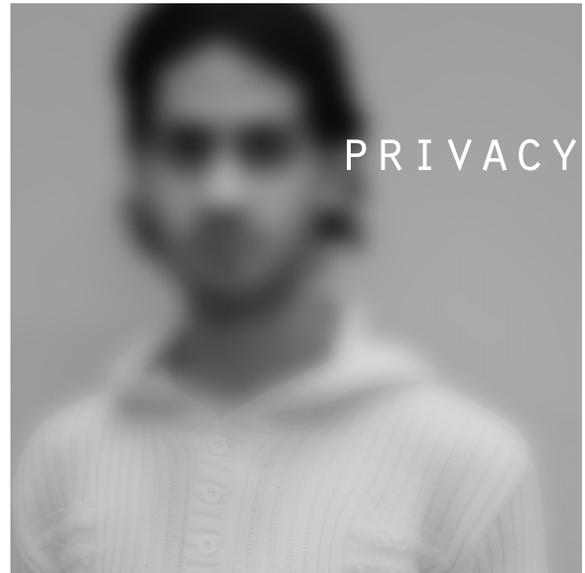


WILLIAM LAU
TEDDY LUONG



Studies on expressions of privacy in public



SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
CARLETON UNIVERSITY, OTTAWA, CANADA

FALL 2010
IDES 4301 MINOR PROJECT A

INSTRUCTOR: ADRIANA ROSS

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SITE ANALYSIS

A Narrative

STANDING STATIONARY I GAZE UPON THE VAST SPACE BEFORE ME, AWAITING THE IMMINENT RETURN OF PEOPLE. THE SUNLIGHT FLOODING THE SPACE FROM ACROSS THE WAY SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER DAY. IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE THE FIRST PEOPLE ENTER THE LANDSCAPE, THEN ANOTHER FEW. TRICKLING IN, AND SOON STREAMING IN, ALL TRAVELLING WITH DETERMINATION. IN THE USUAL TIMELY FASHION, THE ESTABLISHMENTS OPEN, RETRACTING THEIR SHELLS TO WELCOME PEOPLE AS THEY CARRY ON THEIR DAILY ROUTINES. IN ORDER TO BE RECOGNIZED, PEOPLE ENTER THE QUEUE ARRANGING THEMSELVES NEATLY IN THE OUTLINED PATHS. THEY ARE SILENT AND PATIENT, MOVING SWIFTLY TO FILL THE EMPTY SPACES. AND, JUST AS QUICKLY AS THEY ARE IN, THEY ARE OUT. THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR THEM—THERE ARE OTHER THINGS TO DO. PEOPLE COME HERE TO PERFORM BUSINESS, TO COMPLETE TASKS, TO ENQUIRE, TO WAIT. NOT FOR LEISURE NOR SOCIAL ACTIVITY, THIS AREA IS NOT A DESTINATION; IT IS A TRANSPARENT, FORGOTTEN SPACE.

BY THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY, THE STREAM OF PEOPLE BECOMES AN IMPASSABLE RIVER. LAUGHTER AND SCREAMS SIGNAL EMOTION FROM OTHER CORNERS OF THE SPACE. BUT NOT HERE. IT REMAINS PARTICULARLY QUIET AND DIM FOR MOST OF THE DAY – A NEUTRAL SPACE. BUT I FEEL SAFE IN THIS CORNER. LIKE LOOKING THROUGH A TINTED MIRROR I CAN PEER OUT ONTO THE EXPANSE WITH ANONYMITY. AND NO ONE LOOKS BACK.

