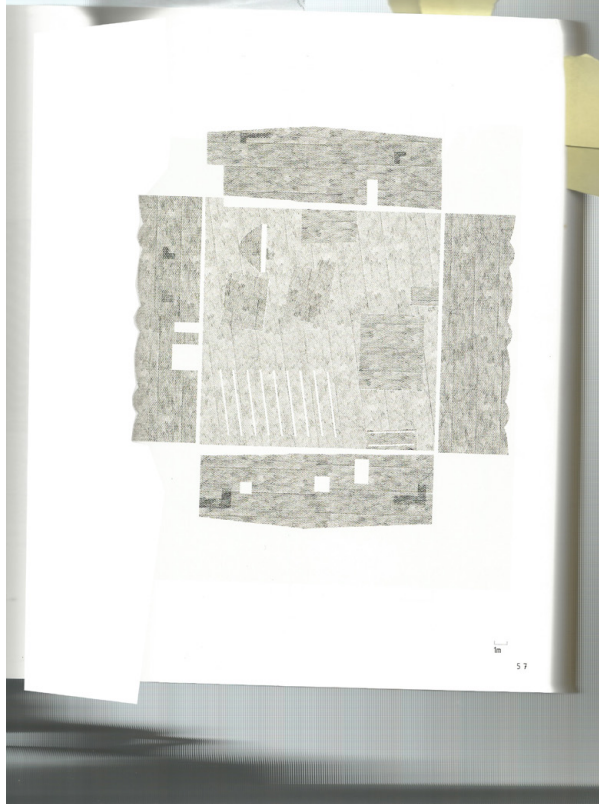


floor

SIGURD LEWERENTZ | Saint Peters, Klippan



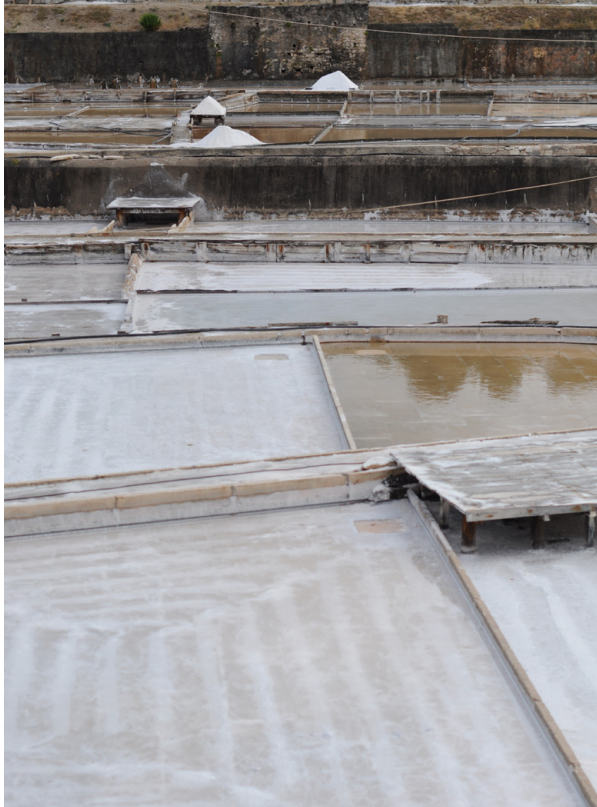
scan from *The Constructed Floor*, 2014 / drawing by Conor Kerr and Lauren McLaughlin

choreography of everyday life

Tonic sets a challenge. We offer contributors a base to stimulate their thoughts and start a discussion on a particular theme. For each issue, a letter, an image, a quote or a box is delivered. Here, the responses are pieced together. The contributors only find out the theme when the publication is released.

For this issue, an extract from Gio Ponti's *In the Praise of Architecture* was selected, accompanied by nine reference images. The word *floor* was omitted from every line.





