

RKO Ruins & The Surreal Fragment:
dreams, film, and architecture

RKO RUINS & THE SURREAL FRAGMENT

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

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

North Dakota State University Libraries Addendum

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May 2021

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the primacy of dreams on our experience through the space of literature, film, and architecture. In contrast to the modern definition of “reality,” much of our waking experience is structured in the same way as dreams, as we stitch together fragments of memories we have to make meaning in the world and navigate our daily rituals. This is never reducible to a direct picture or a purely rational organization of time and space. In fact, as many philosophers suggest, looking at creations such as poetry, literature and film may show us how we actually see.

Inspired by the capacity of dreams and film to disrupt spatial temporal relations that are typically considered normal, this project brings to light the significance of dreams and imagination to waking experience. By restoring the abandoned RKO Keith’s Theater in Queens, New York, into a contemporary space for surrealist art and film, I hope to answer the question: Can architecture, like film and dream, engage our memory and imagination to augment and enhance our notion of reality?

NARRATIVE

“The world of the imaginary is not “unreal.”

-Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries

The lived body is inseparable from perception itself, and dream starts from the lived body, just as waking perception does. Meaning, the way in which we live and experience things in our waking reality is often times very dreamlike. In the Phenomenology of Perception Merleau Ponty, a French philosopher, argues that because there is a hierarchy of relating real and imaginary, our experience is collapsed; that **“a pre personal possession of the world exists prior to any cleavage between the dream world and the waking world, they are just seen as different modes of experience”**

The relationship between architecture and film is evident in the way that we perceive and connect to the imagined. By seeking out our interpretation through the forms of a building, we are attempting to contextualize and interpret what’s in front of us. Our lived experiences allow us to relate to a work of architecture or film. As we perceive through our senses, we are able to see ourselves through a work of art or film and may react in a way that helps us relate to these past experiences.

We must reject any notion of the dream or film as a secondary or degraded perception. This will only become possible by creating an awareness to the significance of the non-perspectival space of architectural representation through a reawakening of bodily engagement and desire that will be brought forth by framing the movement and rhythm of the body through time and space, and in doing so, answer the question: Can architecture, like film and dream, engage our memory and imagination to augment and enhance our notion of reality?

PROJECT TYPOLOGY

“Architecture exists, like cinema, in the dimension of time and movement. One thinks, conceives and reads a building in terms of sequence.”

-Jean Nouvel,

Film is very similar to dreams, as fragments of images and audio are spliced together, constructing spaces within the mind. As we perceive through our senses, we are able to see ourselves through a work of art or film and may react in way that helps us relate to these past experiences. Our imagined perceptions of the places we inhabit are our own interpretation of the ‘living picture’.

Poetic image is able to transform our sense of reality even while we’re awake. This helps us see how a poetic encounter with materials, space or language can affect a dream-like participation that augments or transforms our sense of “reality”. The typology of this project will be a contemporary museum for surrealist art and film, where participants may expand their imagination, blurring the lines between the concrete outer world, and the more intimate inner world. Consciousness and perception will be re-framed in visitor’s experience throughout the space. This is also why the space I design will inspire the creativity of visitors throughout their works of art, poetry, etc.

PRECEDENT RESEARCH

The following projects were given special consideration for precedent research:

- Las Pozas, Surrealist Jungle | Xilita, Mexico
- La Sagrada Familia | Barcelona, Spain
- Sigmund Freud's Practice of Architecture |
Vienna, Austria



Figure 01 | *Las Pozas*, photo credit | Victor Delaqua

LAS POZAS | *Edward James*

Typology: Outdoor Garden

Location: Xilita, Mexico

Size: 80 Acres (3,484,800 SF)

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Edward James created a unique sculptural space. He designed a sculpture garden that defies any architectural label and allows a glimpse of something new, moving between fantasy and reality. Columns with capitals that look like giant flowers, gothic arches, dramatic gates, pavilions with undetermined levels and spiral staircases that end abruptly in mid-air, as if they were an invitation to the heavens. Over the years, the sculptures have gradually merged into a random city, with harmony created by its structures and dialogue with its natural surroundings.

URBAN IMPACT:

Over the years the sculpture garden has been converted into a source of creation and work for the locals. The entire construction of Las Pozas took about 150 people, including carpenters, bricklayers, and gardeners. Walking through the Sculpture Garden has created a space similar to exploring an undiscovered city. Almost as if its labyrinth paths fuels the desire to discover different corners and details. In a space like this, everyone seems to feel the same ambiance and all their thoughts stay within this environment. They are no longer bystanders concerned about day-to-day problems because everyone starts to live in the moment and reflect on each step taken.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

Las Pozas includes a collection of concrete architectural structures and routes that form a sculpture garden. Upon entering, the architectural sculptures appear at different levels and views. There's a river with waterfalls that funnel through the garden. The garden itself is surrounded by a vast jungle terrain. Originally James focused on the horticulture of the site but after a blizzard destroyed his collection of orchids he decided to build a perpetual garden and built concrete structure that resembled floral elements.

Along its paths are hands and heads made of concrete, stone snakes, and other elements with a tone of the ruins, or something unfinished, taken by the jungle, adding some mystery's the place where you go to see and be seen. In this space the viewer creates a new type of contact with the constructed work, the landscape, and all the other visitors.

CASE TAKEAWAYS:

The idea of a building or space not offering a learning experience, but rather propose a discovery experience is something that resonates with me. Las Pozas presents a new way of looking at the reality of the architecture we produce today. Although a space like this is more of "getaway experience" and could not be replicated in our ordinary cities, I believe it presents visitors with new perspectives that we can in turn use to imagine new ways of living.



Figure 02 | *Las Pozas*, photo credit | Herbert Loureiro

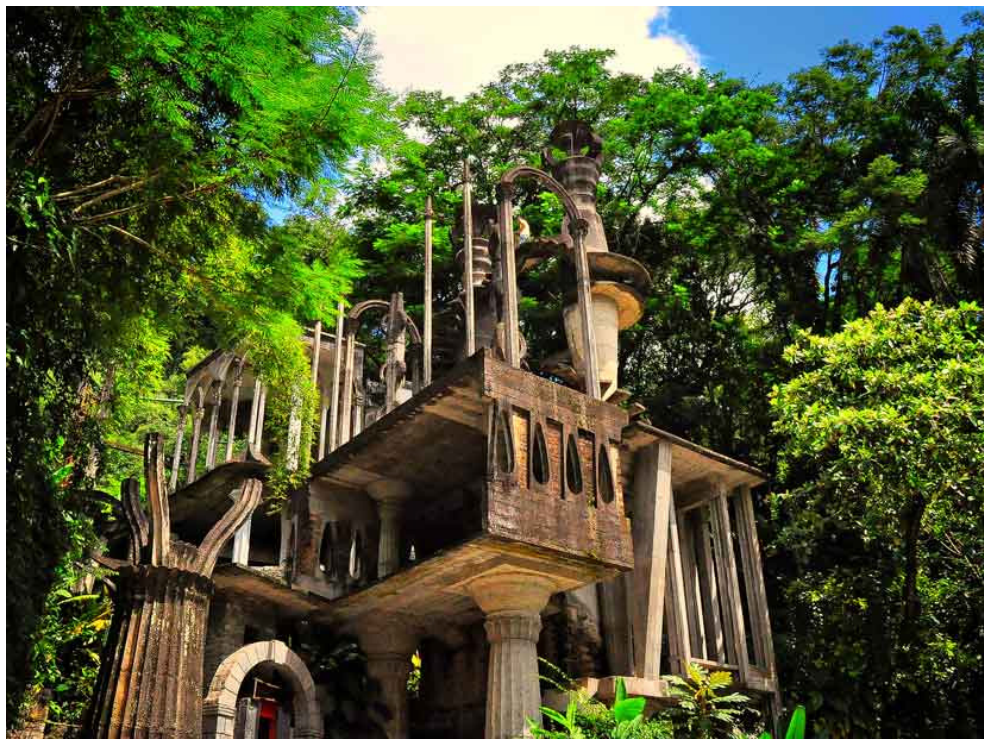


Figure 03 | *'Staircase to Heaven'*, photo credit | Rod Waddington

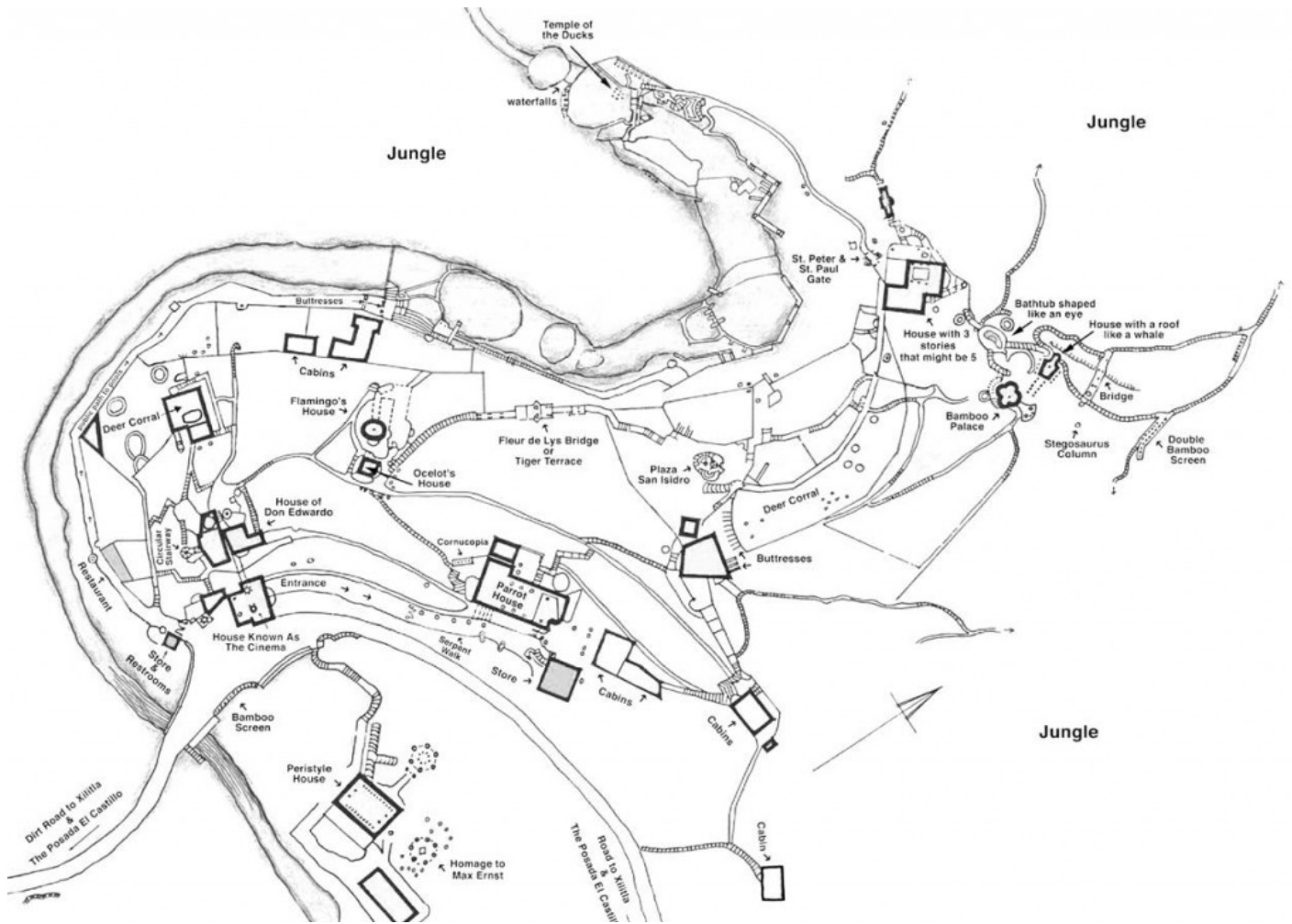


Figure 04 | Map of Las Pozas buildings, pools and sculptures, photo credit | Herbert Loureiro



Figure 05 | *Las Pozas* photo credit | Bernardo Bolaños



Figure 06 | *Stream Through Gardens* photo credit | Rod Waddington



Figure 07 | *Concrete bamboo at Las Pozas*, photo credit | AA Visiting School

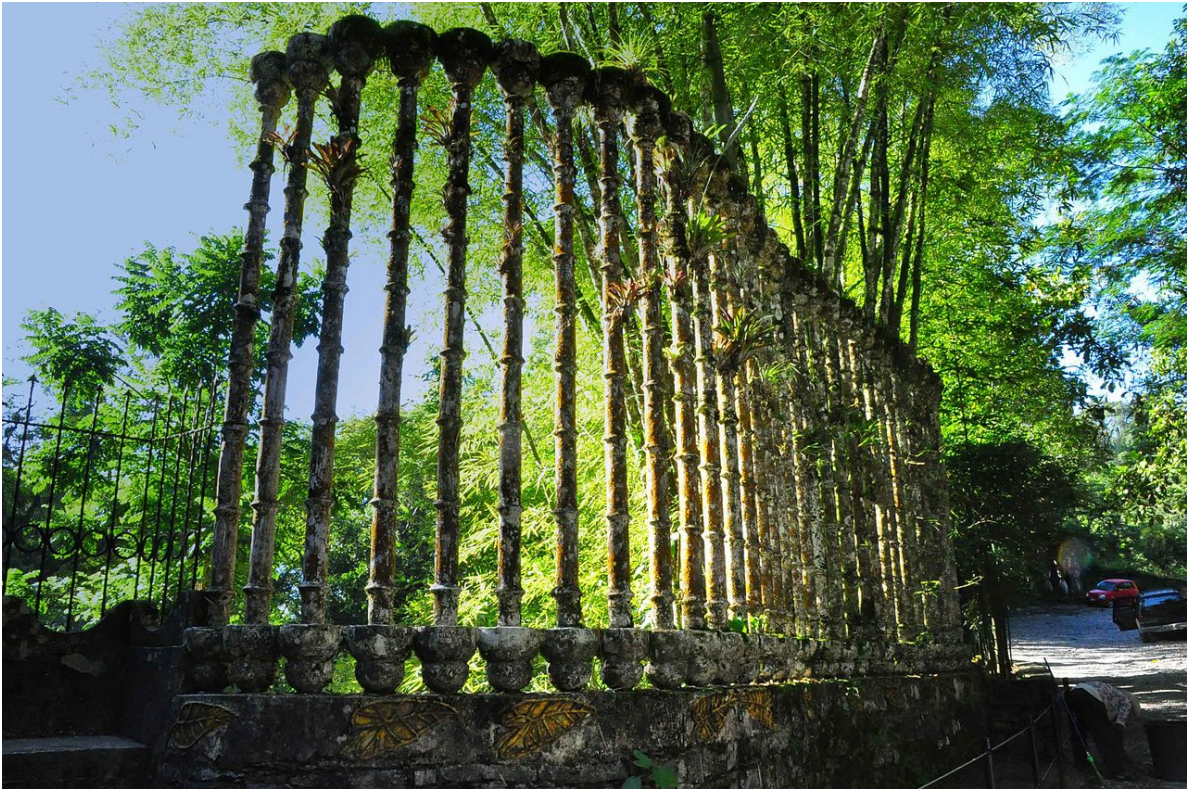


Figure 08 | *Las Pozas Columns* photo credit | Rod Waddington

ANALYSIS

Las Pozas is an architectural representation of surrealism. The captivating sculptures draw in visitors and act as an “escape” from our everyday lives. The growth of the jungle over the years has acted as fragments that build on each other and create connections in between. This process is in tune with what our perception of reality is in relation to the topic of dreams, giving light to the idea of architecture being a space to open up connections deep within us, as well as various times and places.

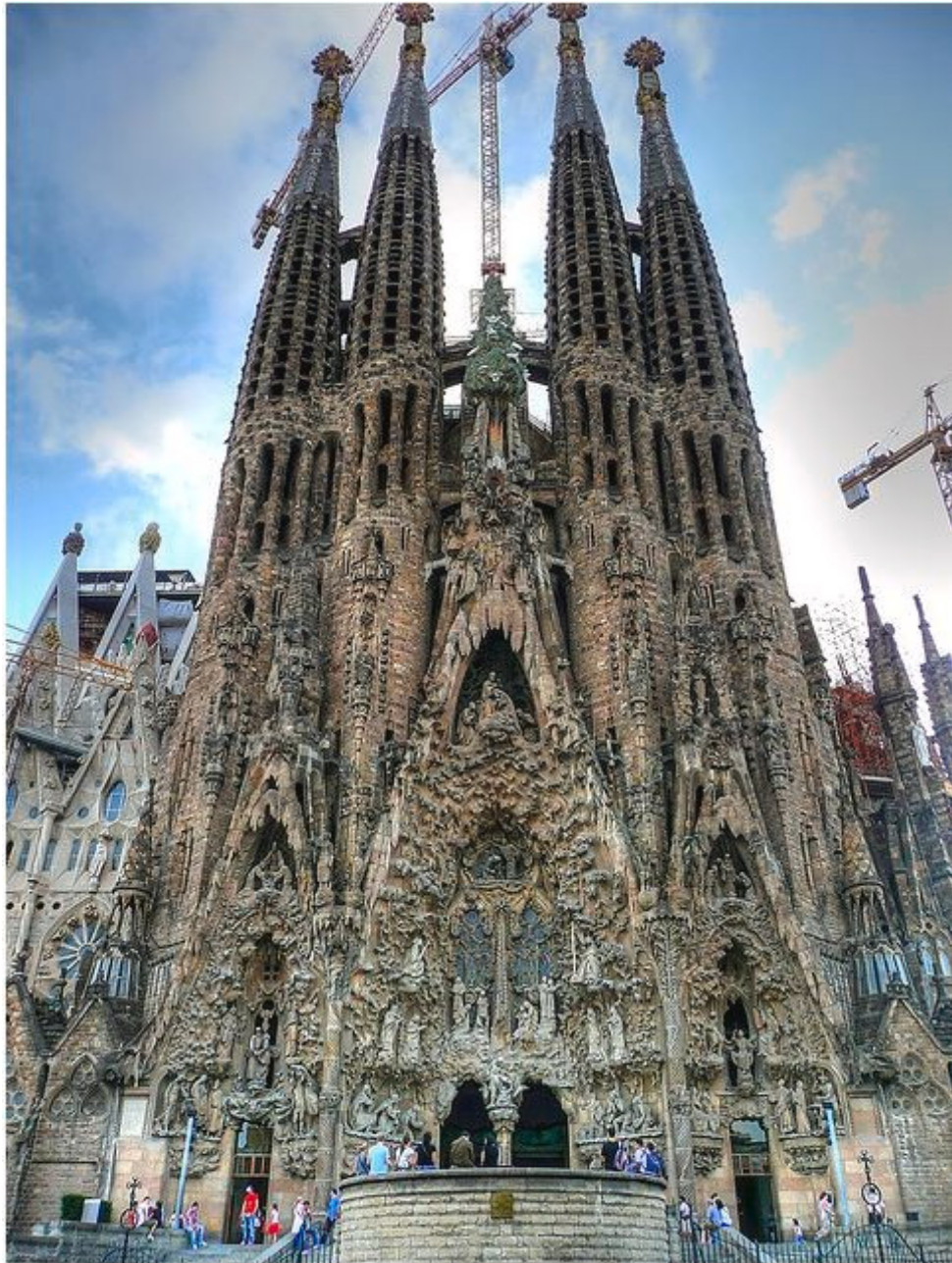


Figure 09 | *La Sagrada Família*, photo credit | Karen Cilento

LA SAGRADA FAMILIA |

Antoni Gaudi

Typology: Basilica

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Size: 48,500 3,484,800 SF

Architect: Antoni Gaudi

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

The Basílica de la Sagrada Família, also known as La Sagrada Família, is a large unfinished Roman Catholic minor basilica in the Eixample district of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. Construction began in 1882 and it is still under construction today. It is projected to be completed by 2026. Gaudi worked on this project until his death in 1926, well aware that he would not live to see it complete. He developed a system of angled columns and hyperboloidal vaults to eliminate the need for flying buttresses. Instead of relying on exterior elements, the horizontal loads are transferred through columns on the interior.

La Sagrada Família utilizes three-dimensional forms comprised of ruled surfaces, including hyperboloids, parabolas, helicoids, and conoids. These complex shapes allow for a thinner, finer structure, and are intended to enhance the temple's acoustics and quality of light.

URBAN IMPACT

Given the rich history of Catalan anti-clericalism long predating the Spanish civil war, it is quite shocking that la Sagrada Família has now become the number-one tourist attraction in Barcelona, with some 3 million visitors annually. It has become a major landmark of the city, drawing people from all around the world. As a fashionable yet deeply conservative architect, Antoni Gaudí was the obvious choice to bring this counter-revolutionary philosophy to life.

His great project, which he worked on obsessively, was to be “a cathedral for the poor” – and yet his reputation was formed by building extravagant villas for Catalan millionaires and courting wealthy patrons. This intimate relationship between money and the church was controversial and precisely what fueled the Catalan suspicion of the clergy. The estimated building costs stand at a shocking €374 million.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

La Sagrada Família consists of a central nave with four aisles at the sides, along with a transept that has a central nave bordered by two aisles forming a Latin cross. There are four bell towers that represent the Apostles which crown each facade of the building. The towers are approximately 100 meters in height.

Once completed, La Sagrada Família will feature eighteen towers that will be composed in a way that presents a unique view of the temple from any single vantage point. On the north end of the Basilica there’s a tower representing the Virgin Mary that will stand over the apse. The central tower will reach 72 meters in height and symbolize Christ, surrounded by four towers representing the Evangelists. Even as construction continues, older portions are undergoing cleaning and restoration.

CASE TAKEAWAYS

La Sagrada Familia has become a major landmark and popular tourist attraction in Spain. No matter which direction you approach the structure you are bound to have a unique experience. It's a living organism that continues to metamorphose right before our eyes. Gaudi used surrealist like inspiration throughout this design, as well as many of his other designs. I believe that looking at a successful project such as this will help bring my ideas to something more tangible.

