



CHILDREN OF THE  
NEON **MIRAGE**:

PROXIMITY, DURATION AND  
HOMUNCULI SPACE

by Bradley Wehrman

Children of the Neon Mirage:  
Proximity, Duration &  
Homunculi Space

A Design Thesis Submitted to the  
Department of Architecture Landscape Architecture  
of North Dakota State University

By

Bradley J. Wehrman

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Architecture

  
Primary Thesis Advisor

  
Thesis Committee Chair

August 2011  
Fargo, North Dakota



NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION  
By signing and submitting this lic  
I, Bradley Wehrman (the author(s  
Dakota State University (NDSU) tl  
translate (as defined below), and,  
the abstract) worldwide in print a  
dium, including but not limited to  
I agree that NDSU may, without c  
mission to any medium or forma  
I also agree that NDSU may keep  
for purposes of security, back-up  
I represent that the submission is  
right to grant the rights containe  
submission does not, to the best  
one's copyright.

If the submission contains materi  
represent that I have obtained th  
right owner to grant NDSU the ri  
such third-party owned material  
within the text or content of the s  
IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UP  
SORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AC  
THAN NDSU, I REPRESENT THAT  
REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS  
AGREEMENT.

NDSU will clearly identify my nan  
submission, and will not make an  
this license, to my submission.

  
Signature

# Table of Contents

Thesis Abstract	5
Problem Statment	6
Statement of Intent	7
Proposal	11
User Client/Description	14
Site Info	15
Project Emphasis/Plan for Proceeding	19
Studio	20
Theoretical Premise Research	21
Typological Research	29
Historical Context	41
Thesis Goals	47
Site Analysis	49
Space Allocation	59
Reference List	60
Design Solution	62

5  
6  
7  
11  
14  
15  
19  
20  
21  
29  
41  
47  
49  
59  
60  
62

This thesis seeks to investigate the relationship of the philosophical ideas of proximity and duration as they relate to architectural expression and representation. In design, linguistic and visual expression and their digital counterparts (command line interface and graphical interface) will be discussed in concert, as they present our "image" of cyberspace and perception of time. The proximity to the body of objects that enable "use" or interface with cyberspace will be the narrative vehicle. The study of these factors as they relate to multiplicity will be the oblique angle from which to enter a discourse into architectural meaning.

## Problem Statement

Who is this near-future inhabitant that we are to anticipate through design?



## Statement of Intent

## T Y P O L O G Y

Hotel and Public Pavillion

## C L A I M

The interface with cyberspace through objects injected or implanted into the human body or behavioral patterns have redefined nature and the way we perceive inhabitable space (proximity), time (duration) and context (memory).

## P R E M I S E S

The social conditions and groundwork for the dominion of cyberspace have been established through infornography and the inability of mankind to keep checks and balances on technological advancements.

The exponential increase of trends that detain "nature" and consequentially our children (the future) are symptomatic of a pervasive latching onto the present as the only viable currency or measure of value. The cyclic and linear dimensions of time must be acknowledged simultaneously.

The *techné* of today, driven by the positivist model, propels "nature" into limbo. This "no man's land" is where the ethical questions of recognizing what is human and non-human arise.

The singling out of sight as the principal human sense is evident in its necessity to process and transmit complex concepts and behaviors (memes) quickly and effectively through visual media. The way inhabitable space is perceived and how space evokes memory has shifted with the writing of visual information in a collective computerized "memory."

## U N I F Y I N G I D E A

As the territory of scientism has expanded into every facet of human experience, the act of making "solid" out of ephemeral digitized information (as a restorative process) becomes increasingly necessary to begin to grasp the intangibility of what has been "lost" or "left behind" in translation.

## P R O J E C T

## J U S T I F I C A T I O N

An ethical stewarding of resources and materials can only be achieved in a revived "being" where the unfettered consumption of "things" and information not necessary for survival are found to only inhibit a mutual recognition with the "other," and consequentially is inimical to that which is unique to being human. Social conditions for the blurring of culture and ideologies through deconstructing space and "nature" are the stripping away of the maternal part of the unbalanced equation.



# Proposal

The site is the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong. The one square mile island city has been the site of confluences of East and West for the duration of the 20th century. Densely populated through high and mid-rise dwellings, the city was forced to grow up instead of out. Beginning in the 60s and 70s with energy crises, Japan and parts of China established their grasp on cutting edge mass-produced technologies. Hong Kong is situated in a pivotal nexus, being the most profitable and trafficked port city in the world. Issues of public health and medicine have been a constant concern with burgeoning populations and dense inhabitation. Home to some of the oldest traditions and histories in the world, the advent of industrialization and technologies has created a face of the city.

What does that face look like?

## Proposal Narrative

A "city" or "community" has been established that cannot be walked into, driven into, or visited via airplane. It has enveloped the world in a net, imperceptible. This "bodynet" or more aptly described as a sling that carries all of our heads simultaneously cannot be tasted, touched, seen or be removed after the bone has been reset. But is there a bone or injury that needed to be tended to?

I met a homeless man who asked me, "If we had a world with no women, what would we have?" My being taken aback only lasted an instant, to and I replied, "A prison for nothing." This premise in combination with the groundwork layed by numerous science fiction stories that describe the esoteric and arcane consequences of what happens when male and female meld through intercourse in cyberspace is important when concerning ourselves with what the Hegelian portrait of the future world-citizen looks like. The proximity of objects for cyberspace "use" or interface, or more alarming, the possibility of injecting nano-machines for direct "interface" with the human nervous and vascular system renders the body as a vehicle for the mind. Gilles Deleuze offers a philosophy of action. He calls for a zealous "taking of accounts" of our technocratic world to discern what, in the machinations of our lives, is human and non-human. "From difference comes identity."

The firing of synapses, memory and the consciousness of the city are becoming blurred into one big smudge. This thinking smudge is predicated on precept of time as linear. While man glorifies the dominion of "nature," we parade our concern for the planet and fellow man through feigned bleeding hearts. Returning to Plato's *Timaeus* for a vision of the perfect rhythm of "nature" as a model or template for man to measure ourselves against (as we are indivisible from nature), sets up an ethical standard of kinds and types of humans. A spectrum containing those who live as animalistic brutes and those who aspire to live as gods. This spectrum shifted from animal-man-God to machine-man-God. The smoothing over or homogenization that is afforded by the expansion of the technologic territory is flattening or "graying" the spectrum under the guise of "unifying" humanity. Whatever part of humanity that is so arrogant to think that we can attain something infinite is bound to be the instruments of their own demise. The Tower of Babel. The Flood. Atlantis. Gilgamesh. These myths shrouded in mystery all chronicle man's pursuit of something beyond our grasp, both physical and mentally. How do we engage the complexity and contradiction of divided representation? If the atmosphere of the chora is a desert, as Derrida claims, where do we get water?

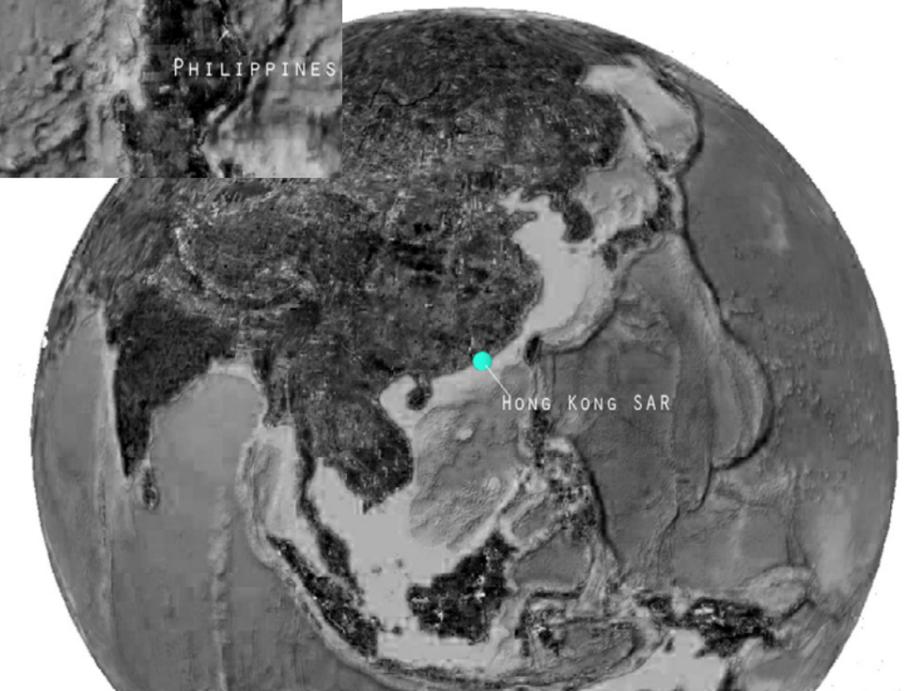
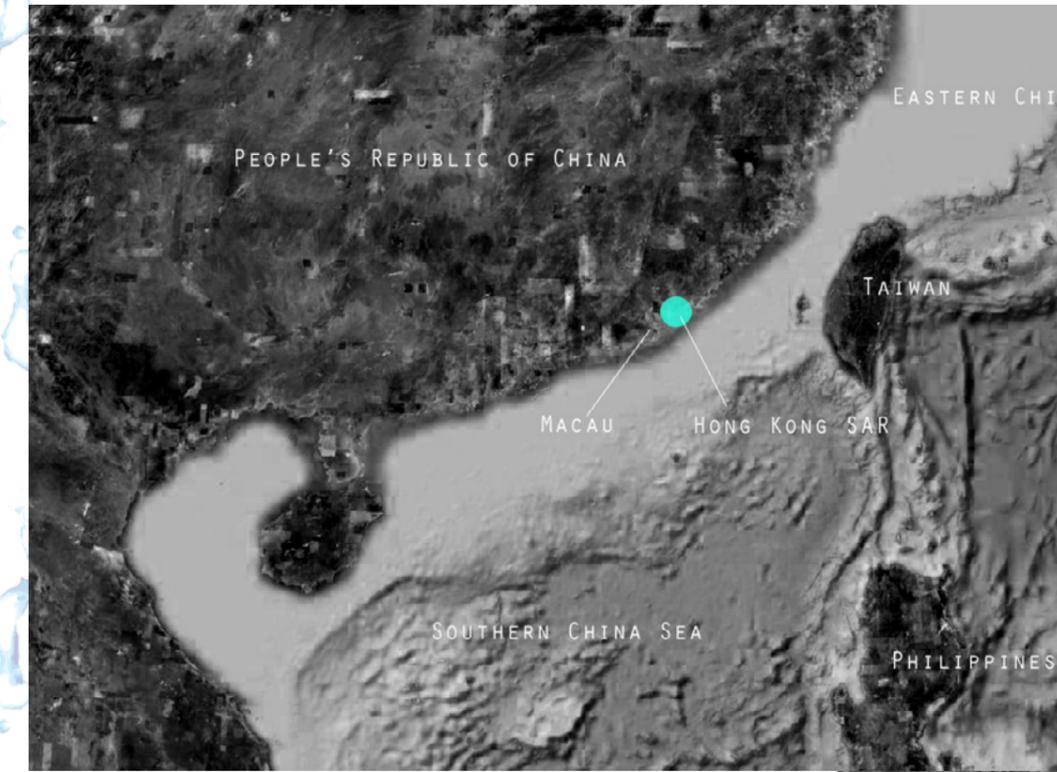
# User/Client Profile

The initial clients are described as international patrons for the hotel and local citizens for the restaurant, theater and pavilion space.

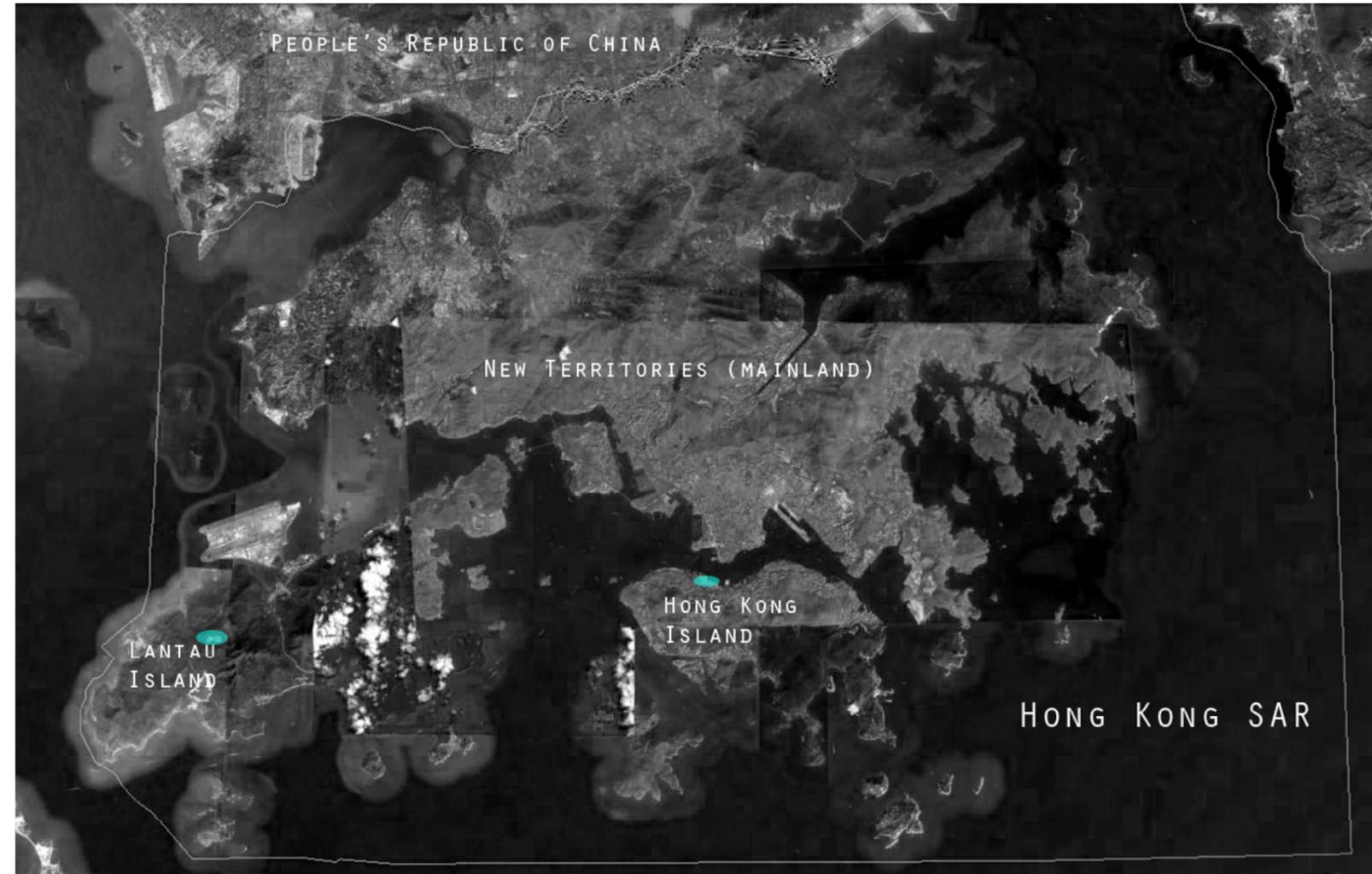
# Project Elements

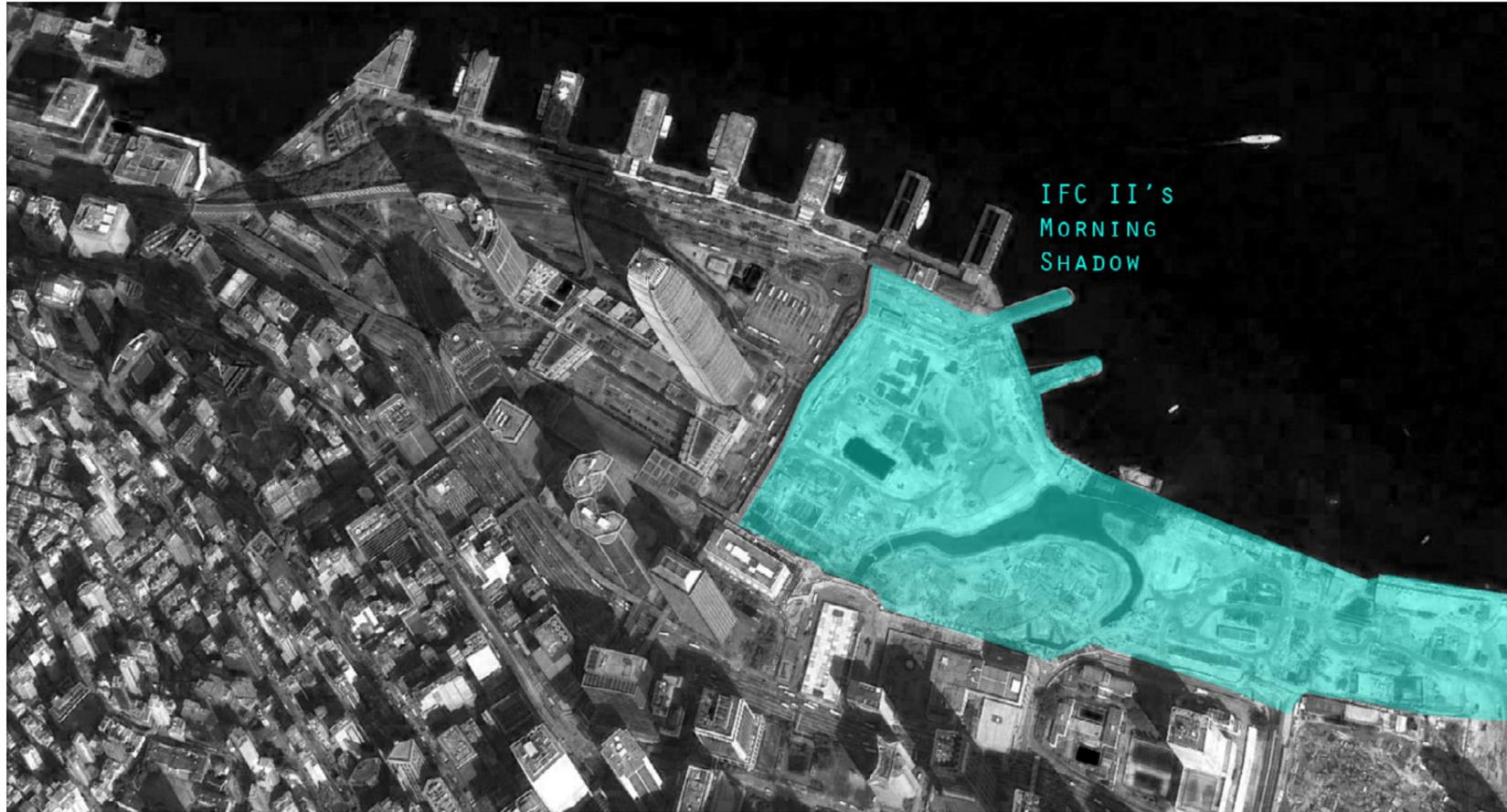
- Pavillion
- Theater
- Concierge
- Parking
- Hotel

## Site Info



# Site Info (cont.)





## Project Emphasis

### Direction

Struggling to grasp the trends of the logician as architect, through moving back and forth between model making, drawing, video, material investigations and computational (expression driven) design, in order to subvert the seduction that is technology driven design that often ignores the presence of "bodies in space." Narrative and fiction will be necessary to craft the lens from which to query the "schiz" of this project.