Salinas, Rio Maior

photograph taken August 2015



Outside Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

photograph taken March 2015

## UNDER YOUR NOSE

Marta Ascenso | January 2022

Maybe it starts with football. Not that I had seen the connection before, but it has occurred to me recently that perhaps the fascination with floors started then, as a kid watching my brother play football. Throughout the years, countless were the evenings spent in the car (inside or out, of course weather dependent) watching his training sessions.

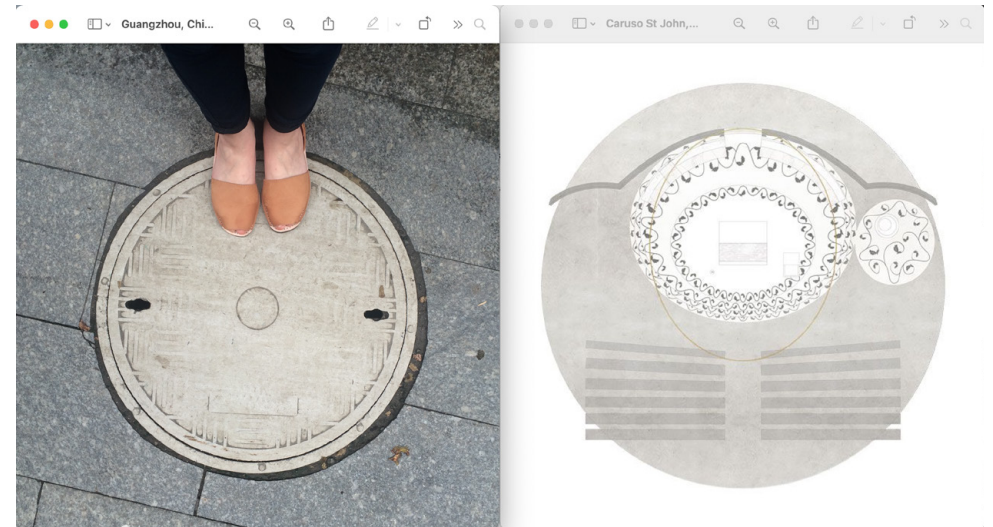
The pitch below a small cliff, the car above - perfect aerial view. My eyes, like a camera moving along, endless travellings following each step and every ball. I guess I did get used to looking down at the floor. Maybe I do owe the blue plan<sup>1</sup> to my brother after all.

Floors define space, floors make space, floors are space. Take football (or any sports pitch for that matter), performances constrained by drawn boundaries, lines of the imagination that have become real, respected, played with and understood.

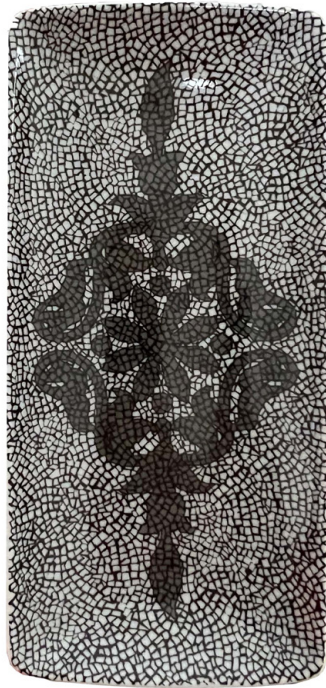
Reading those imaginary boundaries that don't exist (but really, they do) was one of the first lessons. Having studied in a school with no gates, no surrounding walls to define its premises, it was still clear that the front garden separated the public and the private. Of course you could still walk, in some ways you were invited to, but different layers of privacy would fall upon you. At some point sooner or later, you would understand if you should or should not have made it that far. Walks for the brave, or just the observant?

See, observing is key. It's easier sometimes when travelling, your senses are more awake, you expect the surprise, you pay attention. Then if you give yourself to what you observe, you find unexpected encounters, floors can travel quite a distance. Just like when I stumbled upon St Gallen Cathedral in a services hatch in Guangzhou. I immediately sent a photo to a friend that said "Caruso St John in China!" and then I may have sent a copy of the drawing too, just in case the connection wasn't obvious...

