

Julia Kowalski Master of Architecture Thesis University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture ARCH 5100, 5110, 5200, 5210 Wladek Fuchs 09.14-04.15

## How to Construct a Not-House

An Investigation of the Poetic Image

"What is an inexhaustible source of wonder is not only the mature sureness of this fundamental orientation to Being but also the richness of its formation in word and stone." – Martin Heidegger

"We come to see not the work of art, but the world according to the work."- Maurice Merleau-Ponty

### THE META-METAPHOR: the meal

It's true that I've been making a meal. And I'd like to share it with you, if you'd be so kind to participate in this communion with me. This meal, this banquet, has many parts that have been marinating for various amounts of time.

As with any meal, you are free to eat what you'd like. Feel free to sample bites from different plates. You can eat dessert first if you'd like, but I'd encourage you not to skip the vegetables. Though I can only offer dishes to be tasted, it is my hope that at points of curiousness you indulge me because at other points of dry crumbliness I think that I've indulged you.

I am quite interested in the way these ideas have marinated, percolated, permeated, melded, dissolved with each other over time. I am interested in the new connections that have been revealed through the process of making the meal, which began and was sustained by boiling water. Boiling water! The bubbles rise to the top of the pot, thrashing and moving based on the way they've hit other bubbles along the way. In a moment, a plethora of situations have constructed and reconstructed themselves. As I throw new ideas into the pot, they cause a series of reactions, oftentimes referred to as events.<sup>1</sup> Events, like when a tuft of dandelion seeds is caught and carried by the wind, spark a multiplicity of drawings, models, or ideas.<sup>2</sup>

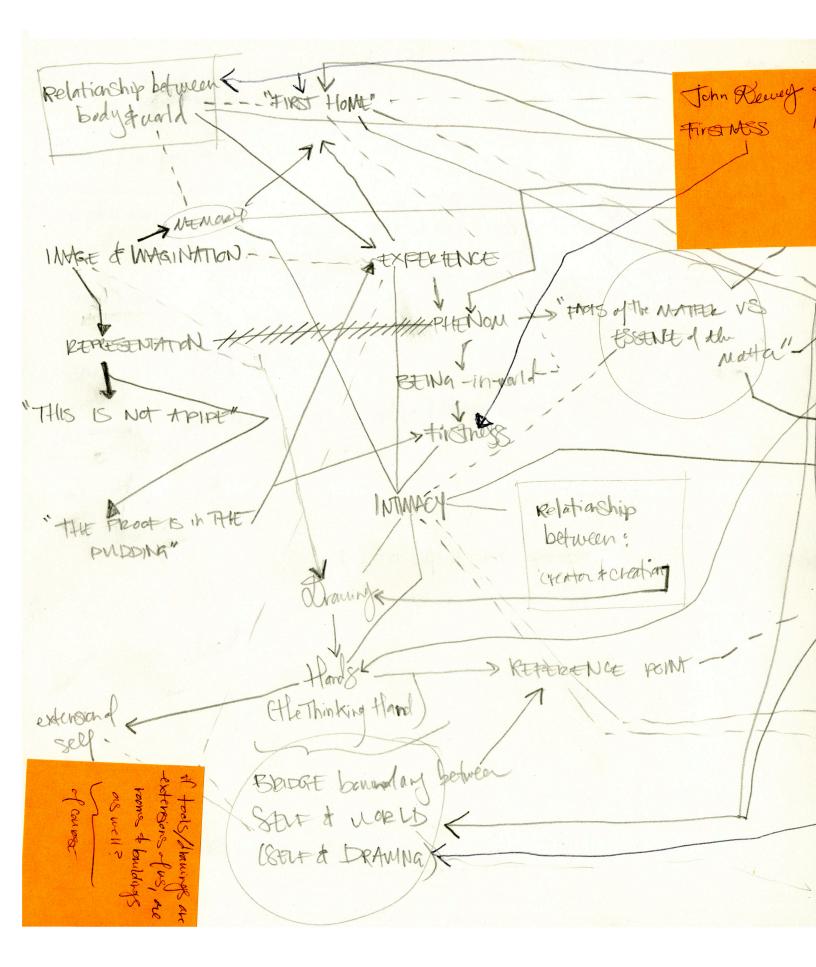
The following mental maps and subsequent Boiling Water Snapshots are snapshots of thought through time. These drawings are maps of the different ways ideas have formed new relationships over time. This churning is the life force behind this experimental, revelatory design process. These maps can be handy tools in situating oneself in the different scopes this project readily takes.

Cooking has always been an experimental thing for me. Design has always been an experimental thing for me.

The process for this project began with wondering and wandering. Questions were asked which were answered through the creation of drawings or models. In a process of experimentation, however, there is often failure. Failure was an important part of this project because it exposed stunted questions, conventional thinking, and enforced honesty and humility. It was important to see failure as a greater vector towards learning.

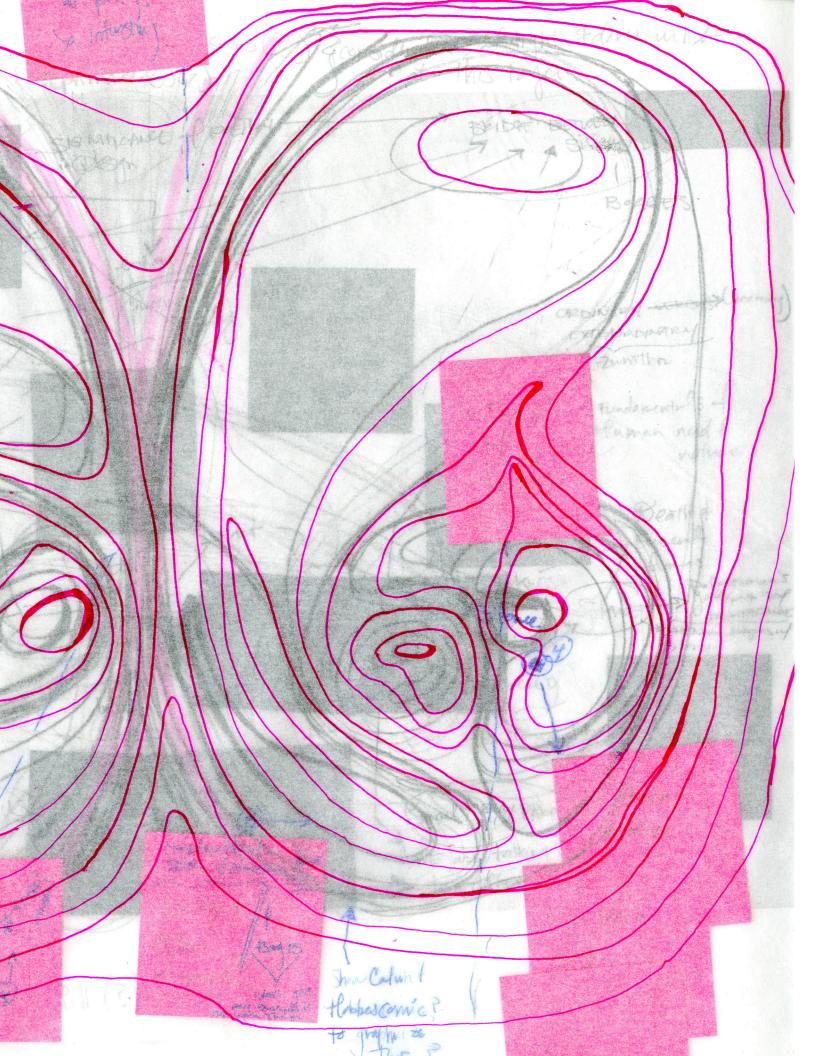
<sup>1</sup>Referring to John Rajchman's Constructions. MIT Press. 1998.