### Design Methodology

Using structures of nature and intuitive sequencing of spaces to conceptualize ideas and then testing their validity through made things.

### Documentation

Lock everything in a box, everyday. Burning dvds of the digital periodically, but never totally relying on digital means of documentation. Photography, film and scanners coupled with digital and physical models will be the constant flux of approaches.

## Plan for Proceeding

In reaching back into historical precedent and drawing philosophical/sociological correlations, the intellectual and emotional substance that makes up linguistic and visual expression in design there is a hope to humanize their digital counterparts (command line interface and graphical interface). The "softness" of digital representation and its ability to shape our "image" of cyberspace must be counteracted with tangible objects, hand drawings and video in order to reclaim it as a meaningful tool for design. The proximity to the body of objects that enable "use" or interface with cyberspace will be the narrative/sociological vehicle of critique. The study of these factors as they relate to multiplicity will be the oblique angle from which to enter a discourse into architectural meaning and the social relational cloud in which they reside.

## Studio Experience

Year 1 Spring	Stephen Wischer	Tea House
Year 2 Fall	Stephen Wischer	Boat House / Twin House
Year 2 Spring	Mike Christenson & Malini Sristava	Community IN FLUX
Year 3 Fall	Steve Martens	Animal Center / Mason Project
Year 3 Spring	Ronald Ramsay	Shaker Barn / Dry Cleaners & Spa Chicago
Year 4 Fall	Bakr Aly Ahmed	High Rise
Year 4 Spring	Darry Booker, Paul Gleye, Frank Kratky	Santa Domingo
Year 4 Summer	Ronald Ramsay	North Coast College
Year 5 Fall	Mark Barnhouse	Water Facility
Year 5 Spring	Mark Barnhouse	

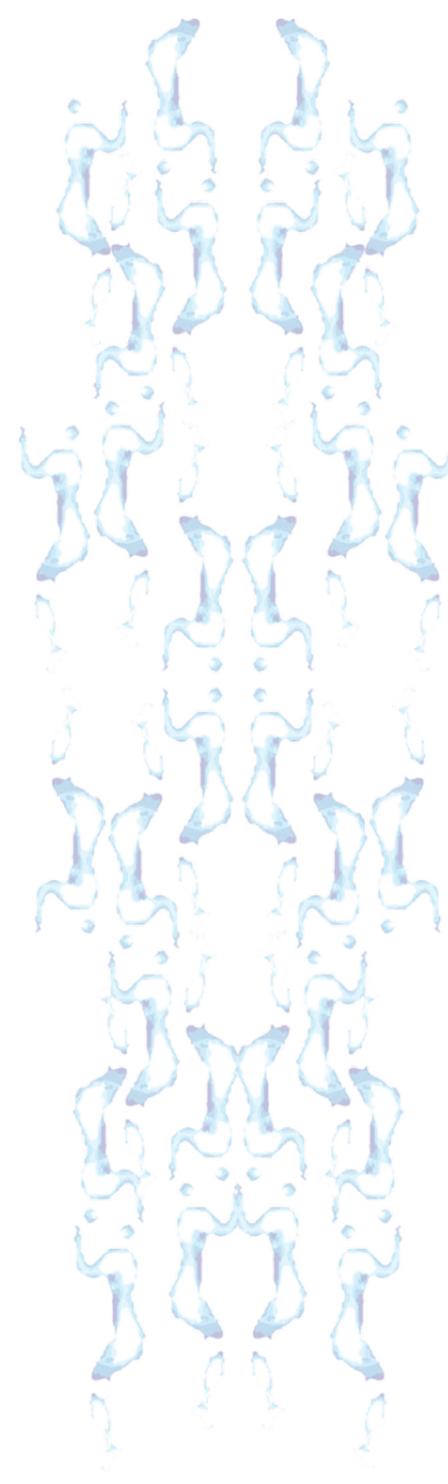
## Theoretical Premise Research



A mirage is a phenomenon witnessed in the extremes of temperature and climate. The eyes squint, the lips flake and the conscious body plods onward. In desert or tundra, the optical phenomenon of an image shifting, appearing and disappearing in the distance is not simply in association or a symptom of delirium. It is part and parcel of the altered state brought on by dehydration or malnutrition. The comic irony of a mind decayed from a lack of basic nourishment constructing it's own "carrot on a string" is not the fabrication of hope in dire circumstances. It is the inability or loss of ability to ascertain a course of action. The extremes of nearly any state of consciousness connected to the deprivation of basic needs can bring on delirium or hallucinations. The extremes of overabundance are found in matters of concentration and saturation. Extremes of excess also incite states of delirium. The psychological profile of a drug addict and someone stranded in the desert are two sides of the same coin.

It is this parallel between the inundation of visual information in the “state of distraction” and the vibrating mirage of cultural amnesia as presented by digitization and cyberspace that I wish to draw in this thesis (Benjamin, 2008). The necessity for a critical analysis of what the social and theoretical implications of digital translation and interaction of the visual as they pertain to art and architectural representation are inextricably linked to our perception of inhabitable space, time (duration) and memory (context) (McGrath, & Gardner, 2007).

Issues of translation and transcription are typically associated with the intent of relaying the original author’s prescribed meaning and nuance in a new language or medium. The geographic location and history of an original creation is the only thing that distinguishes itself from any replica or iteration (Benjamin, 2008). Martin Heidegger in *The Origin of the Work of Art* and Hans-Georg Gadamer in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* conceive the work of art as an encounter which, like the festival, involves a transcendence of subjectivity in an encounter with an event. The significance of how this encounter takes place or is perceived is directly related to the space in which it occurs. This coincides with architectural design in that the aim of an architectural design anticipates and facilitates an event or series of events through an architectural creation.

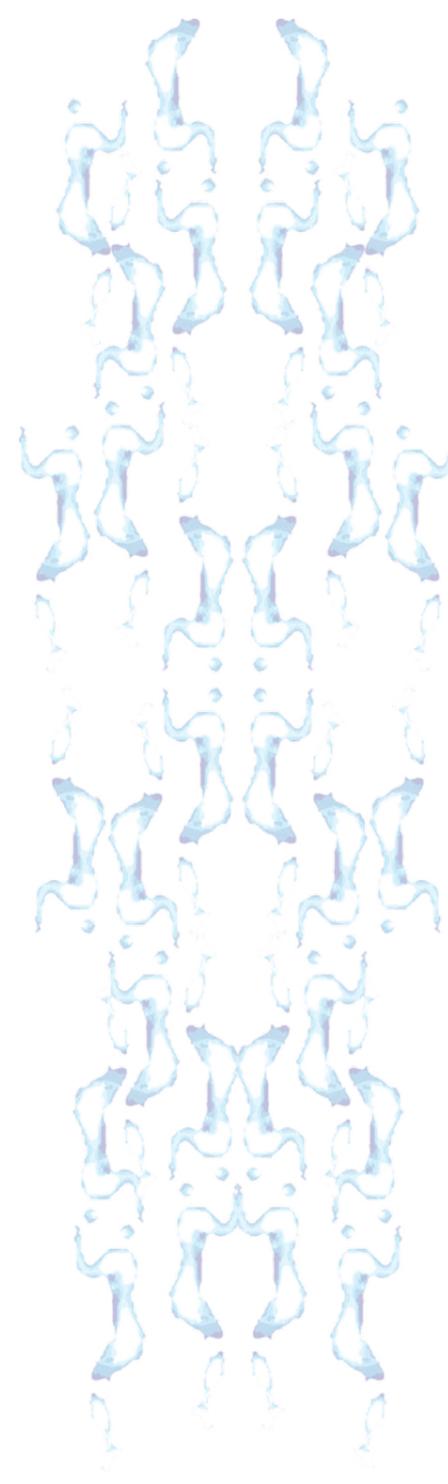


The term media, when speaking of art and architectural representation, denotes a further disassociation from the participation with the intentional creation and the activity that birthed it. It is this dogmatic and narrowed (and at the same time all-inclusive) view of media and communications in architectural representation and art that imply a self-absorbed passivity in the aesthetic experience of creative works. This is symptomatic of what Walter Benjamin had predicted in the implications of reproduction. It is in this inner-directed view of the engagement with aesthetic creations (as intimate as it may be) that it is an inadvertent disavowal that we are in participation with something beyond ourselves. The advent of the view of communication as a matter of expediency and pragmatism in order to cope with the quickened pace of modern life has established the state of being “connected.” This state of being “connected,” instead of each act of communication being significant as participation with the outside world, is where the image and visual communication becomes instrumental in this passive expectation (Sennett, 1992). This attitude of certain expectation is most aptly shown in the prevalent perception that there is a one-to-one relationship between the signifier and the thing signified.

In the *Fall of Public Man* Richard Sennett writes:

The advent of modern psychology and of psychoanalysis in particular, was founded on the faith that in understanding the inner workings of the self sui generis, without transcendental ideas of evil or of sin, people might free themselves from these horrors and be liberated to participate more fully and rationally in a life outside the boundaries of their own desires. Masses of people are concerned with their single life-histories and particular emotions as never before; this proved to be a trap rather than a liberation. (pg.5)

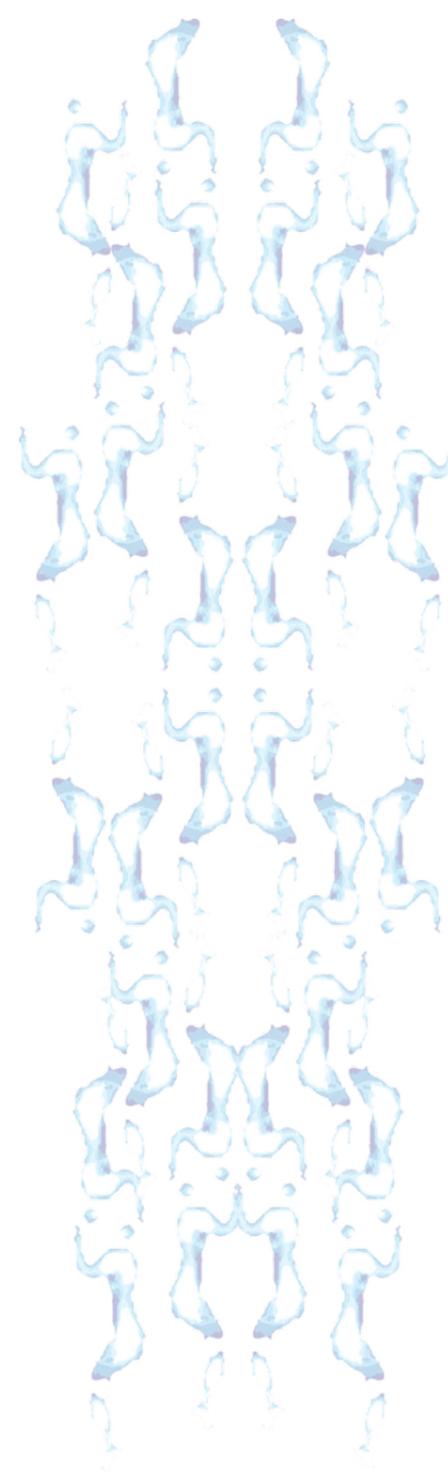
Sennett goes on to explicate how psychoanalysis has constructed an expectation that much of social life that does have meaning and cannot immediately bestow the psychological benefits that we are owed, which leaves us with the feeling that the world outside is continually failing us in our inner-directed condition. Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* are also of the disposition that the "church of psychoanalysis" is a system of oppression in the vein of the arborescent view of knowledge and knowing the world.



This is significant when we are confronted with the reality in slow devaluation of metaphysics and poesis in favor of the belief in the neutrality of objects and tools. The logical positivists of the late Bauhaus led by Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath were in strict observance of shunning all metaphysical statements in both language and aesthetics. They were of the mindset that the building up of neutral building blocks of ideas through protocol sentences was critical to achieving a new world perspective for architecture and philosophy. Carnap and Neurath's conception was that "words divide, pictures unite" (Galison, 1996). For several years Josef Frank designed an architecture to house Neurath's conviction. Neurath envisioned a museum to display graphical and statistical information to unite people of all nationalities (Galison, 1996). If the outside world is regarded as cold and alienating, and the safe expectation of visual certainty can be delivered with social networking artifices such as Google and Facebook, does not one die and the other become alive?

The "site" of interest now, and has been for some time now, is the body. The theory of memetics, as proposed by Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene*, has set up a dialog into how "memes" or behavioral concepts (ideas) can be described as viruses that are transmitted within a populace (Aunger, 2010).

The mythological or religious concepts of heaven, hell, purgatory and nirvana are characterized as realms that hermetically contain or grant passage to a part of us that lives on after our physical bodies “give up the ghost.” The native religions of numerous countries throughout the world have long histories of ancestor worship or paying homage to dead family friends that have “passed on to the other side.” This memorial, taking place at shrines, home reliquaries or holy places, was accompanied by symbolic acts to appease or communicate with the departed (Aunger, 2010). The artifice of “social networking” or cyberspace has seemingly brought these other previously mythological or religious inhabitable realms or spaces to exist parallel to our bodily lifespan. The religious fervor is evident in the daily pilgrimages to Facebook and Twitter, where we prayers are left to undead neighbors who live down the hall, street or across the country. Geographic location and site appear to have become mutable. This brings us back to what distinguishes the authenticity of artistic creations in the significance of where they are situated in the world. If the “hard copy” becomes null and void and it exists everywhere and nowhere, how does our engagement change? How is this engagement indicative of our attitude toward social participation?



The sense of sight and how it can dramatically change brainwaves and patterns through flashing lights and geometries, is also referenced in numerous science fiction narratives. “Magic” being defined as science that is not yet explainable is an interesting paradigm for our time when we are inundated by the use of things we don’t understand (Aunger, 2010). We believe in things we don’t see physically with our eyes all the time. We believe in it, because it works. We have never and will never be able to see our own pupils. The turning one’s self inside-out in order to confront our own shortcomings and our “situatedness” in the world is only possible through conversation and engagement with powerful creations of art, architecture, music, theater etc. as a restoration of the sacred and belief in our ability dream our way out of problems. (Taylor, 1994). This act of turning inside-out cannot be done purely through visual media.

Whether the process and presentation is mediated by hand-built models, drawings, digital media or other forms of representation, the idea of the paper architect is the conceptual frontier where the cultural value or significance as of these paper creations is drawn into question. Trends for the idea of a “paper architect” and practicing architect merging together are symptomatic of the increasing necessity of digital translation of all mediating artifacts of the design process. It must also

be clarified that the idea of the paper architect and the idea and of the practicing architect are polar in their orientation or mutual exclusive. The respective terms are imposed frameworks in the attempt of categorization. This is not that the paper architect's work has become more feasible or that the practicing architect's work has become more conceptual. The significance of this paradigm shift is that the architect is defined or characterized by his "paper" or visual output. The fact that the mediating artifacts of the design process are a necessary preformative step towards an architectural creation is the one distinction of architecture from other traditional art forms.

The daunting task of explicating paradoxically simple ideas and taking accounts of the socially-constructed illusions of philosophical history is part of the legacy left behind by Schelling (Gabriel, & Zizek, 2009). The metaphor of a mirage in comparison to the burgeoning digitization of cultural grounds holds to this idea that illusions (as necessary as they may be) must be carefully analyzed. The exteriorization and separation of vision from perception and human experience is at the crux of the dogmatic increase of individuation. Taking account of the philosophical and historical precedents that explicate current ideological apathy is important for the architect to remain relevant. It is the ethical duty of the architect to restore awe and humility for humanity's place



in a larger cosmological order and to vaccinate the arrogance of positivism that dissolves participation with the world.



