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Access (the modern paradox): a student clinic law hub re-scripting the border between institutional infrastructure and the public realm, in Braamfontein, Johannesburg

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Precedent. Antiquity and Ambiguity.

"We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavor to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously." [1] - T.S. Eliot

"Modernity is not a poetic school but a lineage, a family dispersed over several continents and which for two centuries has survived many sudden changes and misfortunes . . . Because it is a tradition and not a doctrine, it has been able to persist and to change at the same time. This is also why it is so diverse: each poetic adventure is distinct and each poet has sown a miraculous forest of speaking trees. Yet if the works are diverse and each route distinct, what is it that unites all these poets? Not an aesthetic but a search." [2] - Octavio Paz

2.01

Introduction:

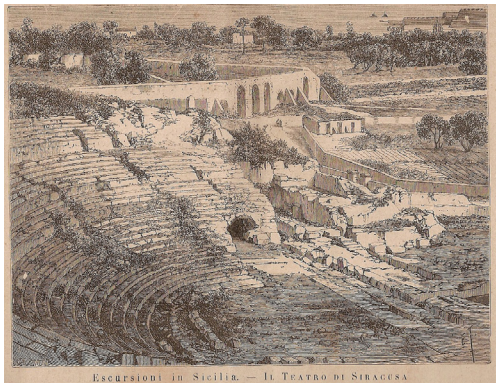
Architecture is an analogous endeavour. What I mean by this is that architectural knowledge - design, form and construction thinking - have been built on and added to throughout history. Building typologies have been added to, tweaked, adjusted and tested. Much like the Law, architecture relies heavily on precedent. In the law's case common law and case law both rely on previous judgements made and litigious decisions. In this chapter I hope to investigate architectures that explore social justice as a way of transcending issues of access and potentially influence my design process and thinking.

Yet, with the study of architectural precedent there is a conflict of transplanted knowledge, where architecture becomes an archaeological re-representation (like that of the portico of Wits' Great Hall[3]) – creating paradox and enforcing a confused symbolism. For this chapter I propose a 'misprison'[4] of precedent – a "creative misreading"[5] of precedent – removing the paradox of transplanted knowledge by creating paradox before the reading has begun.

Teatro Function: Teatro Greco



001. Teatro Greco, Syracuse, Italy. Current condition.







2.03

Teatro Function: Teatro Greco (Greek Theatre) 5th century BC, Syracuse, Italy.

Brief History:

The Teatro Greco belongs to an architectural period of antiquity but its undertones still exists in a modern world. The structure itself has seen many different eras – dating back from Italy's Hellenistic Period, to the Roman theatre Period and in 2014 was scheduled to hold an operatic event – "**Teatro Greco di Siracusa apre alla lirica**"[6] – **The Greek Theatre opens to the Opera**.

Border:

Although the Teatro Greco is ultimately a theatre, architecturally it speaks of hegemony, contest and above all judgement. The predominant focus of the great amphitheatre is the stage. The stage itself is confidently thrust in to the seating and as a space forces it's viewer into making judgement on what they are viewing. The seating, and the viewer to some extent, plays a submissive role spatially but the art being viewed – be it theatre, dance, debate, live music, etc. – relies on the viewers interpretation for it to exist.

These two elements, the stage and the audience, are inseparable to some extent and serve different roles. By looking at the latter first I hope to unpack how relevance is created in the former.

For the sake of understanding the effect of this model – the open air amphitheatre - on Architecture (or vice versa) it is easier to study the progression of the built form. The earliest architectural form of theatre we are aware of happens to be Greek – although storytelling, dance and music are huge parts of African culture (and to be honest any culture that has exist-

002. Drwaing of the Teatro dated 1891 - artist unknown.

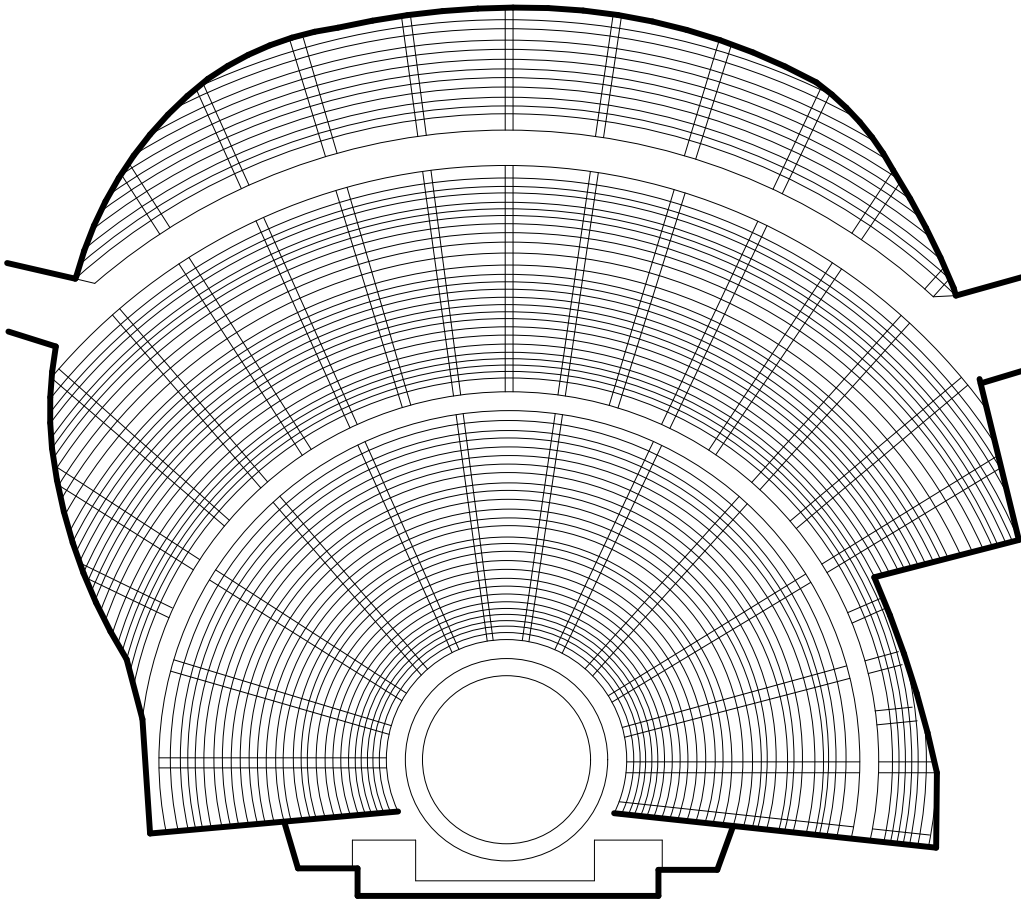
003. In 2012 OMA/AMO reinterpret the theatre's stage for a run of performances

004. Teatro Greco in 2015, a revitilised spectacle.

ed)[7]. The Theatre of Dionysus – apart of the Acropolis complex built in the 5th Century BC – is one of the first know multifunctional spaces for civic display. The Theatre of Dionysus is made up of a circular stage, with a single focal point and a simple fan shaped auditorium – a form that has become synonymous for staging Greek Tragedies. Teatro Greco was a prototype of this model, exported from Greece during the Hellenist rule over Italy (323 BC – 31 BC).