ANALYSIS

By using three dimensional shapes throughout the design, La Familia Sagrada creates a magical, imaginative experience, both from an exterior and interior perspective, much like a dream.

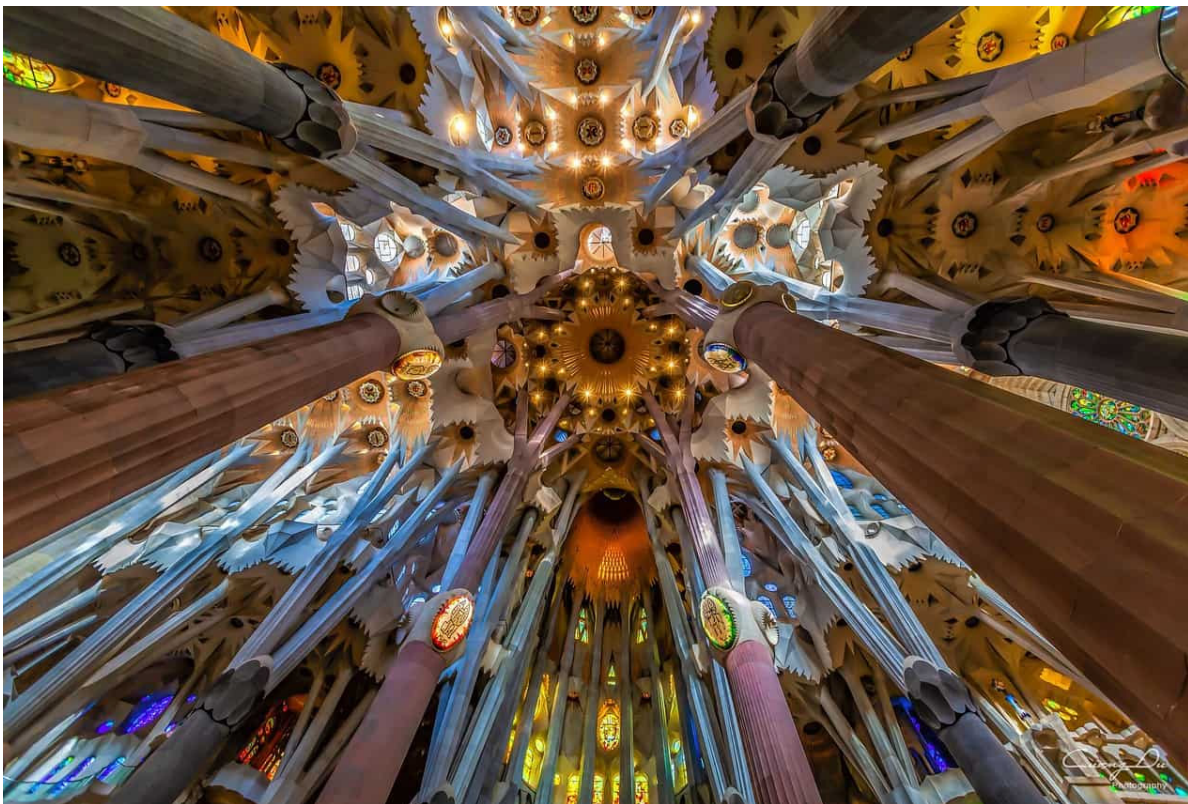


Figure 10 | *La Sagrada Familia Interior*, photo credit | Sofia Scott

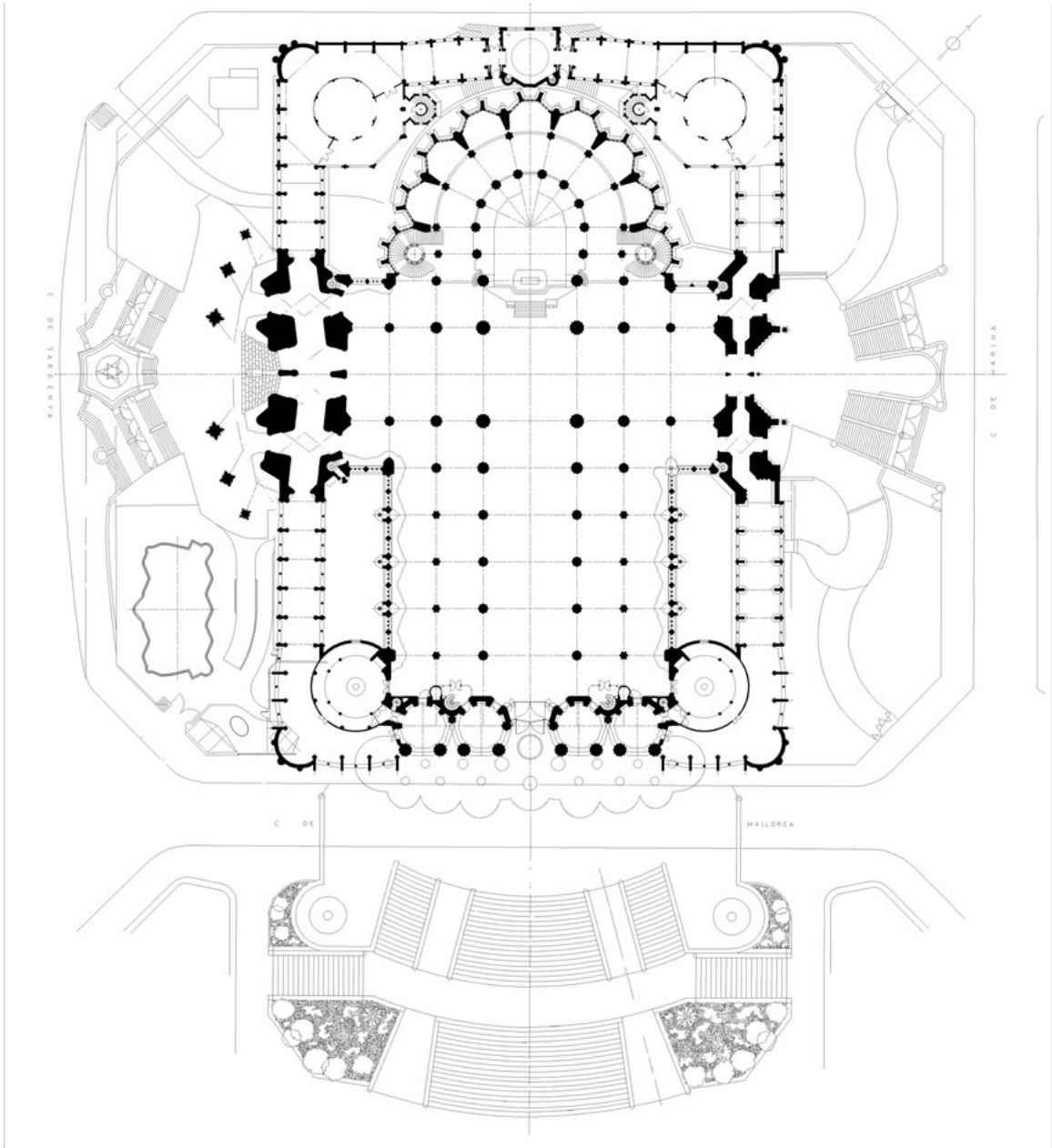


Figure 11 | Ground Floor Plan



Figure 12 | *Central Nave*, photo credit | John Kennan



Figure 13 | *Passion Facade*, photo credit | John Kennan



Figure 14 | *La Sagrada Família Interior*

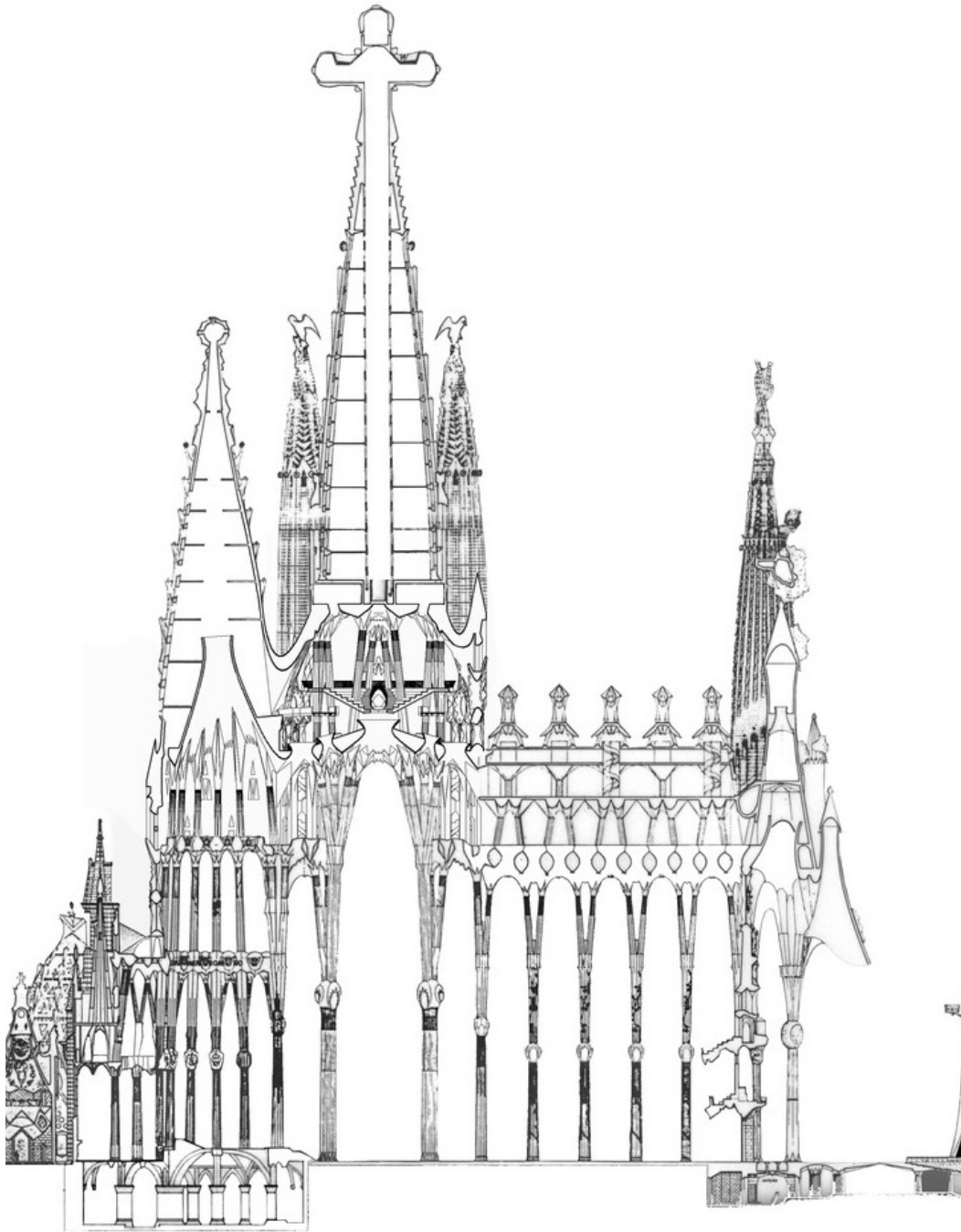


Figure 15 | *Longitudinal Section*

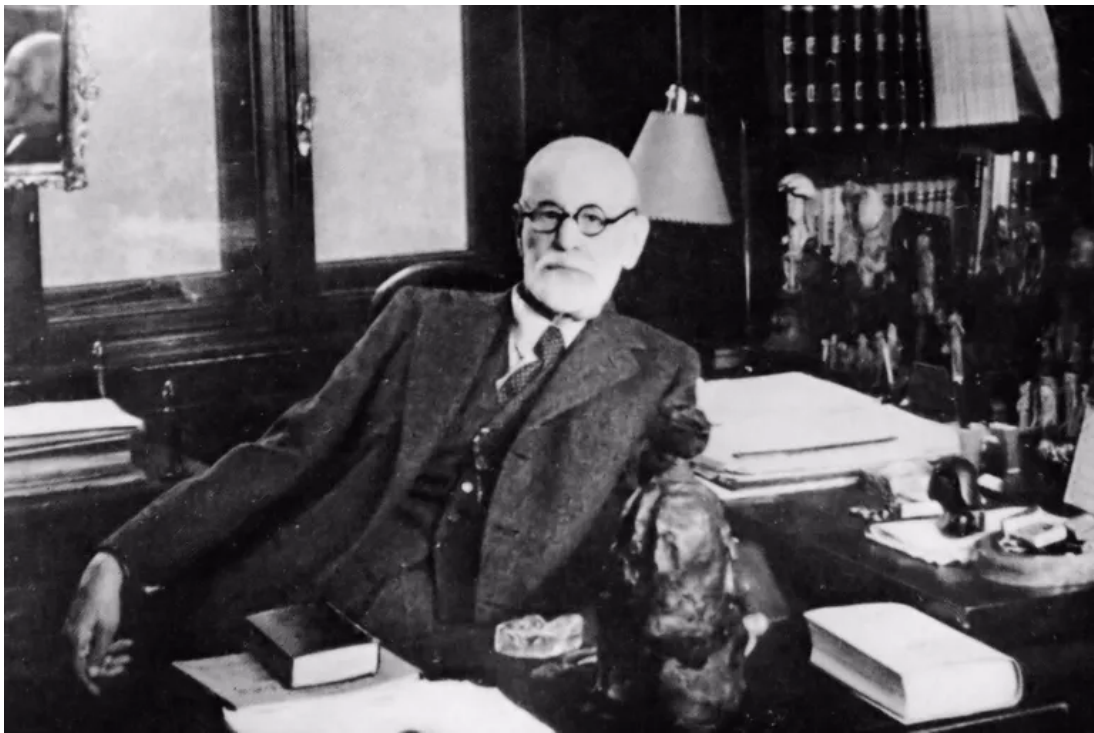


Figure 16 | *Sigmund Freud*, photo credit | Authenticated News / Getty Images

FREUD'S PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE |

Sigmund Freud

Typology: Psychoanalysis Room

Location: Vienna, Austria

Size: 48,500 3,484,800 SF

Architect: Antoni Gaudi

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Freud believed that the external world exists outside our body but is perceived and sensed by its inner world, which exists within deepest recess of the body and is understood as the unconscious. Caught between the 2 is the outer world: the space of consciousness. The external world is not revealed to us in an objective manner, but rather within us, we are never distinct, much like the dream world. His notion of space related to the topographical nature of the mind, particularly of the unconscious, where the unconscious is just spatial. This mode of thinking resulted in Freud filling his psychoanalysis rooms, where he examined the subconscious of patients, with artifacts and fragments from the past. These artifacts contained different archetypical meanings that he would use to read between the patient and the surroundings of the room allowing him to create a space for conceiving connections between various times and places.

URBAN IMPACT

Freud believed dreams represented a disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish. He believed that studying dreams provided the easiest road to understanding of the unconscious activities of the mind. According to the idea that Freud proposed, the dream is considered the guardian of sleep. He conceived spatially, this resulted in his psychoanalysis room to reflect on his working and living world. He used a variety of methods to study the subconscious mind of his patients, drawing people from all over the world. The workspace he surrounded himself, and patients with embodied his mind. Because of the methods he used in his architectural practice, this allowed him to improve his methods and treatment of patients. Treatment sessions would last several hours with extensive analysis. His office has now become a museum exhibit, attracting many visitors each year. Visitors can gain perspective on Freud's mode of thinking..

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Freud's organization of both physical and psychical terrain created a porous boundary between the space of architecture and the space of the subconscious. Freud's consulting room and adjoining study, are confronted with a confusing assortment of furniture and objects: couch, chair, books, bookcases, cabinets, paintings, photographs, lights, rugs, and Freud's extensive collection of antiquities. There was an extensive library near his desk along with the army of antique figurines which faced him while he read and wrote; the 'quite strange' chair that was designed especially for Freud; and the 'oddly decorative mirror' that hung from the large windows in his study. Freud displayed the entirety of his collection, acquired mainly from local antique dealers to allow him to analyze the minds of his patients.

CASE TAKEAWAYS

Studying Freud's workspace was very intriguing to learn about. It allowed me to further explore different means of psychoanalysis and get a glimpse of why Freud structured his rooms the way he did. Because Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis I believe that analyzing the space in which he performed this is beneficial to my topic as I intend to tap into the subconscious of visitors through my architecture and will be able to draw inspiration from this case study.

ANALYSIS

By placing hundreds of artifacts around his workspace, Freud conceived a new means of psychoanalysis. He opened up a space where he could create a dialogue between him and his patients. This is significant in the study of dreams, as dreams also deal with tapping into the subconscious.



Figure 17 | *Freud's Consulting Room*, photo credit | Edmund Engelman



Figure 18 | *Freud's Figurine's*, photo credit | Edmund Engelman



Figure 19 | *Freud's Desk*, photo credit | Edmund Engelman

CASE STUDY & TYPOLOGICAL RESEARCH SUMMARY

Each of the case studies chosen were well thought out in relation to my topic. They greatly varied in typology, but had similarities throughout. I think that having a good mix in typology is beneficial to my thesis as I can draw inspiration from certain aspects of each.

When looking at the work of Edward James, it ties fragmentation and a somewhat “incomplete” design style to the idea of surrealism. Feelings you may experience in Las Pozas are something that I’d like to replicate in my design. I think for the outdoor garden space in particular the sculptures and circulation paths are relevant examples of how a space can evoke a dreamlike participation throughout.

When looking at La Sagrada Familia this is a very well known large scale project. Gaudi’s design techniques will come into play throughout the structural elements of my design, as well as the conceptual elements. This is a massive and complex temple that draws great influence from the context of the site. I find a lot of Gaudi’s work to be interesting and would like to further explore his means for design inspiration, as his work seems to be quite dreamlike.

As for the work of Freud in his architectural practice, I believe this will play greatly into the theoretical aspect of my design, as well as the hidden meanings throughout. His workspace truly opened up a space to conceive connections and I found it fascinating as in his time this type of work was never before seen.

MAJOR PROJECT ELEMENTS

GALLERY/EXHIBIT SPACES

The space that was once the auditorium at RKO will be turned into gallery spaces for the public. Upon entering the galleries, participants become more and more lost in the surreal fragments, where tension is produced unconsciously, expanding, and contracting through space. Visitors may be drawn into as they explore the space, before reaching the theatre itself. Specifically, works of surrealist art created will be displayed, but the overall design of the galleries will be an experience as well.

THEATRE SPACE

Ticket purchasing booths will be located at the entrance of the building. After exploring the galleries, visitors then enter the new theatre space, which is ghosted above where the old stage once existed. During the cinematographic projection, visitors sit immobile between the light and the projected images, in the enduring presence of space-time and no fixed dimensions.

OFFICE/ARTIST SPACE

Office spaces in the existing part of the building will remain. These offices will be for any staff, technicians, curators etc. Some of these spaces will also be converted into workspace rooms where artists may create or teach workshops to be displayed in the gallery spaces.



Figure 20 | *Nostalgia Still*

USER/CLIENT DESCRIPTION

USER GROUPS

Visitors coming to the space would primarily be people coming for inspiration to visualize. Artists, creators, or someone coming for a unique experience that may reform their understanding of perception..

Office Employees 1-5 Total
Artists 1-10 Total*
Community Members 1-200 Total*

CONSIDERATIONS:

Gallery Spaces:

1. Variation in size
2. Circulation of visitors

Theatre Space:

1. Projection room
2. Accessible Seating
3. Ticket Purchase Booth

Office/Workspaces:

1. Integration of natural light
2. Office/storage for artists, staff, etc.
3. Break rooms

THE SITE

The site I have chosen to tackle this topic is New York City. The pace and experience of time is so different there, and I feel this is a city that needs this “reawakening” the most because interactions between people have become somewhat survivalist and mechanical in nature creating a lost sense of wonder. Because I’m dealing with film and fantasy I decided the ruins of an abandon theater would be the perfect spot to locate my architecture. The RKO Keith’s Theatre is located in Downtown Flushing Queens. There are also ties to surrealism in New York during the time period this theatre was in use. RKO Keith’s opened in 1928, which was also around the time that surrealist ideals were being brought over to the United States. Specifically in New York at the Guggenheim museum, where Fredrick Kielser had several surrealist exhibitions at the Art of this Century Gallery. The theatre closed in 1968 when it was sold to a developer who shut it down only a few months later for demolition. The Flushing community was outraged that such a historic building would be torn down to become a strip mall, but alas the ruins remain, surrounded by scaffolding, as they have for years. Many people from the community of Queens are dedicated to saving this theatre as it’s important to their history and culture.



Figure 21 | *Guggenheim's The Art of This Century Gallery*, photo credit | Elena Martinique



Figure 22 | *Overview of NYC* |
New York City, New York

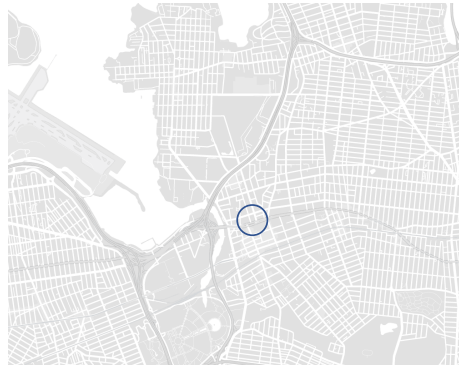


Figure 23 | *Flushing Queens* |
New York City, New York

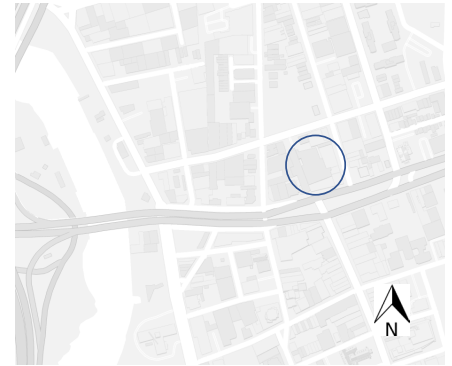


Figure 24 | *Downtown Flushing* |
New York City, New York

SITE SELECTION:

A big reason I decided on this location because of its ties with surrealism. After the surrealist movement dissolved in Europe with the onset of World War II, artists who first joined the Surrealists in 1937, left Europe for New York. The movement found renewal in the United States at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, Art of This Century, and the Julien Levy Gallery. The busy hustle and bustle of NYC allows for visitors to come in and out of "reality" as soon as they step off the street, creating more appreciation toward the dreamlike state.