## Sainte-Marie Couvent de la Tourette

case study i

Location: Lyons, France

Type

Past: Monastery

Present: Study Center

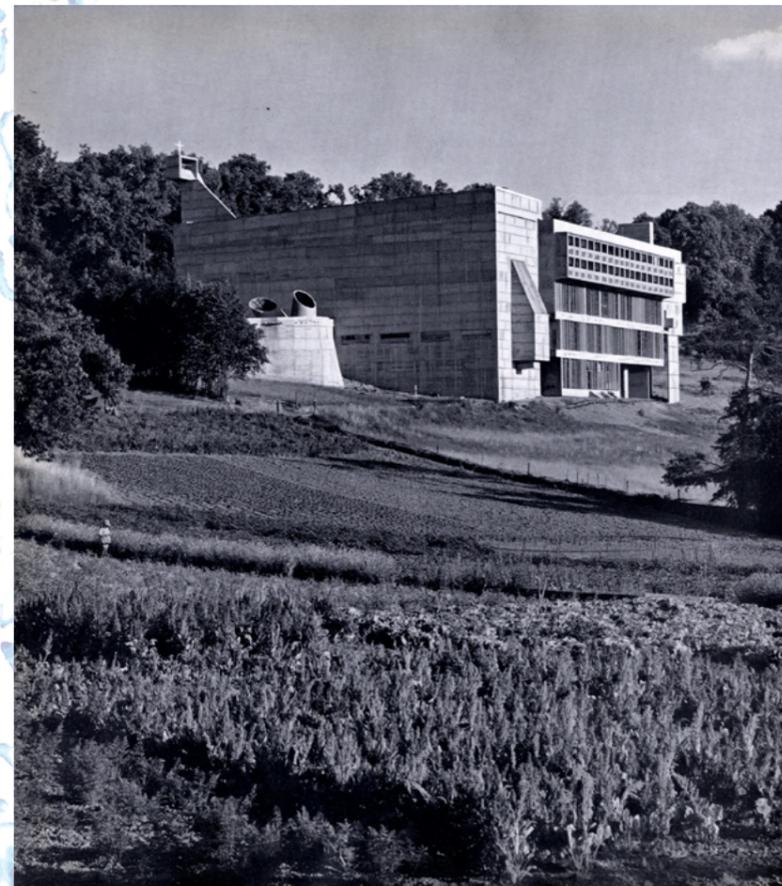
Designer(s): Le Corbusier & Iannis Xenakis

Client: Dominican Order Priory

Years of Construction: 1956-1960

Building Area: 16,500 sq. ft.

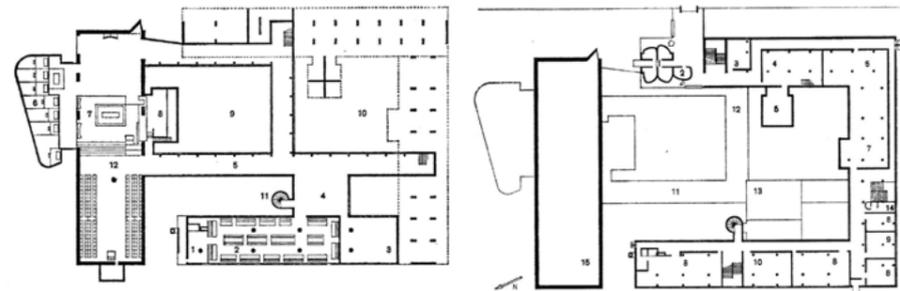
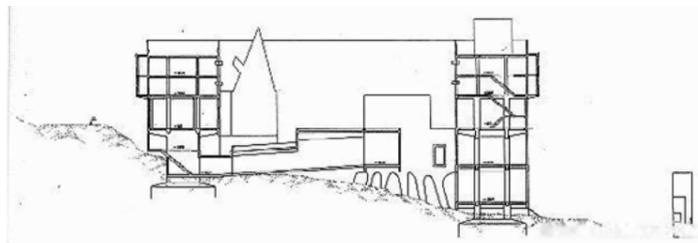
Sainte Marie de La Tourette, built as a chapel, residence and educational site in Lyons, France in the late 1950s continues as one of the more prominent structures of the late Modernist style. The Reverend Father Couturier of the Dominican Order turned to architect, Le Corbusier, to construct the monastery in a small vale opening into a forest. This self-contained world for austere community living was Le Corbusier's last major work in Europe and incorporated many of his long-established design elements. Le Corbusier was adamant about giving the monks what they desired most, silence and peace. The frame itself is of rough reinforced concrete and his practice of using load bearing columns inside allows light cannons to pierce the solid masonry walls. The window-openings separated by modular-controlled vertical divisions, the grassy rooftop cloister, and purposefully planned architectural promenade as a ramp to the



entrance of the church, are all reflections of compositions used 30 years earlier. The exterior of the building fails to crown and merely dominates the steeply sloping site, but the interior nourishes life.

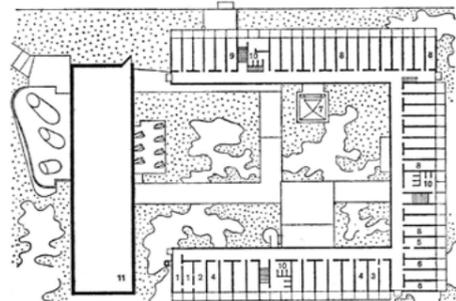
The buildings include a hundred sleeping rooms for staff and students. The study halls, a recreation hall, and the library occupy the upper level. Below one finds the refectory and the cloister in the shape of a cross leading to the church. Much of the esthetics of the building, both in and out, can be attributed to the proportioned floor-to-ceiling glazing applied to many of the public areas. In the church itself, a tall concrete box is given illumination and special spiritual significance by careful use of natural light and subtle, yet intense color. Daylight enters the church through five very different openings, several of them sculpted on the exterior, again creating unique "light cannons." These lighting elements and strong, deep colors within the individual openings interact to provide the church setting with a warm, inspiring glow.

Sainte Marie de La Tourette is still functioning today, only with a much-reduced population of monks. It remains to be something of a pilgrimage site for students of architecture. At the convent, Le Corbusier found a kindred atmosphere for his personal principles and disciplines in self-denial and simplistic living (Henze & Moosbrugger 1966).



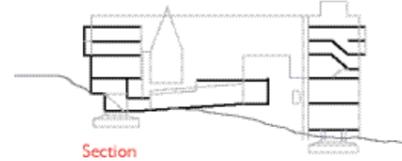
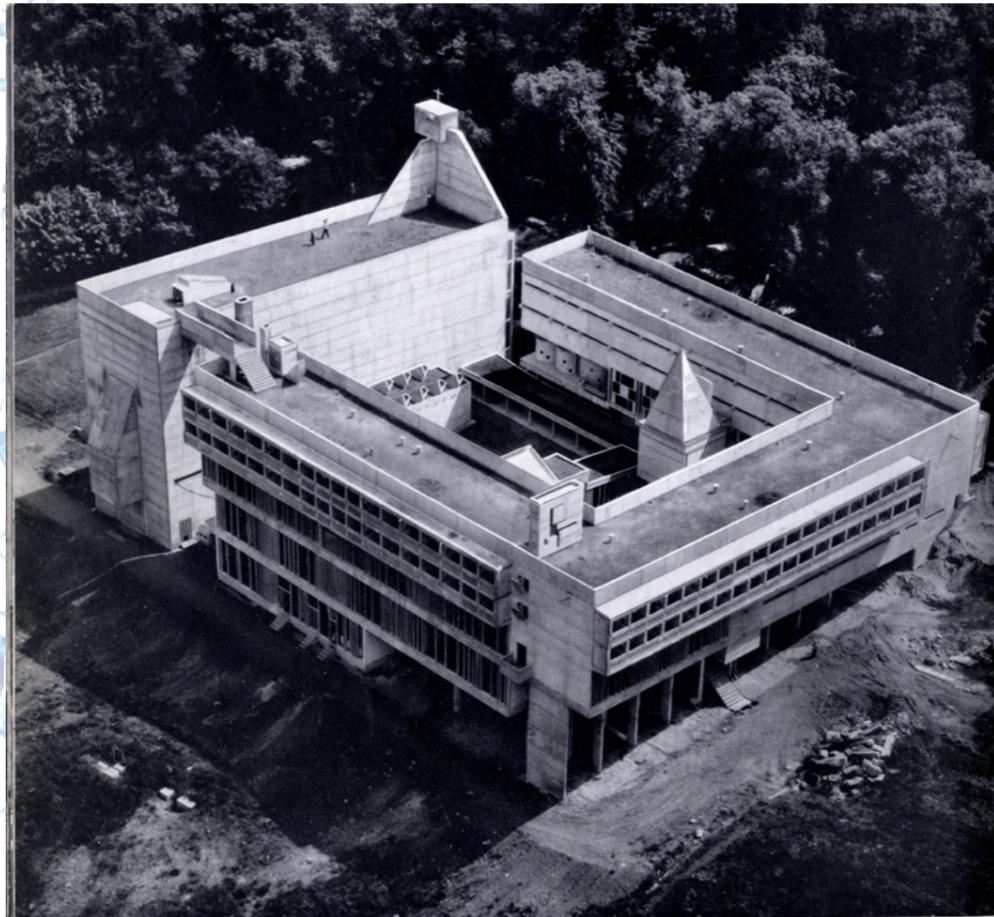
**Refectory floor**  
 1 Pantry, 2 Refectory, 3 Chapter-room, 4 Atrium, 5 Cloister, 6 Lower church, 7 High altar, 8 Sacristy, 9, 10 Courtyard, 11 Spiral staircase, 12 Church

**Entrance floor**  
 1 Conversation cells, 2 Porter, 3 Room for the lay-brothers, 4 Common-room for the student brothers, 5 Oratory, 6 Reading-room, 7 Library, 8 Lecture rooms, 9 Common-room for the student brothers, 10 Common-room for the fathers, 11, 12 Cloister, 13 Atrium, 14 WC, 15 Church

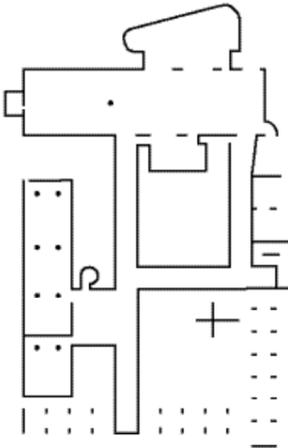


**Cell floor**  
 1 Cells for the sick, 2 Nurse's cell, 3 Cells for visitors, 4 Fathers' cells, 5 Cell for the monk in charge of the student brothers, 6 Student priests' cells, 7 Oratory, 8 Student brothers' cells, 9 Lay brothers' cells, 10 Sanitary offices, 11 Church

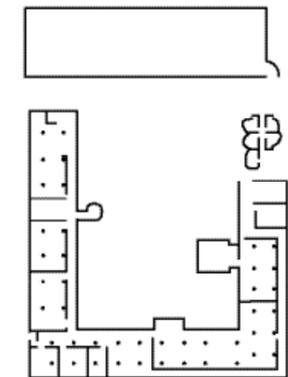
# Graphical Analysis



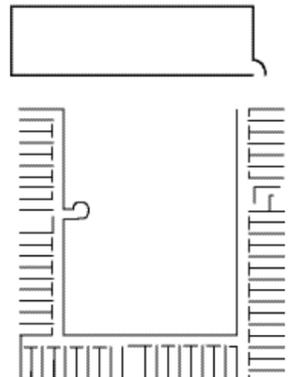
Section



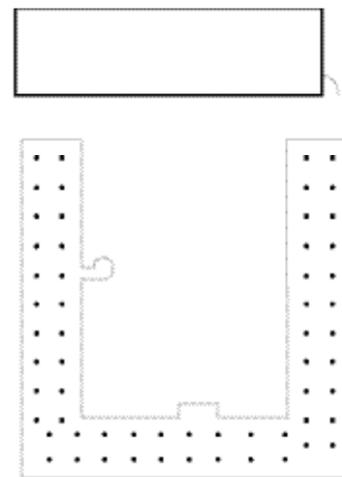
Refectory Floor



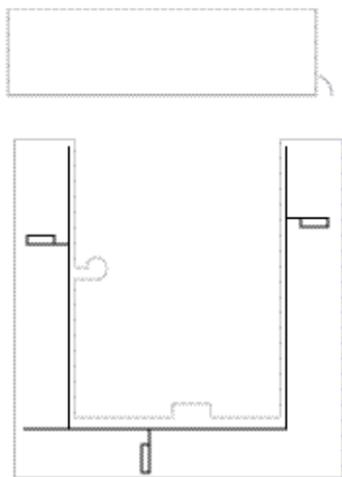
Entrance Floor



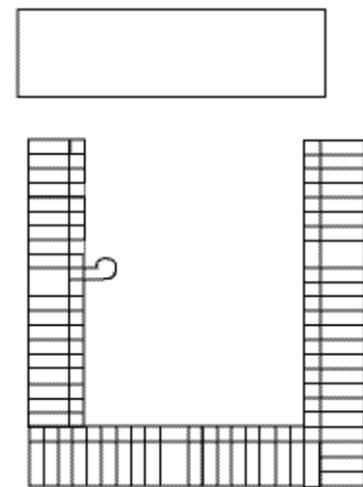
Cell Floor



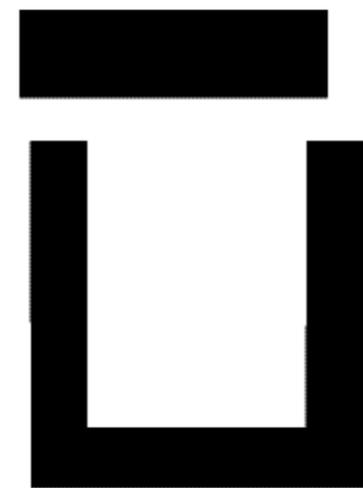
Structural Grid



Circulation



Repetition



Parti

## Kansebo Sensai Select Spa

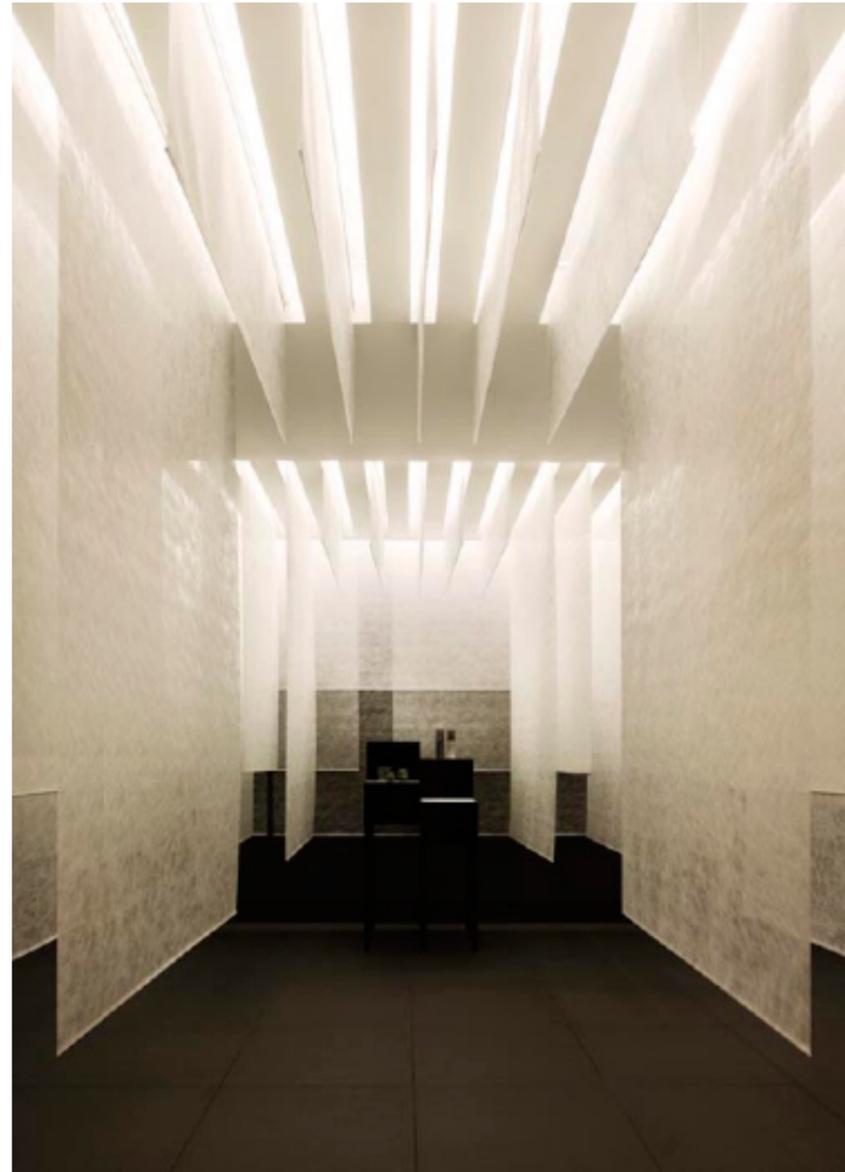
case study ii

Location: Interlaken, Switzerland  
 Type: Hotel Spa Interior  
 Designer(s): Gwenael Nicolas, CURIOSITY JP  
 Client: KANEBO COSMETICS INC.  
 Year of Completion: 2009  
 Building Area: (Not Found) addition to existing 60,000 sq. ft. ESPA spa



Japanese designer Gwenael Nicolas has completed his new spa creation in Interlaken, Switzerland. The Sensai experience of this extraordinary spa equates to a carefully designed journey through a number of sensorial encounters. The Japanese esthetic which is in play throughout the facility is a subtle balance of simplicity flowing from complexity. The foundation of the design is koishimaru silk, and the space is lined with floating layers of it.

