Critiquing Thesis

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4

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>

It is generally accepted throughout any design school that the process of critique generates ideas around the topic being analyzed. While ideas may not be directly derived from the critique itself, this type of conversation, at the minimum, can open other paths towards new possibilities. It grants the author the insight to new perspectives surrounding work and how it is functioning. Critique also opens the door for other individuals to insert new areas of expertise in to the process, that is if the critique isn't considered a final one. Even then does an idea truly end just because the project currently representing it does? Critique also offers the possibility to fracture the process. With the interjection of new opinions, knowledge, and experiences it becomes easier to analysis the work being and decide if a new approach is more suited to addressing the problems at hand. This doesn't require the abandonment of pervious work either. On the contrary, the pervious work gains new meaning when being reexamined under a new light. The repeated fragmentation of an idea allows for a more complete understanding of said idea. The linear process offers one type of thinking, never truly challenging itself with conflicting thoughts or other views, it just steadily grows yet never changes at the core. So why not appreciate a collection of fragments, rather than a string of thoughts

So, if it can be agreed on the process of critique is a good one for the sake of the work, then why isn't the process of design ever critiqued? As architects we design things, whether that be buildings, furniture, landscapes, instillations, or even a set of drawings. Yet, can it not be said that architecture is more than the final product but rather about the process of

getting there? If this is true then why is there not
more emphasis on critiquing the process and the
values that drive it than the actual work itself?
This thesis is an attempt at exploring this process,
and creating a collection of fragments that can
challenge the way work is completed and the
philosophy that drives the said work.
It should be said the not only receiving critique
helps create these fragments, but critiquing other
work is a valuable tool too, and often relates back to
one's own work intended or not.
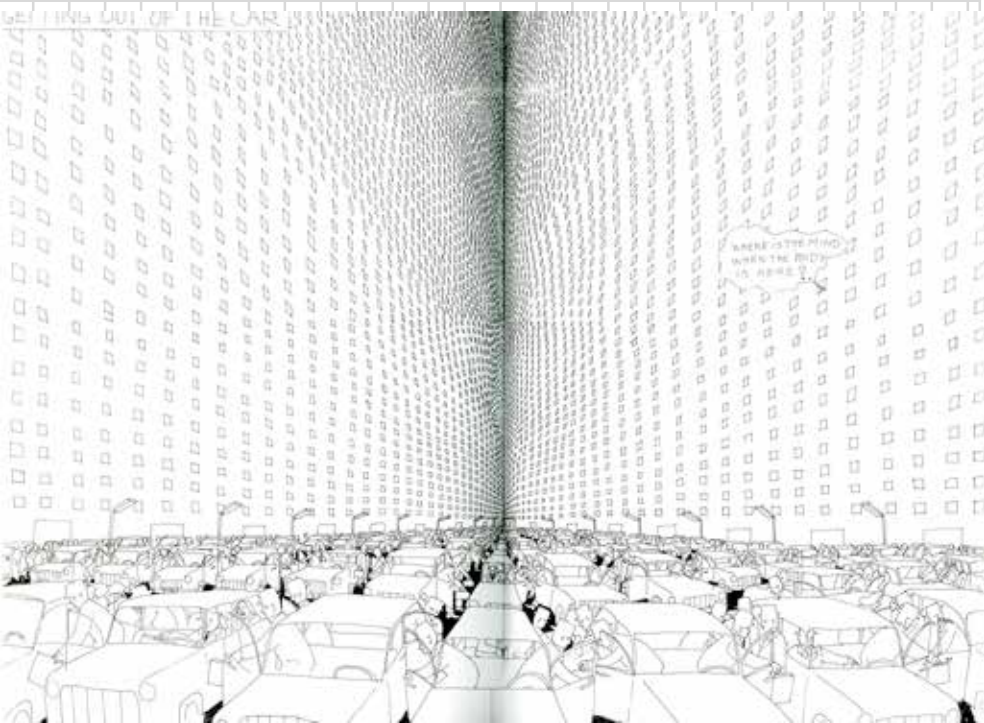
Initial & Driving thoughts:

As humans, we need to use the earth to sustain us, allow for our survival. To ensure our safety as a species we develop have constantly developed more advanced ways of inhabiting the planet. Yet as time passed, safety is obtained and advancements in habitation became more focused on comfort. On the other side of the same hand, most every advancement in our habitation of the planet we have put a greater tax on the resources that we have available.

In current times, new is equated with better. The new model is an upgrade, always. Yet with each new object we tax our host a little bit more, the same host that is required for survival.

 As designers of space we have a unique position, a position to directly affect how people inhabit the world. Within this situation our power is not absolute, yet we have a voice. With a voice comes the obligation to use said voice.
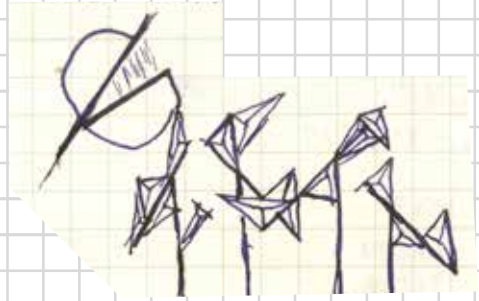
Are there other ways of inhabiting the earth? The answer is yes. Can these be more beneficial to our planets survival? If so how can these ideologies be implemented?

What elements require addressing to provoke change?

So as designers, are there other ways to think about what is deemed valuable? Can these be implemented within the process of design?

Process
The Smooth and Striated by Félix Guattari and
Gilles Deleuze is the start, maybe not the first
chronologically but, it was what manifested
the issues from though to paper, stirred the
unconscious, forced an acknowledgement of
inadequacies. The idea is dichotomous by nature,
even the title falls into this, and that nature has
been embraced. Questions of what is striated?
What is smooth? What is this relationship between
the two? What does each element do to the things
it inhabits? Euclidian space vs Riemannian space,
Static vs Dynamic, Metric vs Relationship, Space
vs Place, each pair was adopted into the process of
questioning.
        Though started in Euclidian space (from
here on it will be referred to as metric space) due
to its comfort. This comfort was born out of what
is considered rational, scientific, or explainable
using logic. Issues always needed a sound metric
understanding in order to be effective.[1] The notion
that the designer only had agency in the realm of
the striated was overwhelming present. We create
drawings to communicate how space is constructed
and ultimately how space appears. These drawings
use a language of numbers, angles, symbols and
construction shorthand to transfer ideas via a
common medium. Based on these assumptions
how could the architects main concern not be
the striated? It allows us to participate in this
conversation, plus it's conventional and accepted,
otherwise known as comfortable.

Process

Yet when reflecting on space, the most memorable experiences have a sense of place, a sense of here. It is not a feeling defined by the fact the hallway is four feet wide or that the space is one hundred and twenty feet deep. The technical aspects of the drawings presence fade, replaced by the relationships fostered by the environment. Thus the idea of smooth space being the medium that imparts meaning to place is introduced into the equation. This isn't to say that striated space has no meaning, rather just a different perspective.

When attempting to wrestle with the problem of inhabiting the world differently, it became clear that any form of solution would be elusive if the problem is explored under conditions that are comfortable.An attempt to work within a Riemannian model became an apparent necessity, and if the challenging of value was something crucial to the process, then a challenging of process was also something that had to be inherent in process. What does smooth and striated look like no longer operating under a comfortable method?

Again the questions of smooth and striated began yet with a new tint to the lens. However the new tint was not alone though and two new short readings were also brought into the fray, the first being Terrain Vague followed by The Garden of Forking Paths.


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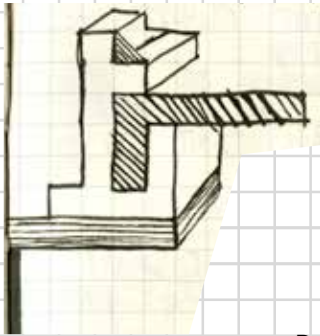
Before diving back in to the smooth and striated, understating the new context becomes imperative to the evolution of thought. In **Terrain Vague**, Sola Morales presents an issue with what he calls Terrain Vague or space that has lost its meaning due to transportation of the services it once provided.[2] The way that space is explored highlights the citizen's critical yet interested eye. Through photography these places have become an interest, revealing the failing nature of once flourishing places. The failure of the designer is doesn't escape Morales's eye either, calling the current workings of the architect a failure, and questioning how agency should be dispersed moving forward with these spaces. In current discourse of architecture we refer to these spaces as deterritorializaed space, something Detroit has an abundance of and has proven a major issue. Morales's critique of the designer applies here too, looking at the reliance on urban farming to cover vacant land. Urban farming itself isn't bad, it does address certain issues with the city, yet it essentially removes the designer from the conversation. If one of the major ways of addressing this spatial problem doesn't include the designer, then how are designers not considering failing in this regard?

At the same time the **Garden of Forking Paths** was on the back burner. A fictional tale set during World War II, following the events a Nazi spy. During his adventure, he runs into history and discovers a part of his culture thought lost. The details of the tale are not important, but the idea it
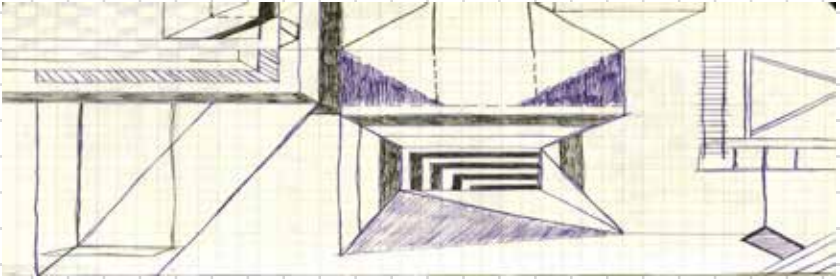
makes one consider is. How is time understood?[3]
What does time look like if the protagonist takes
every option available to them whenever confronted
with a decision? Upon contemplation of these
questions, it became obvious that time is almost
exclusively understood in a striated manor. The
natural progression of thought lead to question how
smooth time would appear? However, without an
apparent path to progress this question remained
on the backburner to simmer.

      Smooth space is called haptic, it is created
by touch, created by the wandering nomads of the
city and hills alike. It is uneven in contrast to the
striations, yet the smooth isn't working against
striated. It would be better described as an ebb and
flow between the two. The more striated something
becomes the easier it becomes for the smooth
to reclaim this space. Look to the auto industry,
as it peaked in efficiency due to the application
of metrics, the once busy factories of south east
Michigan sat empty, to be reclaimed by a smooth
world, where striation once dominated.[4] Reflecting
on scenarios of this sort it appeared that the
conflicts could not be solved with just the smother
or striated, but rather the junction where the two
meet to be a crucial point of interest. During this
time it was becoming more apparent that only one
idea was not going to address a broad enough
spectrum to be comprehensive. Rather to challenge
ideas about value the approach must be tackled
from many perspectives, almost as if having to
never eliminating a potential option once a decision
was made.
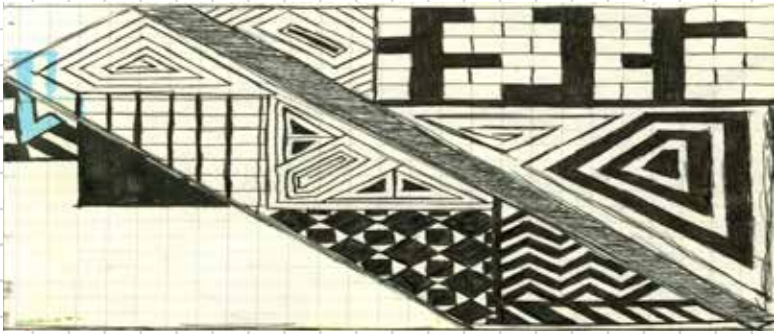
       With new methods in mind the exploration of new material began, particularly interested in contemporary projects under the premise new works would offer fresh ideas that have not been tread over as much. In search of these ideas, articles from recent versions of UDM School of Architecture journal were scoured. Moving forward, three articles were used more extensively than the rest, This land is Not Your Land, Stains of Beauty and Imperceptibility and the Architectural Project of Recovery, each bringing in their own perspectives about inhabitation.

       Following the same branch of thoughts that had developed within the context smooth and striated, **This Land is not Your Land** is advocating for borders to help understand and resolve the issues formed around deterritorializaed space combined with the uneven and unclear distribution of agency. Paul Golisz is not advocating for borders in a traditional sense, but rather to be able to test current agency in relation to current demands of space. The border first establishes current agency of space, then uses the same border to question apparent needs of the agency established. Continuously doing and redoing this could help uncover new and redistribute existing agency appropriately, yet this demands another factor to be considered. The previous value of the border was that it established hard lines for one of two reasons. Yet if it is determined that the borders need to be adjusted to accommodate the required change in agency, how does a hard line get reestablished?

Process

How does this space of in-between get designed to accommodate change yet is still able to draw a line in the sand?[5] For clarification borders are not inherently physical in this application but also apply to the social context surrounding deterritorializaed space.

In addition, the establishment of boarders the two other readings took a similar approach of a case study and interpolation of the potential elsewhere. **Imperceptibility and the Architectural Project of Recovery** looks to what is now considered the cultural capital of Europe, Ruhr German. The conditions of Ruhr were similar in regards to the deterritorialization of space that is seen in Detroit. While the reason for decline are different the problem was the same, how to use this once industrial land? The interventions of Ruhr employed a juxtaposition of contemporary program on top of existing industrial infrastructure to re-activate the once forgotten space.[6] Characterizations of Ruhr can be seen in certain Detroit projects such as Red Bull House of Art. But what other implications can be taken from successful examples that address situations comparable to Detroit?

One such example presented by Ross T. Smith is an article titled **Stains of Beauty**. Smith unfolds an abandoned modernist factory and shows an engraving that nature has left over time. Instead of taking the traditional approach of viewing the marks left by lack of up keep as dirt, Smith views them as layers of beauty. He draws the metaphor of
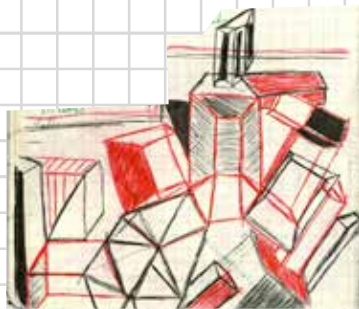
these marks of neglect to stains and their unwanted quality, yet simultaneously shows the beauty of a stain in regards to the materials history. In Smith's defense of a stains beauty he references an ideal, wabi-sabi. Wabi-Sabi is a way of approaching beauty borrowed from the Japanese culture that is reliant on the incomplete and imperfect nature of the world. This way of thought finds beauty through the passage of time and relishes in the overlooked details.[7]

The philosophy of wabi-sabi struck a resonance with the mention of time, with its unique perspective of time. It reaches back to thoughts and questions first brought to attention by The Garden of Forking Paths. Thus, prompting a deeper exploration in to the understandings of wabi-sabi. This deeper exploration isn't to forget or brush aside other issues raised, but rather taking a path that appeared more fluid.

Leonard Koren's **Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers** provided the resource into the mindset of wabi-sabi. The pages describe a what the Japanese take to be common knowledge, yet it was a feeling words struggled to pin down or explain. However, Koren manages to paint a picture of life through the lens of this world view. Wabi-sabi starts with the modest, the imperfect, the incomplete, it is something that can never be complete. The light hand and keen eye are tools honed by the experienced practitioner, for the overlooked details and unassuming aspects of the world are what drive the concepts of value. Concerns of decoration take a back seat to the
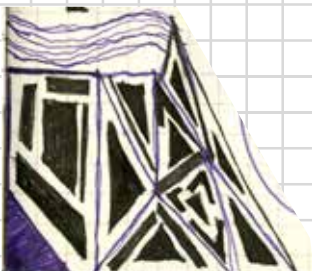
subtle expressions of use, the idea of clarity push aside in favor of obscurity. Wabi-sabi asks for the acceptance of reality while rejecting the illusion of permanence. It strives for unpretentiousness, it seeks qualities that express the collection of use and time. Objects of this nature can be described as having sheen of antiquity or the glow of grim. Taking in to consideration that wabi-sabi started as a reaction to extravagant and ornate tastes being imported from china at the time, so could it now work as a reaction to current societal standards?[8]

Wabi-sabi became the catalyst from which to ask questions from. One question in particular kept reoccurring. How does the designer go about removing their ego in order to create an unpretentious architecture?
Transition about incorporating all three topics and further exploring them through the sketch problem.

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Prompted to explore the making aspect of the creative process offered an outlet to further explore these new perspectives, while also incorporating the facet of time. These ideas manifested them self into a simple design that was meant to collect time. The idea was based on finding a way to activate vacant deterritorializaed land. To avoid issues with cost, systems were researched in which materials were cheap and readily available.
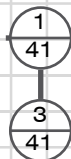
The clock stopped on rammed earth, something that could be done anywhere, yet requires upkeep to maintain its condition in harsh climates. This provide the setting to explore ideas of collecting time, while trying to find ways to address agency of the space. The process began as series of 2 or 3 sketches. When creating the sketches a knife was used at some point to remove an undesirable portion from one of the drawings. Once removed the other sketches began to speak through the void of missing paper. Interested in considering these relationships generated by happenstance of process, the series of two or three expanded in incorporated near a dozen sketches. Each sketch followed a similar process as the original three, with the addition of folding incorporated near the end of the process. While the simple design never came to fruition, the process revealed some interesting conditions. The first being that the sketchbook is a collector of time in one object. The second is that that there are unexplored relationships with in every process, but to not be dissuaded by this, instead used to challenge how the process operates and force new perspectives to be examined. While the result didn't match initial intentions, a tool was created for assisting future processes.

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Moving forward the need to break the 2-D plane became a prominent concern. Prompted by qualities of the previous exploration where a book began to inhabit space in a way that was more than two dimensions, it began to pull many layers together into one composition. The pages themselves even began to take on a volume due

to the multiple folding of pages. Trying to build upon the idea of layering, the inherent nature of plywood fit the desired context. First step dealt with defamiliarizing the sheet of plywood, which involved in reducing the sheet into one inch strips. The inherent layering of plywood was then revealed through a series of angular modifications to the strips. The final step involved finding connection that appeared natural between each individual element to create one object. Standing alone each object appeared to be in an uneasy state between two dimensional and three dimensional. Yet when working in conjunction there was a sense of movement, a dynamic quality, these layers of plywood began to encapsulate the space, they worked as a collection, not an object.

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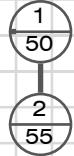
Working based off the space created by the collection additional materials were added to the objects. The idea was to create space within each object using a set or parameters to determine form of new materials. These parameters were primarily based around frequency of attachment as well as placement of the connections. The two materials used to create the additional form consisted of wire mesh and tulle. Each material called for different method of attachment, the wire mesh incorporating staples and notching while the tulle allowed for a lighter connection of pins. The inherent nature of the metal offered a planar surface that allowed itself to be manipulated even if was restricted to one axis for the most part. The form of the wire mesh flexed and held, similar in way to a tension structure,
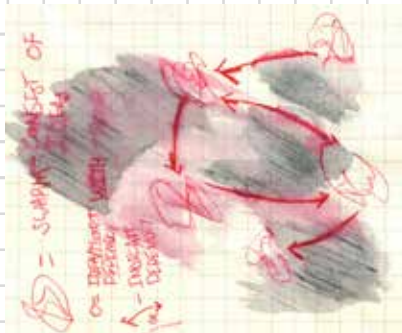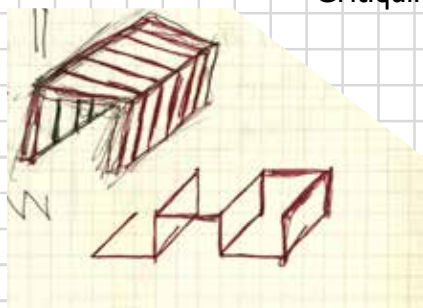
almost creating a cover for an ant or cushion for
a squirrel. On the other hand, the tulle seems to
offer itself more to the existing form appearing as
a sling or hammock draped around the objects.
At the core the same essence, yet completely
different outcomes based on the different inputs,
each scenario accomplishes some while failing
elsewhere. The metal provided a sturdy surface
usable for multiple applications depending on scale,
while the tulle allowed its form to change more
smoothly based on the conditions yet provided
little support in any direction. Yet neither of them
solutions seemed able to collected time, not just
mealy represent it.