THE PROJECT EMPHASIS

1. Reinstate the significance of dreams in relation to our waking reality.

As discussed earlier, dreams and the subconscious are something that are dreadfully overlooked and underrepresented in the modern world. Whereas in ancient times they had extraordinary significance. I would like to bring to light their significance in the modern context in our relation to spaces we experience to people who may be apathetic towards this concept.

2. Integration of surrealist & mythological ideals.

Because the surrealist movement is a primary example of how dreams are used in inspiration for art, film, and design I believe this is a crucial aspect to the style of design. In order to evoke a dreamlike experience I think by searching for inspiration in surrealism is the path to doing so. I also intend to find inspiration in myth as the modern world still preserves mythical behavior. Myth opens up a dreamlike interpretation of reality. Although myth and dream may not be the exact same, both are derived from a similar home of thought.

3. Preserve cultural and historical aspect of the building

I intend for this space to be around for years to come. In order to create a symbolic landmark I intend to use design materials that minimize harmful extended impacts on the community. By building off of what remains, this will help preserve historical and cultural aspects of the building as well.

GOALS OF THE THESIS PROJECT

Theoretical, physical, and social goals of the project:

1. *(Theoretical)* Answer the question of how can architecture re-frame our understanding of consciousness?
2. *(Theoretical)* Learn about surrealist's inspiration and learn more about the history, theory and driving factors of the surrealist movement.
3. *(Theoretical)* Further understand primitive ancient's way of relating dream and myth to our waking reality.
4. *(Social)* Create a space that brings artists, writers, designers etc. together through an engaging space of dreams not separate from reality.
5. *(Social)* Educate tourists or natives who may be apathetic toward this topic and bring awareness to its significance.
6. *(Social)* See how this topic can inspire myself and my colleagues to relate to their own understanding of dreams and film in relation to waking reality.
7. *(Physical)* Create an artefact that authentically represents the experience of moving in and out of a fragmented dreamlike space, similar to feelings my building will evoke.



Figure 25 | *Le Corbusier, Still Life*, photo credit | Van Gogh Purchase Fund

PLAN FOR PROCEEDING

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Upon completion of the proposal and research phase of the thesis project I will begin creating an artefact. This will be the architectural representation of my project that emphasizes a reciprocal relationship between thinking and doing. I will explore the representational capacity of architecture by communicating my intentions across a variety of media and scales to express my ideas to others. By creating an artefact, this will enable me to embody aspects of architectural experience that will be reflected in my final building design. This will be part of the conceptual phase of design.

I'll then utilize software to further analyze the existing site. Because I won't be able to physically access my site this step is crucial. It will be important for me to thoroughly understand the existing portions of the building, what once was there, as well as other important analytical components in order drive my design decisions. Using the compiled data I find I will then begin to refine the site information to help further inform my site design and building design.

A variety of diagrams such as plans, sections, and elevations will also be analyzed in order to form a design solution with multiple connections. Further historical research will continue to help me refine my scope and direction. I want to create as many layers as possible within a refined scope and I think that continuing to study surrealists, specifically André Breton, as well as surrealist culture through works of film, poetry, art etc. will deepen the layers and meaning behind my design inspiration.

DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The process used to arrive at a scientific research conclusion

1. Unifying Idea
2. Topic research leading to discovery of new ideas and tools to help you answer related questions
3. Testing of new ideas and tools
4. Formulation of your own design opinions
- 5 Formulate those opinions into a proposed intervention

DOCUMENTATION OF DESIGN PROCESS

DOCUMENTATION COMPILATION / Documentation Creation

Medium for design investigation:

Computer representation
Hand Sketching
Hand Modeling

Software for Investigation:

Autodesk AutoCAD
Autodesk Revit
Rhinoceros

Software for Representation:

Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe InDesign
Adobe Premiere Pro

Design Preservation Methods:

1. Creation/investigation of representation
 - a. Scanning hand produced drawings
 - b. Photograph physical models/artifacts
2. Feedback from advisor(s)
3. Weekly/biweekly material sent to advisor
4. Research material documented
5. Computer files backed up weekly via Google Drive
6. Thesis book updated weekly as per schedule
7. Drawings/diagrams created upon acquisition in references section

Publication of Material:

Relevant material will be recorded and credited in final Thesis Book available:

1. NDSU Institutional Repository
2. Hard cover book format

Documentation organization:

File Labeling: Year-Contreras_Thesis_Phase_Name

Example: 2020-Contreras_Thesis_Passive Systems_Wind Analysis

THESIS PROJECT SCHEDULE

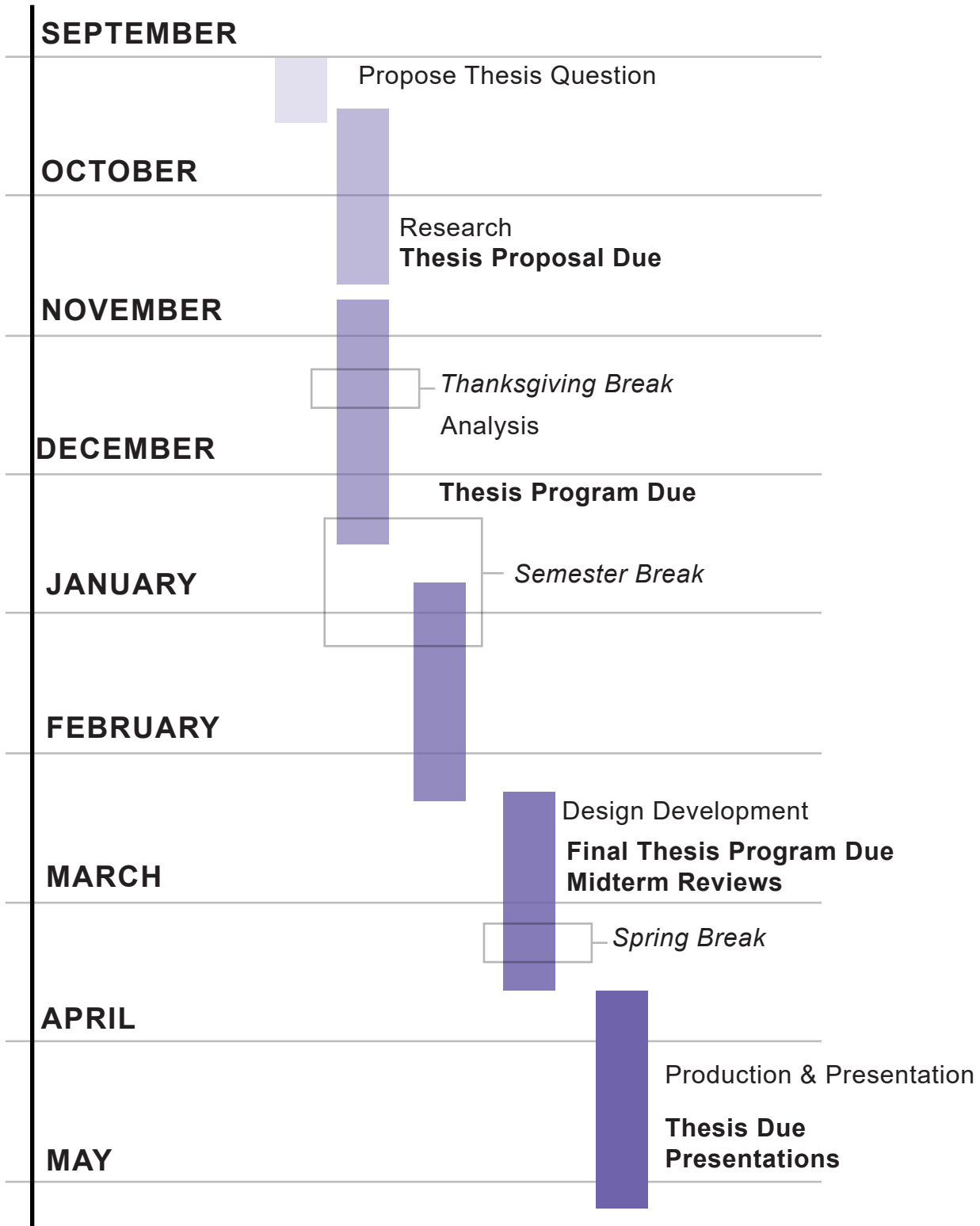


Figure 26 | Thesis Project Schedule

RESULTS FROM THEORETICAL PREMISE

Literature Review I

Overview

In her essay “Towards a Correal Architecture”, Marta Franco writes about her reflections on Austrian-American architect, theoretician, theater designer, artist, and sculptor, Fredrick Kiesler. In this review I’ll mostly be looking at areas that touched on surrealism and Correalism as they greatly associate with my topic of dreams. Correalism is a term that was coined by Kiesler which he defined as “an expression of the dynamics of continual interaction between man and his natural and technological environments.” She specifically does a good job at unpacking the central goals of surrealism, and how they sought to return the imagination to modern reality. This essay gives great background on the history of surrealism and its roots. The topic of surrealism relates to dreams because it seeks to bring a sense of wonder and awe to the everyday life. Surrealists aim was to make the small things in life seem magnificent. Dreams heavily influenced their art, film, literature, etc. thus making this essay a great source of inspiration and research for my thesis project.

Review

Franco begins on introducing surrealism and how it came to be in the United States. She speaks on how a small series of exhibitions came to the Guggenheim in New York in the late 20s and early 30s. Kiesler was asked to devise a new method for displaying surrealist art. In collaboration with Marcel Decump, the two successfully created the “Art of this Century” exhibition. Franco examines this exhibition and its instillations as it was considered to be the statement of arrival for surrealism in America. One of these exhibits consisted of an instillation with crisscrossed strings resembling a labyrinths web. There was also a painting library that had mobile stands and bins that were manipulated by visitors, creating a private exhibit for him or her.

Kiesler's philosophy relied on the idea of "display in space", a method which was used "was to activate the visitors and engage them in a "private event", searching for a subjective relation with the work of art, in which the connection between personal perception and the re-interpretative mind would prevail. This relation proposed a participatory event, which enabled architecture to link perception with the viewers intervention. It resulted in the creation of art itself, as it is the viewer who finishes the work through their own re-interpretation. I believe this to be an overlooked method in architecture today and hope this idea is reflected throughout my design. It's important to look past the aesthetic value of a design and create something that is truly meaningful. Our spaces we surround ourselves with greatly impact our mode of being, therefore as designers of the world we must take this into account.

Kiesler puts it best when he states, "The viewer must recognize his relevance in the act of seeing and receiving as a participant in the creative process of art no less essential than the artist's own intervention, in order to break down barriers and correlate himself within the artistic environment." ¹ Franco goes on to further describe some of the exhibits. A particular one that stood out to me was one of frameless paintings. The paintings were fastened to convex wooden wall where they were suspended from adjustable pivoting sawed-off baseball bats. This was contrasted by an undulating wall of blue canvas which projected pictures that could be controlled by an invisible light beam. This beam was activated by visitor's contact, truly making it an interactive and dreamlike experience. Kiesler was experimenting with the crucial question of participation in architecture throughout all of his exhibits at the Guggenheim. It was looked at in terms of a subjective relationship to space, reflecting on the awareness and importance of the visitor's role in experiencing art or architecture.

¹ T.H.C, "Kiesler's Pursuit of an Idea", Progressive Architecture, July 1969, p. 115

Franco later goes on to discuss the importance of surrealism in our lives today. Surrealism implies a process of reinterpretation based on personal imagination, similar to Kiesler's exhibits. Thus, vision, perception, imagination, and dream can all be used as a process to find sources for design through our ability for reinterpretation. She even argued that direct dream imprints exist in our memory and develop a sequence to explain re-interpretative translation to be done from dreaming to design. There are even dream drawings that were used as a means to gather dream images to be used as a method for the translation of subconscious elements into a conscious reality. This approach can help lead to a more harmonious vision of the world, in which everything is comparable to everything else. I agree with her argument here as it would allow people to no longer view everything through a lens of compartmentalized logical thinking, but rather one where there's an intriguing wholeness in which everything entices everything else. Looking at the world through the lens of surrealism gives us the opportunity to transform our world around us into the image of our own desire.

Conclusion

By creating a space for desire, we open up a world within as well. Desire is something that we all long for. Even the desire for desire is a possibility that comes as part of the human experience. I think that this ties in greatly with surrealism and allows for the ability of "otherness" to appear. Surrealism gave a different reaction against the standard notion of the world in which said otherness did not exist, making the object subjective. It's something that has many ties with not only dreams, but also the imagination itself. The use of imagining allows us to reestablish the connection with human wholeness. It is something that is not separate from perception, but rather continuous and must be liberated. Although surrealism may seem like quite a radical attempt to overcome traditional aesthetics and the reduction of subject-object antinomy, I certainly agree that there is something very 'atmospheric' about the matter.

Summary

Overall Franco does a wonderful job at delving into the world of dreams and surrealism, bring certain underrepresented topics to light. She thoroughly assesses Kiesler's work throughout his installations at the Guggenheim, as well as his theoretical framework and premise. These examples were in great detail and overall helpful in describing existing representations of my thesis.

Franco also successfully depicts surrealism and its importance in today's society, going in depth about their goals, mindset, and dreamlike nature. Correalism and surrealism explore a wide view of the world that opens up the possibility to interpret reality in a new way, a way that is conceived through the fact of its own creation. We become performers of our own reality. This is something that I wholeheartedly agree with and think to a major argument in my own topic.

Overall, Franco does a great job at education the reader, not only on her own perspectives, but also by analyzing Kiesler and other philosophers' perspectives as well. This essay opens up a world of new perspective and allows us to see things in a different way, whether you agree with it, or not.



Figure 27 | *Guggenheim's Art of This Century Reconstruction Model*, photo credit | Fredrick Kielser Foundation

Literature Review II

Overview

This literature review will be looking at an essay titled “Surrealism and Architectural Atmosphere” written by Alberto Perez-Gomez. This essay examines the ties of surrealism in relation to our surroundings. Gomez goes into detail on the idea of poetic image, and the role that this image can in relation to our everyday lives, memories, etc. He specifically delves into architectural atmospheres enabled by permanent buildings, urban environments, natural landscapes, ephemeral structures, and multimedia installations that may create significant memories, both spatial and temporal. Our surroundings create a multi-sensory experience that both influence and becomes a reflection of our own consciousness. In this review I’ll be further examining Gomez’s stance on surrealism’s impact on the architecture we experience today, as well as my own thoughts in relation to the topic.

Review

Gomez sets up his argument by stating that “surrealism has always conspired to question assumed logic and science, whether in events, spaces, written, painted or drawn.” This plays into the idea that surrealist art can affect the space in between, revealing the familiar in the unfamiliar, and the marvelous in the ordinary. Such representation truly questions the status of the subject as a thinking substance, and the status of the objects as a quantifiable and unchanging substance. But for surrealists, this status was not something that is a mere fantasy, but rather something that is a crucial dimension for architectural meaning. There is no difference between delay and fulfillment in surrealism, as both should always be present, the two moments become related through a fluid transition. I agree with this concept as waking our lives and consciousness really do boil down to different fragments and memories that are stitched together, much like a dream. Therefore, we should look at the dreamworld and the lived world as a continuum, rather than two separate things. By bringing various fragments together our own bodily image becomes enlivened and can even heighten how we actually “see images”.

Another idea explored by Gomez is the idea of “continuity”. Continuity in experience between the concrete outer world and inner psychic world of man is a pervasive surrealist theme, we see differently through the work of art. Because a great deal of inspiration for surrealists are found in dreams, this makes the in betweenness of sleeping and waking the most fertile ground for creativity. Through our interaction with architectural spaces, we are allowed to participate in our cultural tradition. **“An essential reciprocity between humanities and culture is embodied in the built fabric of cities. We are creators of that culture, but we are also in a sense “made by it”.** Our embodied interactions with the world and others effect the way we understand our own reality. It is a continuum – whether waking or sleeping, the subject is always more or less in relation to the world, never absolutely present or absent. In other words, the world is never missing from the sleeper’s awareness in the sense that the dualistic language of the conscious and unconscious or even waking and sleeping impose on us. It is a vital part of the human experience that is not just reduced to biological health but has become a cultural issue in the modern world. We must reject any notion of the dream as a secondary or degraded perception; a mere “representation” of something separate or external to itself.

When digging even further into the analysis between surrealism and our architectural experience, Gomez goes on to describe how surrealism is the ultimate aim to re-infuse human life with meaning and how this should be at the core of all architectural work. This really resonated with me and my passion on the subject as well. I feel as though there is more to life than simply working, making money, and just working until you can retire. But unfortunately, this mode of thinking has taken over a lot of people’s minds. I agree with Gomez on his stance of implementing some form or ideology taken from surrealism and use it in our work as designers. It’s is a movement that can bring our own dream like qualities within us into something more tangible and relatable. Surrealism can drive passion and create a context which is non limited to societal norms.

Another important topic that Gomez covers is the idea of the poetic image. Poetic image is something that brings light to surrealism. While science has discovered the analytical meaning of the fragment, it is to poetry that we turn to “discover” its restorative and symbolic meaning. Whether it be built work that is tangible, or something that is not tangible such as writing or music, both of these things function poetically because they inspire in us the creation of an image. Poetic image is key to the human condition, enabling us to transform our sense of reality even while we’re awake. This helps us see how a poetic encounter with materials, space or language can affect a dream-like participation that augments or transforms our sense of “reality”. Essentially, it’s something that is tied to the linguistic dimension of human imagination. This is why the space I design will inspire the creativity of participants throughout their works of art, poetry, etc. The idea of “poetic inhabitation” allows the viewer/reader to create that poetic image within oneself that is then synthesized and transformed in our perception. This act of synthesizing correlates with our perception of the world, including various materials or entire environments which then enter our “circle of poetry” creating something that is truly magical where we open a world of meanings that convey sense and transmit it beyond language but, it something that can only be reached by language.

Architecture is something that fades in and out of our attention, but surrealism enables us to truly embody our surroundings. Gomez argues that architecture cannot be reduced to pictures or merely ‘objective’ formal products. He refers to German philosopher Martin Heidegger stating that **“this is the most powerful mood of all in human existence, with extraordinary possibilities, an openness to those divinities evoked by Surrealism that sweep us away, that may thus reveal a sense of purposefulness.”** As mentioned in my previous review, the space of desire can often times be a reason for people to want to continue to explore their purpose and because I believe we all have a purpose on Earth I would say this was very well stated.

Summary

In his essay "Surrealism and Architectural Atmosphere" Alberto Perez-Gomez focuses on the importance of surrealism in architecture. He claims that it should be at the core of our design as our surroundings greatly influence our conscious and subconscious mind. He also thoroughly discusses the idea of the poetic image and continuity and how this can allow us to open up an imaginative world within. The poetic image is important in relation to architecture as it forms a feeling or image within oneself, an experience that can be very architectural. Architecture is not something that is not strictly limited to buildings, it can be a particular mood or projection of our perception of reality.

Overall, I found this essay to be very helpful in my research as it touches on the importance of surrealism, strengthening my own ideals and design intentions. He states that **"The coming together of the Surrealist project with architecture does not concern merely the uncanny or the fantastic, the shocking or unusual, but rather the disclosure of the marvelous on the surface of things, truly transformative of life; the splendor of being in the vacuous ephemerality of human existence."** This ability to imagine is an important part of our human existence, as it allows us to paint a picture and transform our entire universe to the image of our own desire. Something so powerful should not be overlooked, and I hope to bring this topic to light throughout my thesis research and design.



Figure 28 | Photo from "Surrealism and Architectural Atmosphere, Piranesi
photo credit | Alberto Perez-Gomez

Literature Review III

Variations on the Role of Language and Poetry in Architecture | Nadja

Through the readings “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality” by Paul Ricouer and “Reading Poetry and Philosophy” by Cyril and Liliane Welch we learn about the different varieties and techniques used among several mediums to help us better understand how a “work works.” Metaphor plays a key role in architectural imagination because it creates an expanded vision of reality, allowing the participant to see things in a new or different way. As Ricouer states “metaphor offers us the occasion to shift the problem of the image from the sphere of perception to that of language” (Ricouer, 129). This holds true throughout the work of André Breton in his story “Nadja.” Breton was a French writer and poet best known for his works in surrealism, as well as being its founder and leader. One of his most celebrated works is a story he wrote called Nadja. This book was published during the middle of the surrealist movement in France, therefore becoming an important part of the definition and historical period of surrealism, heavily focusing on many of the questions highlighted throughout the movement, as well as their hopes and beliefs. Through the use of linguistic imagination Breton tells a love story that opens up a space of desire for the reader. By dividing the narrative into two parts, Breton allows connections that may have seemed arbitrary in the first half to come back in the second half, becoming more relevant and thus, allowing the reader to become immersed in the space of poetic distance. Oblique images placed throughout create a sense of wonder and are left up to the reader to reinterpret. Through narrative and linguistic imagination techniques, Breton is able to create an imaginative world within, shaping the story to be one of self-reflection and wonder.

Breton plays with multiple genres that coexist to elevate a higher level of meaning. He sets aside the limits of traditional logic and perception to spontaneously create new, unexpected connections throughout the story. Nadja is written in a semi-autobiographical tone, as it isn't chronological and doesn't fully focus on the events that occur. There are no outlined chapters or sections, it is just divided into two parts by a single blank page. The way Nadja is set up allows for play between various times and places. The reader becomes enveloped in our own dimension creating connections between the images and text. This play between both parts of the story allows for the “emergence of new meanings in the sphere of language, to generate an emergence of new images” (Ricouer, 127). This emergence is what may reshape the way we view our own reality, a surrealist goal indeed.