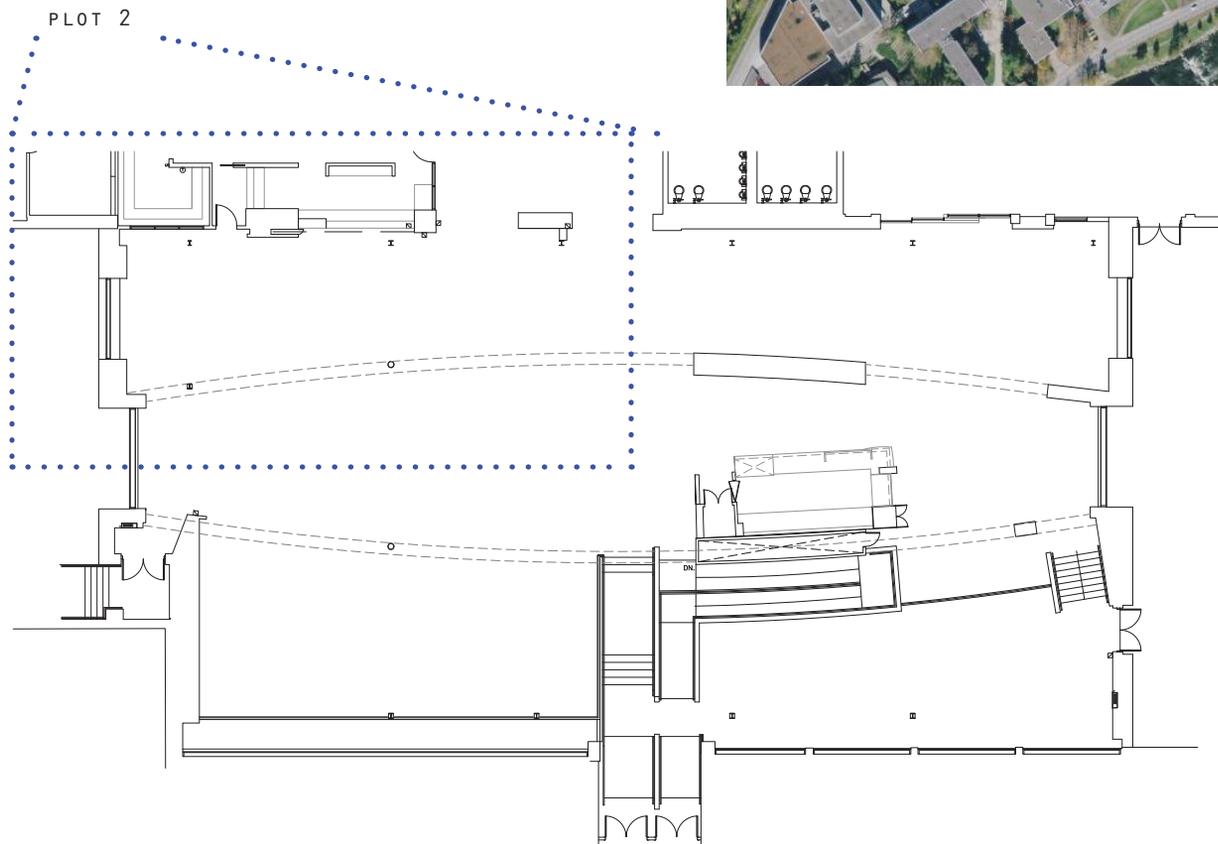
THE DAY WINDS DOWN AND THE SUN SETS BEHIND ME. THE STREAM OF TRAVELLERS TRAIL OFF AND THE SPACE EMPTIES. WHEN THE SUN IS COMPLETELY GONE, THE STARK FLUORESCENCE OF SPOTLIGHTS CAST LONG SHADOWS ON THE INFINITELY FLAT GROUND. DOORS ARE CLOSED AND PIECES SIT UNMOVED, AS IF ABANDONED WITH SOME UNDETERMINED URGENCY. ONLY LONE PIECES OF GARBAGE REMAIN, THE ONLY ARTEFACTS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY.



THE STARK FLUORESCENCE OF SPOTLIGHTS CAST LONG SHADOWS ON THE INFINITELY FLAT GROUND.

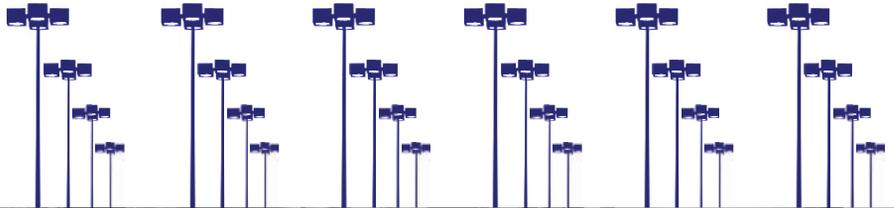
THE SITE IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER
OF THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE GALLERIA AT CARLETON
UNIVERSITY.