Drawing from the first chapter of Poetics
of Space, a work by Gaston Bachelard, the idea of
being able to draw on a collective memory that has
been crafted through daydreaming and dwelling.
This collective memory allows for an access to a
previous time in where daydreaming has happened.[9]
Also, considering daydreaming is always effected
by the space where the person is dwelling, whether
this is a cellar or attic how each imparts their own
quality but this quality appears to not be easily
found in the public sphere of the world. Yet if there
is great power in the ability to day dreaming why
should it be reduced in the public realm or even the
semipublic. Is there a way to daydream in a space
not typically accommodating for this task? Looking
back to the tulle objects they all seemed to poses
an ability to create a cavity of space, a place where
dwelling could possible lead to day dreaming.

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Looking to fabric to accomplish the sling effect of the tulle while at the same time not standing out so much. Burlap became the fabric of choice for its natural qualities as well as strength.

The first major issue to be addressed was the overloading of the senses. In this case the room hand high ceilings and long depth. Taking ques from Jun'ichirō Tanizaki lessons in In Praise of Shadow, the lightness of the room offered a sterile and empty feel. In Tanizaki description of shadows he speaks of their weight as well as ability to fill space and encompass. Using this adding weight to what was perceived above was added to shorten the perceptual range and inhabit a space that no longer felt uncomfortably sterile.[10] To accomplish this burlap was draped over just over the head the space of an area in an attempt to add another layer to environment. While the space did close in there was still something missing, no sense of enclosure to lose one self in the dream. The perception of safety protecting one's blindside was determined to be missing after experiencing places that offer a space to daydream. With a few additional modifications, the burlap environment began to a be a place to dwell and daydream. With a base established no matter level of completeness offers a place to start exploration.

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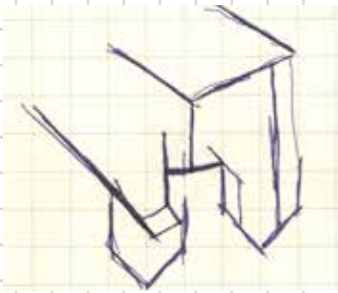
Simultaneously while exploring the implication of the dwelling space, another idea on how to create daydreaming space was explored otherwise known as a nook. Borrowing the objects created out of layering and resizing them to fit the human scale was the intention. Reimaging the scale of the person in relation to the objects was what originally prompted the conversation of dwelling to begin with. Yet in the process of scaling up the objects issues of usability came to the forefront of the process, joined by issues arising when shifting the scale of the objects. First the objects precarious nature was exemplified when sizing up, finding it difficult to find a balance or stability. Second the quality of the form was lost even though steps had been taken to assure a similar quality. While this does appear to be a scale issue it could also deal with the change in fabric from tulle to burlap. Finally, when initialing imagining dwelling in the objects the scale allowed for total emersion, while the text exploration could at best be sat on but truly never inhabited, even when employed in a series of three. Overall a failed attempt at creating a sufficient dwelling. Yet the dwelling set up above the head space seemed to have a positive effect, if not day dreaming at least creating a more intimate environment where focus is easier to grasp.
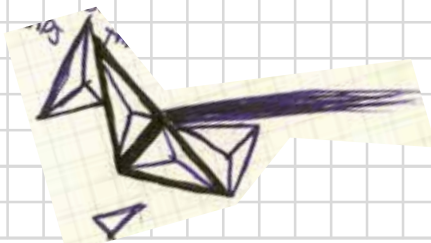
After this failed attempt, it became obvious a new approach was necessary. This new process took form and was driven by a book written by F.S.C. Northrop, The meeting of the East and West. In this book, Northrop attempts to derive a way for which the two ideological different regions of the world can come to a common ground. Throughout his dense analysis, Northrop make one point explicitly clear. The west values Theories of Postulation, while in the east knowledge is based on Theories of Intuition.[11]

While Northrop's analysis is a generalized one, that also may not fully reflect current attitudes in these cultures, it provides the crucial base, a starting point from where each side of the discussion is starting from. Further, he isn't claiming to be able to solve world peace with in the confines of the book. Merely he is setting the table, the ground rules so each side can come to the conversation with some form of understanding where the opposite side stands. He is looking to create the environment for the conversation of mutual understanding to bloom.

To elaborate on Northrop's ideas, the Theories of Postulation refer to ideas formed from deductive reasoning, ideas that can't be physically witnessed such as calculus, and what the west likes to refer to as logic.

On the other hand, Theories of Intuition are exactly as it sounds, based on intuition. These theories are essentially derived from experience of the person creating the theory. The mind set being that if something can be seen in the world how could that not hold true, given the circumstances are the same.

Being from what is describes as the west, having Theories of Postulation cemented into the approach of everyday life, the focus was set on what Northrop called the Orient nations, particularly China, India, and Japan. Through his assessment of how their philosophies developed he points out two key terms that drive the discussion. Both terms refer back to experience or sensations yet handle them in very different ways, The Differentiated vs the Undifferentiated aesthetic continuums.

The differentiated aesthetic continuum is something that is fairly easy to grasp, it is the sensations that allow humans to determine the differences between objects. These sensations are what the senses interpreter, such as color, sound, smells, textures, edges of objects, and even temperature. Every day perception is defined by these qualities, however these experiences are temporary, they don't embody qualities of permanence.[12]
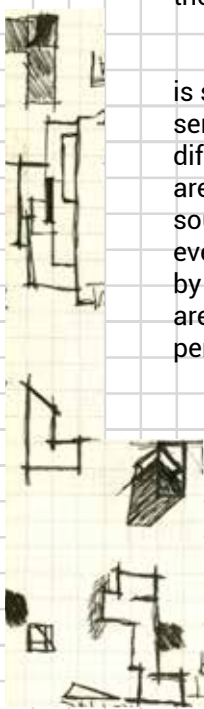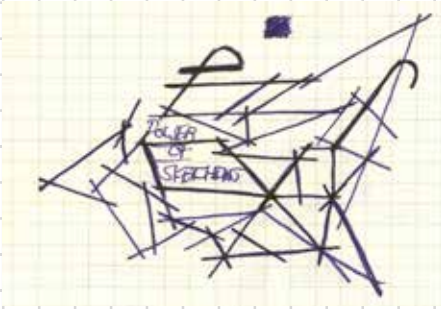
The other side of this is what Northrop calls undifferentiated aesthetic continuum. This idea is what becomes harder to grasp. The idea of the undifferentiated could be seen as time itself, it has existed before us, it will exist after us, and it exists in the very moment of writing these words as it does in the moment of reading these words. It is encompassing of the differentiated, yet brings the human self into the picture, the subjective nature of experience. It embodies the emotions and relationships of people. You may try to grab a snapshot of it at any given moment but that becomes as useful as trying to catch water with your bare hand. It merely exists within the experience, it never stops for man, merely flows, allowing the sensations of relationships. Now the undifferentiated doesn't have a form, color, or smell, for it exists within everything, is everything, thus allowing us to participate in this dance of relationships and connections, even if they are not physical.

This is where the challenge began. How do we design for the undifferentiated, considering the differentiated is temporary? It is also good to note that Orientals do not hold the differentiated in high regard, for things that are temporary cannot bring true and lasting satisfaction, and will leave man with a sense of longing. The exploration of the undifferentiated took place in abstract representations of lived experiences. To study there experiences different perspectives were taken of the same incident. While all from the same creator

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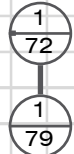
different variables were emphasized within each of the perspectives taken surrounding a single experience. These perspectives then became overlapped on one another to create a more defamiliarized sense of the experience. Essentially differentiated qualities of experience were crafted then layers to create something reaching for the undifferentiated.

      While the goal was to grasp at the ethereal nature of the undifferentiated, it became clear that the differentiated was still commanding the conversation. To break free of this position a new element needed to become the focus of study. Enter the house, the reasoning being, the house begins to embrace the qualities of the undifferentiated. The person is no longer concerned with the physical body as much as with tasks, relationships, actions. The clock takes a back seat in this environment, experience that is currently surrounding the body is what manifests as the most direct, a combination of person and environment.

      Through the next study of experience using the lens of the house it became clear that the experiences of the house transcend the physical boundary's we call the house. So, the question once again evolved, rather than studying the house the question became "what does the house do?" Initially the answer seemed to be answered by actions offered by the house: seclusion, protection, and focus.

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Through prodding these terms as ideas and then visually representing what they accomplish two things became obvious, first is that these terms were inadequate in representing the ideas they were trying to convey. Second, these sensations are not limited to the house, more specially the combination of these particular sensations and not restricted to the house, rather more akin to a quality that could be called home.

In realizing these sensations are not localized to one specific phenomenon prompted an investigation of how the combinations these senses work together in other environments. These additional environments were the ice rink and the studio. More specifically the desk or work space within the studio and the actually confines of the ice rink [200'x85'] not the building that house the rink. In the study of what these sensations afford, the terms used to describe them changed, a subtle change, yet a change none to less. The new terms are Invigorate, Enervate, and Encompass.

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Critiquing Thesis

Invigorate – To stimulate desired focus. To boost a certain train of thought or course of action.

Ex:
Studio – The design process regarding architecture and creativity.

Ice rink – The release of physical energy, the stimulation of muscles, of the body.

House – Reinforce the distractions the house offers, invites the mind to wander.

Enervate – to drain of energy, minimize the irritations that plague the mind in other environments.

Ex:
Studio – Helps block outside distractions that are offered in other environments.

Ice rink – minimalize the aggravations of the day. The only thing that matters is the game at hand.

House – The irritations of work, school, traffic ect... fall to the wayside. Rather the actions of mentally decompressing become the main concern.

Encompass – to surround with objects or sensations that offer a sense of comfort or ease.

Examples are the areas themselves not one particular situation offered by the individual environments.
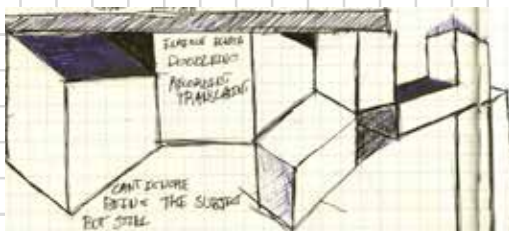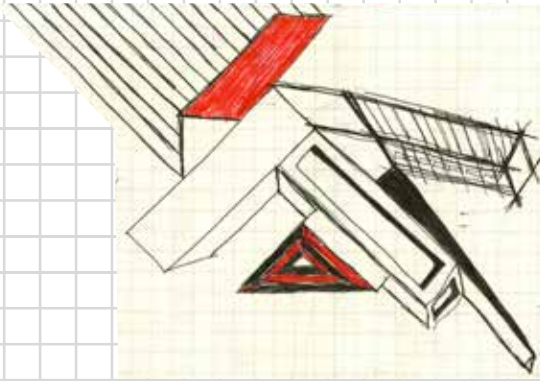
Throughout the studies of the house and home it became apparent that the edge of the composition was a constrain that was having a large impact on the overall whole. This edge was something that defined the work, all the while being a differentiated element, while the work itself was striving to become something more akin to the undifferentiated. It is also apparent that this edge or boarder that exists within the differentiated is always created when crating a composition of elements. As an architect, all we can really do is create these edges, the may appear in different forms, but none to less they are edges.

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$\frac{2}{71}$

If the undifferentiated is not concerned with edges and differentiations, how can we move past the frame? Is it possible to create work without a frame or edge as an architect? Can the tool of the architect be used to get past what the architect works so hard to define?

The simple answer is no. The undifferentiated aesthetic continuum cannot be designed, for it is based on experience, and as much as we may want to, controlling experience is an impossible task. If we can only create edges than this task becomes even less likely. Yet we can begin to combat this, we can design by bringing the edge into the composition itself.
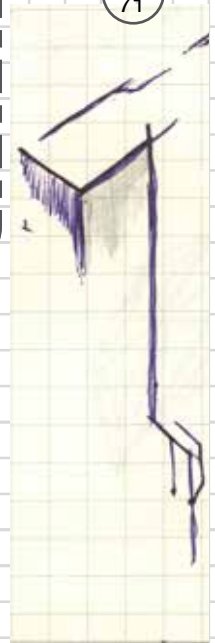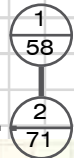
1
88

2
93

The edge doesn't have to be the extents of a given work. This concept ruins the notion that the context surrounding the work is as important if not more so than the work itself. So, in order to gesture towards things outside the border, why not bring the border into the composition itself. Remove the hard edge that is normally cast by the objects of the differentiated aesthetic continuum. Going back to what Paul Golisz suggests in This is Not Your Land, lets challenge the agency of the frame, allow the boarder to be changed at will depending on the relationships being created and challenged. While there may not be a single conclusion to process, there is defiantly a collection of thoughts, all addressing relationships. Considering these relationships all happen within the built environment and they possess qualities which can have an impact on how things are appreciated, it only makes sense that they can be used in order to craft a conversation regarding architecture. While separate, thay may not make a lot of sense, together and within the context of the process they begin from a base of knowledge in assessing in what things do, how they accomplish this and finally offering insight into how to design to further the unseen relationship that are fostered.
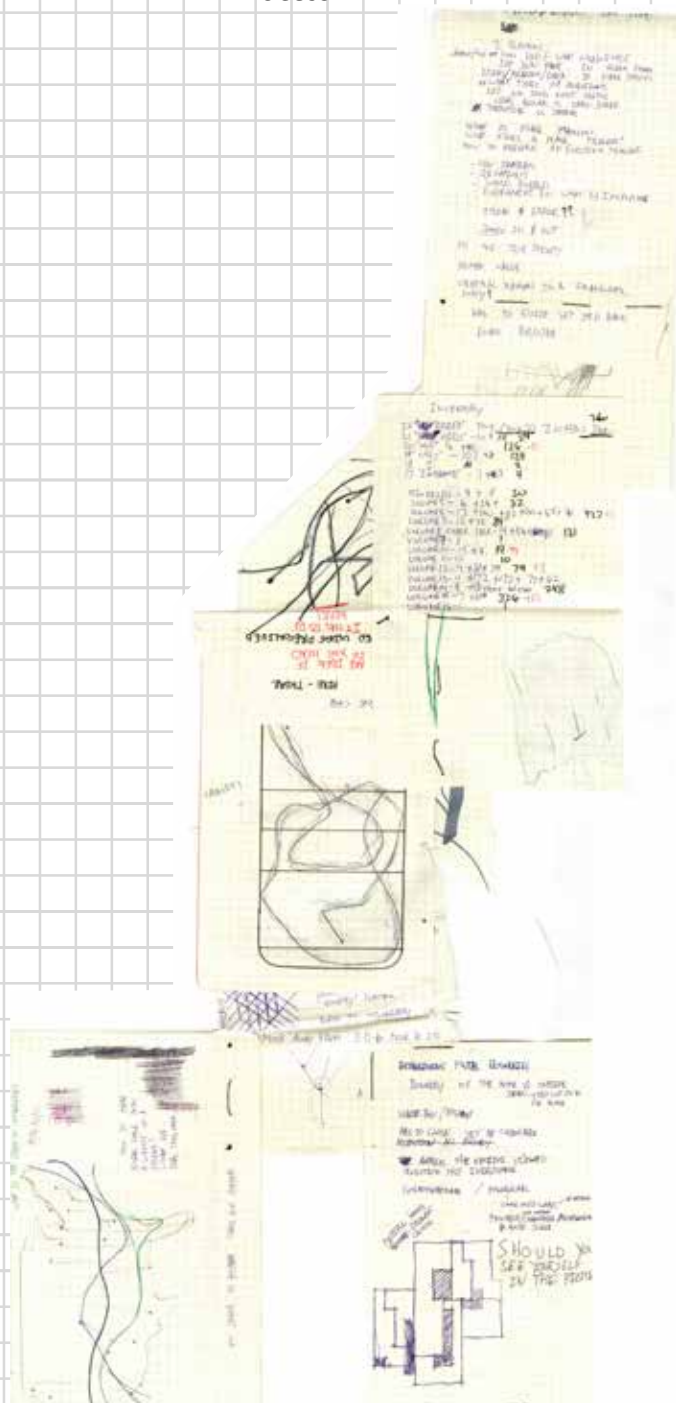
Fragments of Conclusion

Time

Time is one of the anchors of the conversation, it
was one of the first concepts to really break free
from the western concepts that are so driven by a
rational understanding of how they work. Typically,
time is understood in terms of the clock. It is broken
down into measurable fragments, then aligned
to create slightly larger fragments. This process
continues and continues, second, minutes, hours,
days, weeks, months, years, decades and so forth.
This is useful for structuring the world, setting
up meetings, coordinating with friends, allowing
businesses to operate at similar times, thus making
for easier collaboration. All of these things can be
seen as beneficial, which they truly are, yet when
this is the only way time is viewed we begin to miss
out on what time actually is.
Think of a fond memory, a vacation, an event
maybe just a night with friends. Yes, you can recall
that something may have lasted for a week, or the
concert was four hours long, but when you really
try to recall the memories they are a series of
relationships. These relationships may not even be
in chronological order, just a series of experiences
of a road trip, or the fragments of wonderful
conversation set up in a manner of most fond to
least, maybe vice versa it doesn't truly matter. What
does matter is that in the formation of memory, time
slips away, no one remembers that something may
have lasted 5 minutes, if it is the most memorable
portion of a 7 hours experience it will dominate the
memory entirely. So, is time truly experienced in the
fragmented section of the clock? Or rather is time
more related experienced?

Wabi-Sabi

The world through the lens of wabi-sabi is not clear,
rather it opts for obscurity. It accepts the world for
what it is, and looks for beauty through the details.
Beauty through use is evident throughout the view
of wabi-sabi. Rather than buy a new bowl when
the old one cracks, fixing it is preferred, but in a
way the doesn't hide the crack. Rather it values
the expression of life of the object. In wabi-sabi
noting is permanent, everything is emerging from
nothingness or fading back towards nothingness, it
is cyclical, never ending. Accepting that nothing is
perfect is part of this never-ending flow. Perfection
detonates something is complete but also offers
no room for the subjective beauty to come into
play. Neither of these are true with in the mindset
of wabi-sabi. It is the opposite actually, nothing
is perfect, nothing is permanent, so why not let
ourselves set on the side and observe the minute
details that create fascinating world in which we
live. Let us have a light hand to not overpower the
subtle sensations that can be just as beautiful as a
clean modernist line. [13]

Praise of shadow

Is anything design is a matter of personal
preference, yet one thing is clear, people prefer
comfort. But where can comfort be found? Is a
sterile evenly light room the ideal of comfort?
Or does this create a sense of unease? When
imaging comfort it seems to be more appealing
off to the side, engrossed by the surroundings, the
unevenness of the light offers pockets to hide away
in or expanses to exhibit. The uneven nature fills the
room with a sense of atmosphere rather than simply
void air floating above one's head. For everyone
has a different idea of what is most comfortable
environment, so why create environments the only
act in one way. [14]

Ego

We as humans are temporary, yet we consider ourselves the center of the world. Our tastes are purely subjective, our time here clearly limited. As designers if we want to strive to create something bigger than ourselves we must be willing to shed our ego. Egotistical ideas or what created modernist utopias of the early twentieth century. It has lead humans down a path that destroys and divides our world. It embraces the top down thinking because clearly the title of architect means you know so much more about what people need, even more so that the people you are directly serving. Rather than interpret the ego likes to tell, the ego would rather explain than describe, justify over listen. So the question then becomes how do we eliminate the ego from the design process? Community engagement? The mashing of many ideas to from one? Grass roots design processes? And if the ego can't be removed completely, then is there a way to at least minimize it?
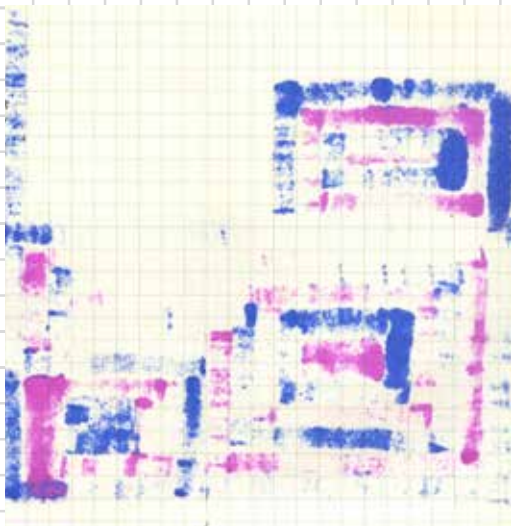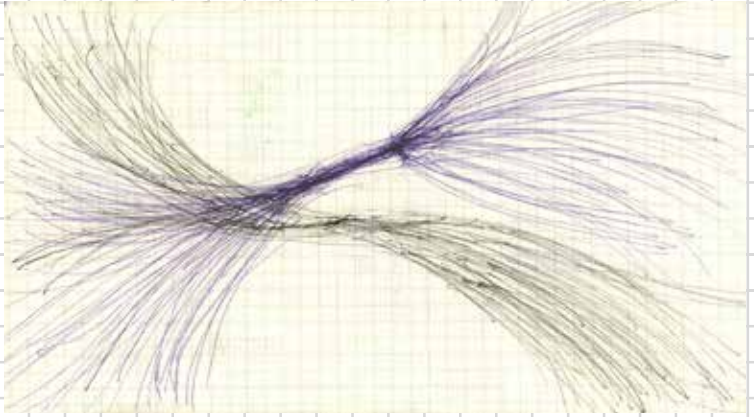
Taboo