<sup>1</sup> The blue plan is an all encompassing line drawing to which I dedicated several months in the study of floors as a way of creating space.



screenshot by Marta Ascenso: on the left, photograph taken in Guangzhou, 2016 | on the right, plan drawing by Caruso St John



*Alma de Lisboa*

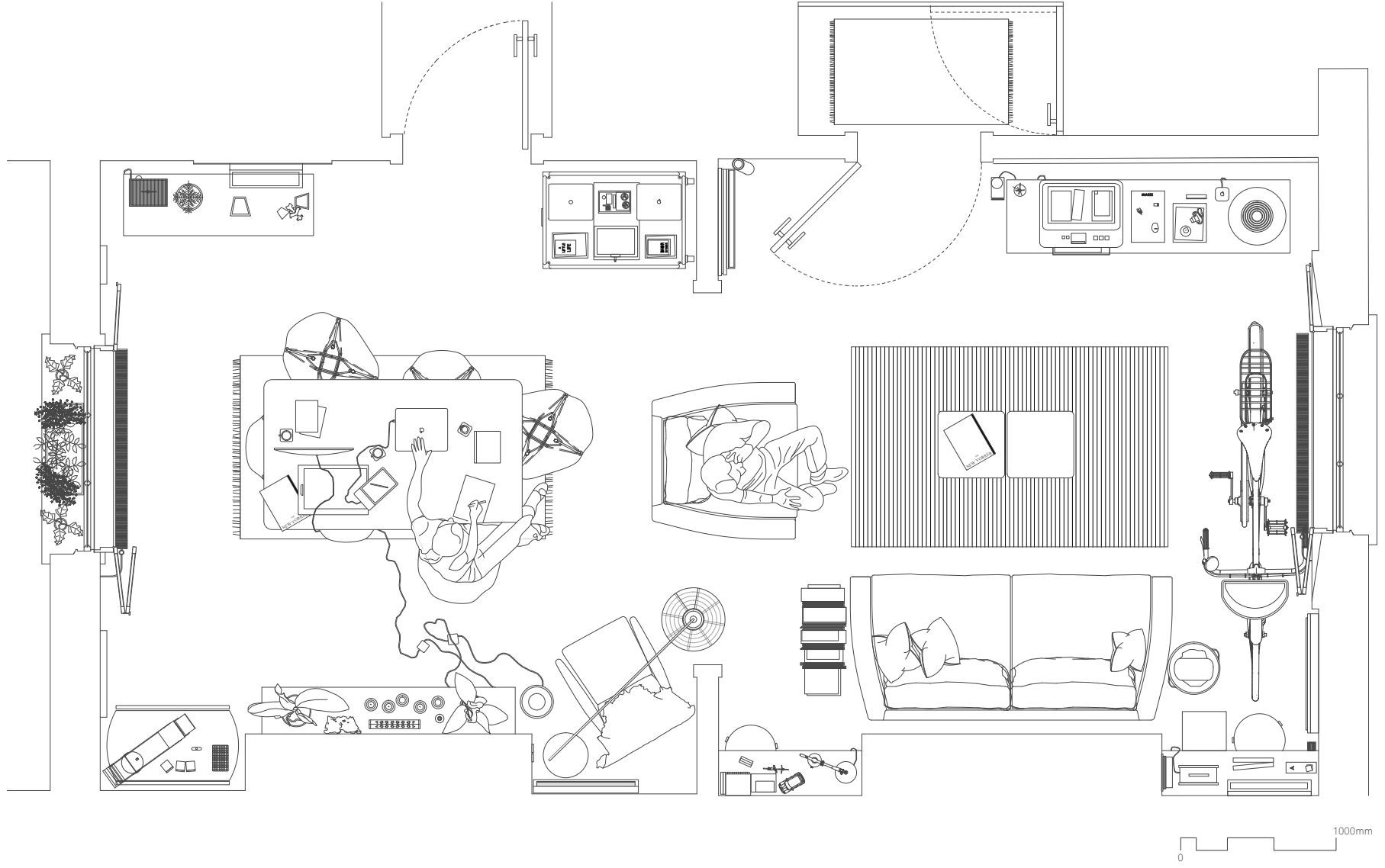
photograph of Vista Alegre's tray from Lisbon collection, taken January 2022

Italy was a lesson overall - Palladio and Scarpa, the villas and the terrazzo, the stone that merges floor and wall to become matter. Then again, everything in Italy.