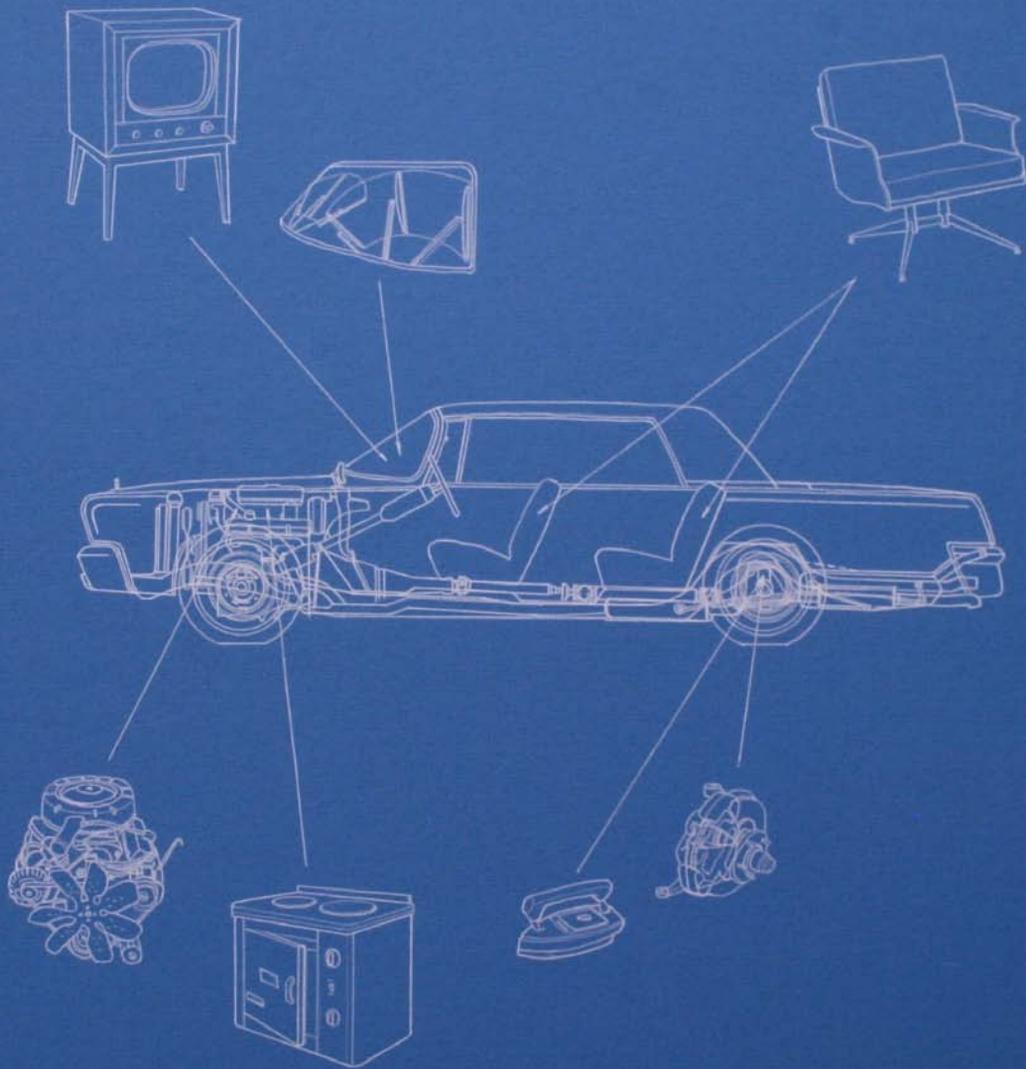
PEOPLE TRAVEL AND PERFORM TASKS WITH
DETERMINATION. VERY FEW MOMENTS ARE LEFT FOR
INTERACTION. THE BEHAVIOUR IS INDICATIVE OF
AMERICAN SUBURBAN LIFE.