The words Good and bad can have more meaning
than simply better or worse. Rather they can
connotate proper or correct use and misuse.
While the proper use of something is completely
subjective, there are definitely instances where
something is misused. This is when the concept of
taboo become important. Taboo, is when you set
yourself to one course of action, offering no room
for imprecisions or omissions. Yet once something
goes awry the whole plan of action falls apart, and
the person whose plan cannot accommodate is
said to lose face. This term is meant to represent
someone who set them self to one plan and
inherently the plan exists within the differentiated
world, which is temporary, and should not be
placed in such high value. This being the case
to avoid taboo one should not set them self to a
predetermined course of action, rather, the superior
person acts for what is right at the given moment.
In the end avoiding what as seen as taboo may not
be important regarding social standing it should be
avoided as to not pigeon hole one's self with in the
design process. [15]

Differentiated Aesthetic Continuum

The differentiated aesthetic continuum refers to the world that is perceived in the everyday. It is made up of the senses, such as sight, sound, texture, temperature. It what allows us as humans to tell the difference between a bench, a table, or another human. It is what the sciences concern themselves with understanding. The western world sees the differentiated in the highest regard, trying to understand every aspect of how it works and what contents make it up. On the other hand, in the east the differentiated aesthetic continuum is seen as secondary in terms of value. The reason being, everything within the differentiated aesthetic continuum can be seen as temporary, and if the object or sensation is temporary than it cannot bring true lasting happiness. [16]

Undifferentiated Aesthetic Continuum

A concept coined by F.S.C. Northrop in his book The Meeting of the East and West. It should be noted that while Northrop does regard aesthetics as mean of branching philosophical differences, in this context aesthetic seems to be closer to the Greek root word that aesthetic is derived from, aisthetikos. The meaning of aisthetikos being sense of perception, as well as the study of value or value judgments when referring to ethics. So, when talking of the Undifferentiated Aesthetic Continuum it is good to remember that aesthetic is referring to more than physical beauty or description.
The undifferentiated aesthetic continuum is something that is not visible or possessing physical form, rather it is something that can be seen as
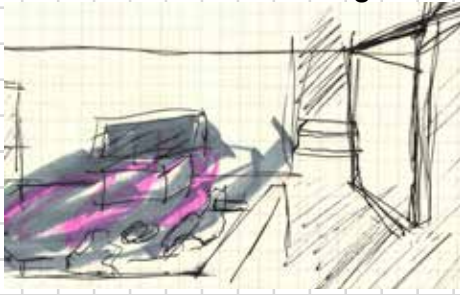
all-embracing and part of everyone and thing, even inanimate objects. Through eastern philosophy such as Confucianism or Taoism is where the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum finds its roots. It is referred to as man to manness, or compassion. The undifferentiated aesthetic continuum is ever present even if one pays no attention to it, for it is what allows for common experience between people or objects. The reason the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum holds value is that it transcends the physical environment, it allows for experience itself to happen. The undifferentiated aesthetic continuum moves past the individual and embraces the whole of experience. While the individual is included within this spectrum, they are only a minor part of the greater whole. Similar to time, the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum never ceases, constantly moving forward, leaving the differentiated world to fade to nothingness, for it is merely temporary. It does accept transitory knowledge, although knowledge gained through experienced is what is placed in higher regard. In the same moment, the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum is both receiver and source of everything in the differentiated, yet more so too. In reality, it cannot be explained due to words being differentiated, and the differentiated cannot wholly describe something greater than itself, rather it has to be experienced, something everyone is capable of doing, if so willing. The goal of striving to reach toward the undifferentiated aesthetic continuums to get past the self and value experience over form for which architects seem to me infatuated with. [17]

Nook/Privacy/Daydream

What does privacy afford? The limiting of sensation allows for the focus that may not be offered in other environments. Privacy also affords the ability to be creative that may not be realized in the spotlight. Whether it's due to embarrassment or a desire for secrecy, privacy can foster creativity due to a variety of reasons. Also, considering privacy can offer a sense of security it can allow the mind to wander with little concern for the physical body. This daydreaming also affords the ability to be creative, allowing people to submerge themselves within their thoughts, with little regard for anything else. Can this powerful tool become mobile, utilized in work or school environment? At the minimum, the senses can be limited through modifications to one's immediate personal environment depending on personal taste. [18]
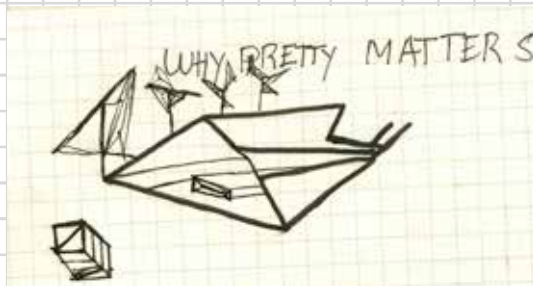
Layering/Folding/ Removing/Framing

In order to defamiliarize oneself from the process of design so it can then be critiqued a new process had to be adopted in order to challenge the old. Instead of opting for linearity and iteration, the process took an approach of reflection through the layering and folding of work back on to itself. It takes form in breaking the linear nature of the book and reconstructing it in a new manner, allowing it to be manipulated in multiple ways that include a series of folds that offer new relationships beyond the typical unfolding of book. [19]
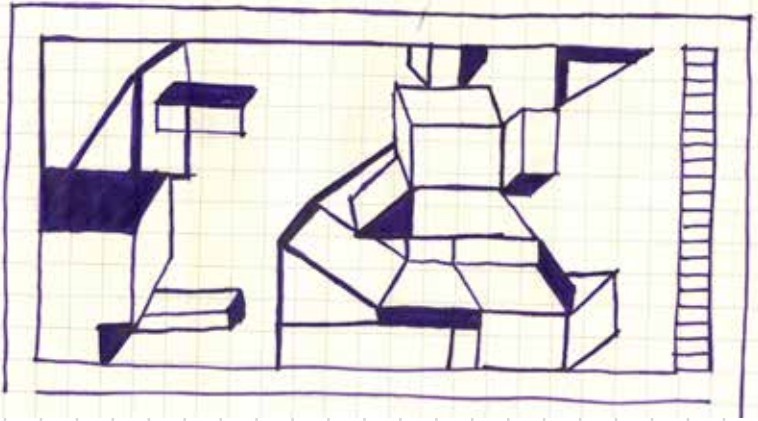
Experience as knowledge

Taking a que from eastern philosophy, the highest
form of knowledge is experience itself. This isn't
to discredit math or science or theory, rather these
sections of knowledge attempt to provide universal
rule to every situation. On the other had experience
as knowledge only claims to know what is observed
firsthand. Even science works this way to a degree,
it has a hypothesis, sets controls, and conducts
an experiment and observes the results to test the
hypothesis. Notice a key factor is the observation
of the results, or rather experience as knowledge.
So even within the western train of thought,
knowledge being gained through experience is
valued as well. However, in the east experience is
the base of knowledge. This can even be seen in
their way of writing, where words are not crafted
from a set of existing letters, rather they are derived
from the image of the experience, almost as a
diagram of what was seen. Also sentence structure
isn't composed by a set of rules, but written as
how things were experienced. So, the form of
communication itself is completely based in the
experience of the situation compared to a structure
of composing and explanation as it is done in the
west. [20]

Critiquing Thesis

1 Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 498

2 Davidson, Cynthia C., and Ignasi De Sola Morales. 121

3 Borges, Jorge Luis. 49

4 Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 500

5 Golisz, Paul.100

6 Kinkead, Dan. 111

7 Smith, Ross.188

8 Koren, Leonard. 40

9 Bachelard, Gaston. 17

10 Junichiro, Tanizaki. 23

11 Northrop, Filmer S. C. 300-520

12 Northrop, Filmer S. C.300-500

13 Koren, Leonard. 22

14 Junichiro, Tanizaki. 18

15 Northrop, Filmer S. C.300-520

16 Northrop, Filmer S. C. 300-520

17 Northrop, Filmer S. C. 300-520

18 Bachelard, Gaston. 22

19 Rajchman, John.15

20 Northrop, Filmer S. C.

Studys

Sketch Problem - Finding Traces

An initial attempt to train the eye into seeing using
the lens of Wabi-Sabi.

(1)(41) Wabi-Sabi Investigation

(2)(41) Wabi-Sabi Investigation

(3)(41) Wabi-Sabi Investigation

Sketch Problem - Perspective

A study using many different perspectives of one object or thought layered in a linear sequence. Then the sequence is destroyed, fragmented, folded, and rearranged to uncover new possibilities. During the resequencing the ability to destroy and renew is ever present, ever unfolding.

