Incorporating *Spolia*:
The Façade as Artifact and Frame

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

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DEDICATION

For Georgia Merriman.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores an architectural response for an urban site that incorporates the dismantled façade stones (*spolia*) of the site's previous building into two dialectical devices: a ramp and a camera obscura. Each device allows the stones to act as both artifact (individual object with an embedded history) and frame (structure that invites a reading of its context).

Spatial and temporal concepts from film provide theoretical guidance for the dialectical structure of the architectural design approach. A constant navigation between pairs of opposing forces (capturing/projecting, introvert/extrovert, operator/device, artifact/frame, object/subject) results in a pair of architectures, one a cinema + digital archive and the other a film school, between which a public space is activated as an outdoor amphitheatre. The two buildings simultaneously act as object (artifact) and subject (frame) in an attempt to locate and express a redefined historical continuity for the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> Buildings, like humans, are the products of their generation and their location. Unlike commodities or texts, buildings, like humans, are unique and impossible to duplicate. Buildings are inevitably formed by both a place and a history. They are brought into existence, they have a youth, a maturity, a senility, a death. Buildings are not fixed things; they change, they grow, they get sick, they die, or, more commonly, they are murdered...It does not seem absurd, therefore, to imagine that buildings might even be valued as agents. (Wharton 2011, 194)

> *Spolia* are survivors of violence, about which they might be mute (if they bear no visible signs of it) or eloquent. (Kinney 2011, 4)

Thesis Question

How can architectural fragments (*spolia)* become a catalyst for an architecture that reframes the historical continuity of a site?

Site Context

A Downtown Renaissance

Hamilton is reinventing itself. Several decades of suburban expansion have left its core with empty shops and a large stock of unoccupied and unmaintained 19th century buildings. The city has also recently undergone a major economic shift as the steel industry, central to its economy and identity throughout most of the 20th century, has been drastically downsized. As the cost of living in Toronto has continued to increase, Hamilton has garnered attention due to its relative affordability, and many creative industries and individuals have looked to downtown Hamilton as a new home base, transitioning the former steel town towards a growing economy in innovation and the arts. One of the areas central to this revitalization has been James Street North, a 10-block stretch just south of the original 1836 city centre at Gore Park where James St and King St intersect.

niagara escarpment
a 100 m high ridge bisecting the city that continues through to niagara falls. composed of limestone and sandstone, home to carolinian forest and many waterfalls.

DOWNTOWN
HAMILTON

at joseph's hospital

escarpment access

james street south

central train
and bus station

king street east

city hall

gore park

former board of education;
future mcmaster university
medical school

art gallery of
hamilton

site

formerly an 1850s 4-storey commercial office building. demolished in 2011. a link between james street north and the downtown core.

king street west

central library +
market

copps coliseum

armoury

casino

james street north
a growing arts district. home to hamilton's largest portuguese community, here you can find studios and galleries, restaurants, bars, shops, small markets, cafés, and a monthly evening art crawl.

industrial sector
predominantly steel production. infill from the early 1900s. below the dotted line shows natural shoreline of marsh and creeks. prior to this, hamilton had a

rail line

bayfront park

hamilton harbour

north

Map of downtown Hamilton highlighting James North district and site (contour data from City of Hamilton 2012).
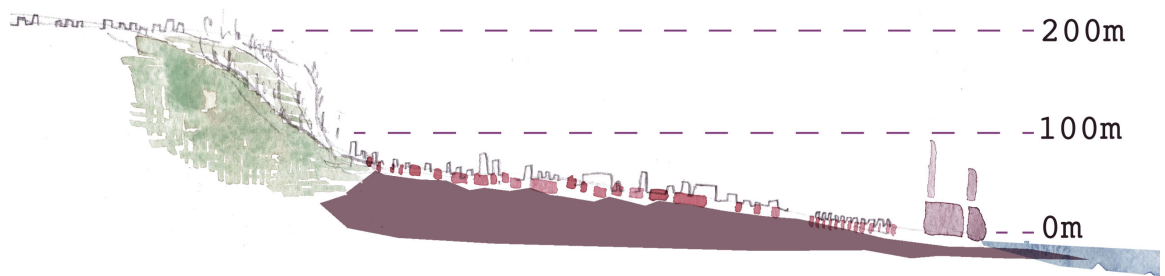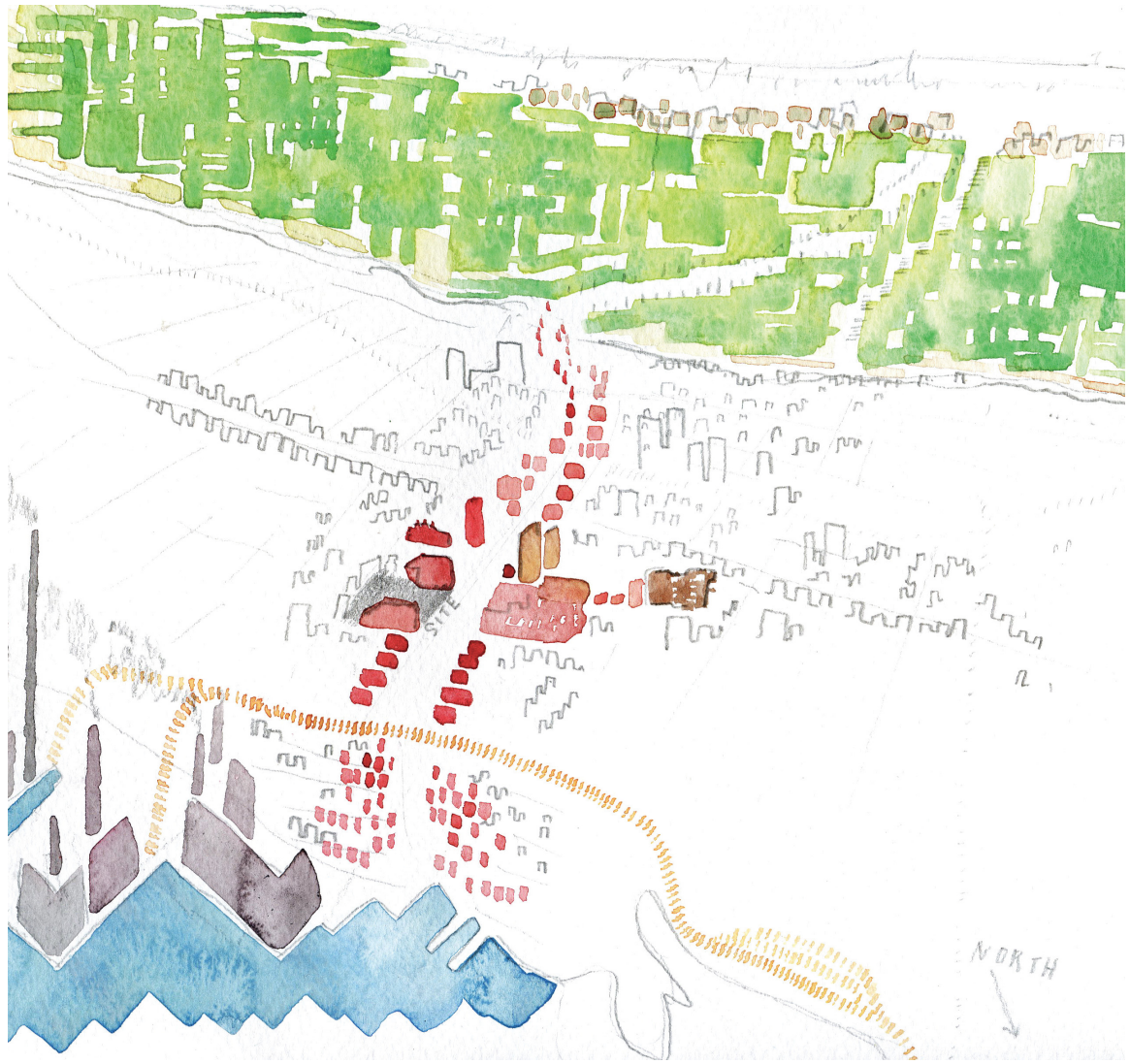
Sketches of urban condition: downtown Hamilton sits between the Niagara Escarpment to the south and an industrial shoreline to the north.

With a growing number of artists and small retail businesses taking up residence alongside the existing community, and a monthly Art Crawl hosted by artists, musicians, shops and restaurants, the original downtown area is slowly starting to regain qualities of a cultural and economic centre.
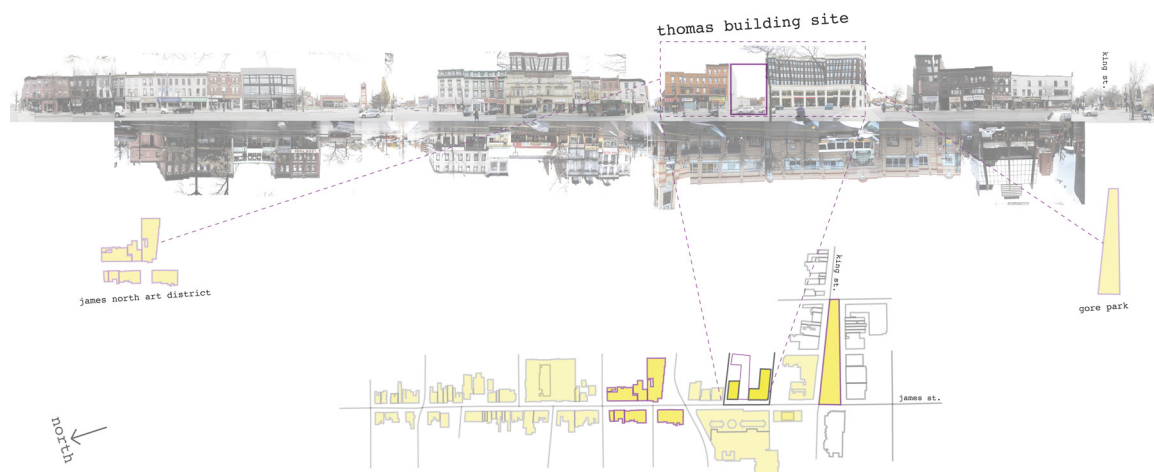
Site as link between James North art district and historic downtown at Gore Park (map data from City of Hamilton 2012).

Amidst this changing landscape, there continues to be a sense of loss as the city's built heritage is rapidly disappearing. The William Thomas building, a four-storey commercial building on James North is a particularly interesting case; it was demolished in July 2011, however the building's 1850s sandstone façade was dismantled, inventoried and stored at a nearby facility with the intention of reconstructing the original façade on a new building. The site sits directly to the north of the iconic Lister Block, a recently restored 6-storey corner building exemplifying one of the city's rare conservation successes.

The Thomas building formed part of the James streetscape, however it was not a memorable building on its own; designed in a simple, symmetrical Renaissance Revival style, it had been masked for the last several decades under a large piece of sheet metal in an attempt to modernize the façade, resulting in the forced removal of the protruding decorative sandstone. The majority of the building had not been in use for decades and the structure had become greatly compromised due to water infiltration and careless removal of floor joists.
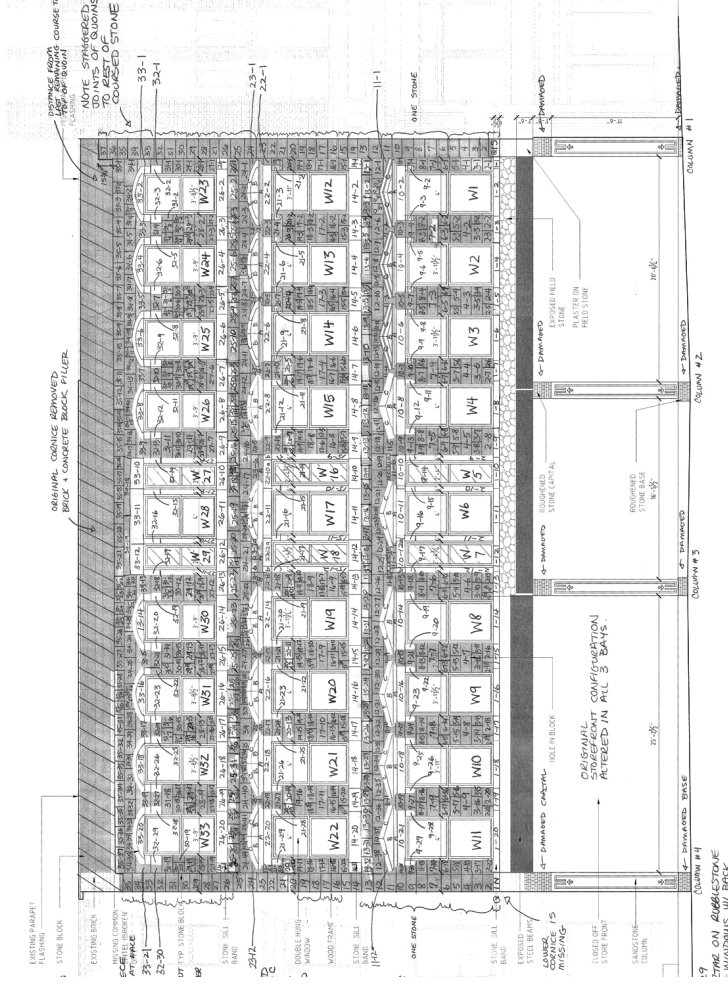
Stone inventory elevation, WGD Architects 2010.
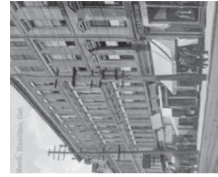
1950 - 2011

Photo timeline of Thomas Building. Photo credit left to right: City of Hamilton 2010, Google 2012, Hamilton Spectator 2010, City of Hamilton 2010, City of Hamilton 2010, author.