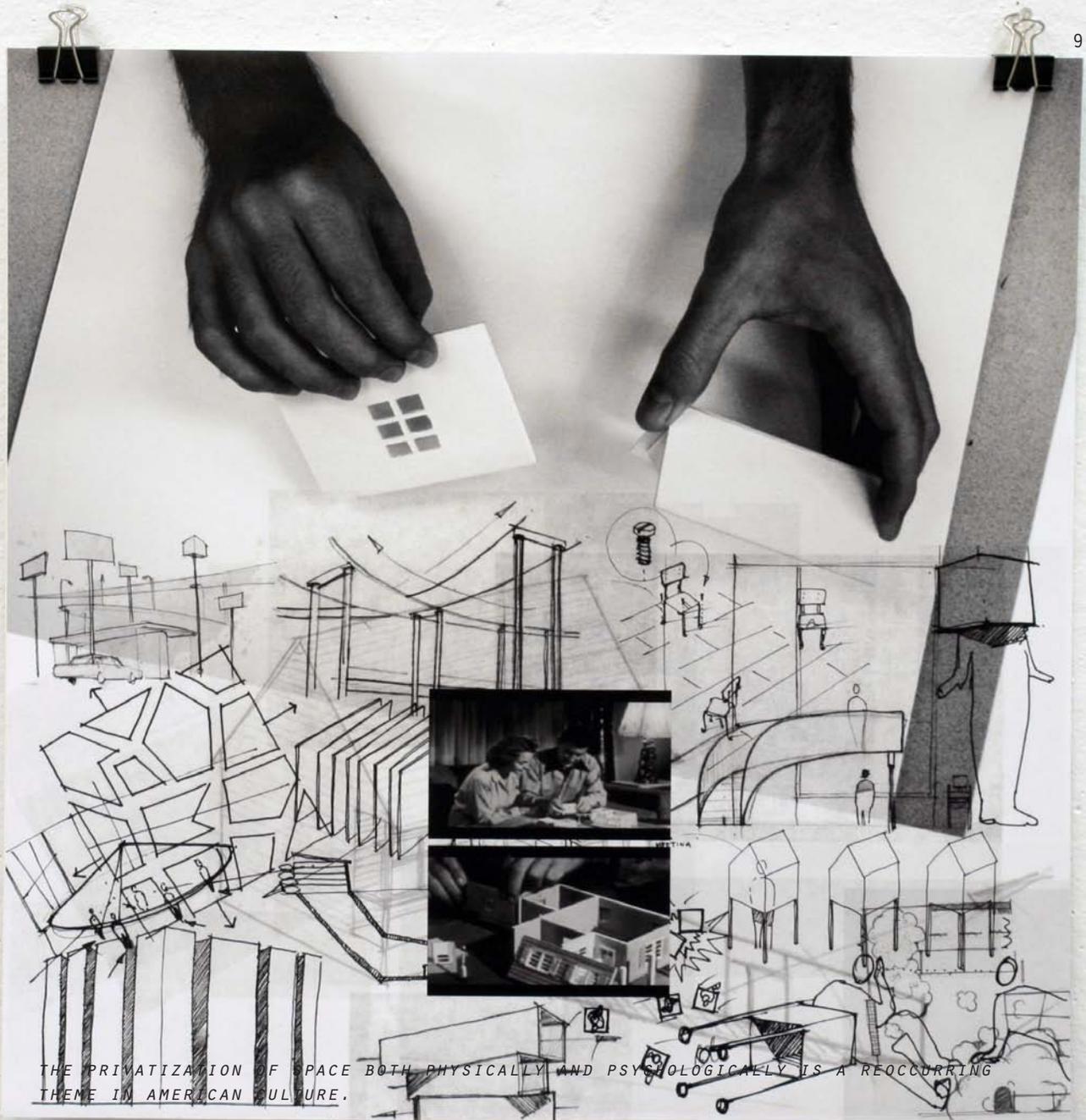


THE SITE AS FOUND IN THE GALLERIA, DAY AND NIGHT.





PUBLIC SPACE BECAME PRIVATIZED AS THE AUTOMOBILE BECAME A MOBILE LIVING ROOM.



THE PRIVATIZATION OF SPACE BOTH PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY IS A REOCCURRING
THEME IN AMERICAN CULTURE.