Access, or function: Form + Function

Teatro Greco, much like all theatres of that period, was a civic, open air facility where local people could enjoy theatrical productions with religious overtones – "productions staged in the theatres were religious in content, in service of Dionysis, the God of Drama."[8] The open air amphitheatre facility is the epitome of form being derived from funsction - centuries later, Louis Sullivan's iconic statement:

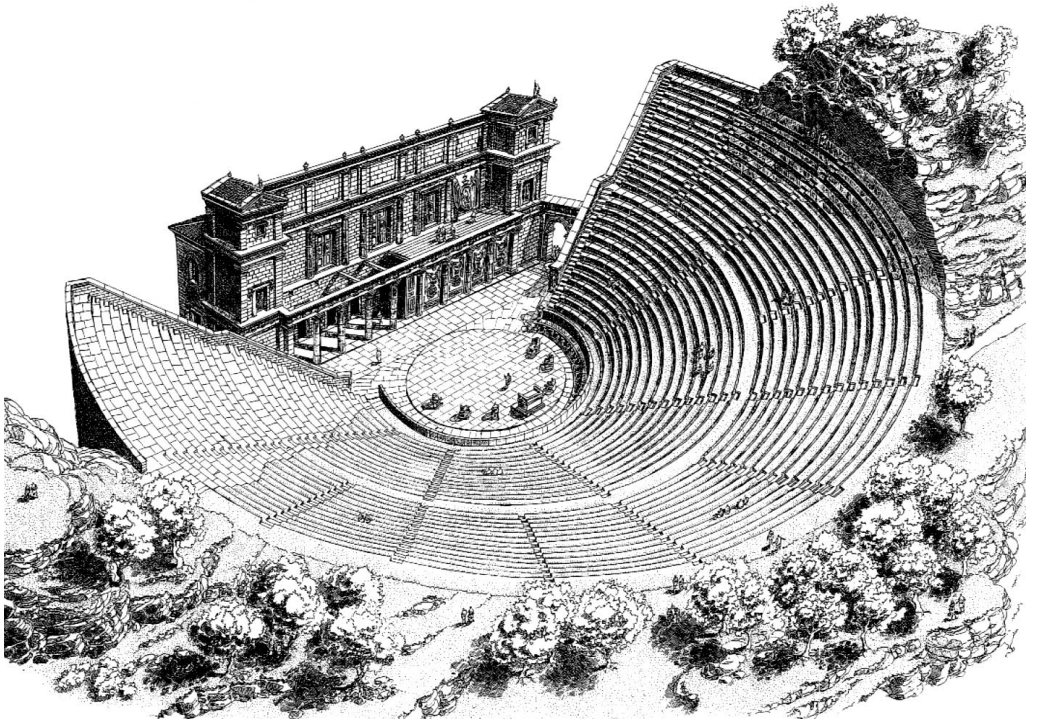


005. Teatro Greco Plan

"**form ever follows function**"[9] would become the decree of Modern Architecture. The cavea - the semi-circular amphitheatre that is cut into the Temenite Hill – is a depiction of social inclusion at a massive scale. According to Cerchiai, Jannelli and Longo – authors of "The Greek Cities of Magna Graecia and Sicily" - The Cavea is: "168m in diameter . . . surrounded by 67 tiers of seating divided into nine segments."[10] The concentric tiers, carved into the southern slope of the hill, hint at social stratification of classes but deals with the equality of uninhibited view (each viewer can see the spectacle without obstruction). This concept of the user being the all important presence would go on to influence not only theatre design but any other spaces that invite judgement.

"The Roman architectural critic Vitruvius appears to have derived his scheme for theatre buildings from this model."[11]

This complex relationship between the audience and the stage has been developed into an architectural standard to ensure fairness, creating what is



006. Typical Greak Theatre Layout

Sight-lines
One of the main parameters in the design of any grandstand or stadium is the desired standard of view for the spectator. More recently with the advent of all-seater stadiums the standard of view to be achieved has become much more important, in that the spectator should not feel the need to stand at key stages in the game to get a satisfactory view of the action. This is established by means of the sight-line calculation, which would generate a typical profile for the seating tier. As shown in the following diagrams a number of solutions can be studied by using alternative values in the calculation.

The factors affecting the calculation of the riser height (N) for the seating tier are:

N = riser height
R = height between eye and the 'point of focus' on the playing field
(the point of focus is often the near touchline)
D = horizontal distance from the eye to 'point of focus'
C = 'C' value (standard of view)
T = depth of seating row
(the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*, published by The Stationery Office, outlines minimum requirements for seat widths and seating row depths).

A worked example to calculate the required riser height for a given 'C' value is given below, using the expression:

$$N = \frac{(R + C) \times (D + T)}{D} - R$$

The analysis of a proposed spectator position 20m from the touchline (D), 5m above the level of the point of focus on the pitch (R), using an 800mm tread depth (T), with the requirement to achieve a 'C' value of 90mm, would give a riser height as follows (all measurements in millimetres):

$$N = \frac{(5000 + 90) \times (20000 + 800)}{20000} - 5000$$

$$= \frac{5090 \times 20800}{20000} - 5000$$

$$= 5293.6 - 5000$$

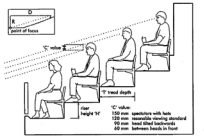
$$= 293.6\text{mm riser height}$$

'C' value = 150mm excellent standard (may be used in the design of racecourse grandstands where many spectators wear hats)
= 120mm good viewing standard
= 90mm reasonable viewing standard, head tilted backwards
= 60mm between heads in row in front

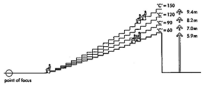
Although the calculation method is simple, in reality the riser heights may have to be calculated many times over as the optimum solution for the section is investigated. For any change in the factors affecting the calculation of the riser height, the calculations for each row would have to be repeated.

Method of calculation The parameters that have an effect on the profile of the section resulting from the sight-line calculations are illustrated in the diagrams and set out below.

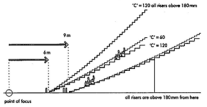
(1) The point of focus should first be established. This is often the near touchline or goal-line for end stands. However, with multipurpose stadiums accommodating a number of sports (e.g. an athletics track around the playing field), the point of focus may need to be adjusted to provide satisfactory viewing standards for both sports. As shown in the diagrams, moving the profile closer to the point of focus results in a steeper rake and an increase in height which may be unacceptable.
(2) The 'C' value then needs to be determined and again as can be seen in the diagrams alternative values can have a significant affect on the profile of the seating tier.
In a new design a 'C' value of 90mm is an ideal starting point; however, in larger stadiums it is



11 Stadiums: viewing standards

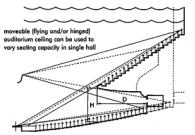


12 Stadiums: changing 'C' values (1)

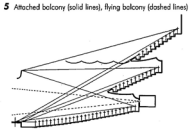


13 Stadiums: changing 'C' values (2), showing the effect of changing seating into standing

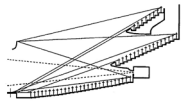
007. Sightline Calculations



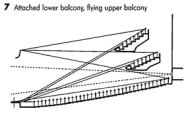
5 Attached balcony (solid lines), flying balcony (dashed lines)



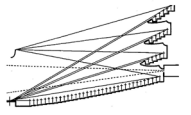
6 Two attached balconies



7 Attached lower balcony, flying upper balcony



8 Two flying balconies

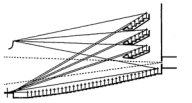


9 Three attached balconies

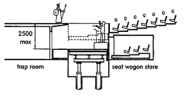
The auditorium longitudinal sections shown (**5—10**) have the same numbers of rows.