Consideration of built history is a constant requirement for design responses to our urban environment. As buildings age and evolve they silently become cultural monuments that help us understand our place in history. The archived façade stones from the Thomas building provide an opportunity for innovative architecture that can reveal aspects of the past in order to provoke a critical response in the present.

Historical Continuity

Buildings as Bodies

In the concluding paragraphs of Annabel Wharton's essay, "The Tribune Tower: *Spolia* as Despoliation", Wharton makes a compelling argument for an approach that considers buildings as living things, as agents, as bodies.

If a building is a body then it demands to be engaged as a surviving witness of various pasts, its full biography taken into account instead of solely its structure's origins. This helps to explain our empathy with its abuse and destruction (Wharton 2011, 195).

Walter Benjamin's ideas about the *aura* of an original work of art (Benjamin 1936, 104) apply to buildings as bodies. Unlike photographs or films, the Thomas Building can never be reproduced, but its *aura* can be translated through the retention and use of its original façade stones, body parts that hold memory. This project is adopting an approach that honours the agency of these parts, and the site as a whole. Using the stones in the architectural response becomes a central strategy for transforming the continuity of the site.

Seeking an Active, Age-Value Monument

History is an effective tool because it provides a record (albeit biased) of our collective mistakes, and instructs us on what has and hasn't worked in the past. We can use this knowledge to guide us through our current situations and challenges.

Nietzsche called for an awakening in how we use history: if it won't help us (or worse still, if it hinders us) then we should let it go, thus freeing our minds up for creative solutions. If our use of history proves to act as a catalyst for life and action it is worthwhile, necessary even. But, as Nietzsche quoted Goethe: "Moreover I hate everything which merely instructs

me without increasing or directly quickening my activity" (Nietzsche 1980, 7).

Alois Riegl's 1903 essay, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origins," provides a powerful compass for understanding the aims of conserving our built environment. Riegl defines three categories of monuments:

1. Intentional monuments: recall a specific moment or complex of moments from the past, allowing little room for subjective interpretation

2. Historical monuments: refer to a particular moment, but allow subjective interpretation.

3. Age-value monuments: do not refer directly to their original significance and purpose; rather, their aim is to reveal the passage of time. (Riegl 1998, 624)

Riegl then defines two facets of our appreciation for monuments: historical value and age value. Historical value refers to an object's value as the document of a moment of past time, while age value lies in the general sense of the passage of time produced by the contemplation of a given object. He further explains:

> The immediate emotional effect of recognizing age value depends neither on scholarly knowledge nor historical education for its satisfaction, since it is evoked by mere sensory perception. Hence it is not restricted to the educated but also touches the masses independent of their education. (Riegl 1998, 624)

The concept of age value presents a valid framework for approaching the treatment of the Thomas site. There are multiple reasons for this. First, the existing circumstances are such that the building had been neglected for a long time. A lack of directed human intervention towards preserving the building resulted in the overwhelming forces of decay setting in and jeopardizing its structure. Additionally, no measures were taken to preserve the internal layout of the building and many alterations took place over the years, making it difficult to know its original character.

Second, the building has been completely demolished, with no traces of its existence left on the site. The former party walls of its neighbouring buildings are now covered in a clean concrete masonry surface and new gravel has been laid on the ground, sitting inconspicuously at sidewalk level. The main structure, composed of wooden joists and rubble walls, was dismantled and discarded, leaving the recovered sandstone façade blocks as the only remaining traces of the building.

From the point of view of historical value, the reconstruction of the Thomas building would need to purposely recall a specific moment in history, but the question that must be asked is, what is this significant moment? If the façade were to be reconstructed to its original 1850s configuration, it would only be creating a false image of a forgotten past.

The Thomas building was originally significant because it contributed to the vibrant commercial district that was once the heart of the downtown, and also because its designer, William Thomas was a prolific and prominent architect across Upper and Eastern Canada at the time. Otherwise, the building went largely unnoticed throughout its life, and archival photographs usually focus on its corner neighbour, the Lister Block, an impressive commercial building from the same period.

Attempting to replicate the original building (although an admirable intent given the prominence of "tear-down" culture currently rampant in Hamilton) would be a futile exercise at recalling its historical value, and suggests that alternative approaches to reconstruction could be of more value to the evolving James North streetscape.

Given that the building has been destroyed and the façade stones preserved, the historical value of a rebuilt monument could potentially refer to the event of the building's demolition, which holds significance since it alludes to the general life span of decay while confronting and questioning the human action that suddenly tore it down. The monument could also refer to the former role of the stones as a façade. This approach to historical value would be more relevant to the public's overall memory of the building, and provides an opportunity for a critical stance that could speak to the larger issue of historical preservation.

An age value approach to reconstruction creates the opportunity to work with the now-abstracted façade material in a way that can heighten the visitors' awareness of the stones having had a considerable life span and undergoing various levels of transformation, without needing any specific reference to a particular moment in time. The stones possess visual and tactile layers of information that immediately communicate a sense of the passage of time: the rough, hand-cut quality, the varying textures that have worn away, discolouration due to air pollution and weathering, as well as the ink labels applied during their removal.

Stone rubbings and photo by author of stones stored on shipping pallets.

Riegl observes that the "cult of age value" will result in self-destruction of the monument, since the most dogmatic of supporters would argue that no interventions of any kind should be made to preserve a monument: they should be left to rot and crumble (Riegl 1998, 633). This presents a conflict in the existing story of the Thomas building since intervention has already occurred and further intervention is proposed. This suggests, that there must be a balance between the consideration of both historical and age value.

This project seeks to examine this balance by exploring the former role of the façade itself and how it may be translated in a new context. Using the stones in an abstracted way permits the appreciation of their age value and gives the opportunity to convey a sense of historical continuity on the site while provoking life and action.

Incorporating *Spolia*

Tarnya Cooper's essay, *Forgetting Rome and the Voice of Piranesi's 'Speaking Ruins'*, discusses Paul Connerton's analysis of how memory is assimilated in the body, referred to as "incorporating practice". Cooper applies this idea to Piranesi's interpretive etchings of roman ruins and suggests that his placement of figures in active poses among the ruins played a powerful role in creating strong memories of Rome for people who had never actually travelled there. For those who would later visit Rome, they would have to actively unlearn these memories in order to acquaint themselves with the real city. In this sense, "incorporating the space became an active dialogue between remembered images and present experience, a dialogue in which elements of one or the other usually ended up displaced from memory" (Cooper 1999, 119).

This idea of incorporation is an important driving element in the design for an active monument. Using the *spolia* in a way that creates a different physical experience from the original observation of the stones as a façade can result in a tension between what is remembered and what is being experienced in the present moment. This tension is an important ingredient for an active monument and can create a sense of wonder, as an individual feels a subtle convergence between past and present.

Spolia Case Studies

Spolia is an art historical term for the recycling of architectural fragments (Wharton 2011, p 179). Not until the late 1960s was it being discussed in a way in which attention was paid to the new context and not just the appropriated object. An essay by Arnold Esch published in 1969 (*Spolien*) opened the debate surrounding the interpretation of *spolia* and the subject increased greatly in popularity during the 1980s, alongside the booming postmodern movement (Esch 2011, 13). This is likely no coincidence, given how many of the tropes and strategies of postmodernism are also characteristic of *spolia*: fragmentation, historicism, memory, authenticity, authorship and appropriation (Kinney 2011, 1).

The discourse on *spolia* is sprawling and complex. Exploring specific examples of its use is an instructive starting point. Comparing two very different historical precedents, the Chicago Tribune Tower and the Mosque of Cordoba, helps to provide a sounding board for the

intention of the Thomas Building *spolia* within the context of this project.

The Tribune Tower: Spolia in its Classical Sense of Coercive Authority

In its earliest incarnation, *spolia* was largely associated with violence and assertion of power. Building anew with appropriated fragments of the 'conquered' was usually a symbolic display of domination, a despoiling of the fragment in its original context.

The Chicago Tribune Tower is a modern example of *spolia* in its classical sense. At street level, the north, south and west façades of the tower are dotted with nearly 150 pieces of well-known buildings and historically significant sites from around the world. The pieces (largely procured by forcible, manipulative means by the Tribune staff (Wharton 2011, 188-89)) are small and seem haphazardly stuck into the façade in a way that is just noticeable enough to allow them status as curiosities. Each piece represents a significant monument, however the lack of framing results in a failure to communicate any meaning whatsoever.

Chicago Tribune Tower, section of the façade including fragments of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and the pyramid at Gaza (*sic!* in process of correction), photograph by Annabel Wharton (Wharton 2011).

The Mosque of Cordoba: Appropriation as a Vehicle for Structural Innovation

Built in 780-785 by the exiled Omeyan prince Abd-al-Rahman, one of the defining features of the Mosque can be found in the arcades, where existing Roman columns from nearby demolished buildings were salvaged and used.

The crucial device of the Mosque is the structural solution to the fragility of the existing columns. Normally, pillars would simply be raised to the desired height of the arch, but the old columns required a strong harness in the form of a second arch below the main full-height arch. Since there were no existing precedents of an under-arch system at the time, the builders of Cordoba looked to the Roman aqueducts for inspiration. The result is a peculiar but strikingly beautiful space that elegantly and innovatively expresses its historical context. The Mosque provides an important precedent for how to approach the structural intention of this project's use of the Thomas Building *spolia*.

View of arcade in Great Mosque showing reused Roman columns and double arch system, photograph by Fernando Chueca Goitia (Goitia 1971).

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Film as Metaphor

In his 1936 essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility", Walter Benjamin describes film as "the work of art most capable of improvement", and further states that "this capability is linked to its radical renunciation of eternal value" (Benjamin 1936, 109).   The Thomas stones can be seen as related to film in this sense: they exist as a series of individual blocks (frames) that can be edited together in any number of different ways., just as filmmakers can create multiple narratives from the same footage through the editing process. Unlike the easily reproducible frames of film, however, the stones do not renounce their eternal value. They remain as originals, whose aura should be carefully considered in their rearrangement.   By editing together the stones, a new narrative, imbued with this tangible aura, becomes established and starts to inform the remainder of the monument, piece by piece.

The disciplines of architecture and filmmaking have long since been compared, as buildings and films have a lot in common. Both are experienced spatially and temporally, and rely on principles of structure and composition. Architect and writer Juhanni Pallasmaa has said that both art forms "create and mediate comprehensive images of life" (Pallasmaa 2011, 13).

Exploring the relationships between architecture and film raises questions about perception, reality, and imagination. Fragmented architecture may be built for film sets in order to construct a complete, continuous spatial idea, just as existing buildings or landscapes may be altered through lighting to achieve an atmosphere that is otherworldly. We experience buildings and films sequentially as they unfold before us. Both are also experienced physically: the act of watching a film appears passive, however our bodies can often actually feel the illusory cinematic space before our eyes. The principles of film can help to translate spatial ideas into built form, providing useful hints for the architectural response to the site.

Early drawing of opening scene from Wes Anderson's film *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012).

Film as Program

Considering film as a guiding programmatic element resonates strongly with both the urban context and the ideas about creating an active monument through incorporation and the extroverted/introverted nature of the façade. A centre for film would represent a place of action and creation, while maintaining two complementary components, a cinema and digital archive (public, extroverted) , and a film school (private, introverted).