INQUIRY



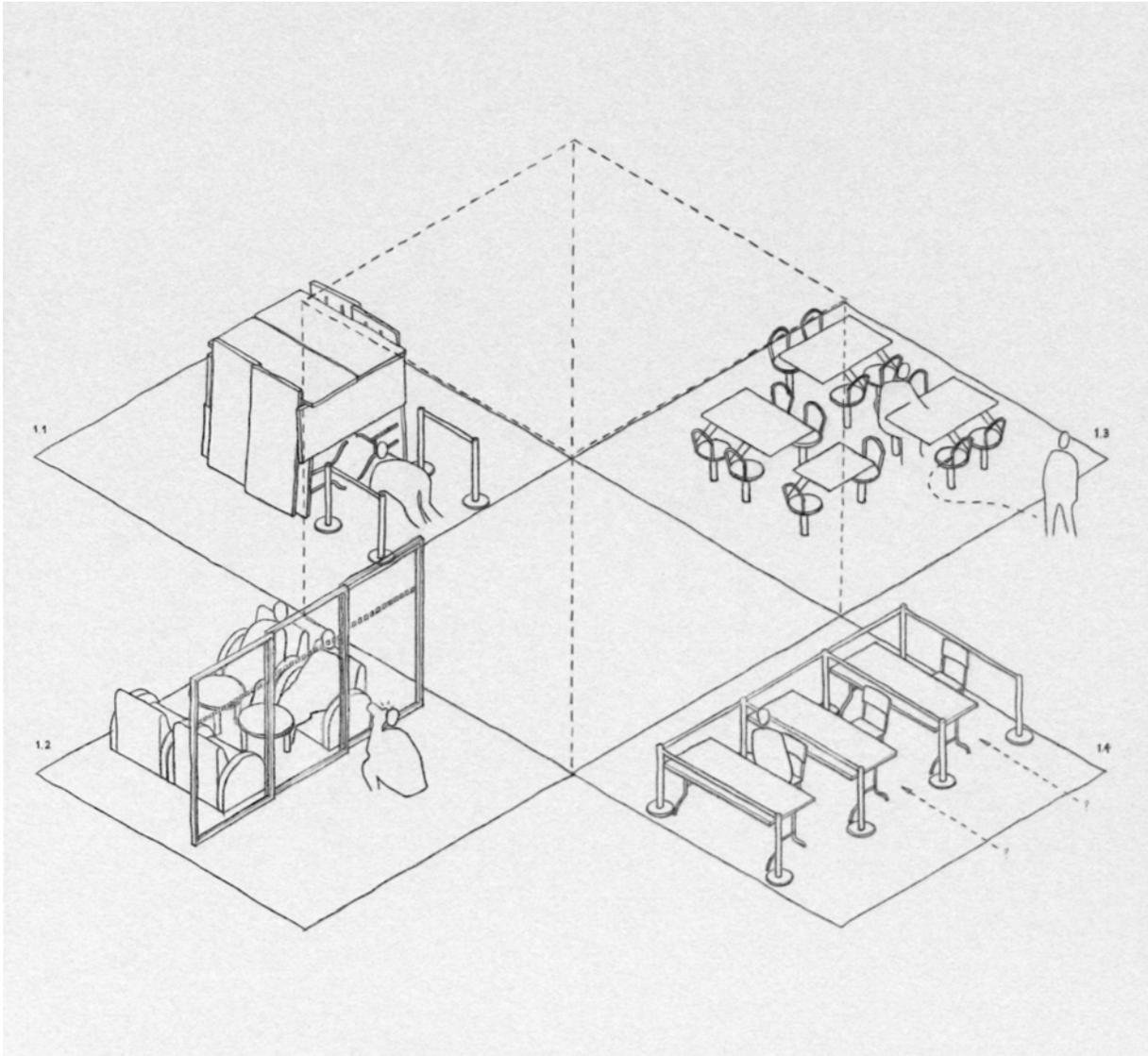
Questioning Boundaries of Private Space

THE CONCEPTS OF PRIVATE SPACE AND PUBLIC SPACE WERE QUESTIONED. ANONYMOUS ACTS OF WHAT ARE TYPICALLY PRIVATE ACTIVITIES WERE PERFORMED IN THE GALLERIA: SLEEPING, BRUSHING TEETH, CHOPPING VEGETABLES, AND FOLDING LAUNDRY.

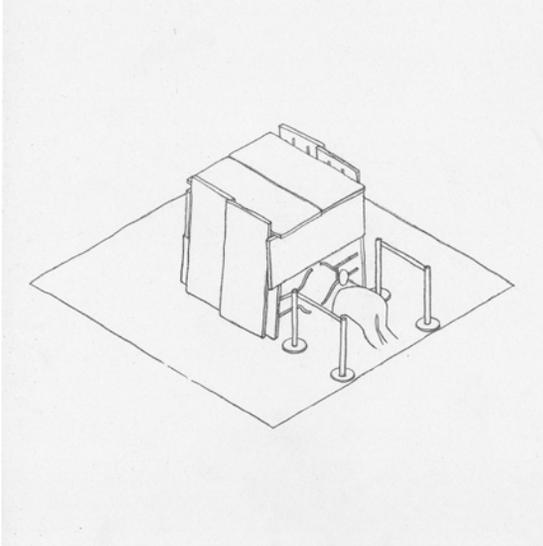


STUDIES

PART 1 | SUBVERTING PRIVATE SPACE



1.1 *Fortress*



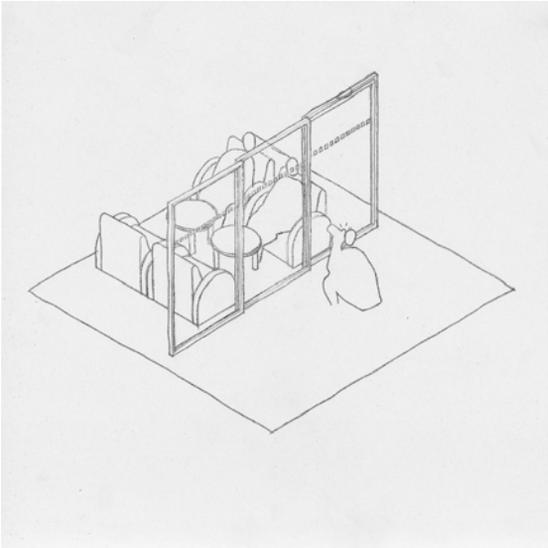
A PHYSICAL ENVELOPE CAN PROVIDE A SENSE OF PRIVACY. WHAT EFFECT CAN BE ACHIEVED ON SITE?