1 Sketch Problem
42

Studys

Sketch Problem

Sketch Problem

Sketch Problem
44

2
Sketch Problem
44

Studys
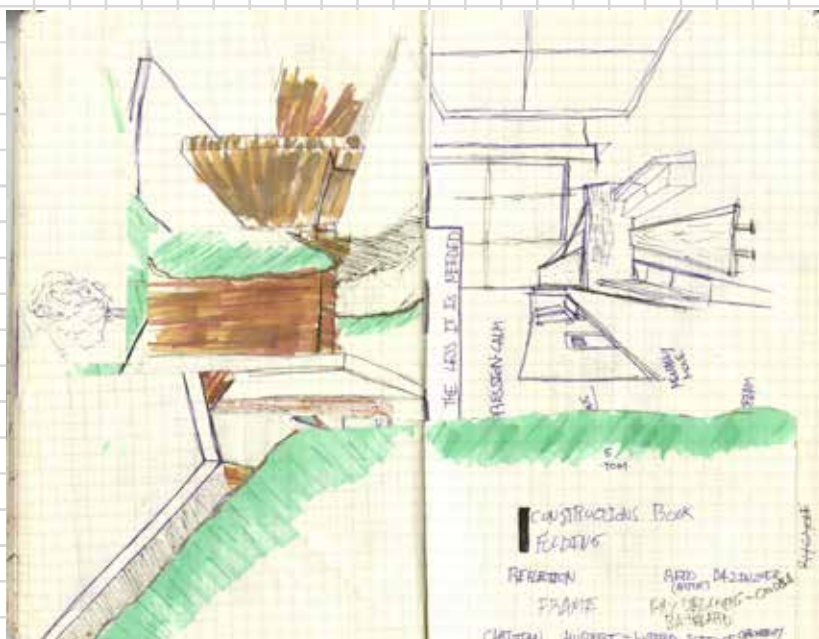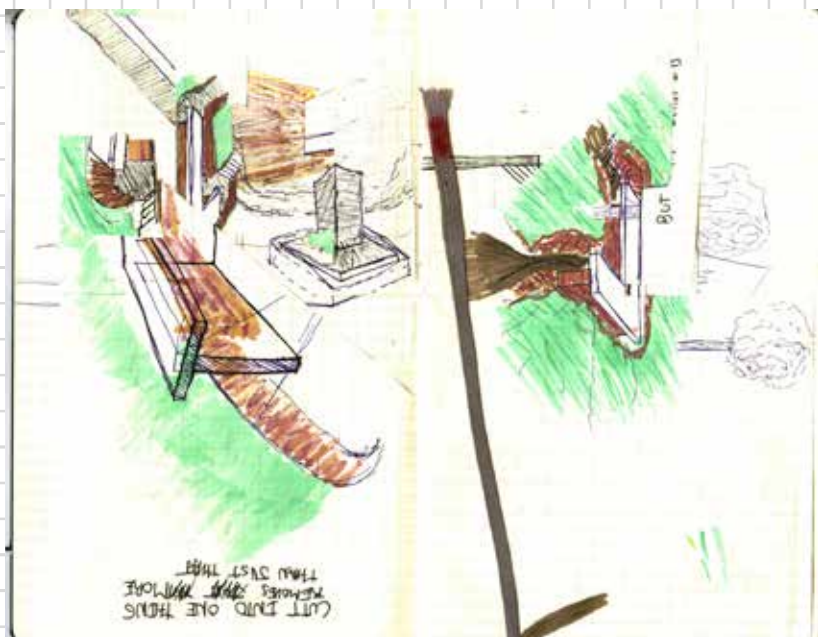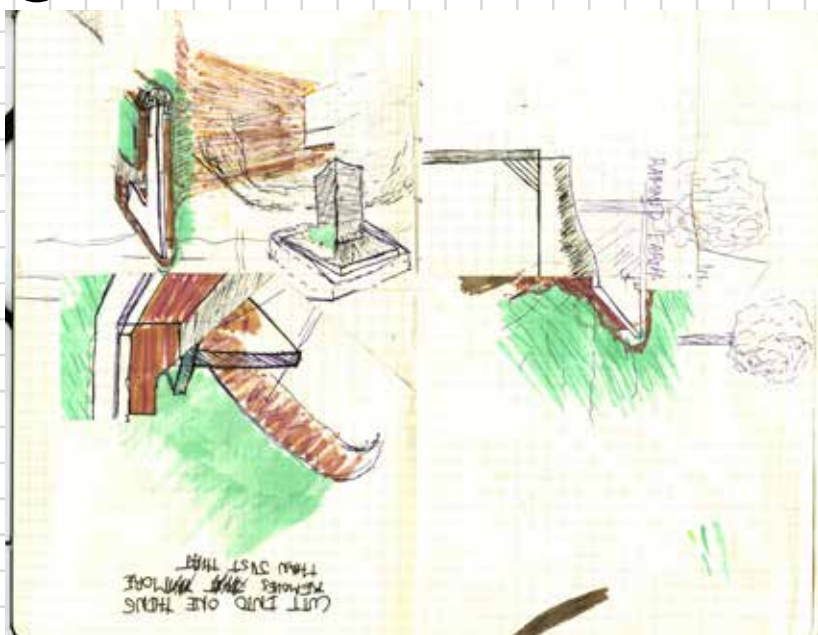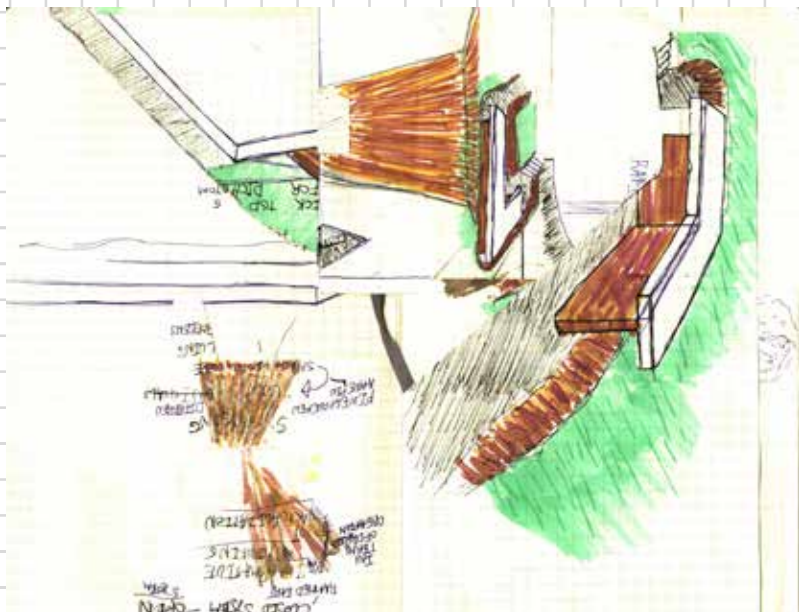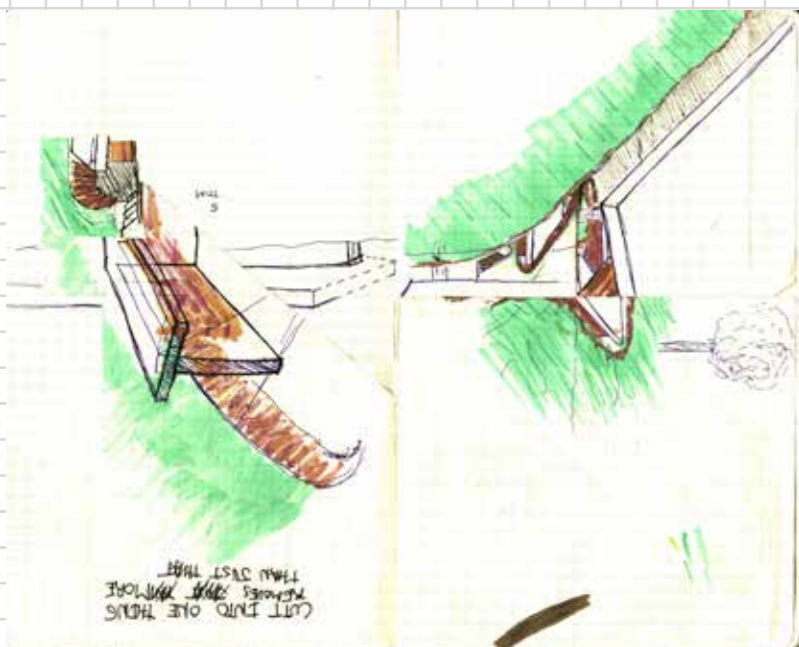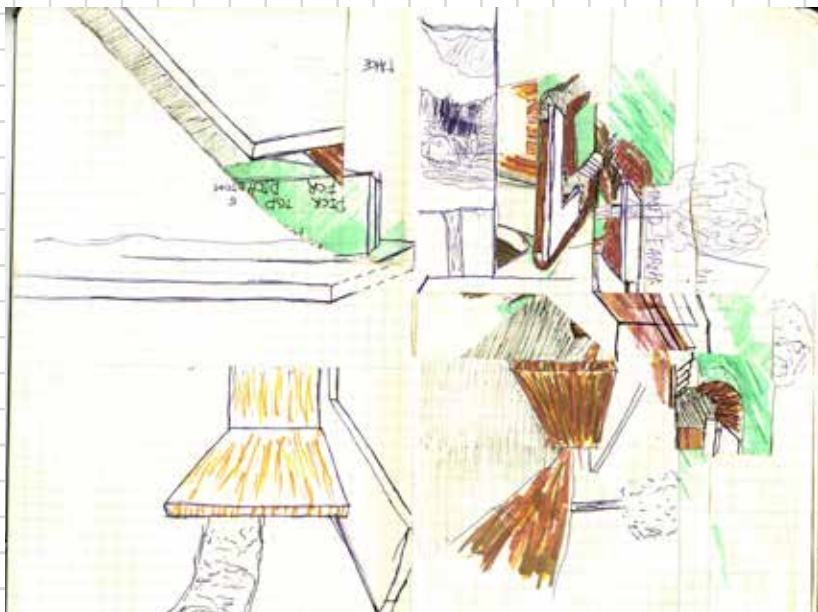
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45
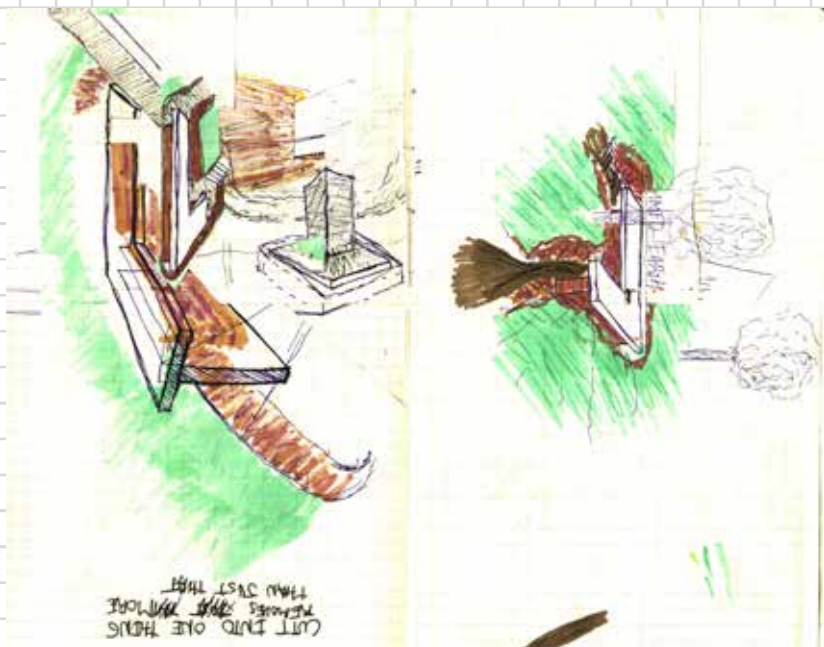
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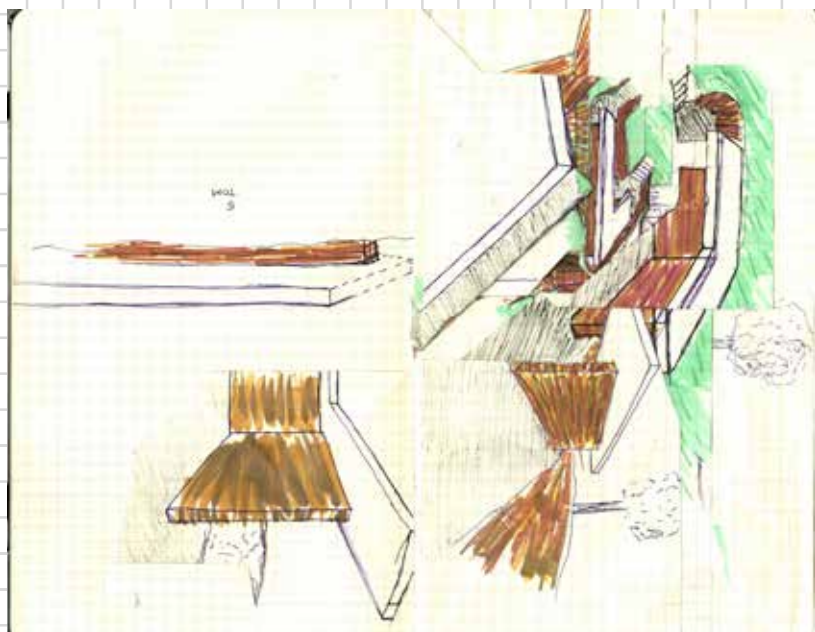
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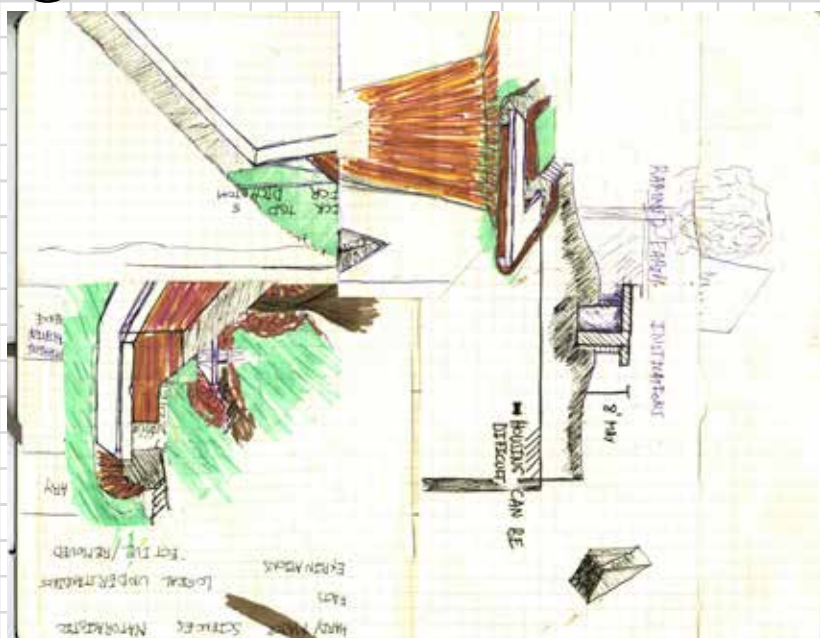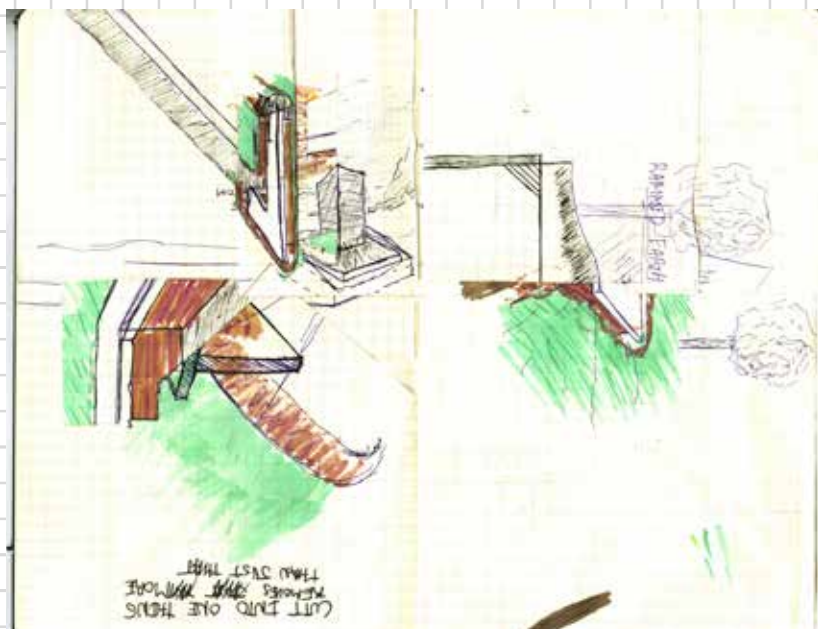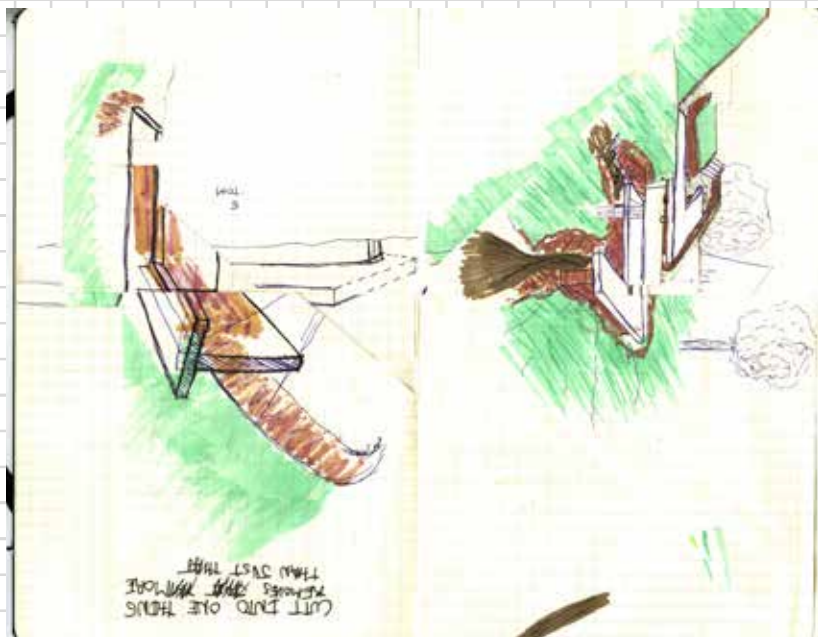
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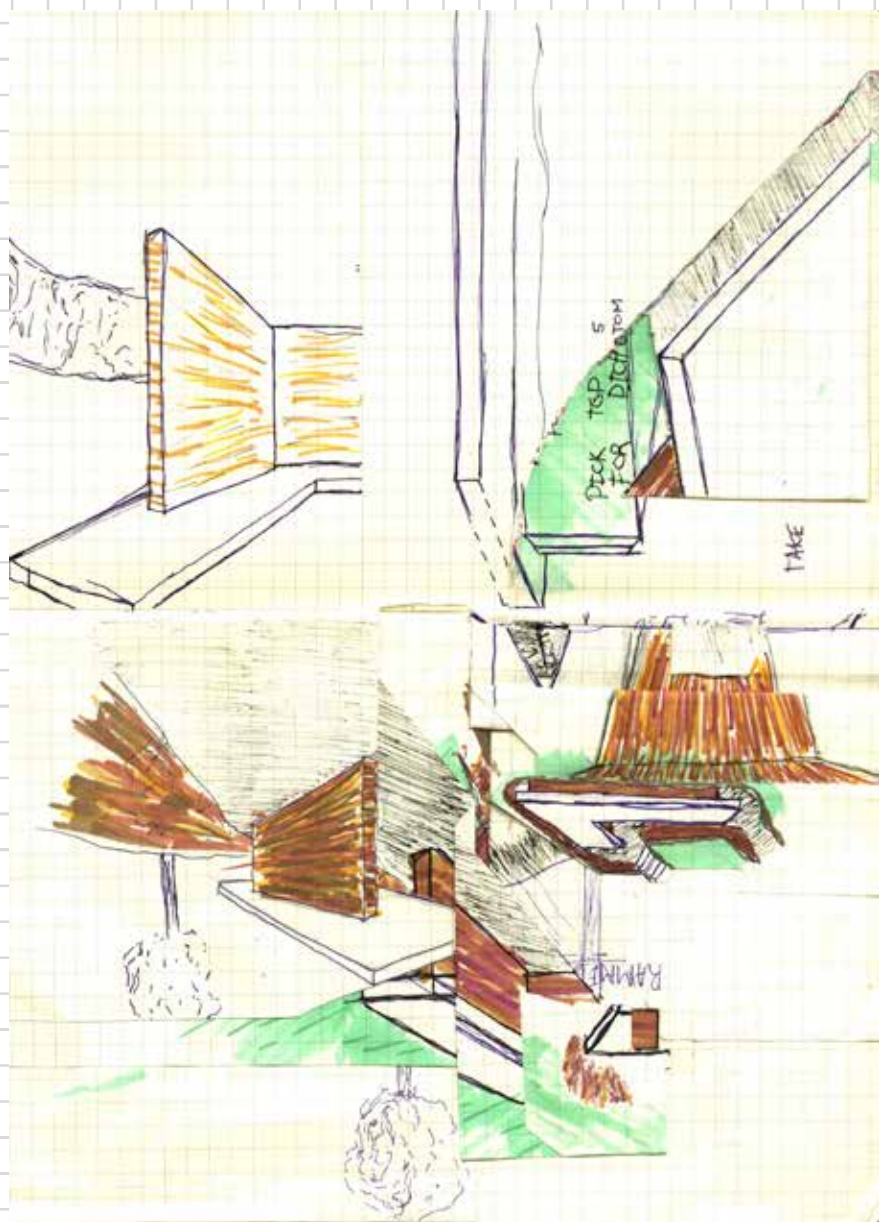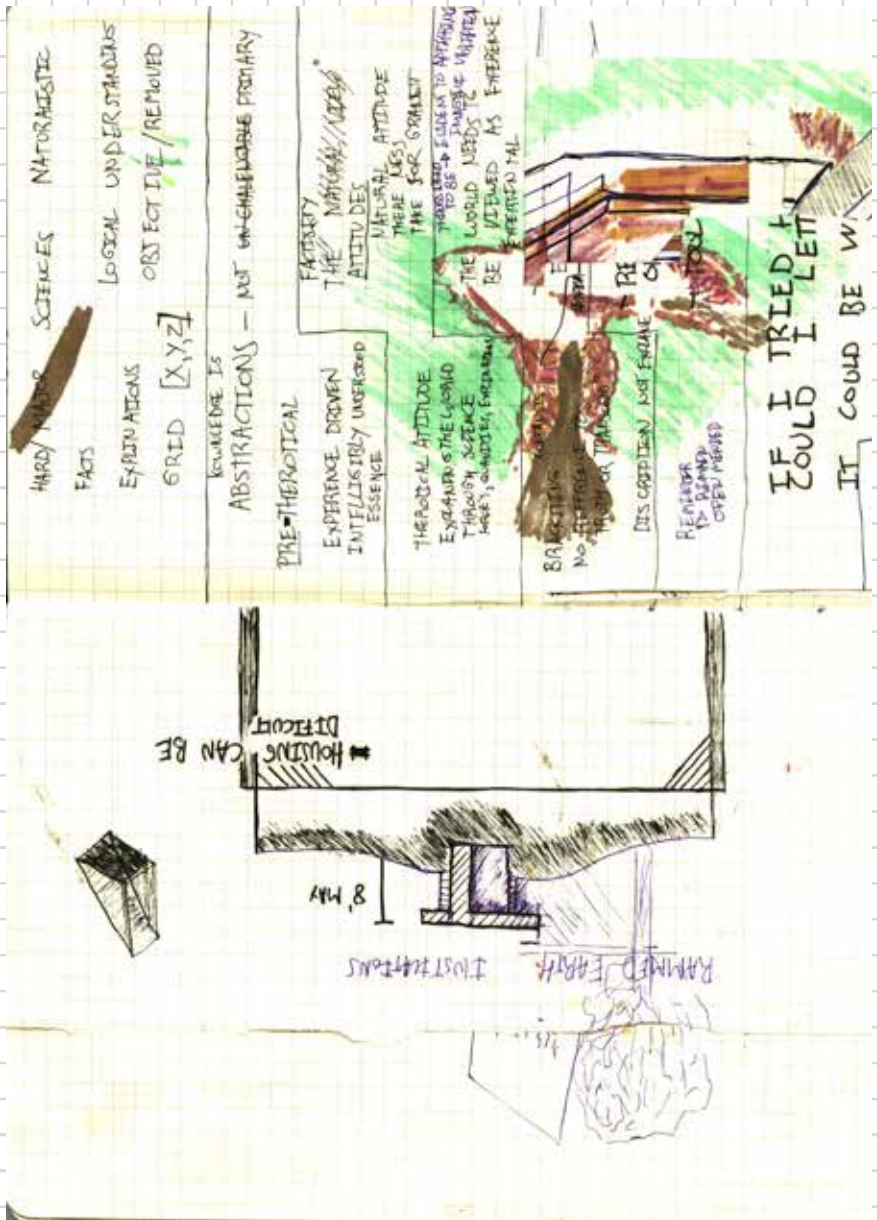
Sketch Problem

<u>Sketch Problem - 2.5-D Folding</u>

An attempt to break free of the 2 dimensional confines of the sketch book while still paying homage to the layering aspect where this process began. This attempt began to create something closer to 2.5D then 3 dimensional with the addition of foreign elements.
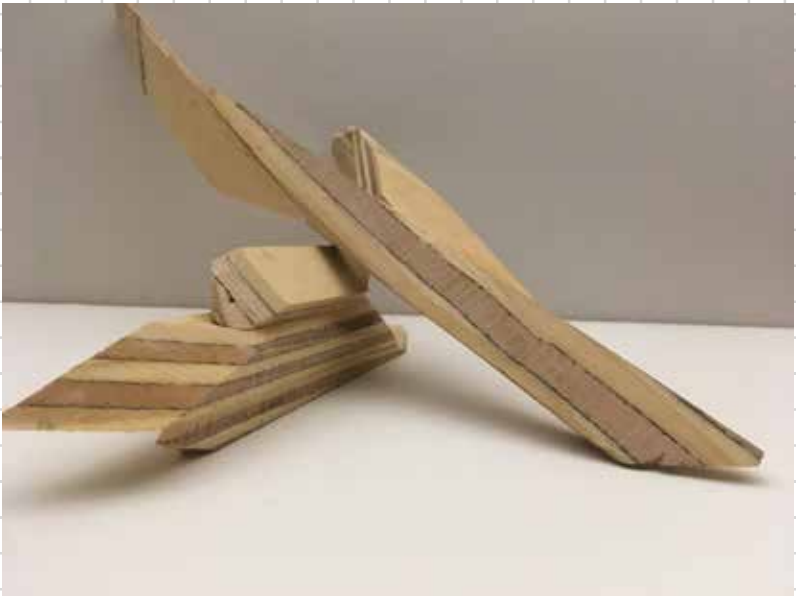
①/50 Plywood Folding

Studys

(1 / 51) Plywood Folding

(2 / 51) Plywood Folding
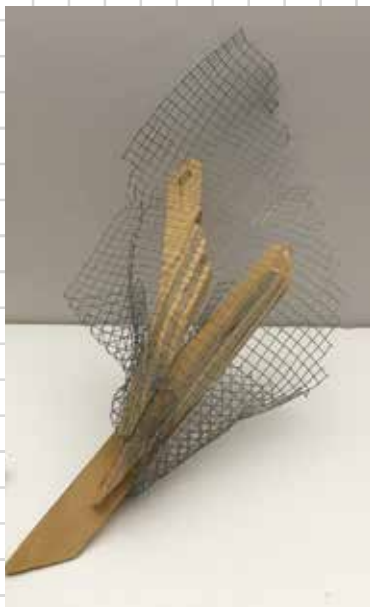
(1/52) Plywood Folding
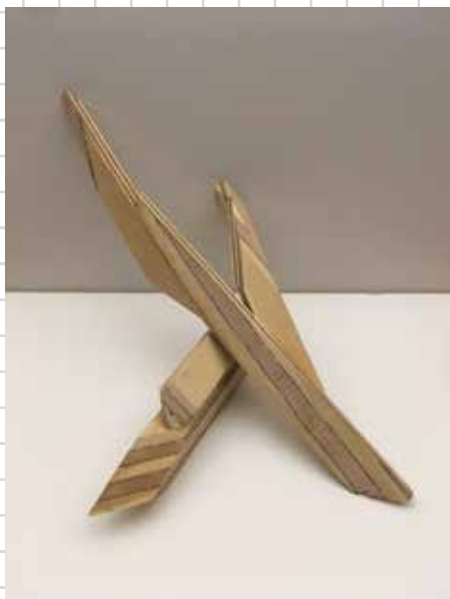
(2/52) Plywood Folding
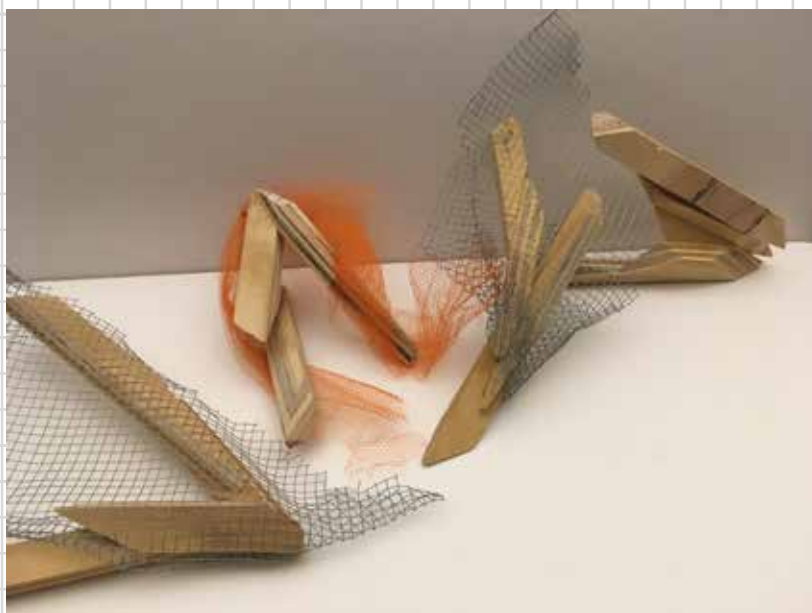
(3/52) Plywood Folding