The maximum recommended D:H for balcony overhangs is 1:1 for concerts and 2:1 for opera and drama. Flying balconies may allow a greater D:H ratio by allowing reverberant energy to reach rear seats from behind. Balcony overhangs must be positioned clear of projection beams. The sight-line angle from the balcony to the stage should be no more than 30° and the last rows should have clear sight-lines to the central speaker cluster.

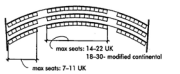
Convex and irregular surfaces aid sound diffusion. Domes, vaults and other large concave surfaces may cause acoustic problems.



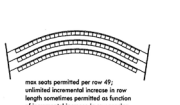
10 Three flying balconies



11 Typical orchestra pit lift detail

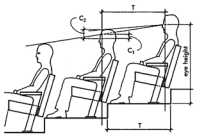


12 Multiple aisle detail

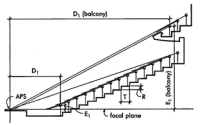


13 'Continental' seating

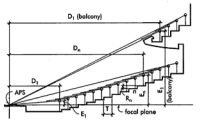
008. Sightline Calculations



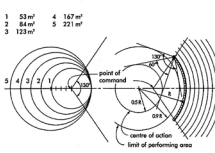
14 Typical seated spectator



15 Constant rise floor slopes



16 Isicidomal floor slopes



17 Range of performing area **18** Relationship between performing area and seating **19** Viewing angle fields from stage opening

SIGHT-LINES
14 shows a typical seated spectator:
eye height: 1120 ± 100mm
tread of seating tier (row spacing) T: 800–1150mm
head clearance C:
C_1 = 60mm minimum (view between heads in front)
C_2 = 120mm (reasonable viewing standards)
Rise E (see **15**): difference in height between adjacent seating platforms.

Floor slopes (see 15, 16)
The ontied point of sight (APS) is the intersection of the highest sight-line at a focal plane positioned 50mm above the stage platform. Distance D is the horizontal distance from the eye of a seated spectator to the APS.
D_1 = distance from eye of front row to APS
D_n = distance from eye of given row n to APS
Elevation E is the vertical height of the eye of a seated spectator above the focal plane.
E_1 = vertical height of eye of first row above focal plane
E_n = vertical height of eye of given row n above focal plane
E_1 = 0 establishes maximum stage height allowable (i.e. 1060mm)

With a constant rise floor slope (see **15**) the sight-lines from rows are parallel and the APS is determined by the intersection of the sight-line from the last or highest row at the focal plane.

$$R = \frac{T}{D_1}\left[E_1 + (N-1) + C\right] \qquad D_1 = \frac{T}{R-C}\left[E_1 + (N-1)\,C\right]$$

$$E_1 = \frac{D_1}{T}(R - C) - C(N-1)$$

N = number of rows in seat bank

With an isicidomal floor slope (see **16**) more efficient use is made of the given total rise. The exponential shape of the floor results from the generation of sight lines a single focal point or APS.

$$E_n = D_1\left[\frac{E_1}{D_1} + C\left(\frac{1}{D_1} + \frac{1}{D_2} + \frac{1}{D_3} + \cdots + \frac{1}{D_{n-1}}\right)\right] \qquad R_n = E_n - E_{n-1}$$

The type and scale of performance will dictate the range of performing area sizes (see **17**). It may be desirable for performing space to accommodate a variety of performing area sizes. Containment of the audience within a 120° peripheral spread of vision from a performer at the point of command will help promote maximum visual and aural communication between the performer and the spectators.

The largest performing area should fall within a boundary defined by the 120° angle of peripheral of vision from seats at ends of the front rows (see **18**). The limit of the centre of action is defined by a 60° angle of normal, accurate, polychromatic vision from seats at ends of the front rows. The point of command should logically fall within the centre of action.

The boundary limit of the seating area in an auditorium might be defined by a given constant angle of peripheral spread of vision to the sides of given stage openings. Limits of both 30° and 40° angles of peripheral spread of vision related to various openings are illustrated in **19**.

009. Sightline Calculations

considered as: "the desired standard of view for the spectator."[12] This has impacted the design of theatres, stadiums and cinemas though the invention of **sightline calculations** serving as a parametric manipulation of mathematic calculations and seating arrangements.

Current Condition, and Architectures Role: Form + Function + Disjunction

The thrust stage is sunken into the southern slope of the mountain and is surrounded by the above mentioned raked seating. Although nonexistent today, the stage was backed by Skenê.[13] The skenê, or scene building, was actually the only physical building form in the theatre and was used as a backdrop. The stage is, or was, a platform for performance but the skenê gave the act context. In this case architecture was used in two very different ways, the one being; as infrastructure for viewing, and the other; being a decorative datum. This decorative da-



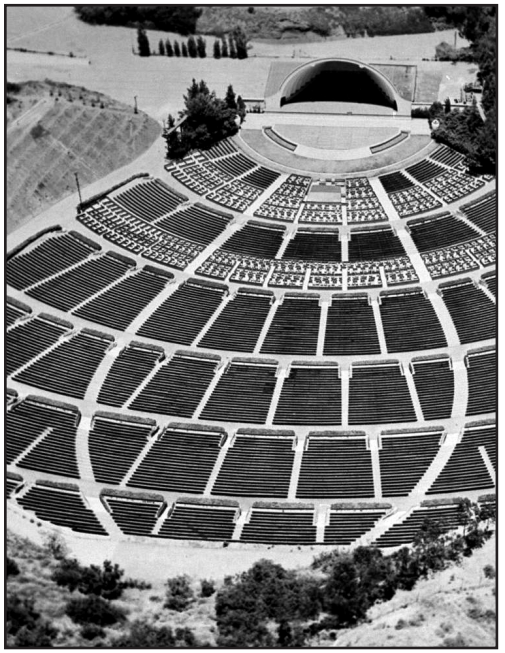
010. Skenê in decay at the Teatro Antico di Taormina, Sicily, Italy.