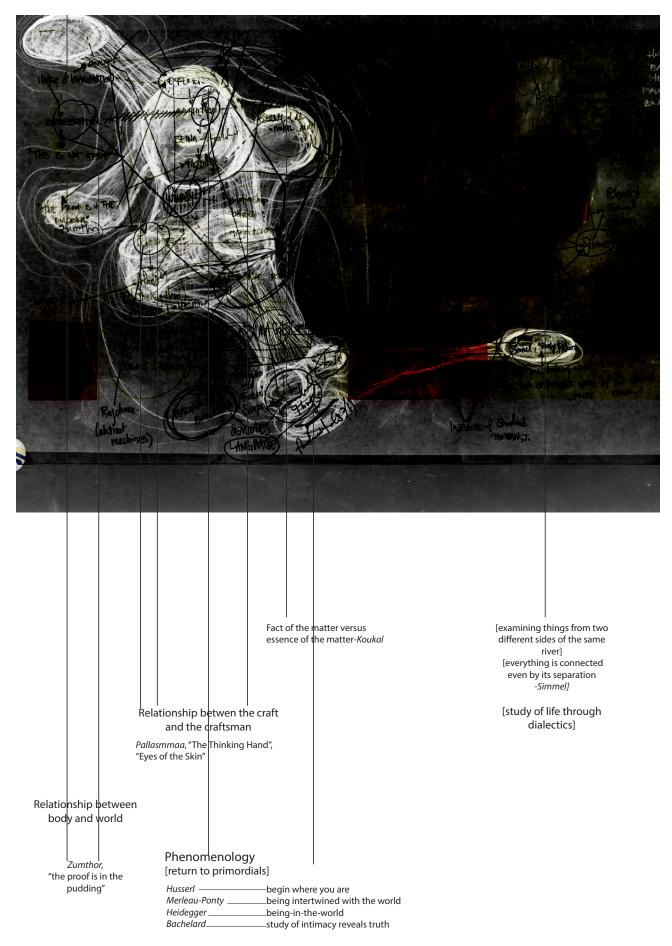
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Interestingly, those three things oftentimes have become blended as the process of this project unfolded.

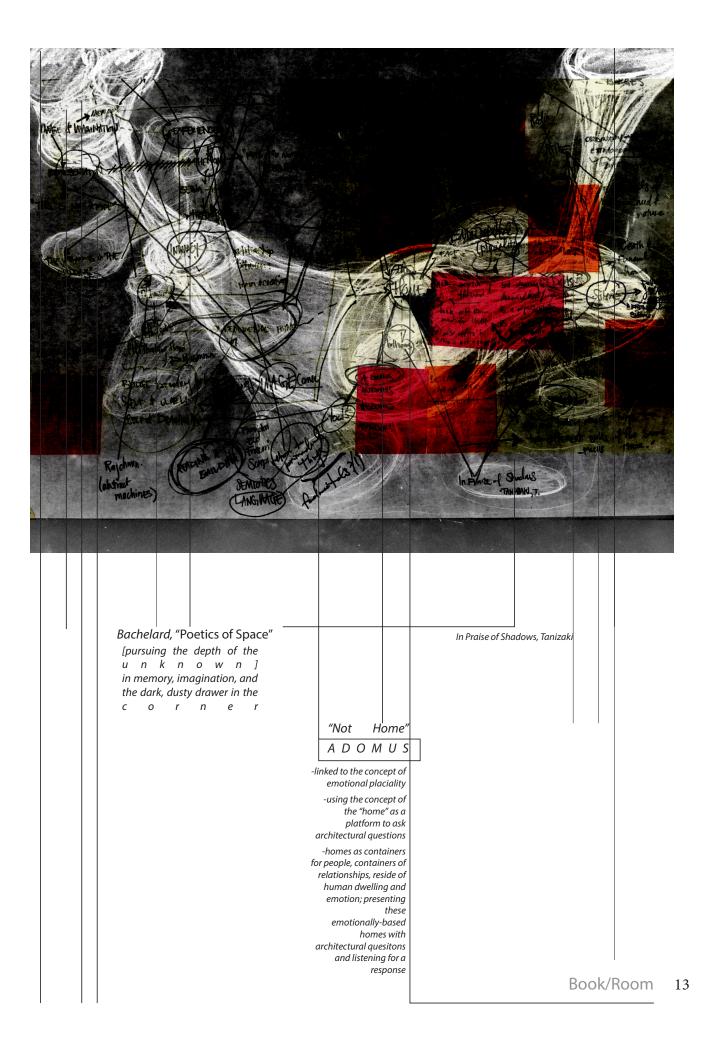




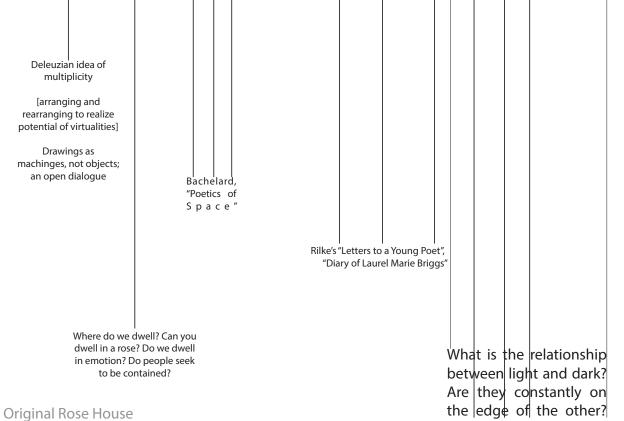


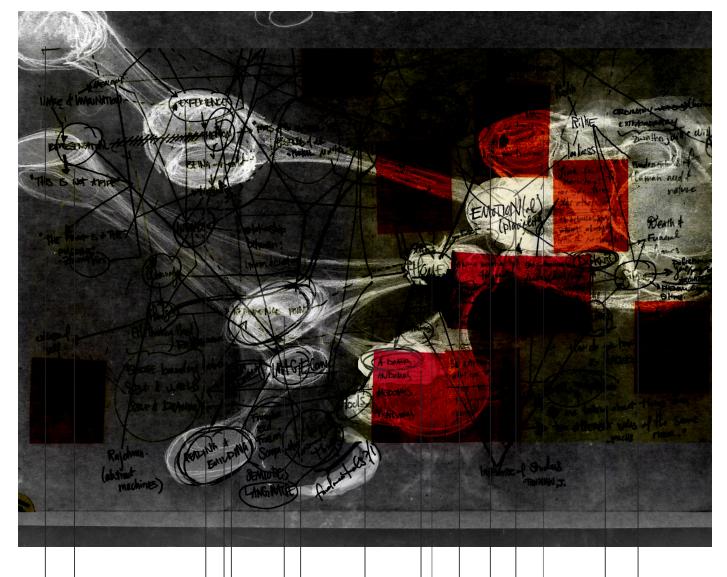


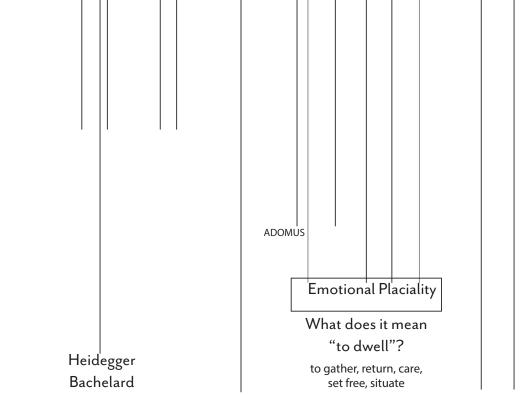




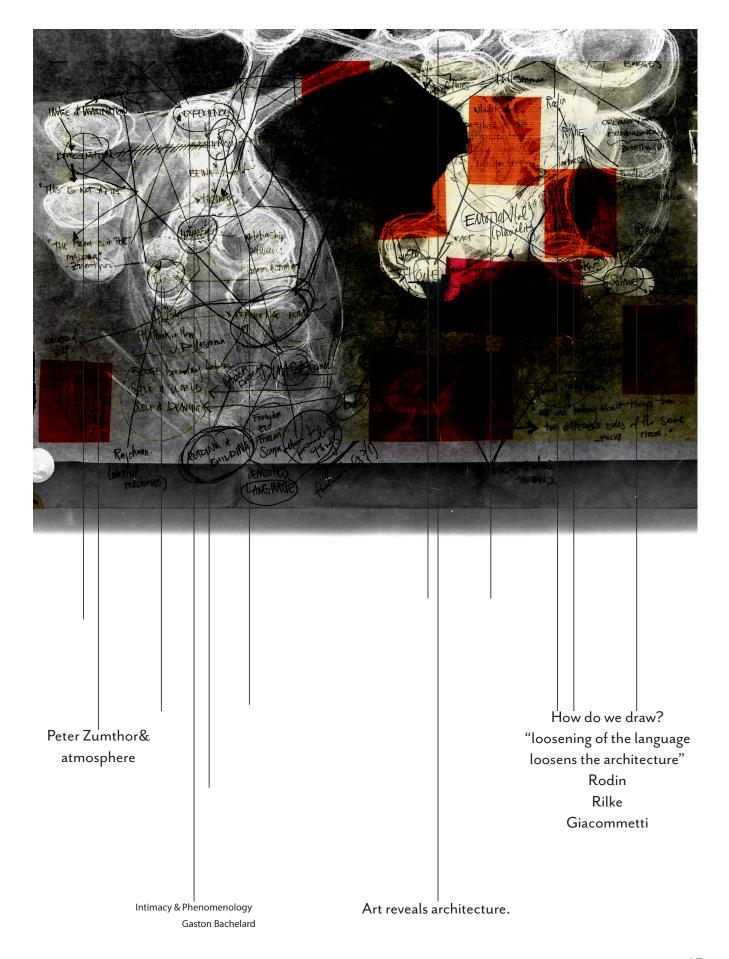








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- [7] how to make a meal | the meta-metaphor
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- [30] how to construct a not-house the memory house the house of fear the house of sculpture the house of brea(d)th the sacred house
- [95] conclusion