The language used creates an imaginative world within. Language of course is key in storytelling, and in turn allows the story of Nadja to come to life in the space within our minds. "In reading a poetic work responsibly we necessarily re-discover and revise the area, the whole in which we are participating" (Cyril & Welch, 364). This again, feeds back into the idea that through language we are able to see and think differently. It gives us the chance to reexamine our own presence, and in turn gives us a different perspective, which we can use to create new meanings through our mode of existence. Through the poetic language used Breton bridges meanings across our own interpretation of the story; between what is there, and what is not there, playing with the presence and absence as described by Ricouer. He states that "to have an image of something is to "see" it in our mind's eye, without the presence of the actual thing" (Ricouer, 124). So, although what we see in our minds is not physically there, it is in fact very much real, as "fictions are merely complex ideas whose components are derived from previous experience" (Ricouer, 125). In other words, this experience is even more "real" because of the participation it involves as we read into the work. Breton interjects what seem to be obscure images that present themselves as meaningful when they reappear throughout the story, materializing what was once imaginary. These images open up a space for reinterpretation where the reader is immersed in imaginative sequences in the mind. This is a form of poetic expression as described by Lisa Landrum, where "we can reinvent ways to describe common qualities and experiences, and in turn re-make the world" (Landrum, 26).

In the first half of the narrative Breton expresses reflections of his own thoughts and questions our mode of existing in the world. This sets up a chance for him to explore his own beliefs and how they are applicable to his daily life as an artist, poet, and writer. He describes the theory of "self", explaining that one can only realize one's true self by knowing who the self is and that we all hold a divine or higher self within. At first glance, these thoughts may seem mundane and unconnected, but are later revealed as more meaningful. All of the exploratory themes present themselves before the character of Nadja is even introduced. By delving into his own mind, Breton creates a dialogue between himself and the reader, as the reader begins to question their own mode of existence.

The second half of the book consists of a love story between Breton and a woman he meets named Nadja. Nadja is a mysterious, eccentric woman who instantly piques his interest and curiosity. Her appearance is not described much, but she sees life differently, sharing stories with Breton and seeing things he cannot. By only giving a small description of what Nadja looks like, Breton is using material imagination. He doesn't allow the reader to fully envision what she may look like so that we may draw out our own conclusions in a way that is non direct. This is perhaps because Breton wishes the reader to picture Nadja the way the readers themselves want Nadja to be. Ricouer states that "imagination at work – in a work- produces itself as a world" (Ricouer, 128). The imagination is a little more oblique in this case, where Nadja may become a reflection of ourselves. Nadja herself, acts as a metaphor, explaining themes and meanings in previous parts of the story, as well as becoming a metaphor for our own longings and desires. She causes Breton to question parts of his own reality, relating back to the first half of the story where he analyzes his perception of what is real. When André and Nadja spent a lot of time together in the beginning of their relationship, he realized more about himself by looking at the world through Nadja's eyes. A prime example of this would be when they were going for a walk and Nadja pointed at a black window stating that it would turn red in just a few moments. As Breton watched, it did in fact turn red, but in hindsight he questioned whether this was just Nadja's insanity taking over his own mind, and then again, questioned whether everyone else was insane to not see the change of the windows color.

Ricouer states that "image remains a mental representation 'associated' from without to the linguistic message, unless it adds whatever it is to the information already conveyed by the message" (Ricouer, 132). By telling the story of her life the pictures of Nadja's art placed throughout the pages become seemingly more attached to the storyline. Because the reader is never truly left with the full image of Nadja, they are left with a desire for more. This space of desire is precisely what becomes alluring about this story. This refers back to Ricouer's discussion of portraits and how we can read meaning into the images in order to see the meaning which the image describes. Had we been given every detail of Nadja (like a direct portrait), the space of desire would become collapsed, leaving the reader uninterested in the plot. By recreating these images and connections we are able to "sort out, rearrange, and recall." (Cyril & Welch, 352). This opportunity to recall things in a new way allows meaning to emerge in the making of a moment, thus granting the work the opportunity to distinguish the difference between the existence of a moment, and the need for something else. Nadja and Breton continue to meet up several times, as he becomes more and more intrigued, until he begins to realize that all her stories don't add up, causing him to stop seeing her.

Through the space of desire and poetic distance, the reader even begins to question Nadja's existence, as it is later revealed that Nadja is committed to a sanitarium because her strange behavior becomes too much. Even though Breton has lost interest at this point, he still longs for one last conversation with her, and doesn't believe the sanitarium will help. Again, this relates back to the space of desire, something that is part of the human condition which we all long for.

The narrative ends with Breton explaining why he chose to write about his relationship with Nadja. He says that he has gone over their time together so often in his head that it no longer seems like something that really happened to him. It is only after he has distanced himself from the events in this way that he is able to write them down. This explanation connects the two halves of the novel by demonstrating how the story of Breton and Nadja is an extended example of the disconnect and distance Breton feels in his dealings with other people. Breton plays with the theme of reality, as reality is relative in who decides what is real and what is not. In the instance of the character Nadja, she believed things that others didn't, which is what Breton was initially intrigued by. The image of Nadja in a mental institution is a key moment in the story, as her sanity is then defined not by herself but by others, thus strengthening the meaning behind the story. In addition to portraits and buildings that let the reader visualize his text, Breton adds some Surrealist touches by reproducing incidental things like documents and drawings. This touches on Anca Matyiku's thoughts of metaphor capturing atmospheric precision. She states that "language can render intangible atmosphere much quicker than drawing" (Matyiku, 117). This holds true throughout Nadja as the spaces described are able to quickly consume our minds in the imaginative process. Because the spaces and characters are not described in great detail this intensifies the readers own imagination as we are left to fill in the gaps with images that then become a reflection of ourselves, thus "suspending meaning in the neutralized atmosphere, to which one could give the name of the dimension of fiction" (Ricoeur, 134). This re-description of reality is proactive, as it gives us the opportunity to interact with the world in new ways. Through the story of Nadja, this key theme of reflection, and reinterpretation allow us to transcend into the work. Through the use of poetic imagery and language, Breton is able to create connections across a distance thus transforming simple imagery and language into new meanings that help us see how we actually see.

Nostalgia Film Analysis | Andrei Tarkovsky

An example of film that inspired me was the film “Nostalgia” directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, Soviet Russian filmmaker and film theorist. The theme of Nostalgia is the simultaneous longing for home and the impossibility of homecoming. Tarkovsky’s buildings evoke a melancholic dimension of time and memory of homecoming. The spaces shot throughout the film are usually rendered as a frontal perspective with a single vanish point. This spatial representation helps to flatten the scene into a two-dimensional image, like a painting. Many of Tarkovsky’s slow and prolonged camera shots move either parallel to the picture plane, or along the perpendicular depth direction. In consequence, the camera never rushes into the depicted space, and the viewer remains at the edge of the painting like image.



Figure 29 | *Nostalgia Still*



Figure 30 | *Nostalgia Still*



Figure 31 | *Nostalgia Still*

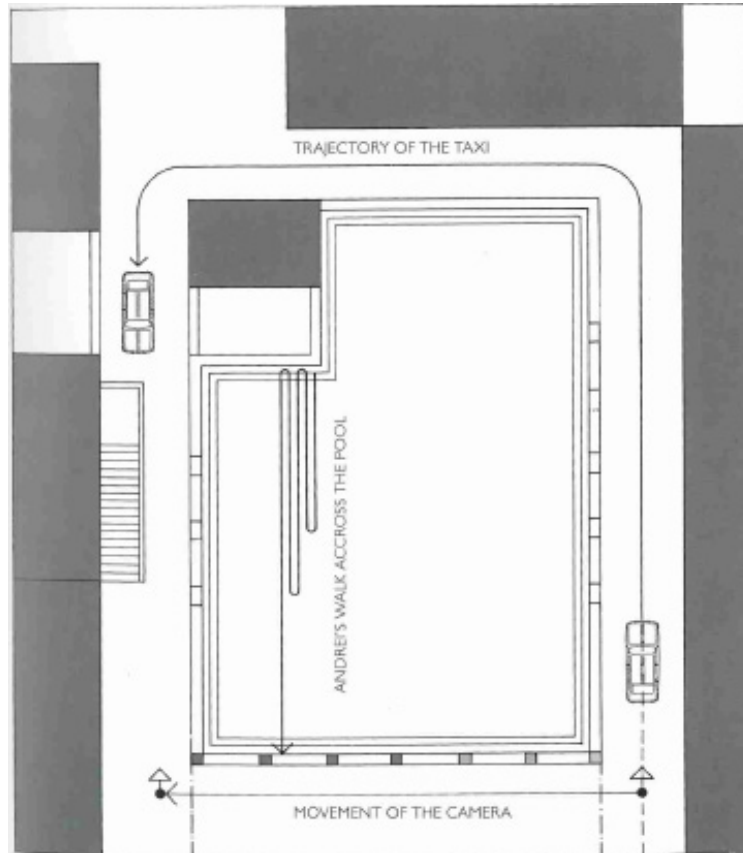


Figure 32 | *The Poetics of Image*, pg.77



Figure 33 | *The Poetics of Image*, pg.77

An example of this can be found in the opening scene where a car drives to the left across the frame in a foggy landscape. While the sound of the engine remains audible, the car makes a loop outside the screen and returns from the left back to the front part of the frame. This movement blends the space beyond the screen in order to activate the viewer's awareness of the space beyond.

A R T E F A C T

A creation of an artefact to further develop the relation between theoretical research and the final architecture was key to the design inspiration of the theatre. Through my artefact, I decided to further play into the relation between fiction and reality, as my architecture sits atop the ruins of an abandoned theater. Juhani Pallasmaa states that “a useful building addresses our reason, whereas a ruined building awakens our imagination and unconscious fantasies” (Pallasmaa, 27). He also states that “Ruins have a strong mental and emotive presence and impact. They activate both our memories and imaginations. Ruins materialize history and time, and they also often turn arrogant or authoritarian architectural structures into humble and humane ones. Ruins seem to have a healing mental impact, as they invite us to reflect, dream and imagine.” Through these architectural fragments layered with images of the ruins, as well as memories of past inhabitants, the participant becomes enveloped in their own dimension of storytelling creating connections between the images and text. In order to further play into fiction vs. reality, these fragments have been distressed, as they become one with the ruins themselves. Much like a film strip, the pages may be rearranged, becoming an interactive artefact, where one creates their own story through reinterpretation of the architectural fragments.



Figure 34 | *Artefact Display, Memorial Union*
photo credit | Valentina Contreras

A piece of literature that inspired me and relates back to my artefact is the story “Nadja” by Andre Breton. Specifically, the way Breton interjects what seem to be obscure images that present themselves as meaningful when they reappear throughout the story, materializing what was once imaginary. We need something to see ourselves through in order to develop a further understanding of the world we inhabit. One may be presented with a reflection of themselves through the oblique images seen in my artefact, as our lived experiences allow us to relate to a work of art, architecture, or film. As we perceive through our senses, we are able to see ourselves through a work of art or film and may react in way that helps us relate to these past experiences. Because of the lack of clarity between the images and text presented in my artefact, we are left with the opportunity to reflect and reinterpret in various ways. Similar to the film Nostalgia, where the blending and layering of different shots bring our awareness to the space beyond the screen, or in Nadja, where the meaning behind images become clearer as we read into the work, and in turn reflect on ourselves. My artefact provides a space where our imagination may be consumed through the process of opening up a space for connections across a distance.



Figure 35 | *Artefact Display, Memorial Union* | photo credit | Valentina Contreras

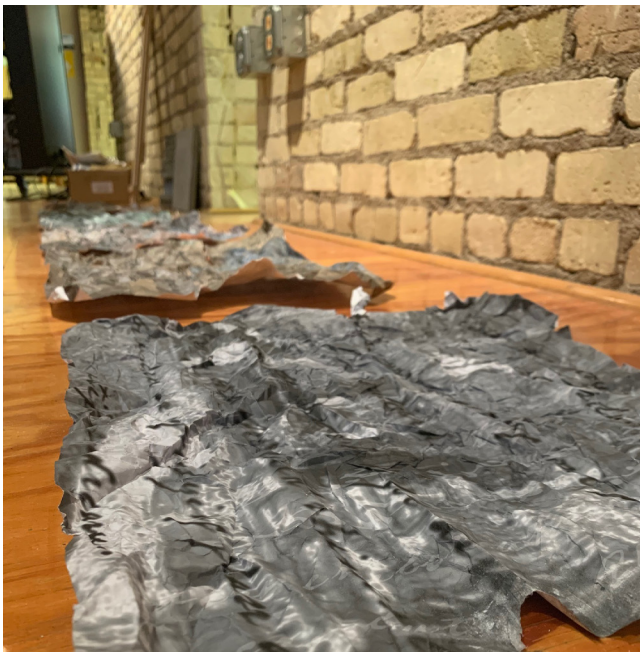


Figure 36 | *Artefact Process*
photo credit | Valentina Contreras



Figure 37 | *Artefact Process*
photo credit | Valentina Contreras

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Academic & Professional

I have defined this project as important to myself because I believe that dreams and consciousness are both underrepresented in society today. I am curious about the significance and meaning behind spaces in dreams in relation to our waking reality. I believe at this stage it's important to be asking "big picture" questions and to not hold back. At this point in my academic development, I haven't been asked too many theoretical questions that really make you think, making this the perfect opportunity to do so. Professionally, this way of thinking has been overlooked. Going into the field after this year, I'll be able to bring new questions to the table.

This project will add an immense amount of knowledge by pushing me to digger deeper in the questioning of our perception of "reality". My vocabulary skill set will broaden with the amount of reading and writing I am doing. Also, my verbal communication of ideas will be enhanced. As stated earlier, in my opinion, the profession has somehow fallen to be more and more technical. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I believe that's not what true architecture is and does. The deeper meaning behind a building has been somewhat lost. This thesis will make professionals look at things in a different way than how they may have been taught or have been used to doing in the profession. I think that others in the profession could contribute to this as it would cause a shift in the meaning behind buildings and design inspiration. That is why a topic such as dreams is important to question at this time, just as in the profession, academically this way of thinking has become less and less important.

Economical & Social

I think bringing something to light that is underrepresented is a great reason to economically justify a project. It would get people wondering and talking, inspire creativity etc. so the return would be intangible. It'd be more of a societal impact which in return could spark other ideas and improve a way of living as well as enhance creativity, peace within, etc. This societal impact justifies the reasoning behind the project as it will bring to light a topic that is overlooked, whereas in ancient times dreams were viewed just as, if not more important than our waking reality. Society has become so fast paced, we tend to forget to stop and appreciate the everyday miracles around us. I don't believe this would have a major impact on the environment, since it would more so be adding to an existing structure, so I believe this justifies the environmental repercussions. Dreams have become negated in the modern world and **“to continue to retain its traditional ethical dimension and relevance, architecture must continue to concern itself with the creative interpretation of the everyday situations which constitute the field of our existence.”** (*Weston, Surrealist Paris*). This will only become possible by creating an awareness to the significance of the non-perspectival space of architectural representation.

Cultural

Culturally, I believe this project will bring life back to Downtown, Flushing. The area that was once a hot spot in Queens, has slowly deteriorated and lost a sense of culture. By restoring this theatre that holds so many memories, it allows for a revival of the area. The area needs a space like this, and because RKO Keith's was once such an integral part of the culture and history, I believe it will create a new sense of community within the area.

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Historical

We begin by looking at how ancient man would explain his thoughts through mythology, where speculations were not limited by modern science and had many possibilities. Mircea Eliade, a Romanian-American historian, states that **“The world of the imaginary is not “unreal”** (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*). But, in the modern world we have evolved to confuse myth with “fables”, while man of the traditional societies saw it as “the only valid revelation of reality”. It has even been held that the diseases and crises of modern societies are rightly attributable to the absence of a mythology appropriate to them. Myths represent a certain mode of being in the world and although this mode of thinking has been somewhat lost, the modern world still preserves some mythical behavior. **“Myth doesn’t simply disappear from the present world of the psyche; it only changes its aspect and disguises its operations.”** (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*). This is a concept that is commonly overlooked, but myth lives within in us whether we are aware of it or not. It makes itself present in the dreams, fantasies, and longings of modern man. Films and literature such as Game of Thrones, Thor, Lord of Rings, etc. are all rooted in myth. Festivals observed in the modern world that are viewed as secular still preserve a mythical structure and function. In particular, there is a mythological basis of the festivities that mark any “new beginning”; in which we can recognize the nostalgia for renewal, a yearning for the world to be renovated, that one might enter upon a new history in a world reborn that is created fresh. For example: rejoicing the New Year or festivities following the birth of a child, remote as the rejoicings may be, these celebrations still have a resonance, obscure but profound, throughout their being.

In ancient Egypt it was understood that we dream with our eyes open. Even the Egyptian word for dreams was written with a symbol representing an open eye.

So, this logogram is really describing the process of waking up within sleep (bottom half represents a bed top half represents an open eye). The Egyptians believed that the gods speak to us in dreams. As we are reminded in the Bible story of Joseph and Pharaoh, close attention was given to dream messages about the possible future. It was perceived that by recalling and working with dreams, humans are able to flourish in the art of memory and give us the ability to tap into knowledge that existed before entering on this life journey, thus awakening our connection with other life experiences, dimensions, past lives, etc. They recognized that true initiation and transformation would occur in a reality much deeper than we know. One that is only accessible through a dream journey beyond the body.

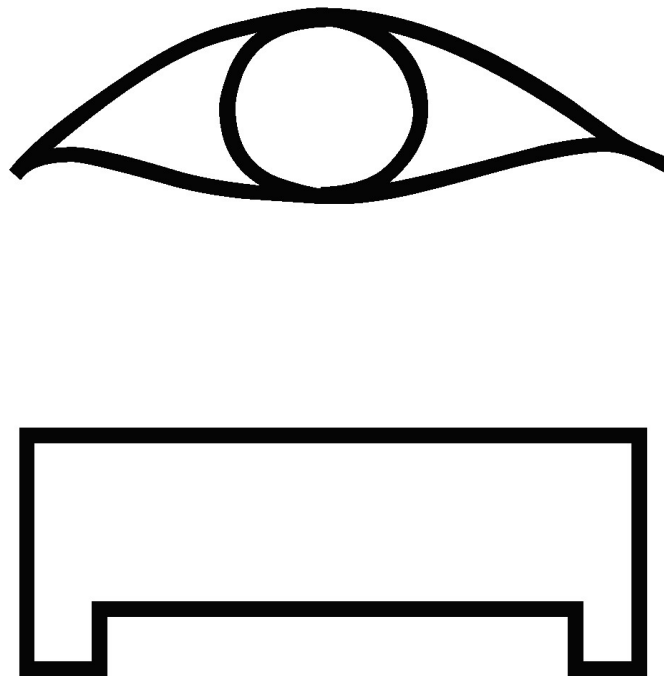


Figure 38 | *Egyptian Logogram*, photo credit | Sarah Janes

“There is continuity between the functions fulfilled and the messages transmitted by certain symbolisms to the deepest layers of the unconscious and the meanings that they reveal upon the plane of the purest spiritual activity.” (*Eliade*) These great mythical themes continue to repeat themselves in the obscure depths of the psyche even though **“The myth is no longer dominant in the essential sectors of life.”** (*Eliade*) The modern world has not completely eliminated mythical behavior, only its field of action and our interpretation has changed. Like science and technology, mythology, is not about opting out of this world, but about enabling us to live more intensely within it. It is something that has been repressed partly into the obscurer levels of the psyche but we must become aware of what in modern existence is still mythical and survives as such simply because it's part of the human condition, in that it expresses the anxiety of man living in time.

Social

“The phenomenology of the poetic expression is the phenomenology of the soul and not the mind, and it is aimed at a core, initial and essential strata of our experience of being.” (*Gaston Bachelard, Poetics of Space*). Space is constituted as the wanderer participates in it, and it is through the body that time and space is anchored, and it comes into being as it is inhabited and perceived. We live in a perpetual state of business that causes burnout, less overall productivity, and less creativity; blankly staring at a screen, mindless scrolling, work, eat, sleep, repeat. This has caused a loss in the realm of creativity, as reflected in a lot of the architecture we see today. The lived body is inseparable from perception itself, and dream starts from the lived body, just as waking perception does. So, the way we live and experience things in our waking reality is often times very dreamlike. We stitch together fragments of memories we have, creating a labyrinth in which we use to navigate about our daily rituals.

I believe that in a social context we are “dream deprived.” As humans we're born with a natural curiosity about our surroundings. Being born into a society

where dreams pose little or no social importance leaves us with very few ways to learn about the meaning of our dreams. From a biological standpoint it's simply looked as our brains' way of processing thoughts, memories, etc. But there is no way to prove this, as a lot about dreams is still not fully understood, and may never be. In a societal context I believe that making people conscious of different perspectives and modes of thinking will spark something inside us that we may not have been aware of. Something that needs to be released and is part of the human condition. Civilization as we know it today is very fast paced and our minds can barely take in all that surrounds us each and everyday. Having a moment in time to stop, think, meditate, etc. will benefit us as a society because it reminds us to slow down a bit.

Cultural

Merleau Ponty states that **“Through the phenomenon of dreaming, we are made aware of the reality of the oneiric as well as the oneiric character of the real.”** The oneiric is a dimension of all experience, whether waking or sleeping. There's so much about our waking reality that's structured in the same way that a dream is structured. This causes the role of dreams in psychosomatic health and its relation to reality to have the ability to show us how we actually see. Within the limits where they operate, dreams give every evidence of being continuous and show signs of organization. The waking world remains a crucial component of sleeping experience. It is a continuum – whether waking or sleeping, the subject is always more or less in relation to the world, never absolutely present or absent. Our embodied interactions with the world and others effect the way we understand our own reality. In other words, the world is never missing from the sleeper's awareness in the sense that the dualistic language of the conscious and unconscious or even waking and sleeping impose on us. It is a vital part of the human experience that is not just reduced to biological health but has become a cultural issue in the modern world. Culturally, New York City is known as “the city that never sleeps”. All around the globe sleep has become secondary to our mode of being.