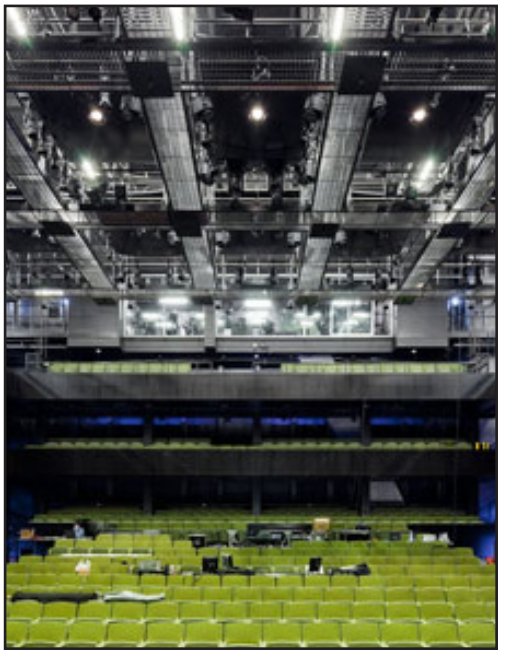
011. Modern Skenê Aldo Rossi's playful theatre concept.



012. Removal of the Skenê... Audience as the Skenê.







tum allowed the viewer to connect the content of the performance, or deliberation, with that specific time period, or possible regime. The architecture – the decorative datum – manipulated the observer's understanding of the art in front of them. The visible architecture, the sk nê, could only have created disjuncture – the structure would have taken on transplanted Grecian aesthetics.

Influence:

Theatre, much like political forum, itself became a privileged spectacle when Vitruvius forced it into a building. Can political forum return to the "street"? I hope to return this prestigious form back to the use of the public.

With advances in technology and access to the internet, anyone with a mobile device has the ability to leave a comment. Yet there aren't any places accessible to the public for discussion around the law, where academics, students and the "person off the street" can come together and exchange ideas on the law (of the day).

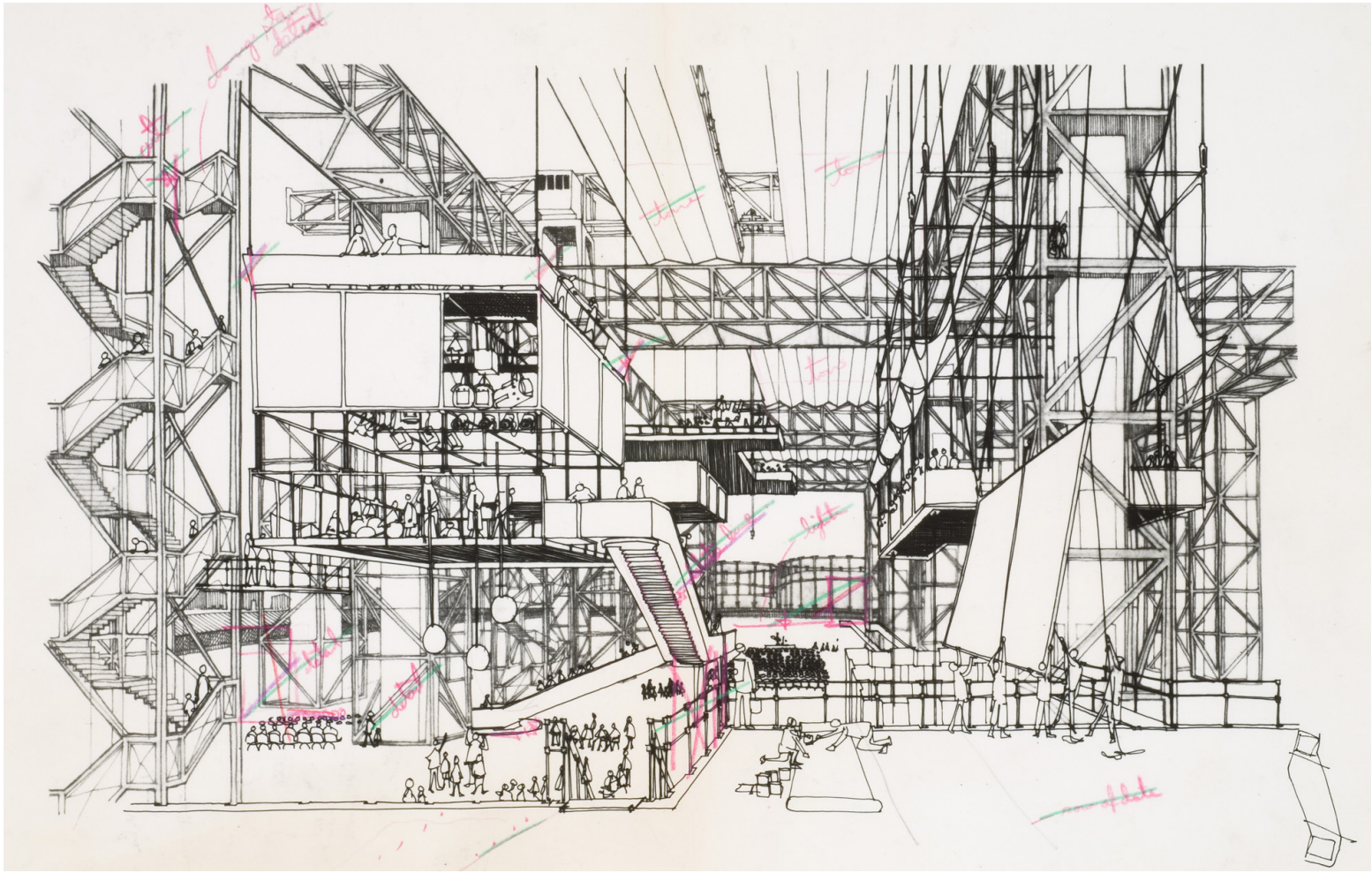
Facade, or skenê, was used to context. Yet, it is arguable that context is both ambiguous and completely loaded. What really is context? Is context just site? Is a political infrastructure context? Context in the 21st Century is a blur, a moiré; a mesh of ideals and lists of words announced by the prefix "socio." The greatest gesture was for the skenê to dissolve, context was driven back to site and place. The facade becomes the first point of access of the building.

013. The Hollywood Bowl

014. Modern Theatre Skenê

015. Wyly Theatre - REX/OMA

Palace WOW: Fun Palace



2.010

016. Fun Palace (1961-1964), Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood, UK



017. Cedric Price, Architect and educator.

2.011



018. Joan Littlewood, director and "Mother of Modern Theatre."

Palace WOW: Fun Palace (1961-1964), Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood, UK.

