye, professor of art history at the University of Delaware, argues that the idea of the nomad has been co-opted by capitalist ventures in a way that has exhausted its intellectual capacity, that the narrative of the Nomad has been assimilated into Western culture as a lifestyle choice rather than a model of resistance. This is the basis for the appearance of the Exotic Nomad in the text. Refer to his article: Okoye, Ikem Stanley. “Rending the ‘nomad’” *Interventions*, 6:2 (2004) p180-200.

15. The relevance of Deleuze & Guattari’s ‘nomos’ to the Nomad’s narratives is restricted to that of the foreign Nomad. Though ‘nomos’ is reinvented as a positive and desirable model of resistance in their text, it remains the direct antithesis of ‘polis’, or the state, and in doing so, reinforces the dichotomy of foreign versus native. However, they do incorporate a character that mediates between ‘nomos’ and ‘polis’, which will be explored in Chapter 3. SOURCE: Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Translated by Brian Massumi. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986)

16. Deleuze & Guattari p51.

The hunter-gatherer follows where there is harvestable food; the pastoral follows available pastures for grazing; the craft-trade follows where

17 there is need for their skill. Movement occurs in tune with environmental changes, and if depletion of resources did not occur, there would perhaps be no movement at all. In contrast, the contemporary urban dweller has orchestrated everything to move around him. His food and necessities are an array of Asian, South American, African and European products; his information gushes from foreign books, the virtual world, and more. Anonymous hands provide. And if this continuous flow were to stop? Panic.

We do not have to look far for an example, as it was witnessed when the

18 volcano Eyjafjallajokull interrupted our normalized connectivity with its travelling clouds of ash.

The foreign Nomad moves as a consequence of his preferred way of living, in that such a mode of existence requires continuous re-evaluations of his relationship with his surroundings. He changes when change needs to occur, be it desert or city. On the contrary, the exotic Nomad, as revealed by an industry of travel and consumption, moves because of reasons that place the environment as a backdrop for leisure. He is exotic in that he adopts movement as part of a distinction tied to his economic status. His privilege presumes that the same comfortable range of activities can be performed

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17. Environment refers to all the conditions under which the Nomad lives, rather than a strictly climatic perspective.

18. The volcanic eruptions that occurred in Iceland between March 26th and April 13th, 2010, sent up large clouds of ash, grounding all air traffic in Europe, leaving many people stranded and halting all exporting activity. SOURCE: "Ash Cloud Hindering Businesses, Travelers"; Cbc.ca. CBC News (2010).

anywhere, in any situation, where the environment is either changed or ignored to accommodate him. We can refer to Zaha Hadid's Chanel Art Container to find the exotic Nomad at work. An eerie prediction for the future is offered by Fulcrum Magazine about the Container:

"Museums once defined cities, and we traveled even to remote small towns to see them. Now with this mobile museum, the city is no longer necessary. The museum travels to a town near you fully packaged and branded 'Chanel'." <sup>19</sup>

The exotic Nomad promises to make the city irrelevant. In a global frame of mind, projections of Karl Lagerfeld extend through and beyond all cities. Even Hadid refers to the Art Container as "an entire landscape for...[art]work", an "enigmatic strangeness...arousing curiosity". Designed in the spacious realms of virtual modeling space, the Art Container is the only referential background for the exotic Nomad, and he is only there because he is invited to participate within it as an affirmation of that glamourous oddity. <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup>

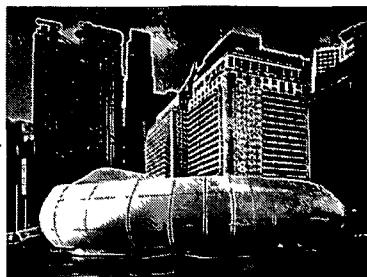
The third myth of the Nomad is that of the dissonant Nomad, who is neither foreign nor exotic because his existence is not defined by his imposed or assumed proximity away from settled communities. In fact, he regularly traverses the city as its resident. His nomadic tendencies emerge from recognition that his identity is not shaped by his dependence on the city's

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19. Quoted from "Chanel Art Container": Fulcrum Magazine Online. Fulcrummag.com (2008).

PHOTO: The alien-like Art Container against the backdrop of Hong Kong. "Chanel Contemporary Art Container": Dezeen Magazine. Dezeen.com (2008).

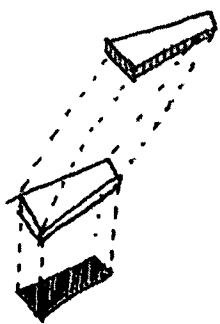
20. The iconic head designer of Chanel.  
21. Fulcrummag.com (2008).



22. Within musical principles, 'dissonance' is a term that describes jarring, harsh, and unresolved sounds, which may be considered noise, in opposition to 'consonance', which is defined as harmonious. However, dissonant sounds are increasingly tied to experimentation, as demonstrated by the music of Sun Ra and other free jazz musicians. Therefore, while dissonance can be perceived as conflict, it can also be regarded as open to an exploration of critical practice.  
SOURCE: Heble p23.

established boundaries, and that his own inherent points of difference can be used to push those boundaries. Remaining sensitive to his immediate surroundings, the Nomad's dissonance is the result of recognizing internal and societal incongruities and exploring their possibilities for allowing alternate interpretative uses of the city's spatial resources. Whereas the foreign Nomad's difference, predetermined by civilized society, is considered too anarchic to be persuasive, and the exotic Nomad's difference removes him entirely from the relevance of local urban environments, the dissonant Nomad is able to encourage diversity from within the city because he is able to release himself from its gridded nature. Currently manifested in isolated glimpses, perhaps as a student who takes afternoon naps in the library, or a musician who plays uninvited music in the local market, the dissonant Nomad has yet to be fully explored as part of an active community.

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2

**(Un)Settling of the Nomad**

Instances of the Nomad are necessarily bound to the particular landscapes in which he chooses to reside. These environments may vary, but each will determine his chosen practices. Foreign Nomads, whose pastoral activities require acute attention to changing climates and vegetation in their vast habitats, are also in constant interaction with the settled communities around them. Whether engaged in trading, or even avoidance, the presence of these communities are permanent features that often influence the Nomad's movement. Similarly, Nomads traversing within Western cities must face existing spatial organizations, even if they do not intend to follow them. The perceptions of space that have come to define the modern phenomena of inhabitation are important to acknowledge, as they are the foundation of the social landscape that the dissonant Nomad must address.

The organization of contemporary Western cities can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during the age of discovery and conquest in the early

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- 1 Renaissance, when the initial notions of a propertied system coincided with the first English conceptions of a nomadic person. The British enclosure
- 2 movement, conceived in 1534, allowed for land to be perceived as a commodity that could be bought or sold, not merely a place of residence and livelihood. In the face of increased pressures for the production of trade commodities, along with rising prices brought on by commercialization that extended beyond local economies, the aristocracy, who had previously relied on rent from peasants for income, had to reconsider the role their land played in sustaining their lives. Instead of noble entitlement or obligation to land, where the nobleman's identity was inseparable from that of his domain, the aristocracy now had to contend with land being a saleable possession,
- 3 "enabl[ing] a conceptual distinction between land and ownership." Land was divided and sold among various purchasers, accompanied by the violence of uprooting the peasants who had been living on these lands. These separations, of title from land, and of forcible physical removals, allowed for land to be viewed as being obtainable and claimable under private control in spite of monarchies, nations and fellow citizens.

Yet, none of this could have occurred without appropriate representations of this land. As William Wood argues, from a sociological point of view, it was how land began to be portrayed in European cartography in

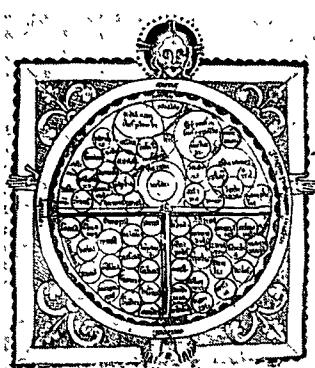
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1. People who are considered nomadic have of course existed long before the 16th century, but the usage of the term 'Nomad' is comparatively recent. The characterization, though not necessarily tied to the emergence of the property system, would have highlighted the differences between English explorers and their subjects of study.

IMAGE: The Lambeth Palace world map, where the earth is understood in relation to Christ's body  
SOURCE: Mapping Paradise (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) p131.

2. Wood, William. "(Virtual) Myths" Critical Sociology. (30.2: 2004) p524.

3 Wood p525.



the 16<sup>th</sup> century that enabled a changed understanding of occupying space.

- 4 Whereas medieval maps perceived space as inseparable from various cultural influences such as religion, mythology and author-based interpretations, the technical measurement of land used in Renaissance cartography aspired to
- 5 show “spatial uniformity” and objectivity, removing any cultural references to the landscape. The viewer is placed above, with his eye over all perceivable space, unlike the medieval viewer who understood the represented space in relation to his participation within it. Once human biases were no longer a visible part of the world map, which was now claiming to exercise the “truth”
- 6 of “nature”, European explorers could hold claim to any part of the “new” world as they wished, drawing lines through existing villages and extracting resources from anonymous reserves waiting to be discovered. Those who did not have the advantage of the Cartesian map were viewed as inferior, and as a result, were judged to lack any validity in holding claims even to the land they had already inhabited for years.

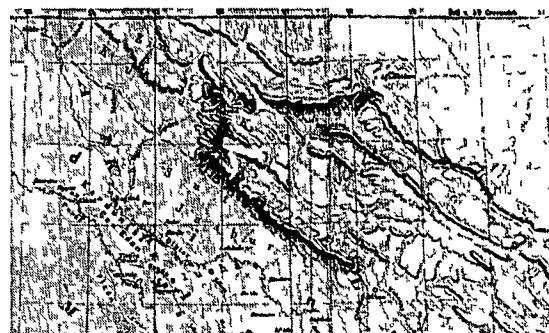
Nicholas Blomley argues that the revised cartography of the world depended upon representational techniques where the drawing of uniformly scaled lines played a key role. Based in geometry and mathematics, such techniques were often attributed to the Renaissance interest in linear perspective. Its influence encouraged European maps and surveys, portrayed

4 Medieval maps, referred to as *mappa mundi*, mainly served didactic purposes and record keeping, and were not used for travel. Rather than mathematically defined, they are heavily contextual, relying on the internal logic of the society that produced them, as well as its relationships to its intended audience, often including the biblical Paradise as an ever-present element. SOURCE Scafi, Alessandro *Mapping Paradise* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 2006) p84-124

5 Wood p521

6 New in terms of their perception of other continents, as well as the reinvented notions behind their own domains

IMAGE Map of Babylon, a Cartesian search for the Garden of Eden. By Delitzsch, Friedrich (1881) SOURCE Mapping Paradise p349



as accurate and reasoned measurements of the world, to be conceived as a  
7 *priori* to any human settlement, so that “space [could be] marked and divided into places where people are put,” rather than people being the defining factor of spatial delineation. The hand that guided the pen became the authority over all conceivable space. Lived space existed uneasily. Naturally, people who did not fit within lines saw themselves excluded from the norm, with some earning the name ‘nomad’. Our ‘normalized’ conduct concerning property is so internalized that there does not even exist a true antonym for  
8, 9 ‘nomad’, though ‘settler’ or ‘sedentary’ have been used in the recent past. The ‘nomad’ is deliberately set apart from other Westernized inhabitants because  
10 of his failure to be mapped by conventional means.

If exploratory maps promised possibilities of an order based on division, then it was early modern surveys that put such possibilities into regular practice. Whereas the mapped world was still an abstract concept controlled by a handful of deciding figures, the crisp and measurable squares of private property depicted on official surveys provided precision and tangibility to the  
11 “statement of ownership”, something with much more affect to the regular citizen, because it avoided the ambiguity of translating space into spoken or  
12 written agreements, which was previously the norm. The visualized parcels of land were also a form of socioeconomic record keeping, allowing a structured

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7. Blomley, Nicholas. “Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. (93.1: 2003) p127.

8. ‘Sedentary’ comes from an anthropological vocabulary in reference to acts of permanent settlement. However, in its notable use by theorists Deleuze and Guattari to describe the stasis of society, there seems to be a negative connotation associated with it, since within a contemporary medical context, it refers to an inactive, and therefore, unhealthy lifestyle.

9. There are a number of authors and scholars who, in challenging the ‘truth’ of property, have had to contemplate the need for an antonym. For example, Nicholas Blomley, William Wood, Mike Davis, and Neil Smith.

10. The word ‘failure’ is used because it reflects the negative tone set for the foreign Nomad in colonial times: assumed to be primitive, Nomads are perceived to simply not understand the sophistication of maps and property, rather than having an equally valid difference in spatial practice.

11. Blomley p126.

12. Wood p523.

13 tax system to be put in place, as well as determining the range of personal rights bestowed upon citizens. Those who owned land were offered a stronger  
14 voice; by holding a cadastral survey, the early landowner could vote and sway the politics of the nation. Though voting has evolved past its limitation to landowners, the significance of a permanent address is still reminiscent of its history. This is highlighted in the 2008 Federal Election of Canada, when stricter proof-of-address rules meant that students, renters and people with transient living arrangements were turned away until they could prove their  
15 places of residence.

16 The inherent dividing nature of line drawing imposed a binary order on a society that came to define itself through spatial boundaries. One was either inside or outside, local or foreign, legitimate or illegitimate. Moreover, the interior of these lines were, and do remain, prone to change where ambition saw expansion as a necessary goal, true to its colonial roots, though this  
17 transgression is almost always negatively received. On the other side of the line, unwillingly, of course, stand the natives, migrants, refugees, and even renters, who challenge the foundation of Western ownership by an approach to settlement that is more difficult to monitor and define. Deemed as threats, reactions can range from wariness and annoyance to outright stigmatization and exclusion. The implication of installing these boundaries is that the space

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13. The property tax is still an important economy within the contemporary city, as it contributes to necessary services to residents, such as education, infrastructure, as well as social assistance. It directly links home ownership to the welfare of the Western city. In that sense, the homeowner controls his private spaces, but also informs public ones. SOURCE: "Ontario's Property Tax System"; City of Ottawa. [http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/proptaxes/general\\_info/on\\_tax\\_system\\_en.html](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/proptaxes/general_info/on_tax_system_en.html) (2008).

14. 17th c. Historian Sir John Spelman argued that England could not fairly represent its people, because of the "Forty Shilling Freeholder" voting qualification which decreed that only people with property worth forty shillings or more could vote. He states "all that have 40s. per annum free-hold Land...cannot be above a tenth part of the Kingdome." It demonstrates that voting was strongly tied to the economic value of land. SOURCE: Spelman, Sir John. A View of a Printed Book Intituled Observations. Oxford (1643). Quoted in: Hirst, Derek. *The Representative of the People?* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975) p29-30.

15. It is estimated that two-thirds of students at Dalhousie University were turned away in Halifax. This incident, of course, reflects the difficulty in implementing new policies, but also reveals the spatial assumptions that are made even to the most basic of rights. SOURCE: "New ID Rules Cause Confusion at Polls" CBC News: Canada Votes. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada-votes/story/2008/10/14/poll-problems.html?ref=rss> (2008)

16. Blomley p127.

of the city is homogenized under the ideology of one distinct group, rather than allowing multiple variations of occupancy to be sustained. A single popularized idea has somehow conditioned most of the urban population to internalize assumptions behind 'proper' land ownership and development. Though not necessarily wrong, we must be attentive to how these ideas have come to gain acceptance over others. If our modern mode of living is borne out of heavily manipulated spatial constructs, where an objective *natural* occurrence is a fiction, should we continue to entertain its seemingly permanent control of the city? Does questioning its viability not give us the opportunity to weigh in on other expressive forms of habitation?

Interestingly, in the case of the dissonant Nomad, who is not drawn on the map at all, his existence may be disregarded by default. His anomalous living is an oddity, that is agreed, but he does not seem likely to interfere with the established order. The line does not apply to him, nor does he see significance in it, an attribute of which can be used to his advantage. Of course, it does not mean that the dissonant Nomad can always slip away unnoticed. To keep the established property system in order, a never-ending string of regulations are developed, cited, and maintained, which can be a great obstacle to his fluidity. By simply occupying space, one almost always swims through legalities and illegalities. There are many watchful eyes. Usage,

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17. Post-colonial civil society is often deeply involved in acknowledging and correcting past spatial transgressions, and if a nation is involved in any suspicious occupation of land, they must answer to the scrutiny of other governments, as well as to international organizations such as the UN. However, even the UN itself must answer to critiques of its handling of peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions, proving that no one is free from the dilemmas of territory.

duration of residence, construction and other factors contribute to whether or not law accepts the Nomad's stay. Changes to accepted land uses are scrutinized and often resisted. Aggressively subversive acts, such as squatting and soliciting, are likely to be eliminated. Any of these activities that continue to exist are pushed to the fringes of society, hidden away from the public eye. Though the dissonant Nomad may not participate in these frowned-upon activities, he thrives in the ambiguities that can be frequently denied by law. In fact, the lawful city is akin to the inhospitable desert that the foreign Nomad sometimes calls home. When the situation is no longer useful or welcoming, he must move on to a different strategy.