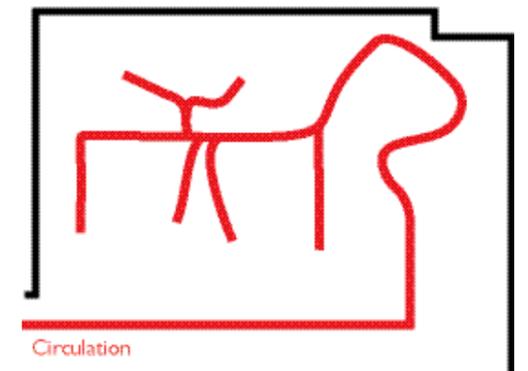
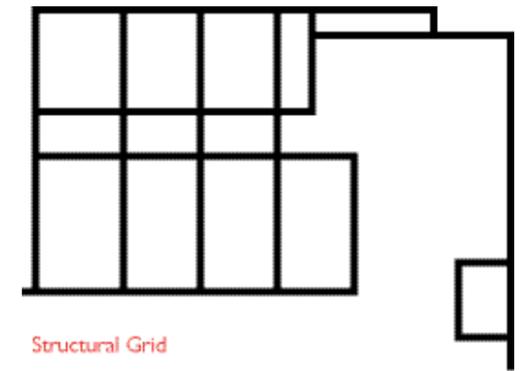
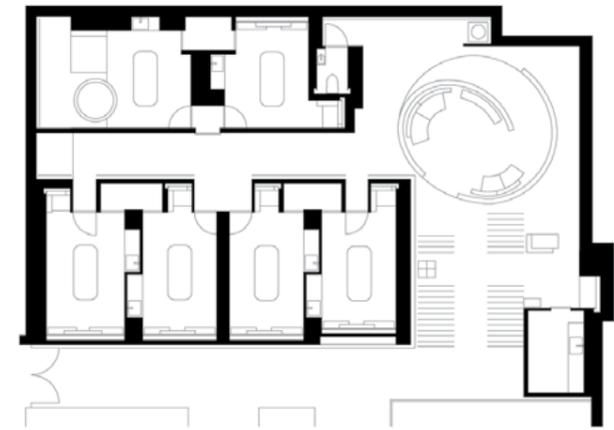




Enhanced by the soft glow of light, the layers of silk operate to gently remove layers of stress from the outside world, thus transforming the mind and body. Enveloped in serene light, the central waiting room is designed as a space to “cocoon” an oasis of tranquility, where everyday life moves into different dimensions, permitting an experience of relaxation and heightened well being.

Darkness in the corridor spaces contrasts with the soft glow of the cabin light and invites a reference to nature. The large treatment rooms boast warm, wooden walls and timber shelves joined to the ceiling by long, metal poles. A wall of light is created in each with layers of interwoven strings of fabric. With concentration, the eye loses its focus and the space seems to disappear, thus giving liberation to the mind.

## Graphical Analysis



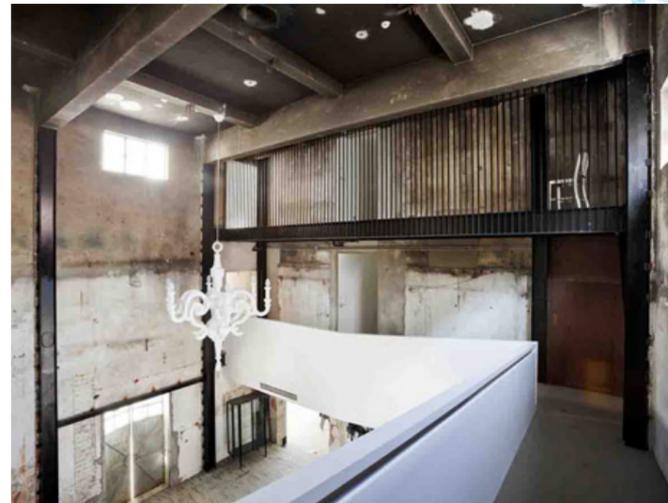
# THE WATERHOUSE at South Bund

case study iii

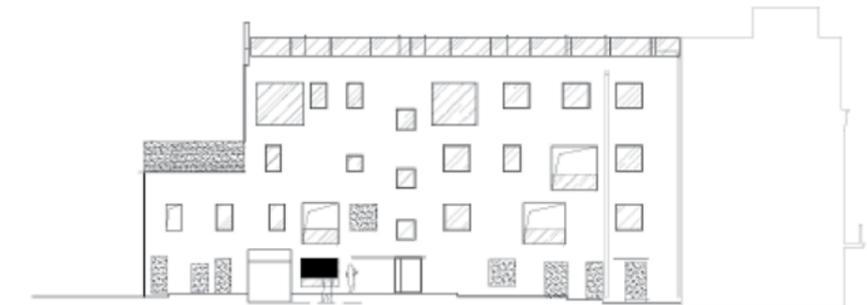
Location: Shanghai, China  
Type: Boutique Hotel  
Designer(s): NHDRO

The Waterhouse, located near the new Cool Docks development on the South Bund District of Shanghai, is a four-story, 19 room boutique hotel which was once a three-story, disused Japanese army headquarters from the 1930s. Chinese architects NHDRO transformed the structure while maintaining the building's stripped concrete and brick walls. The new Cor-Ten steel extension on the roof provides a roof terrace for viewing the adjacent Huangpu River and the glistening Pudong skyline.

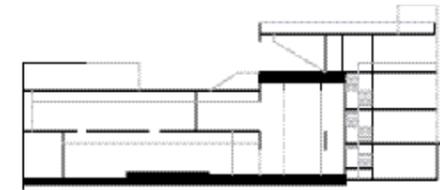
The architectural concept supporting this renovation is clearly the endeavor to contrast what is old with the most contemporary. NHDRO's addition on the fourth floor complements the industrial nature of the ships which navigate the river below, allowing a contextual link between history and the present culture. NHDRO is also credited with the design of the hotel's interior, which has an uncommon blurring effect or kind of inversion factor between the interior and exterior elements which creates a refreshing spatial experience for guests.



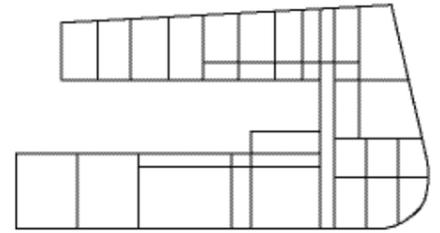
The inversion design element allows the guests in this five-star hotel to peek into private spaces while the private spaces invite one to view the public areas. This is experienced with the large vertical window above the main receiving area and the corridor windows overlooking the dining room. These unanticipated visual connections not only afford each guest a wonderful ingredient of surprise, but also are a repetition of, and invitation to confront the local 'tight spatial flavor' of the city of Shanghai.



# Graphical Analysis



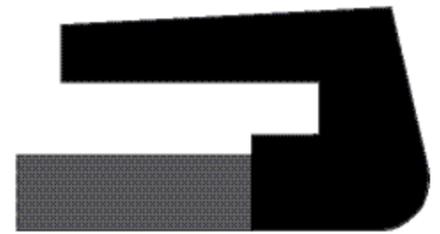
Sections



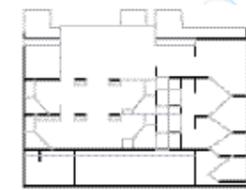
Structural Grid



Circulation



Parti



# Historical Context



The heritage of Hong Kong is multivalent in its origins and development throughout antiquity and modernity. The earliest known human traces on Hong Kong were dated five thousand years ago according to archaeological work started in the 1920s. It is believed that the people who settled in Hong Kong at that time were descended from northern Chinese stone-age cultures. In the seventh century A.D., the discovery of an ancient tomb at Lei Cheung Uk in Kowloon signified the presence of Han Chinese. During the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) the first major migration from northern China to Hong Kong was documented. Trade was established with British merchants when the British East India Company made the transcontinental voyage to Hong Kong and China in 1699 (Tsang, 1997).

The beginning of Great Britain's claim to Hong Kong coincides with the Chinese defeat in the First Opium War (1839-1842). The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 was followed by the Peking (Beijing) Convention in 1860 of the Second Opium War (1856-1858). The Convention of Peking formally settled the conflict in a grant of "perpetuity" to Britain, in the lease of the Kowloon Peninsula of mainland China. The conflicts of the First and Second Opium Wars were incited by the Chinese opposition to the use of their ports for trade and transport of opium refined

British-controlled India. The use of military strength by Britain in both of the Opium Wars was due to their need to to maintain their profitable trade status. A 99-year lease of the New Territories connected to the mainland, instigated by the United Kingdom in 1898, ensured their ability to defend Hong Kong and expanded the size of the Hong Kong colony. A 4 year period during World War II when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong was the only instance when British-control loosened on Hong Kong. Britain maintained control from the end of the Opium Wars until the territory was granted back to the People's Republic of China in July of 1997 (Tsang 2004).

The terms for the reversion to Chinese control were settled in an agreement signed by the British and Chinese governments in December 1984. The unabridged confirmation of the terms of previous agreements, in the 1984 agreement contained guarantees for the future autonomy of Hong Kong. Specifically the agreements entailed that the territory would enjoy a high degree of autonomy, especially in the economic field, where its existing system would be largely left intact. The slogan 'one country, two systems' was coined by the Chinese to describe the future regime and its relationship with mainland China. The areas of foreign affairs and defense were the only exceptions in establishing the new Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong in the diktat of Peking (Lane, 1990).

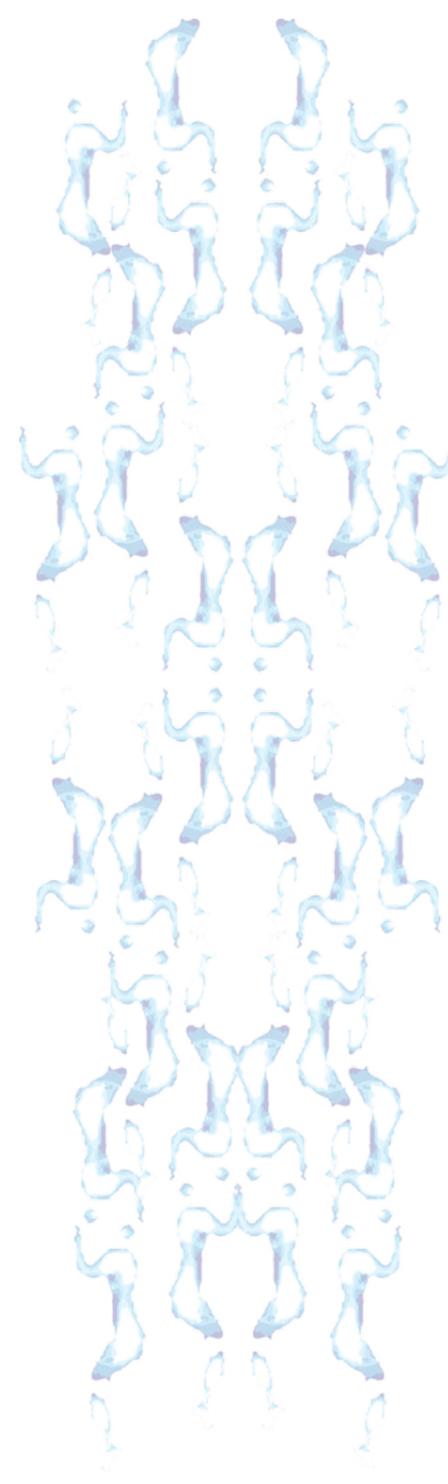


The main point of contention in the period leading up to the handover was political representation. Under the colonial regime, democratic representation had been held to a minimum and executive powers were retained by the governor. The system remained mostly untouched since the departure of the British in July 1997 (Tsang, 2004).

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Hong Kong was developed into a warehousing and distribution center for U.K. trade with southern China. Hundreds of thousands of people retreated from China to Hong Kong at the end of World War II. This was to escape the communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, . Hong Kong's unique circumstances granted it economic success in the areas of manufacturing, commercial, finance, and tourism. In the last five decades, Hong Kong has achieved high rates of life expectancy, literacy, per capita income, and other areas (Tsang, 2004.) In the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 and the Basic Law, it is outlined that Hong Kong will govern its own political, economic, and judicial systems and unique way of life for 50 years after reversion. Hong Kong will participate in international agreements and organizations under the name, "Hong Kong, China."

In the governing of trade, Tung Chee Hwa, a shipping tycoon from Beijing, was granted the new position of chief executive. His responsibilities are comparable to those of the former governor. The Democratic Party for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), a pro-Beijing political party, was initiated in the events before the handover. After the first election held under the Chinese in 1998, the DAB took control of LegCo. In the elections that followed, their hold of the trade organization has been maintained. In the current governing and electoral systems there is no room for any opposition that could overturn policies of the administration. Tung Chee Hwa was reelected to a second term in the office of chief executive in 2002 (Tsang, 2004).

In the months after the territory had reverted to Chinese control, the governing system faced the Asian financial crisis. At first the timing of these events seemed to have no affect on Hong Kong's political and economic standing. But the economy has been depressed for most of the last five years. In the time that followed these events, political discontent began to arise and the stability Hong Kong enjoyed has been shaken (Tsang, 2004.) Protests calling for a reevaluation of the democratic and representative system of government began in 2003. Also, Tung Chee Hwa announced his resignation from the position of chief executive for health reasons in 2005.



Chief Secretary Donald Tsang became acting chief executive as per the direction of the basic law. Pressure was applied from China on the newly appointed administration to initiate anti-subversion laws to counteract the Falun Gong Christian religious sect.

Criticism of the 2000 elections, that were supposed to be free, open, arose out of the functional constituency that and election committee elections and were said to be undemocratic. The strict regulations rendered most citizen inelligible to vote. The principal officials accountability system was initiated by the Hong Kong government in 2002. This change was to respond to public concerns that the government was unable to address social issues in a timely manner. There was also the addition of a strata of 11 political appointees that report directly to the chief executive, to run the 11 policy bureaus. Three other senior civil service positions including the chief secretary, financial secretary, and justice secretary also were converted to elected positions (Tsang, 2004).

Hong Kong's economy has shifted away from manufacturing and is now service-based. The city is now a center for major corporate and banking. Hong Kong also handles the bulk of China's exports.

The manufacturing that persists is in textiles, consumer electronics and other consumer goods. The naturally occurring deep-water cargo port that Hong Kong is situated around is one of the busiest and most efficient in the region (Tsang, 2004).

## Thesis Goals

In the same way that modern art is nourished by classical and traditional forms of art, this thesis seeks to continue an ongoing discourse on the theoretical and sociological implications of digital translation and interface with visual information. It is my goal to craft a comprehensive scope of the theoretical premise in concert with the context and typology to elucidate the ideas and rich culture of the site. It is my goal that by doing this in excruciating specificity of narrative and elements that the architectural creation and mediating artifacts resonate in a way that they could not in referencing any other geographic location. It is in the establishment of this strong figure-ground relationship that I hope to communicate to my contemporaries the origins of architecture serving a larger mytho-poetic cosmology as an essential part of culture. In the establishment of a clear line of historical precedent for the ideas that fostered my investigations and fervor, I hope to spark a reverence for history in the interplay between place and narrative.

In myself, the hope is to hone my abilities and speed in the precise use of digital mediation as a way of observing the issues that I am discussing theoretically and also in preparation for endeavors beyond this thesis investigation. It is in this complex dialogue regarding visual, written and verbal language that I hope to learn more in doing and making things in which speak through to explore these ideas in a different way.

The recent realization that I need to find balance in working with both certainty and uncertainty will central to my mode of work. I aim to ensure my steadfastness as a designer, thinker and maker, while keeping the paralysis that can result from an excess of theorizing and criticism at bay.

This balance of the act of making and the necessity of theory also elucidates the contribution I intend to make to the professional and theoretical realms of architectural practice. The issues of our perception of visual digital culture and the effect that it has on architectural practice can most aptly be approach through theoretical or philosophical angles. The awareness of these issues is necessary for an architecture practice that is interested in doing and receiving culturally significant and relevant work.

## Site Analysis



## Narrative

The ferries and tanker ships lumber across the waves as I wait on Pier 9 in Wan Chai for a lift home from work. The island-side is home to most of the financial and international trade business of Hong Kong. It smells of a flow that is cold and atonal; but seems so far away as I stand here with a well-developed humid sweat. The scent of languid, humid ocean air is a welcome change from the chill of board rooms and lobbies. The arteries in the midst of watchtowers are clean and slick for a flow of white-blood cells. They are the cleanest I have ever seen. The artery traffic behind me hums with little red taxis punctuated by a volley of pedestrians who make their gallant trod from the paper trails, glass sheets, steel matrices and marble veneers of their desire. I could continue in step with them, but it is a Wednesday to hunt for Moon Cakes.

It's a clear shot home to Lantau on the underground-then-above-ground MTR, but I rationalize that it'd be a shame to look at the evening wane through the glass of a crowded railcar. Also, it is the hour of the white-gloved platform attendants. To push the railcars to capacity is their lot. I wonder what they think about the first time they slide on the white gloves and push fleshy cargo just past the threshold so the doors can narrowly close on the railcar. Under the shade of the ferry shelter a little shiny-haired girl snaps open a lychee and devours its sweet insides with a giggle as she jars me from thoughts of cattle branding. Some fresh fruit from the Night Market in Mongkok will be a warranted detour after the ferry on the way to Moon Cakes.