A MAKESHIFT SHELTER WAS BUILT USING THE AVAILABLE TABLES IN THE SPACE. THE IRREGULAR ACTIVITY ATTRACTED UNWANTED ATTENTION AND THE STUDY WAS HALTED.

1.1.1



1.2 Peering Through a Window



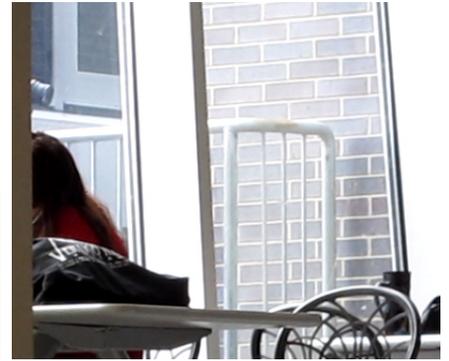
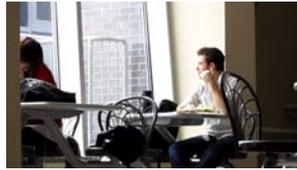
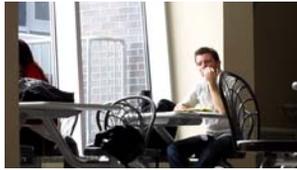
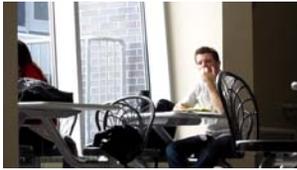
THOUGH TRANSPARENT, A WINDOW IS A BARRIER. WHAT LEVELS OF PRIVACY DO PEOPLE HOLD IN PUBLIC SPACES?

PHOTOS OF SUBJECTS WERE TAKEN THROUGH WINDOWS AS A METHOD OF ENCROACHING ONTO THEIR PRIVACY. THIS WAS DONE IN AN ATTEMPT TO PROVOKE INTERACTION BETWEEN SUBJECTS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER.





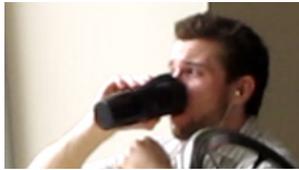
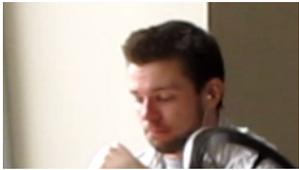
1.2.1



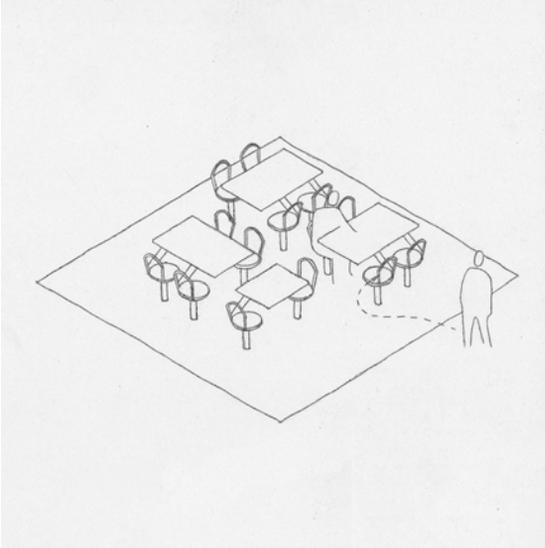
1.2.2



IN BOTH CASES, THE SUBJECTS AVOIDED
ACKNOWLEDGING THE PHOTOGRAPHER. WAS
THIS A METHOD TO AVOID CONFRONTATION
OR WERE THE SUBJECTS INDIFFERENT TO
THE INVASION?



1.3 Invasion



PRIVACY IS EXPECTED WITHIN A PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT. THIS CONCEPT IS RESPECTED OUT OF CONVENTION.

THE STUDY INTRODUCES A SURPRISE GUEST WHO INTENTIONALLY OCCUPIES THE NEAREST AVAILABLE SEAT. THE PURPOSE OF THE IMPOSITION IS TO FORCE UPON THE SUBJECTS AN UNEXPECTED CONFRONTATION.

1.3.1





A MEETING BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE WAS INTERRUPTED BY AN UNINVITED GUEST. DESPITE THE GUEST'S ADVANCES, THE PAIR WAS RELUCTANT TO CONFRONT HIM.

DEBRIEF



1.3.2



A SUBJECT HAD CLAIMED AN ENTIRE TABLE WITH VARIOUS PERSONAL ITEMS. AS THE UNINVITED GUEST IMPOSED ONTO HIS PROPERTY, THE SUBJECT WAS EVIDENTLY UNCOMFORTABLE. NONETHELESS HE DID NOT CHALLENGE THE GUEST.