The location of the Thomas Building site provides a good opportunity for a program that can facilitate expansion of the growing arts community while acting as a link between the James North community and Gore Park, the original city centre at King and James. The dual program makes use of the L-shaped site, placing the cinema and archive on the James Street side, and the film school on the Rebecca Street side.
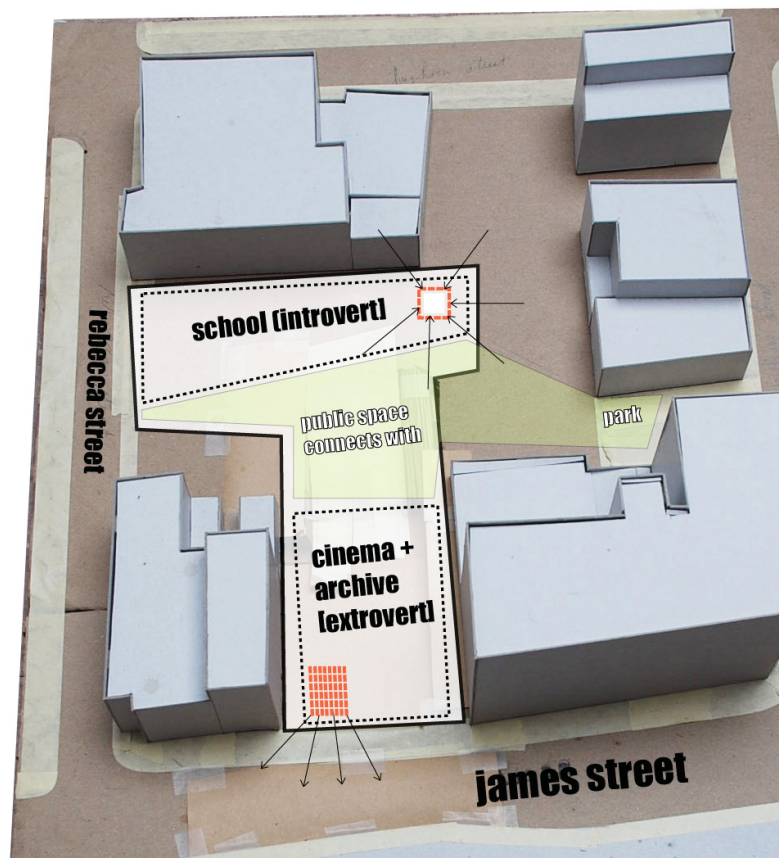

L-shaped site with placement of cinema and school, park and pub-
lic space. Areas where stones will be reused are marked in orange.

Dialectic Framework

In *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (1989), Susan Buck-Morss provides a visual system of coordinates that describes the invisible structure of Benjamin's thinking in his Passagen-Werk:

The two axes follow Hegelian polarities of reality (horizontal) and consciousness (vertical). The phantasmagoria represents an arrested form of history in which lies potential for awakening by collective political action. The trace can be seen as a clue in a detective story, an imprint that may be read and interpreted. The symbol is the transitory, dream form of the potential locked in the realm of the fetish. The allegory is the wish image of the past, appearing to us as loose rubble, building blocks that await a new form and application.

This system of coordinates provides a useful framework for this project. The "commodity" in this case is the set of façade stones, the image of the old façade is the phantasmagoria, the trace is the history of the building's life and demolition, the allegory is the rethinking of the façade and the symbol is the creative potential for the site, the active monument of a film school and cinema.
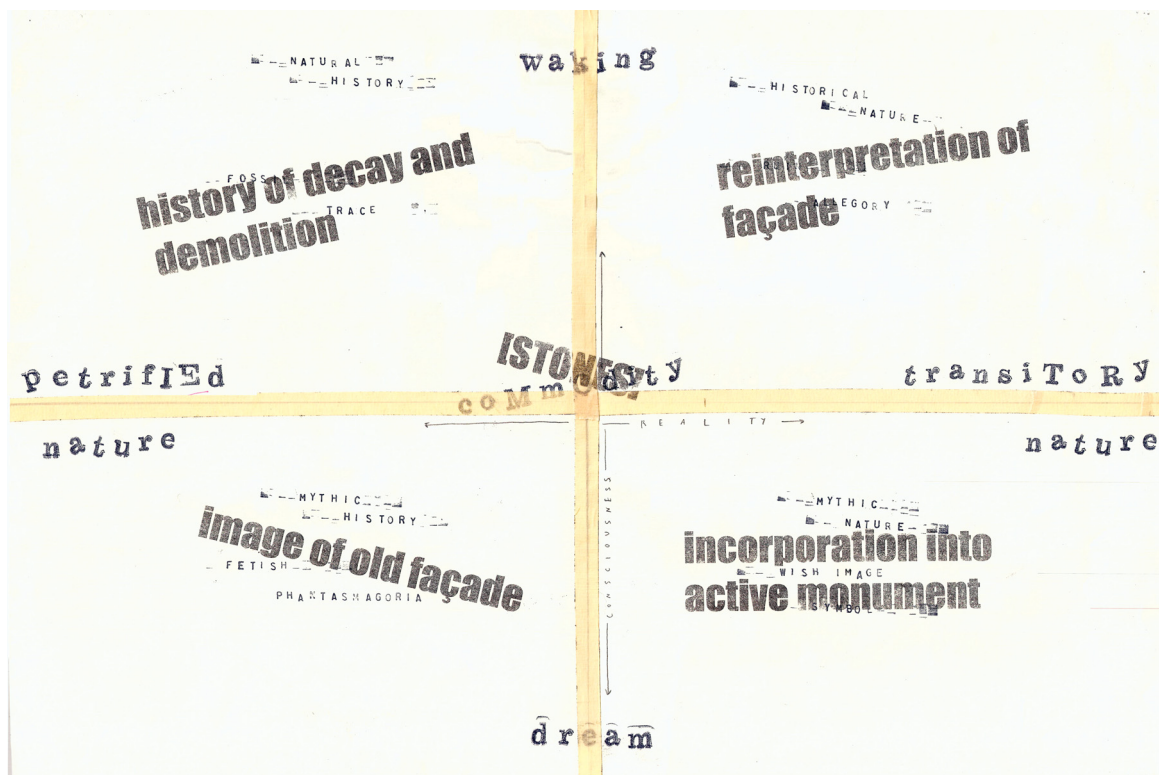
Project mapped onto Benjamin's dialectic diagram.

The centrality of this dialectic framework as a system of thinking led to the development of a list of opposing forces, or dialectic pairs, that would act as guides throughout the design process of this project. The dialectic pairs, in chronological order of their discovery and use are: projecting/capturing, extrovert/introvert, device/operator, frame/artifact, and subject/object. The following diagram was constructed by splitting and mirroring the pairs, then folding the paper like an accordion as a way of exploring the idea of the pairs inhabiting opposite spaces while having an overlapping middle ground in which design may be activated.

2D to 3D diagram showing the pairs of opposing forces structuring the project.

# CHAPTER 3: REINTERPRETING THE FAÇADE

2D to 3D

Functionally abstracted, a façade becomes a surface, an image. The image of the façade as seen from the outside is more complete, more iconographic, however the façade plane also has a reverse side, a mirror image, as seen from the interior. Taking any flat image, one can imagine transforming it from:

Functional abstraction of the "façade" (imagine the above surfaces glued back-to-back).

to a variety of forms, both planar and volumetric:
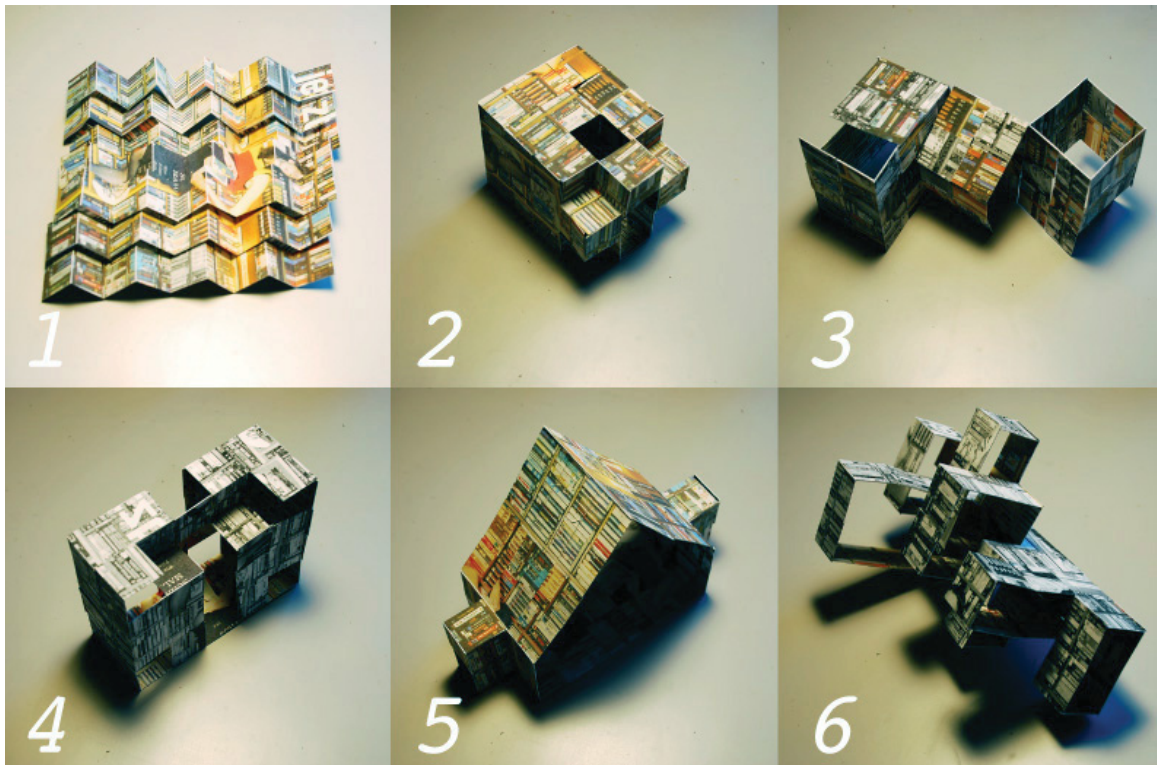
Six 2D to 3D iterations using the same double-sided image.

There are nearly infinite possibilities for the transformative abilities of the stones. They may take on a planar shift (wall to floor) or assume a volumetric condition (wall to room).

Extroverted and Introverted

What are some alternatives to an attempt at accurate historical reconstruction? The architectural significance of a façade provides meaningful clues. A façade does many things, the most basic of which is to provide a physical separation between the interior and exterior of a building. Usually the façade is a vertical plane, rising up from the horizontal ground plane. For passersby, a façade is often the defining feature of a building. It is, quite literally, the "face", and by extension offers a way of sticking in one's memory, providing an avatar that roots itself into one's mental map of a city.

Beyond this, the façade can reveal clues about the building's interior. We can read information like, how many floors does the building have? What is the building used for? Are there people inside, can we see them, what are they doing? In this sense, the façade is "extroverted": it begins to reveal the interior logic of the building to the outside world.

From an interior perspective the façade mediates the connection from outside to inside. We don't typically think of the façade as something seen from inside, but it determines views to the exterior and the amount and location of natural light entering a building. Placement of openings creates experiential rhythm, and can modulate qualities like air movement, temperature, light levels and acoustics. The façade is also the threshold through which the building's surroundings are absorbed and internalized, acting as a sort of lens. This represents its "introverted" nature.

The dual extroverted/introverted nature of the façade begins to suggest a pair of architectural devices, one that reveals its interior to the outside (projecting), while the other invites its surroundings inwards (capturing).
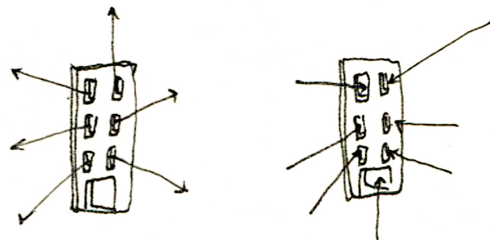
Extrovert/introvert.

CHAPTER 4: TWO ARCHITECTURAL DEVICES

The two devices act as small-scale catalysts continually referenced as a guide to the architectural development of the site. They reinterpret the meaning of a façade and are structurally and spatially conceived to create an awareness of the stones' age value and their history of dismantlement and reappropriation.

The Ramp (Projecting)

The proposed extroverted device is a suspended stone ramp entryway, which descends from the ground level into the archive space. In this device, the stones act as a plane but are shifted from vertical to horizontal. They transform from a simple wall threshold to an extended ground plane, a threshold that carries you along its length while you feel the stones below your feet, a gravitational connection.

Above the ramp at the entry is an angled reflective surface. Passersby will see the reflection of the stones below projected as an image, an illusory façade, but they will not see the real stones until they are inside, walking down the ramp. The device projects and is extroverted: it reveals itself to the outside world from inside the building.

The structural language of the ramp is an attempt to describe the prior dismantlement of the stones, through the use of a dry assembly system. Instead of mortaring the stones together in pure, stacked compression as was the case in the original façade assembly, the ramp employs a steel stress ribbon system, inspired by the Punt da Suransuns by Jürg Conzett. The steel ribbons act in tension to support the rows of stones, which are spaced slightly apart by the aluminum plates at each butt joint (allowing light to filter down into the archive space), laterally braced by pin connections. These pin connections allow slight movement of the ramp, further serving as a reminder that the stones are now serving a very different structural purpose.

1:25 sectional model of the suspended stone ramp entry.