(2)
(53) Plywood Folding

(2)
(53) Plywood Folding

2/54 Plywood_Folding
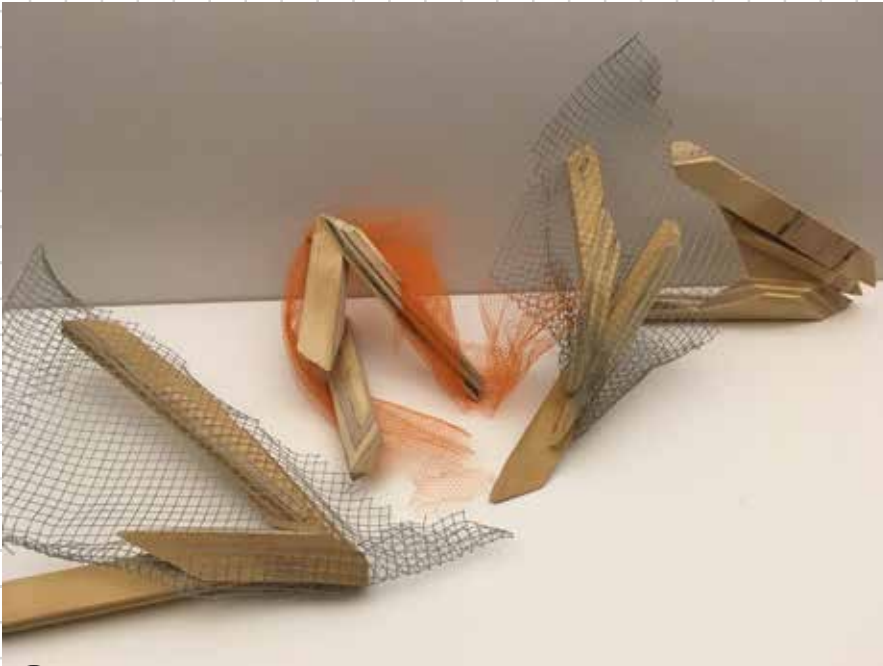
2/54 Plywood_Folding

3/54 Plywood_Folding

Studys
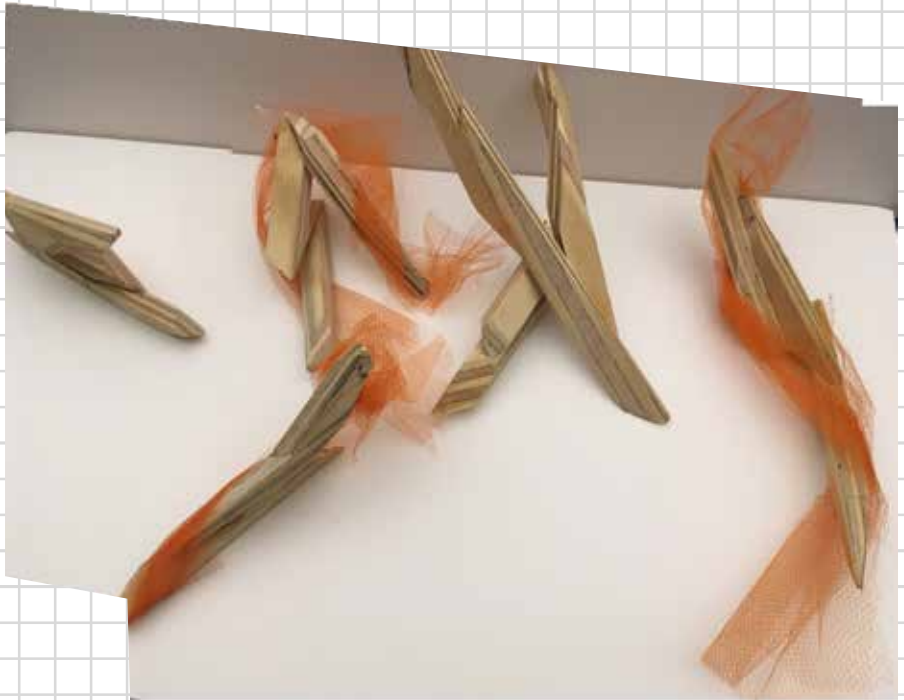
Plywood Folding
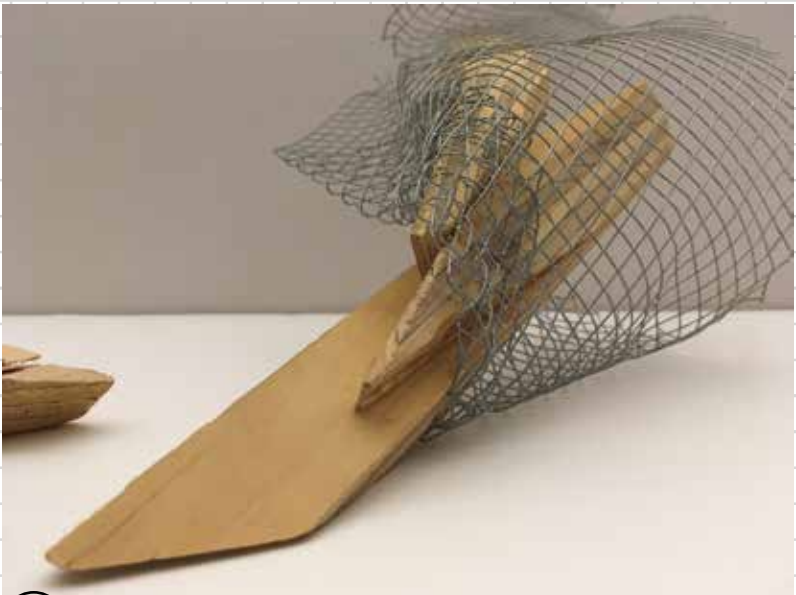
Plywood Folding   55

Sketch Problem - Dwelling Space

A study using many different perspectives of one object or thought layered in a linear sequence. Then the sequence is destroyed, fragmented, folded, and rearranged to uncover new possibilities. During the resequencing the ability to destroy and renew is ever present, ever unfolding.

(1/56) Plywood Folding

(2/56) Plywood Folding

1 Plywood Folding
57

Sketch Problem - Edges

Upon realizing the edge was becoming a major constraint a series of studies were conducts to study the strength of edges, their containment qualities, what is required to create them and what is required to negate an edge.
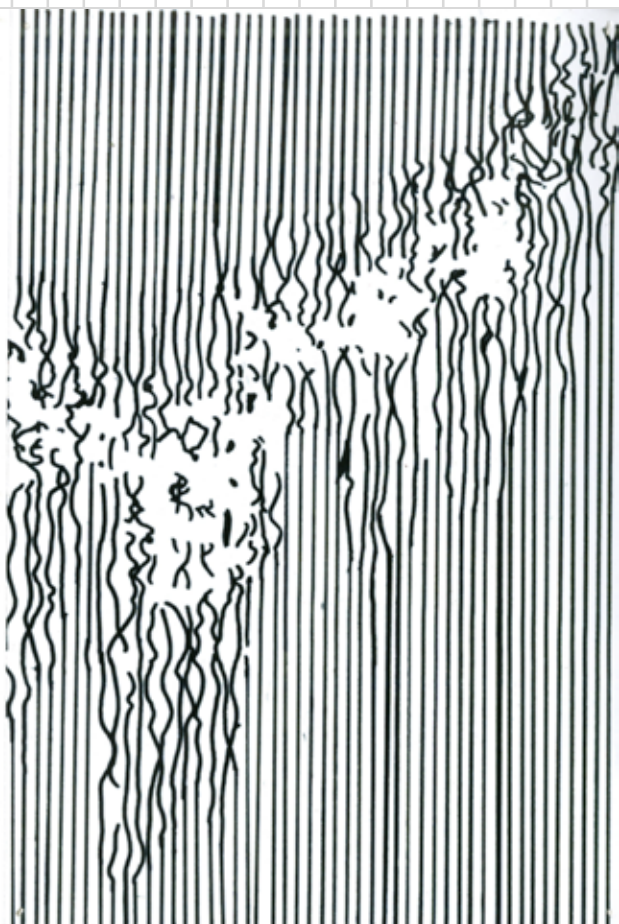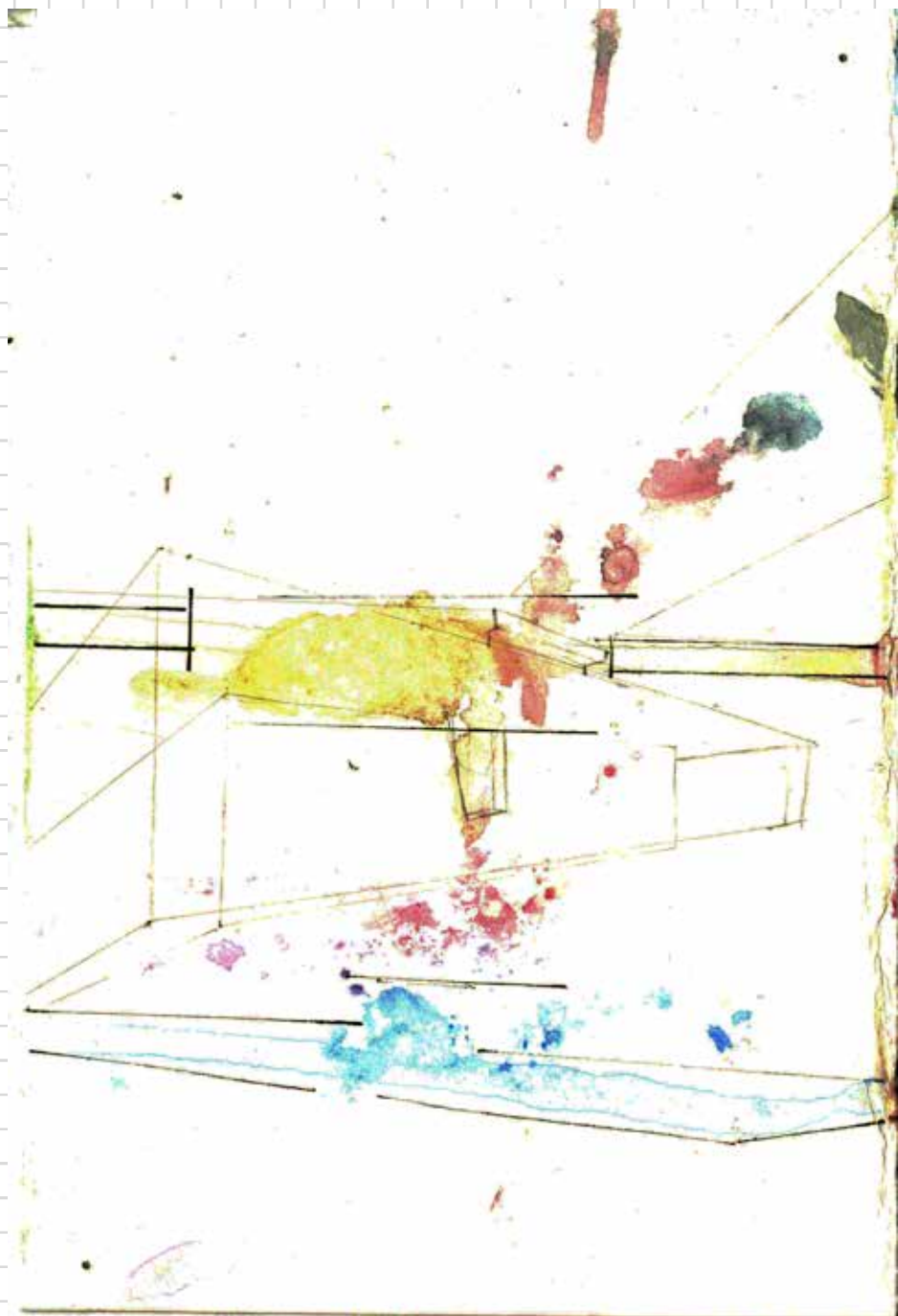
1/58 Edge Study

1 Edge Study
59
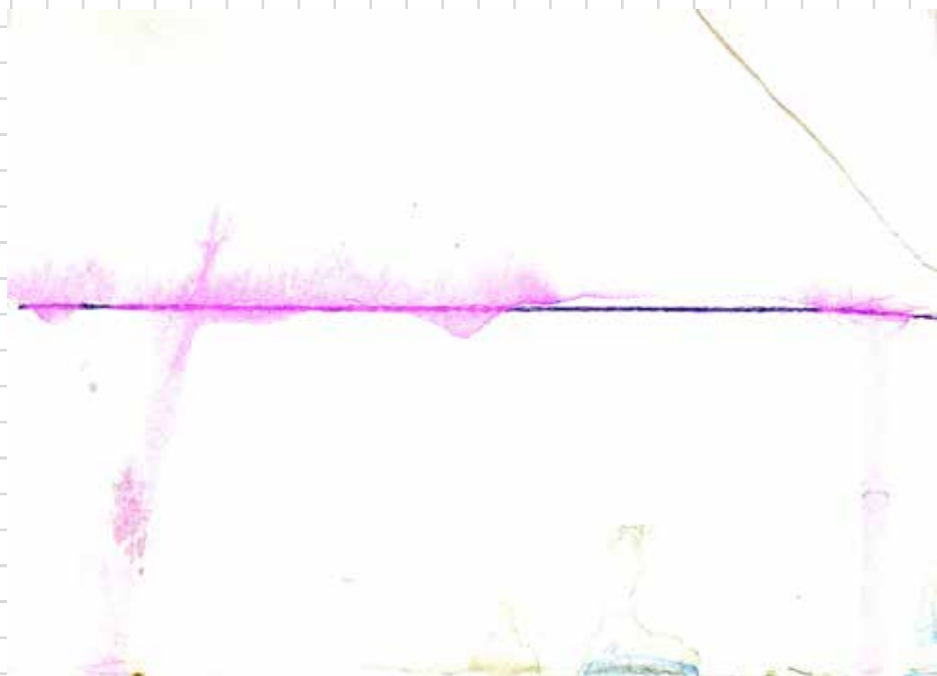
Edge Study

Edge Study
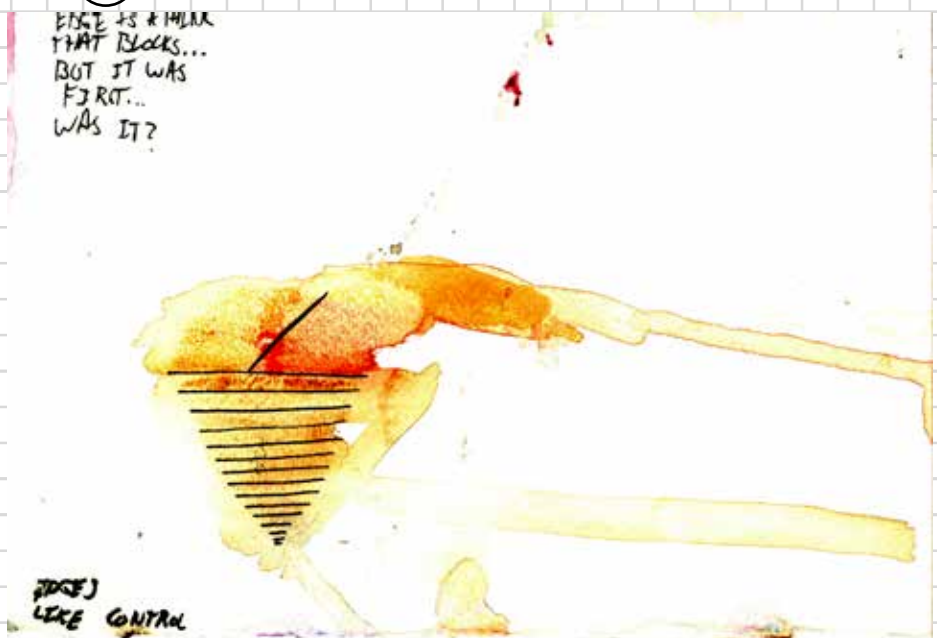
Edge Study

EDGE IS A THING
THAT BLOCKS...
BUT IT WAS
FIRST...
WAS IT?

EDGES
LIKE CONTROL
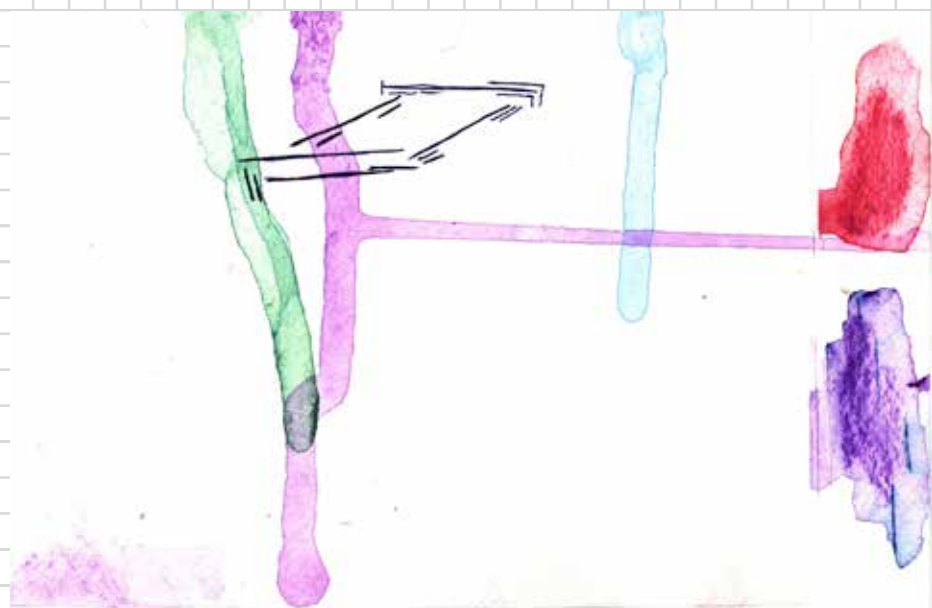
2
61 Edge Study

1/62 Edge Study

Do you REMEMBER TIME? OR MOMENTS?