Brief History:

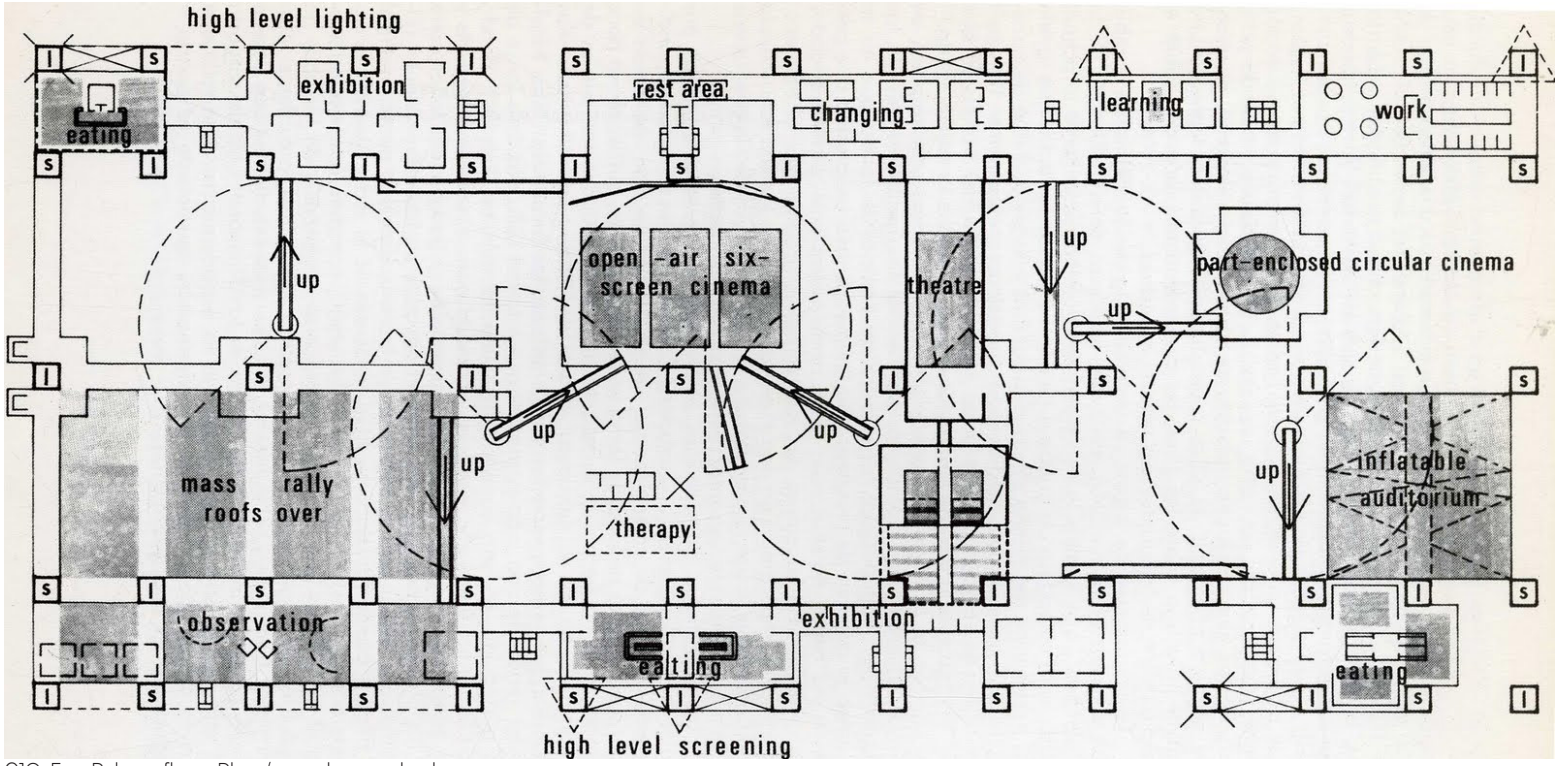
The Fun Palace, by architect and educator Cedric Price, is a radical form of socially driven architecture. The project was seen as an antidote to the mundane everyday life in England in the 1960's. The design generators for the project where about creating a space where the general public could interact with one another, interact and manipulate the architecture, and the desired outcome would create a post-modern heterotopia. The Fun Palace would become social condenser.

Border, or Social Agitator:

In an article for the May issue of New Scientist, in 1964, Price discusses the ambitions of the Fun Palace;

"This complex, which enables self-participatory education and entertainment, can only work -and then for only a finite time -if it is not accessible to those living and working in the immediate neighbourhood but also, through its varied communication links, accessible as a regional and national amenity.[14]"

Cedric Price's Fun Palace relied on both; the immediate community interaction, as well as the experimental, once-off spatial organisation that the structure could provide. The strength of the project relied very much on the mix of 'real' program and participatory program, and the structures adaptability to new spatial relationships. When referring to 'real' program I am talking about the typical program of an entertainment complex; the theatre, auditorium, exhibition spaces, eateries, and so on. The participatory program is where the project gains its peculiar appeal, in what Joan Littlewood – an English theatre director hailed as the 'Mother of Modern Theatre' and Price's collaborator on the Fun Palace project



019. Fun Palace floor Plan (complete with elevators that spin on axis).

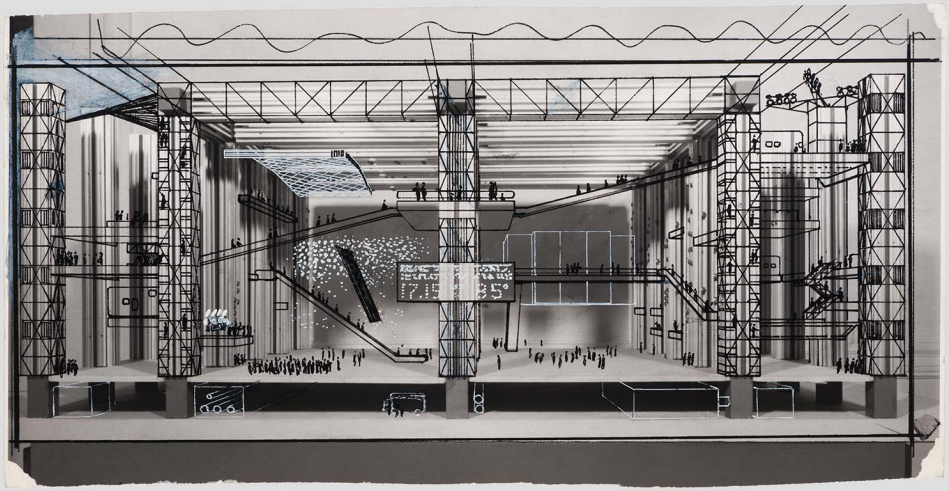
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– describes as; "a fun arcade where one could enjoy mechanical tests such as commonly conducted by psychologists and technicians,[15]" as well as spaces where the public could interact and create art, music or just simply observe. The project was highly ambitious, as Price had designed the building to be 'expendable and changeable', and ultimately was never built. Price discussed it as a multifunctional space that challenged how people interact with architecture and how architecture could react to interaction.