The RKO Keith's Theatre holds a lot of cultural significance to the Flushing area of Queens. This theatre lives in the memory of those who grew up going to see artist perform, or to see new movie releases. There were many stars who performed at this theater. Some of these stars included Bob Hope, Jack Benny and the Marx Brothers, Judy Garland, Mae West, Milton Berle, Jimmy Durante, and Jerry Lewis, all of whom performed and provided entertainment on stage. There are many stories to tell here, one man proposed to his wife in the balcony of the theater; another said his father used to supply the goldfish that swam in the main lobby's fountain, a nickel a fish. His father caught those fish in Kissena Park Pond. Nevertheless it is an integral part to the history and culture of Queens during the 1920s.



Figure 39 | *Downtown Flushing Queens*, photo credit | Queens Historical Society

SITE ANALYSIS

QUALITATIVE ASPECTS

The location of my design at the RKO Keith's Theatre in Downtown Flushing. NYC is a very dense city and therefore pedestrian traffic and circulation will be crucial to this analysis. The site will be located in the Queens borough of New York. The architecture will be built off the ruins of the abandon theatre as a dreamlike journey that will awaken within us a feeling of revival, inspiration, and imagination.



Figure 40 | *RKO Keith's Facade*, photo credit | Google Earth

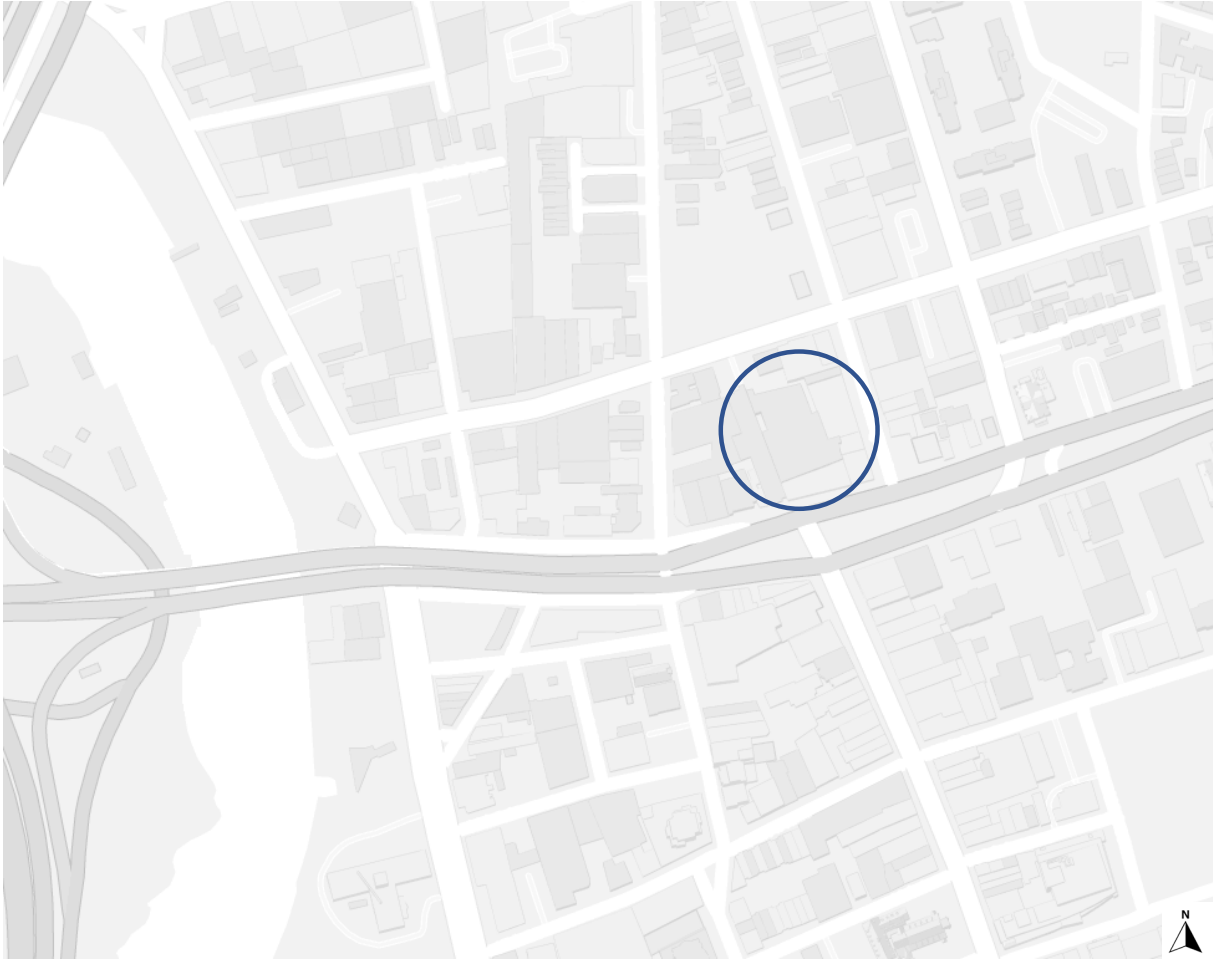


Figure 41 | *Base Map*, photo credit | Google Maps

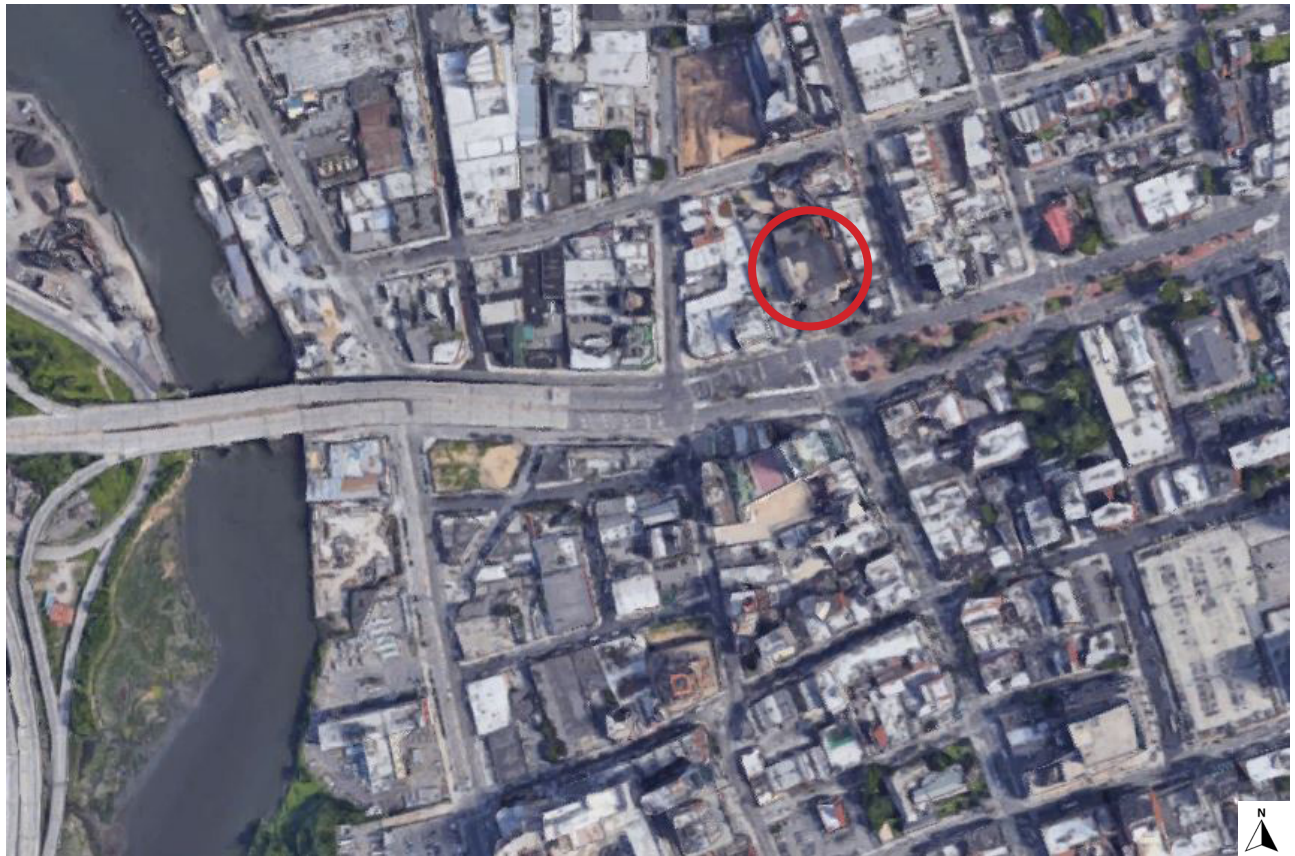


Figure 42 | *Base Map, Satellite View*, photo credit | Google Earth



Figure 43 | Base Map, Ariel Satellite View, photo credit | Google Earth



Figure 44 | *Circulation*, photo credit | Google Earth

This area is highly used and has many visitors (residents and non-residents) each day. Because NYC is so dense, it's very important to take circulation into consideration for when I design. As shown in the diagram above, there is heavy vehicular traffic on the streets directly adjacent to my site, as well as heavy pedestrian traffic on the side walk.



Heavy Vehical Traffic



Heavy Pedestrian Traffic



Figure 45 | *Sun & Wind Analysis*, photo credit | Google Earth

Seen above is a sun and wind analysis of the site. The entrance to the building is south facing, giving the office and workshop spaces a lot of opportunity for natural sunlight to come through. This is something to take into consideration for the shadows that will play into my design.



Sun Analysis



SW Winds (Winter)



NE Winds (Summer)