**20-01 | Phenomenology & Architecture | Fall 2011**<sup>3</sup> Working Format for Collaborative Phenomenology (Version 5)

- 1. From mundane subjectivity, start your description by briefly stating in a notebook your most prominent memory of the phenomenon that is under investigation for the week, and how you feel about it. Find a photograph, image, or any other visual aid that you think at least partially exemplifies the phenomenon.
- 2. Begin to phenomenologically focus your description. Shifting from your most prominent memory and feeling about the phenomenon, focus in on the phenomenon itself, either directly or indirectly. Take care with your language throughout your description, employing verbs and adverbs rather than adjectives and nouns. Try to only report on how this phenomenon appears to you, in itself and from itself. All other knowledge relating to this phenomenon, whether derived from psychology, sociology, anthropology, the hard sciences, architecture, etc., needs to be put aside and bracketed. Attempt to do this initially through body hermeneutics:
  - a. **Perception.** What can you see, hear, feel, taste, and smell? Which senses are most engaged? Which senses are muted? How are the senses synaesthetically or otherwise stimulated? What distance is the "perfect" distance from which to "take in" this phenomenon and perceive it most comprehensively? What happens to your various senses when you alter your distance from the phenomenon?
  - b. Motility. How does this phenomenon ask you to move? What speeds or rhythms does your body take up? In what specific ways do certain body parts move? Which specific limbs does it engage? Are the movements you are being asked to take up physically comfortable or not? Does it ask your body to—literally—go new places? Does it keep you in your physical comfort zone?
  - **c. Social-affectivity.** How does this phenomenon ask you to engage it on an emotional level? What/how does it make you feel? How do you relate to it on an interpersonal (or person-object) level? What are the contours of your relationship to one another? How does it "fit" you and you it? Do you feel any dis-ease or psychic discomfort? Do you feel alienated or marginalized? Or welcomed and on familiar ground?
  - **d. Viscerality.** What is going on beneath your skin, in the inner workings of your body? Does the encounter with the phenomenon induce an upset stomach, a headache, a quickened heartbeat, etc.?
  - e. Cognition. How does this phenomenon ask you to categorize it? What is it called? What do those names tell you? What is its rational relation within larger schemes or contexts (its function, its history, its "value," etc.)?
- **3.** Attempt to discern the essential structures of the phenomenon through imaginative variation. If you imaginatively "remove" various elements of the phenomenon, does the experience "hang together" or "fall apart"? What is essential to the phenomenon in order for its appearance to remain coherent, *as that appearance*? What elements can be removed without effecting the intelligibility of the experience?
- 4. Without waiting until the last minute, pair up with your partner for the week over lunch, coffee, a beer, the internet—whatever works that will allow you to have an undistracted conversation. Compare notes, visual aids, and work through steps 1-3 together, in a provisional attempt to "attune" and bring your descriptions together. The point here is not to judge who has generated the better description. Listen, and try to see, together.
- 5. Summarize your joint findings into five (5) bullet points that you think (at least provisionally) capture the essence of the phenomenon, still employing verbs and adverbs rather than adjectives and nouns. You will narrate these findings with your partner at the next class meeting.

(continued on next page)

1

### "What is the primordial stuff of architecture?", he wonders.

Memory Emotion Imagination Darkness Light Silence Atmosphere Time

These are the elements of this investigation. These are the brick and mortar that construct the homes embedded in this book.

Do hands have their run will, understanding & desire? Speech language Shand. (are they the origin of our pleasure tremotion?) - drawing is a link between body \$ mind. thought development) -body & house me abflerent miled - is the bady the home ". TI \*p. 13 The Thinking What would be Alnd. PRE-LANGWARE -relationship between the and Post - LANGUATE body & the world 117 (fools vs. neros) chands us. speech the body as site 128 teels are He La abroning body hills He La abroning body bocen Marteau Ponts a Socen AN Extension of Daytabraming Helanguagen connects of phenon the Kody "reading a room the body. 172 OF THE memory & imagination one stimule by this HINKING OE SILENCE rote in this HAND. reading-Fron this drawing by hard we tauch "Arch has to Slon down the designed abject a space experience .- the task of arch 15 to maintain of defend Sitence. body mind Sou Where is imagination what does this say! home ... at soul ? what does this translate to\_ GROUNded for last somester's pageot. what is the link (what would a drawing look like DUK toonalysus? If the installation ?) Depil here PRIMI as it ME Sping first motophys real & imapped Empalhi requires intiman HONE intimacy connector to PRASE OF V motenality thands

### LANGUAGE, TOOLS, AND THE THINKING HAND

#### {WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THINKING HAND?}

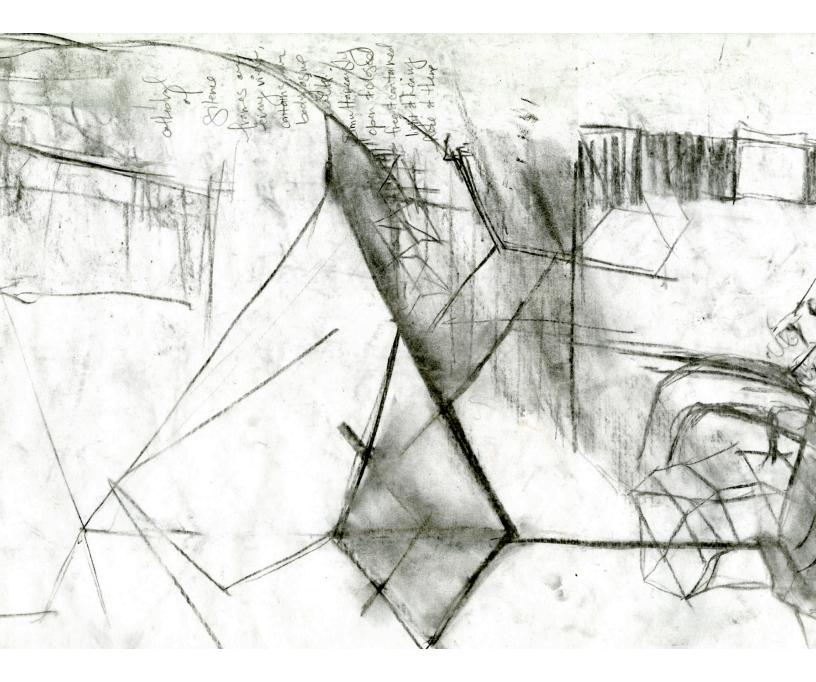
Blessed John Paul II, in his Letter to Artists, recognized that the link between craft and craftsman could also be seen in the word itself, for example in Polish, stwórca (creator) and twórca (craftsman)<sup>4</sup>. The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, made the claim that the closer one becomes to the origin of the word, the closer one becomes to the essence of a thing. There begins to be revealed a connection between language and object, word and lived-world. The way we describe things, the way we draw things, reveals how we see and understand the world around us.

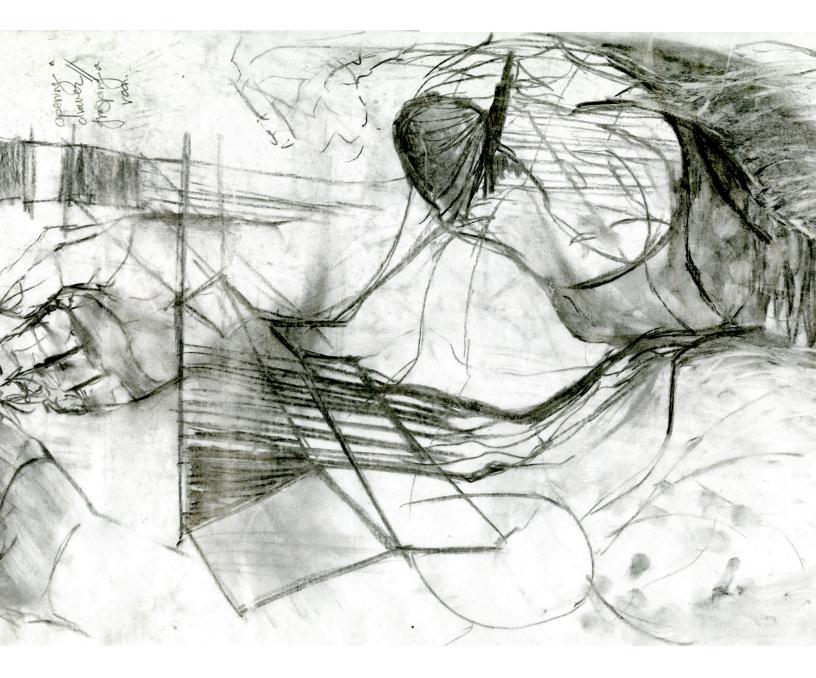
Continuing, the relationship between the craft and the craftsman is an intimate one. In this study, the consideration of how the hand relates to the rest of the body is centrally important. When drawing, the hand becomes a link between the eye, mind, and the body. The movements of the body become traced onto the canvas. Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmmaa understands the hand as the first tool in which we discover the world. He explains the hand as being an important tool in drawing, especially, when he describes architecture as "a product of the thinking hand" <sup>5</sup>. Through hand-drawing, he claims that we touch the designed object or space from the inside out. In this way, we see things differently.