Fully recognizing the dilemma of a 'dividing line', French sociologist Henri Lefebvre chooses to term the distinction between the two sides 18 differently, in a manner that is useful to the Nomad: continuous and discontinuous, which describes *approaches*, and not sides at all. The word 'continuity' recalls the idea of *continuum*, an accepted timeline of practices to which the majority of society has collectively adhered. The suggestion of 'discontinuity', as Lefebvre points out, "emphasizes distinctions and reveals 19 irreducible diversities" that supply an infinite number of options, however positive or negative. Continuity defines discontinuity, and vice versa, but they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, their intersections are key to the changing

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PHOTO: Kowloon Walled City: one of more the more iconic instances of extremely subversive high-density spatial development, whereby an ambiguous jurisdiction in Hong Kong led to a quick settlement of over 30,000 squatters. (1989) SOURCE: "Kowloon Walled City." Wikipedia.org, (2010).



18. Lefebvre poses that every society produces its own space in which social relations are played out, and that it is through the dissecting of everyday lived practices in the city that narratives of power and alienation are drawn out. Though the terms 'continuous' and 'discontinuous' are meant to be points of 'anchorage' that cannot be taken as effective knowledge, they emphasize the idea of contingency, and may shed some light as to how to reveal the infinite diversities of thinking about space. SOURCE: Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. Vol 2. Translated by John Moore. (London; New York: Verso, 2002) p126-142.

19. Lefebvre p128.

of values. By summoning the two descriptors, the moral implications of 'sides' are removed, signaling the acknowledgement of practices that are alternative rather than illegitimate.

- Rather than relying on 'border' and 'line' to define societal space,
- 20 Dutch sociologist Saskia Sassen explains that each term is given a terrain to negotiate, where their alleged legitimacies can be fully explored. If the terms are applied to the city's geography, then 'continuity' consists of accepted forms of occupying land. Continuous spaces are therefore the civilized
- 21 "propertied...geography" inhabited by legalized society, spaces that law favours against discontinuous ones, because they are based upon a socially
- 22 and economically determined value system that requires the obeying of set boundaries. As long as people and space operate within these confines, the city is viewed as stable. Discontinuity can then perhaps be understood as
- 23 "places that are much less effectively controlled", where law's jurisdiction occurs in varying degrees of power. This usually refers to places that have less social or economic value in the public realm. In the case of gridded cities, they are the sidewalks that inadvertently accommodate panhandlers and troubadours, highways for hitchhikers, or bridge undersides that invite graffiti artists and occasional young lovers. These spaces are looked down upon, but cannot be eliminated, because of their attachment to existing

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20. "Terrain" is an additional term that Sassen proposes in comprehending Lefebvre's 'continuity' and 'discontinuity'. Her reference to Lefebvre specifically deals with spaces of formal and informal economic operations. Though both are sociologists, Sassen's research is different than that of Lefebvre's in that her work delves into human migration within an increasingly globalized international order. It provides an interesting perspective on mobility and how it may be encouraged or hindered by socioeconomic factors. SOURCE: Sassen, Saskia. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. (New York: New Press, 1998) p102 footnote 19.

21. Blomley p125.

22. This is demonstrated through heavily monitored zoning systems that are in place. How zoning is developed is a highly complicated matter, and attempts to change its laws are carefully analyzed and discussed over a long period of time. Zoning's importance reveals that the extent of spatial regulation can pervade even the smallest measurement.

23. Canadian anthropologist Alan Smart specifically refers to the developed squatter areas in Hong Kong, revealing that illegal land uses are persistent when there is a need and desire. Often, their advantage is that they can act quickly, before government bureaucracies can mobilize their resources, if they do it at all. SOURCE: Smart, Alan. "Unruly Places: Urban Governance and the Persistence of Illegality in Hong Kong's 'Urban Squatter Areas'" *American Anthropologist*. (103.1: 2001) p31.

infrastructure. Furthermore, because the use of these spaces is temporally based, participants are difficult to detain permanently, as long as law isn't physically represented, perhaps by a fence or a police officer at the exact location at an exact time. Even so, physical barriers require time and resources

24 that the city cannot always spare. Bureaucratic neglect and inertia are surprisingly advantageous to the persistence of discontinuous spaces.

The dissonant Nomad can operate in the overlaps between continuity and discontinuity. Space, being much more dynamic than the laws imposed upon it, is quite open to variability, meaning that what is continuous at one moment may be discontinuous at the next. As long as the city resident considers partaking in dissonance, there is opportunity to disassemble some of the assumptions made about the rigidity of city spaces. In other words, to be nomadic is to relinquish absolute control over land, and to respond to the

25 presence of our various neighbours. It is a change in our mode of habitation, as well as a questioning of the immobility of our daily rituals. The Nomad offers an alternative perspective, in the belief that it is choice that allows for progress. To be released from the strict city grid, to reinterpret and redesign the rules of habitation will perhaps encourage a more meaningful knowledge of our surroundings, a goal that has yet to be achieved. The city, through hundreds of years of conditioning, is designed to counter such change.

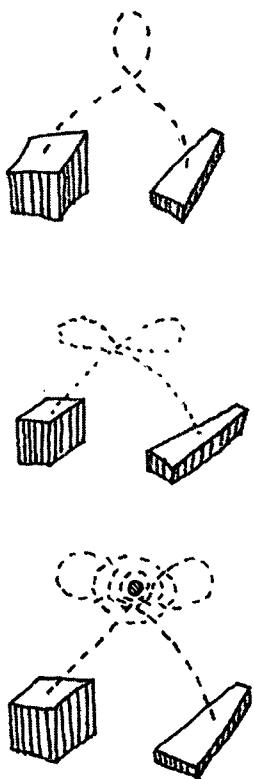
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24. Smart p41.

25. Referencing our approach to neighbours that is inspired by our current property system and its well-defined lines: "Keep out!", "Good fences make good neighbours.", etc.

Our disposition to acknowledge the existing order is upheld not merely by words, but by the physical infrastructure that surrounds us. It is the '*Where*' that matters for law to be able to assert its power. Architecture, as is, resonates with the power of those who have come to shape the city, some good, and some bad, though we must also not forget that it is partly responsible for the values that are framed within its walls. As a study and perpetuation of space, architecture is not free from subjective beginnings. However, under individual practitioners and patrons, its relationship to the city is an open one; it can operate under different direction than what is considered the norm and still be an active part of its society. How architecture manages to manifest alternate visions of the city is dependent upon the will of its participants, who must hint at and draw out discontinuous tendencies. Therefore, to find the Nomad travelling within the invisible confines of the local city, the architect must *anticipate* his arrival.

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3

**The Metallurgist and the Architect**

**A**rchitecture, as an indispensable element of the urban landscape, influences the organization of habitation patterns, whether intentionally or otherwise. The architect's role is of spatial design, and its effect prompts agency, but to what cause? In responding to societal expectations, architecture can perform normatively, sensibly producing house after house, museum after museum. However, there is also an aspect of

- 1 architectural thought that appreciates the value of deviation. By recognizing both points, the identity of the architect cannot be considered as synonymous with the gridded city nor with the Nomad. Instead, the architect must be introduced as a third character.

Within Deleuze and Guattari's purified conceptions of 'nomos' and 'polis',

- 2 a third character is also presented, that of the metallurgist, who mediates the relationships between the two powers, but as a distinct individual. Of the three, it is the metallurgist who is the most adaptive, living amongst and working for two separate causes without total alienation from either. Despite

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1. Deviation, defined by Merriam-Webster as "noticeable or marked departure from accepted norms of behaviour," occurs as creative experimentation with, but not limited to, form, technology and theory within architecture. SOURCE: "Deviation"; Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Merriam-webster.com (2010).

2. Deleuze and Guattari p90-109.

the disparity of living principles between 'nomos' and 'polis', Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that they often share resources in the form of tools and weapons provided to them by the metallurgist, whose craft of metalwork is a type of knowledge that is passed between the two. Harnessed by both

- 3 for his abilities, the metallurgist "liber[ates] a materiality in relation to a prepared matter, ... a transformation in relation to the form to be incarnated."

In other words, the metallurgist is responsible for manipulating the inherent

- 4 properties of metal, as artisan and scientist, to provide a variety of useful

5 technologies to 'nomos' and 'polis'. The metallurgist gives them the same palette of strategies, tying them to the same material culture, but the ways in which they decide to *apply* such strategies is what determines their differences. Therefore, the agenda of the metallurgist should not be confused with the agendas of 'nomos' or 'polis'. It is necessarily separate because he operates solely in production, within the interests of his craft. Though the intentions of either party are implicit within his work, the metallurgist's

- 6 power is in the continual development of variation, which opens up new possibilities of contextual relations between 'nomos' and 'polis'.

Like the metallurgist in providing useful tools and weapons, the architect offers definitions of space that ground various identities within the gridded city. Implicit in their relations, the architect's current influence tends towards

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3. Deleuze and Guattari p102.

4. Deleuze and Guattari p99.

5. The technologies that Deleuze and Guattari describe are specific to metalwork, such as battle-axes of the Hyskos and sabers of the Scythians, though they are meant to evoke more recent technologies, especially in war and in science. SOURCE: Deleuze and Guattari, p91. (Recall the discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's historiographic approach to Nomadology in Chapter 1.)

6. Deleuze and Guattari, p102.

7 the established, while the relationship with the dissonant Nomad is a passive one. Most of his work in the city is immobile, where prevailing methods of design reflect the debatable permanence of societal values. The resulting architecture, closely following guidelines, surveys and 'proper' building principles, often cuts awkwardly across communities or has little to do with the surrounding city. What is more telling, perhaps, is that publicly praised examples of influential architecture frequently find themselves built in the  
8-10 middle of nowhere, such as Villa Savoye, the Farnsworth House, or Diller and  
11 Scofidio's Blur Building. In each example, the fluidity of concepts becomes much more complicated if inserted into the city. Imagine the Blur Building  
12 in the downtown core of Zurich or Geneva: one can presume that under the direction of the architect, traffic would be halted most of the day, and  
13 city residents would go about their day clad in colour-changing raincoats. However, in the reality of the city, the pavilion would not be approved for construction, or would sit as an empty frame most days, eventually being dismantled. Unlimited freedom in design is counterbalanced by the possible rurality and emptiness of its locations; a boundless blank canvas is curiously longed for within the architectural community. Does this not reveal the existence of a type of expression that the city does not usually provide, or perhaps even tolerate?

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7. Passive in the sense that it is consequential. The architect does not build directly for the Nomad.

8. Not all acclaimed architecture is subject to 'nothingness', but a neighbourless space forgives easily. To conceive of the examples above in a dense area means more persuasion and coaxing on the part of the architect: achievable, but exponentially more difficult.

9. Built in 1929, Villa Savoye is considered an iconic of Le Corbusier in establishing the aesthetic of early modernism. Its conceptual purity arose from the fact that it was designed as a weekend home in the small village of Poissy, France, located on a meadow with no neighbours. SOURCE: "Villa Savoye – A Machine for Living"; Ultimatehouse.tv (2007).

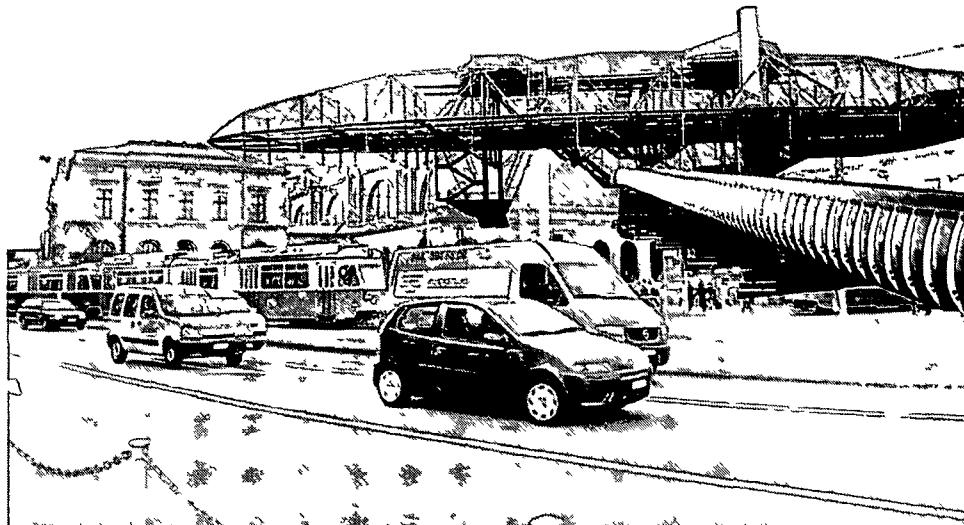
10. The Farnsworth House, built by Mies van der Rohe in 1951, was intended as a country retreat for its client in Plano, Illinois. Once again, its transparency and simplicity of structure was only possible in the context of neighbourless private property. SOURCE: "History"; Farnsworthhouse.org (2009).

PHOTO: Villa Savoye By Sullivan, Mary Ann (2006). SOURCE: Bluffton.edu (2010).



PHOTO: Farnsworth House. SOURCE: Uml.edu (2010).





Within the current spatial reality of Western cities projecting the Blur Building into the urban spaces of Zurich rather than on a lake might rid the project of its conceptual strengths, perhaps ending up as something like a naked structure, hovering awkwardly above the cityscape

**11** An experiment in "an architecture of atmosphere", where the primary material was of lake-water mist the Blur Building was constructed by the firm Diller & Scofidio as part of the Swiss Expo in 2002 on Lake Neuchatel  
SOURCE "Blur Building", Dsny.com (2002)

**12** The chosen cities reflect the purpose of the Blur Building as a Swiss pavilion

PHOTO Blur Building within its original context at Lake Neuchatel (2002) SOURCE Eikographia.com (2010)



**13** Designed to allow a curious social interaction between strangers, the 'Braincoat', a smart raincoat embedded with a personal character profile, lights up with different colours to show "affinity or antipathy" towards fellow Braincoat participants through a comparison of profiles when walking past each other  
SOURCE 'Braincoat For the Blur Building', Dsny.com (2002) IMAGE Arcspace.com (2010)



14 In a recent lecture entitled 'Less Space, More Quality,' presented to the students at Carleton University's School of Architecture and Urbanism by Lisbeth Van der Pol, chief architect of the Dutch government, the subject of architectural careers was explored as a consequence of talking about how 15 to appropriately design within cities. She made a strong case for integrated 16 design, in a uniquely Dutch perspective, arguing that the architect should extend past the design of one building into its surrounding environment, challenging previously set standards in order to improve the social, as well as ecological, quality of the city. It is a principle that the students should be familiar with through their studies. Yet when she gauged the depth of this understanding by posing a few questions to her audience, a dilemma was revealed. She asked how many architecture students intended on becoming architects. Every student, in a room of approximately eighty, raised his or her hand. When she asked how many of them envisioned becoming an urbanist, only a handful of students raised their hands. It seems that while the students acknowledge the engagement between their future architectures and the urban landscape, they are also sensitive to the titles that represent their work. Herein lies the problem: while Van der Pol defines 'urbanist' as a much more inclusive role taken on by the architect as a means of experimenting with city space, as in 'the architect *and* urban designer', the students have misunderstood it to be the counter-intuitive position of 'urban planner but

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14. The lecture was offered by Van Der Pol in her visit to Ottawa on March 26th 2010, which I attended. It coincided with an information session for first year students about career options in conservation, sustainability, and urbanism, reflecting the separation of the second year curriculum into distinct academic streams. A summary of the lecture can be found at: Cook, Maria. "Dutch Advice for Ottawa"; Ottawa Citizen Online: Designing Ottawa. <http://communities.canada.com/OTTAWACITIZEN/blogs/designingottawa/archive/2010/03/29/dutch-advice-for-ottawa.aspx> (2010).