Reflection of stones as seen from James Street.
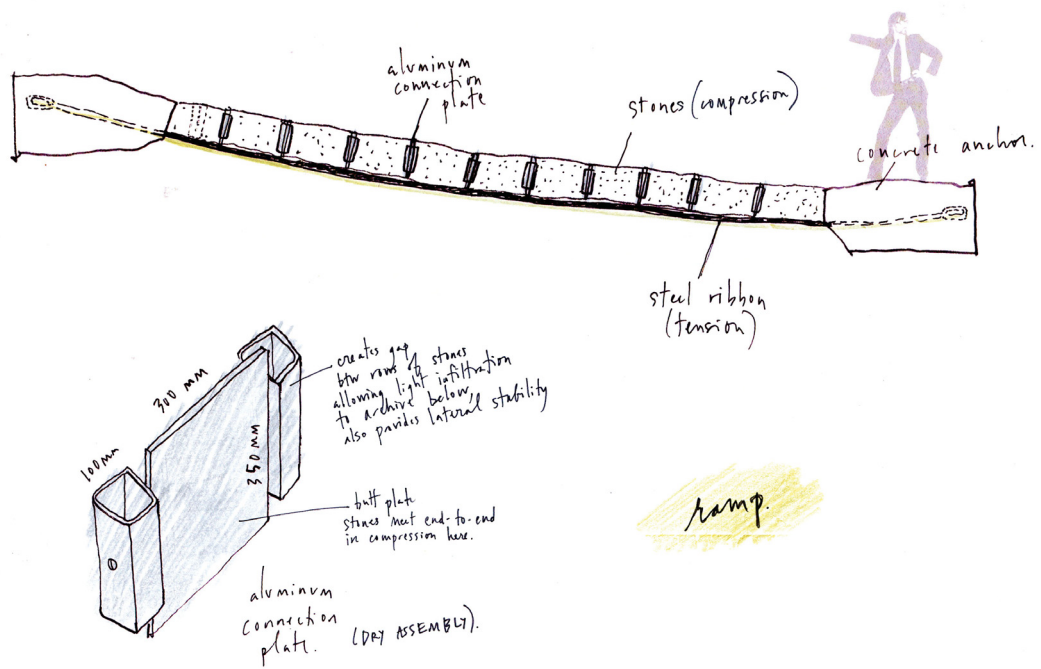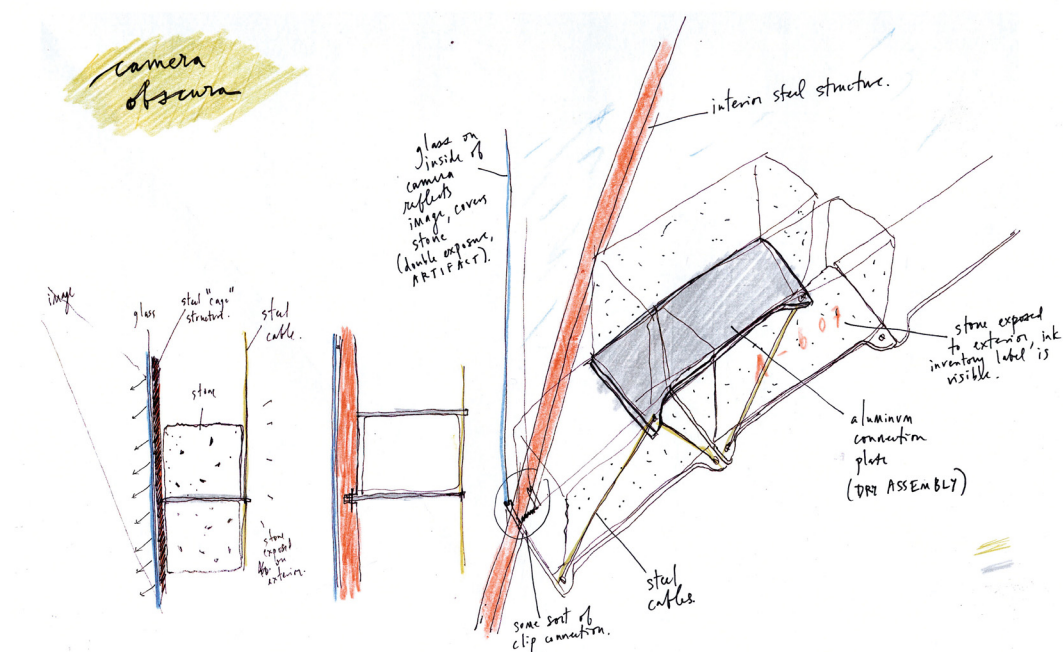
Ramp structural strategy.

Light filtering through ramp into archive space.

The Camera Obscura (Capturing)

For the introverted device, the stones transform from plane to volume. An enclosed chamber at high altitude in the film school captures two live views from the city through small apertures in a raised cupola. The images, one south from the natural escarpment (the material source of the sandstone), and one north from the industrial shoreline, are projected onto the floors and walls of the camera obscura. The stones forming the enclosure are clipped to an internal steel structure and the interior is wrapped in transparent glass. This surface helps distribute and focus the images coming through the camera obscura while the stones' texture and form is subtly removed, sitting behind the glass like an artifact in a museum. A kind of double vision is created that overlays the city onto the stones, allowing focus to shift between the two surfaces, perhaps holding both in focus, if only momentarily. It is only on the exterior of the camera obscura chamber that the stones may be directly experienced.

The structural language of the camera obscura is analogous to that of the ramp. A dry assembly system allows the stones to individually rest on aluminum plates that accomodate the joints and provide small projecting clips for an external retaining web of fine, steel cable. The plates are then clipped into the internal steel structure of the camera obscura. The system is analogous to that of a gabian wall.

Camera obscura structural strategy.
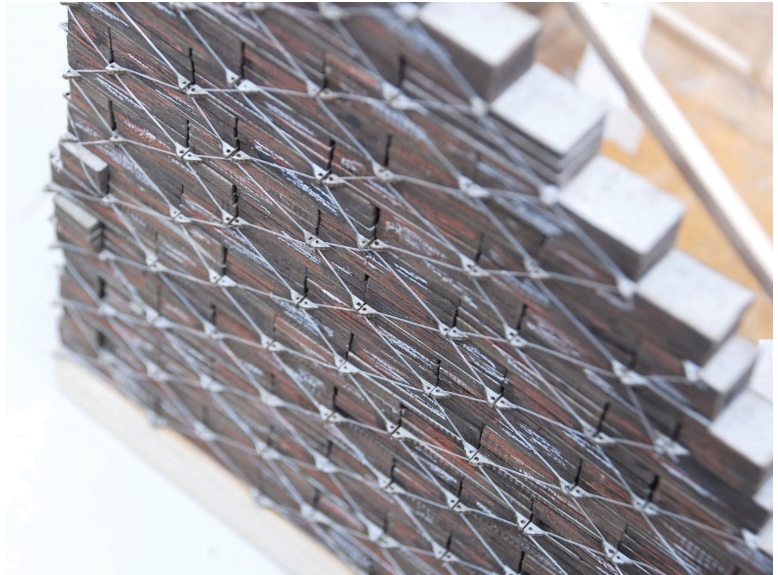
Detail of clip and cable system.
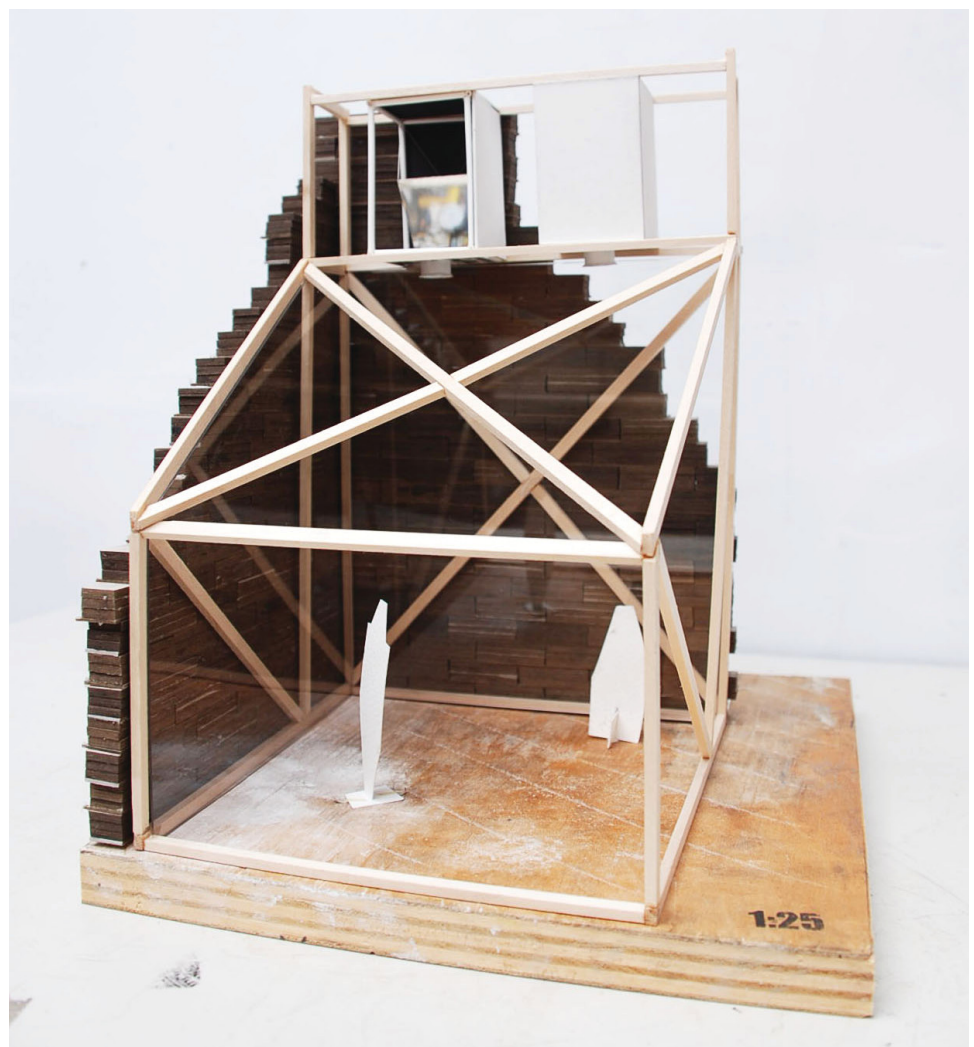
Steel frame and interior reflective glass.

Steel is the New Art

Steel plays an important symbolic and tectonic role for both devices. The once-prevalent steel industry has begun to employ fewer Hamiltonians, and as the economy transitions towards arts and innovation, "Art is the New Steel" has become a popular catchphrase for the burgeoning James St North art district. The reality, however, is that the steel industry continues to play a significant role in the city's economic, cultural and material fabric. By using steel alongside the stones in a symbiotic structural relationship, it reclaims its role as an important element of the city's heritage: past and present, symbolically and tectonically, experientially and temporally.

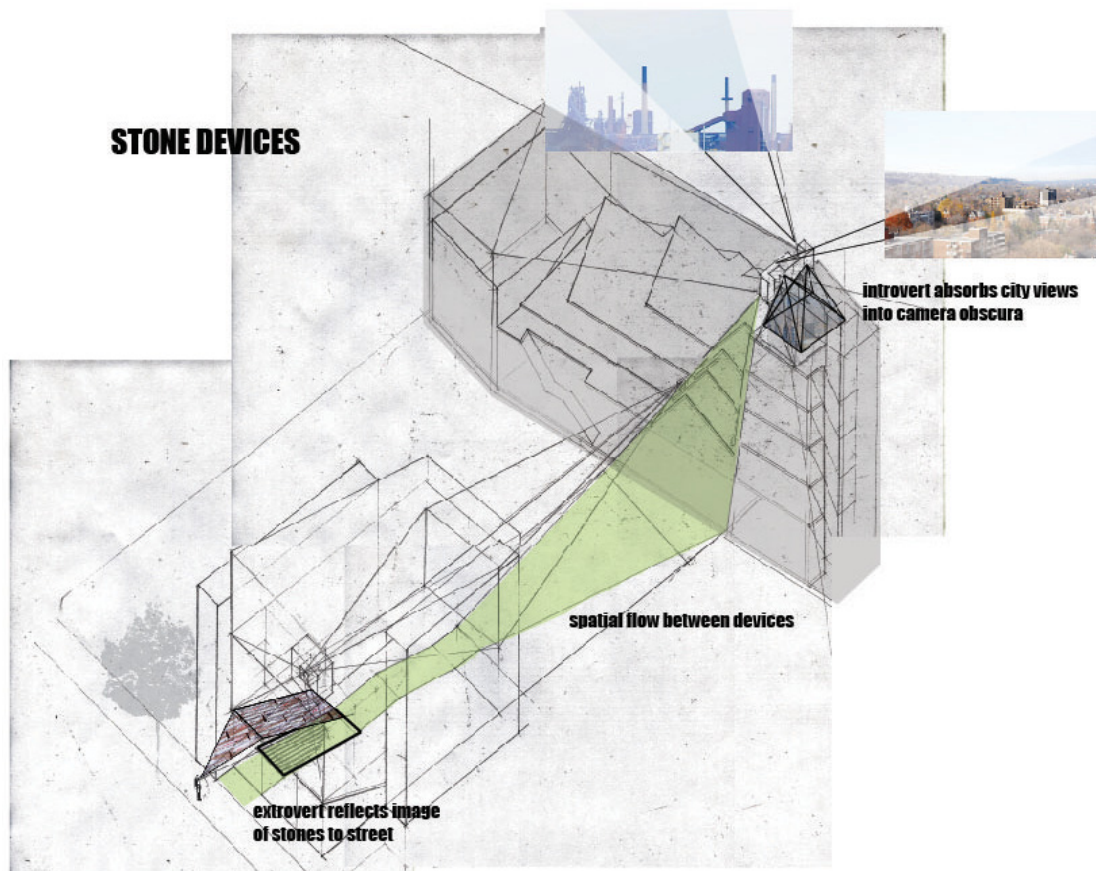Double exposed image of escarpment and steel industry.