2/62 Edge Study

(1/63) Edge Study

(2/63) Edge Study

1 / 64 Edge Study

Edge Study

(1/66) Edge Study

(2/66) Edge Study

$\overset{\textstyle 1}{\underset{\textstyle 67}{\bigcirc}}$ Edge Study

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1 Edge Study
68

1
69
Edge Study
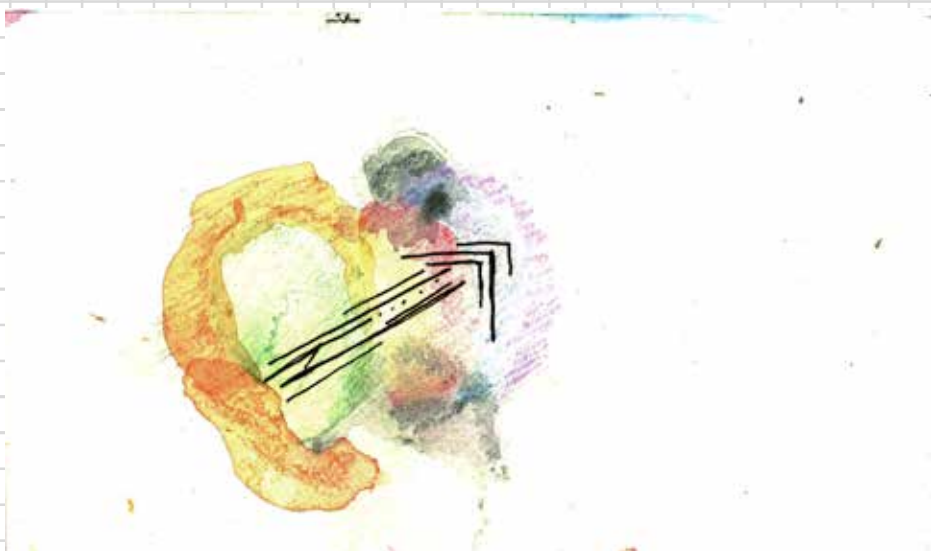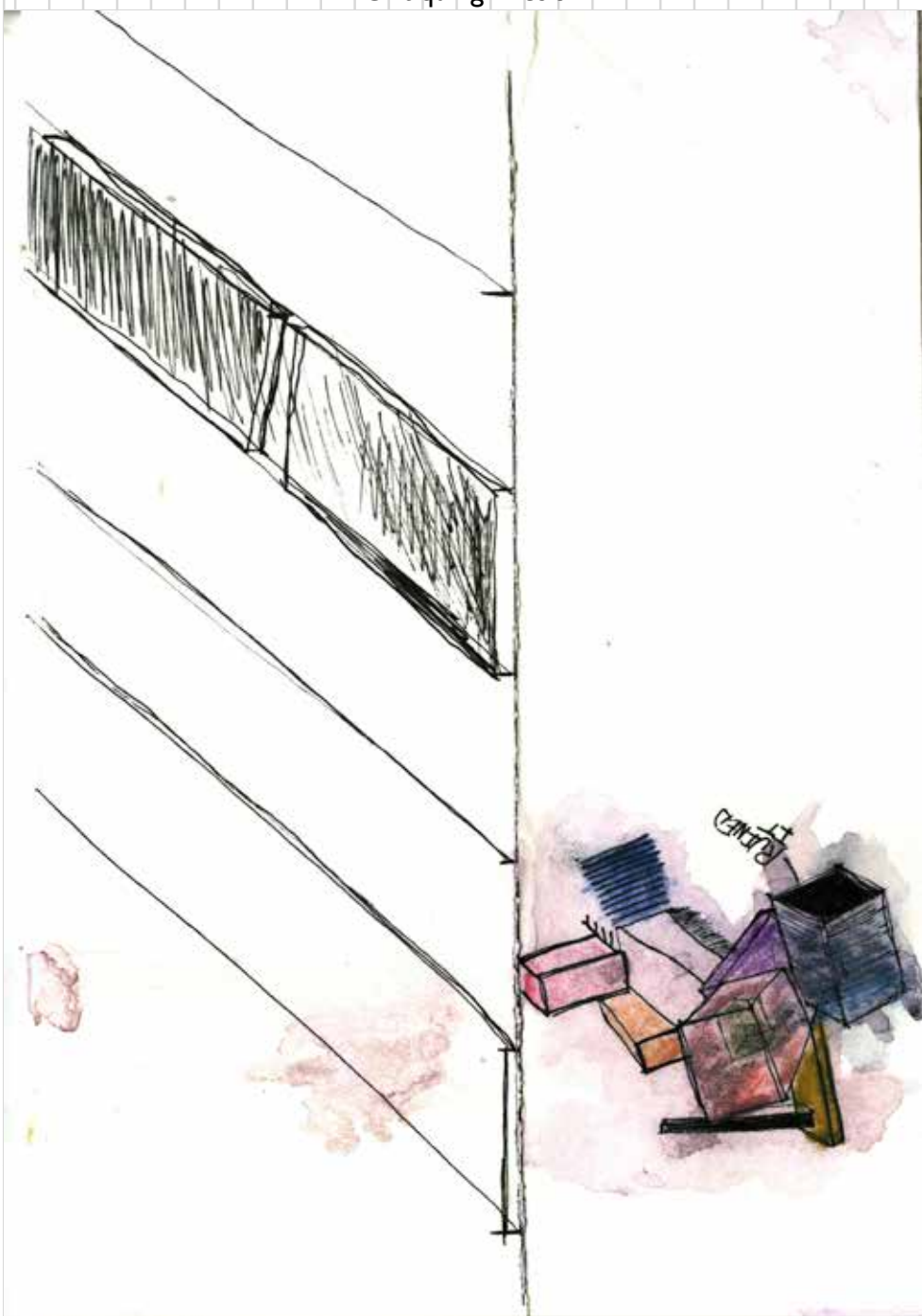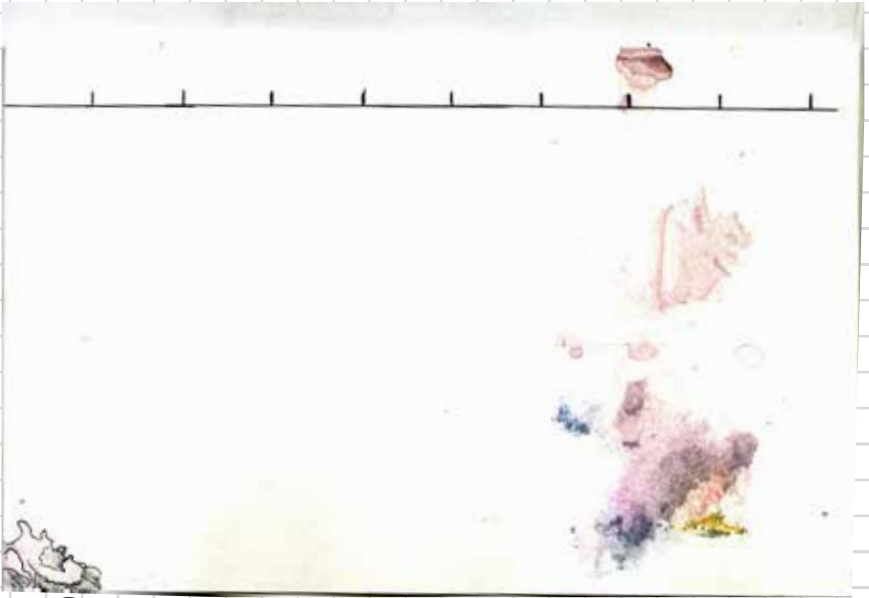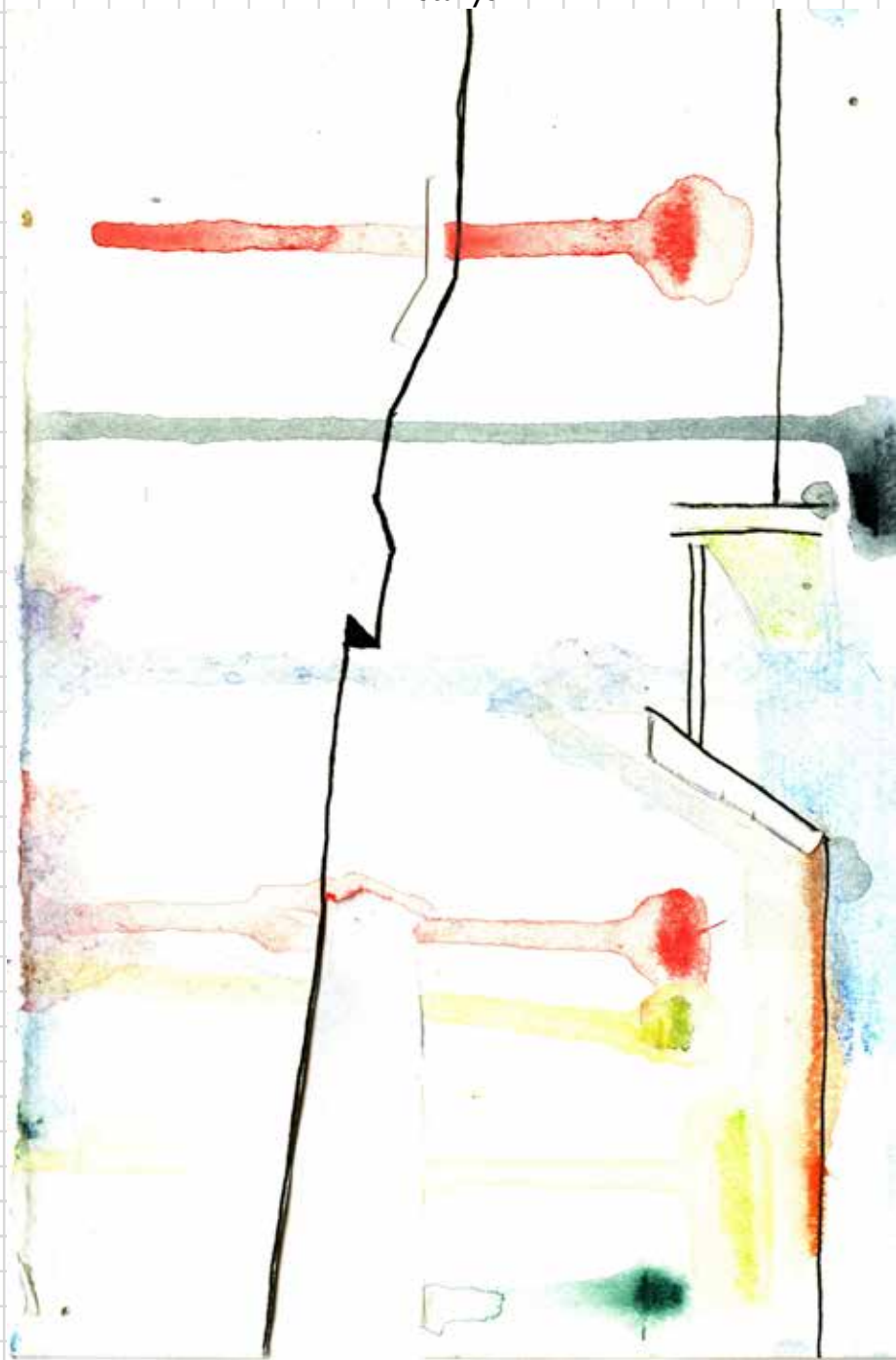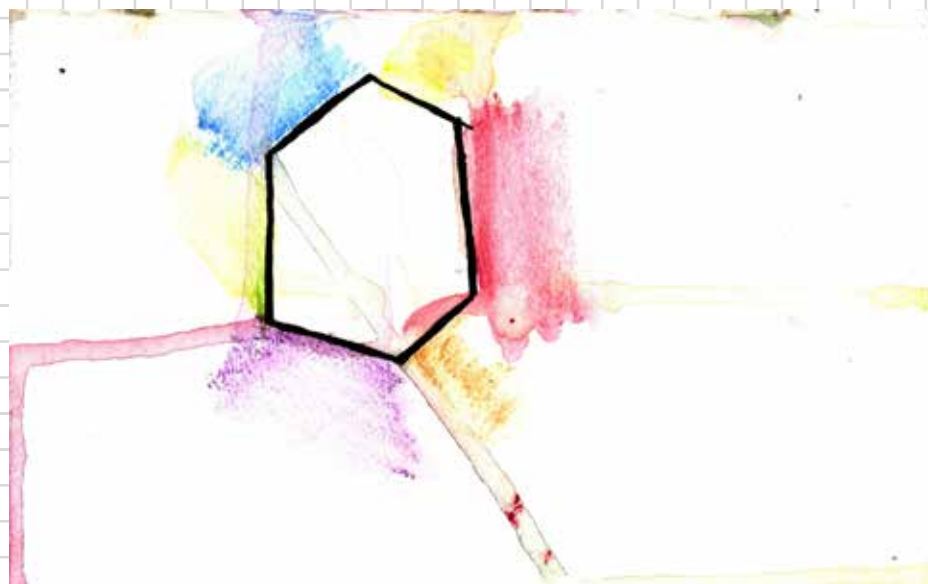
$\left(\dfrac{1}{70}\right)$ Edge Study

$\left(\dfrac{2}{70}\right)$ Edge Study

Studys

Edge Study

Edge Study

Sketch Problem - Experience

Once experience became a key focus of knowledge and design, way of visually representing experience became required. Through layering and reduction then layering a series of experiences were created through a mixture of metric and experiential qualities.

① 72 Experience Diagram
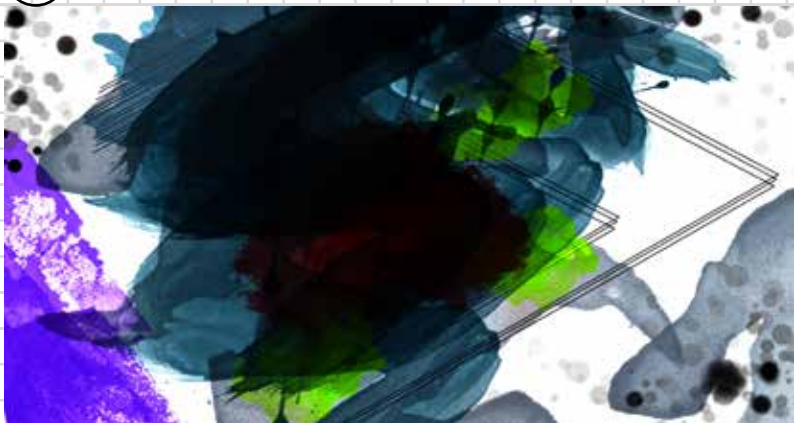

② 72 Experience Diagram

1 Experience Diagram
73
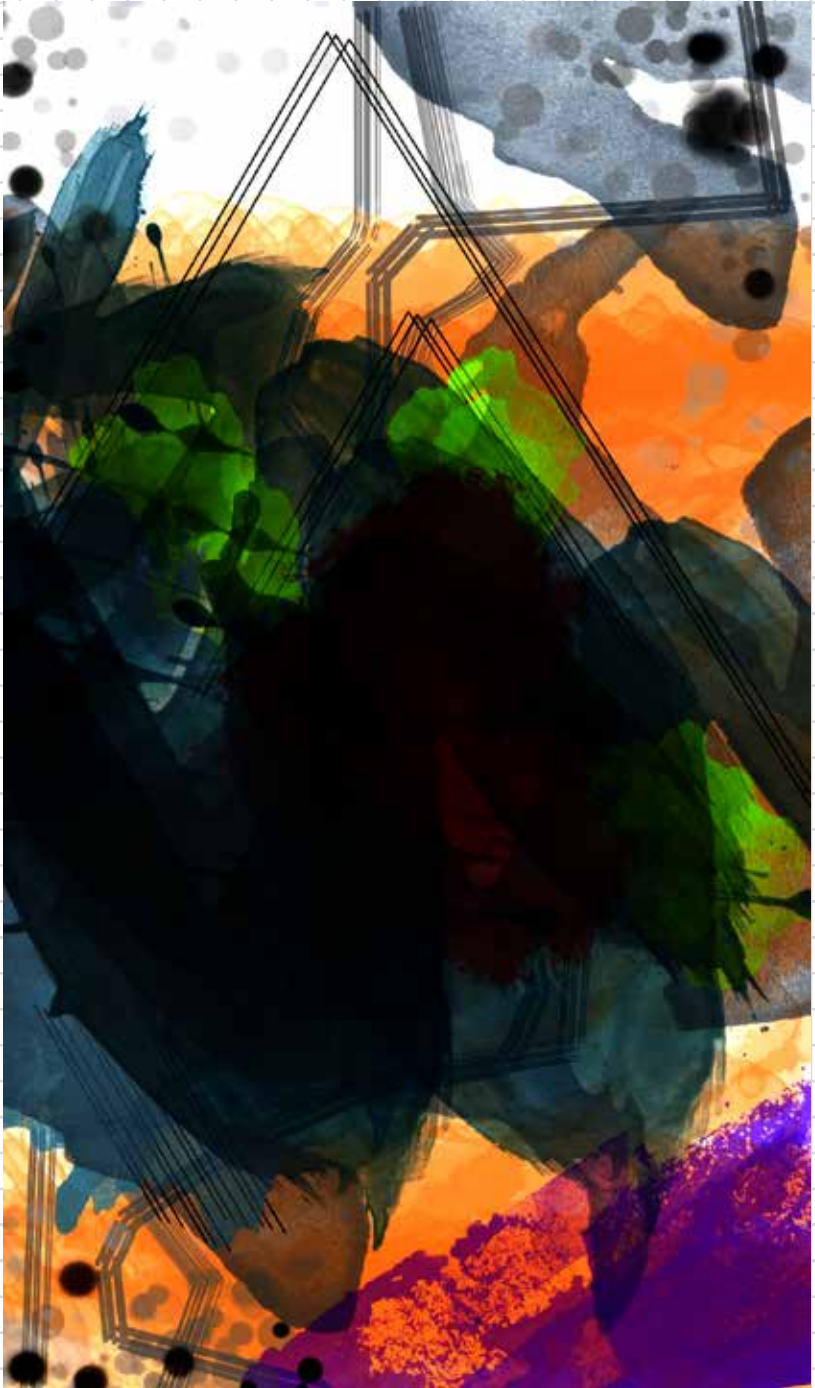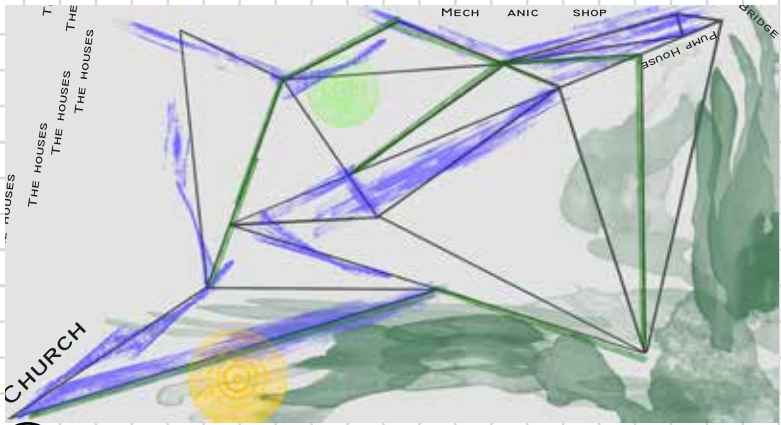
1/74 Experience Diagram