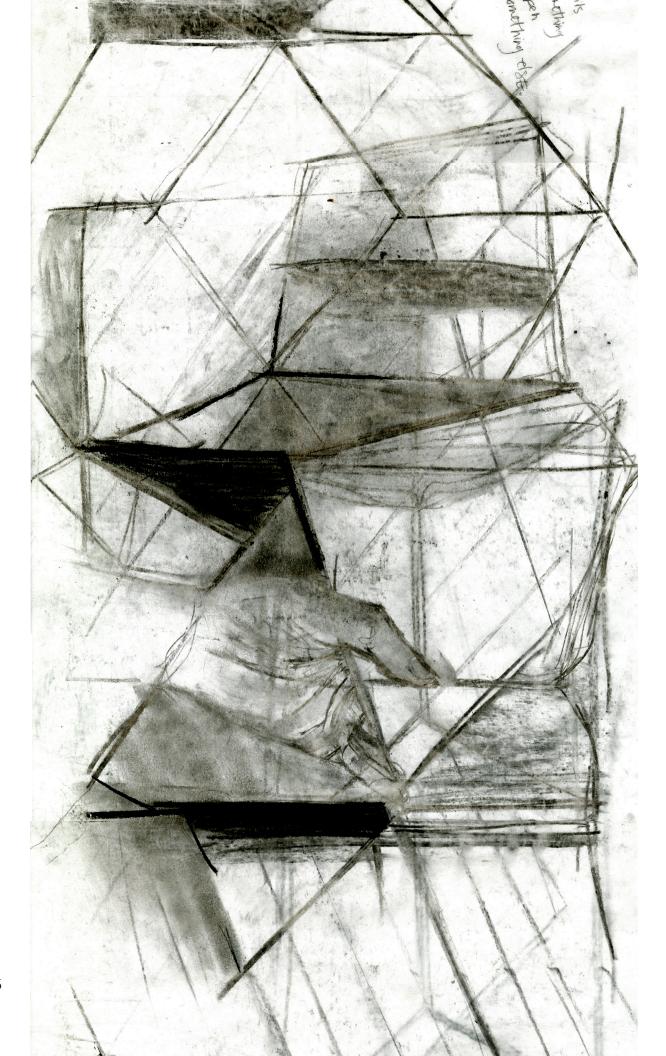
Did the chicken come first or did the egg? Does the meaning of an object arise from the word attached to it, or does the word come from the meaning of the object? Philosopher Martin Heidegger claimed that being closer to the origin of the word brings one closer to its essence. Words become tools, then, to educate one on the essence of the object. In this way, words construct meaning. The way one's hands work with a drawing conjure meaning in a similar way. Tools, being used as a means, refine actions and tasks. As tools become refined, the act becomes refined as well. In this study, drawings are seen as catalysts for thought-drawings are seen as tools. Just as words build meaning, so too do drawings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Blessed John Paul II. 1999. < http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2artis.htm>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Pallasmaa, J. The Thinking Hand. Wiley. 2009.



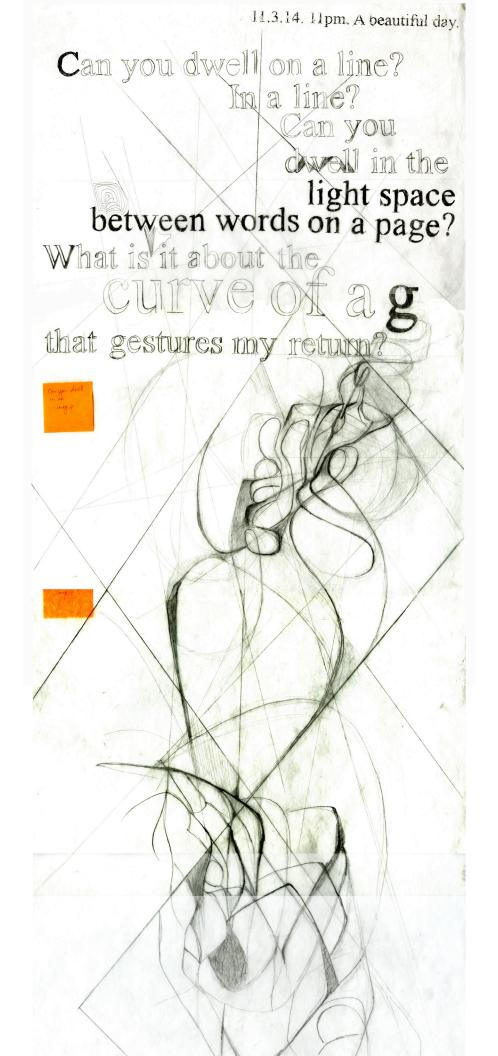




### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOME

The home serves as the meeting point for both interests of this thesis: semiotic and phenomenological. Experience and code are both embedded in the house. In order to better understand the house, the designer chose to dissect it. However, as with any problem, the solution is based off of the tools used to approach it. Instead of dissecting the home with a chainsaw and cutting of corners like Gordon Matta-Clark, the designer chose to approach the home wondering about emotional dwelling places. In this way, the tools for dissecting become memory and atmosphere instead of stud wall structure.

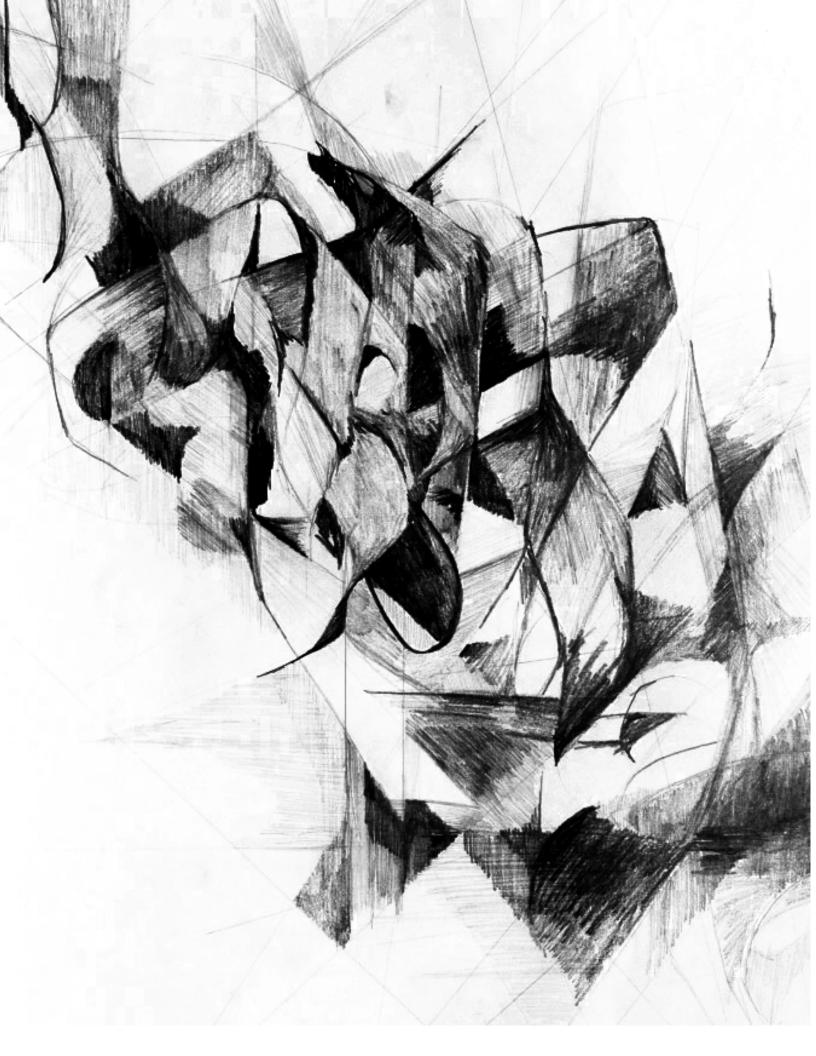
# HOW DO WE DRAW HOW WE DWELL?