CHAPTER 5: DESIGN

The establishment of the two devices and their placement on the site informs the development of their corresponding programmatic and spatial architectural expression.
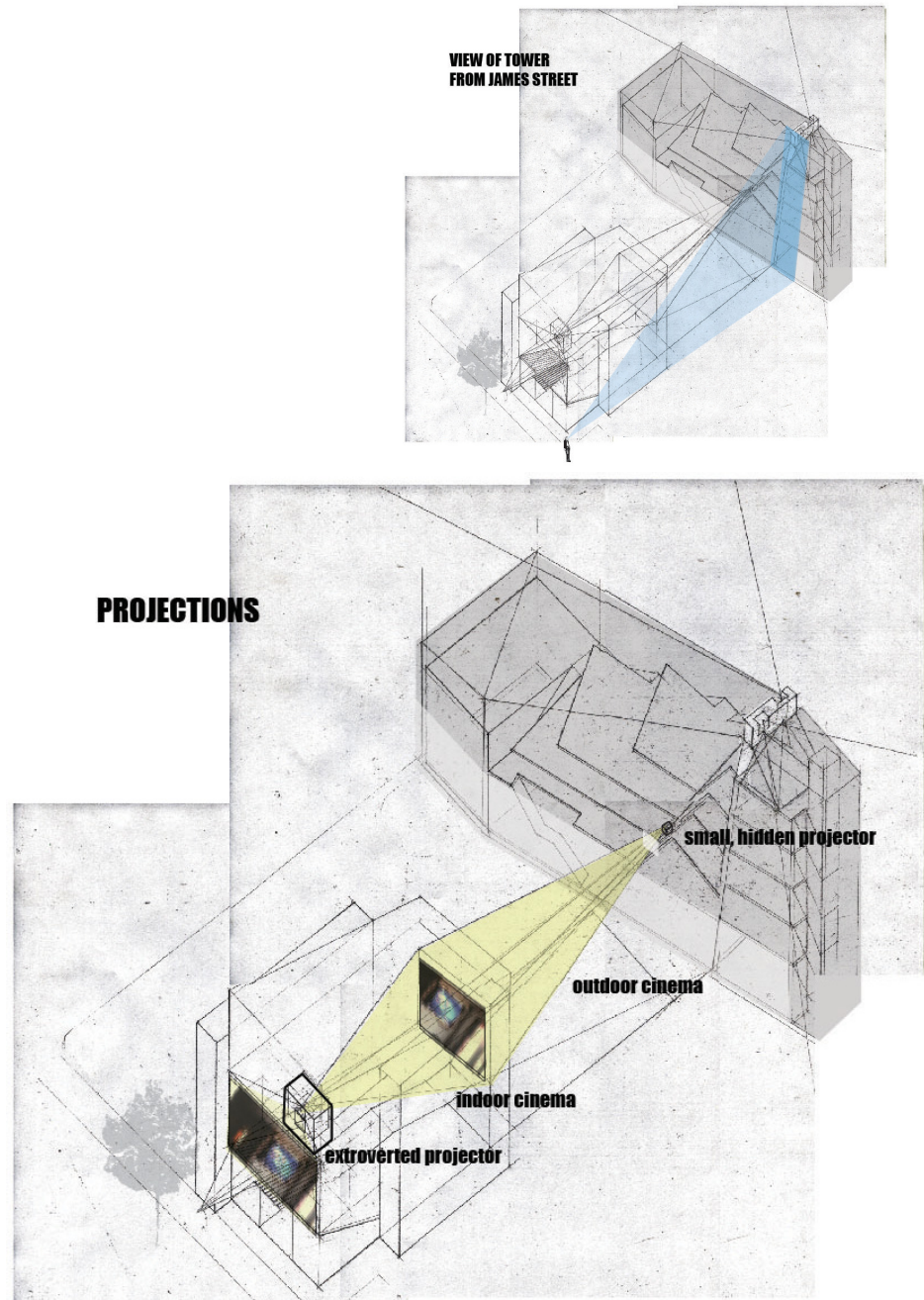
Connecting the Devices

The ramp describes an entrance to a more public, extroverted building (a cinema + archive) at the James St entrance that can afford views and connections to the middle of the site and to the camera obscura.

The camera obscura is placed at a high point in order to capture views. The introverted building, (a film school), slopes downwards to the Rebecca St side to respect building heights at street level. A cloak of steel mesh creates a monolithic, inward-looking appearance while allowing light to pass in and out of the building.

STONE DEVICES

introvert absorbs city views
into camera obscura

spatial flow between devices

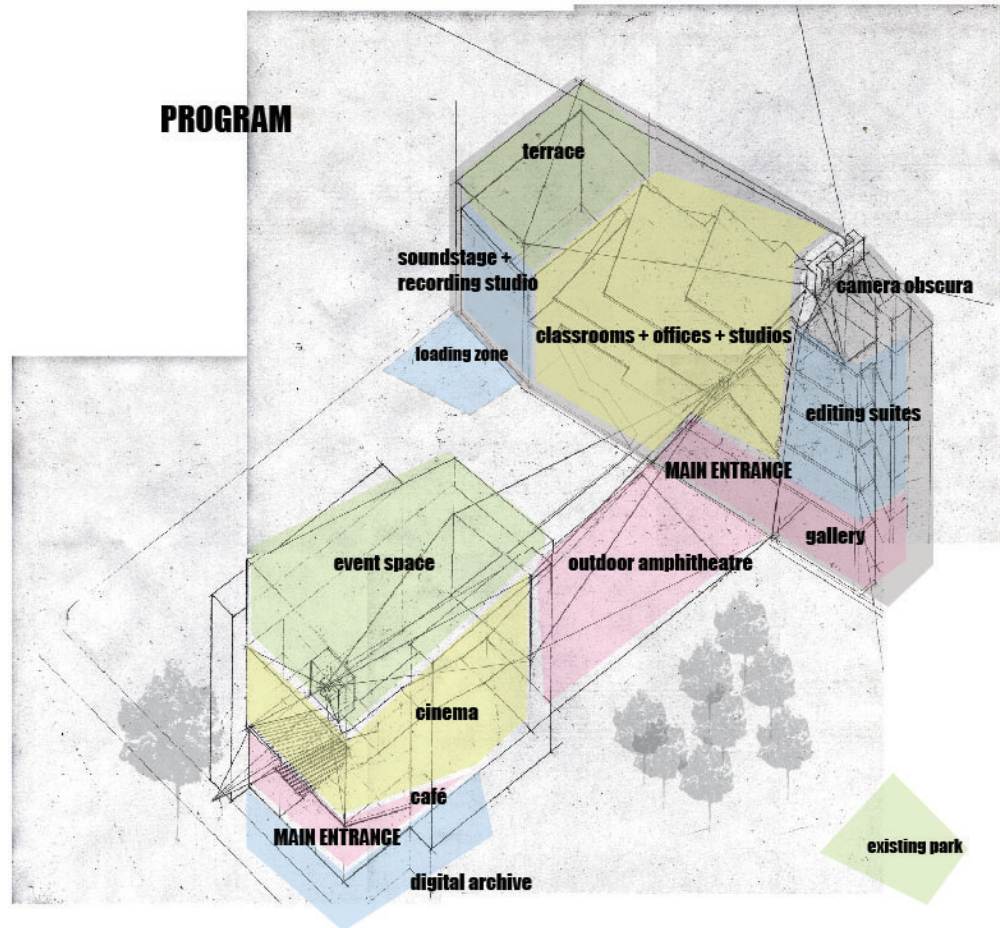extrovert reflects image
of stones to street

The stone ramp is projected as a façade to James St while the camera obscura captures views of the industrial and natural landscapes. A continuous space is created between them by lifting the cinema off the ground and carving an atrium through the floorplates of the film school.

Spacing the extrovert off its neighbour to the south connects a view from James St to the top of the film school at the camera obscura. Hinging the cinema space from two large box truss circulation walls allows it to appear as if it were floating, thus providing a connection at ground level to the public amphitheatre behind, which rises up from the below-ground archive space and is directed at the back of the cinema space, a double-sided projection surface. An adjacent park directly east of the Lister Block connects with this open amphitheatre, forming a large public space in the middle of the city block.

VIEW OF TOWER
FROM JAMES STREET

PROJECTIONS

small, hidden projector

outdoor cinema

indoor cinema

extroverted projector

Relationships between buildings: view of tower (above) and projections (below).

Relationships between buildings: program strategy.

The program strategy for the film school sandwiches classroom, office and studio space between a soundstage/recording studio at Rebecca St and a tower of editing suites at the other end of the building, below the camera obscura.

The soundstage and editing spaces are the active filmmaking space, and have an important relationship to the cinema and archive. The below-ground archive is a place for artifacts, films that have been made in the past and may be retrieved and used as source material for a new project. The school provides an active environment for learning and making. Once a film is complete, it is shown to the public as something new, the result of a combination of ideas rearranged in a new way by a film student. In this sense it acts more as a framing device, a contemporary idea that provokes discussion. But as time passes each new film will eventually become an artifact, finding its place in the archive among an accumulation of other works. Here it will rest, along with all the others, waiting to be rediscovered.
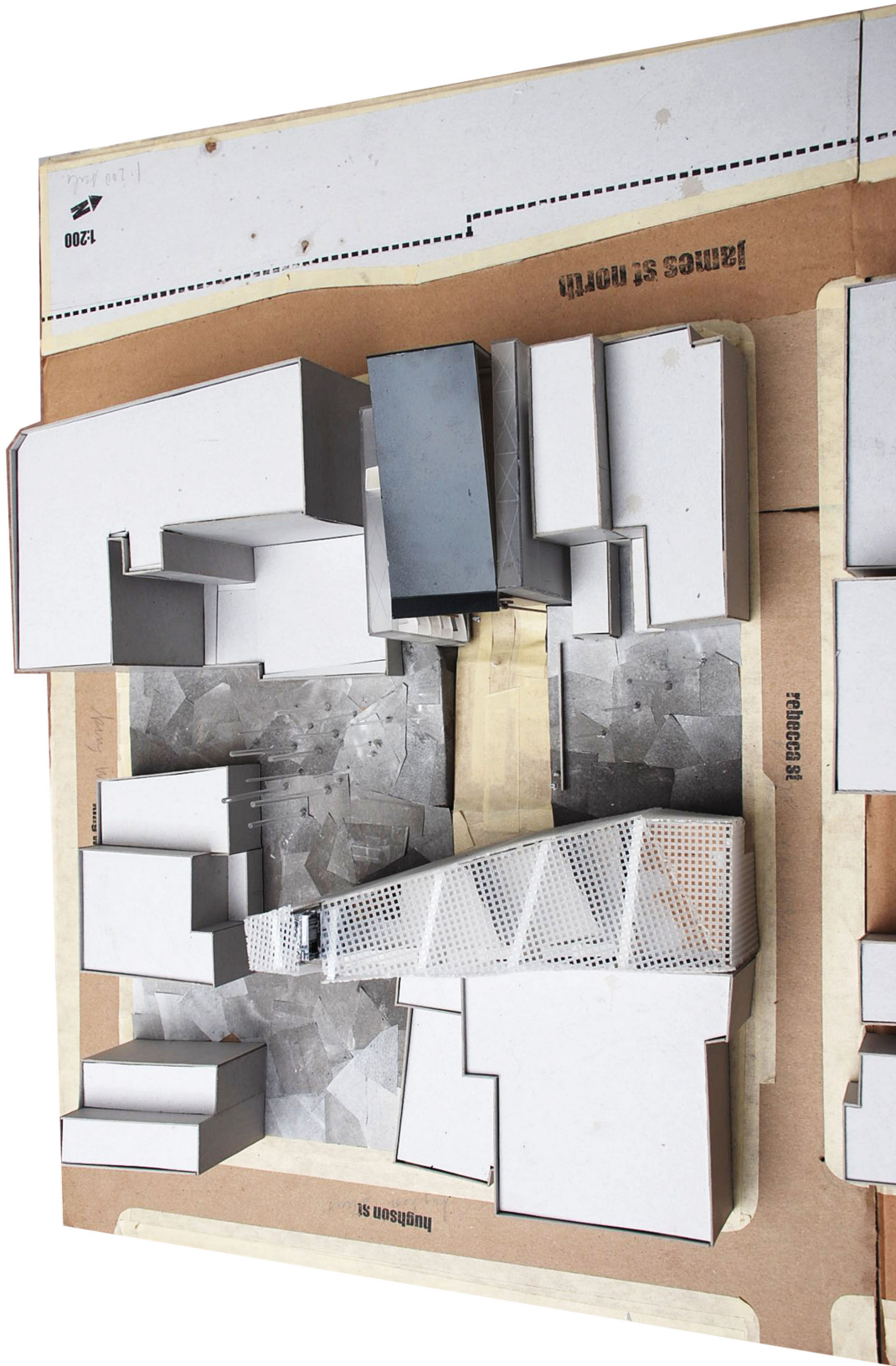
Site model.