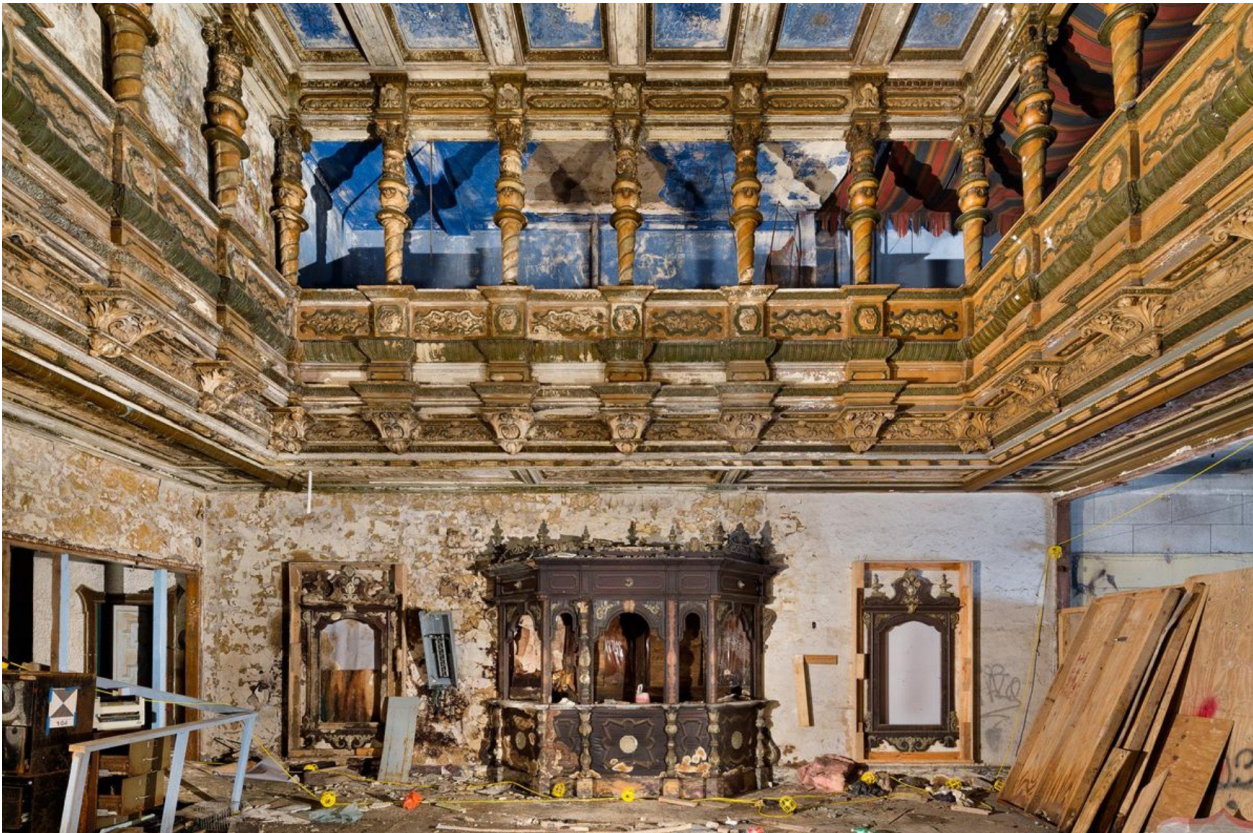


Figure 46 | *Ticket Booth Entrance*, photo credit | New York Times



Figure 47 | *Lobby* , photo credit | NYC Ago



Figure 48 | Lobby , photo credit | New York Times



Figure 49 | *Old Theatre Stage* , photo credit | NYC Ago



Figure 50 | *Old Auditorium Space* , photo credit | After The Final Curtain



Figure 51 | Lobby , photo credit | NYC Ago

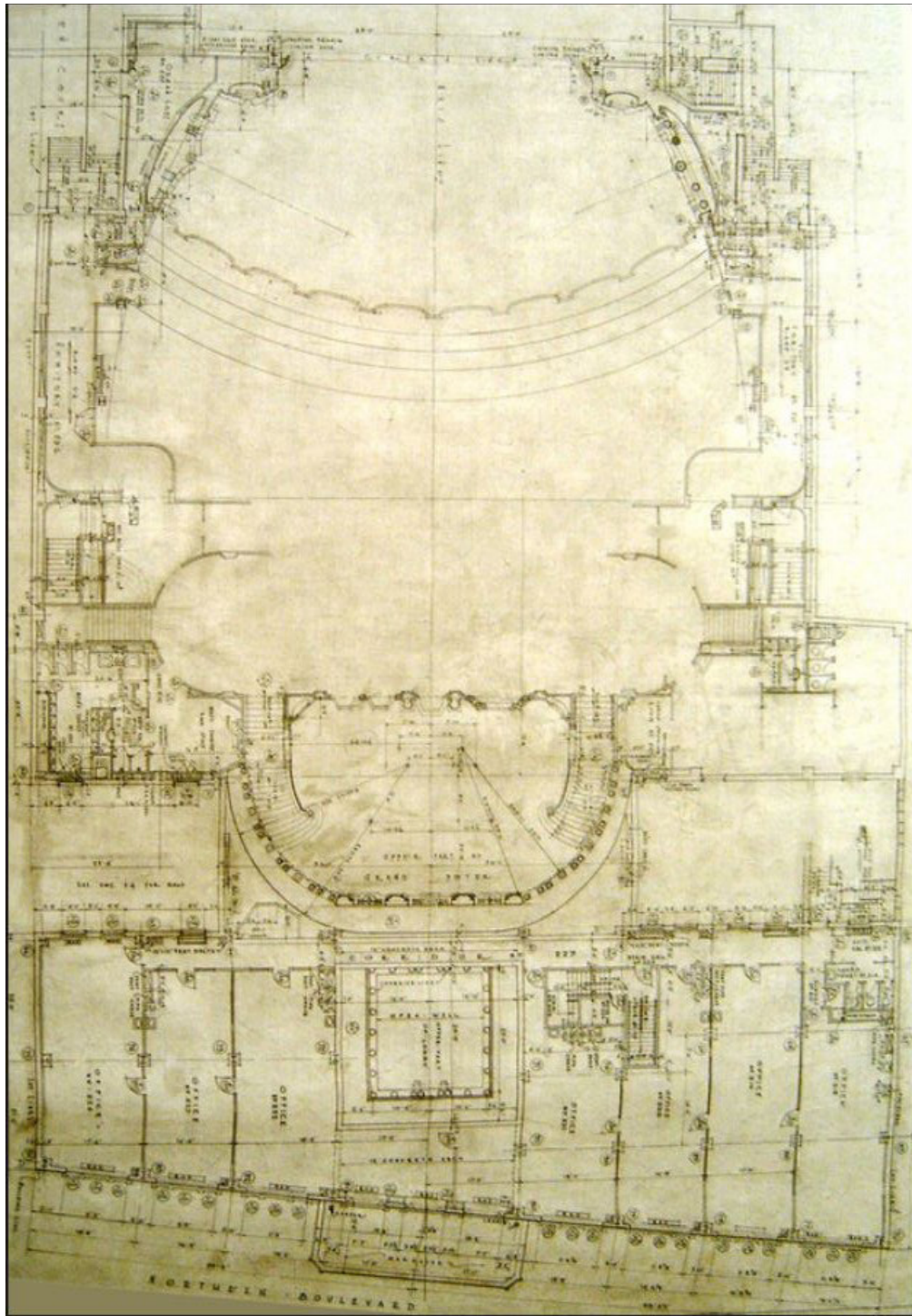


Figure 52 | *Level One Floor Plan* , photo credit | Michael Perlman

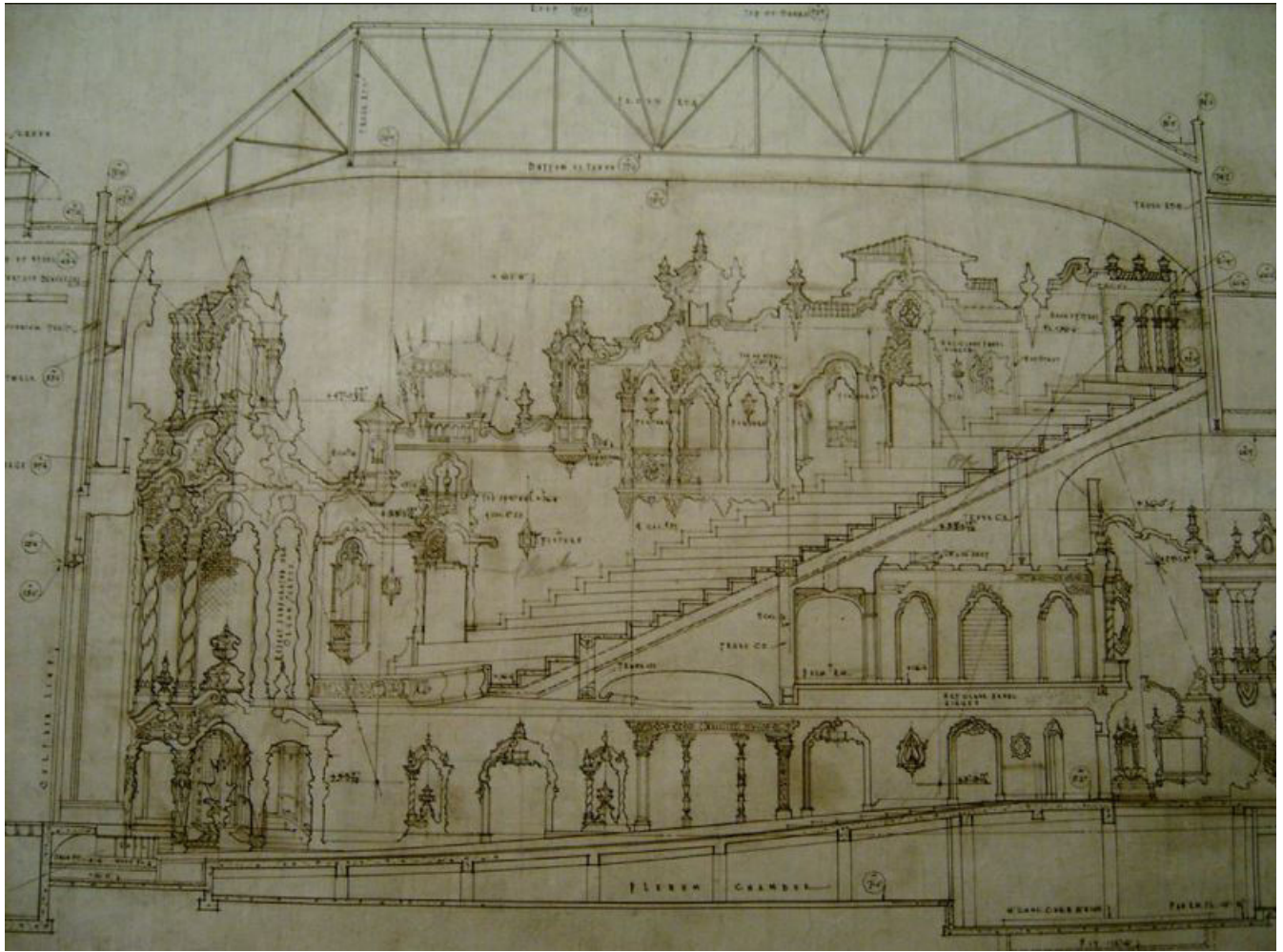


Figure 53 | *Detailing* , photo credit | Michael Perlman

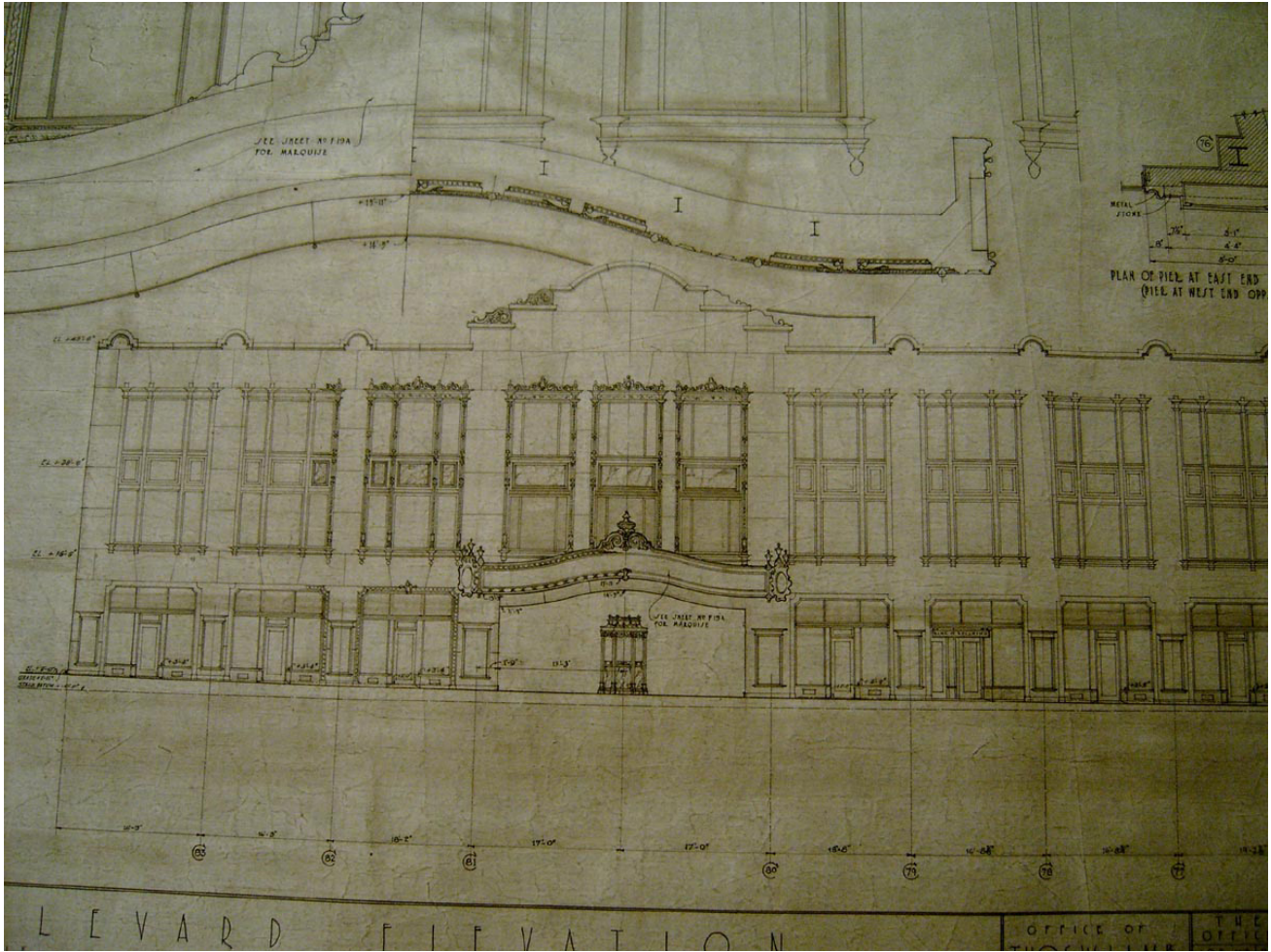


Figure 54 | Facade , photo credit | Michael Perlman

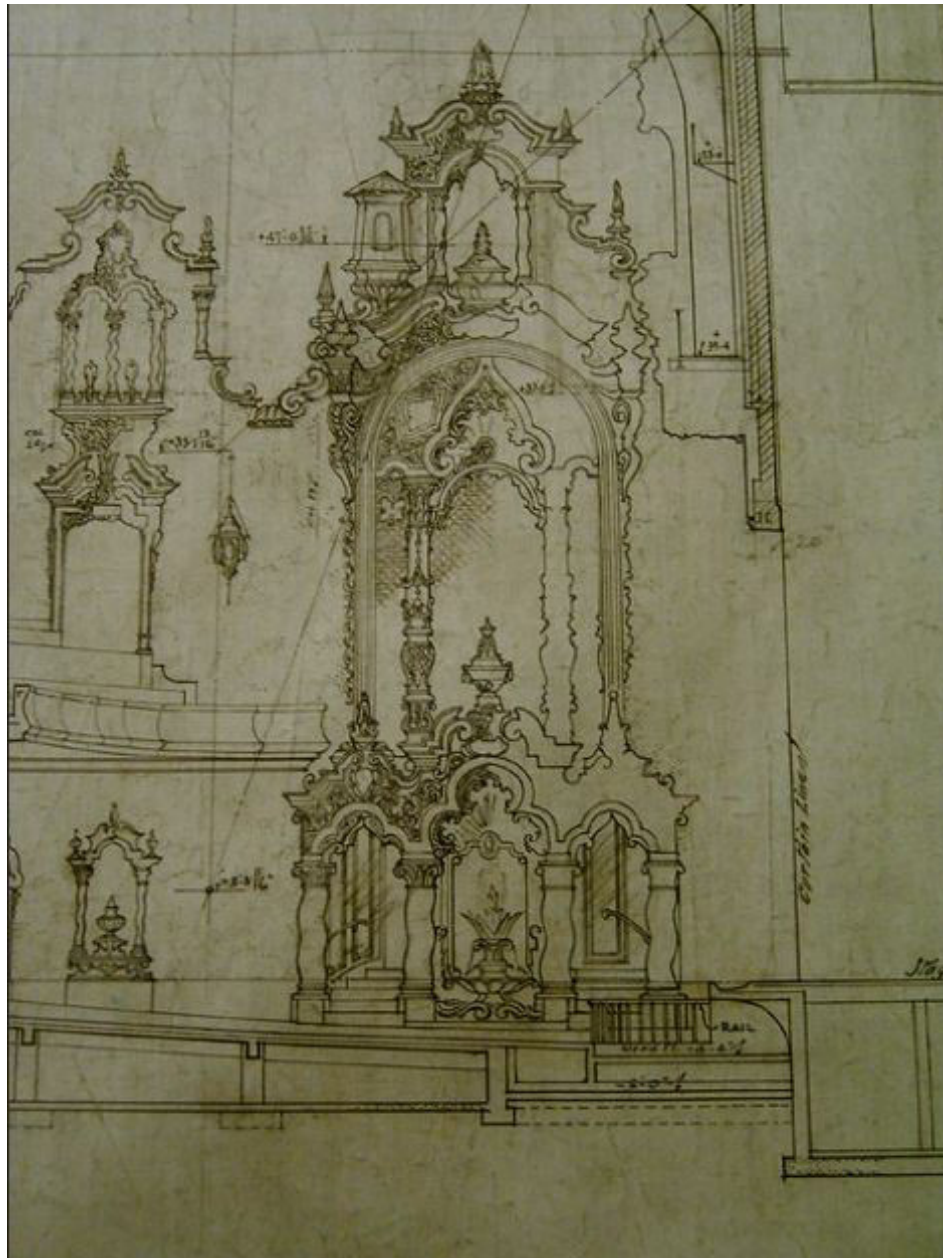


Figure 55 | *Detailing* , photo credit | Michael Perlman

CLIMATE ANALYSIS

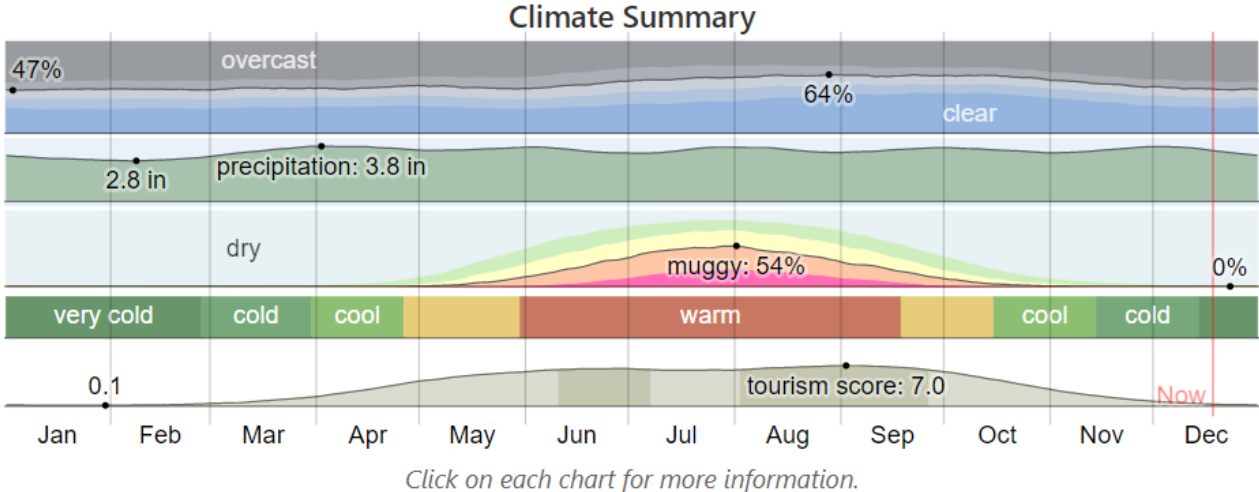


Figure 56 | *Climate Summary*, photo credit | Weather Spark

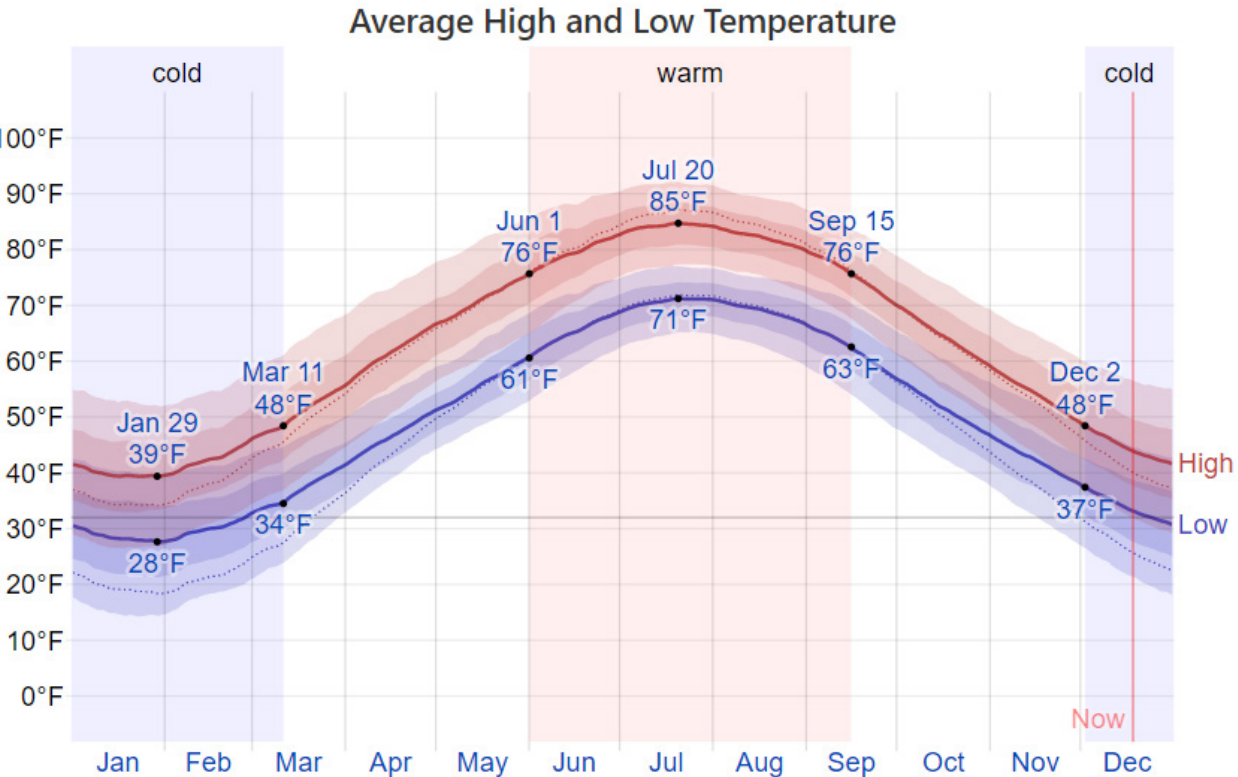


Figure 57 | *Average High and Low Temperature*, photo credit | Weather Spark

Average Hourly Temperature

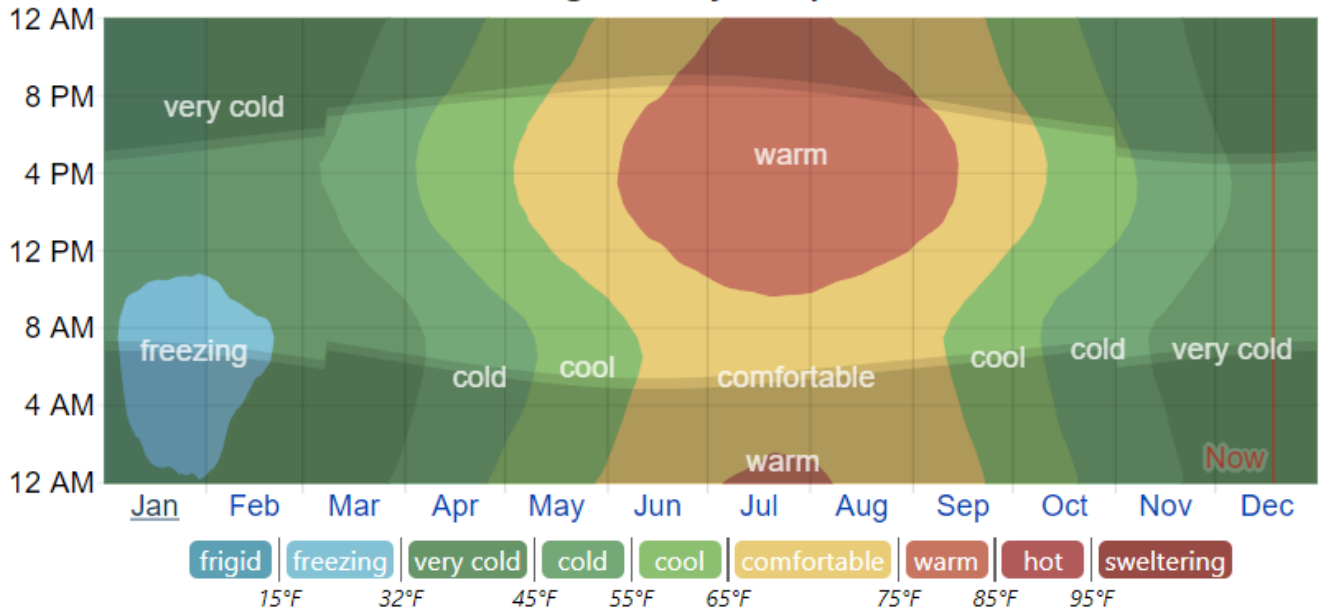


Figure 58 | Average Hourly Temperature, photo credit | Weather Spark

Cloud Cover Categories

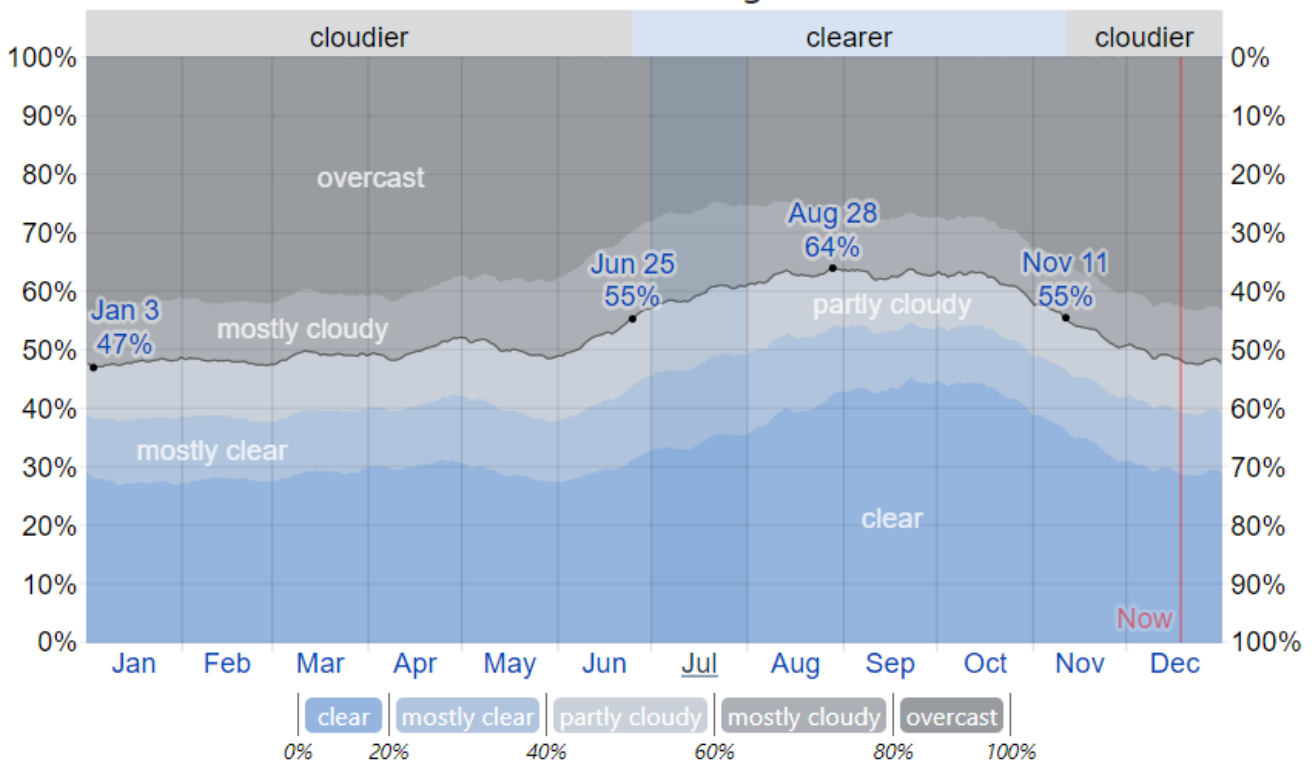


Figure 59 | Cloud Cover Categories, photo credit | Weather Spark

Average Monthly Rainfall

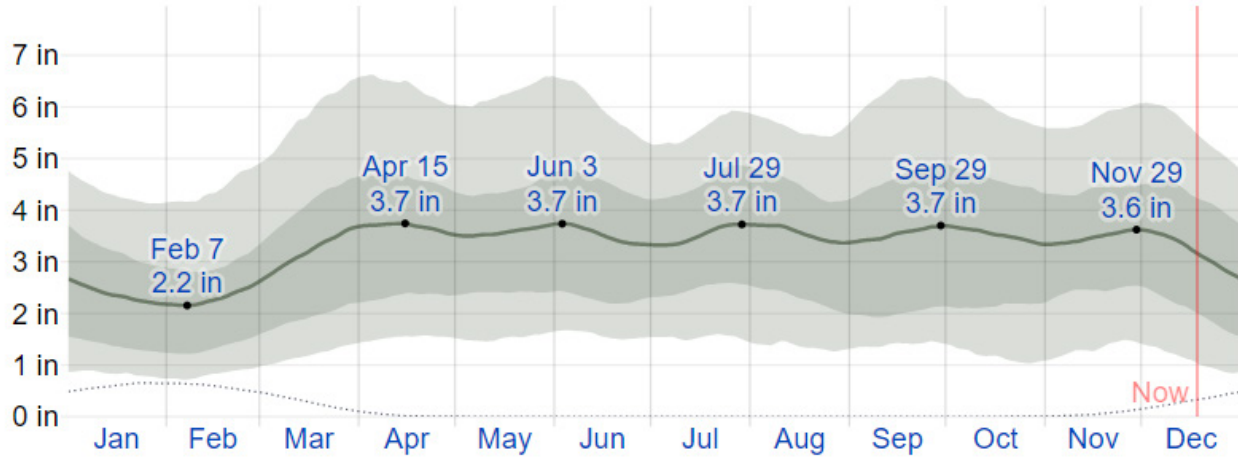


Figure 60 | Average Monthly Rainfall, photo credit | Weather Spark

Average Liquid-Equivalent Monthly Snowfall

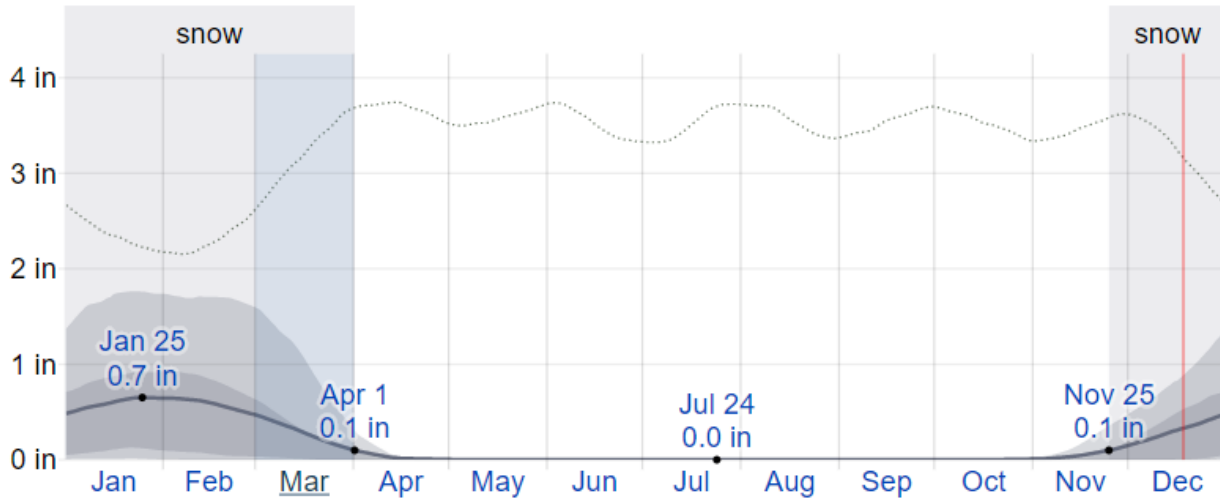


Figure 61 | Average Liquid-Equivalent Monthly Snowfall, photo credit | Weather Spark