15. She specifically dealt with myths about density and how to conserve space while preserving the aesthetic integrities of design, by providing Dutch examples and looking at principles found in architecture, urbanism, and landscape architecture.

16. The Dutch are renowned for their architectural experimentation. During the question period after the lecture, a student asked van der Pol how Dutch architecture manages to persuade the public in accepting their projects. Her answer was that it was a social conditioning that placed great emphasis on the value of innovation, having developed over a period of 200 years.

*not architect'. In asserting their independence from being labeled as urbanists, the students reveal an instinctual gap that is perceived to lie between the creative output promised by their architectural pedagogy and the mundane formulaic work of a *planner*.*

The internal separation of design and planning indicates the hesitance that the students hold in how they will address the city in the future. It is

- 17 believed that the architect can be freely involved in designing urban spaces, even using planning principles under the guise of architectural ones, but to consider oneself a planner is to abandon the creative process by which the architect is almost always convinced. Van der Pol, in expressing her concern over the students' unease with urbanism, argues that this is not the case. She remarks that contemporary and future architectural opportunities are to be found in the evolution of city environments, which can only happen when urban planning is directly confronted *through* design. This means that there must be *active* overlap between the disciplines of urban planning and designing, regardless of the intentions of the project. For van der Pol, maintaining 18 autonomy is possible, as demonstrated by her own position as *chief architect*, because tolerance for experimentation has been nurtured within the Dutch. However, for her Canadian audience, sensitivity to their architectural identity may affect how willingly they embrace and *challenge* the interacting fields.

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17. For current architecture students, there is sometimes confusion surrounding architecture, urban design and urban planning because of exposure to their principles through a dominantly architectural context. Though urban design, as the organization, design, and experience of public spaces, permeates both disciplines of architecture and urban planning, it is usually understood as solely within the scope of architecture, as studio projects often require the development of urban design skills alongside architectural ones. Because of this, the understanding of urban planning is effectively reduced to its more pragmatic considerations of policy.

18. The position of 'chief government architect' in the Netherlands is an independent role, described as the "architectural conscience of the Netherlands". The position started, over 200 years ago, as an architect who oversaw the construction of governmental buildings, but has evolved to include promoting the quality of the country's architecture, urban planning and sustainability policies, down to the display of monuments and art. SOURCE: "Chief Government Architect"; Rijksbouwmeester.nl (2008). Its integrated character is quite different from that of the other careers presented that day.

Without fully understanding their roles in the city, how much are architects willing to go beyond their own individual production?

Like Deleuze and Guattari's metallurgist, whose power lies in knowingly engineering the defense and destruction of both 'nomos' and 'polis', the architect can remain a self-directed agent who is able to assert his influence upon the city. By invoking the Nomad, the opportunity is created for the architect to address the city in a different manner than that of a binary compromise between freedom and constriction. In doing so, the architect must take his set of practices and translate it to imagine other acts and purposes. Aspects of this have already been projected into the Western city through various architects and theorists, who developed new concepts in trying to appropriately address a changing society through its urban spaces. Though most do not address the dissonant Nomad directly, they do anticipate a multiplicity of spatial perceptions in responding to a number of contemporary architectural issues that still influence the city today, of which the myths of the Nomad are associated.

19

There are three notable concerns that are presented: temporalities of the city, subjectivities of the body, and heterogeneities of society. The first deals with the generative process of architecture in the context of urbanism, where there seems to be the question of 'image'. It is most notably challenged

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19. The following concepts will be explained briefly as complementary examples, rather than overarching principles by which the Nomad will adopt.

by architects Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi, who are critical of the  
20 formal as a main organizing principle, characterized by cities in the 1980s.  
Koolhaas poses that the criticizing of existing urban spaces without actively  
21 participating in its planning only clutters the city with "only architecture, ever  
more architecture", where buildings sit on the landscape as nostalgic objects.  
22 Instead, he proposes that urbanism join with architecture as a hybrid to  
continually discover spatial potentials within the existing city. In the case of  
Tschumi, the formal is interpreted as a self-perpetuating device that produces  
hollow architectures in which functions are injected, promoting stagnant  
modes of living that are non-conducive towards the changing culture of a city.  
Using ideas behind film, of time and movement, architecture is explored as  
23 collections of spaces that intensify urban interaction without constricting  
usage. Though not necessarily nomadic, such architects stage urban culture  
upon in-between spaces that are subject to a temporal flux, a concept that is  
germane to the notions of the Nomad.

The second concern is contextualized around the human body, and  
how it is reconciled within a technological society. Posed by architect Toyo  
24 Ito and theorist Elizabeth Grosz, amongst others, the contemporary body  
is a fragmented self that is dispersed between the physical and the virtual.  
25 The word "nomad" is used specifically by Ito to describe the effect of media

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20. Tschumi notes that his entry for the Parc de la Villette Competition in 1982 tried to counter the ideas of Leon Krier and his New Urbanism principles. SOURCE: Walker, Enrique. Interview with Bernard Tschumi. *Tschumi on Architecture*. (New York: Monacelli Press, 2006) p53.

21. Koolhaas, Rem. "Whatever Happened to Urbanism?" S, M, L, XL. (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995) p967.

22. Koolhaas p969.

23. Tschumi attempts to "design conditions that will have the potential to stimulate interaction." Walker p76.

24. The post-modern 'self' is a well-discussed topic in many disciplines, and is not limited to architecture.

25. Shannon, Kelly. Interview with Toyo Ito. "Into the City of Replicants." *World Architecture* (43: 1996) p80-81.

and technology on the body, in which its experiences are scattered in such a way that spatial environments become ambiguous in their articulation and usage. What is public and what is private becomes unclear. Though Grosz does not refer to the 'nomad' as Ito does, she explores subjectivity and space in a similar fashion. In navigating between physical and virtual space, the person, as subject, is not always anchored within a corporeal identity; it is possible for the subject to be absorbed into a virtual identity, what Ito would term "fictional bodies". As a condition of current society, architecture then has to be re-evaluated in order to incorporate virtual bodies within constructed space. Its purpose would be to build a "community of nomads". It is theorized that because space is now contingent upon multiple variations of bodies, its spaces are inevitably impermanent as meaning shifts according to the inhabitation of different spaces by different bodies playing different roles.

The third is a critique that situates architecture within a larger sociopolitical scope. Though touched upon by Koolhaas and Tschumi, it is Anthony Kiendl and architect Ignasi de Sola-Morales who speak of society as a conscious system towards which architecture is responsible. The system, in its current condition, has attempted to universalize different processes within society to evoke a homogeneous set of values. However, alternate readings of the city constantly emerge, where experiences are multiple and

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26. Grosz, Elizabeth. "Architecture From the Outside." *Architecture from the Outside*. (Cambridge. London: MIT Press, 2001) p81.  
27. Ito p77.

do not conform to an absolute system. As new readings appear, society encounters a crisis where it cannot reconcile the readings into its set of values.

The crisis is then a point that architecture must address, as de Sola-Morales 28 describes, by “archaeology”, methodically revealing experiential layers within a city. Such architecture must induce sensibilities that counter what is expected; it must be “weak”, “fragmented”, “fleeting” to capture the 29 complexities of society. For Kiendl, “informal” architecture is summoned to challenge the significance of existing beliefs about living. It is important to the re-imagining and re-contextualizing of people’s social surroundings, to discover co-existent ways of inhabiting the city. Architecture documents multiplicities within a city, but it must also facilitate the production of such heterogeneity.

The key recognition within the presented concerns of temporalities, subjectivities, and heterogeneities is that the identities of architectural space, of the human body, and of societal values are subject to open readings within the contemporary condition. This openness reveals the development of a Western culture that relishes in ambiguity. Through the articulation of projects, real or imagined, strategies can be devised to appropriate the inherent instability of city spaces, allowing the dissonant Nomad to reveal himself within the resident community. The architect, as metallurgist, strays into an ‘Other’ practice of design.

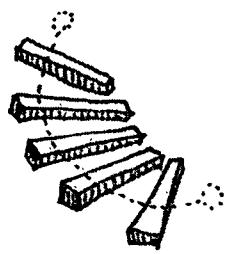
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28. De Sola-Morales, Ignasi. “Weak Architecture.” *Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997) p65.

29. As art curator, director of various art institutions, writer, and instructor of art and architecture, Anthony Kiendl has provided an interesting case for more informal ways, through art, architecture, and other forms of culture, of responding to contemporary culture and challenging the monumentality of existing spaces.  
SOURCE: Kiendl, Anthony. “Informal Architectures: Space in Contemporary Culture.” *Informal Architectures*. (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2008) p8-29.



On the other side of the spectrum the Blur Building could stand as a mesmerizing composer of urban climates. In order for this to occur how might the architect review the intentions and methodologies behind urban design?



4

**Nomadic Strategies for Architecture**

In proposing a practice of design that responds to the dissonant Nomad, consideration must be made for how such a practice can develop. Since architecture already operates under specific processes, it will be through their reinterpretation that an 'Other' practice will be manifested. To review these processes, the 'logic' of architecture, and its various theoretical fragments, can be thought of as actions, in order to highlight the fact that their development is a *conscious* undertaking. As philosopher Michel Foucault writes:

"Modern thought...is a certain mode of action..As soon as it functions, it offends or reconciles, attracts or repels, breaks, dissociates, unites or reunites; it cannot help but liberate or enslave..."

1

In perceiving the architectural process as such, the choices and justifications that are made behind the built environment can be reevaluated. A sequence of thought, as a sequence of actions, is an individual responsibility rather than a universalized means of application. What is 'right' and 'appropriate'

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1. Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) p357. Quoted in Grosz, Elizabeth. "Architecture from the Outside." *Architecture from the Outside*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001) p57.

becomes negotiable, and our adopted architectural mantras have the opportunity to become much more nuanced.

To perform an action, the actor or agent must exert forces. Borrowing a term from physics, envisioning “force” allows the practice (the body) of architecture to be wary of the possibility of deviation from its normalized path. It simply quantifies existing elements in the creative process into means for producing different effects. According to Deleuze and Guattari, they can

- 2 be culturally produced associations and causes that influence the trajectory of thought. In the case of architecture, they are part of the reasoning that is internalized within the design process. They are the strategies that guide the progression within a series of design choices. Architecture's response to the push and pull of different forces determines its relationship to culture, which also influences the intrinsic relationship between those forces. The urban environment and its architecture therefore share a reciprocal connection.

The effect of applying forces to architecture is the experience of *acceleration*. Referring back to physics, acceleration is the changing of velocity of an object, causing that object to speed up, slow down, or deform. Within the architectural context, this change in speed can be interpreted as a change in meaning, where the same architectural language is reconstructed to evoke something else. Bernard Tschumi also attributes acceleration to

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2. Within the context of Nomadology, it is the metallurgist who manipulates forces to influence ‘trajectory’. Deleuze and Guattari p88.

- 3 the literal speed in which a building is constructed, which, he argues, can be crucial to whether or not a project is realized. He draws from the example of Parc de la Villette, whose gradual development over a period of fifteen
- 4 years allowed him to “solve a political situation.” If it had been built more quickly, the same result would not have been possible. Going through multiple governments meant that discontinuity, unavoidable because of various changes in support, and of constraints imposed by the city, had to be worked into the design. The various stages of completion were advantageous in that it allowed for a constant review of project concepts and strategies, creating something that stands out quite uniquely. However, Tschumi still laments the slowness of the project, possibly for pragmatic reasons of undergoing numerous changes in relationships with contractors and the city, which can be time-consuming and strenuous. He is in favour of a faster approach,
- 5 performing what he calls a “blitzkrieg”, which he equates to a more powerful architecture.

A faster speed can achieve something quite different. Using the term

6 ‘blitzkrieg’, German for “lightning war”, though ambitious, can be an effective description, in that what is produced has the opportunity to surprise. As Italo Calvino argues in his lecture on quickness, a high speed of expression can progress a narrative quickly, changing from one situation to another in

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3. Walker p68

4. Walker p68

6. “Blitzkrieg”, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary Merriam-webster.com (2010).

PHOTO: Tschumi's Parc de la Villette, a series of folies in an urban park. SOURCE: Tschumi on Architecture (New York. Monacelli Press, 2006) p71.

5 Power can be interpreted in many ways. For Tschumi, it is used to suggest clarity of architectural intention to subvert expectations, but it should not be limited to that sole definition.



an instant. Within architecture, it finalizes the architect's vision with efficiency, maintaining concept purity. Another instance of Tschumi's architecture can be used to illustrate this; in the case of his Groningen Glass

7 Video Gallery, the simple concept of transforming private acts into public ones is crystallized by a quickly built and restrained assembly system of mostly glass. Glass as enclosure, glass as structure, glass as theatre; the simplicity of the construction responds to the practical requirements of the project, but also efficiently exploits the qualities of a single material to give clarity to his ideas. Calvino also emphasizes that quickness produces something inexact in form, allowing the mind to take in an "abundance 8 of thoughts or images" at once, provoking the mind to wander. The Video Gallery is similarly interpretive in its design; its inversion of expectations sets minds to question existing practices without enforcing any ideology of form or construction. In its ambiguity, a quick architecture can propose usages through *implication* rather than explicit direction.

Slowness, its opposite, should not be disregarded either. Slowing down architecture, or as Calvino would term it, 'digressing', gives it the opportunity to explore the potentials of its space, by "jump[ing] from one subject to another,

9 to lose the thread a hundred times and find it again after a hundred more 10 twists and turns." It is an approach that is about a sensitive settlement into a

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PHOTO: Groningen Glass Video Gallery. SOURCE: Tschumi on Architecture p93.



7. Built in 1991, the Video Gallery is a temporary pavilion addressing the idea of watching television as a spectacle in itself, that the viewer could also be actor. According to Tschumi, the building explores architecture as "urban activator", instead of merely a means to house interactions. SOURCE: Walker p64-66.

8. The original context of this lecture is within literature, but it is quite applicable to forming architectural narratives. SOURCE: Calvino, Italo. "Quickness." Six Memos for the Next Millennium. Translated by Patrick Creagh. (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) p42.

9. Calvino p46.

10. Slow architecture is a recent architectural movement that counters the mindset that buildings should be quickly built, instead opting for development in drawn out stages. SOURCE: "Slow Architecture"; Slow-architecture.com (2009).

site, to discover the traits of its surroundings, and to develop an architecture that responds to any major or minor change to its environment. One notable example is Fumihiko Maki's Hillside Terrace, which he developed from 1969 to

- 11 1992 in seven phases. Having taken into account the perspectives of his real-estate clients, existing tenants, and local businessmen, the planning was not based on a rigid finality, but rather it was porous to change and tweaking. The architect relied on responses to the partially completed structure to further 12 his designs. The result was a fully accepted integration into the urban landscape. Of course, there is also the case of Gaudi's Sagrada Familia. Despite having been under construction for over 125 years, outlasting its creator, it is 13 a heritage site that is one of the top tourist attractions in Spain. It is also unique in that the process of creation is valued as much as its physical structure, a claim that many buildings cannot hold. Though envisioned by Gaudi, it is in fact a work that has been under the direction of numerous architects. Its collaborative nature makes it a hybrid that is incredibly adapted to, and definitive of, its site and culture.

Fast and slow architecture need not be opposed. They can, in fact, be complementary within the city. What is important is that architecture should use speed to its advantage depending on what needs to be achieved. An old

- 14 Latin adage sums up this principle nicely: *festina lente*, to make haste slowly.

11. Maki, Fumihiko. "Hillside Terrace Complex". Maki and Associates (2007).

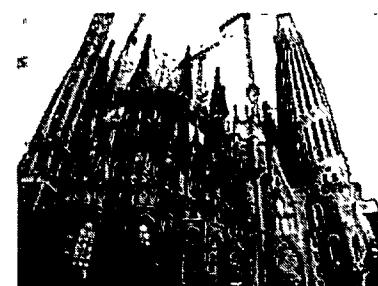
PHOTO: Shared Space within Hillside Terrace.  
SOURCE: Archidose.blogspot.com (2004).



12. Naomi Pollock, of the New York Times, describes Hillside Terrace as one of the most popular neighbourhoods in Tokyo. Maki himself has said, "This type of sequential project provides a kind of satisfaction that one can not get from designing a large building. It's the kind of satisfaction one gets watching one's baby grow." SOURCE: Pollock, Naomi. "Urban Design: An Experiment: Building Tokyo" The New York Times (1999).

13. "History"; The Sagrada Familia Foundation. Sagradafamilia.cat (2002).