1.3.3

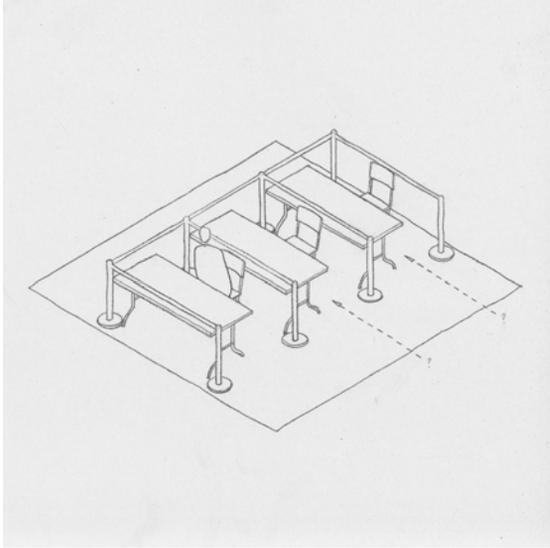


THIS TIME, THE GUEST ASKED BEFORE OCCUPYING THE SEAT DIRECTLY ACROSS A SUBJECT IN AN OTHERWISE DESERTED STUDY HALL. THE SUBJECT AMICABLY ACCEPTED DESPITE THE GUEST'S UNCONVENTIONAL CHOICE OF SEAT. THE SUBJECT SHOWED NO SIGNS OF DISCOMFORT.

DEBRIEF



1.4 Fenced Off



OWNERSHIP OF SPACE IS EXPRESSED IN VARIOUS WAYS.

THREE PERSONAL WORK ENCLOSURES WERE CREATED TO OBSERVE BEHAVIOURS CONNECTED TO OWNERSHIP OF SPACE. THE PURPOSE WAS TO OBSERVE IF PASSERSBY WOULD UTILIZE THE DESKS FOR SIT-DOWN WORK.



1.4.1



AFTER NO ACTIVITY, ONE CELL WAS BAITED TO ENCOURAGE POTENTIAL USERS. LATER, ONE PERSON REMOVED A CHAIR FROM THE SETUP FOR USE ELSEWHERE.

STUDIES

PART 2 | GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS

2.1 *"Mending Wall"*

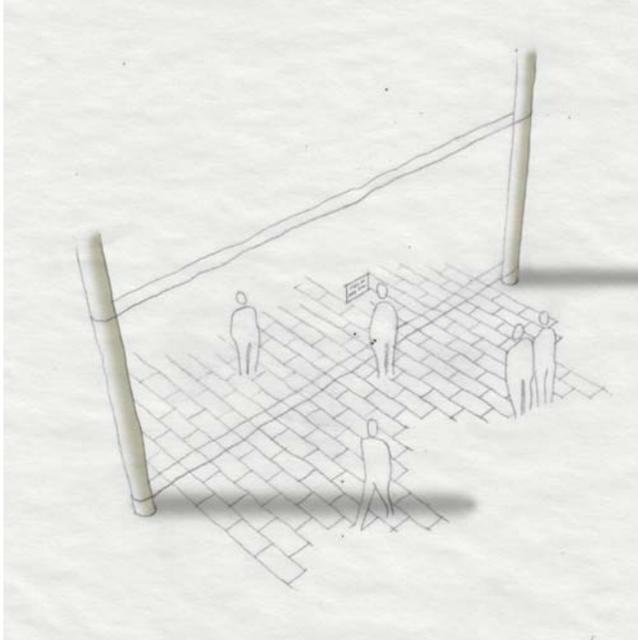
SOMETHING THERE IS THAT DOESN'T LOVE A WALL,
THAT SENDS THE FROZEN-GROUND-SWELL UNDER IT,
AND SPILLS THE UPPER BOULDERS IN THE SUN;
AND MAKES GAPS EVEN TWO CAN PASS ABREAST.
THE WORK OF HUNTERS IS ANOTHER THING:
I HAVE COME AFTER THEM AND MADE REPAIR
WHERE THEY HAVE LEFT NOT ONE STONE ON A STONE,
BUT THEY WOULD HAVE THE RABBIT OUT OF HIDING,
TO PLEASE THE YELPING DOGS. THE GAPS I MEAN,
NO ONE HAS SEEN THEM MADE OR HEARD THEM MADE,
BUT AT SPRING MENDING-TIME WE FIND THEM THERE.
I LET MY NEIGHBOUR KNOW BEYOND THE HILL;
AND ON A DAY WE MEET TO WALK THE LINE
AND SET THE WALL BETWEEN US ONCE AGAIN.
WE KEEP THE WALL BETWEEN US AS WE GO.
TO EACH THE BOULDERS THAT HAVE FALLEN TO EACH.
AND SOME ARE LOAVES AND SOME SO NEARLY BALLS
WE HAVE TO USE A SPELL TO MAKE THEM BALANCE:
"STAY WHERE YOU ARE UNTIL OUR BACKS ARE TURNED!"
WE WEAR OUR FINGERS ROUGH WITH HANDLING THEM.
OH, JUST ANOTHER KIND OF OUT-DOOR GAME,
ONE ON A SIDE. IT COMES TO LITTLE MORE:
THERE WHERE IT IS WE DO NOT NEED THE WALL:
HE IS ALL PINE AND I AM APPLE ORCHARD.
MY APPLE TREES WILL NEVER GET ACROSS
AND EAT THE CONES UNDER HIS PINES, I TELL HIM.
HE ONLY SAYS, "GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS."
SPRING IS THE MISCHIEF IN ME, AND I WONDER
IF I COULD PUT A NOTION IN HIS HEAD:
"WHY DO THEY MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS? ISN'T IT
WHERE THERE ARE COWS? BUT HERE THERE ARE NO COWS.
BEFORE I BUILT A WALL I'D ASK TO KNOW
WHAT I WAS WALLING IN OR WALLING OUT,
AND TO WHOM I WAS LIKE TO GIVE OFFENCE.