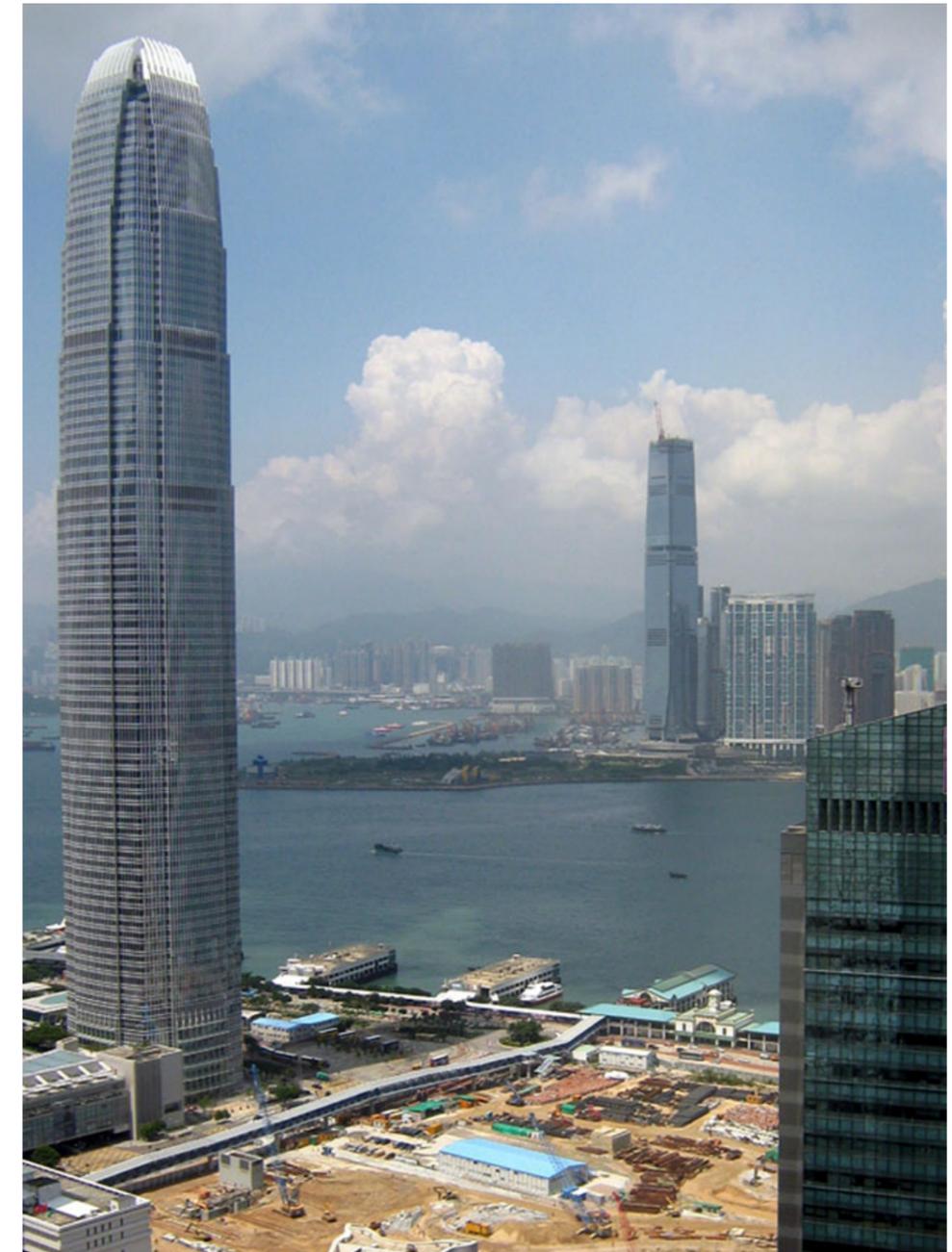


I slide off my suit coat and hang it on the paint-chipped railing and look east over my right shoulder along the coast line towards the convention center that lurches out into the water. The waves bring my gaze to rest on the nearby construction site that spans down the coast. They are digging caissons to make use of the bayside property. Cranes and rebar stick out of the mud sledged up from the last of the late summer typhoon rains. The yellow-turned-white-from-sun hatted construction workers in most of Asia mistrust the erector set steel scaffolding that I see at home in favor of bending, contorting bamboo scaffolding and green netting. The bamboo is bound around each joint hundreds of times and the framework wraps onto the frame or building without any trace of damage. To see the work in the ground with steel and concrete is a sight to behold anywhere in Hong Kong, as there isn't much bare ground left to be excavated or cultivated for development. The yellow hats seem to be done with work for the day.



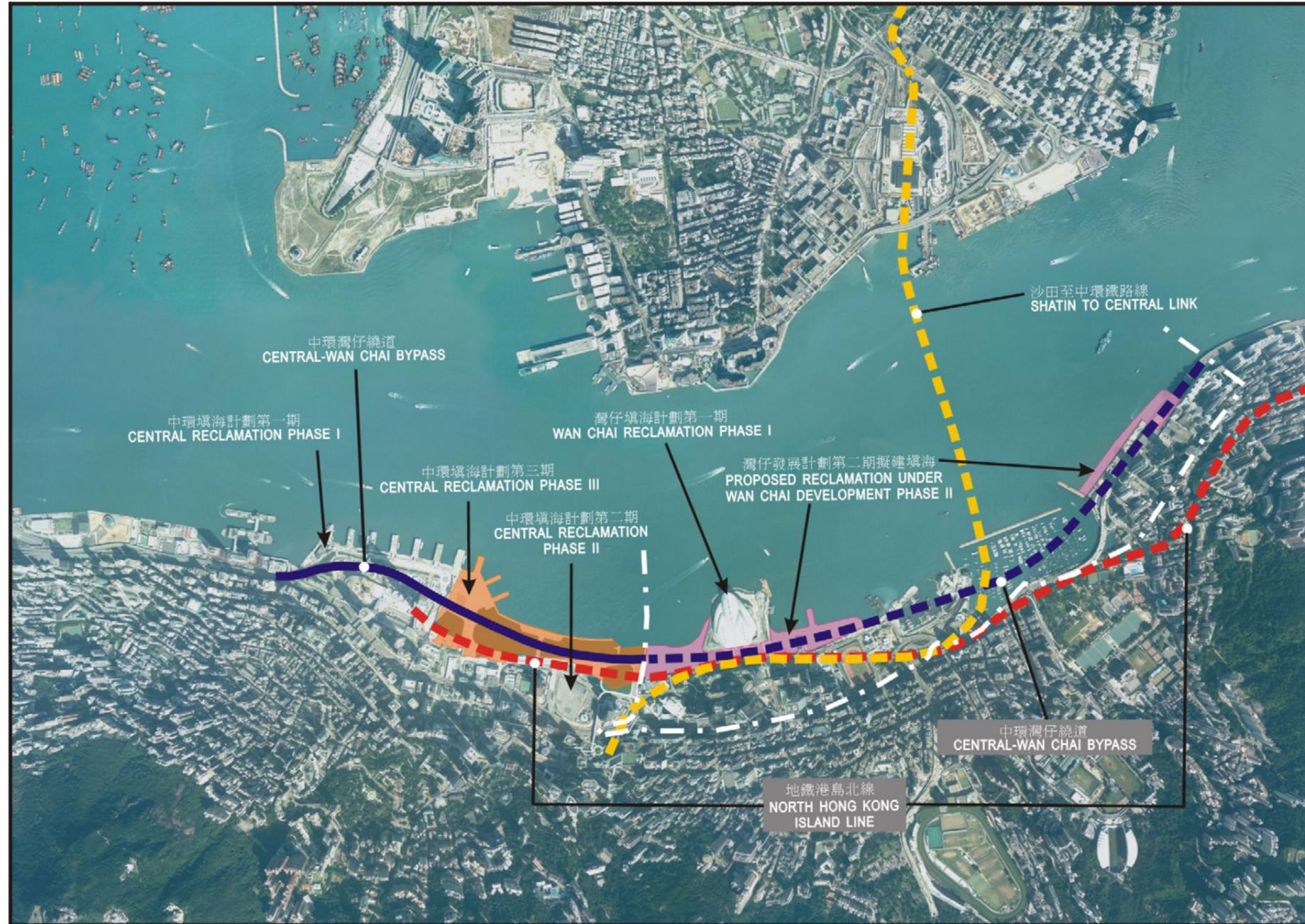
## Site Characteristics

The proposed site is surrounded by high and mid-rise buildings. Directly south is the Federal post office building. Adjacent and east of there is the City Hall building. The towering IFC II complex dwarfs the scale of the site. The construction site is a land reclamation project that is anticipated to create an urban green space for the whole of Hong Kong to be able to visit with ease. The surrounding urban is dense, but not claustrophobic in nature. Careful planning has been taken to not perpetuate any large shadowy crevasses. The existing grid is slightly skewed from due north in response to the coastline and slope. The waters of the coast initially came to rest near the base of the existing buildings, but is now being pushed out by infilling the area with silt and clay. The bedrock is close to the surface and nearly no erosion occurs at the site due to the volcanic activity that formed the area. Natural existing vegetation is not immediately close to the site, but is visible and within walking distance. The existing vegetation is limited to plantings, trees and medium-sized plazas.



I turn from my lean on the sun-warmed railing and squint at the partially eclipsed sun. It is then that I notice that I stand right on the edge of the behemoth shadow of the IFC II building. The immense height leads me to peer back at the rest of the high rise financial and housing buildings that create a multi-layered spatial texture. The hazy green mountain peaks and slopes that rise behind the occupied obelisks suggest that they were not always here to block my view. They could have slid down the mountains like driftwood in one of the recent torrential rains. As soon as the sleeping giants caught some speed on their slip down they stood up on their tip toes to keep from a dive off the cliff into the bay.

The horn of the ferry approach calls my attention to face the waters that lead to the mainland portion of Hong Kong. The opposite coastline of Tsim Sha Tsui and West Kowloon, lined with more tall fence posts, marks the other boundary of the port corridor. As the shuffle to the boarding queue begins, it's these boundaries and horizons and their changing colors that remind me of why coming back is new each time. The fact that Moon Cakes only show up once a year helps as well.



SKETCH No. HKI-Z1444

## Site Characteristics (cont.)

The existing grid is slightly skewed from due north in response to the coastline and slope. The waters of the coast initially came to rest near the base of the existing buildings, but is now being pushed out by infilling the area with silt and clay. The bedrock is close to the surface and nearly no erosion occurs at the site due to the volcanica activity that formed the area. Natural existing vegetation is not immediately close to the site, but is visible and within walking distance. The existing vegetation is limited to the plantings, trees and medium sized plazas. The wind is relegated to mostly to the open areas near the coast and water. Typhoon season being the most severe for winds, the rest of the year is relatively mild. The bay corridor does create the wind tunnel effect for surface winds.

The photo to the right is just a few blocks south of the proposed site.





View East



View Southeast

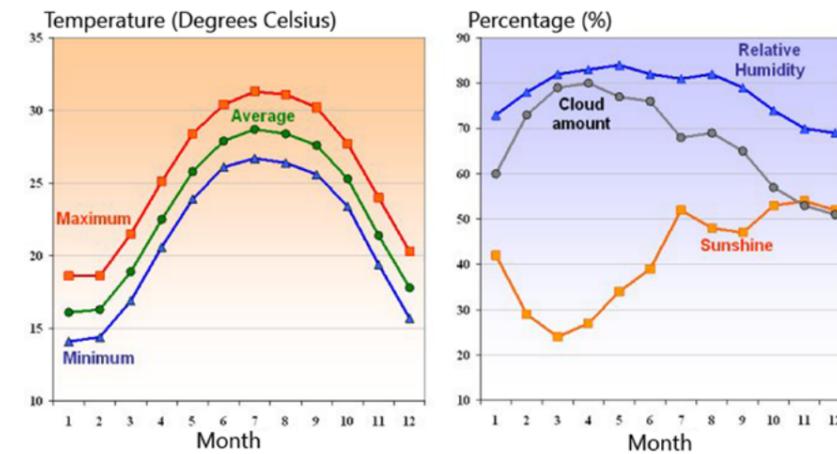
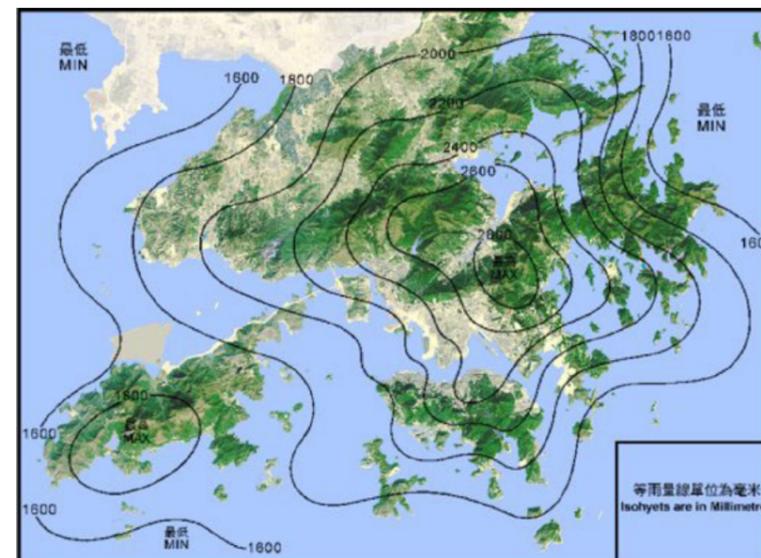


View South

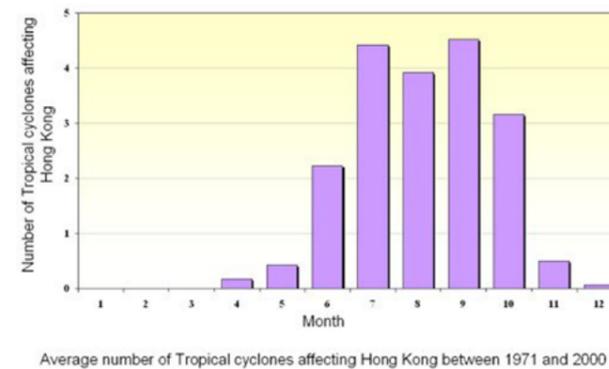


View Northwest

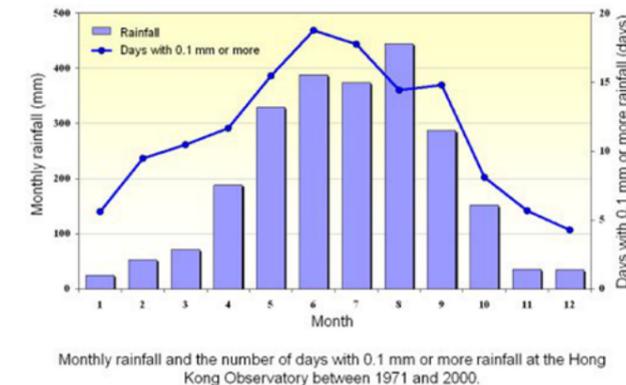
## Climate Data



Monthly mean temperature (left), relative humidity, cloud amount and sunshine duration (right) at the Hong Kong Observatory between 1971-2000

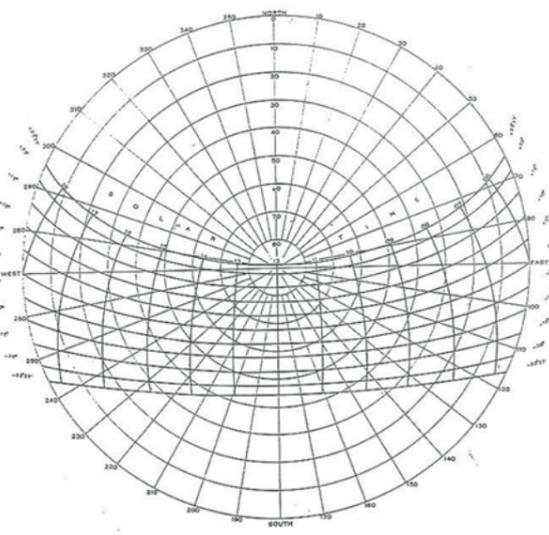
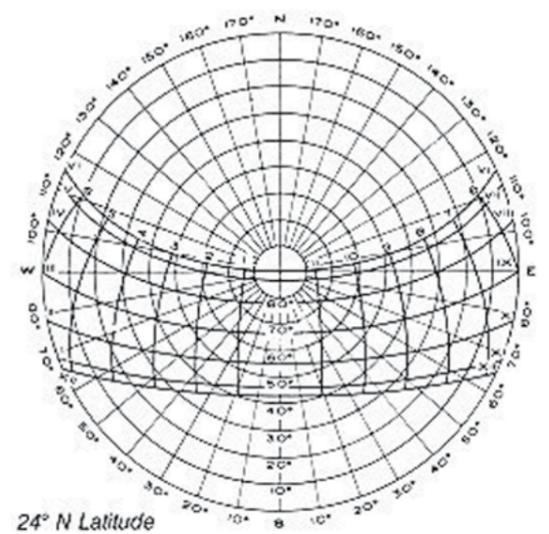
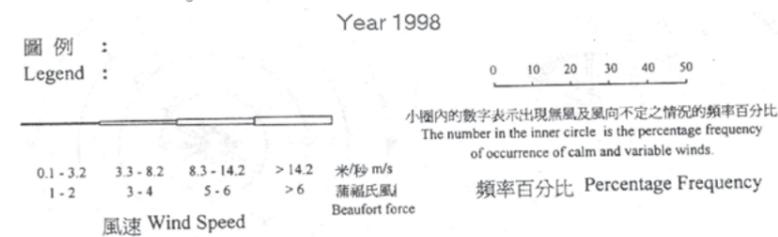
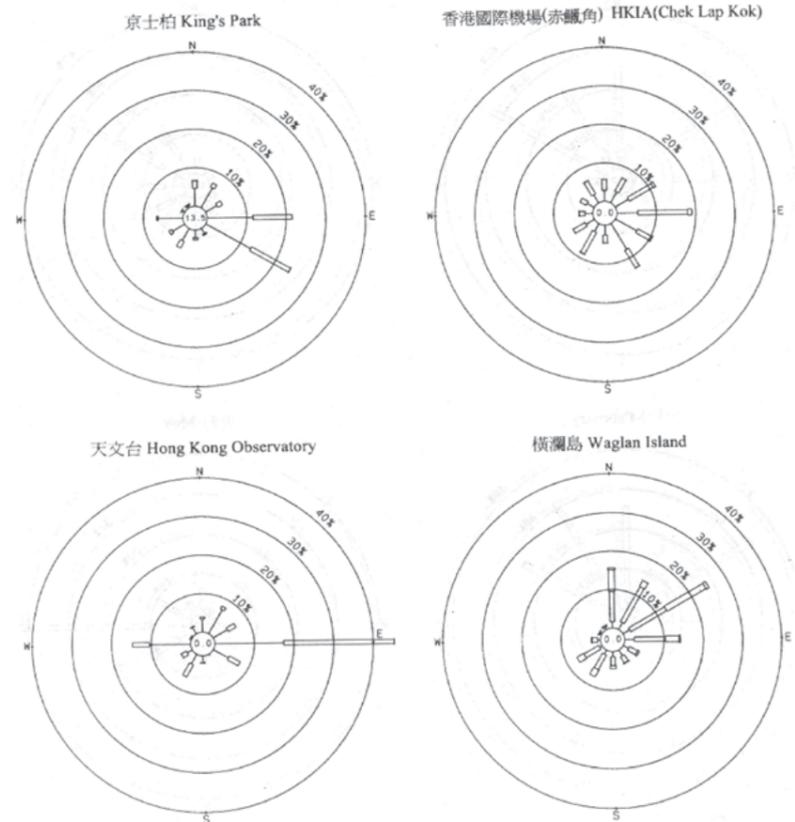