### From an evening wrapped in nostalgia, Turning inside to go out ...lingering on the staircase of the Memory House





# INFLUENCES:

+Bachelard +Zumthor

### MEET THE YOUNG POET

Sprouting from the thought, "Can one dwell in a rose?" as a subsequent question to "how do light and dark relate to each other?" the Original Rose House (ORH) quite literally served as the ink blot on the canvas that is this thesis study. The dialogue a craftsman has with his craft is an intimate one, indeed. He speaks to his project through his choice in materials, but also his gesture. However, for the project to unfold in its natural fruition, the craftsman, the designer, should listen. It was through this listening that the once mumbled language of the Original Rose House began to speak (albeit in tangled fragments at a time). Peering into section cuts of the ORH, the young man who was dwelling in the ORH looked out as well. Daydreaming asks one to look outside while turning in.

### {Where does one dwell emotionally?}

The closed book, like the closed drawer and the dark inkblot on the page, offers the imagining self infinite depth and virtuality. It is on this plane, in the chasm between real and imagined, in the tension of the unreal reality, that the Young Poet opens the door of the Original Rose House and introduces himself. An outsider might call him a client, but an insider would not hesitate in calling him a companion.

### {Can one dwell in a rose?}

A home can be seen as an extension of the body. Not only do they form reference points for how one understand themselves in the lived-world, but they are laden with memory and emotion. Rather than obeying the geometry of a home, the idea of the house is un-thunk in this study as a series of relationships. Heidegger's hut in Todtnauberg, Germany has been analyzed in order to gain better understanding of his intellect. In this way, his ideas about dwelling have been grounded in his personal ritualistic retreat. In a similar way, Michelangelo's frescos are grounded by the architecture of the Sistine Chapel. Heidegger's consistent retreat is a testament to the intense relationship between thought, person, and place.



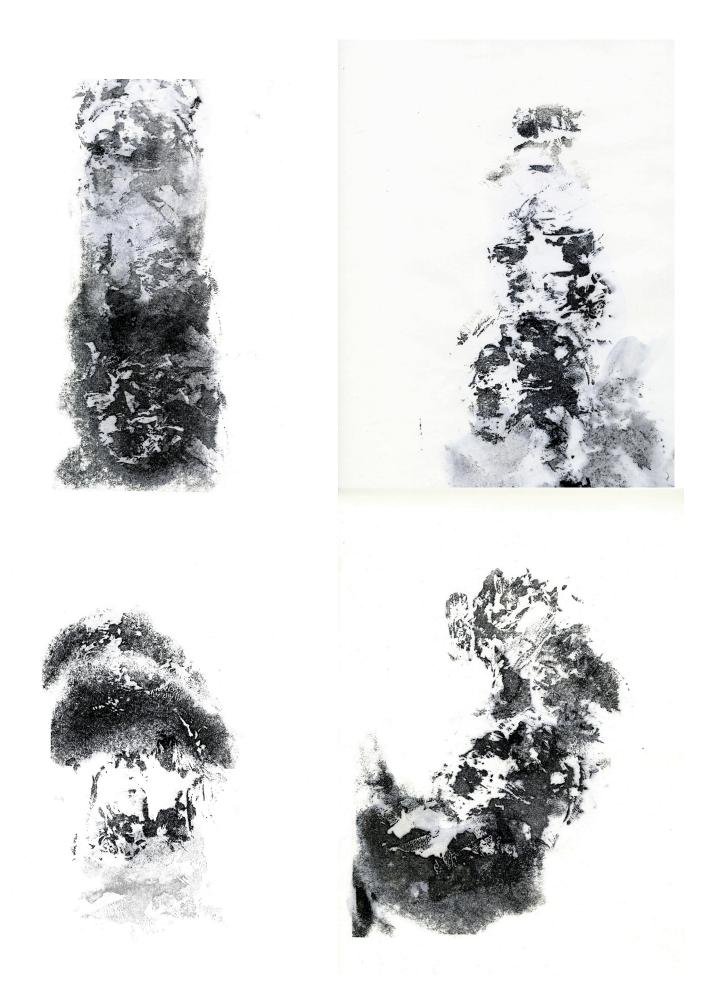


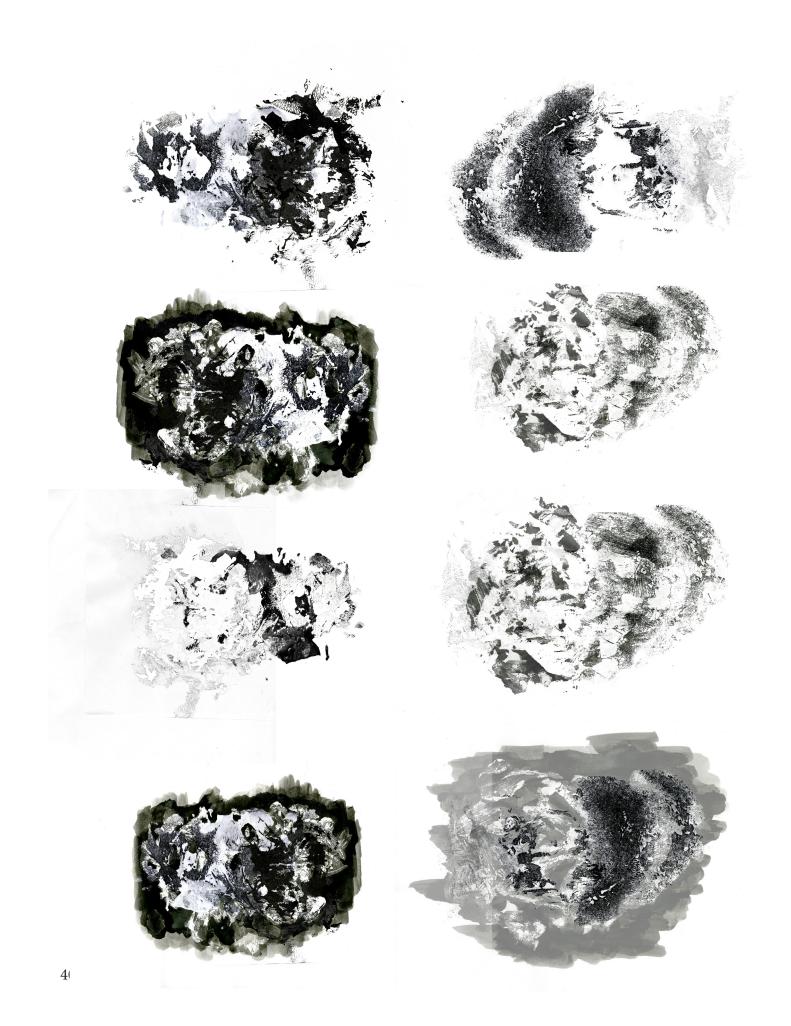


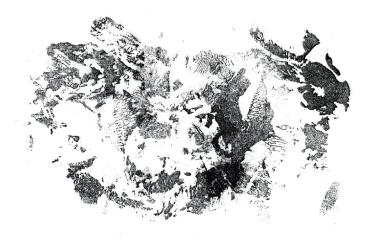




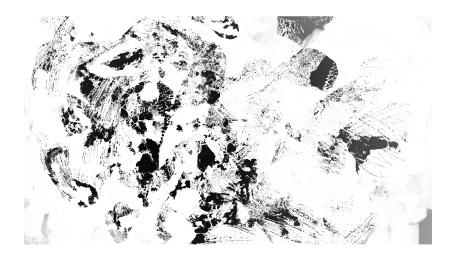




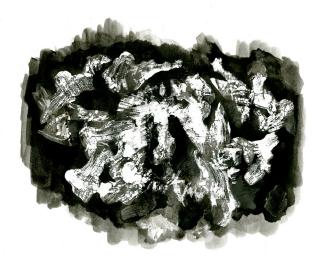














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## {HAS SPACE BECOME THE IMAGE OF SPACE? WHAT IS A POETIC IMAGE?}

In an age of the image, one cannot deny that learning walks hand in hand with the image. Is the space poetic in and of itself, or is it the way one talks about it that makes it poetic? Perhaps it is a synthesis of these two questions.

Just as poetry is meant to be spoken and live in the lungs, architecture is means to be inhabited, experienced.

How does one know that poetry is poetry? It is the arrangement of the words on the page that signal one to slow down, signal that these words are important and should be lingered on? In a similar way, the reconsideration of composition, recognizing drawing and media as a tool to create a dialogue is relevant for architecture. Breaking up the paragraph (and by extension to architecture, break up the drawing into fragments), teaches one to read the poem, or the drawing, differently. Words become emphasized as they are allowed the space to let their meaning expand and dwell on the page and in the reader's mind. The media is the message.