Film School: Object/Subject

Each building can be discussed in terms of dialectic pairs. The film school (introvert) plays with ideas of object and subject, or third person and first person. Through a comparison to a set of images from the set and filmspace of Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), we see a photo of the constructed film set, a long sectional cut of a ship, which clearly displays the contents of each room on the ship. This set is an object, read orthogonally from a distance by the camera. It is splayed open and the walls separating each room constitute the framing device for showing the location of each room on the ship. This orients the viewer and provides them with an objective mental map of the world created by Wes Anderson. The film school may be read in this way from the perspective of the cinema, whose gaze is directed orthogonally to the long axis of the school, reading it in a similar way that displays the programmatic layout of the school, like a map, to the cinema-goers.

As one enters the film space of *The Life Aquatic*, or enters the film school and begins to move through its circulatory path, the framing device shifts ninety degrees from the pairs of walls dividing the spaces to the walls' edges and the corresponding structural framing system (steel columns) on the outer skin of the building. The interior concrete structural fins provide the inside of the frame and the columns are arranged to complete the edge of each interior concrete wall. Now, the length of the building (or film set) starts to be read as a sequence of frames through which the users (or characters) may move.
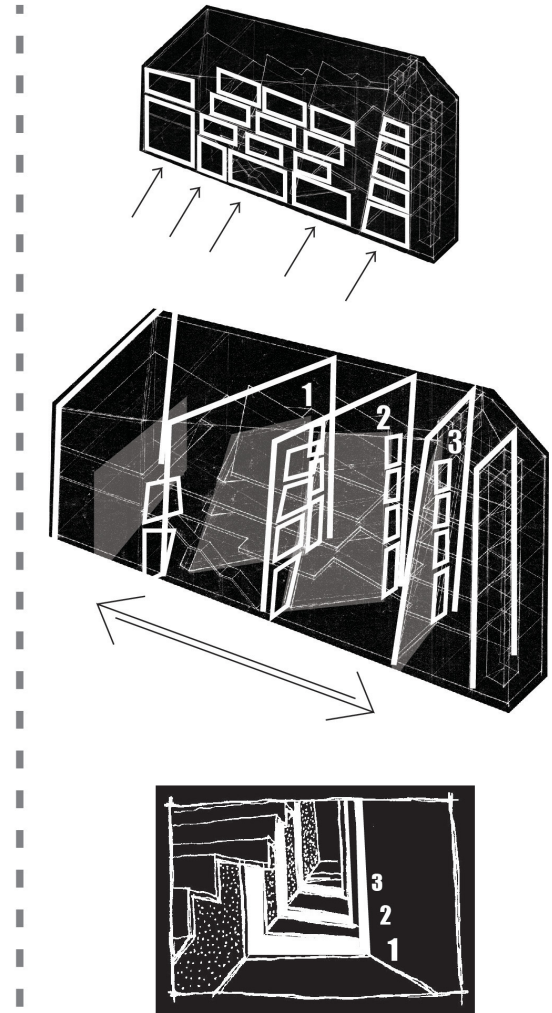
OBJECT
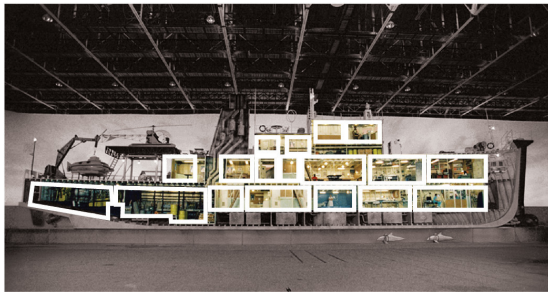
3RD PERSON VIEW: DISPLAY OF SPACES
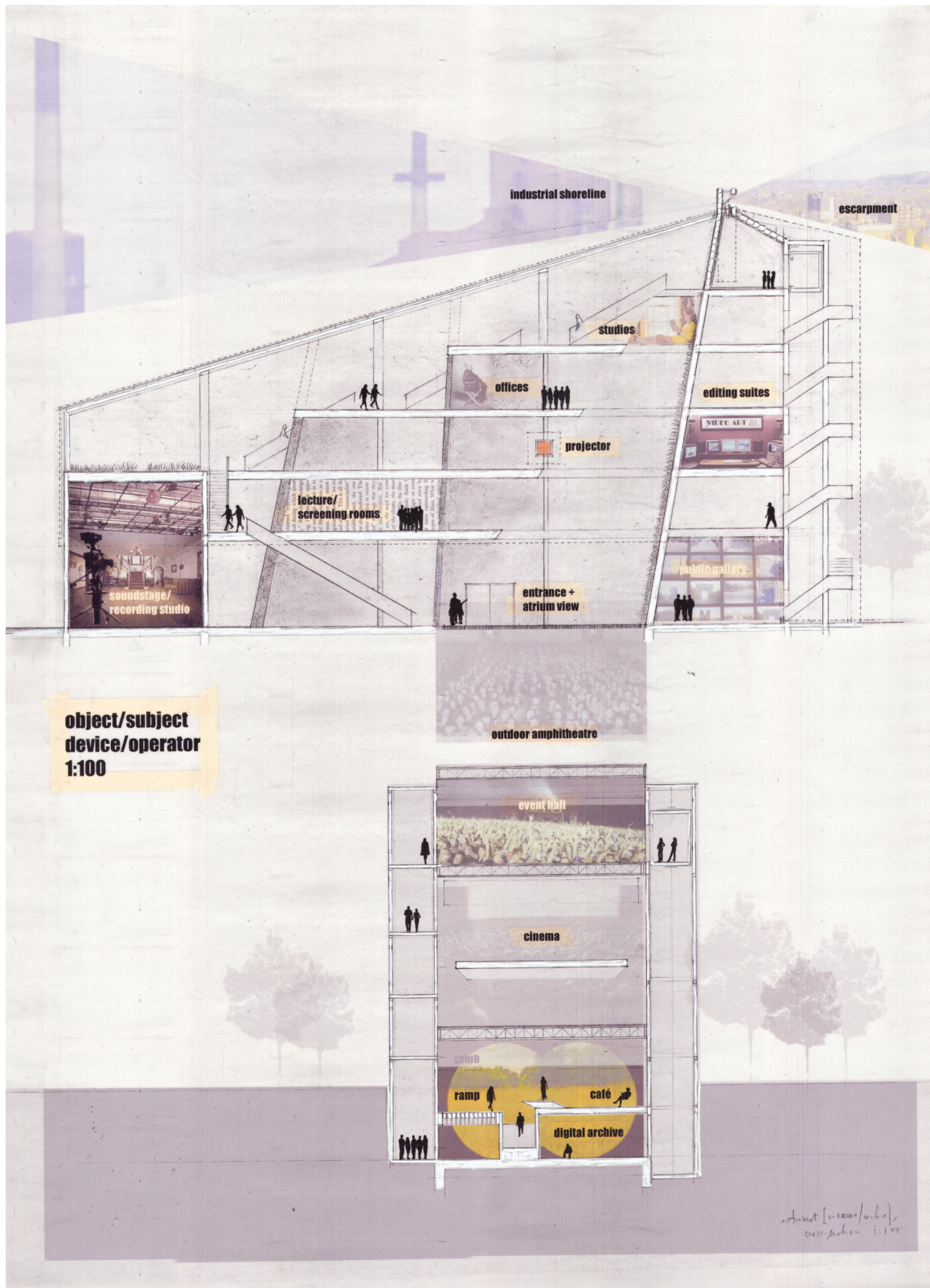
STRUCTURE AS EXPERIENTIAL FRAMING

1ST PERSON VIEW: SEQUENCE OF FRAMES

SUBJECT

Film school: object/subject.

industrial shoreline

escarpment

studios

offices

editing suites

projector

lecture/
screening rooms

VIDEO ART

public gallery

soundstage/
recording studio

entrance +
atrium view

object/subject
device/operator
1:100

outdoor amphitheatre

event hall

cinema

ramp

café

digital archive

North/south sections through both buildings. The cinema acts like a camera positioned toward the film school.

Cinema + Archive: Device/Operator

The cinema + archive (extrovert) places a projector box just inside the James St façade, which projects both inwards to the cinema and outwards to the street, capturing the shadows of people standing in the lobby. The axis of the projector extends across the site to the film school, positioning a small projector suspended from the ceiling on the fourth floor, pointed towards the back wall of the cinema, which becomes the outdoor screening surface for the amphitheatre.

At the back of the cinema between the two projectors is a large shutter that moves up and down, covering and uncovering a large horizontal slot window just above the projection surface. Its position changes according to day and night, acting as an external indicator of what is happening inside. It remains open before a film starts, allowing cinema-goers a clear view to the camera obscura. The shutter descends as the film starts, allowing complete darkness in the indoor cinema while activating a connection between the event space above and the public space below.
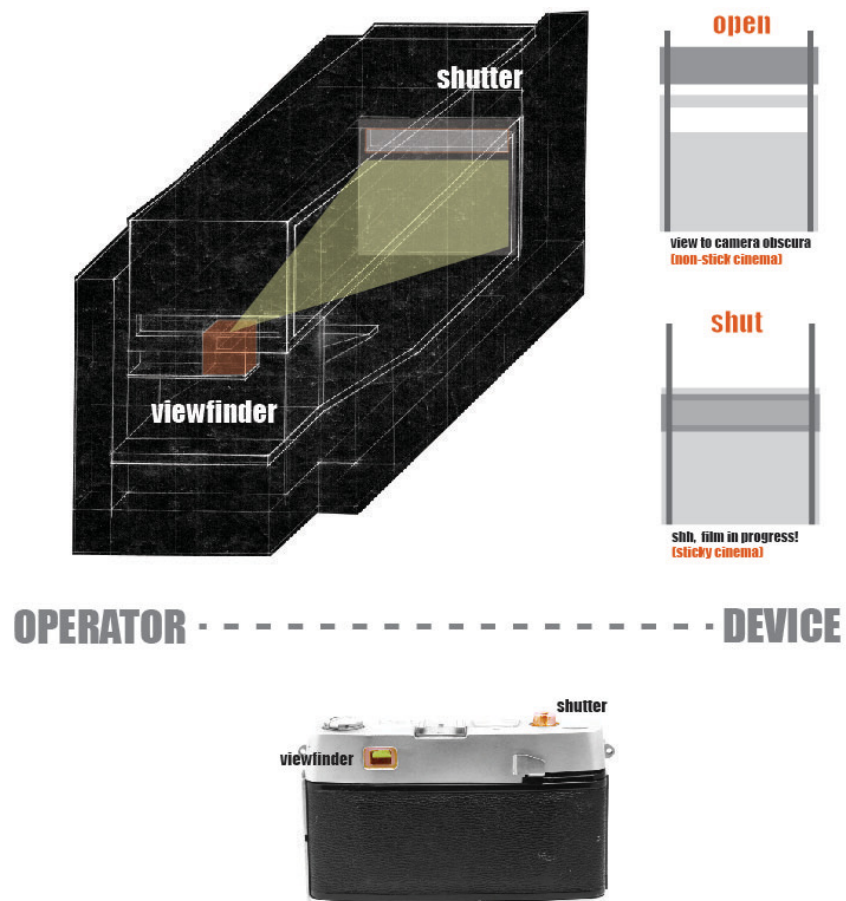
The projector and shutter of the cinema can be related to the viewfinder and shutter of a camera. The extroverted building acts as a device through which the introverted building is viewed and framed. The introverted building can be seen as the programmatic operator of this device, being the active space in which films are created to be shown in the extroverted building.