Average number of Tropical cyclones affecting Hong Kong between 1971 and 2000



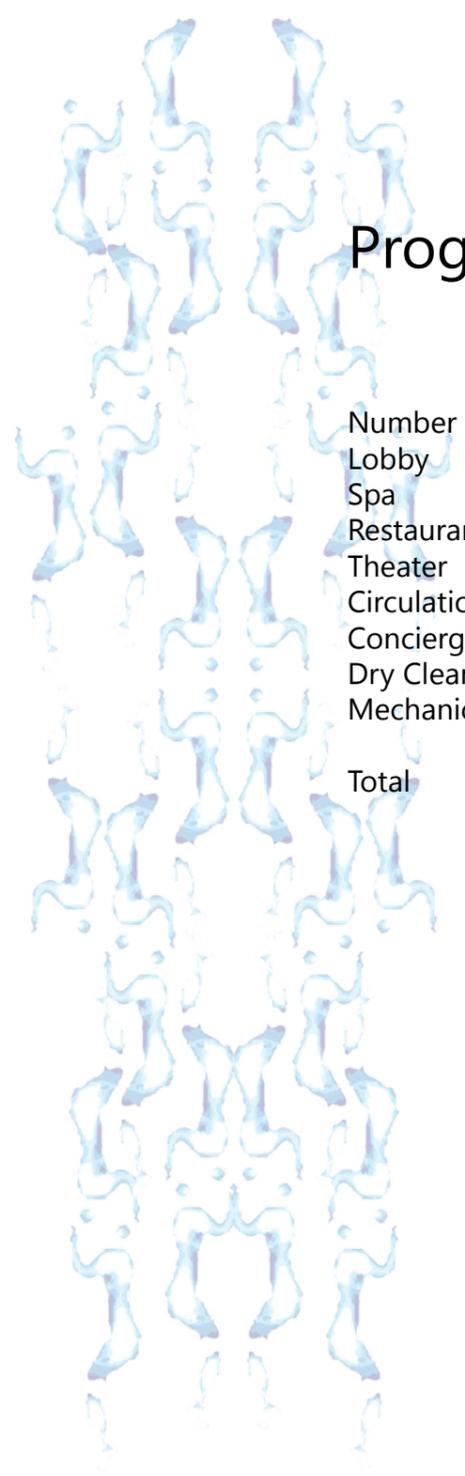
Monthly rainfall and the number of days with 0.1 mm or more rainfall at the Hong Kong Observatory between 1971 and 2000.

# Wind and Sun Direction Diagrams



# Programmatic Requirements

Number of guestrooms	90	Net Guest room area	400 sq. ft
Lobby			15,000 sq. ft.
Spa			45,000 sq. ft.
Restaurant/Lounge			25,000 sq. ft.
Theater			35,000 sq. ft.
Circulation			30,000 sq. ft.
Concierge			5,000 sq. ft.
Dry Cleaning/Laundry			8,000 sq. ft.
Mechanical/Utilities			5,000 sq. ft.
<b>Total</b>			<b>204,000 sq. ft.</b>



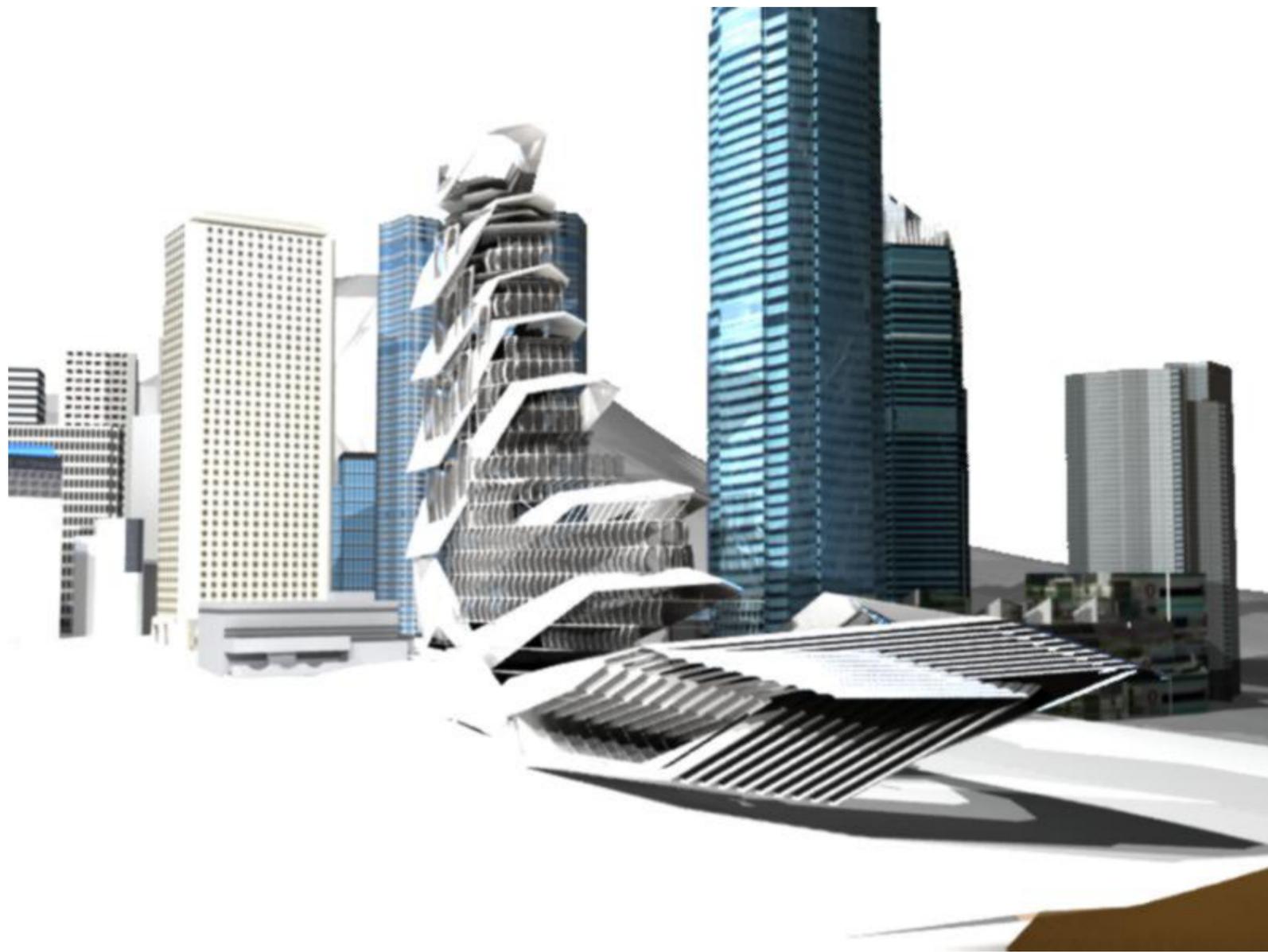
## Reference List

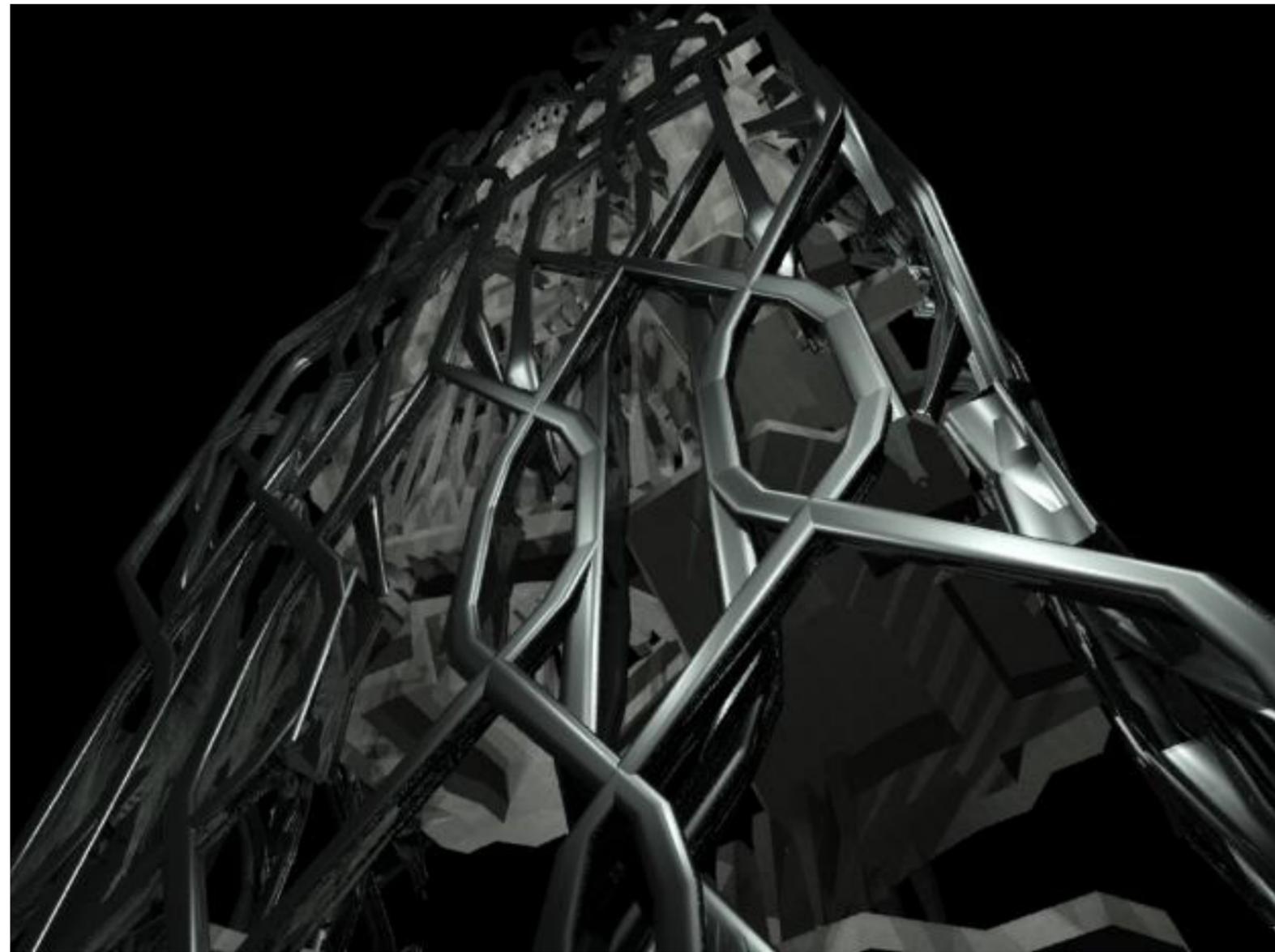
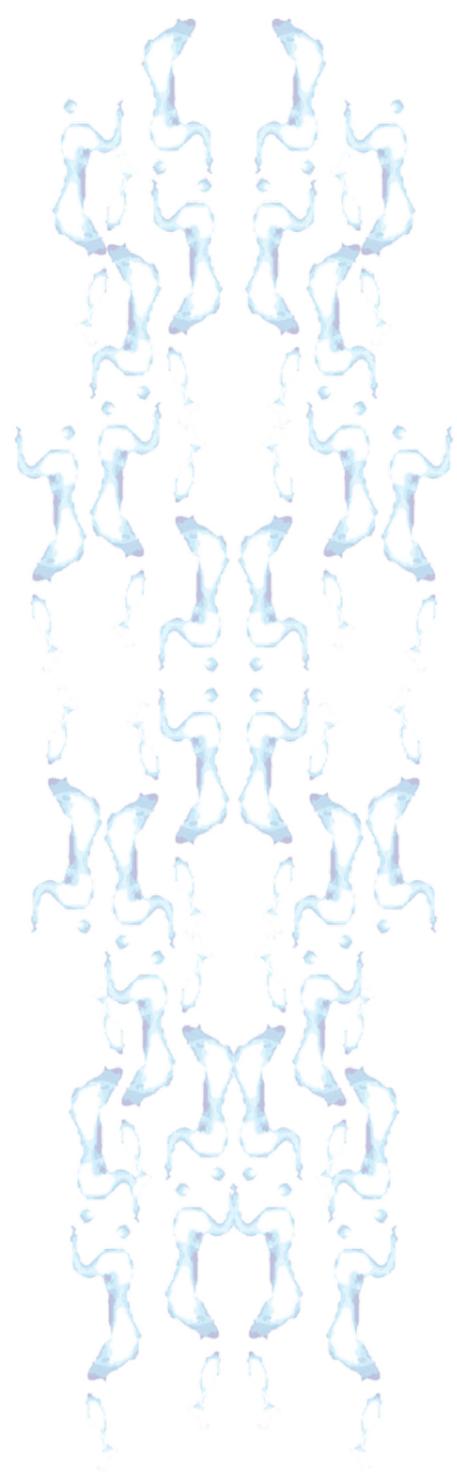
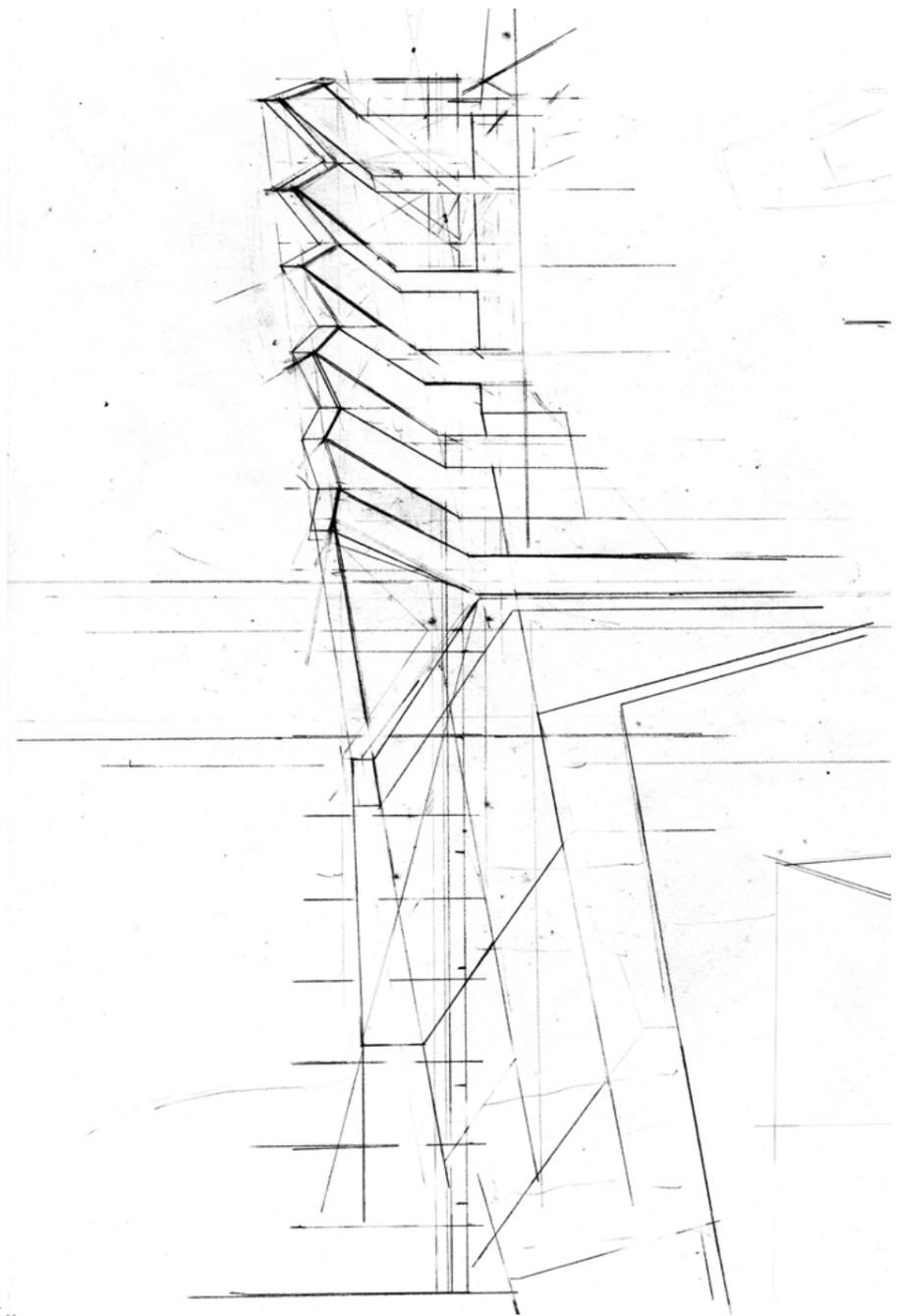
- Aunger, R. (2010). *The Electric Meme: A New Theory of How We Think*. New York: Free Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (2006). *The System of Objects (Radical Thinkers)*. New York: Verso.
- Benjamin, W., Jennings, M. W., Doherty, B., Levin, T. Y., & Jephcott, E. F. (2008). *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility, and other writings on media* . Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Bergson, H. (2007). *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Bingaman, A. (2002). *Embodied Utopias*. New York: Routledge.
- Bishop, R., Phillips, J., & Yeo, W. (2004). *Beyond Description: Singapore Space Historicity (Architext) (New edition ed.)*. New York: Routledge.
- Cheung, J., & Yeoh, A. (1998). *Hong Kong: A Guide to Recent Architecture (Architectural Travel Guides)*. London: Batsford Ltd.
- Crary, J. (1990). *Techniques of the observer: on vision and modernity in the nineteenth century*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2009). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Dezeen Blog Archive The Waterhouse at South Bund by NHDRO. (n.d.). Dezeen architecture and design magazine . Retrieved December 1, 2010, from <http://www.dezeen.com/2010/09/06/the-waterhouse-at-south-bund-by-nhdro/>
- Etherington, P. O. (2010, February 9). Dezeen Blog Archive Kanebo Sensai Select Spa by Gwenael Nicolas. Dezeen architecture gwenael-nicolas/
- Gabriel, M., & Zizek, S. (2009). *Mythology, Madness and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*. New York: Continuum.
- Galison, P., Richardson, A. W., & Giere, R. N. (1996). *Constructing Modernism: The Cultural Location of Aufbau. Origins of logical empiricism* (pp. 17-44). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gandelsonas, M. E. (2002). *Shanghai Reflections: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Search for an Alternative Modernity* (1st ed.). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