2/74 Experience Diagram

3/74 Experience Diagram

Experience Diagram

1
76
Experience Diagram

2
76
Experience Diagram

3
76
Experience Diagram

BRIDGE
PUMP HOUSE
SHOP
ANIC
MECH
CHURCH
THE HOUSES

Experience Diagram

1 / 78 Experience Diagram

2 / 78 Experience Diagram

3 / 78 Experience Diagram

1
79
Experience Diagram
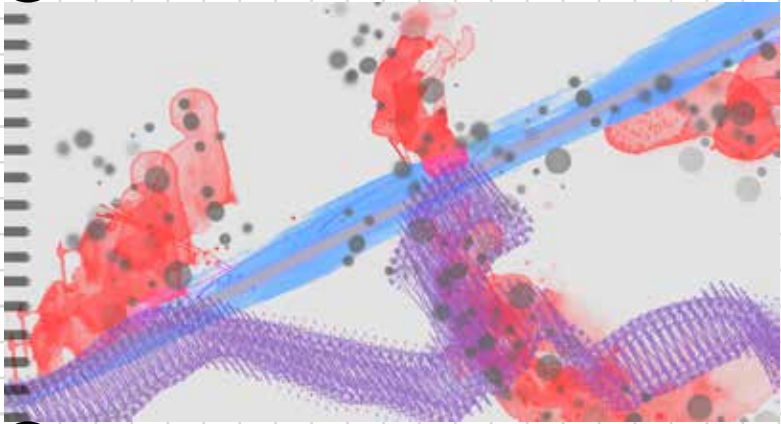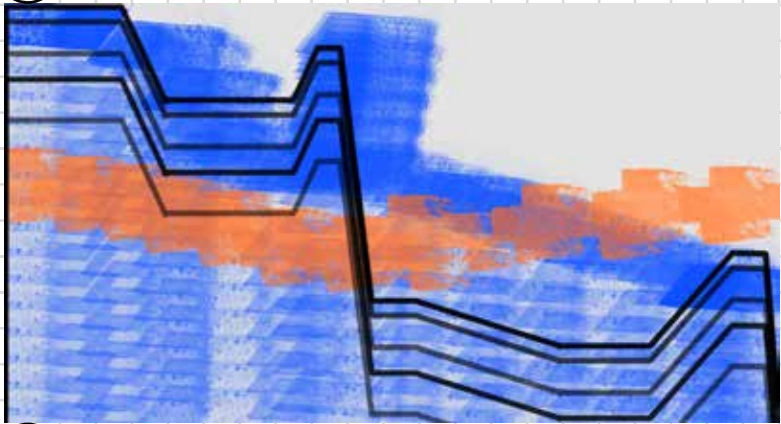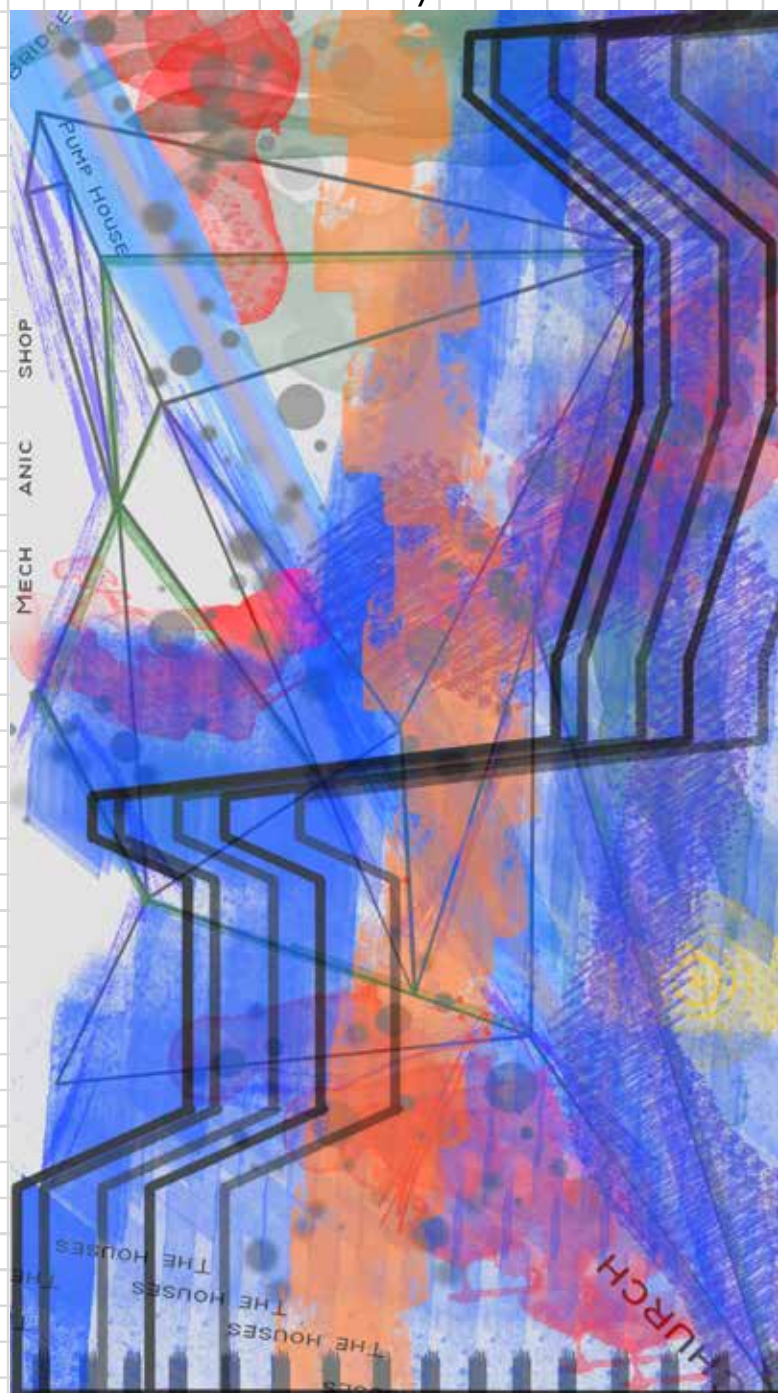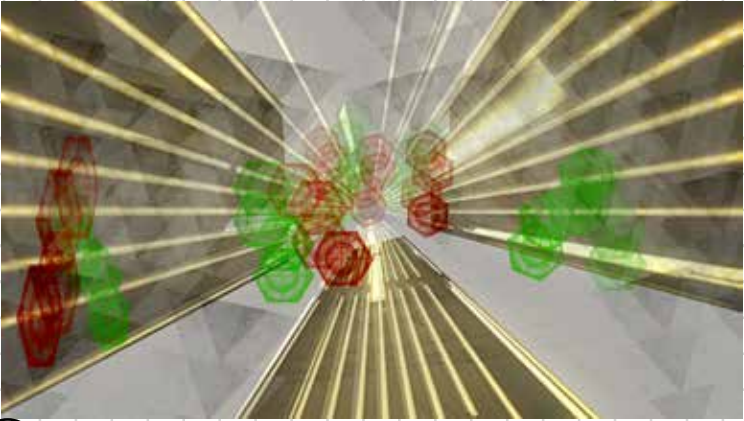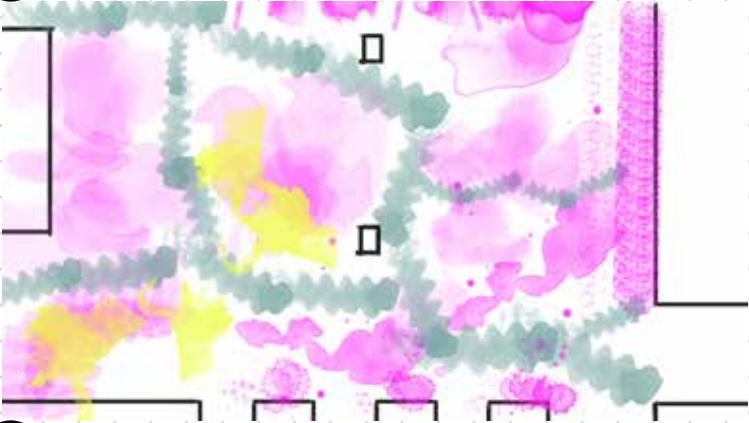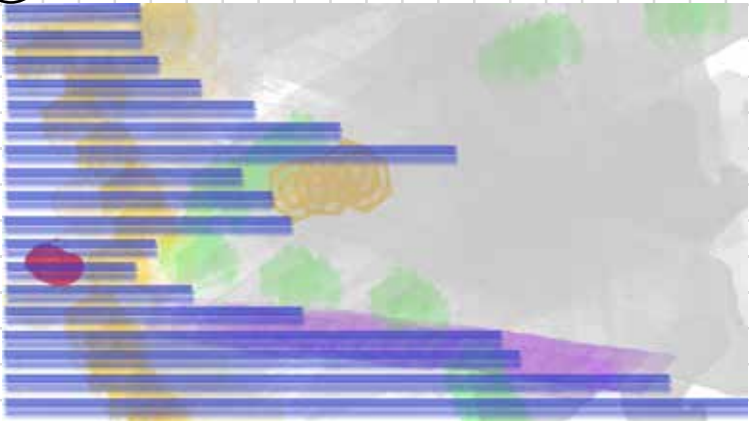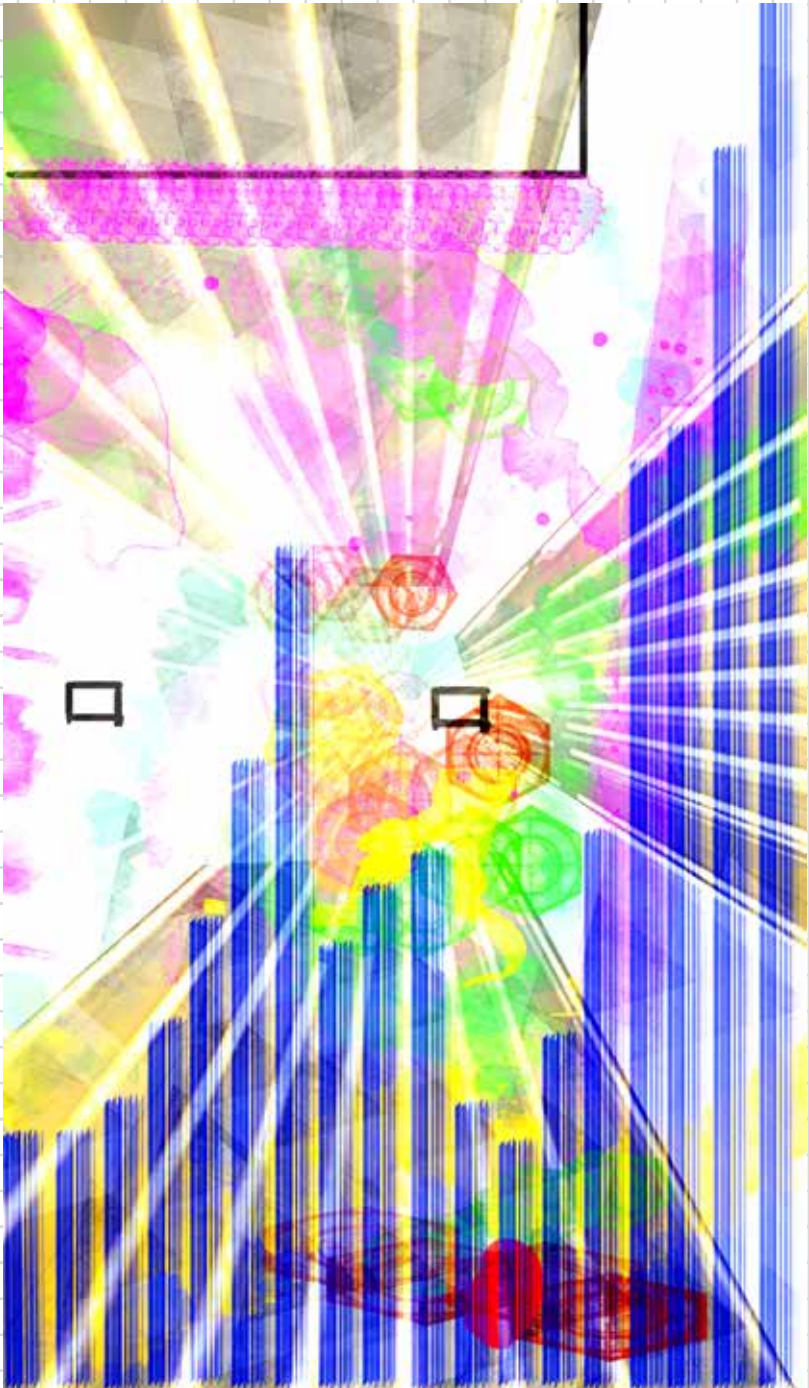
Sketch Problem - House

As the process of experience evolved and strived to reach for qualities of the undifferentiated, the house became the subject so the timeless nature fostered within it confines.

1
82 House Study

1
83 House Study
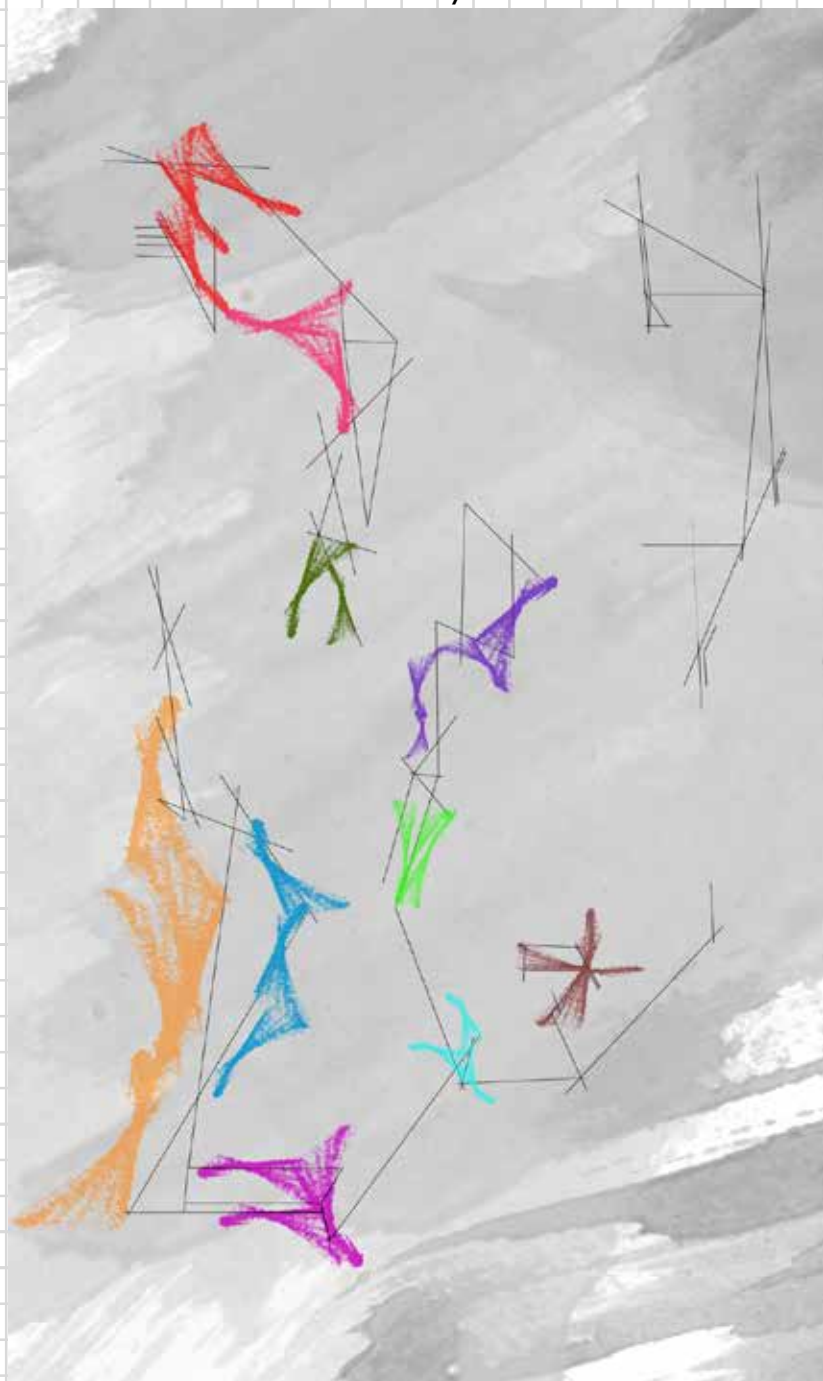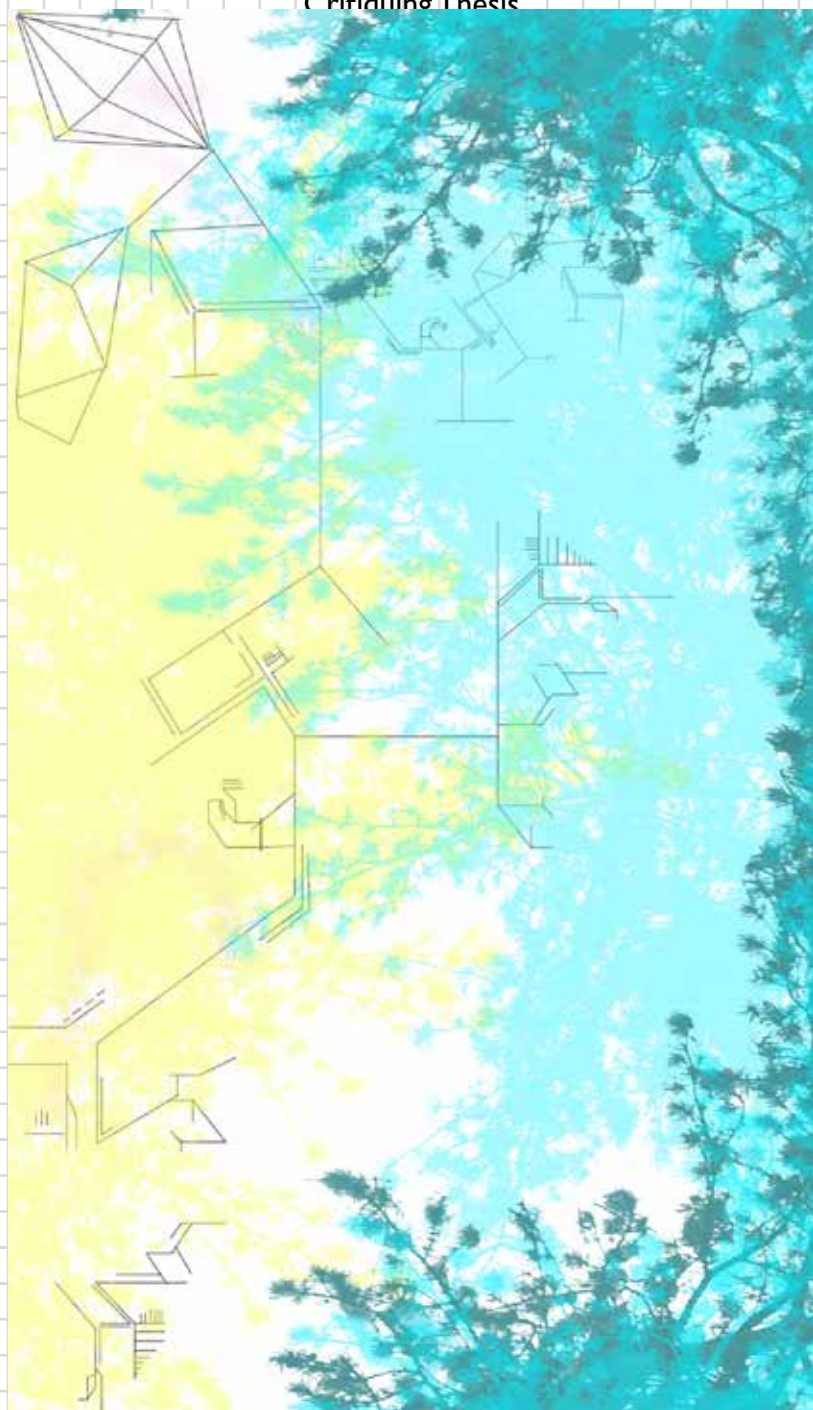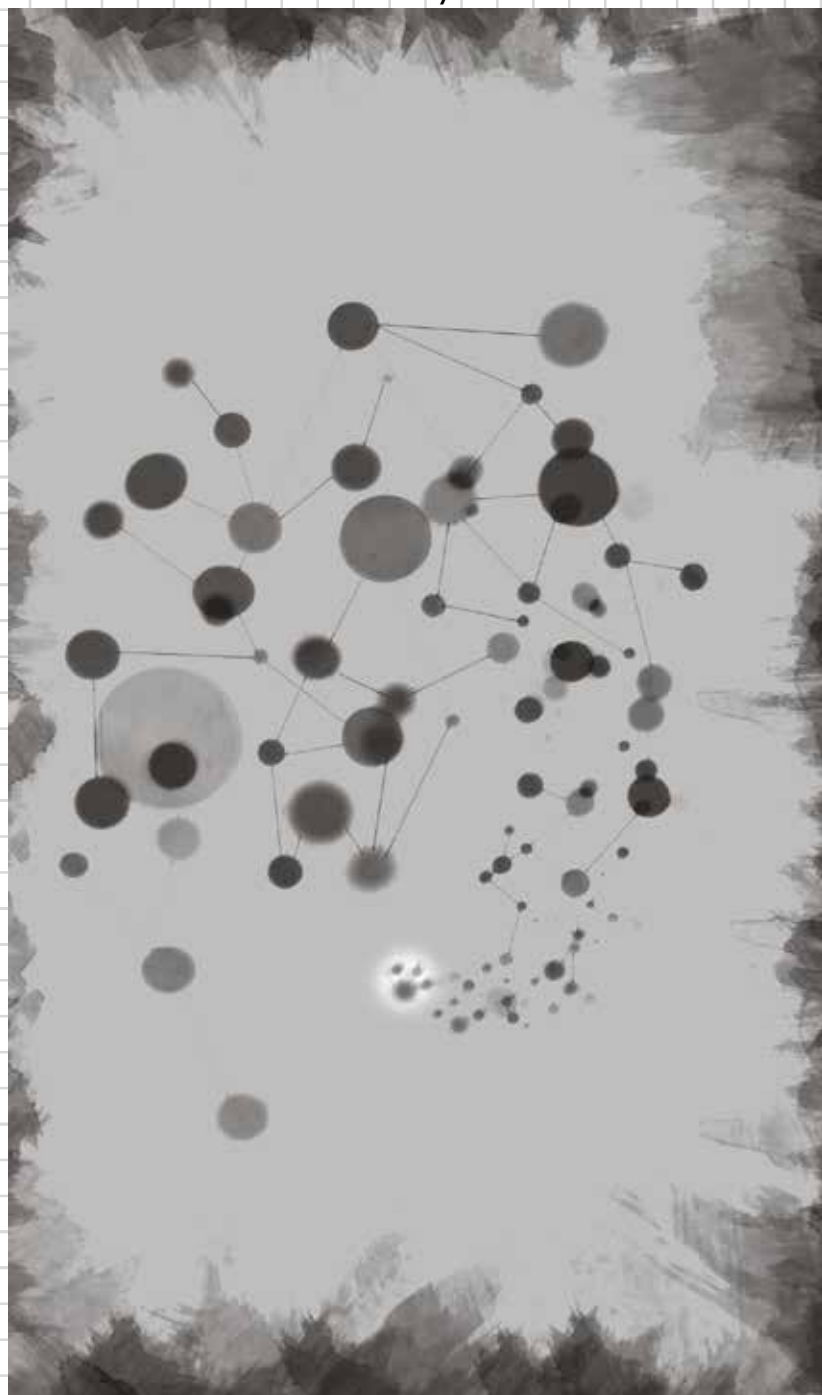
Sketch
Problem - Home