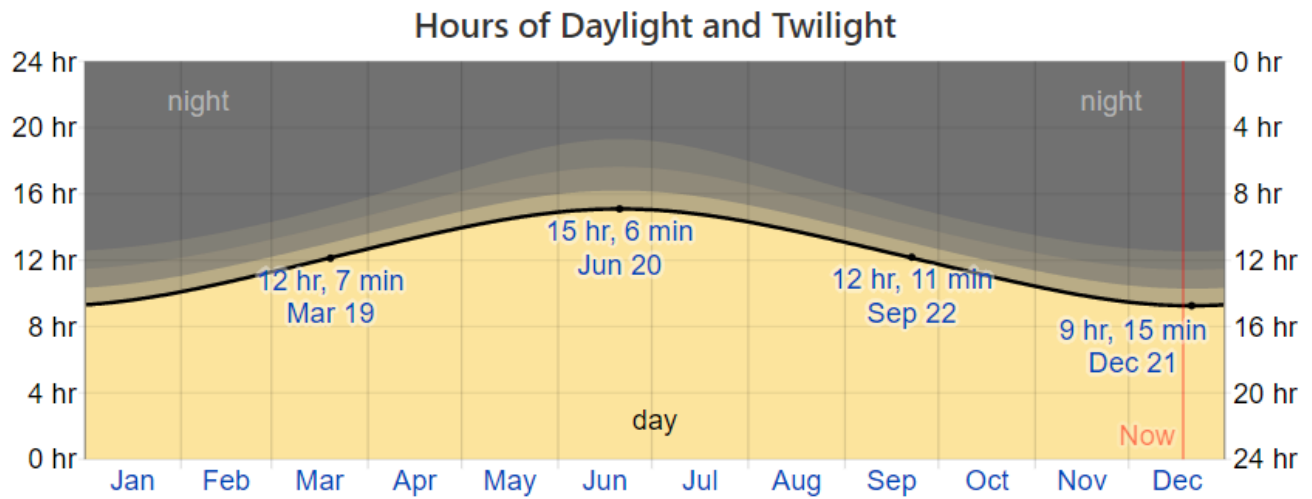


Figure 62 | *Hours of Daylight and Twilight*, photo credit | Weather Spark

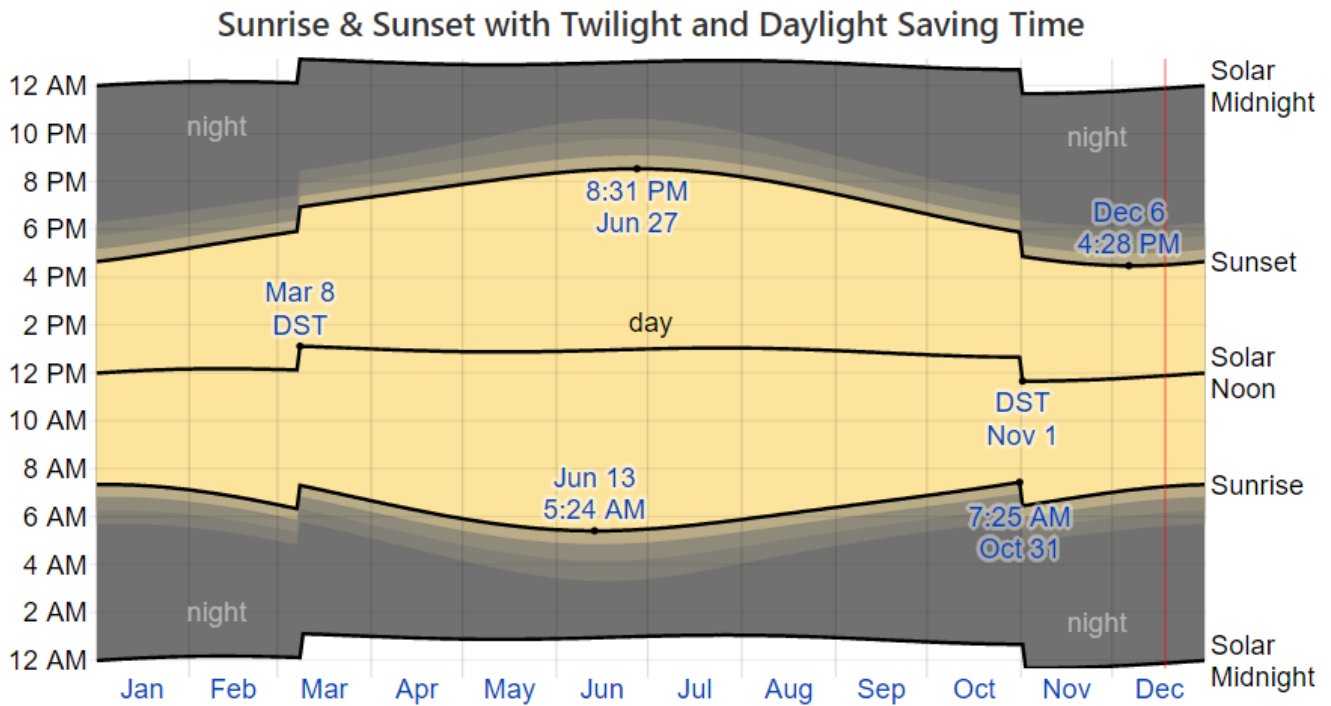


Figure 63 | *Hours of Daylight and Twilight & Daylight Saving*, photo credit | Weather Spark

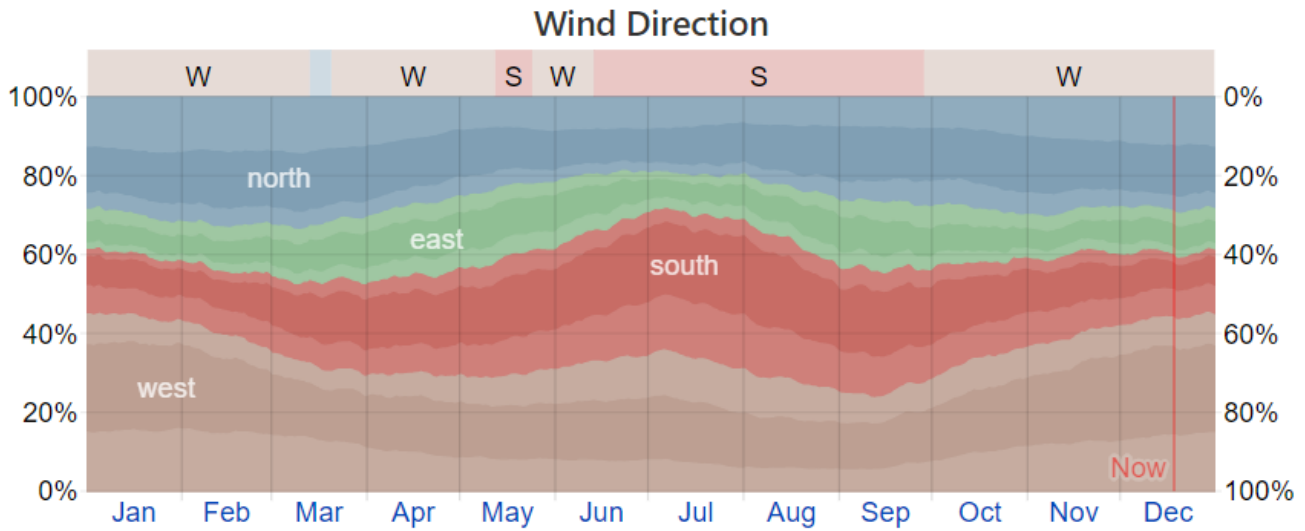


Figure 64 | *Wind Direction*, photo credit | Weather Spark

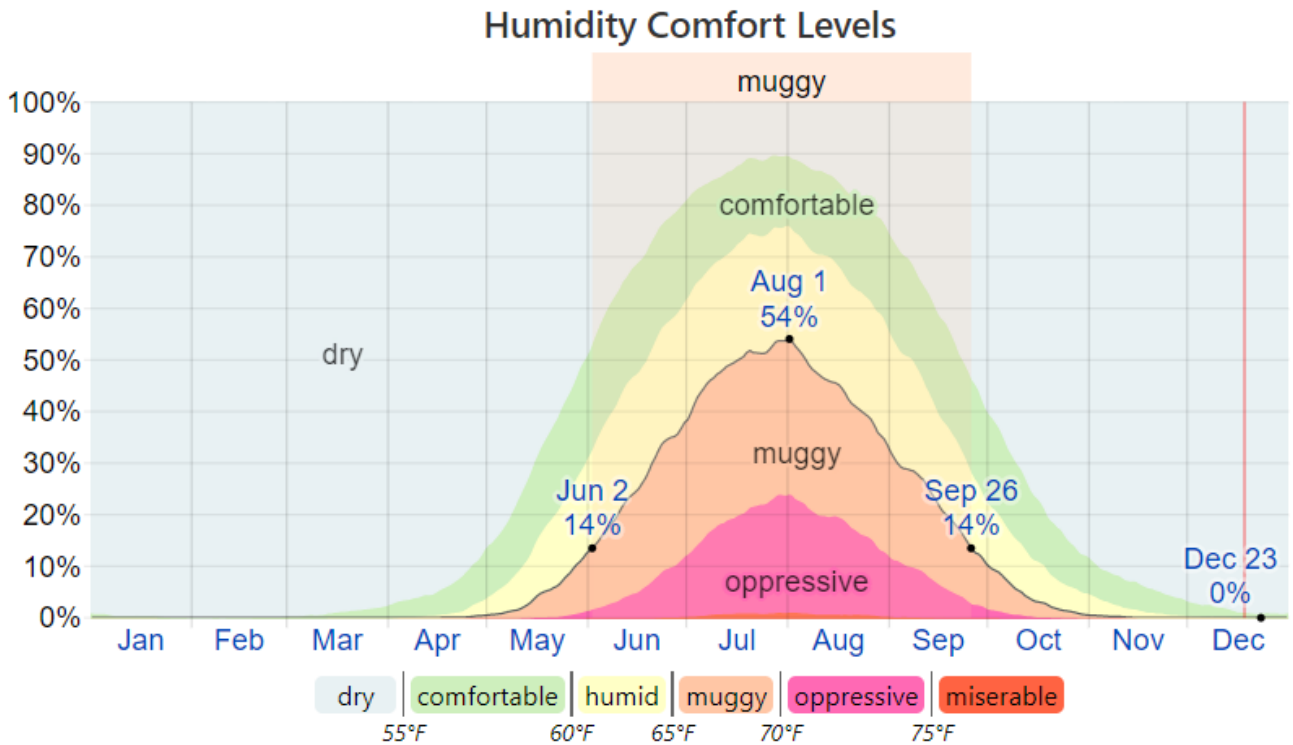


Figure 65 | *Humidity Comfort Levels*, photo credit | Weather Spark

DEMOGRAPHICS

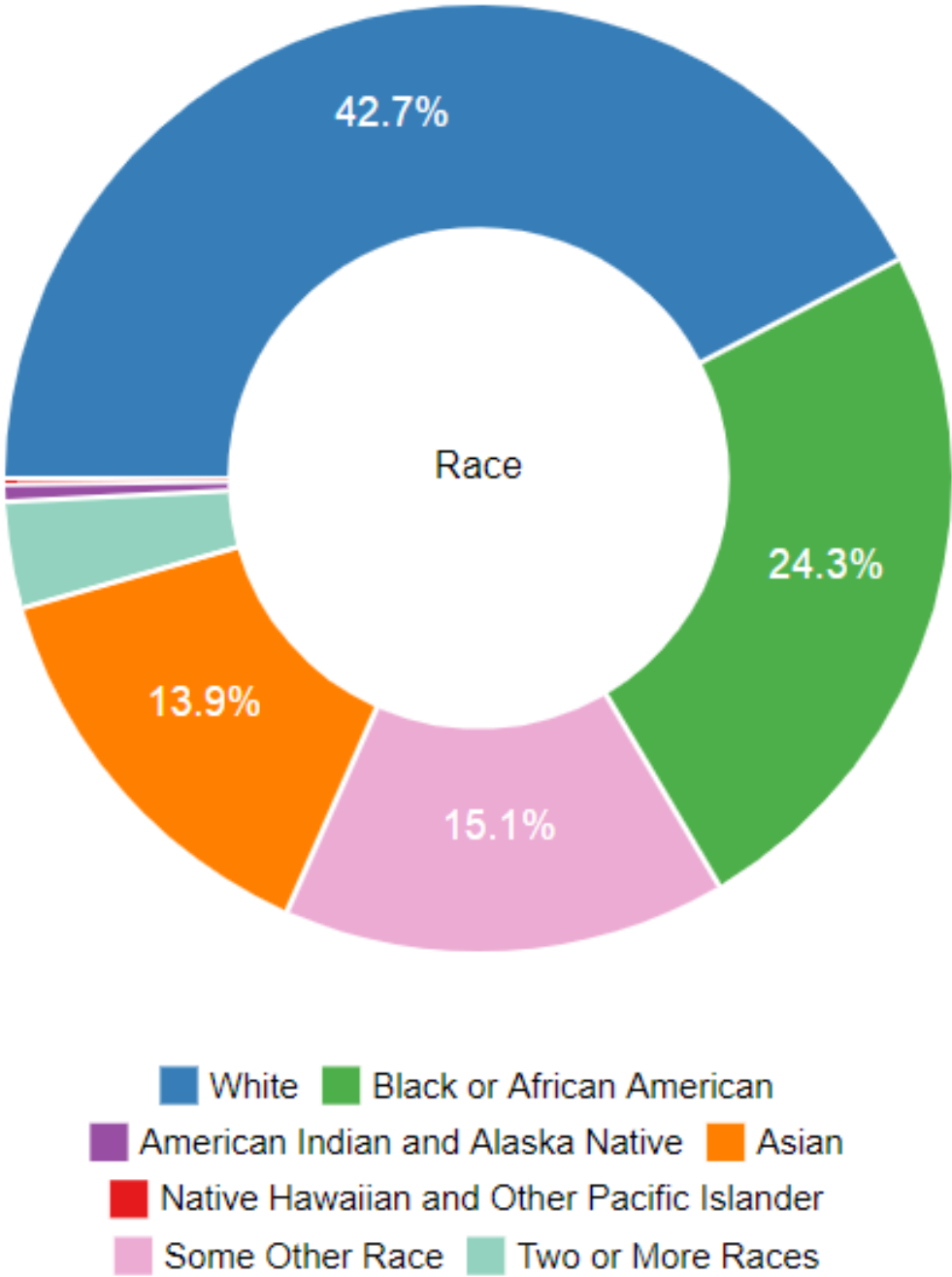


Figure 66 | *Race Demographics*, photo credit | World Population Review

New York City Median Age

36.5 35.2 37.8



Total



Male




Female

New York City Adults

There are 6,677,140 adults, (1,189,360 of whom are seniors) in New York City.

New York City Age Dependency

53.9 Age Dependency Ratio 

21.7 Old Age Dependency Ratio 

32.2 Child Dependency Ratio 

New York City Sex Ratio

Female 4,418,620 52.33%

Male 4,025,100 47.67%

Figure 67 | *Age Demographics*, photo credit | World Population Review

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Space Allocation

The criteria to figure out the space allocation for my project will be calculated by researching similar projects. I can use those spatial relationships to closely estimate and compare my findings with what I think is appropriate. I think that the size can also vary depending on existing conditions at the site. Because my program is more so an extension of an existing space it will be very important to note what those existing measurements are. This will greatly affect certain aspects of my design, as well as help define a starting point for my square footage.

Environmental Performance

Environmental performance will be taken into great consideration for my design, as I believe it should for any design. In order to do this effectively the materials used must be selected carefully. I will research specific types of material with the best energy performance and incorporate them into my design. It will be a challenge to find material that are light and dreamlike, while also preserving a strong environmental performance. I will also try my best to locally source the materials as this is a major impact on the environmental repercussions. I will also research passive strategies to thoroughly integrate into my designs as it will largely be in open spaces.

Behavioral Performance

Behavioral performance and usage are one of the primary goals of my project. Designing a space(s) that can reawaken something within us and create a positive impact on users will be a target analysis of the project. The way to do this will be by finding a layout that allows for a variety of different experiences between users. A lot of the spaces will be something that are open to interpretation to a certain extent, allowing users to define their own experience throughout.

Psychological Impact

The psychological impact is another leading crucial aspect to my design. Because my thesis revolves largely around the mind and consciousness the design must have a wide range of psychological impacts. There will be certain aspects of my design that will leave you thinking afterword for days, weeks or even years to come. In order to successfully do this, I must evaluate the psyche and seek out effective techniques that create a positive and lasting impact on one's experience. The culture of my site will largely play into this as well so it will be important for me to also look at resident's frame of mind who have lived in NYC for a while.

THE DESIGN

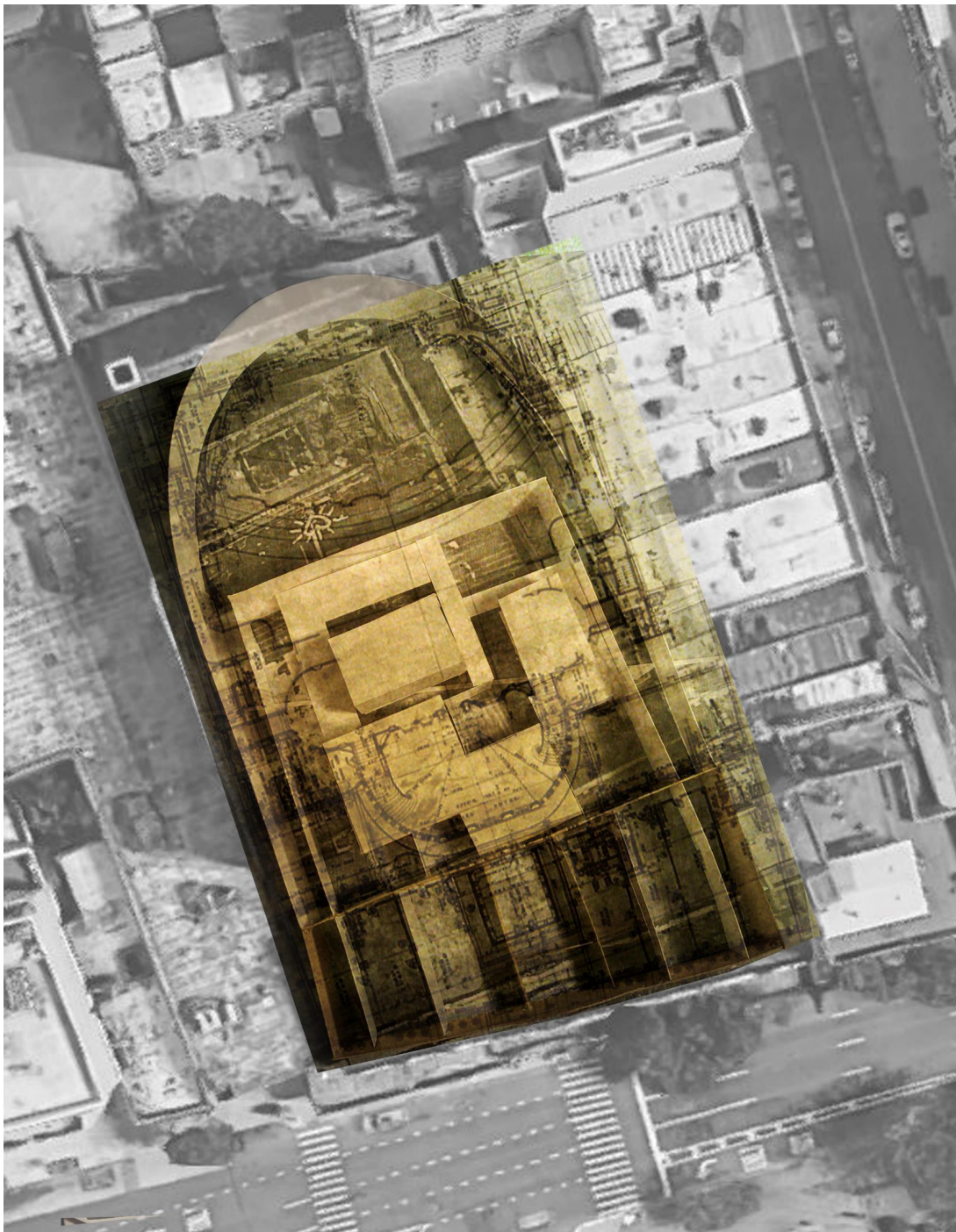


Figure 68 | *Process Model*



Figure 69 | *Process Model*

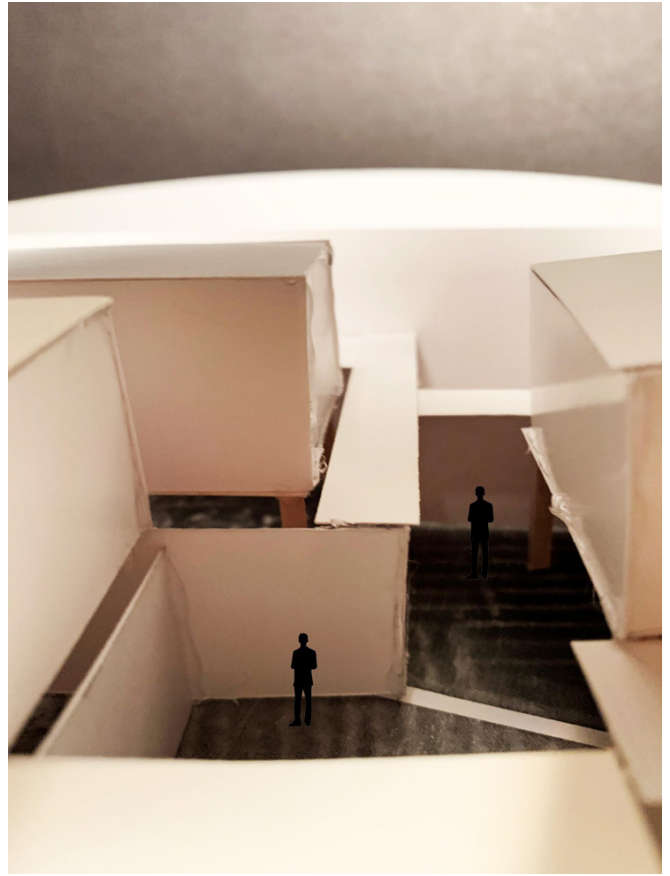


Figure 70 | *Process Model*



Figure 71 | *Process Model*

This building has watched hundreds pass by, slipping into a trance. Lifeless and drone to the world around them, my architecture unfolds a journey within the city, a city that cries for help, a city that craves a reawakening...