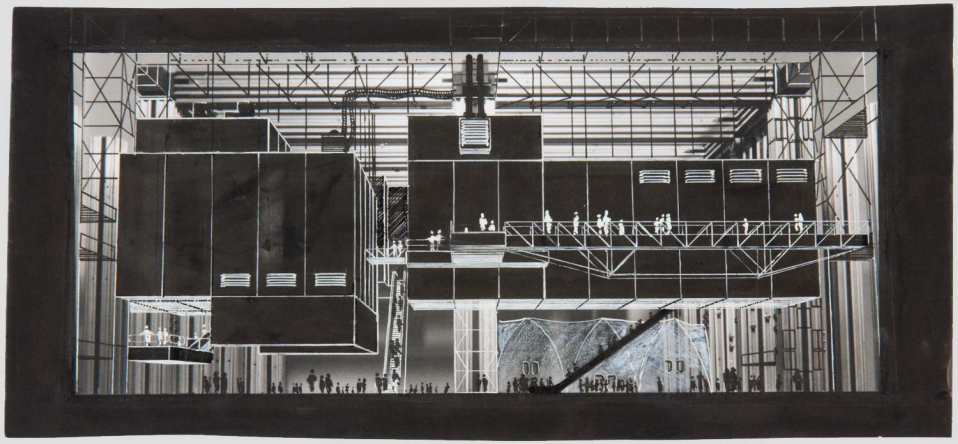
"The organisation of space and the objects occupying it should, on the one hand, challenge the participants' mental and physical dexterity and, on the other, allow for flow of space and time, in which passive and active pleasure is provoked.[16]"

Spectacle as Transgressor:

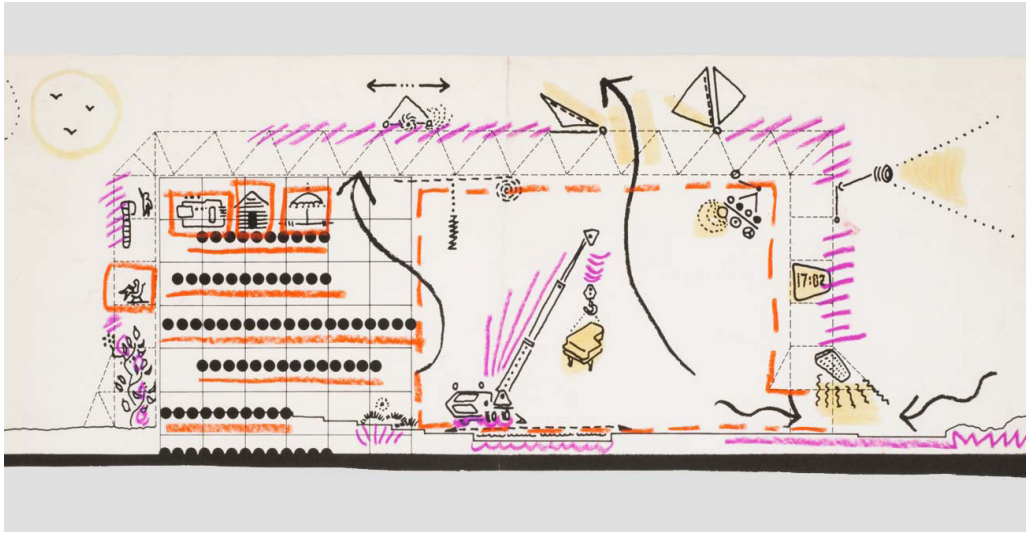
The project was ultimately designed as an Amusement Park that its users would unwittingly take part not only in the act of creating art but ultimately in the making of the architecture. Although the basis for the project was for it to be tactile in its function it was also designed to have a 10 year life span. The Fun Palace would sit on a specific site, in a specific time (frame),



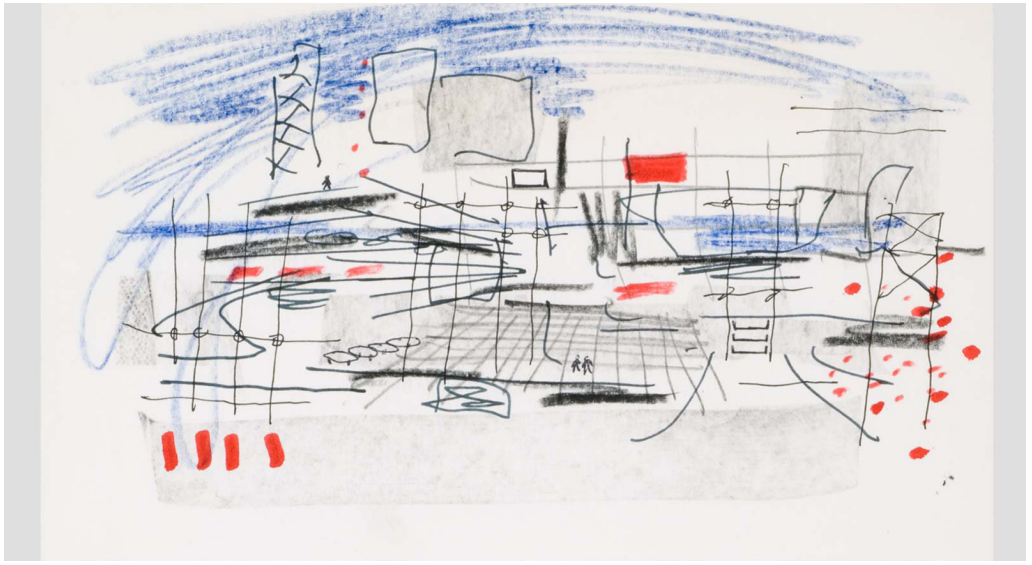
020. Fun Palace Perspectival Section



021. Fun Palace Perspectival Elevation



022. Fun Palace concept sketch



023. Fun Palace concept sketch

users would move through the space and the space would gradually change, over time, and possibly on returning after a day, week, or month, the spatial arrangement would have changed. Distance (time and physical) becomes critical in understanding the change as a memory-making device but also a social generator. People who shared the same experience of the Fun Palace on a specific day can discuss it, or others who experienced it on another day, or maybe even the same day but from another point of view, can say how it affected them. The work is less of an amusement park, like those of today that are gauche and suffer with time, and more of a social experiment where the only outcome is learning – be it from experience or one of the many programmed spaces

Arata Isozaki, a Japanese Metabolist and Architect, writes – in an essay on Cedric Price - that today's amusement parks have become mute because their program and structure is too fixed.

"...where the present day amusement park itself is but an enlargement of what formally was a travelling fair, now fixed in one location. Though as soon it was fixed in place, the everyday life of the community became monotonous; the plazas and parks lost any special significance, and a means of exchanging news with the outside world was received via broadcast message.[17]"

2.015

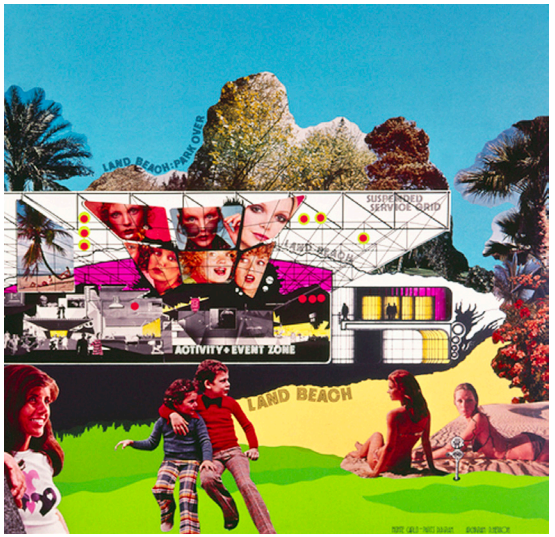
Social Influence, and Architectures Role:

Despite the fact that the Fun Palace was never built aspects of the building have been used as precedent for more recent architectural projects. Arata Isozaki's Osaka Expo '70 Festival plaza takes its cues from the Fun Palace, as does Archigram's Monte Carlo competition entry, and more recently Atelier Bow-Wow's BMW Guggenheim Lab. The BMW Guggenheim Lab described as;

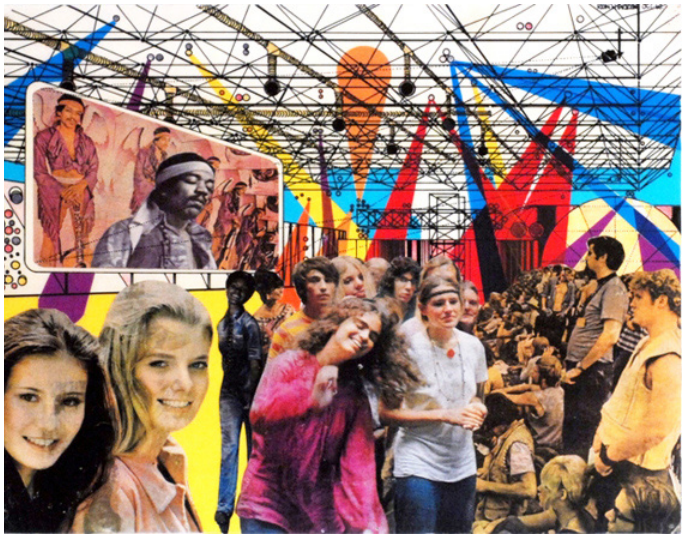
"A mobile laboratory about urban life . . . Part urban think tank, part community



024. Arata Isozaki's Osaka Expo '70 Festival plaza



025. Archigram's Monte Carlo competition entry

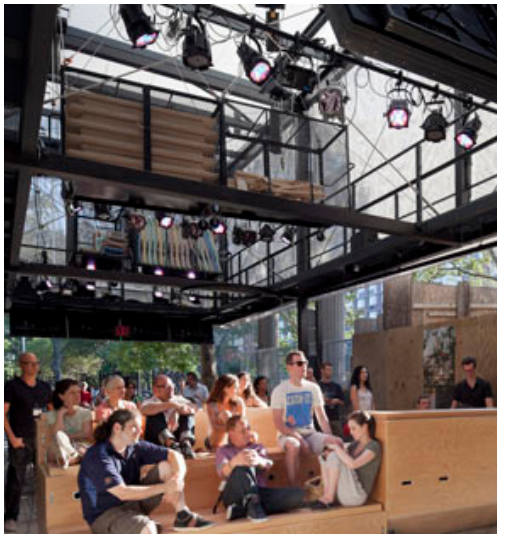


026. Archigram's Monte Carlo competition entry

2.017



027. Atelier Bow-Wow's BMW Guggenheim Lab.



028. Atelier Bow-Wow's BMW Guggenheim Lab



029. Atelier Bow-Wow's BMW Guggenheim Lab

centre and public gathering space, the Lab's goal was the exploration of new ideas, experimentation, and ultimately the creation of forward-thinking visions and projects for city life."[18]

The BMW Guggenheim Lab achieved what Price's Fun Palace imagined (just on a much smaller scale). The architecture vanished into infrastructure, and what was left was a place for social and intellectual exchange. What architecture is visible is light in appearance, as the carbon fibre structure allowed the Lab to be lightweight but durable, and versatile. The 'roof' structure concealed the furnishings of space – tables, chairs, exhibition stands – that would mechanically drop down from the ceiling to create a multitude of programmable spaces. The BMW Guggenheim Lab also achieves the "sitelessness" that Price and Littlewood were hoping to achieve – The Lab first opened in New York and then moved to Berlin and ended its tour in Mumbai.

Ultimately architecture to an extent has to be fixed, but can remain open ended. The groups of Archigram and the like explored the ideas of walking cities, while the Isozaki explored the extravagance of unrestricted program. There is a comfort in architecture being fixed, that when dealing with specific groups of people that it offers the idea of protection and permanence in a time, for them, that might seem turbulent. I think tactility of space, that Price and Littlewood were exploring, offers for an opportunity for architecture to step back from being the spectacle and human interaction becomes the spectacle. In terms of Heidegger's space/place conundrum, the spectacle of space (the built interface) retreats and the place becomes the spectacle.

The architecture had no facade – the only form of enclosure was around the programmed spaces rather than the greater architectural statement. The architecture became an infrastructure, and moments were freed up by the strong column grid and open space made for chance encounters and groups to gather. Without a facade the building becomes ambiguous,

there is no defining feature of where the building starts or where designed space begins.

Influence:

The freedom of open, tactile space and spaces that have the abilities to re-appropriate with needs of the user are imperative to free up an architecture that can be very controlling – with reference to the current Legal Clinic and Norton Rose Fullbright offices. This can be interpreted in terms of users being able to crate comfortable situations for sharing and expressing their legal situation without being on constant display. It is important to invest in an architecture that gives the user choice rather than dictating how they should interact within the space. Yet, levels of tactility have to be balanced s many of the users of a Law Clinic are often marginalised, emotional and uncomfortable – the balance of openness and the ability to close space (rather than closed space) is crucial in creating a forum where people are open to interaction.

Social Gang: The Arcus Center



2.020

030. Arcus Centre for Social Justice Leadership (2014), Kalamazoo College, Michigan, USA, Studio Gang.



031. Jeanne Gang, Architect.



032. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran, President of Kalamazoo College.



033. Jon Stryker, Philanthropist, Architect and Founder of the Arcus Foundation.

Social Gang: Arcus Centre for Social Justice Leadership (2014), Kalamazoo College, Michigan, USA, Studio Gang.

Brief History:

The Arcus Centre for Social Justice Leadership, designed by Studio Gang, is a culmination of the social ideals of the Kalamazoo College in Michigan, the Arcus Foundation's Social Justice Program and an architectural intervention. The University of Michigan acts as an anchor, as it holds the architecture and socially sensitive program together. The University has a commitment to social justice, and prides itself on the foundation set out by its creators James and Lucinda Stone in 1833.

The Arcus Foundation, created by Jon Stryker (a trained architect and Kalamazoo College alumni), offers grants for "innovative ideas that advance informed and engaged communities"[19] particularly in the area of Social Justice, especially for programs involved in LGBT communities, as well as programs that commit to ape conservation. The Arcus Foundation offers funding for: "general operating support, project support for specific programs, public policy and research, capital projects and capacity building."[20]

Access:

Both institutions, the Kalamazoo College and Arcus Foundation, are centred on open discussion and the creation of a new knowledge base through exchange. The College created an interesting program called "deliberative dialogues" whereby these values could be at observed and tested.

"The process centred around two framing questions "What is social justice?" and "What does a socially just campus look like?" The goals of the dialogues included developing a shared understanding of the term "social justice," generating a shared vision of Kalamazoo College as a socially just community, developing a plan for achieving that vision, and modelling exemplary practices of social dialogue and deliberation." [21]

Discussion and exchange is, quite literally, at the heart of the Arcus Centre for Social Justice Leadership. The central spine is configured like a beaded necklace of discussion spaces. In an interview with Reed Miller, for Frame Magazine, Jeanne Gang (founder of Studio Gang) spoke of making the invisible visible by addressing 'discussion' as a design driver.