PHOTO: La Sagrada Familia, still under construction. SOURCE: Roughts.blogspot.com (2008)



14. Calvino p48.

Every endeavor has an appropriate speed; to go too fast or too slow may hinder the project. Effectiveness is usually precisely timed. Even the traffic light system that we use without much thought requires good timing. A poorly timed sequence of lights can sometimes force drivers to make a choice: to speed or not to speed. When maintaining the legal limit somehow forces cars to sit at red light after red light, patience can be tested. However, if it can be planned that speeding will cause more stops at red lights, then it might be more likely that driving will occur at appropriate speeds. Though it rarely makes headlines, such planning often requires the meticulous weighing of factors that will determine how long each light is sustained, involving much thought and conscious decision-making to achieve the desired equilibrium. The forces that lend to the acceleration of a specific architecture must be made clear in order to determine its speed. There are five basic forces that drive the Nomad's architectural position: site, scale, image, visibility, and material traces. Much like musical arrangements, these forces, comparable to individual notes, are constant, but how they are played out will inevitably vary, as an improvisation on a theme. Therefore, while the proposed five forces are no doubt familiar terms, applied daily to a variety of architectural concoctions, the degree of its application will be specific to the Nomad.

The first force, site, is well understood to be the foundation of any

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architecture. As has been established previously, the dissonant Nomad's relationship to site is an adaptive one, where there is a practiced sensitivity towards the environment. But what does this sensitivity actually mean? Depending on the individual Nomad, the pattern of his establishment will rely on the resources that surround him, as well as the hospitality of the location. With the foreign Nomad, his resources are based upon habitation, grazing or agricultural needs, while climate and terrain are often the main constraints of settlement. The Nomad in the city will most likely require a support system of communication, information, and culture, while his 'climate' will deal with the availability of ambiguous and liminal spaces. Yet, the dissonant Nomad's 15 site of operation will be subject to variation, as it is often the *interaction* and weighing between these factors that will determine how the Nomad settles.

Much of the interaction will also be dependent on scale, the second force. As archaeologist Roger Cribb writes about the foreign Nomad, "broad topographic and climatic constraints impose limits within which access to 16 specific grazing tracts further narrows down the *range of choice*." Similarly, the overall cultural atmosphere of a city will inform the dissonant Nomad of his options before the unique instances of a specific place. Scale also refers to the range of his affect. For the Nomad to be successful, he can only build what is absolutely necessary, what he can operate smoothly, so his

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15. Cribb, Roger. *Nomads in Archaeology*. 16. Cribb p139.  
(Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University  
Press, 1991) p138.

architecture is proportional to himself. The Nomad who travels between countries will require something different than the Nomad who moves from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Implementation may also depend on the number of participants; the Nomad who operates singularly and the Nomad who operates with a community will produce disparities.

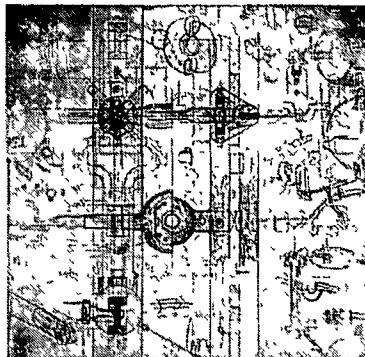
The third force, image, is important because it supports the representations of the Nomad, which, by virtue of the dissonant Nomad's polyvalent identity, entails addressing the translation of lines: if lines predominantly divide on our current maps, what does this mean for our architectural production and its drawings? They cannot be so easily discarded. Might there be a way of using these lines effectively and advantageously in favour of the Nomad? To answer these questions, the architect must explore the possibilities of the dissonant Nomad in a visual format. He must also remember that the process of drawing itself often undergoes deviations, not excluding that of architectural origins. For example, looking at Carlo Scarpa's drawings means discovering every twist and turn of his design developments, as he deliberately mixes objective plans and sections with more subjective sketches and imaginings. Rather than a strict documentation of a final product, as would be found in many projects, Scarpa acknowledges the existence of other possibilities, allowing lines to reflect their own subjectivities and

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17. Moeller, Martin Interview with Marco Frascari "The Tell-Tale Drawing" Blueprints (25 3 2007) p6-8, Frascari, Marco "Architectural Synesthesia" Penn State University (2009).

IMAGE An example of one of Scarpa's many-layered drawings. SOURCE: Drawingarchitecture.tumblr.com (2010).



accidents, and refusing to give credence to their assumed autonomy. Every drawn line is subject to the perceptive differences of its draftsman. In turn, the drawings that are created will inform how the design will emerge. Because the architect has to innovate with his usage of lines to fully express the intentions and principles of the Nomad, the resulting architecture will inevitably diverge from the normalized products of design.

Not to be confused with image, the force of visibility concerns the possibility of survival for the dissonant Nomad and his community, by mediating the relationships that are formed with his neighbours. How does the Nomad take advantage of the publicity of spaces without obstructing the needs of those in his vicinity? How does he *introduce* meaningful variation into the spaces he inhabits? To suggest visibility is not to merely advocate a distinction in form, to openly display contrast, but rather that the dissonant Nomad often operates

- 18 in degrees of camouflage, to borrow a term from nature and war. However, the strategy is not limited to mimicry, as camouflage often suggests. A more encompassing definition is that of a disruption of visual patterns within some of the natural guises that the environment offers. An example of visibility as
- 19 a strategy can be found in Herzog & de Meuron's Ricola marketing offices, where the building alternately dissolves and solidifies within its residential context through the manipulation of materials. Glass that either reflects its

18. Design and camouflage has been linked previously in the past. Author Roy Behrens has a substantial bibliography on their related histories. Refer to: Behrens, Roy. *False Colors: Art, Design, and Camouflage*. (Dysart: Bobolink Books, 2002).

19. Built between 1997-99, in Laufen, Switzerland, the architecture is designed as such that it cannot be reduced to a singular form, but in a manner that is fluid with its context. SOURCE: Moneo, Rafael. "Herzog & De Meuron." *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies*. (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 2004) p402.

IMAGE: Ricola Marketing Offices. SOURCE: *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies* p402 (2004).



neighbourhood or reveals interior activities and plants that weave above and around the building make its actual size, of 39m in length, unobtrusive in an area where houses have a maximum length of 25m. Additionally, the natural cycle of plants, paired with synthetic rafters that bend depending on temperature and weight, allows the building to visibly reflect upon its climatic conditions. What results is an architecture that displays a very conscious sense of its context. In nature, camouflage often gives clues to how animals warn, evade, and attract, depending on whom they regularly interact with: predator, prey or mate. And though the dissonant Nomad should not be equated as being *natural*, camouflage is useful to him in that it allows him to control how he relates to his context. It demands that he understands the nuances of his environment, whether he uses them to expose or to disguise. And similar to natural camouflages, negotiating visibility is very much an evolutionary process.

Early understanding of the construction of nomadic settlements had previously led to the belief that Nomads are a mostly invisible phenomenon, blamed on the difficulty of tracking their artifacts. However, it seems that the problem lies in the distinguishing of their traces from ordinary sedentary villages. As Cribb poses, Nomads and their surrounding villages with whom 20 they sustain regular interaction often share a material culture. Their chosen

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20. Cribb p69.

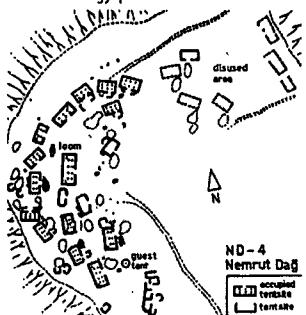
mobility does not mean that their necessities are in any way different from anyone else. The difference is that Nomads carry their valuables and the necessities that are indispensable to their habitation, like the tent poles and

- 21 tentcloths they utilize; however, there are also *fixtures* that are left in place. Despite being significant organizational elements, they are expendable and easily found or built elsewhere. It suggests that there is a network of raised floors, tent foundations, and stone hearths strewn across the landscape, and though it is not explicitly said, these fixtures can be used again by the next community. As a contemporary example, we can refer to Michael Rakowitz's

22 ParaSITE, which proposes an inflatable sleeping bag for the homeless that takes advantage of heat and air emitted from various buildings. The sleeping bag is carried as another belonging, and when needed, it is attached to the exhaust ducts on building exteriors to provide rest and warmth. Similarly, the construction of the dissonant Nomad's architecture must establish a physical connection with *pre-built elements*. Whether he is the one who builds it, or it is found, the architectural implications are already quite different from a process of building that involves digging out and clearing all previous traces of inhabitants before.

As seen above, any guideline for developing architecture for the dissonant Nomad is mostly suggestive, as it is incredibly context-dependent. The

- 21.** Fixture: the word is used to describe features that are built into the landscape, aiding the Nomad in everyday living. SOURCE: Cribb p66. IMAGE: Scattering of fixtures within the Nemrut Dag summer campsite. SOURCE: Nomads in Archaeology p206.



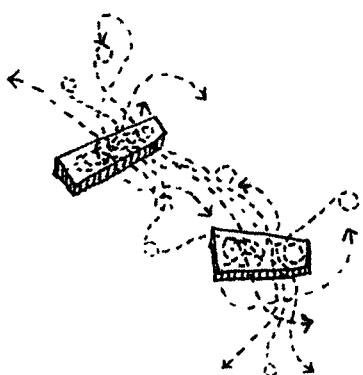
**IMAGE:** The paraSITE, attached to an existing building to form a temporary resting place.  
**SOURCE:** Design Like You Give a Damn p193.



- 22.** The project is found in multiple locations in the United States; the idea has taken off because of the ease of its construction and its sustainability. Each unit can be constructed from the easily acquired materials of plastic bags and tape, and its form is only limited by the builder's imagination. SOURCE: Rakowitz, Michael. "PARASITE" Design Like You Give a Damn. (New York: Metropolis Books, 2006) p190-193.

examples given are not necessarily developed for the Nomad, but do give glimpses of nomadic possibilities. The five forces assigned here are in no way exhaustive; there may be many more characteristics to be ascribed to the dissonant Nomad. What is certain is that its nature can only be suggested. Yet, these fragments, when composed together, begin to form a cohesive architectural process, by proposing a number of constraints to be considered. How they develop will be determined by its application to a specific project. The next step presents itself: designing architectural spaces to be inhabited by the dissonant Nomad.

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**5**

**Compositions for the Musical Nomad**

"There is a long history of ambiguity around the word 'noise' in English: to Shakespeare and the Elizabethans it meant an argument, a quarrel, but it was also used to describe a band of musicians, as well as 'an agreeable or melodious sound.' And likewise in practice what categorizes sound as 'noise' or 'music' is fiercely ambiguous and subjective."

— John Szwed, Lives and Times of Sun Ra, 228.

Local music is indicative of the city, because its exposure is understandably subjective, and its influence is dependent upon city residents. Furthermore, most local musicians are a large part of other communities within the city, most notably of arts, literature and film, but can also be composed of integral elements of business, banking, teaching, or, as is common in Ottawa, government. The nature of music itself is transient, evading attempts to be confined within strict categories. Its relationship to space is an important one as well. How sounds travel within a set space 1 affects its texture, but it is also prone to travelling through spaces, escaping through the catalog of materials that we have built around us as our habitat. Because of this, music has become a taboo within contemporary society; the sounds that are regularly allowed to penetrate the city jungle are usually restricted to traffic, construction, speech, and the whispers emitting from our personal audio devices. Any sound waves creeping over property lines are immediately curtailed by animosity in the form of noise complaints.

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1. The texture of sound is sometimes referred to as quality, and is dependent on a number of spatial factors, from the size and shape of its enclosing environment to its surrounding materiality.

Let us pause: *should* we tolerate the sounds of traffic over music?

- Luckily, music still survives. Even in Ottawa, basements are pumping with band practices, and shows are regularly performed. Yet, if our celebrated music festivals are any indication, our most outwardly music-focused events are located at the seams of the city. Edging the Ottawa River, Bluesfest is at Lebreton Flats, Westfest on Richmond Road, and Folkfest miles away at Britannia Park. Only Jazzfest remains at the heart, in Confederation Park, while other smaller scale festivals are dispersed across multiple venues.  
The cities of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and the smaller Halifax, can boast thriving music communities, while it seems music occupies a secondary position in Ottawa's urban life. Without the annual summer-driven festivals that are regularly mentioned (and regularly complained about), the presence of music is not strong. The hundreds of local music groups who pass daily through the city can only boast recognition at a very limited scale. And it may require other more prominently music oriented cities to recognize them before their hometown lends an ear.
- One of the ways of sampling and promoting various affinities for music is through the local community radio stations, CKCU and CHUO, hosted by Carleton University and University of Ottawa respectively. CKCU, with its first broadcast in 1975, even holds the bragging rights to being Canada's first

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IMAGE: Ottawa Bluesfest. By Raiser, Marie-Rachel (2007). SOURCE: Christielites.com (2007).



2. It is common for festivals in Ottawa to rely on existing venues to accommodate their events. It is advantageous in that they can appear in various sections of the city, but in doing so, they must also work with the rules and constraints imposed by those venues. Some of these festivals include Chamberfest and the D-Town Hoedown, amongst others.

3. IMAGE: Broadcasting at CKCU in 1975. SOURCE: "35th Anniversary"; Ckcu.fm.com (2010).



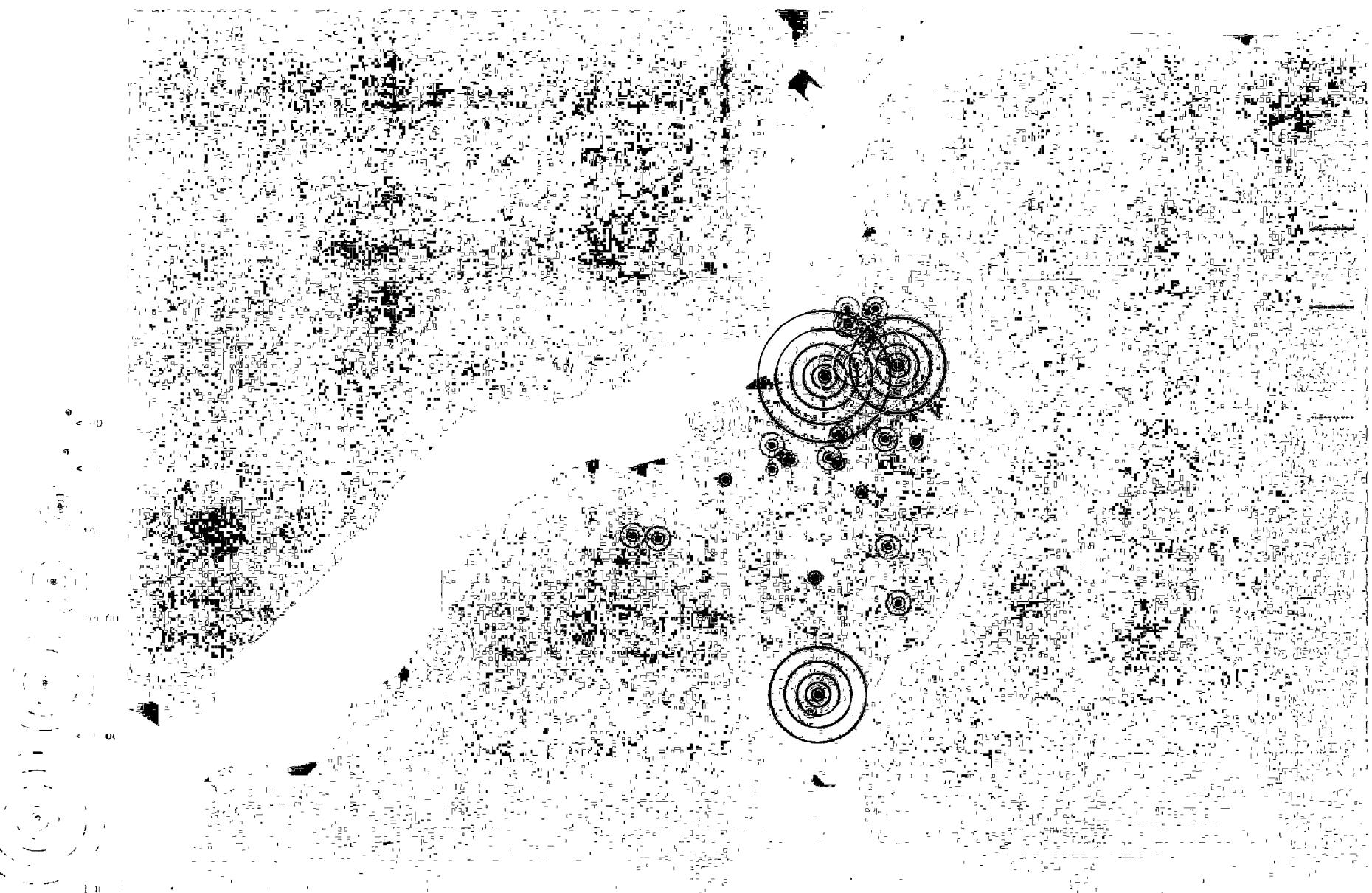


Diagram of current musical saturation in Ottawa, by estimated number of participants. Though not a complete list, it gives a general idea of how music venues are laid out in central Ottawa.  
The list includes the categories of non-commercial radio, informal venues (houses), formal venues (bars, auditoriums), and festival grounds.

community-based radio station. Commercial radio stations may command the airwaves, but they are in no way on par with listener-supported radio in

- 4 explicating the diversities of musical culture, especially those found in the stations' immediate vicinities. Rather than adhering to dictated playlists, the freeform radio format challenges the bizarre umbrella of 'popular music' with individually designed programming and personalities involved directly with the creative community. However, despite their supposed expressive freedom, stations in Ottawa are prisoned by their lack of projection onto physical space. A majority of Ottawa citizens simply do not tune into the stations. Even the students who share their campuses do not know of their existence or of their exact location within the universities.