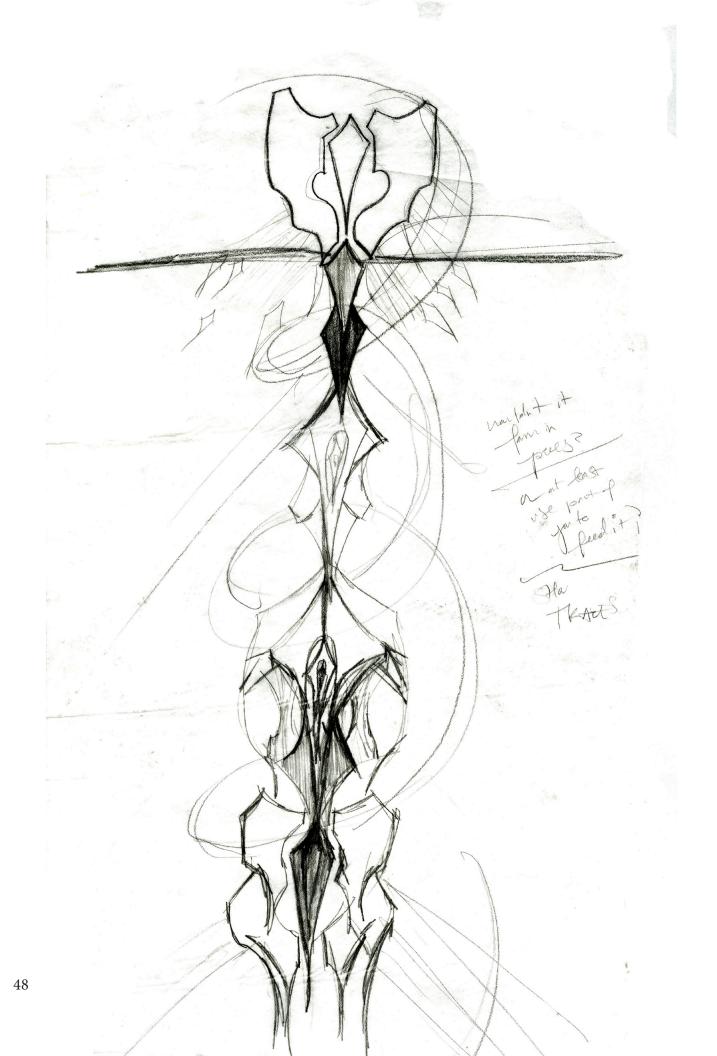
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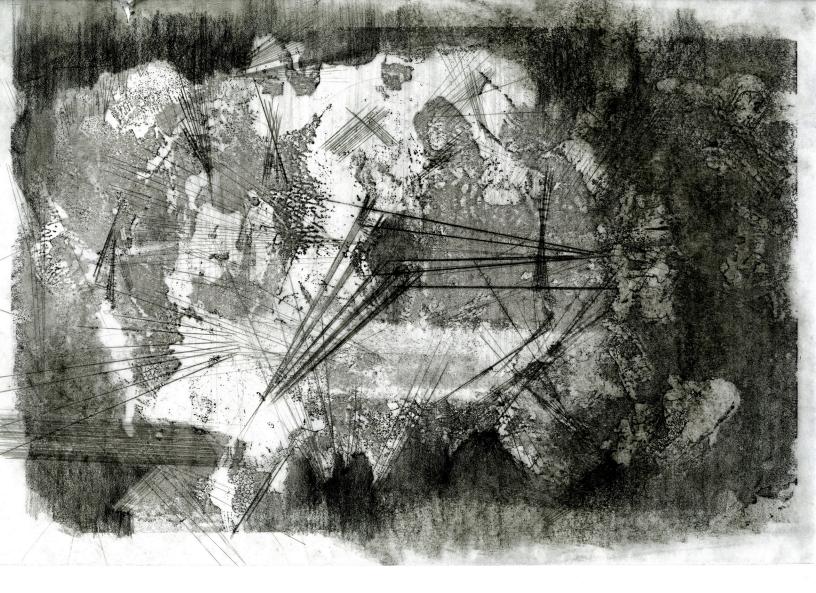
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From the grip of night, With a fever's cool grasp burning my chest Entombed by a House of Fear...









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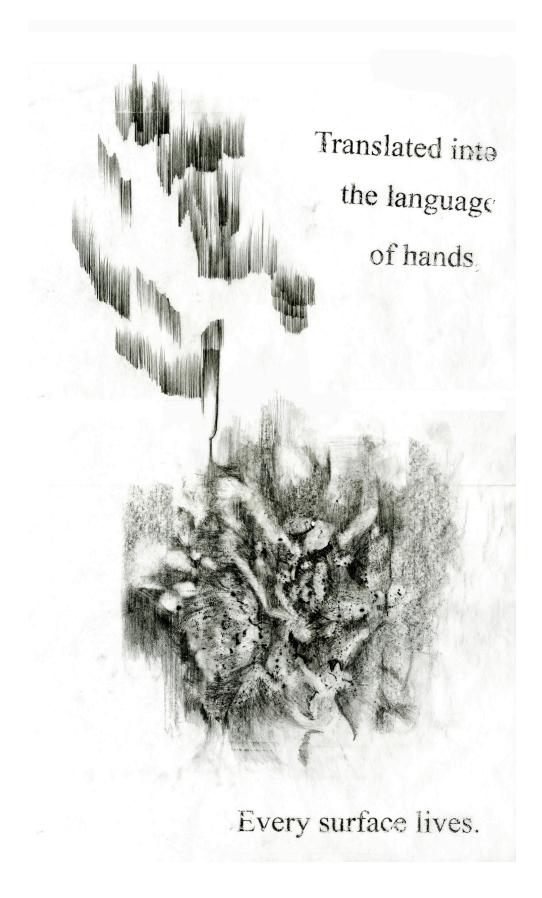
How deep is the reservoir from which my life flows?

...digging deep to plant the House of Sculpture

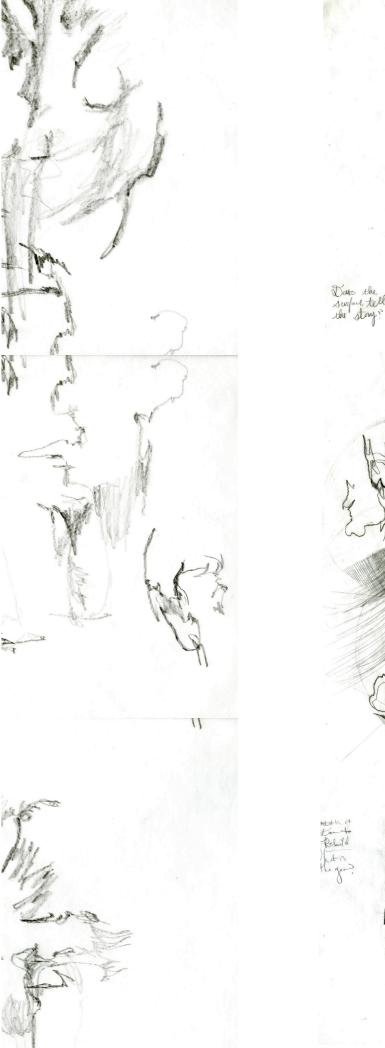


## INFLUENCES:

- +Rilke
- +Rodin
- +Bachelard
- +How to introduce oneself to darkness?