## Reference List (cont.)

- Heidegger, M. (2008). *Being and Time*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- Henze, A., & Moosbrugger, B. (1963). *La Tourette, the Le Corbusier monastery* . New York: G. Wittenborn.
- Lane, K. (1990). *Sovereignty and the status quo: the historical roots of China's Hong Kong policy*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- McGrath, B., & Gardner, J. (2007). *Cinematics: architectural drawing today*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy .
- Mitchell, W. J. (1990). *The Logic of Architecture: Design, Computation, and Cognition*. London: The Mit Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. (1996). *City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn* (New Ed ed.). London: The Mit Press.
- Nietzsche, F. W. (1957). *The use and abuse of history (2nd rev. ed.)*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub..
- Ponty, M., & Lefort, C. (1968). *The visible and the invisible; followed by working notes.*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern.
- Reiser, J., & Umemoto, N. (2006). *Atlas of novel tectonics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Sennett, R. (1992). *The Fall of Public Man* (Open Market Edition). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Taylor, A. E. (1929). *Plato: Timaeus and Critias*. London: Methuen & Co..
- Taylor, M. C. (1994). *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion (Religion and Postmodernism Series)*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Tsang, S. Y. (1997). *Hong Kong: appointment with China*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Tsang, S. Y. (2004). *A modern history of Hong Kong*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Vesely, D. (2006). *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (New Ed ed.). London: The Mit Press.
- Wu, N. I., & Boyd, A. (1962). *Chinese architecture and town planning: 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1911*. Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press.
- Yuro, T. (2005). *The Wall of Fools* (Japanese Ladder Series, Number 5). Shinchosha: Ibc Publishing, Japan.

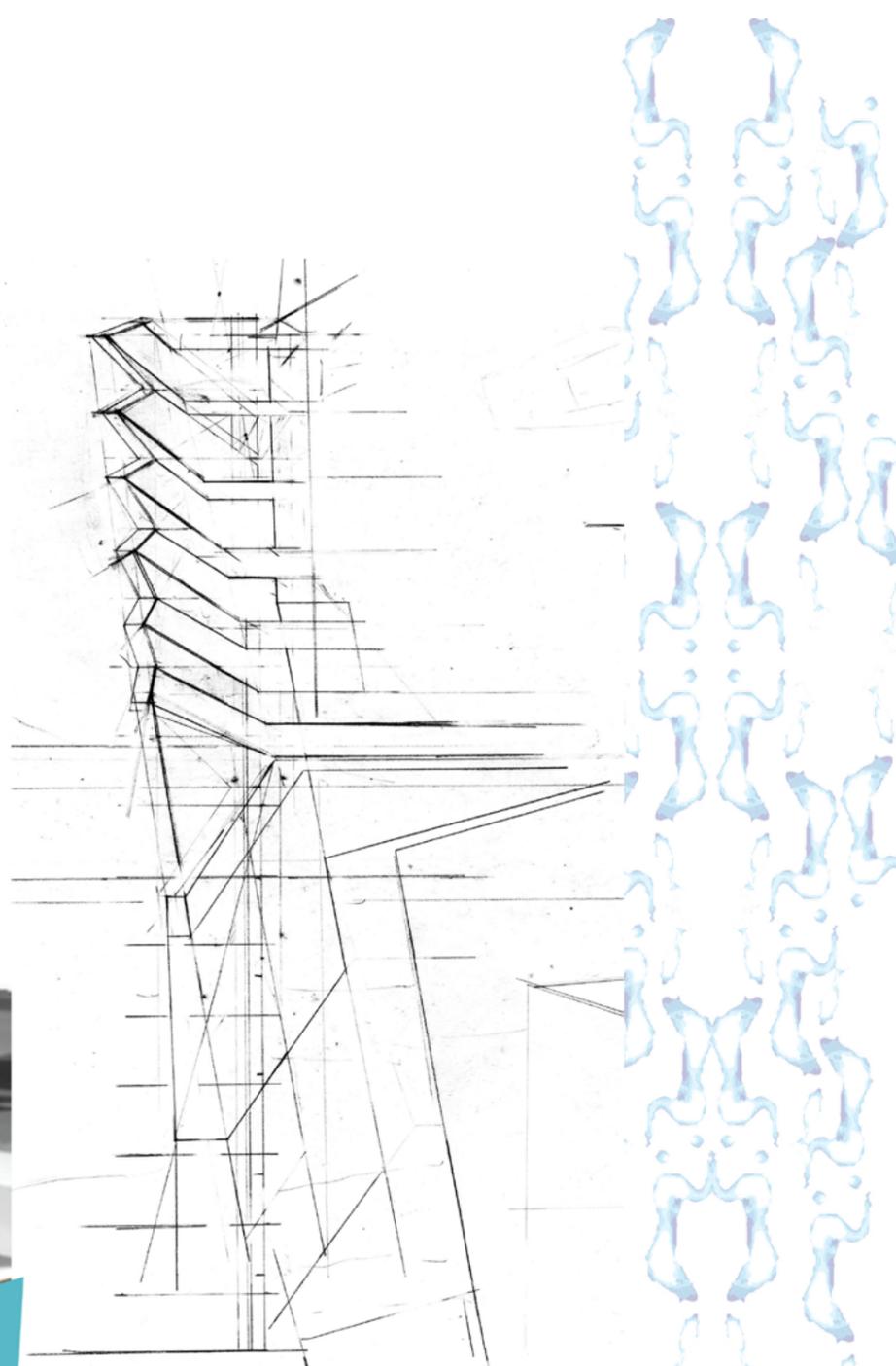
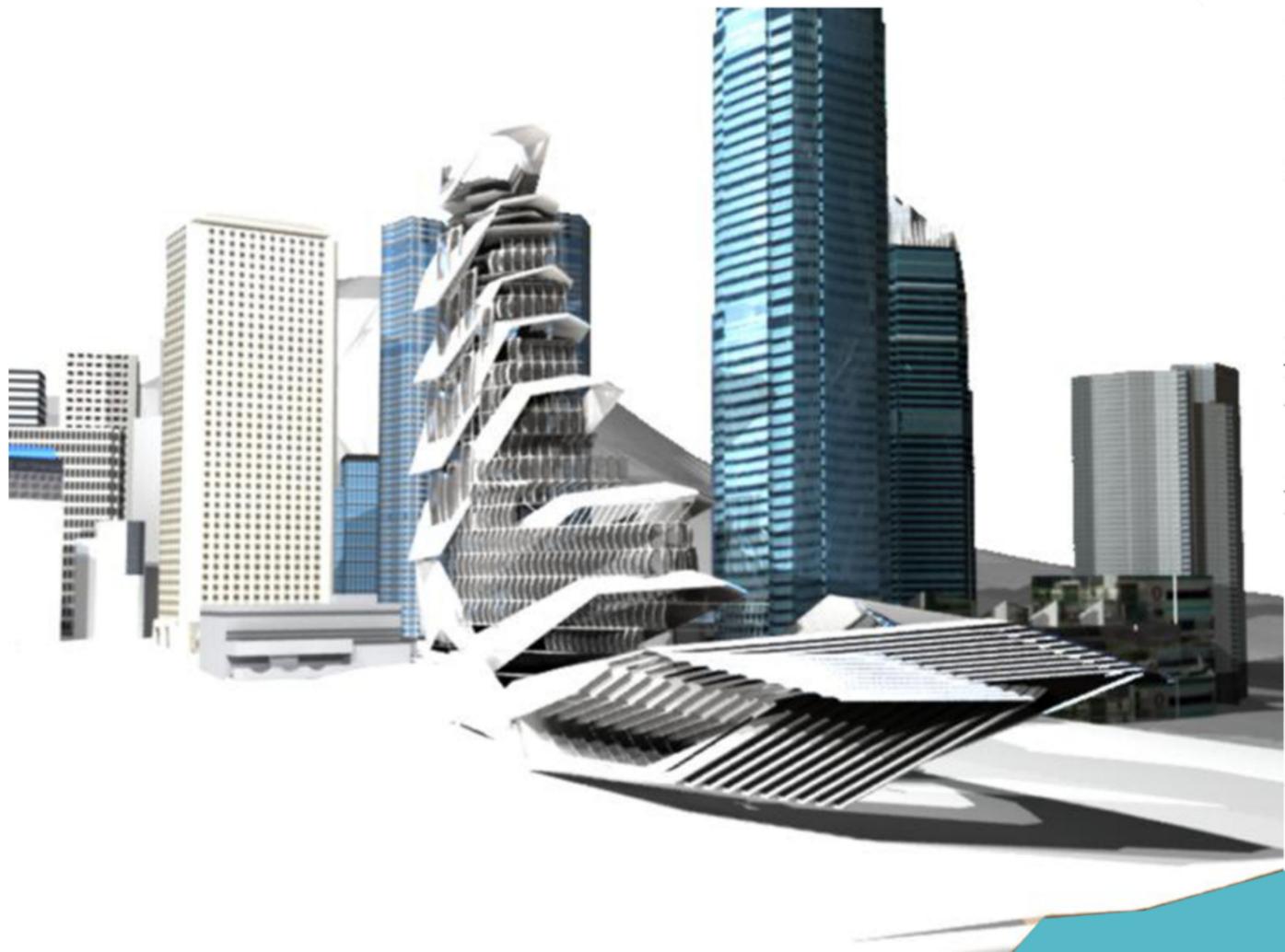
# Design Solution



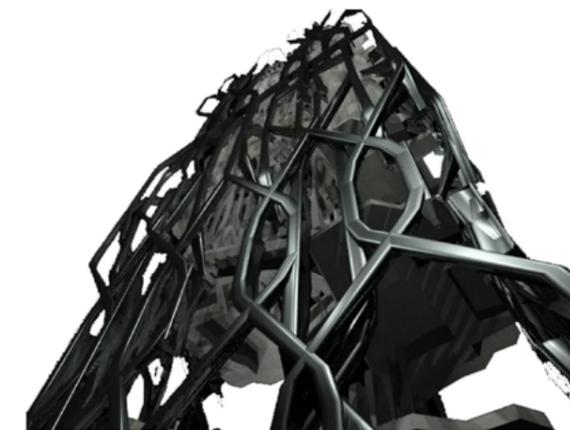
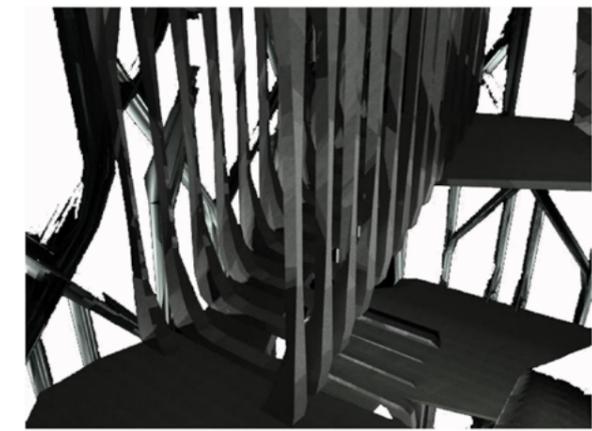
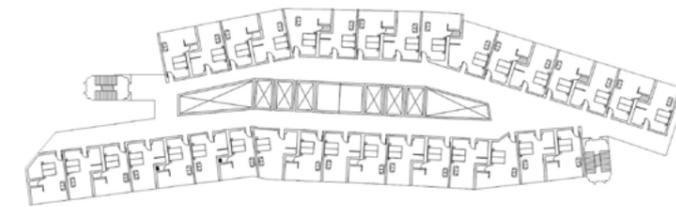
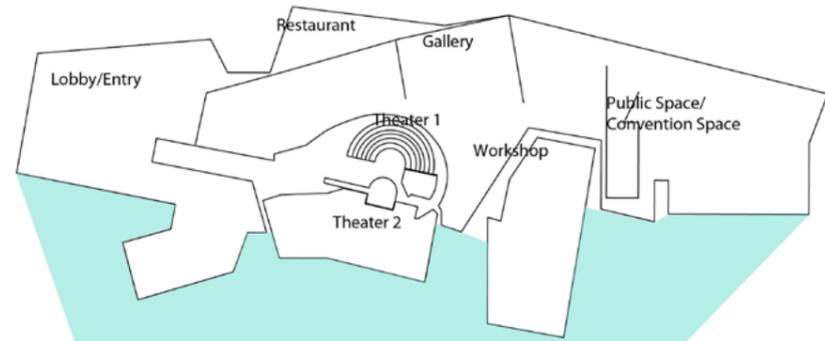