Among other concerns, lack of appropriate space has become an issue for CKCU and CHUO, as the universities that house them have devoted less and less support towards developing them. Both stations find themselves in tight, often unaccommodating spaces. Currently, CKCU hides within the University Centre's mostly inaccessible fifth floor, while at Ottawa U, CHUO

has the luck of being placed in a sub-basement. This unavailability of space extends to radio sponsored events as well. As an example, CKCU's annual

- 5 participation in Doors Open Ottawa consists of a free barbecue and music show made up of local bands. This year, being forced inside by weather, it was

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4. The intricate workings of community radio have been subject to much academic discussion. For an exploration of specifically North American community radio, refer to: Fairchild, Charles. *Community Radio and Public Culture*. (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 2001)

5. I participated in the event on June 5th 2010. A summary and photos of the event can be found at: Carver, Andrew. "Air Show." [Natcap-rock.blogspot.com](http://Natcap-rock.blogspot.com) (2010).

set up inside the University Centre at Rooster's Cafe. Unfortunately, after the first performance by a long-active country band, university proctors raised the concern to organizers that the event was disturbing an exam in progress, despite it being a Saturday. There was no way of mitigating the sounds travelling through window to window. As an unlucky compromise, the following music sets were forced to turn down the volume. Watching a local punk band play its songs well within reasonable decibel levels was odd, if not inappropriate.

Perhaps there is cause to believe that because radio stations project their presence on invisible airwaves (or virtual waves of internet radio), their physical location does not matter. However, similar to the Nomad, though the travel of music is not constricted by the city structure, a direct relationship with the inhabited landscape is needed for music's continuation, as witnessed by the numerous live performances that occur regularly. The deliberate travel of music to make direct contact with its audience in different contexts is perhaps one of its most important aspects. Even the disembodied sounds that are associated with radio can only operate with the very physical presence of organizers, technicians, equipment, designated space, and listeners. Without proper exposure to their surroundings and potential supporters, they may not exist at all. Therefore, if CKCU and CHUO, in their current condition, cannot suitably connect to the city, then perhaps changes

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need to be made to their occupied spaces.

- Currently, the presence of both radio stations in the city extends to
- 7 funding drives each year, Doors Open Ottawa, its Radio Camp for children, and a passive sponsorship of local shows and festivals. Of the four major
- 8 festivals held in Ottawa, only two of them list the stations as sponsors. In general, the number of events that are actually organized by the station is low, and most of them are restricted to nighttime entertainment in only a select few venues. Not all of these are accessible features that truly display the diversity of the station. If a proposed architecture could transcend these limited sites, regularly offer showcases of different musical affinities, and simply make radio visible, it may be possible to jumpstart an interest in local radio.
- 9 Perhaps we can take inspiration from an instance at WFMU, a community radio station situated in New Jersey. Even amongst commercial competitors,
- 10 it is one of the most popular freeform radio stations in the United States. On an occasion when the studio lost electricity, the DJ drove the scheduled
- 11 polka band to the station's transmitter shack, and had them play their music live in the rain, plugged directly into the transmitter. Faced with losing listeners' interest even briefly, a moment of improvisation immortalized the situation into one of the most unique and memorable moments of the station's history.

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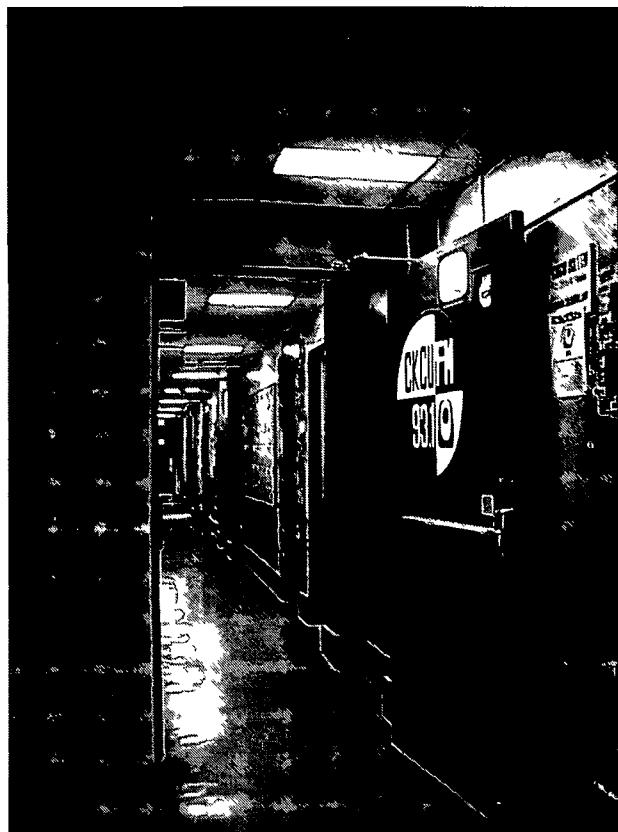
7. Radio Camp is interesting, in that children can be signed up during March and summer breaks to learn how to produce radio. CKCU even dedicates airtime to broadcasting kids-produced programs at Radio Camp, an opportunity that would not be possible at commercial stations. SOURCE: "Radio camp"; Ckcu.fm.com (2010).

8. Westfest and Jazzfest, as listed on their websites: Westfest.ca and Ottawajazzfestival.com.

9. WFMU is currently the longest running freeform radio station in the United States. It started as a radio station affiliated with Upsala College, but eventually outlasted it, and is now run by a nonprofit organization made up of its radio personnel and supporters. SOURCE: "About WFMU"; WFMU.org (2007).

10. From 1990 to 1994, it was named the best radio station in the nation by Rolling Stone magazine. SOURCE: Wolf, Jaime. "No hits, All the time"; The New York Times (1999). It has also garnered a large international following in recent years, as documented by pledges coming from listeners all over the world. SOURCE: "Marathon Map" Wfm.org (2010).

11. Station manager Ken Freedman recounts this incident in an interview by Jason Gross of Perfect Sound Forever. SOURCE: Gross, Jason. Interview with Ken Freedman. Perfect Sound Forever Music Magazine Online. <http://www.furious.com/perfect/wfmu.html> (1997).



**Current location of CKCU On the fifth floor of the Carleton Unicentre**

**Nomad in the City:  
Composing an Architectural Dissonance**



**Inside the studio at CKCU.**

To re-evaluate radio and music under the guise of the Nomad is easily conceivable. Theoretically, radio can be produced almost anywhere; with the radio tower safely anchored in Chelsea, an element translatable to the nomadic fixture, whereby existing elements are repurposed yet remain unchanged. The location of the station matters only in that there is enough electricity for all its equipment, and perhaps a bathroom or two for its employees and volunteers. This, in its current reality, is a possible reason why the physical presence of radio, as witnessed at CKCU and CHUO, is usually crammed into an ill-fitting space, only to be moved when that space is needed for something else. What if community radio could be as similarly mobile as the sound waves emitted from its towers? Imagine music, wafting and dispersing throughout the city, like a fragrant or pungent smell from a kitchen...

For now, uprooting entire radio stations is not necessary. Their current homes, however temporary, still serve as important links to the schools to which they are attached. Yet, to introduce a physical presence requires extending beyond the station, into the city where people can negotiate daily

12 with its sound. Focusing our attention on CKCU, let us propose two satellite locations to act as receiving ends to the transmitted broadcasts. Free from personal devices, these 'Compositions' of CKCU can become part of the city's layered soundscape, to be explored, confronted, or ignored.

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12. To be able to apply some specificity to an architectural design, CKCU is chosen as the "client". Though CKCU and CHUO share similar concerns, they are still different entities, and it would be a shame to generalize their unique natures. The preference given to CKCU did not emerge out of a weighing of options. It is most definitely biased, for obvious reasons...



**Composition No. 1: Nicholas**

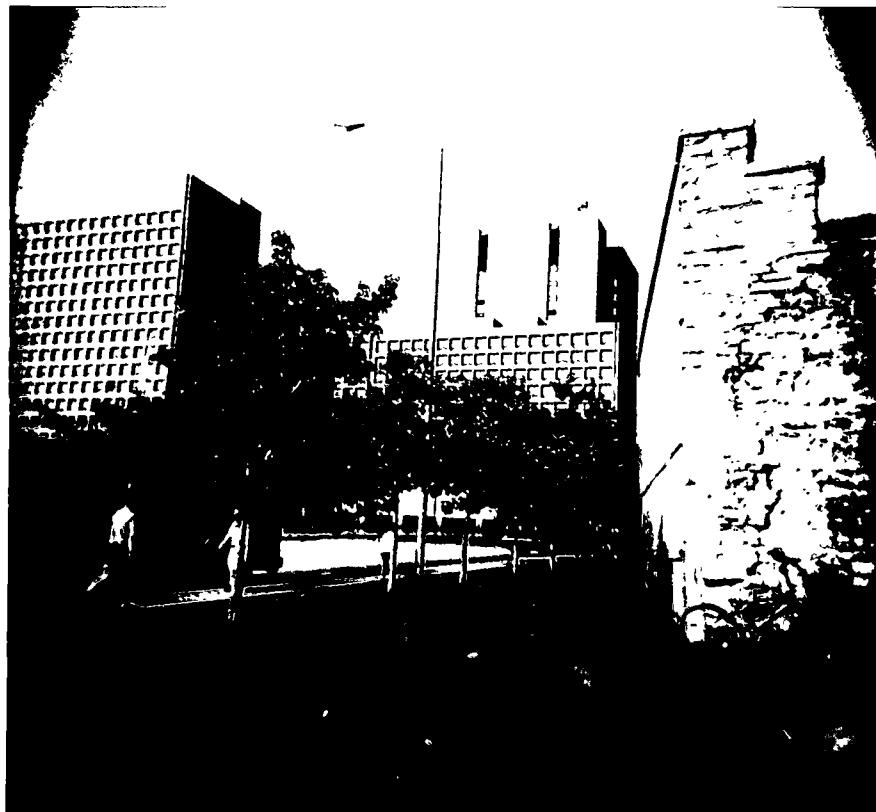
Located at the intersection of the Mackenzie King Bridge, Waller Street, and Nicholas Street, the first Composition is within the Lowertown core, in close proximity with existing musical venues and other cultural attractions in the Byward Market, receiving a mix of touristic as well as local pedestrian traffic. The site regularly entertains a high volume of large vehicles rumbling past, as it is closely connected to the 417 highway as well as the Transitway. In its vicinity are the Arts Court, the Ottawa Jail Hostel, the University of Ottawa, and the 75 Nicholas Street Botanical Garden, a project being developed as a new public space and research centre.

1



Composition No. 2: Catherine

Located on two levels, on Bank Street by Catherine Street, and on the edge of the 417 Highway, the second Composition is at the fringe of Centretown, leading into the Glebe, where cultural activities are slightly more sparse compared to Lowertown. The area receives local pedestrian traffic linked to two distinct commercial sections, while Bank and Catherine are both busy local roads, receiving additional traffic from the Greyhound Bus Station. It is culturally connected to the Seventh Library, a project being developed as a multifunctional complex for the Ottawa International Writers' Festival, housing exhibition spaces, an auditorium, and bar/cafe.



Site Photo: Nicholas

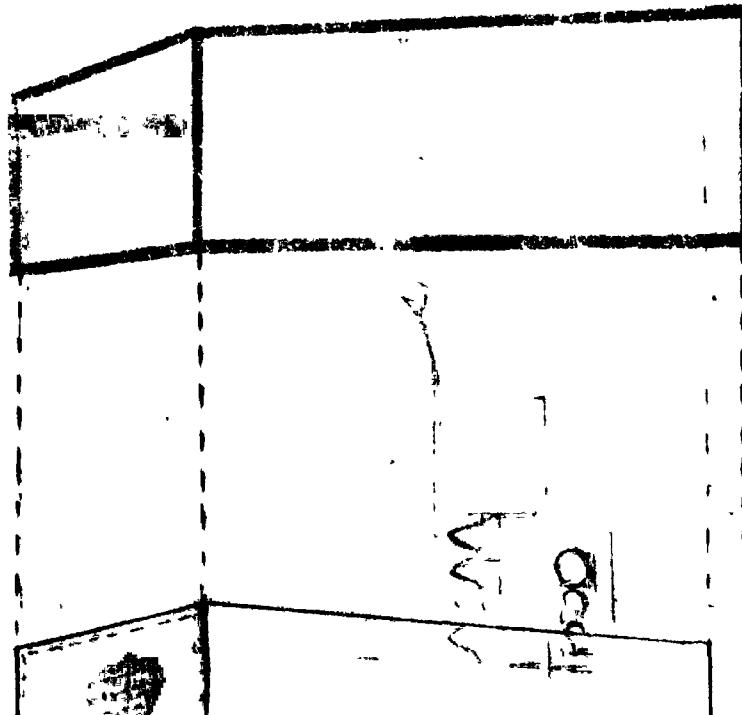
**Site:**

For the Nomad, considering site means to consider the natural advantages of its environment, and how that can be orchestrated to his needs. Because the Compositions address a cultural aspect of the city, their sites are carefully chosen for their potential access to complementary resources, becoming part of a larger network in support of the area. In the case of Nicholas, its proximity to the Transitway, existing performance venues, other key cultural components such as the University of Ottawa and the Byward market, as well as the commercially driven Rideau Centre informs a context that receives varied demographics who cross paths daily in carrying out different activities. Perched around the corner of an important intersection, and following existing lines of travel, Nicholas serves as a temporary converging point for people to pause at or wander through before moving onto other destinations.



Site Photo: Catherine

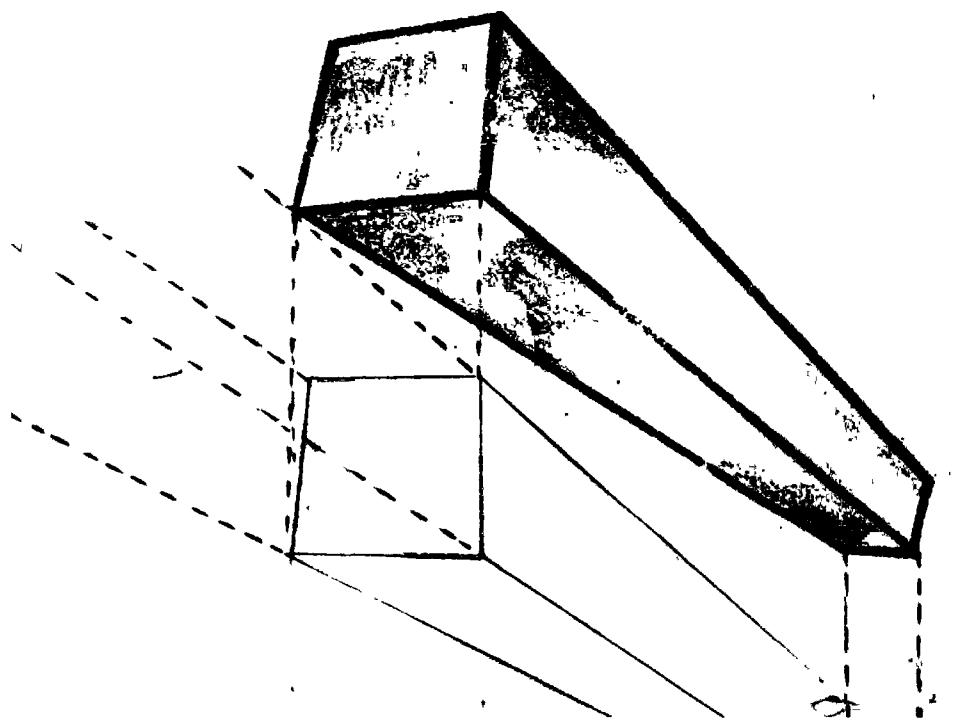
The second Composition, Catherine, operates in an area lacking in established cultural institutions, one that mainly acts as a passageway between two significant commercial stretches. Observing the brief disconnect between the social environs of the Glebe and Centretown, the Composition of Catherine reveals itself as a cultural bridge by defining an additional point along Bank St. for people to encounter. Rather than following the existing flow of people traffic as demonstrated by Nicholas, Catherine emphasizes the perpendicular axis as a way to break the current linearity of travel, inviting a more prolonged participation within the threshold.