"Looking back to the civil rights movement in the US, we found that the planning for many of the most important marches and social justice movements took place around someone's kitchen table, in someone's living room, or in the basement of a small church. Dr. Martin Luther King strategised peaceful protests in the basement of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, for example. When we interviewed Arcus Center staff, Kalamazoo College students, and community organisers, they wanted this important work of social justice to become visible and felt it deserved to come up out of the basement. But at the same time, we



034. Interior discussion space - light, bright and informal.

thought that introducing the domestic elements of the kitchen, fireplace, and hearth into the centre of the space would help people feel comfortable so they could more easily have conversations about difficult issues."[22]

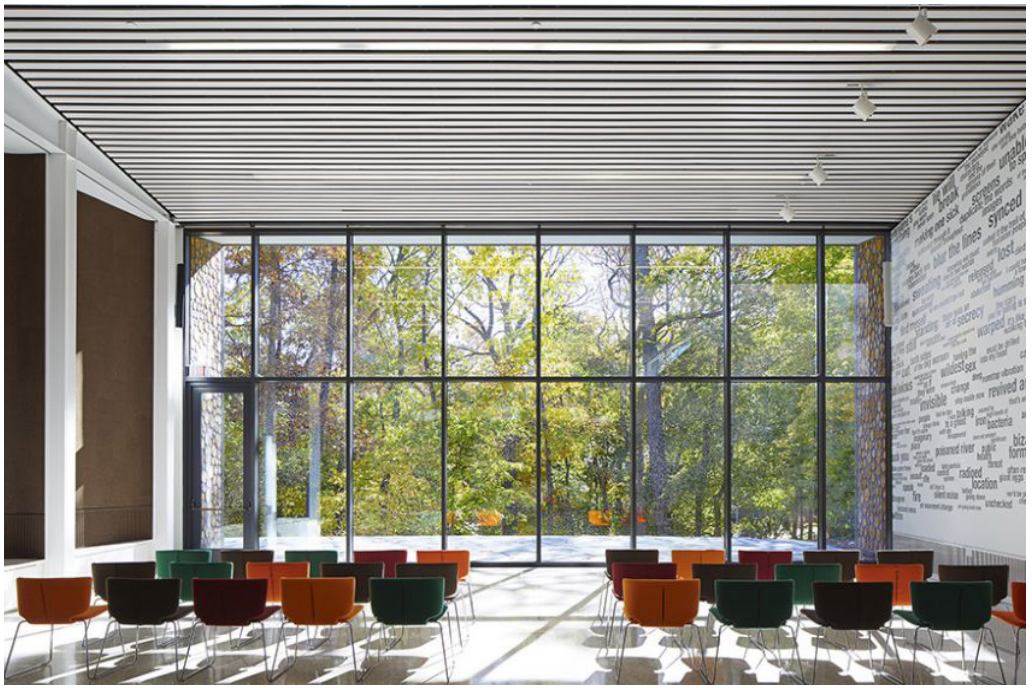
Border, a Wall or Opportunity:

2.023

The structure is a single storey, steel framed construction with curved cordwood[23] facades. The Centre's bold Y-shaped form creates visual connections out towards the College campus, local neighbourhood and adjacent woods, in a hope to connect community, education and nature. The Arcus Centre for Social Justice Leadership at its basis is architecture used to generate intervention and interaction. Meeting spaces interfere with programmed work spaces, forcing interaction among users. The Y-shaped plan accommodates non-hierarchical communal functions a long its spines – with the focus being an amoeba shaped discussion pit. Niches, for more sensitive discussions and interactions, are set into the



035. Curved Cordwood facade.



036. Internal lecture space - no blackboard but a connection to nature.

external walls. In an article for the New York Times, architecture critic, Michael Kimmelman wrote:

"Imagine a log cabin the Jetsons ordered from the 2062 Whole Earth Catalog, and you start to get the picture . . . What makes the building special is partly the novel form, which grows straight out of the center's ambitions. It's also the element of handicraft (those cordwood masonry exteriors) when so much marquee architecture leans on high-tech materials and 3-D printing . . . Mostly the center's design is laudable simply for being eloquent and humane."[24]

The timber facade not only used for aesthetic purposes but for a connection to place. The surrounding site is heavily wooded and the construction technique was imported from earlier settlers in the area - which makes timber a wise choice for blending in to the setting. Materiality and tectonics played a pivotal role in the design and construction process. The timber

2.025



037. Community joins in to build the cordwood facade.



038. Facade going up.



039. Each piece of timber has its own identity.

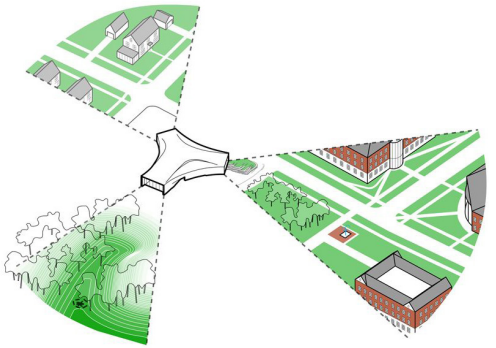
facade has biophilic properties and offers high performance for a humble, low-tech material. The Principle behind the construction is no different to that of a cavity wall:

"In addition to the wood, which is 11 inches deep, and a 1½-inch cavity, the exterior enclosure also includes continuous insulation, air and waterproof barriers, and a stud wall. Like a typical brick cavity wall, it also has weep holes. The entire system is almost 2 feet deep and provides a thermal resistance of R 30.25—an insulation value that comfortably surpasses the minimum set by the code."[25]

The interior space is stark white, with accent walls of warm hues, and is flooded with natural light. Although the cordwood facade cannot be felt from the interior, except for circular porthole windows mimicking the pattern



040. Floor Plan.



041. Connections created by the center - Community, university, nature.

of the randomly stacked white cedar logs, the three terraces on the extremities of the Y-shaped plan look outside. The construction of the wall proved tedious and time consuming but gives the building, as Kimmelman wrote, a "handcrafted quality" and humbleness.

Social justice, or more so equality of roles, was further explored in the construction process. In a mini-documentary, Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran - President of the Kalamazoo College – states that there was a quest for diversity among subcontractors by including people of colour, women and people of different sexual orientations[26], in jobs, or part of the building process, that is usually reserved for males.

Influence:

The Spatial planning of the Arcus Center is very interesting, it reserves large open space for discussion and interaction while smaller, private spaces allow for 1:1 interaction. The private spaces are tucked in to the edges of the building allowing for anonymity of the user. The more open spaces are centred on discussion and connection. The planning revolves around how people interact, the furnishing that allow for different types of interaction and the situations that are created.

The Arcus Center's use of form is interesting. At first glance the extreme cantilevers and odd shape could be mistake for Architects Ego but is actually quite the opposite. The form draws connections to the University, Suburbia and the neighbouring forest. I hope to create connections with the Arts Precinct, the Technology building south of my site, the University and street.

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