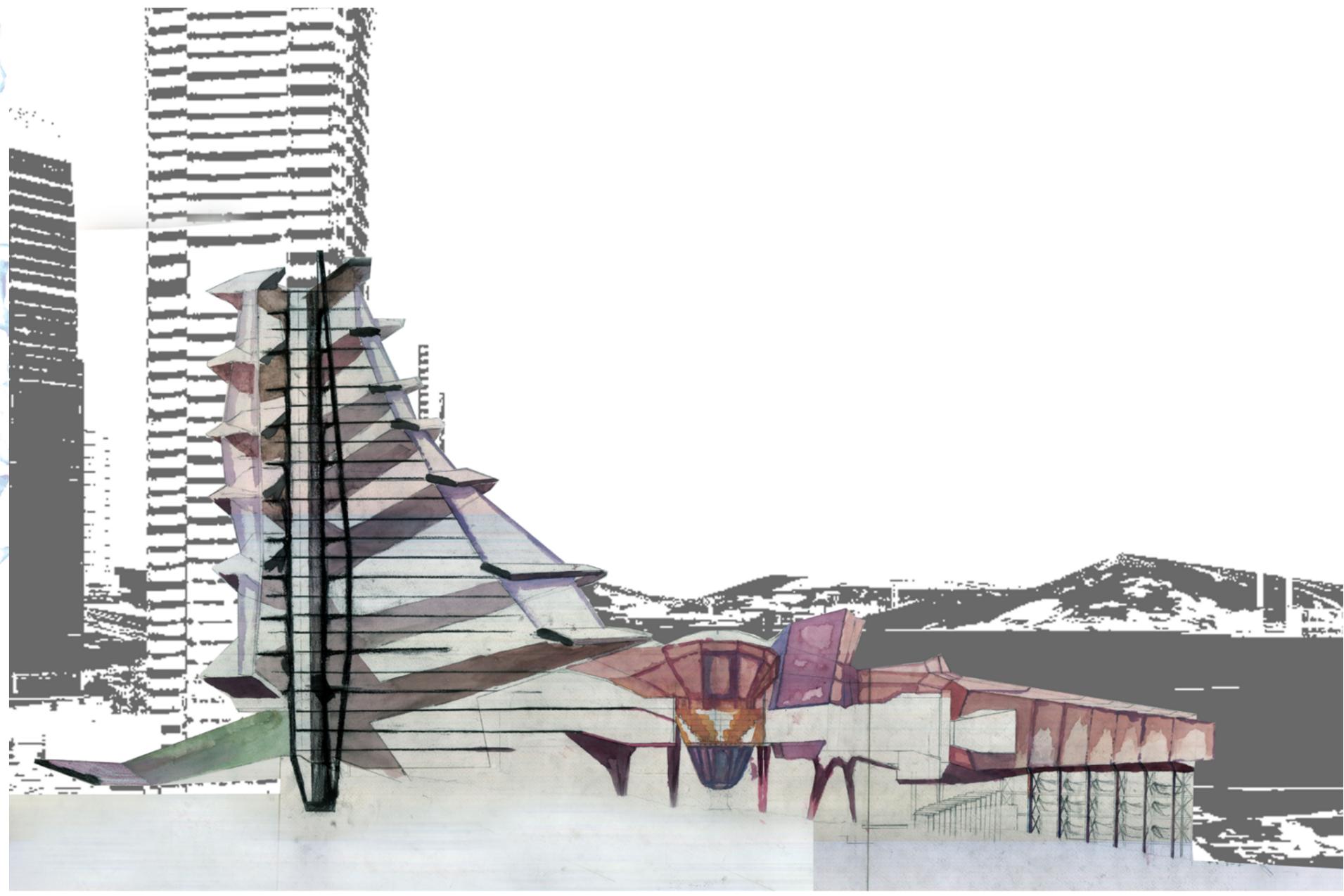
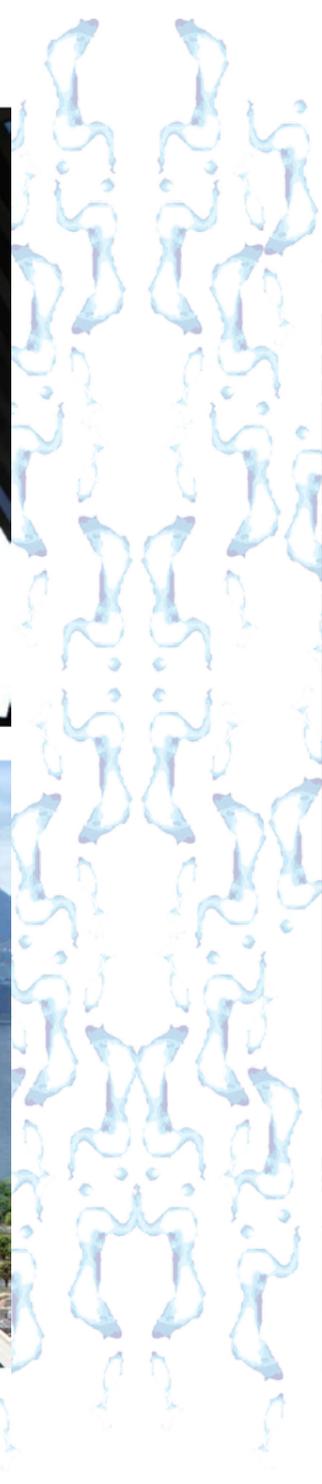
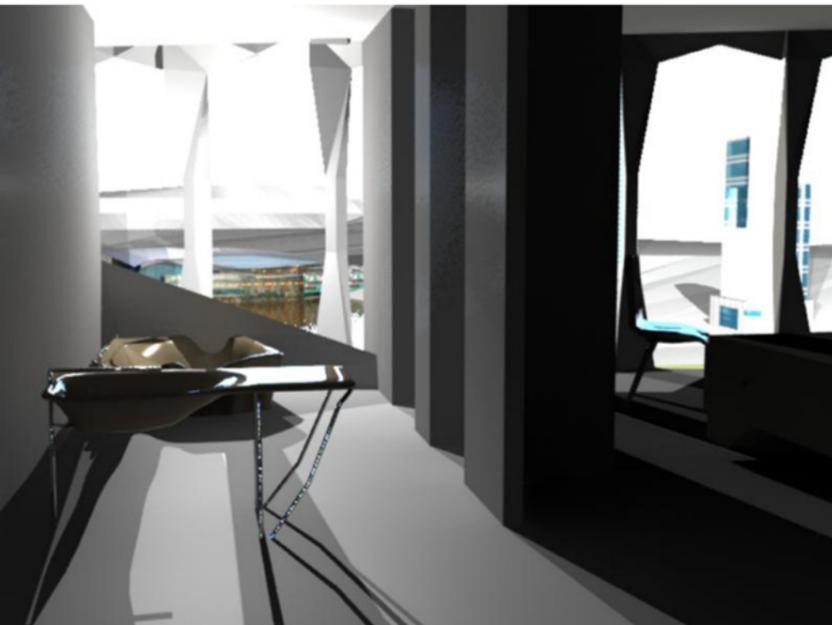
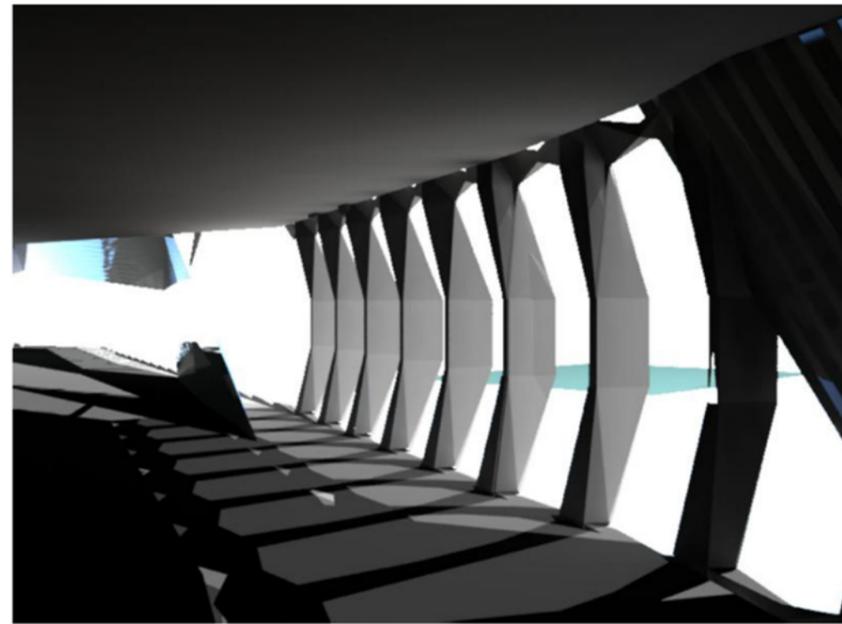
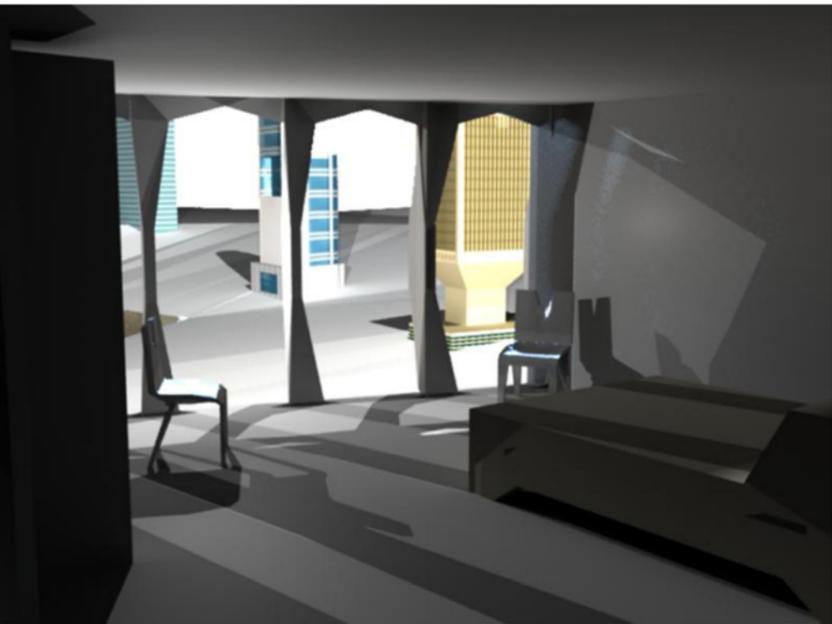
# 蜃景 Performing Arts Center/Hotel

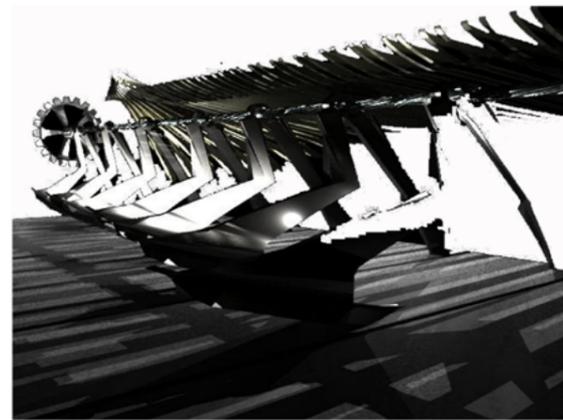
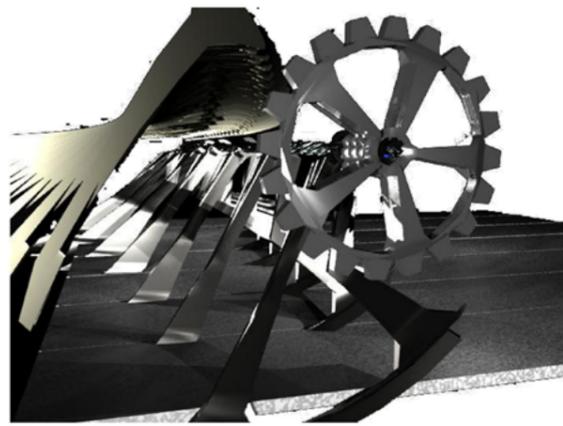
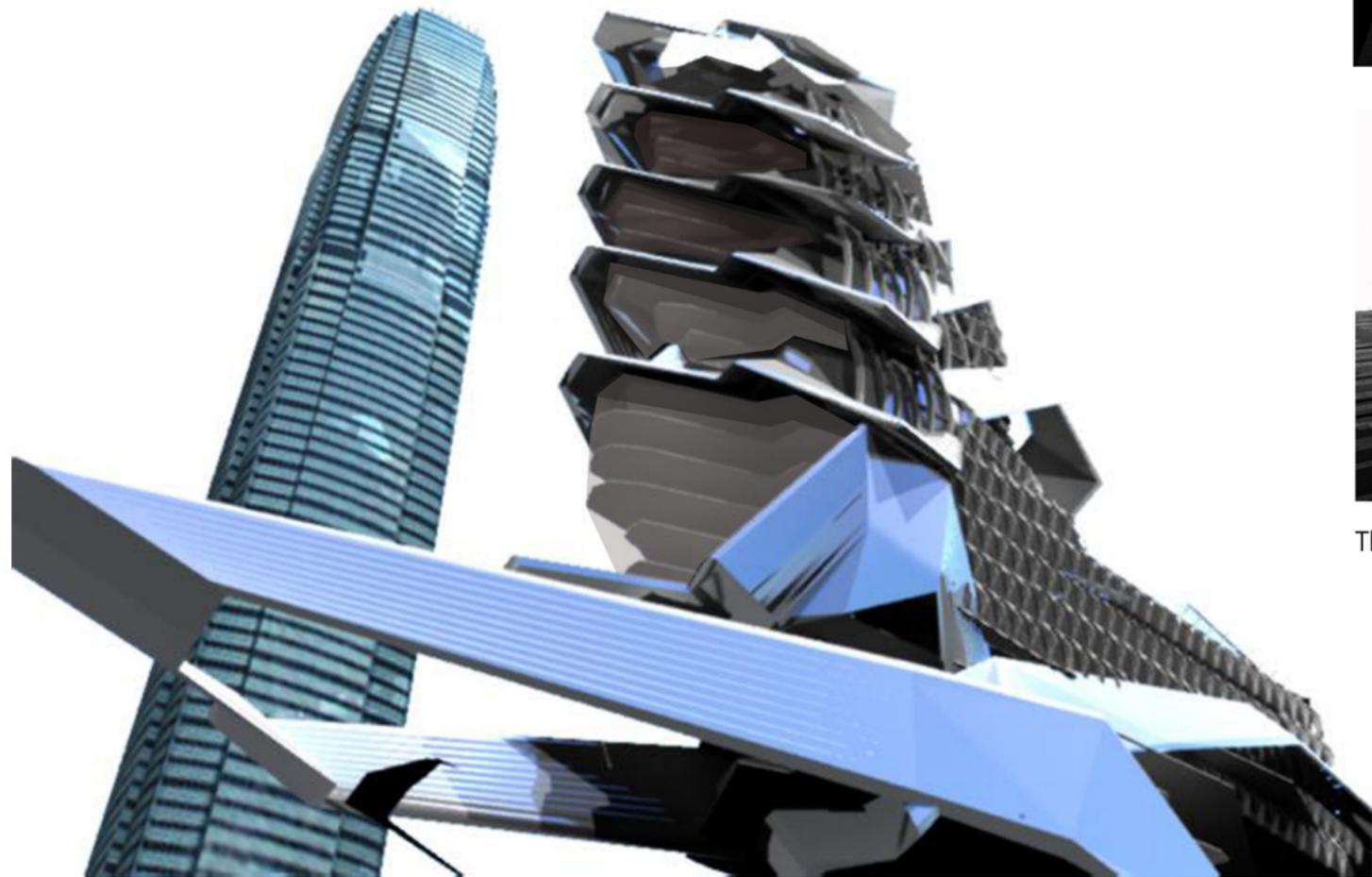
(Shèn-jǐng) Hong Kong SAR, China



Situated on the Island side of Hong Kong, this district is mainly business and financial institutions. Infusing into the landscape a performing arts center aimed at raising global awareness of China's repression of artists and censorship policies. This project seeks to redefine the class-based stigma of the performing arts center into a fundamental element of urban culture. The stimulus for this design was a response to the "progression" of digitization as an integral part of world culture and human interaction.



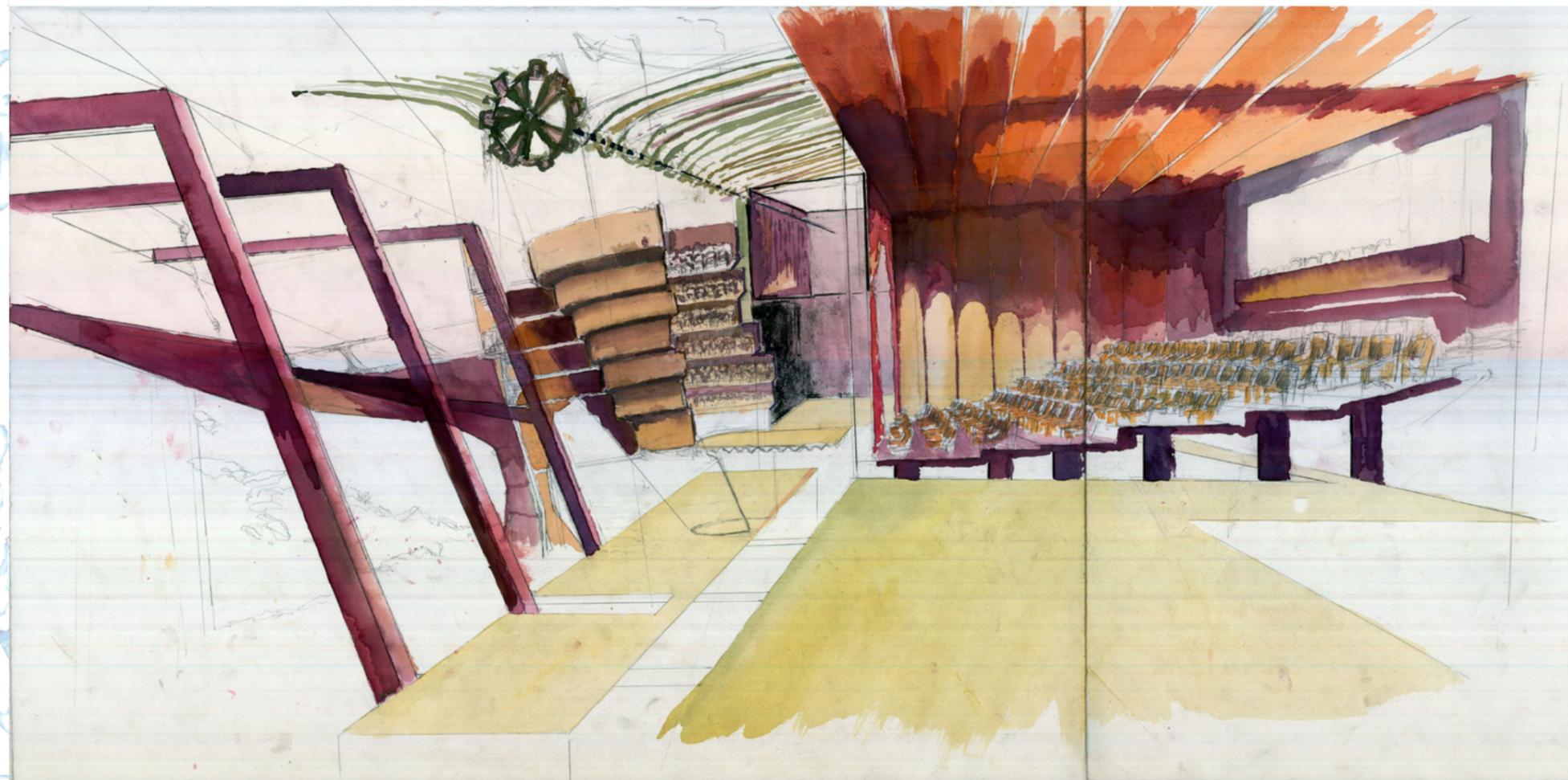




Theater Stage Mechanism



Exploded Section of Theaters and Workshop





Bradley Wehrman  
Minneapolis, MN  
bradley.wehrman@gmail.com

"agritecture!"