Resource Delineation: Nicholas

Along with existing resources, the Compositions are also developed in conjunction with cultural projects planned by other organizations. Nicholas is tied to the 75 Nicholas St. Botanical Garden, while Catherine is tied to the Seventh Library. The Botanical Garden occupies the parking lot next to the Ottawa Jail Hostel, and a portion of its spaces overlaps and punctuates the stone wall that it shares with the Composition. Despite differences in program, its joint spatial relationship with Nicholas highlights a working partnership between the Ottawa Botanical Garden Society and CKCU that strengthens the presence of each within the city.

13. These 'other organizations' are in fact, thesis projects by two of my colleagues, designed in the same timeframe as this project. The Compositions' resources, therefore, reflect my personal resources, because the reality within the Compositions is not separate from personal interpretation and influence. For more information regarding the two other projects, please refer to *This + That*, *Both And* by Camille Mendoza, and *The Seventh Library* by Adrienne Hossfeld



Resource Delineation: Catherine

The Seventh Library is similarly connected to the second Composition. Developed for the Ottawa International Writers Festival, the complex straddles the Glebe and Centretown, acting as multiple points of connection within the same threshold space inhabited by Catherine. Both provide unique programs that link to form a series of public arts forums, engaging both sides of the 417 highway. Together, the Seventh Library and Catherine begin to inform the growth of another distinct cultural point in Ottawa, encouraging the eventual presence of other organizations.



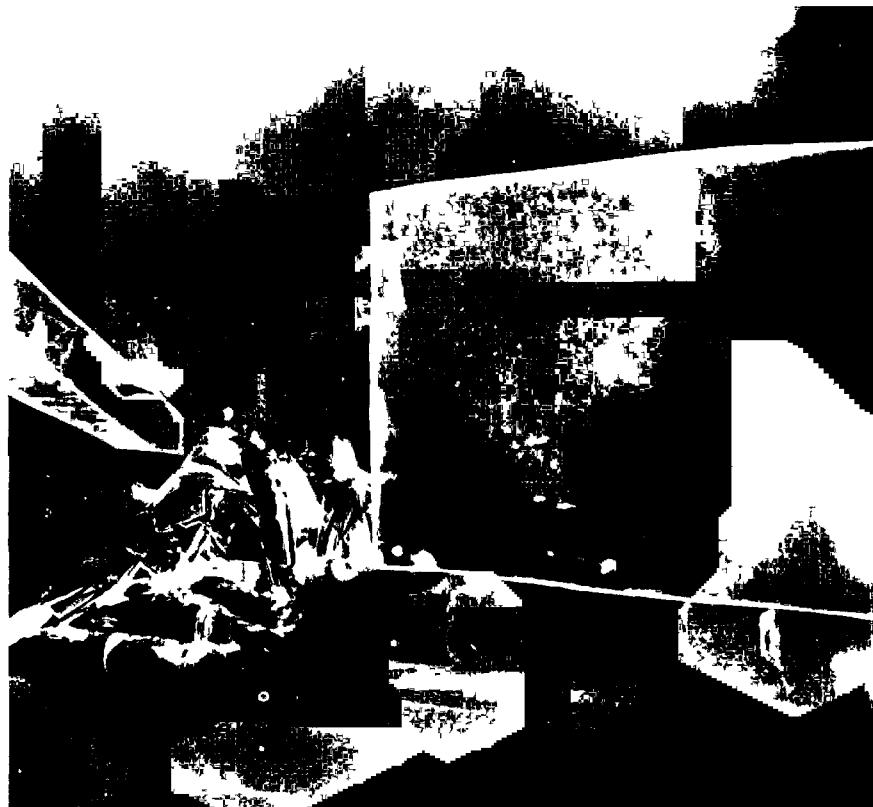
Photographic Vignette: Nicholas

**Scale:**

For the Compositions to become an effective presence within the city, the scale of their development must be taken into consideration. They are necessarily composed of fragments, whether on the larger urban landscape, or within their specific sites. The decision to introduce multiple Compositions reflects the need for CKCU to be recognized as a layer of ever-changing musical elements that address various cultural atmospheres, rather than a singular event in a central location. More Compositions can be created or existing Compositions changed according to the station's or the city's needs, as the size of their network is dependent upon the radio station's degree of influence. Within the Composition's specific sites, internal spaces are organized and constructed according to the infrastructure of its surrounding environs; their arrangement is based upon the availability of liminal spaces that extend across public and private realms.

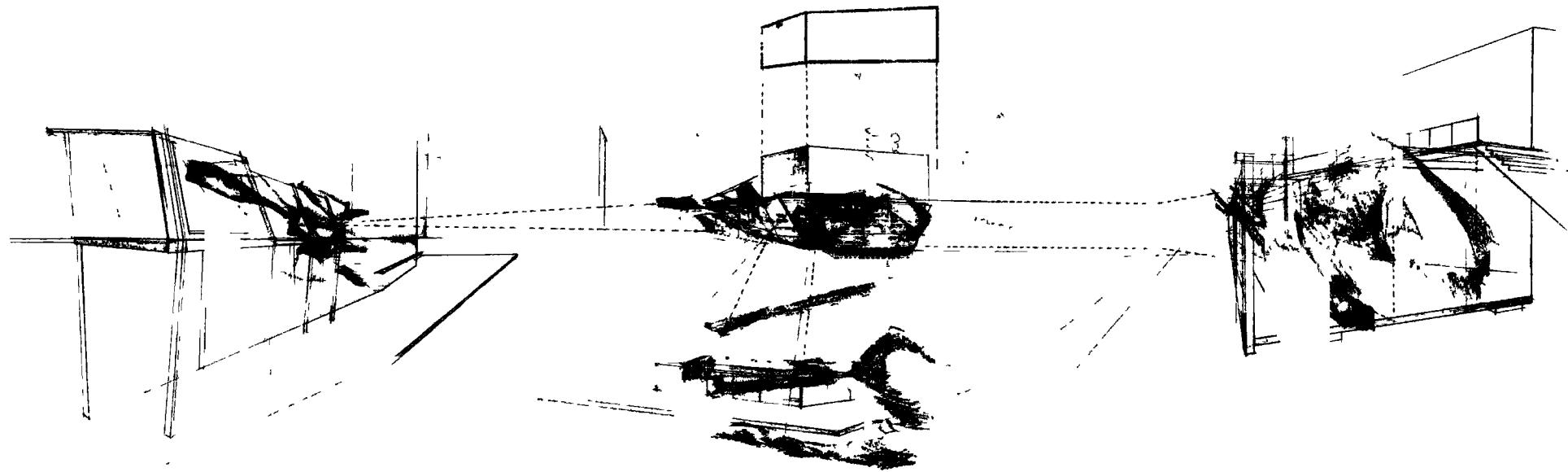


Diagram of a possible network of Compositions within Ottawa. In the scope of the project, CKCU has two satellite locations, but others can be developed in the future.

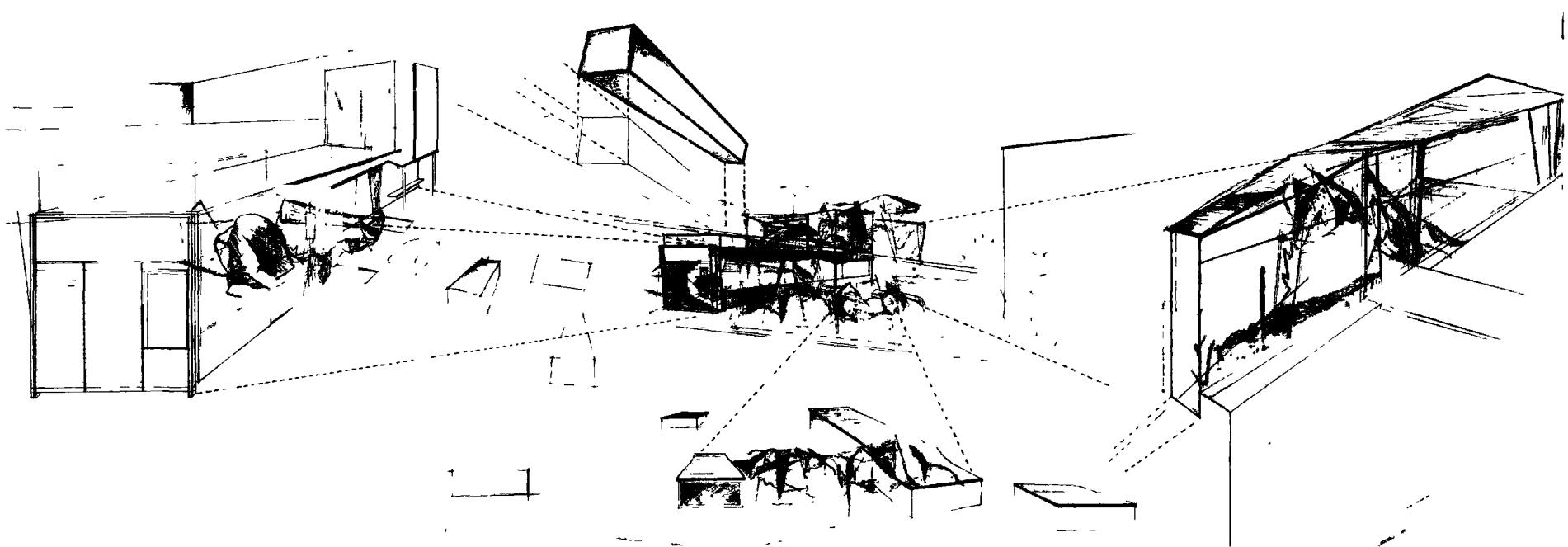


Photographic Vignette: Catherine

While Nicholas negotiates between the sidewalk space of the Mackenzie King Bridge and the walls of the Ottawa Jail Hostel, Catherine rests upon the edge of the 417 Highway and the parking lot area of its neighbouring office building. Each informs the resulting configuration of its spatial fragments. Because the notion of 'composition' itself suggests the formation of singular parts into a cohesive whole, the two structures are strategically designed as moments that may function independently, but also suggest usage as one continuous building. This gives flexibility to the Compositions in terms of their capacity, allowing them to host multiple smaller events at once, or for larger functions to take place. This also provides flexibility in their construction, where the parts can be built together, or as separate phases if necessary.



The three main spatial fragments within the Composition of Nicholas



The three main spatial fragments within the Composition of Catherine.



Image:

The architectural design of the Compositions begins by a process of revealing possible moments within the selected sites followed by interpretations into structures. It consciously sets the production of space at the ground level as a first step, where view and perspective are explored before the planning of the overall layout. Images are constructed with various analog and digital media, as well as memory, layered and pieced together in a manner that avoids any objective interpretation. Photography, video, audio, and drawing are stripped of their autonomy in representing space by coming together as a hybrid method that highlights the power of authorship.



Photographic Vignette: Catherine

Film photography is used initially as documentation of the two sites. Already the method suggests subjectivity by the conscious choices made in the framing of spatial elements deemed to be descriptive of the sites. The subjective quality of photography is further exploited through the creation of vignettes, where imagined spaces emerge from an altered approach to photo development. The regular process involves the timed exposure of photo paper to a light source through negatives and subsequent immersion in a series of 14 chemistry baths: the developer informs the appearance of the image, the stop neutralizes the developing process, and the fixer stabilizes the image, making it no longer sensitive to light. In the revised vignette process, the photo paper is intervened upon by manipulating materials of different transparencies on the paper surface, which is then exposed to light. Afterwards, developer and fixer are alternately painted on the paper, to expose or hide various elements of the photographic 'site'.

14. This is an extremely simplified version of how analog photography works. In reality, there are many more factors that determine the outcome of the photo.



Video Narrative: Nicholas

This requires a certain degree of improvisation, as only the developer can make visible marks on the paper. Fixer is always invisible until the process has ended. Consequently, the vignette can only consist of  
15 what the photographer wants to reveal, and 'enclosure' only applied based on the pieces of the image that has already emerged on the paper. In other words, the practice of delineating space is reversed, in that it is not walls, floors, and roofs that are determined first, but the specificities of the site that are designated to remain intact.

The two sites are additionally documented through digital recordings. Video footage and its accompanying audio tracks are taken at different times to analyze the existing conditions of the sites.

15. Enclosure is used in the sense that parts of the photo are hidden from the viewer, much like a 'wall' within an architectural space. Chemically, the fixer has stopped the developing process before an image has fully appeared.



Video Narrative: Catherine

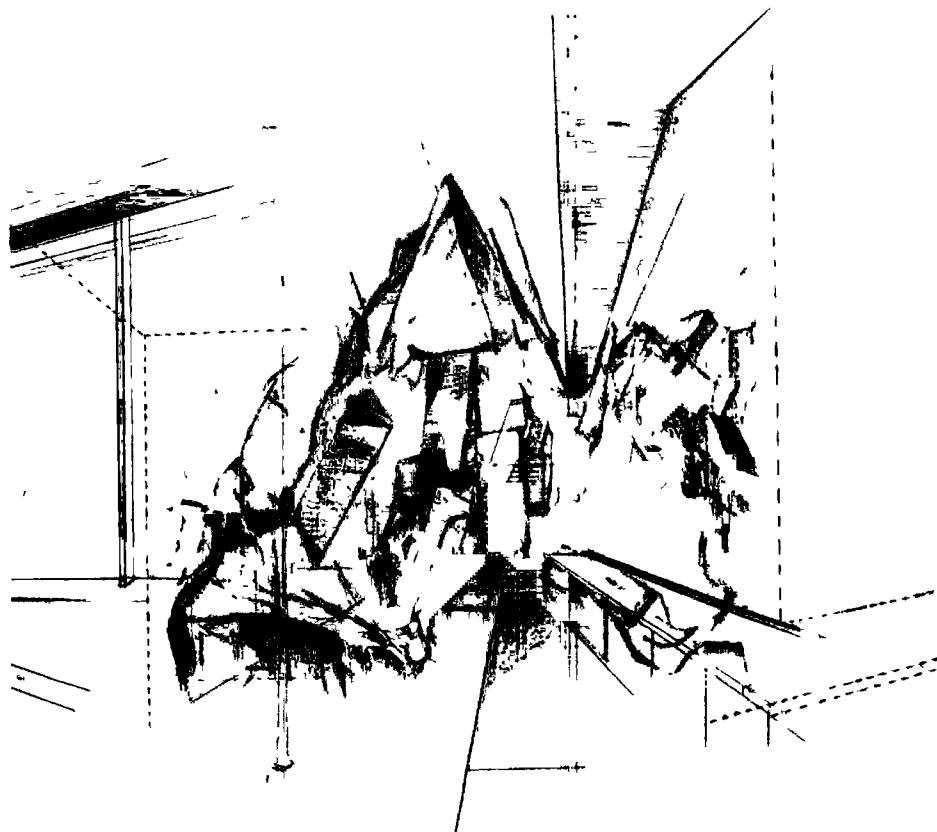
Clips are edited together to form short narratives, where real-time transforms into imagined time as light, sound, and movement merge to briefly describe the changing nature of the surroundings. These narratives then undergo further interpretation through the creation of improvised scores. Observing the visual and aural rhythms of the edited videos, several musicians are called to imagine atmospheric possibilities for Nicholas and Catherine by way of their instruments. Rather than simply accommodating music, the qualities of the sites become involved in its generation. It is a collective effort, similar to Sun Ra's Arkestra, where the musicians continually respond to each other in order to form a cohesive piece. The resulting music blend with, emerge out of, and are absorbed into the natural urban sounds of traffic and conversation, becoming another experiential layer in the compositional process.