SOMETHING THERE IS THAT DOESN'T LOVE A WALL,
 THAT WANTS IT DOWN." I COULD SAY "ELVES" TO HIM,
 BUT IT'S NOT ELVES EXACTLY, AND I'D RATHER
 HE SAID IT FOR HIMSELF. I SEE HIM THERE
 BRINGING A STONE GRASPED FIRMLY BY THE TOP
 IN EACH HAND, LIKE AN OLD-STONE SAVAGE ARMED.
 HE MOVES IN DARKNESS AS IT SEEMS TO ME,
 NOT OF WOODS ONLY AND THE SHADE OF TREES.
 HE WILL NOT GO BEHIND HIS FATHER'S SAYING,
 AND HE LIKES HAVING THOUGHT OF IT SO WELL
 HE SAYS AGAIN, "GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS."

ROBERT FROST, NORTH OF BOSTON, 1914

2.2 *A Wall of Convention*



THE WALL, AS FROST SUGGESTS, IS A
 SYMBOL OF CONVENTION: THE HABITUAL
 WAY OF PEOPLE'S MIND AND BEHAVIOUR
 WHICH HINDERS COMMUNICATION. THE TWO
 FARMERS CONSTRUCT A WALL BETWEEN
 THEIR PROPERTIES DESPITE THE FACT
 THAT NEITHER HAVE ANYTHING TO WALL IN
 OR OUT. THE CONVENTIONAL BEHAVIOURS
 IMPOSED BY SOCIETY ARE QUESTIONED.



AS A DIRECT PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF THE CONCEPT, A LARGE TRANSLUCENT WALL WAS TEMPORARILY ERECTED IN THE GALLERIA OF THE UNICENTRE. IT QUESTIONED THE RATIONALE OF A WALL, AS IT OFFERS NO PARTICULAR BARRIER TO LIGHT OR SOUND. SIMILARLY, THE SUBJECTS IN THE PREVIOUS STUDIES AVOIDED CONFRONTATION, DESPITE FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE.







DISCUSSION

Considerations for Improving the Galleria

WHEN DESIGNING PUBLIC SPACES, SOCIAL NORMS MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS A POWERFUL AND INVISIBLE FORCE. VERY OFTEN INDIVIDUALS ARE IMPELLED TO COMPLY TO THIS FORCE, BEHAVING IN ACCEPTED WAYS. THESE LIMITATIONS ARE IMPOSED TO PREVENT CERTAIN ACTIONS. WITHIN AMERICAN CULTURE THE RESPECT FOR PRIVACY HAS BECOME CONVENTIONALIZED, GREATLY REDUCING COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION. THE FEAR IS NOT OF INTERACTION BUT OF THE INITIAL CONFRONTATION.

TO CREATE SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRAL AND MEANINGFUL PUBLIC SPACES, THE SPACE MUST OVERCOME THE NATURAL TENDENCY FOR INDIVIDUALISTIC SEGREGATION-THE BUILDING OF INVISIBLE WALLS. THIS MAY EITHER BE BY FORCEFULLY CREATING INTEGRAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT INSTIGATE INTERACTION OR PROVIDING A COMFORTABLE LEVEL OF PRIVACY THAT NATURALLY DECONSTRUCTS THE WALLS WHICH RESTRICT COMMUNICATION.