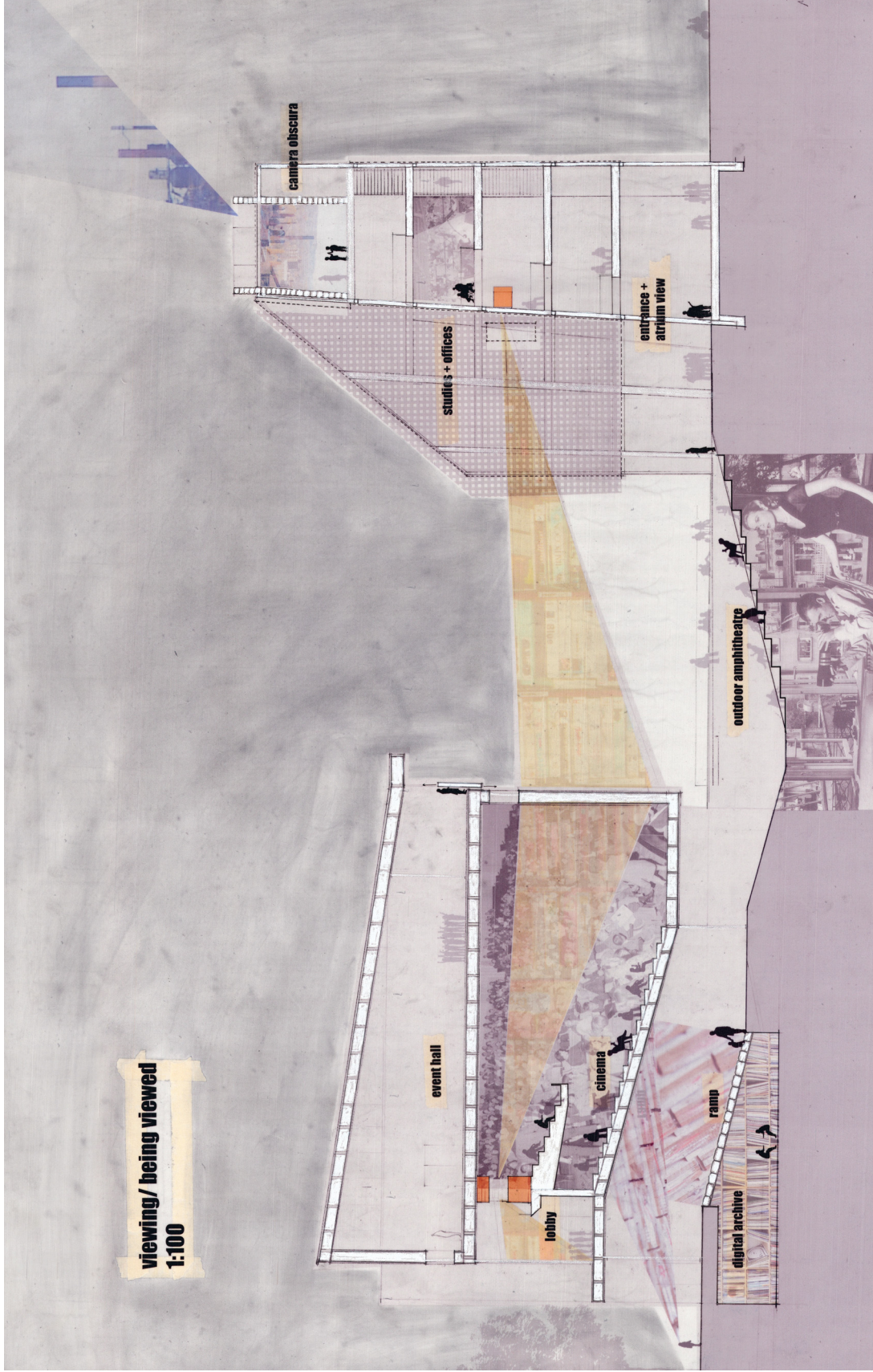## Leaving the Movie Theater: Non-stick Cinema

In *Leaving the Movie Theater*, Roland Barthes points out the hypnotic effect of a dark cinema space, likening the screen to an "engulfing mirror", to which we, as narcissistic bodies are "glued" (Barthes 1986, 349). Solomon Nagler, inspired by Barthes, labels this dark, hypnotic, controlled environment as "sticky" cinema, while proposing a complete disposal of the conventional cinema space. Showing a film outdoors in a dark field, for example, "stared at by the stars, glueless images enable nocturnal spectators to engage in a supreme form of Barthes' blissful discretion, to participate in a Cinema of the Senses, and to better experience the dark mysteries that surround them" (Nagler 2010, 2). Nagler calls this alternative scenario "non-stick" cinema.

This form of cinematic discretion guides this project's architectural treatment of its film-viewing spaces. While both sticky and non-stick cinema situations are explored, the real interest lies in the realm of the non-stick. The sticky cinema is the indoor space, which becomes completely dark after the lowering of the shutter. Still, it might be possible that the image of the camera obscura, visible until the very moment the projector's cone of light begins to flicker, could imprint itself on the retinas of the movie-goers, leaving a sort of afterimage. Any awareness of the physical space existing behind the projection surface is rarely present in conventional sticky cinema.

The main non-stick cinema is the outdoor amphitheatre. Here the possibilities for distraction are endless. Weather is felt, lighting can change, people move about freely. In addition, when the shutter is down, the event space above the cinema connects visually to the amphitheatre. The movie-goers may now see people moving around directly above the projected image. An awareness of being observed disrupts the conventional object/subject relationship of a film and its viewers.

Cinema + archive: device/operator.

viewing/ being viewed 1:100

camera obscura

studies + offices

entrance + atrium view

outdoor amphitheatre
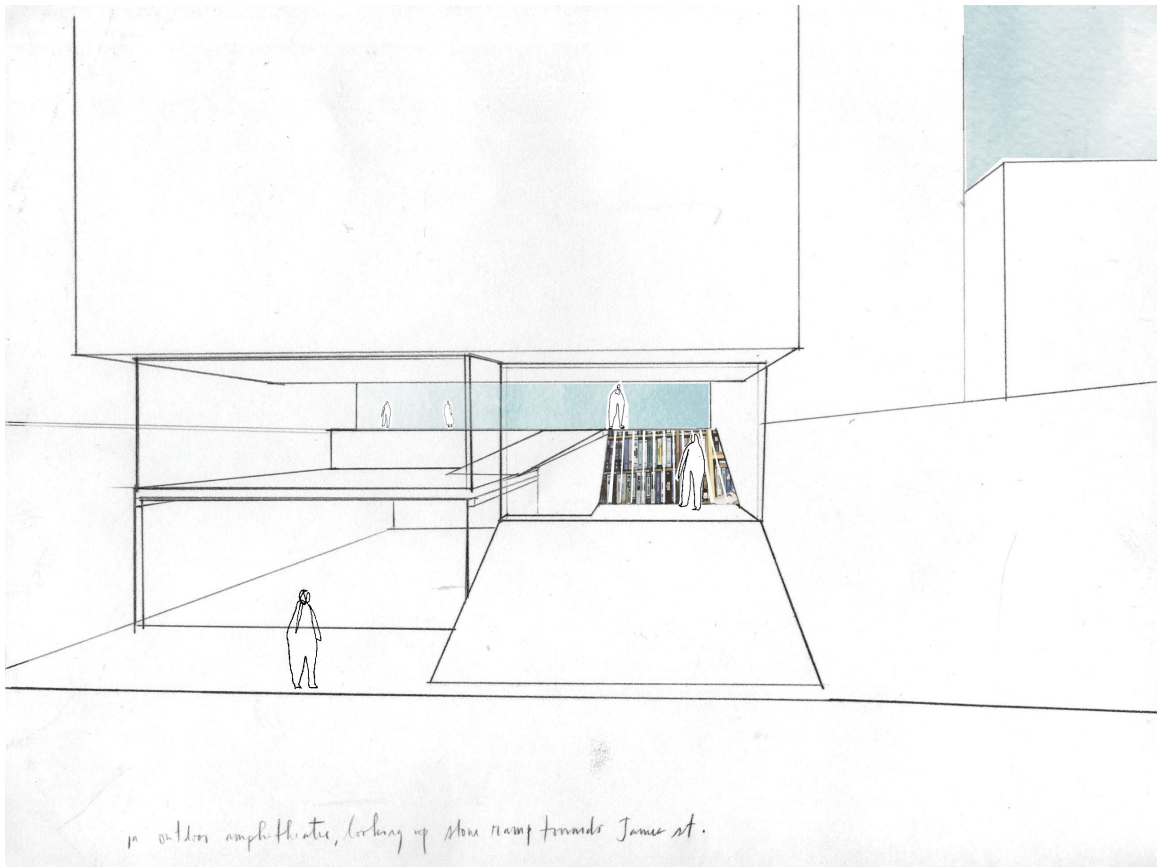
event hall

cinema

lobby

ramp

digital archive

East/west section through site. The projectors (orange) rest on one axis, and the introvert reverses the gaze of the extrovert by projecting back onto the extrovert's exterior.
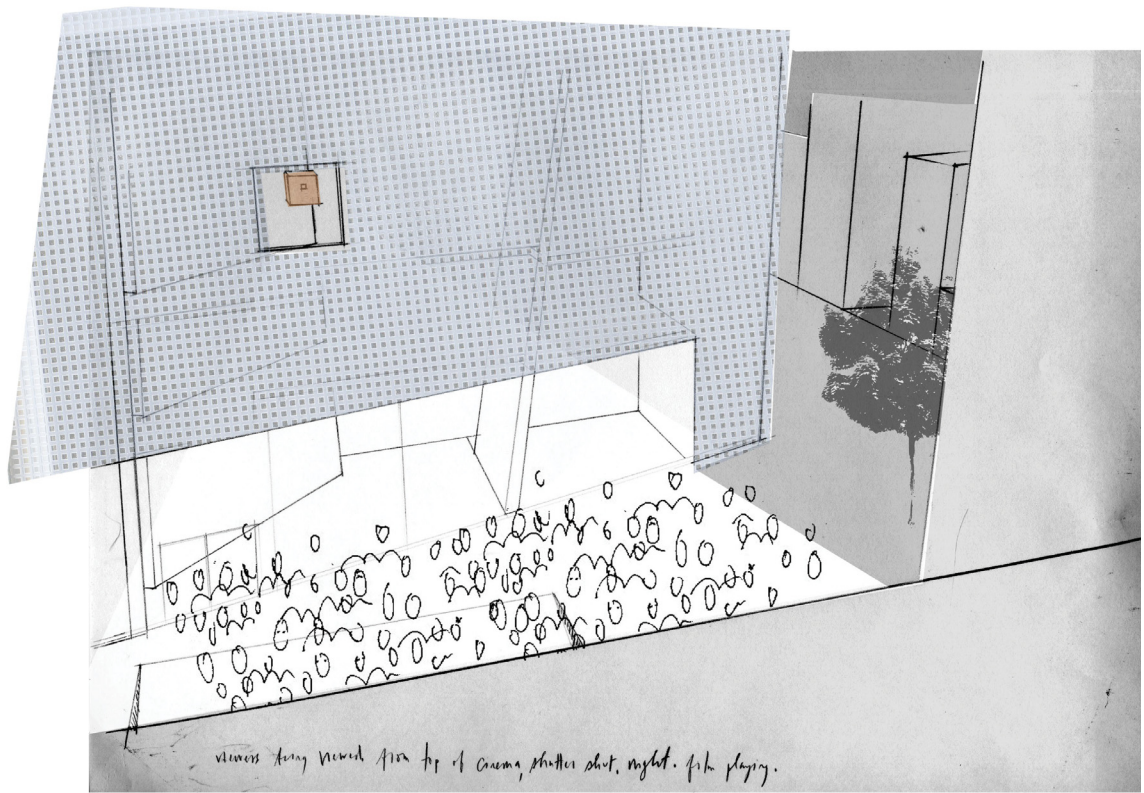
view of cinema façade + camera obscura tower from James St. night.

James St façade showing reflection of stone ramp, view of camera obscura, and projection in lobby.

seated in cinema waiting for film to start, shutter open. dark.

View of camera obscura from sticky cinema space. Film about to begin.

in outdoor amphitheatre, looking up stone ramp towards James st.