Creating the improvised score in the basement of Birdman Sound, the local record store in Ottawa.



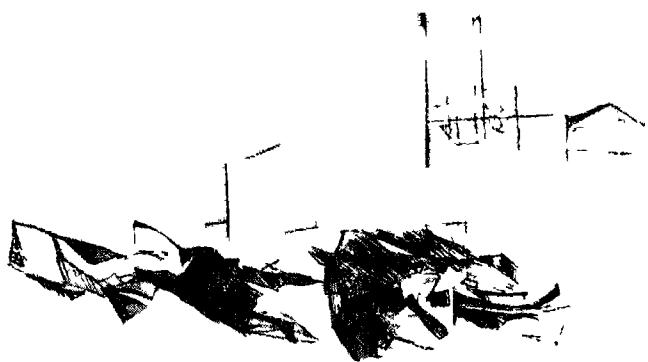
Creating the improvised score in the basement of Birdman Sound



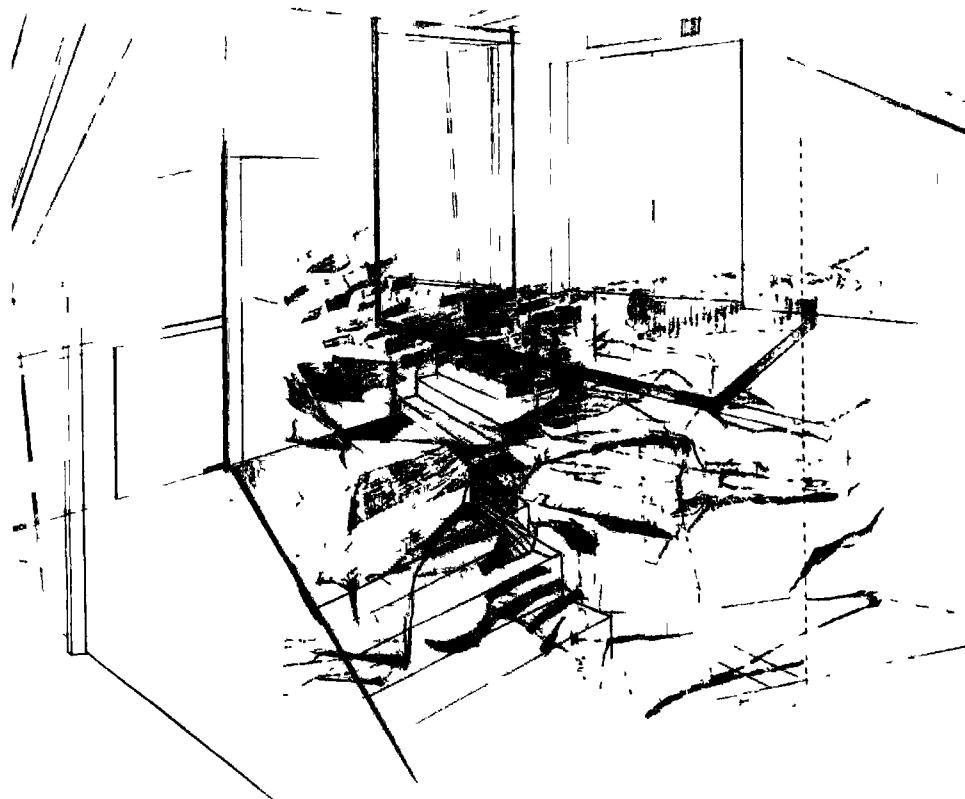
Drafted Perspective: Nicholas

Sketches and measured drawings are further layered on top of the conceptual gestures of photographic vignettes and video narratives in order to draw out the beginnings of some architectural order. The drawn lines emerge from surfaces, depths and structures that are interpreted from the vignettes' abstract forms, in combination with the draftsman's own architectural memory. Because each drawing only clarifies the spatial qualities of one fixed view, multiple drawings are developed at the same time. Each drawing necessarily functions as a fragmented space, allowing the draftsman, or others, to choreograph and organize the set of drawings into multiple layouts.

Nomad in the City:  
Composing an Architectural Dissonance

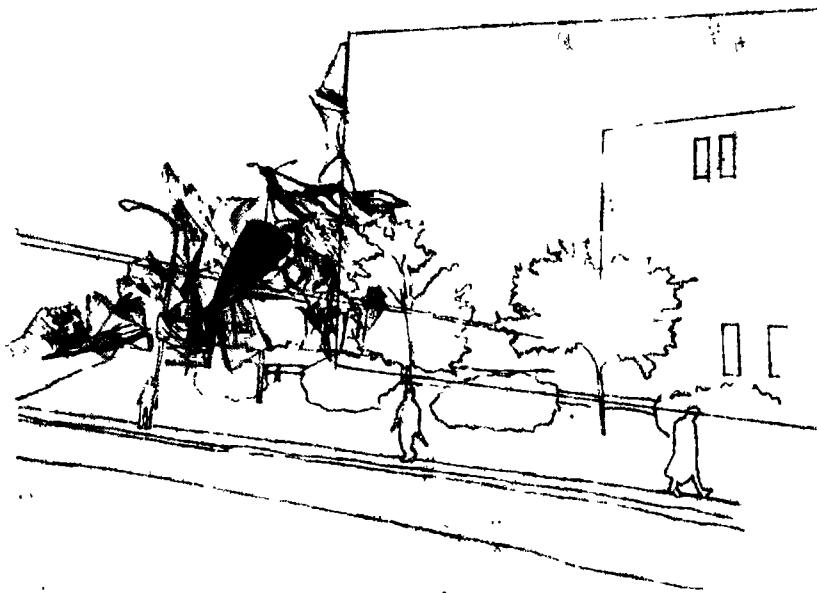


Sketched Moment Nicholas

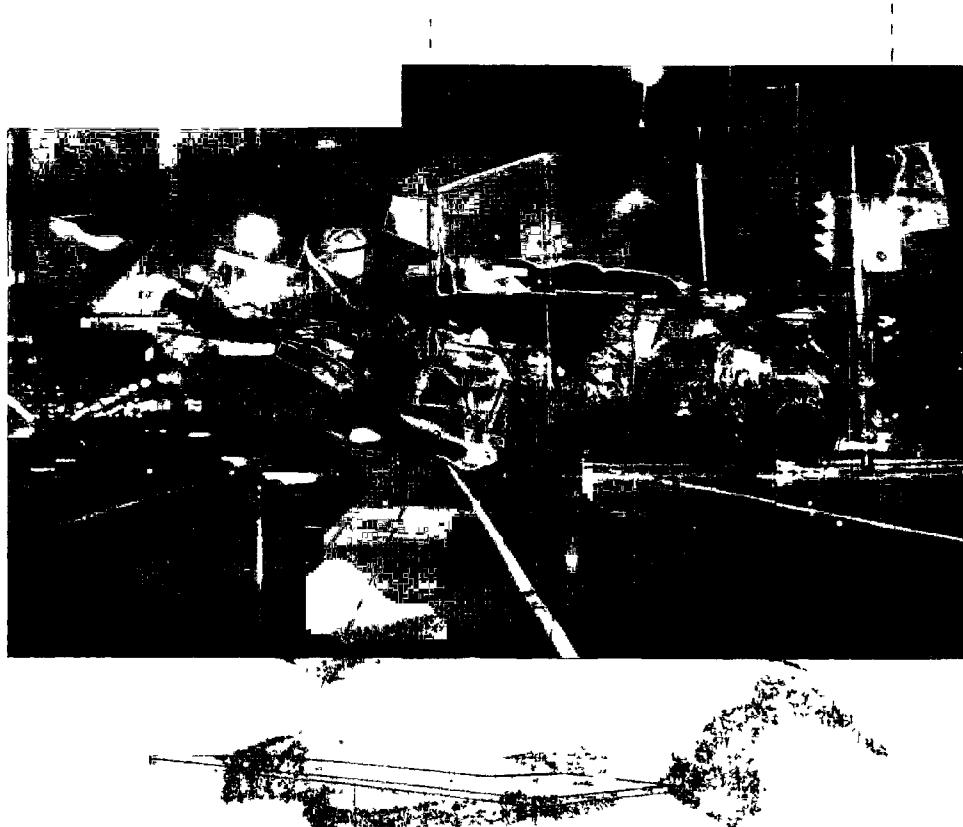


Drafted Perspective: Catherine

The process of layering photograph, video, audio, and drawing is not a linear one. In the perspective of the Nomad, they are contingent tools of spatial interpretation. As the Compositions are assemblages of real and imagined spaces, the continued unfolding of design in each form of medium demands a re-evaluation of the images produced in the others. It is a planning strategy that projects the photographer, videographer, sound composer, and draftsman within the spaces to be created, and not hovering above the city as if they were satellites. Therefore, the architecture of the Compositions does not emerge as mere volumes but as a series of contextual experiences.



Sketched Moment: Catherine



Gestural Collage Nicholas

### Visibility:

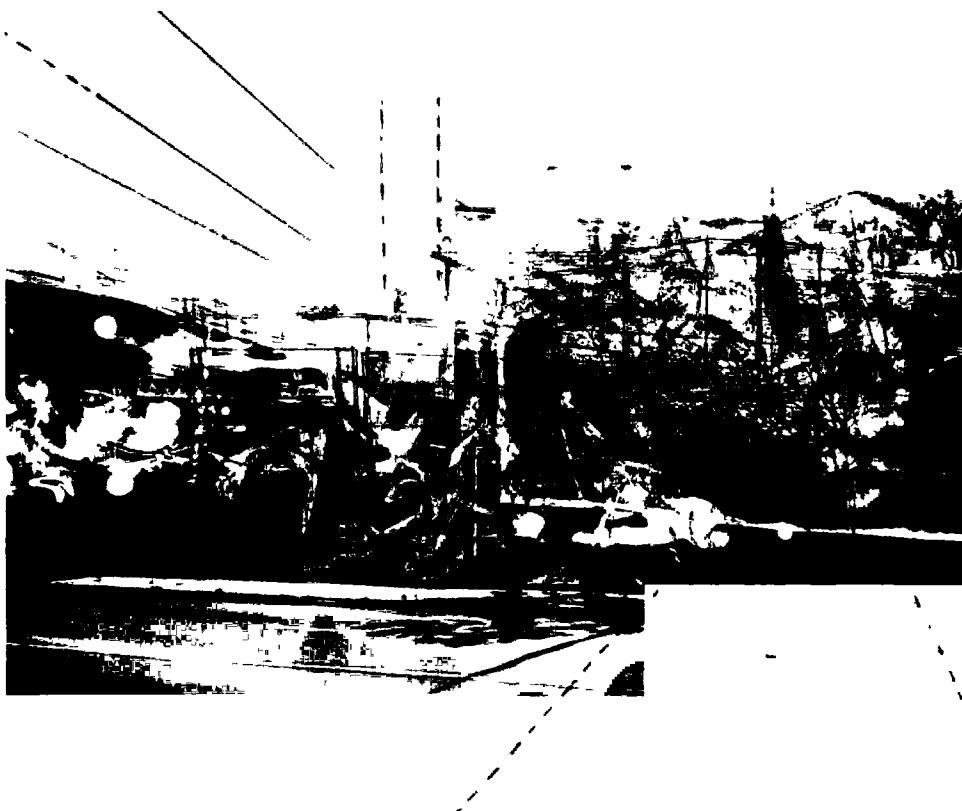
One of the main issues concerning the visibility of the Compositions involves their aural integration into their respective environments. As CKCU is musically driven, it is important that the sounds inherent to its programs are not negatively received, as it would jeopardize the viability of the Compositions as fixed elements in the city. Therefore, the music of CKCU must blend with sounds of the existing landscape. Recalling the strategy of camouflage, the Compositions can take advantage of the existence of traffic noises, as it has become an inevitable part of the city's soundscape. Locating musical venues where there is already noise, from vehicles, pedestrians, and existing establishments, may be beneficial to the persistence of the Compositions' musical interventions, since constant noises tend to be less noticeable than periodic ones.<sup>16</sup> Illustrative of this, bars and restaurants are often clustered together to form distinctive areas rather than spread throughout the city.<sup>17</sup>

16. SOURCE: Minor, Michael. "Traffic Noise Background Information" Michael Minor & Associates Noise and Vibration Consulting Firm (2006)

17. This is also reflective of zoning laws, and how they are interpreted

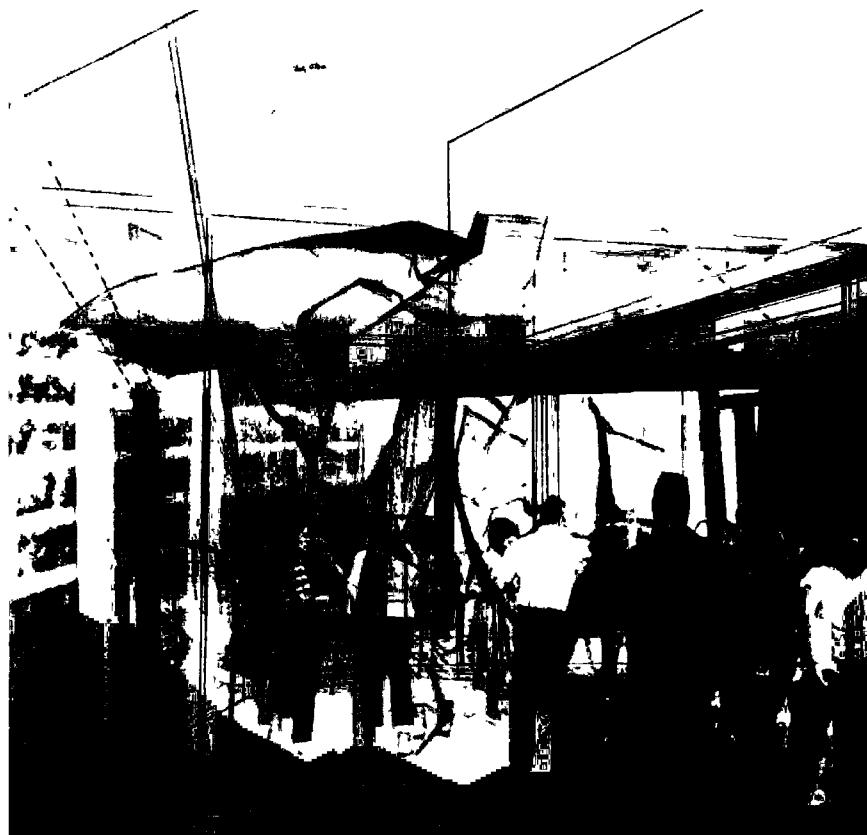


Diagram of noise as topography, documenting the overlaps of cultural noise and traffic noise in Ottawa.  
Using the strategy of visibility, Catherine and Nicholas are situated in areas where both kinds of sounds are in abundance.



Gestural Collage: Catherine

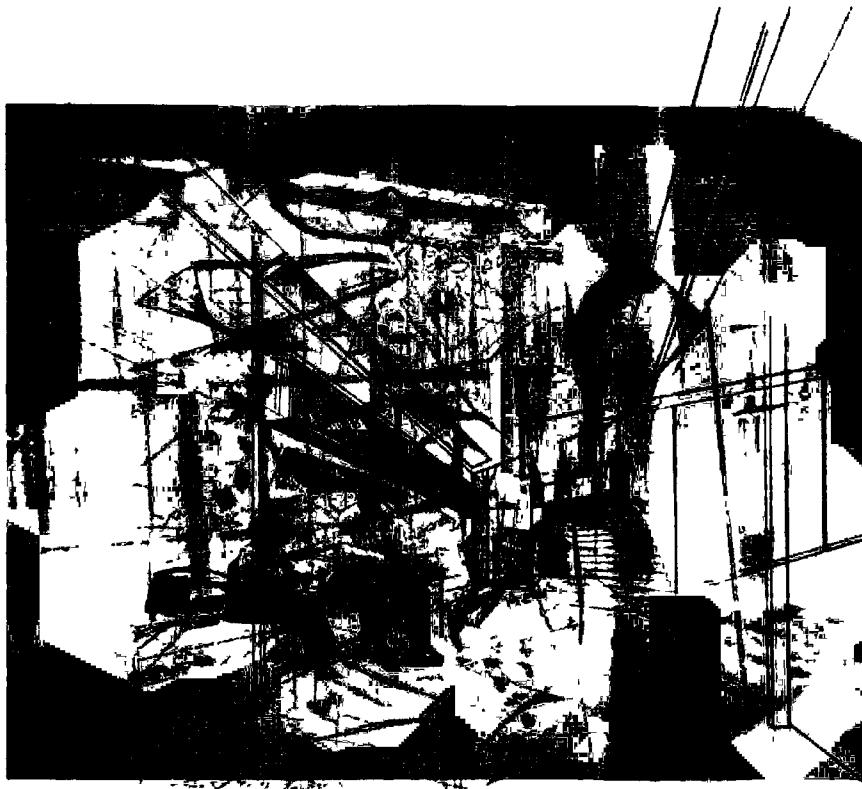
Furthermore, locating the Compositions in traffic-filled mixed environments allows for more chance encounters and access to supporting resources, taking full advantage of areas already populated with urban life. In a more conceptual exercise, the existing noises can also be the basis for the production of music, as demonstrated by the musical scores created for both Nicholas and Catherine. Therefore, local sounds are interpreted as a necessary component of the context; they are invited to wander through the spaces as part of the Compositions. In this manner, different activities can be practiced under Ottawa's environmental guises without obstructing the existing qualities of its sites.