Figure 72 | *Preserved Entrance*

Our journey begins upon the entry where visitors are brought into the remains of the ticket booth area. Elements of the old building appear, as the new creeps in. Movement lives throughout, as dozens of bodies are yearning to explore the memories that are held within the ruins, while dozens pass right by, absent mindedly neglecting the beauty of what this place holds.

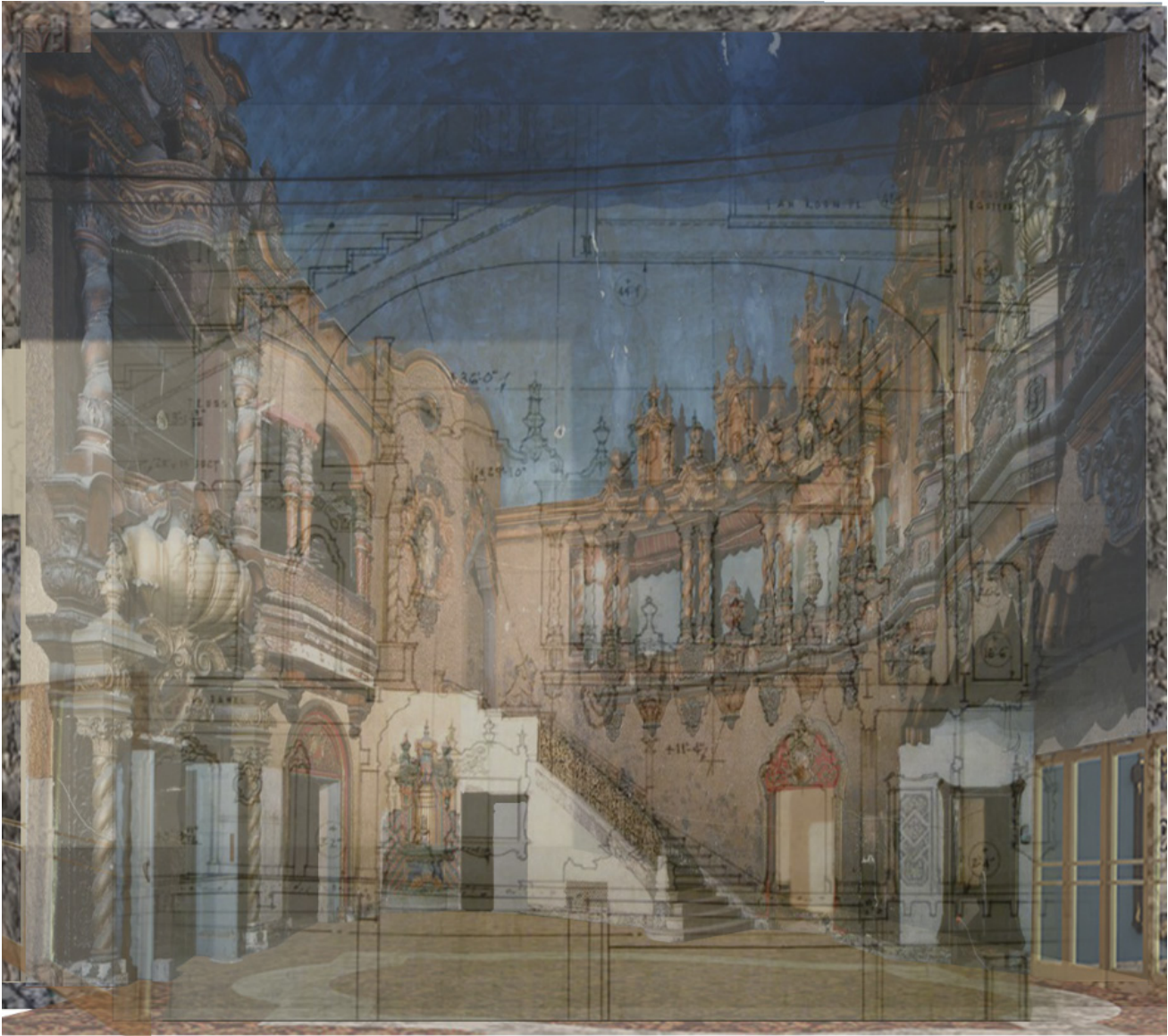


Figure 73 | *Preserved Lobby*

Moving into main lobby, which is now a historically preserved landmark, memories are brought forth once again. Where the blue ceiling and ornate detailing is brought back to life.

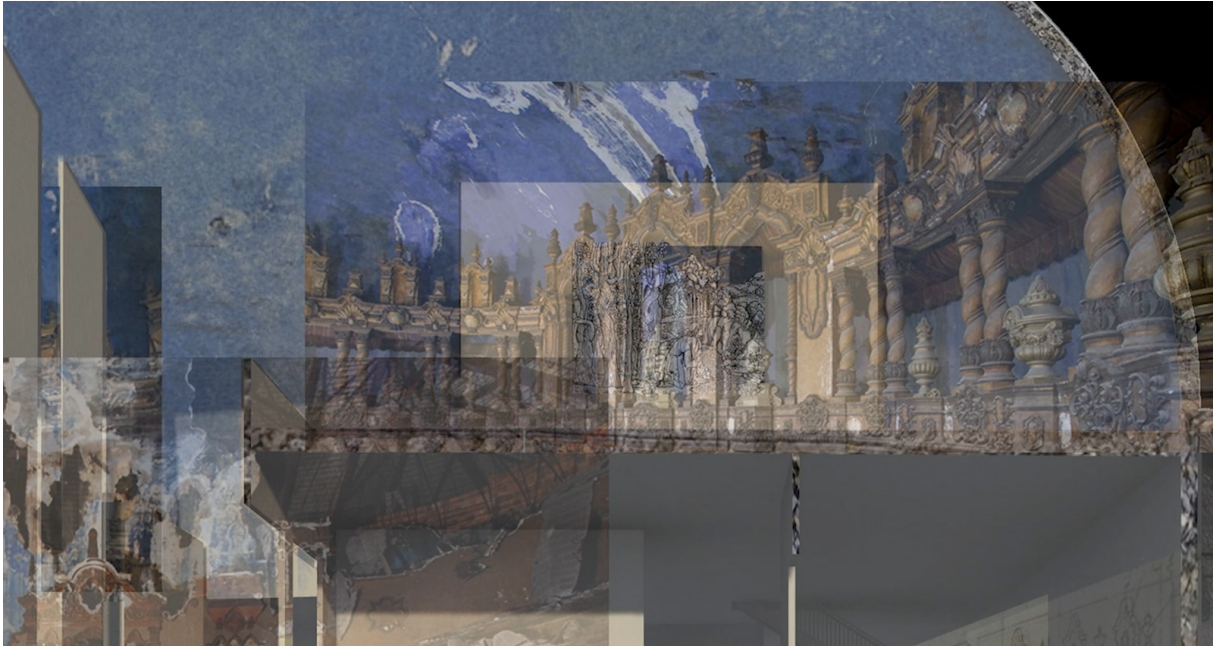


Figure 74 | *Mezzanine*

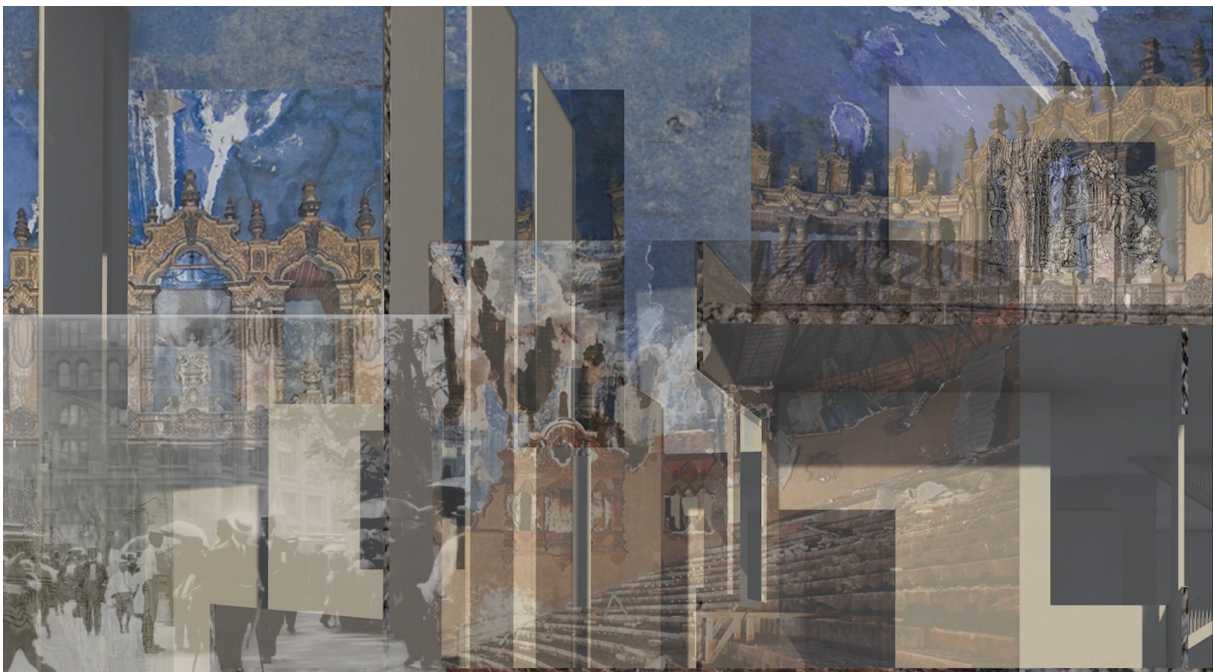


Figure 75 | *Mezzanine*

Moving up the grand staircase into the gallery spaces participants become more and more lost in the surreal fragments, where tension is produced unconsciously, expanding, and contracting through space. The ghost of the mezzanine level reappears, the space of desire. The space where you go to see the theatrical encounters occurring beyond.

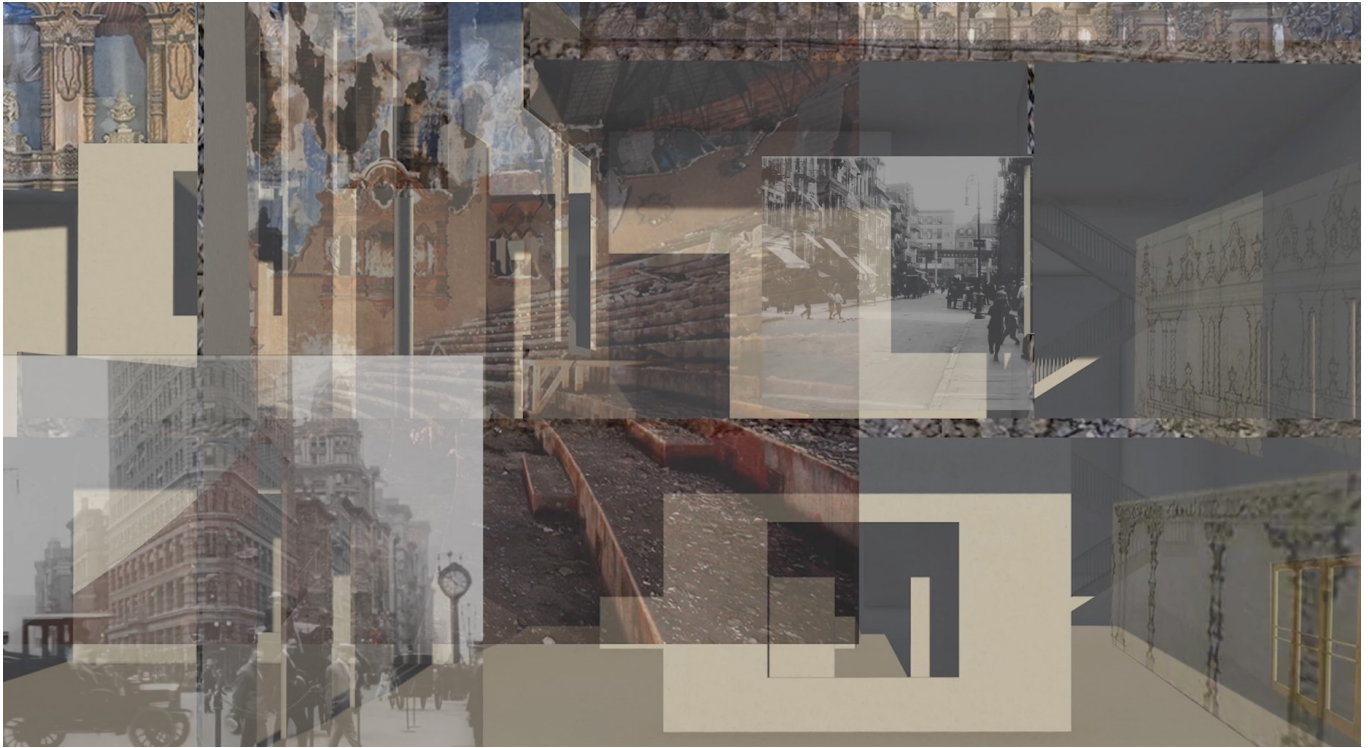


Figure 76 | *Galleries*

As you move through the gallery spaces, the movement and rhythm of the body are framed. Where the rhythm articulates a form of animation, constructing the space through the figment of imagination. Visual projections of the old theatre are placed throughout, simulating a living architecture, where the body is induced to follow the rhythm of the montage images. It is home of a moving picture, a house of film, where the eye moves back and forth causing the body space to be controlled and manipulated through imaginary endless space.



Figure 77 | *Theatre Space*

After exploring the galleries, visitors then enter the new theatre space, which is ghosted above where the old stage once existed. During the cinematographic projection, visitors sit immobile between the light and the projected images, in the enduring presence of space-time and no fixed dimensions. The screen where the film is viewed is layered where the proscenium once stood, metaphorically reaching out to the “screen” where the film is now viewed. Facing the galleries, participants are viewing and being transformed in the theatre space, while also extending to the space beyond the screen into the galleries where bodies parade, aligned in rhythm.

Forming an essence of what was there, and what has come back in a new way plays with the reversibility of dream and fiction. By creating nonlinear fragments that connect to what remains, there leaves play between what was there, what is no longer there and what could be there. When looking through the gallery's, participants may be framed in a different way thus allowing imagination to transform their view and in turn see things in a new way. Upon exiting the building your perception of time and space are collapsed, reawakening our mode of being. It is the space to see and to be seen, one space blending into the next, much like the artefact.

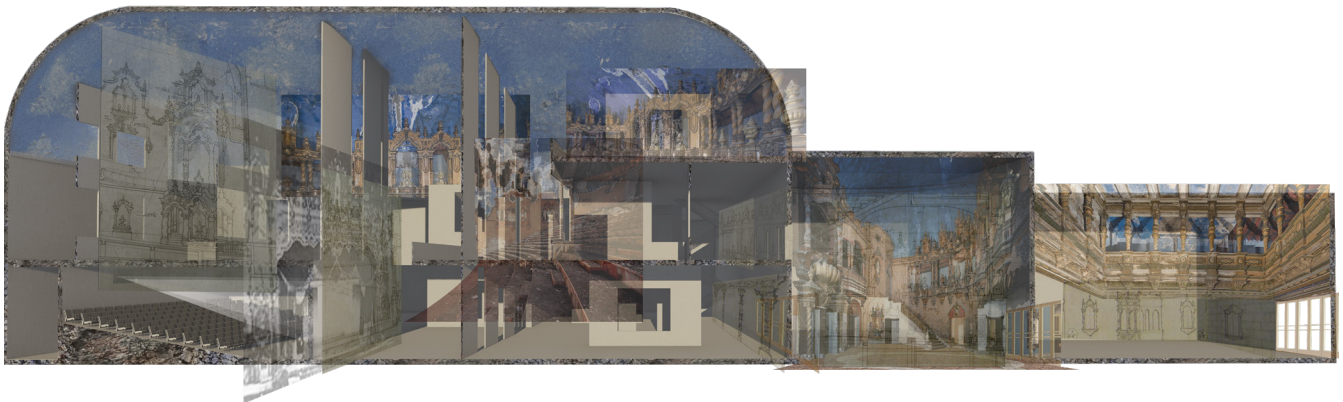


Figure 78 | *Section*

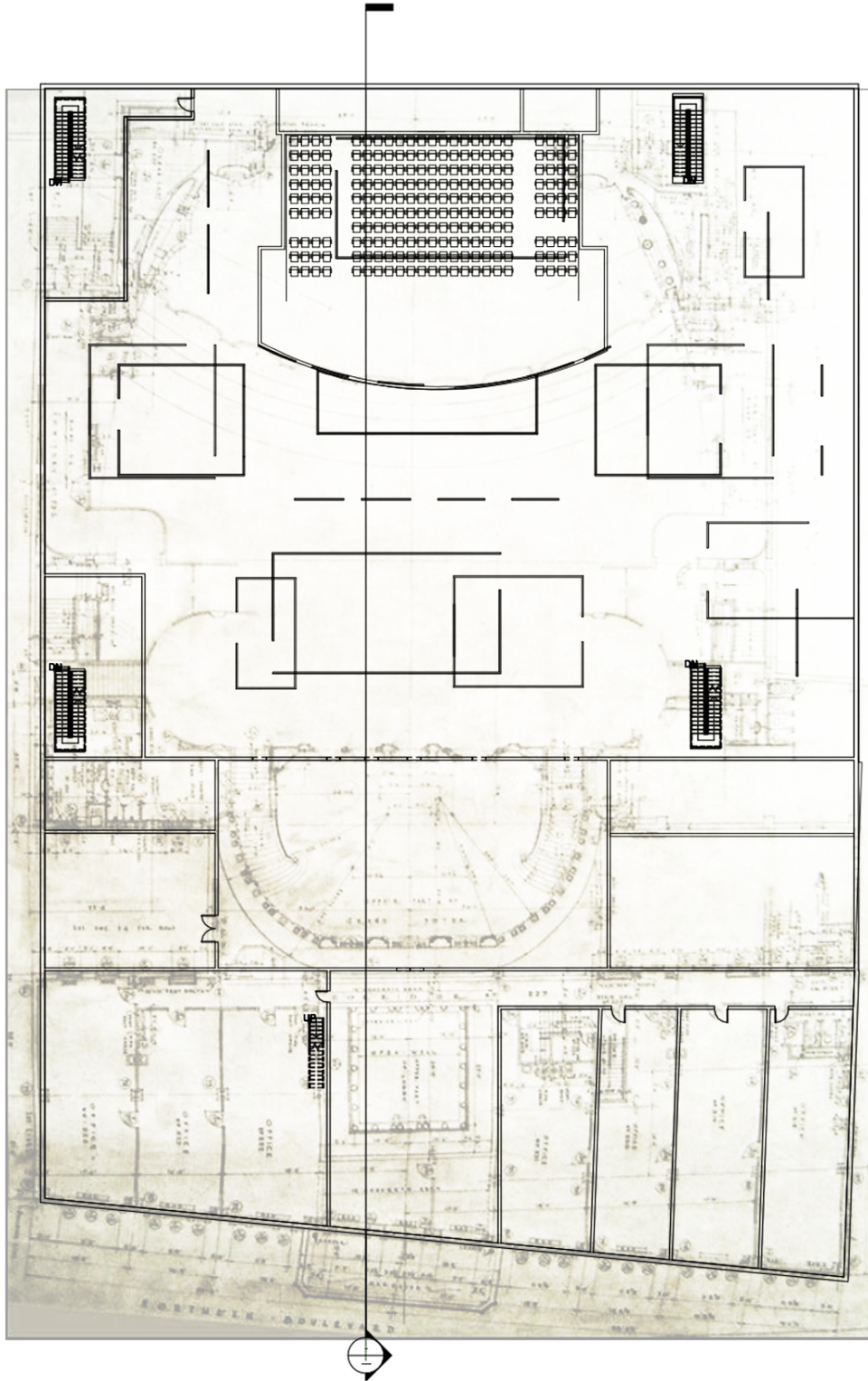


Figure 79 | Level 2 Floor Plan, with Level 1 Overlay



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PREVIOUS STUDIO EXPERIENCE

2ND YEAR

Fall 2017: Cindy Urness

Tea House | Fargo, North Dakota

Site response and integration into a conceptual building

Mpls Boat House | Minneapolis, Minnesota

Spatial relationships and their connection in design

Spring 2018: Charlott Greub

Small Dwelling | Marfa, Texas

Design on a micro scale; accommodating specific use scenarios

Birdhouse | Fargo, North Dakota

Design for specific bird species in respect to Pritzker Prize winner

3RD YEAR

Fall 2018: Regin Schwaen

Visitor's Center | Cooperstown, North Dakota

Design a visitor's center made of wood for a historic missile launching site

Pointview of the Fjords | Norway

create a structure made of brick that capture landscape observation

Spring 2019: Nilourfar Alenjery

The Reflection Within | Narrative Based building

Narrative-based building made of steel

Native American Museum | Fargo, North Dakota

Create a design proposal for a Museum of Native American Art & Workshops

4TH YEAR

Fall 2019: Amar Hussein

Urban and Sustainable High Rise | Miami, Florida

Extensive investigation under a strict delivery timetable

Spring 2020: Paul Gleye

Urban Design Project | Brussels, Belgium

Urban development for the future of Brussels

5TH YEAR

Fall 2020: Stephen Wischer

Thesis Research

RKO Ruins and The Surreal Fragment: Dreams, Film, and Architecture

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

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hometown | **VICTORIA, MINNESOTA**