The house became a limiter that actions of the house came to the for front of the process. Now experience we being explored based on what these action accomplish, moving past the physical boundaries of the house and towards the relationship focused sensations of the home.
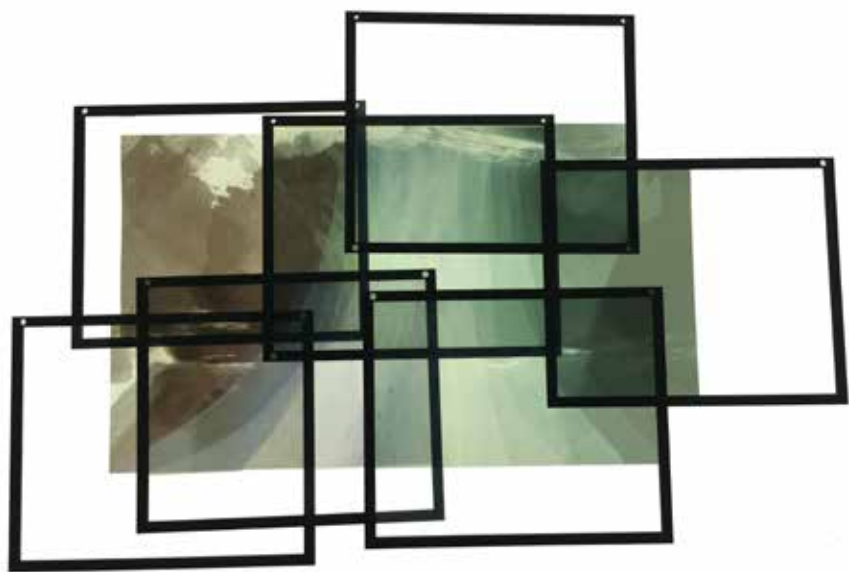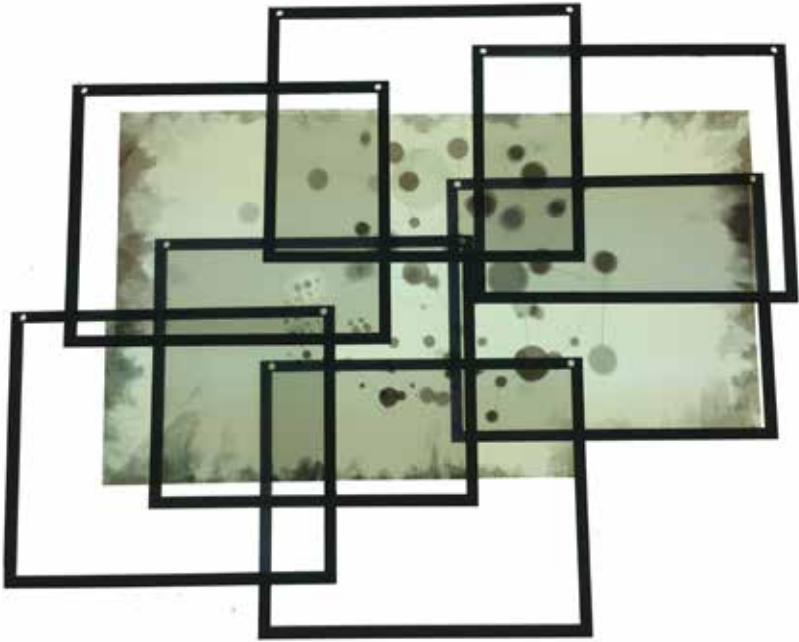

1 Qualities of Home
84

① / 87 Qualities of Home
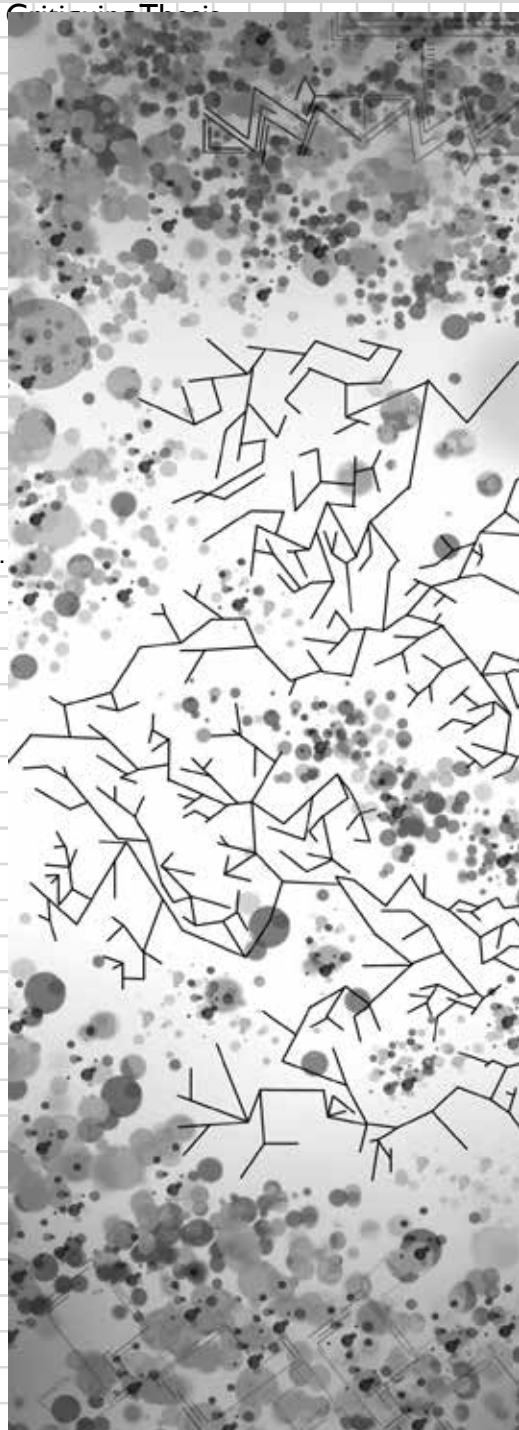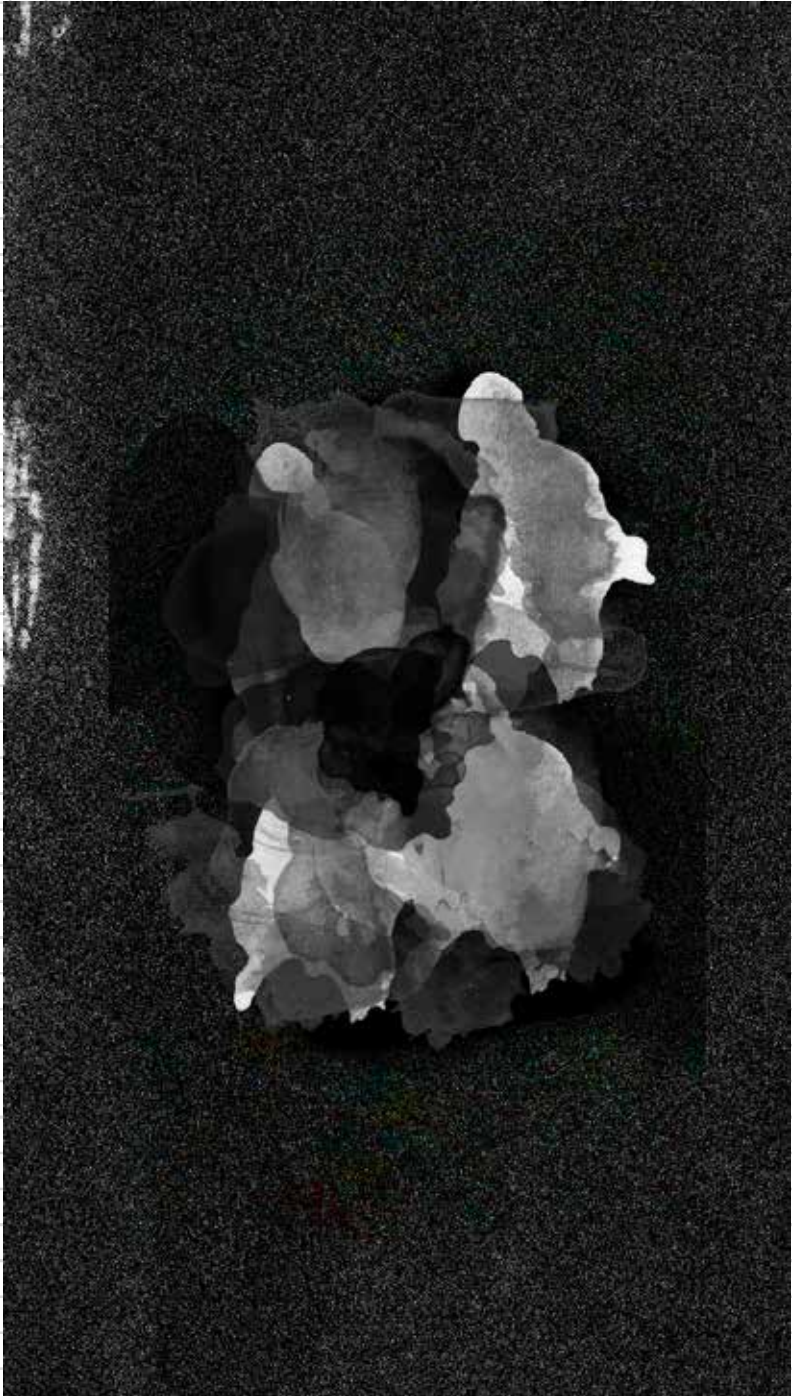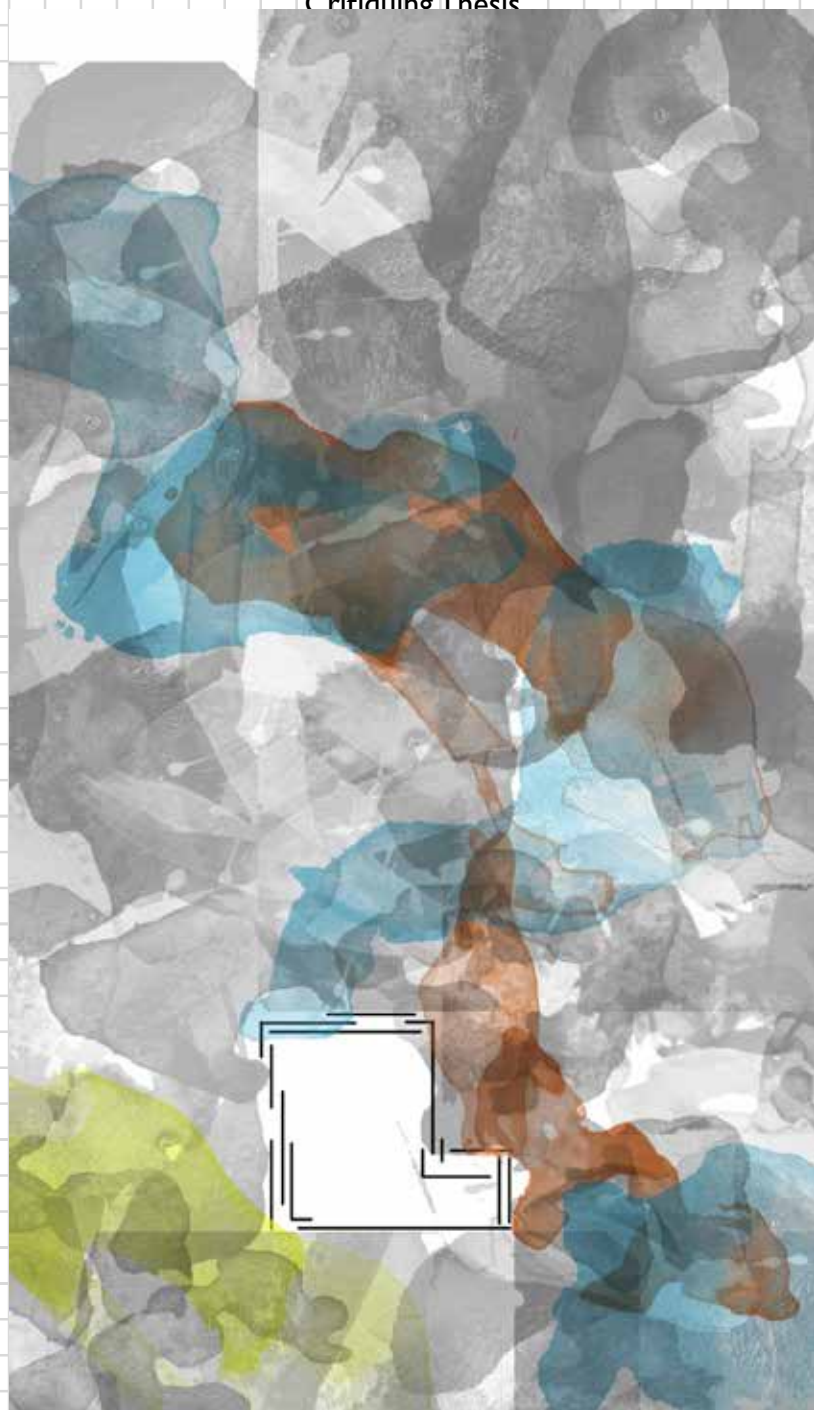
Sketch Problem - Frames

With the edge being ever present this became
an attempt to incorporate the edge into the
composition in order to suggest that the frame isn't
the end or limit of something, rather it denotes a
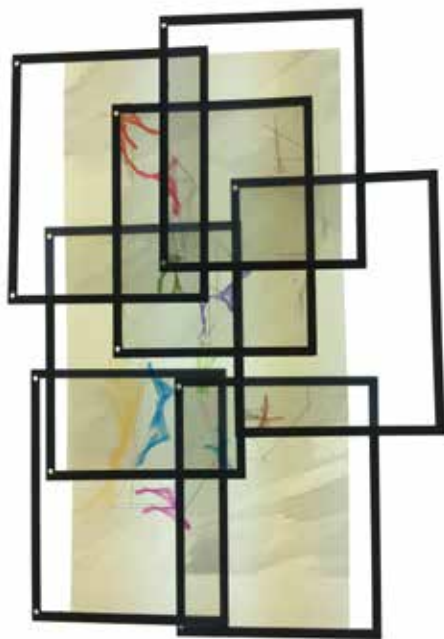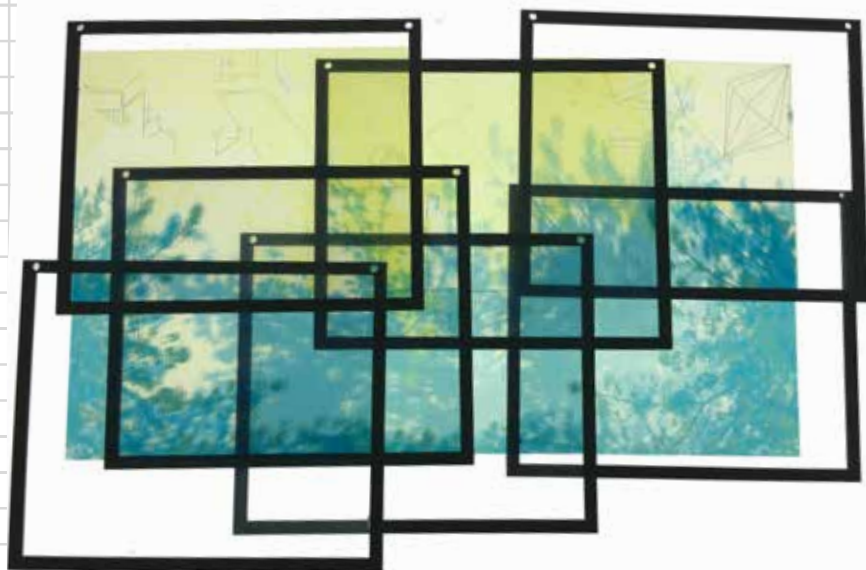frame can be fragment of a larger whole.

1 / 88 Frame Fragmentations

(1 / 89) Frame Fragmentations

(2 / 89) Frame Fragmentations

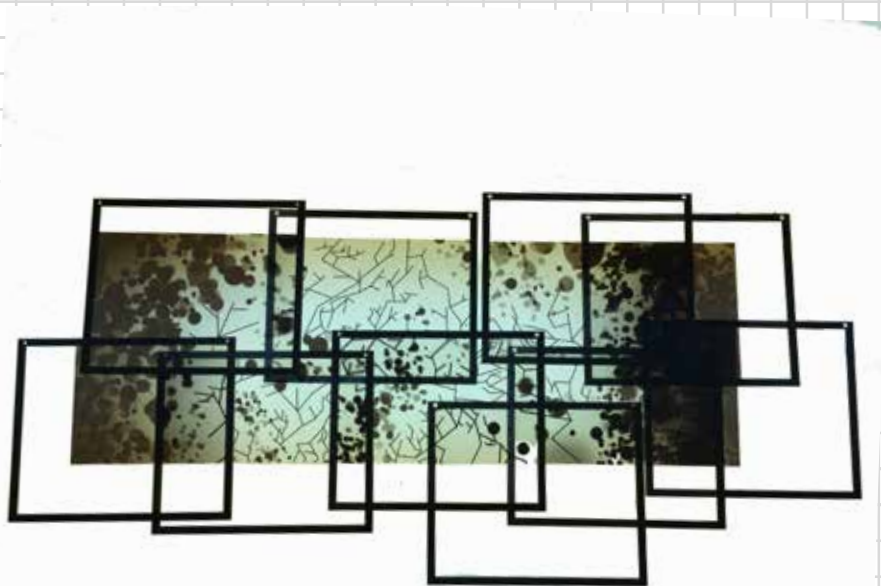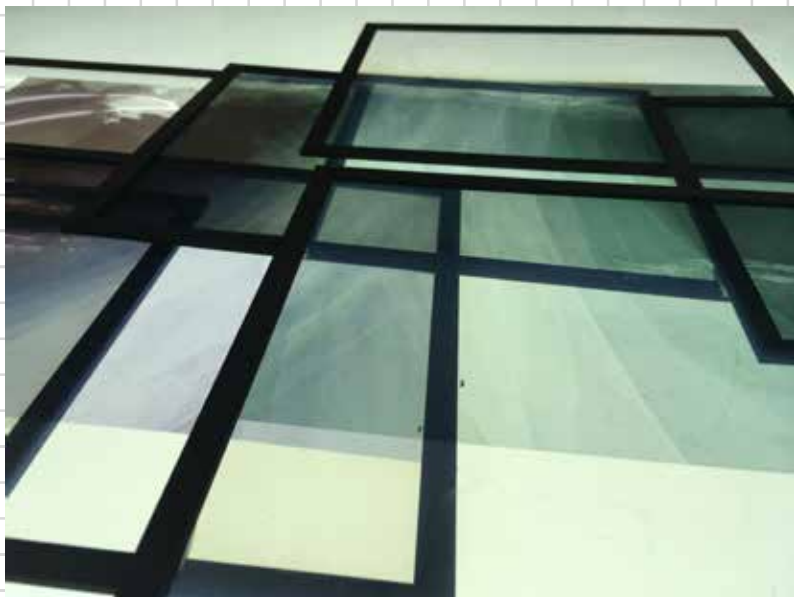(1/90) Frame Fragmentations

(2/90) Frame Fragmentations

(3/90) Frame Fragmentations
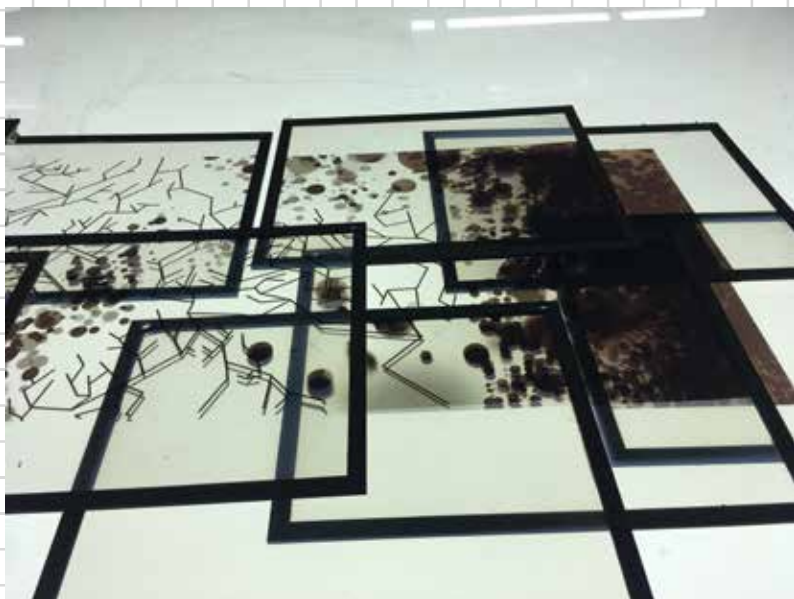
(1)(91) Frame Fragmentations

(2)(91) Frame Fragmentations

1 Frame Fragmentations
92

2 Frame Fragmentations
92

(1) (93) Frame Fragmentations

(2) (93) Frame Fragmentations

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Final though

Unity doesn't necessarily mean one homogenous object, rather the collection of a series of heterogenous objects is what creates the sensation of one.