Hybrid Perspective: Nicholas

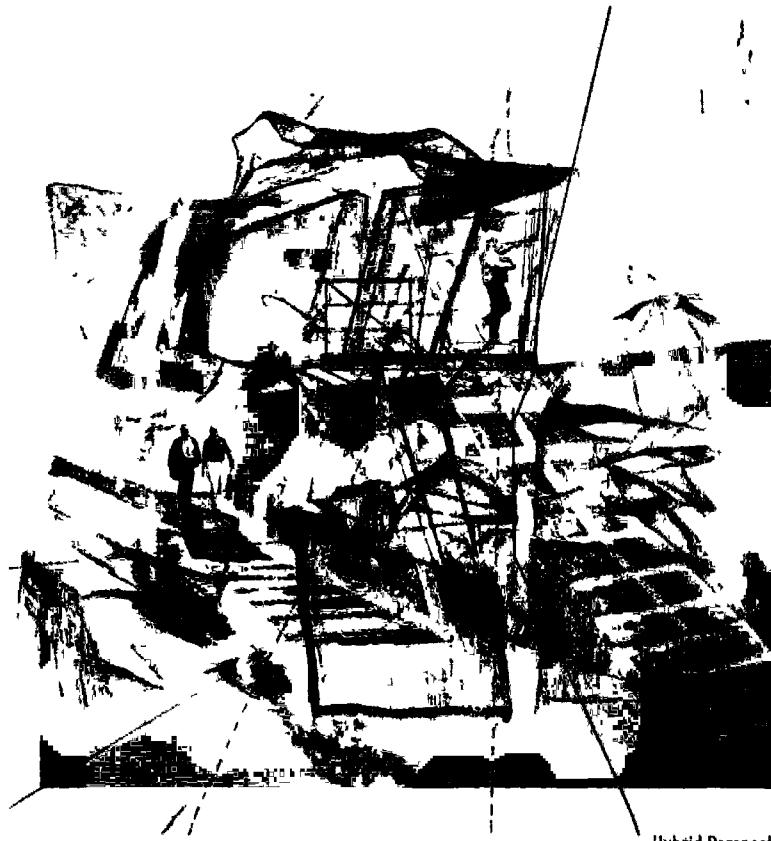
**Material traces:**

Material traces refer to the range of programmatic opportunities that the Compositions can provide to the residents of the city. In other words, the fixtures of the sites are the designed spaces that allow the proliferation of different activities. These built structures are akin to the stone hearths and raised floors of the foreign Nomad, waiting to accommodate the various communities that happen to pass by.



Hybrid Perspective: Catherine

The programming of the spaces consist of formal and informal features. Formally, the Compositions free CKCU from the existing venues to which they are limited, as well as cultivate a wider range of radio sponsored activities, by providing spaces that can regularly host events within visible locations, with more flexible temporal arrangements. Furthermore, the Compositions act as community resources, meaning that various cultural organizations can also hold events, providing they contribute to the maintenance of the space. By operating shared spaces, CKCU maintains complementary relationships with its neighbouring community organizations, where the radio station promotes them physically and on-air. In turn, those organizations provide support in the form of sponsorship as well as access to audiences they may not normally encounter.



Hybrid Perspective: Nicholas

The Compositions' informal elements are simpler interventions that reach out daily to individuals. The spaces act as 24-hour audio devices with the purpose of releasing both programmed and non-programmed sound to wandering passersby. They are briefly exposed to a moment of music and can make the choice to slow down, or to quickly hurry away. Sitting areas are provided for those who wish to stay longer, not only for the purpose of listening, but also of resting and interacting. In this way, CKCU invites city residents to discover its character, perhaps eventually garnering interest to participate in its making. Another vital aspect of the Compositions is that of advertising various events that are ongoing in the city. Designated surfaces are provided for flyers and posters, making the Compositions unofficial information centres for events, related to CKCU or otherwise, encouraging connections between radio and its music community.

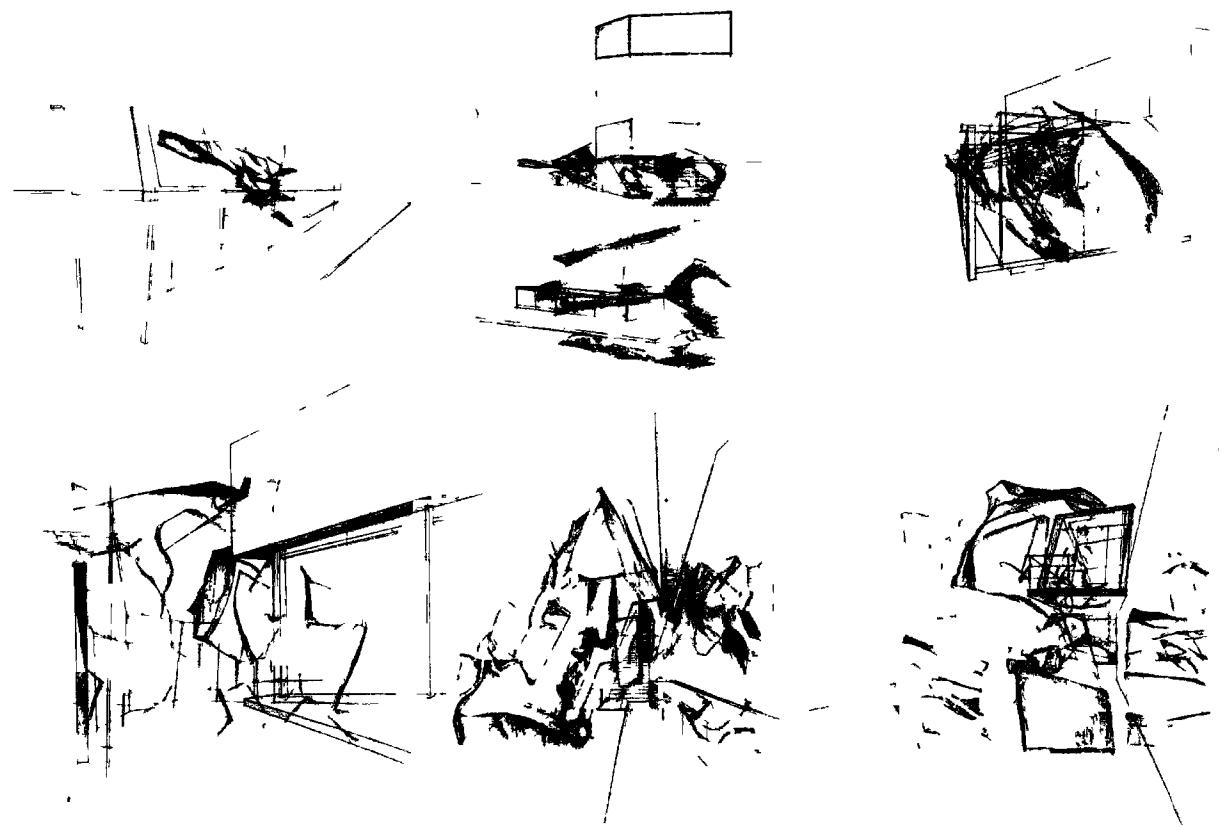


Hybrid Perspective: Catherine

By addressing both the formal needs of CKCU as well as providing open spaces for the public through the strategies of the Nomad, the Compositions are able to link various cultural entities within Ottawa through the creation of shared spatial resources. They anticipate the temporary attachments of musical, and larger cultural, communities within the city, but they also hint at the inevitable confrontations and negotiations that will occur in their spaces. Creating common grounds for different organizations to exercise their perspectives is to expect differences in approach to arise. Therefore, in remaining open, the Compositions allow conflicts to take place and be played out, hopefully leading to the proliferation of new Compositions in an ongoing development of public culture.

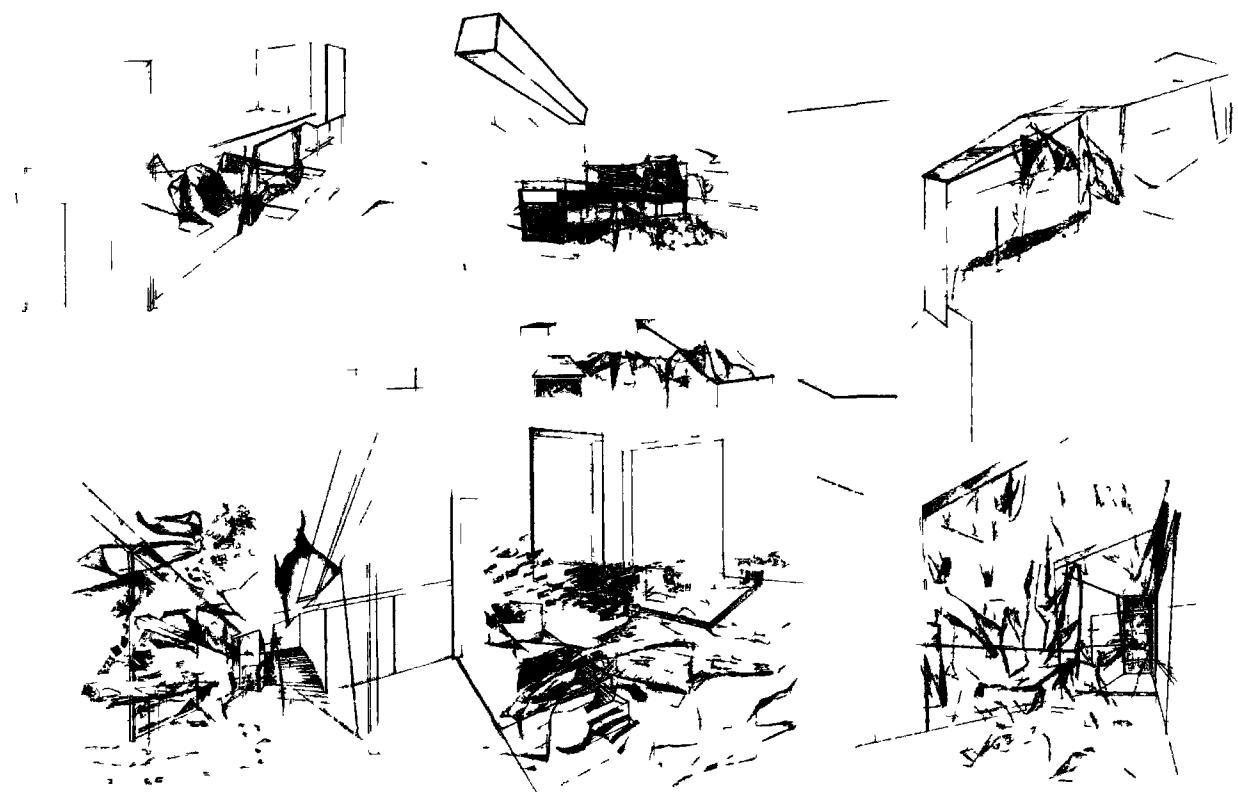


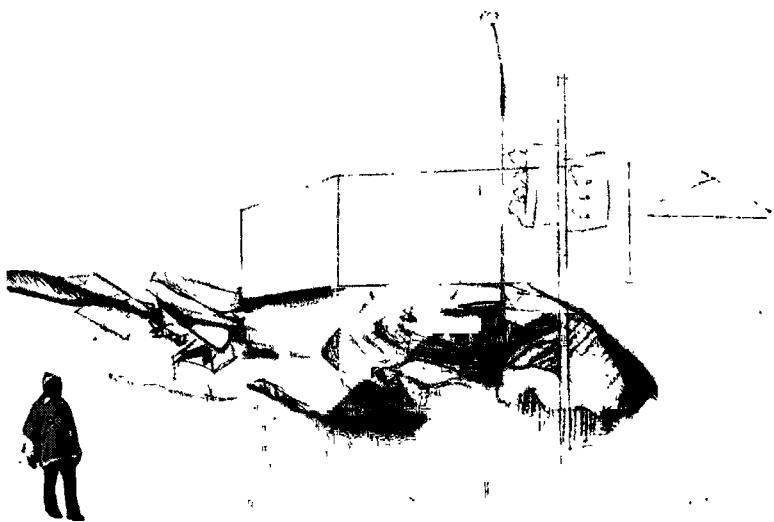
Other fragments in the process of composing Nicholas





Other fragments in the process of composing Catherine





## Coda **Unexpected Improvisations**

Through the articulation of strategic forces and Compositions in the creation of shared spatial and communicative resources, cultural entities within the city can be linked together in the form of nomadic *collectives*. Rather than the sole dependence upon established institutions, collections of various cultural identities can directly share in a number of partnerships and support through physical interaction within the architectural Compositions. In taking advantage of their liminality, finding value and opportunity in the strangeness of their locations, and reciprocating its discreet subversions of space by maintaining a mixture of informal public fixtures among enclosed ones, the Compositions are less likely to be viewed as a threat to existing settings within propertied geography. By situating within Compositions, the Nomads invite passersby into their shared spaces rather than aggressively invading heavily guarded public spaces. Their spatial dissonance piques interest, but is not necessarily jarring to the purposes of its surrounding neighbours.

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However, the anticipation of an ever-changing assortment of temporary attachments to the Compositions from communities within the city can also hint at inevitable confrontations and negotiations that will occur in their spaces. Creating common grounds for different organizations to exercise their perspectives is to expect differences in approach to arise. The conflicts that may occur extend beyond the scope of architecture, as their resolution involves exercises in mediation and cooperation. This relies upon existing and future organizations in the city to be responsive to the idea of the Nomad. It requires a tactic similar to the musicianship ethics of Sun Ra's

- 1 Arkestra, where "There are no mistakes. If someone's playing off-key or it sounds bad, the rest of us will do the same. And then it will sound right," the
- 2 lesson being that a (musical) composition was "a common enterprise, and that solutions to problems were a collective matter." Relying upon improvisation, dissonant Nomads must cooperate under the pressures of differing agendas. They must learn to thrive on the unexpected.

This is the difficulty in planning for nomadic occurrences. Because any particular group cannot permanently sustain its produced spaces, their usage will inevitably change. In the case of the Compositions, this means that Nicholas or Catherine may one day be established as valuable institutions, in that their flexibility is compromised by strict regulations of how the spaces

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1. Szwed p114.

2. Ibid.

are to be used. It is not too farfetched to project this future, as control of land remains a powerful driving force within society. In spite of this, it is possible for the dissonant Nomad to continue to wander within the city. To suggest dissonance already implies sounds' eventual absorption into consonance. Therefore, the Nomad always foresees this assimilation. Yet it does not mean that the nomadic will be taken over by the sedentary. On the contrary, the dissonant Nomad continually transforms into other instances of difference. He actively shifts the sounds and ideas that are considered to be dissonant, calling on the architect to create new Compositions in response to the development of public culture.

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### THE POTENTIAL

Beyond other thought and other words  
Are the things that seem not to be  
And yet are.  
  
How impossible is the impossible  
Yet the impossible is a thought  
And every thought is real  
  
An idea, a flash of intuition's fire  
A seed of fire that can bring to be  
The reality of itself.  
  
Beyond other thought and other words  
Are the potentials....  
That hidden circumstance  
And pretentious chance  
Cannot control.

– Sun Ra

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