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## From an expansive eve, Traversing interior landscapes, Nature flows from me in the House of Brea(d)th



## INFLUENCES:

+Rilke

+Giacommetti

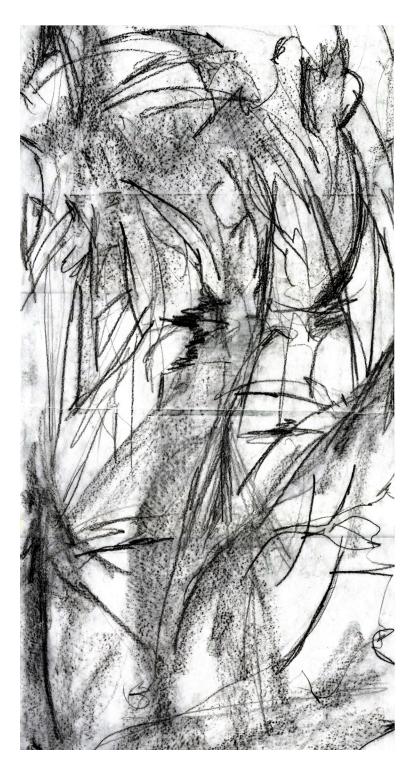
+exploring bodily awareness in darkness

- +exploring boundary in darkness
- +measuring through rhythms
- +vastness

+immense intimacy





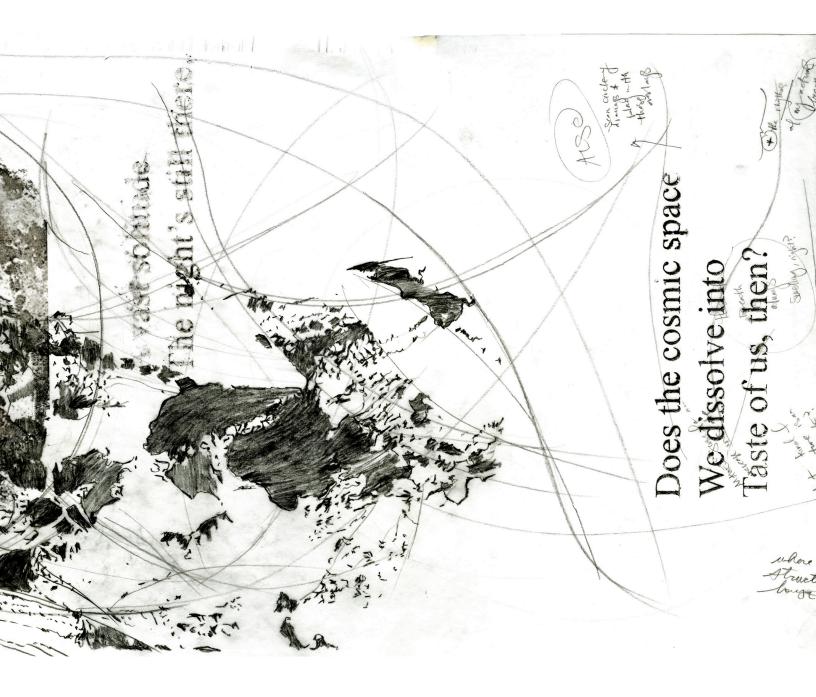


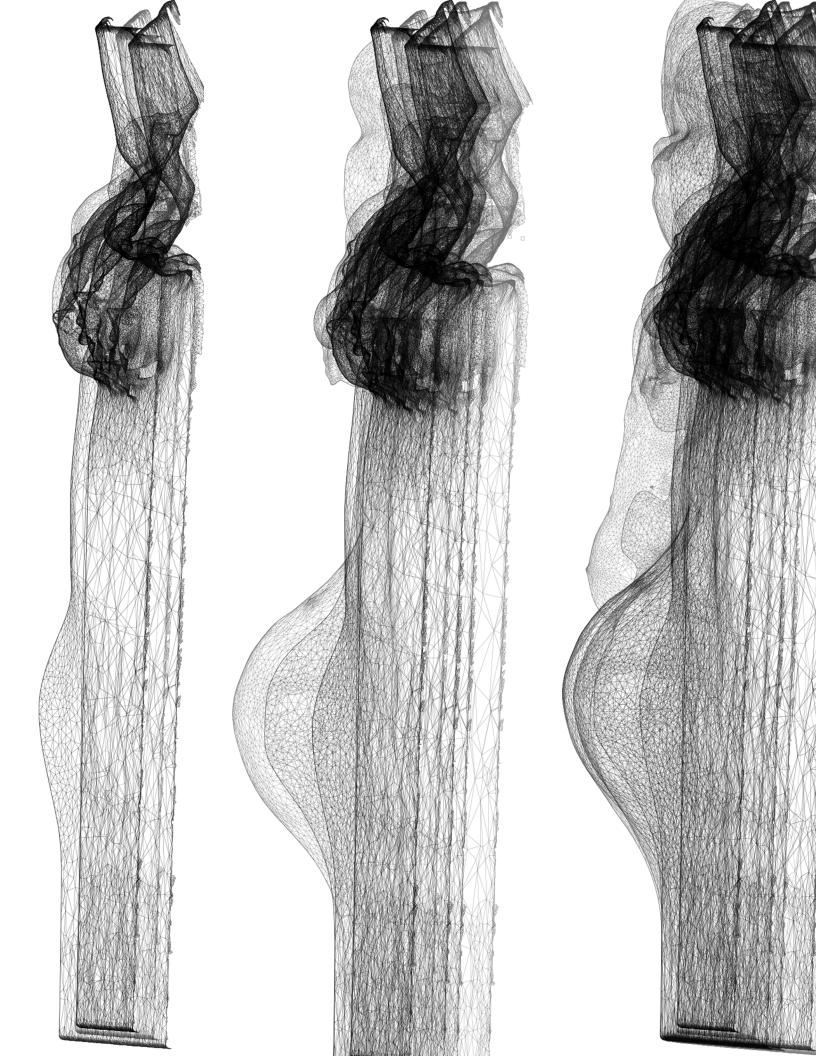








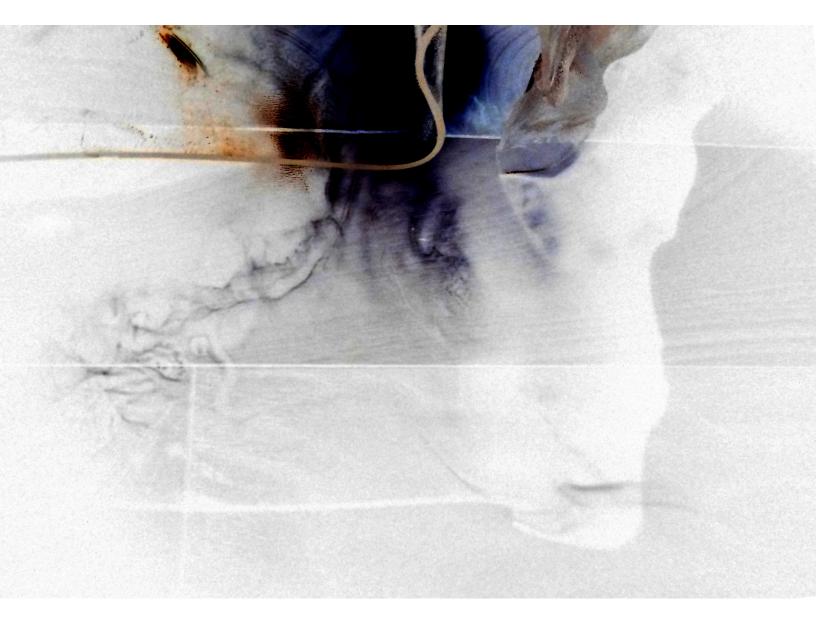


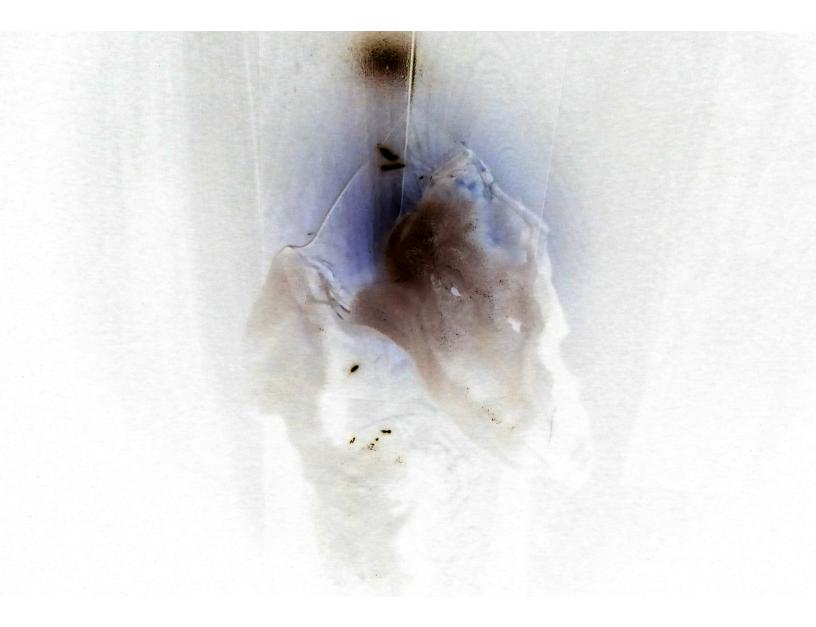












- Sitence & language p. 164 - What do sitence & davkness build? p. 165 -timest stence are related p. 168. - cathedrals have your availting 168. is cathedral Jos museums of sitence. Harare musuus & catholials dift? Love is flad, the other is living ... one a betartopa one iston but for a deferent vason - people nand be artifact - objes then) Piero Bella Francesca: union of objects = ideas the platonic ciorld of idus is usible in his pictures) 0 p.110 - sitence & faith, sitence & mystery. - "when the lager of sitence is missing the extraordinary easing because connected with the ordinary, with The Tracting Plon of things Chedness the extraordinary to a mere part of the mechanical portive) -" prayer is a pouring of the word into Sitence" 200

-In 1948 Knerkegnard is saying the under world/life is diseased atthe cure is to createsiteree -uard is parn from Sitence, so not it must have some sitence or "perfect sitence is beardage the perfect und" - 140 "the througe that were ma position by the uard stand the sitence, as of they were called back into the sitence disappear therein." "the nord not any brings the out of the sitence; it also p estence mutuch they can de

"But the ral part of 5 presession of the breek, st The words, not nie rusa."

noise can be vereance only by son where different will (a used of the userd of St something diff. Rom the same remared from Sitence) -sounds hanging in the nic

- Darkness is matter \$810000 - Brence is "The greatest of a p. 154 - "Mark ences of swence -p. 155 - "Mark ences of swence -p. 155

- "Man dights a himself: the night bec dead & gut Shill alive."