View from amphitheatre of stone ramp and James St entrance.
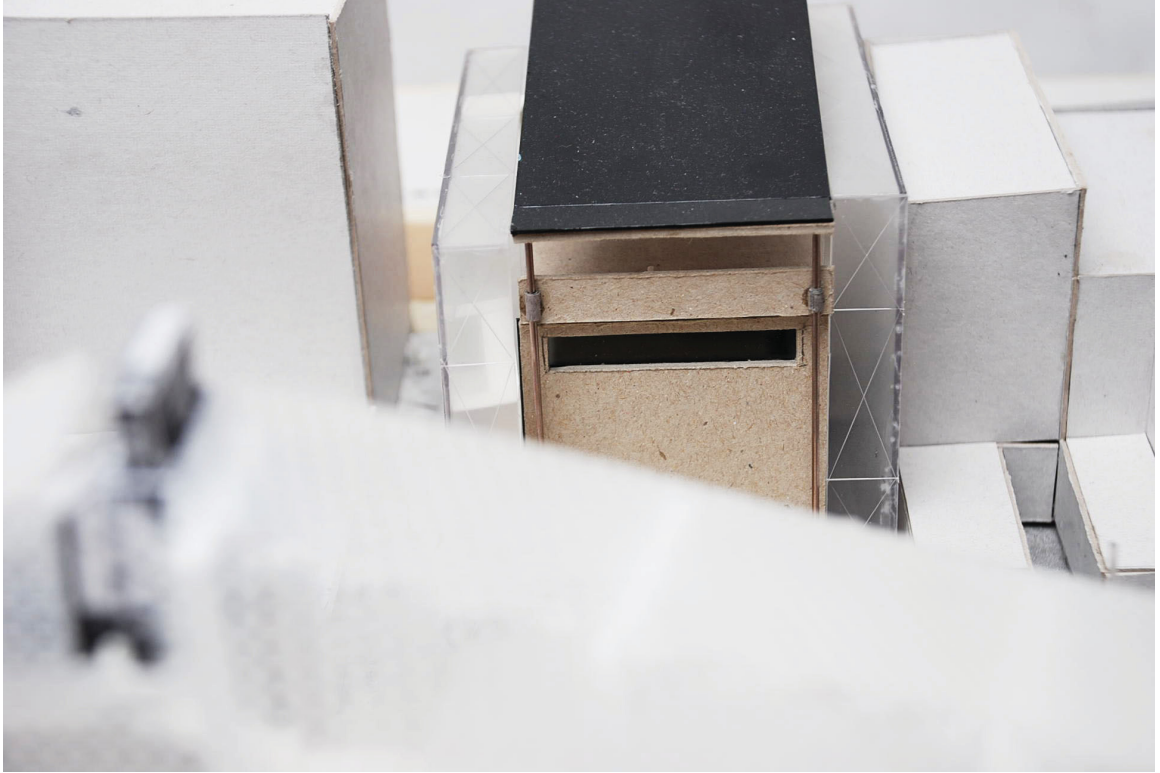
viewers being viewed from top of cinema, shutter shut, night, film playing.

Looking down from the event hall. Watching people watch a film.
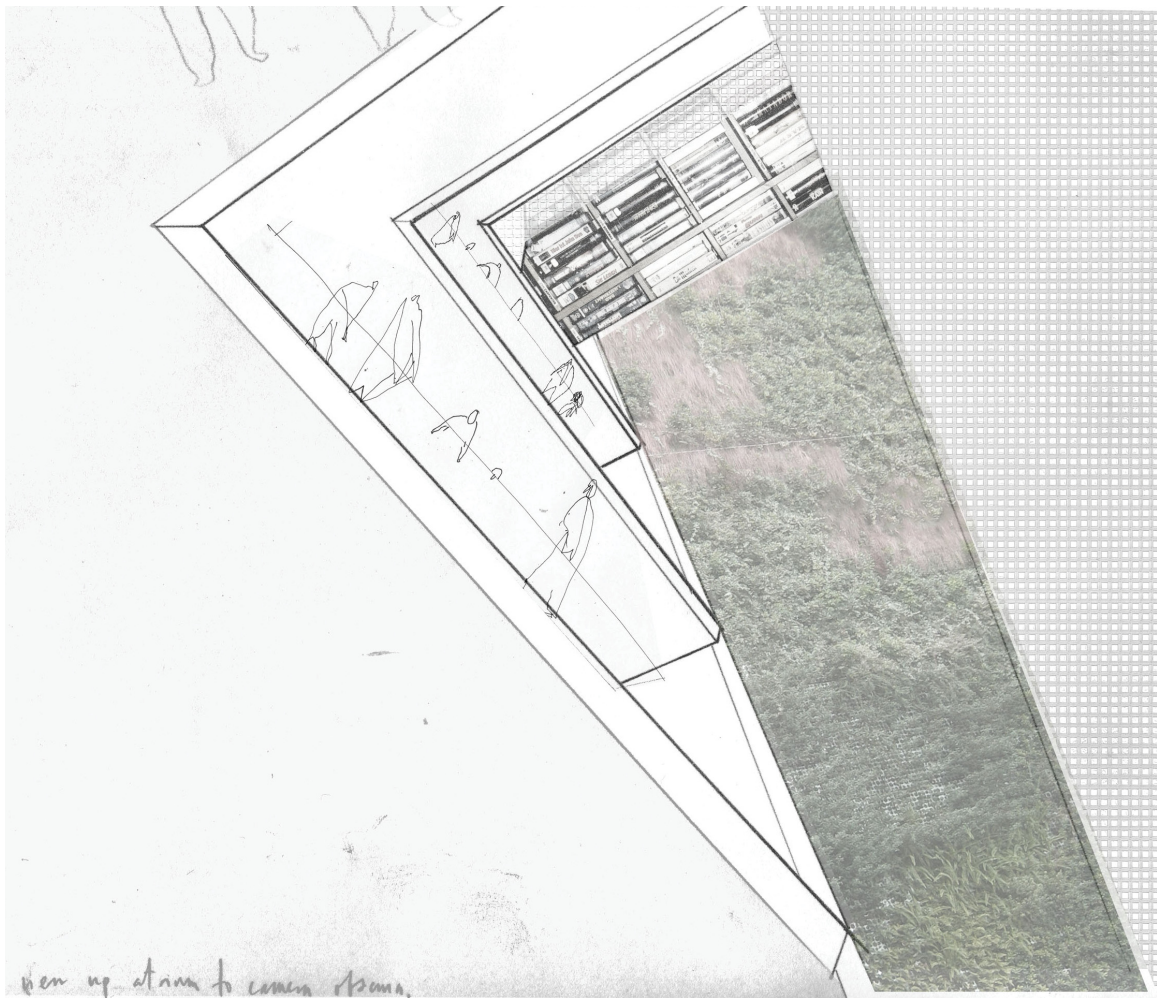
Looking up atrium in film school to camera obscura.

twin projectors, from school. shutter open. day.
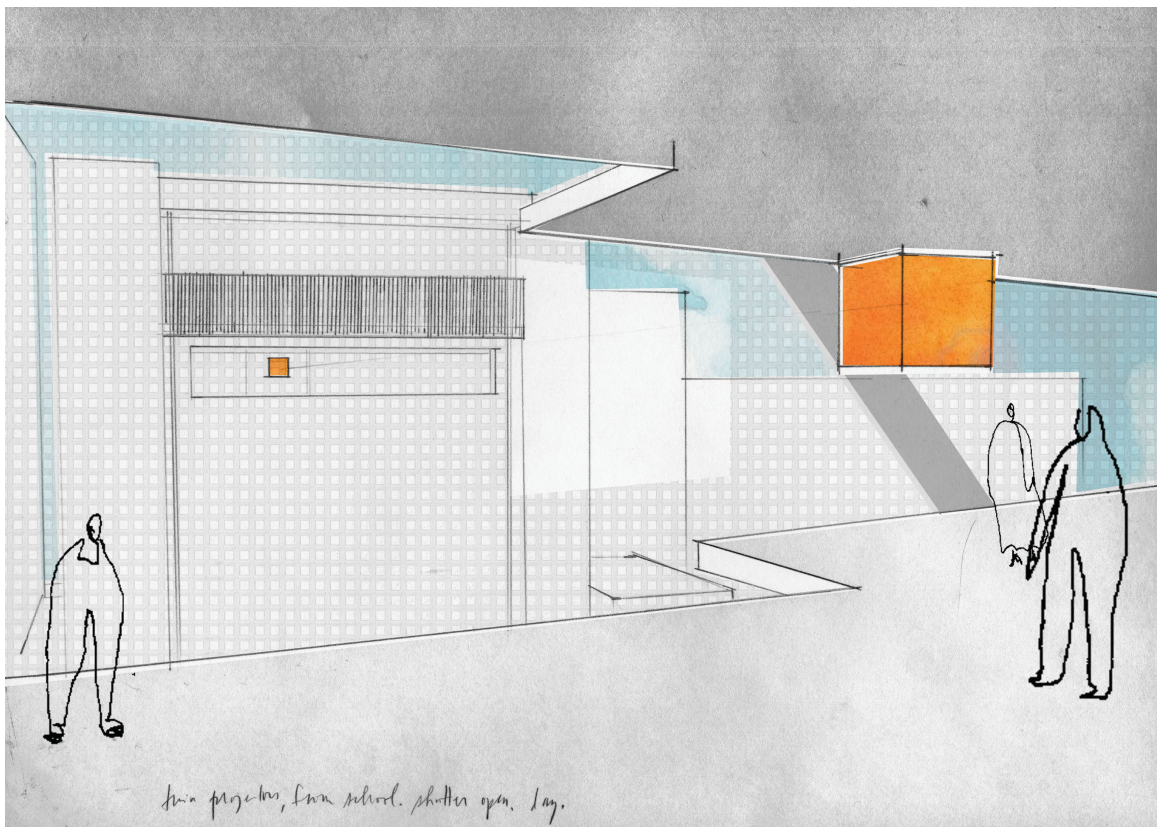
In film school, view of both projectors. Shutter is open during the day.

Day condition: shutter open.
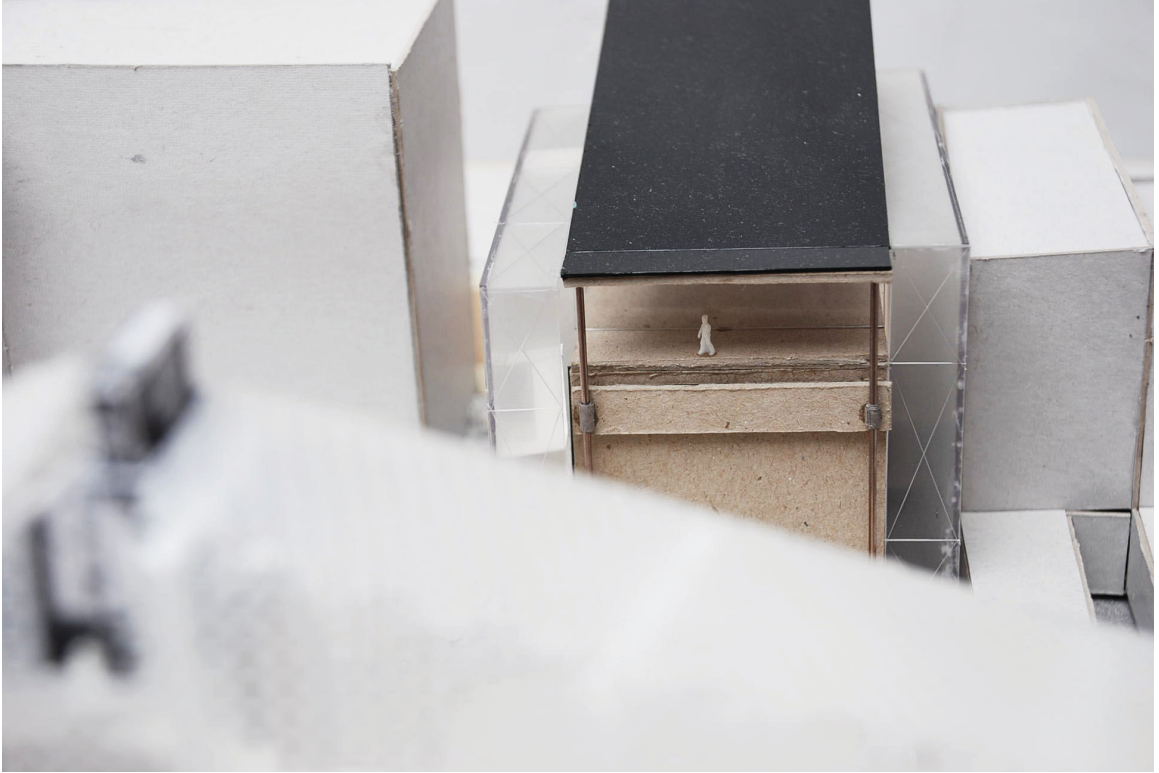
Night condition: shutter closed.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Taking Off

Barthes suggests that there is an alternative to succumbing to the "engulfing mirror" of conventional cinema (other than complete disposal of the cinema itself):

> By letting oneself be fascinated *twice over*, by the image and by its surroundings--as if I had two bodies at the same time: a narcissistic body which gazes, lost, into the engulfing mirror, and a perverse body, ready to fetishize not the image but precisely what exceeds it: the texture of the sound, the hall, the darkness, the obscure mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, entering the theater, leaving the hall; in short, in order to distance, in order to "take off", I complicate a "relation" by a "situation." (Barthes 1986, 349)

Being fascinated, *twice over*, resides in the dialectic territory of the project. Just as the film, as fetishized image (artifact) and situation (frame), compels us to be in two places at once, the spoliated façade stones have a similar ability to pull us in two separate directions. Their embedded history lends them status as both fetishized artifact and instructive framing device.

The past and future create such tensions in us. As conscious beings we negotiate between them constantly, to ends both constructive and destructive. It should be one of our greatest responsibilities, to maintain a curiosity and commitment to the charged space between, where the past and future converge, the ever-slippery present moment.

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