- Siltence & awarenees p. 163.

Uny Stene Split open nide et consume you 2.21.15 unley (147) the echo of ed into motion tess in Bt/PM as Does rhythm imply naiting to be And up to your 4 to 0 return P things lan & Alan yan Childhood roduce the Sappeneagerin " TEN 510N Rem. af each shell arts in gres mscachol STENCTURE of "I am definitely POEMS relating to loved & whatever the stretur of happens to me, withing that is Each house? an availed by this ence expresses next theot is for dove. and so In has to build 7 my life is good each have construct St. Josephine Batchita 4.p.151 motif in character. Bad lac party ! is language. Il usetes existences". Death to self? placed Broots Icheek gut Sandts 1 ST. Pall light fa ause Reis -156.

-Small peece of gold smanned Shraugh Henord lotte # sa Stor Jund A fourd its place on thread flows. (Agnt Shrangh Slat?) Stellto Harts light & otena thin time So much so that bandances are eased Low free to mac toolissahre No ceho to be found. nat Aching, without & france, I fee, that So Bretch. But tenheiend broch when [ cannot extend nigelaughter Outo ahose shad chall prosp? 1. 100 Ou shall falls hate plasmable davanies & fleteing lypot with death

I share any myself et an that chimb of existence 18 the by to Shallon Feething on A gums () van l'ama beginner an mjan lefe Rot Bestell. Other is the ATP Alcola halluget? where the feels lede there or he alled vay tog Plothe Stliberada the lighting? (De cares across it al cares lieconse acheeds it) Tis Anowhere he lot vake botton? lel laque potes

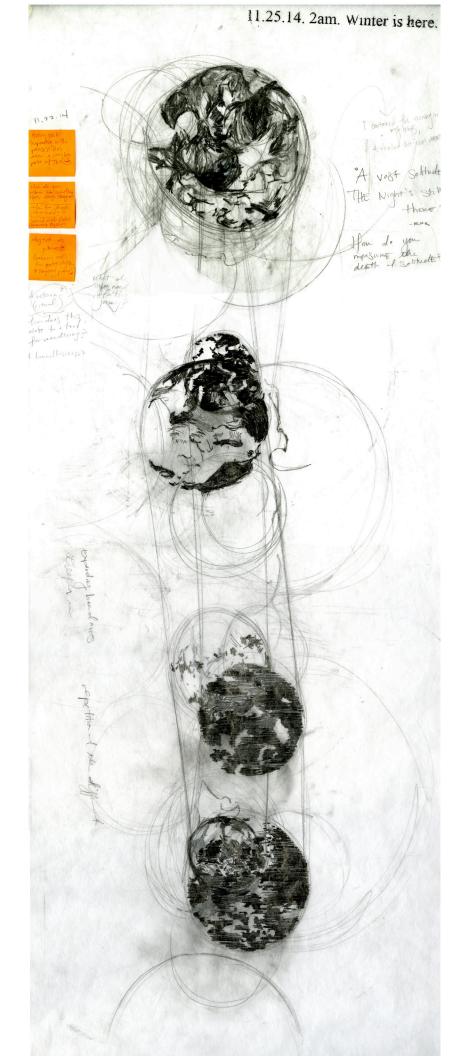
From stillness,

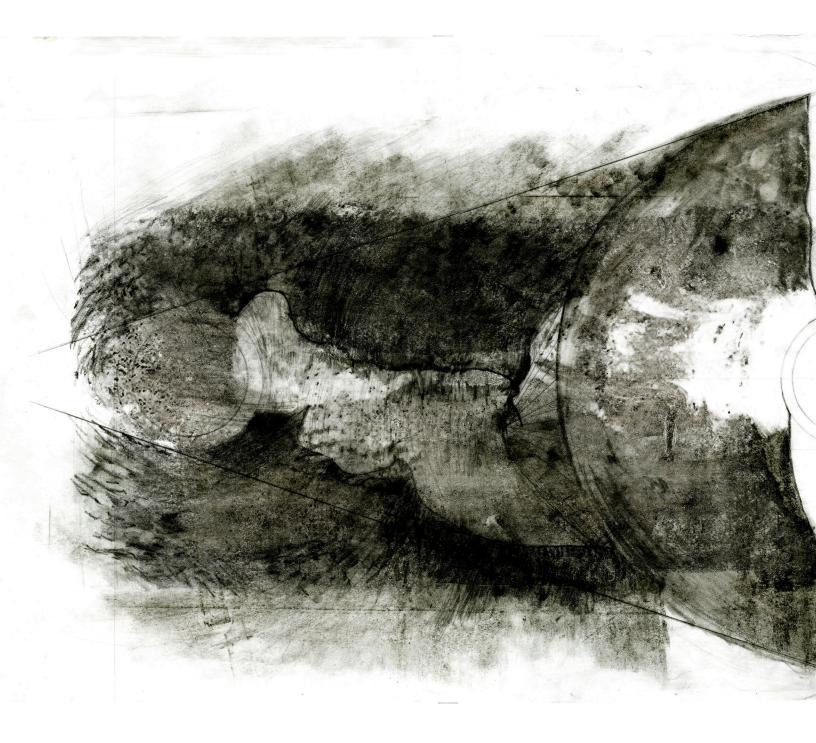
To dwell in immense intimacy is to learn the language of silence in the Sacred House.

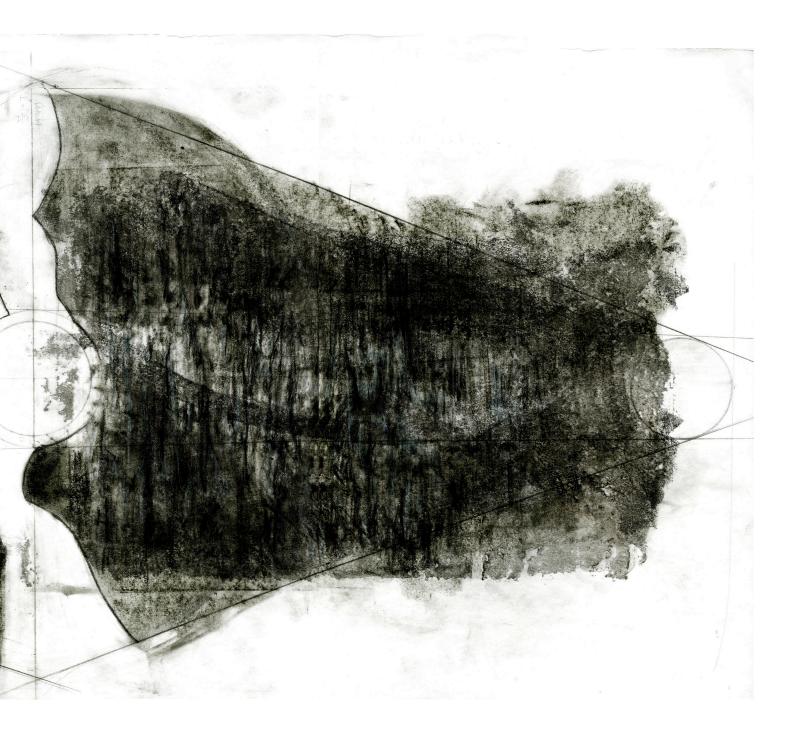


## INFLUENCES:

+chiascuoro +light & silence +rembrandt +goya +piranesi +michelangelo +olafur eliasson











## Conclusion

As T.S. Eliot said, "we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." Perhaps this is an apt description of what it means to dwell: to be situated in a place where an exchange of person and place, memory and emotion occurs.

Dwelling and return have seasonal and cyclical connotations. To dwell one must gather the more elusive architectural elements of memory, emotion, light, shadow, and smell.

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