If I could take some floors home, of course I would! I would even take the little souvenir from Lisbon because who wouldn't take the floors of their home? As if you could keep little bits of the space you've lived, floors you've walked over, or not.

At the end of the day, floors give the background to our moving narratives: we've played football, we've walked the gardens of FAUP (where somehow it always begins), we've travelled through Italy (because They all went to Italy), looked around in China (with a casual stop in Switzerland) and we've ended up where we are now, with souvenirs from home (Lisbon at my desk).

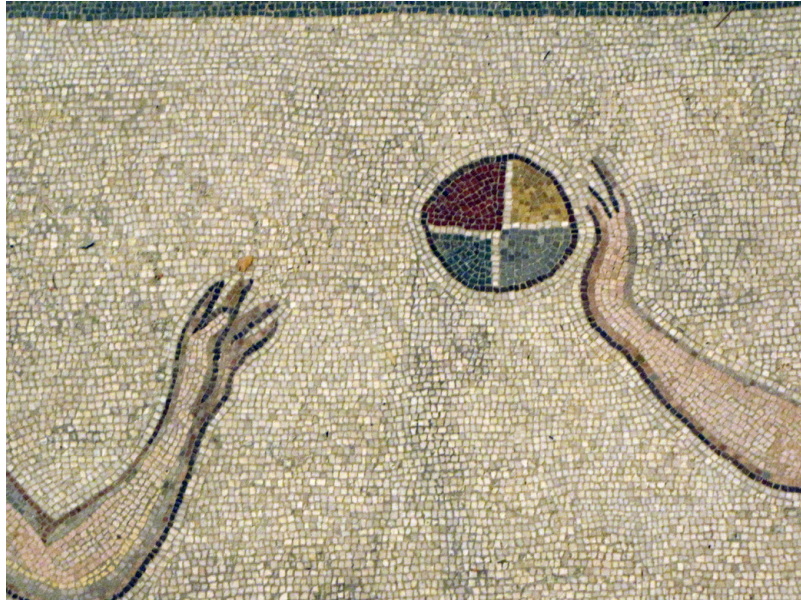
If floors could speak, they would tell the stories of our lives.





MOSAIC

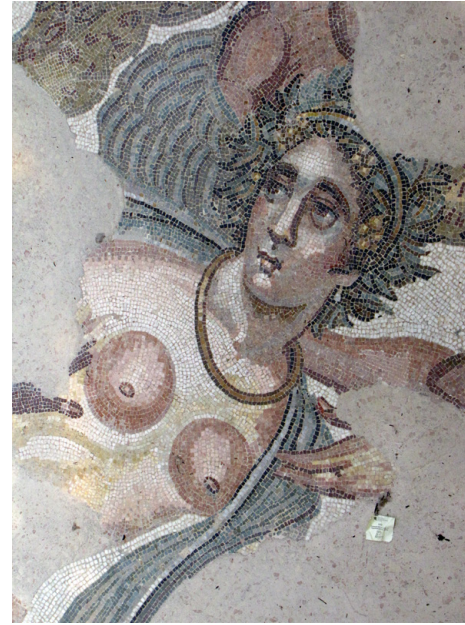
Mari Campistron | June 2020



photography by Mari Campistron, taken in Sicily

I look at mosaic floors and imagine the love, care and patience the hands that crafted them took when assembling the tesserae, when designing a grid or pattern that will enhance the beauty of the simplified images that are represented.

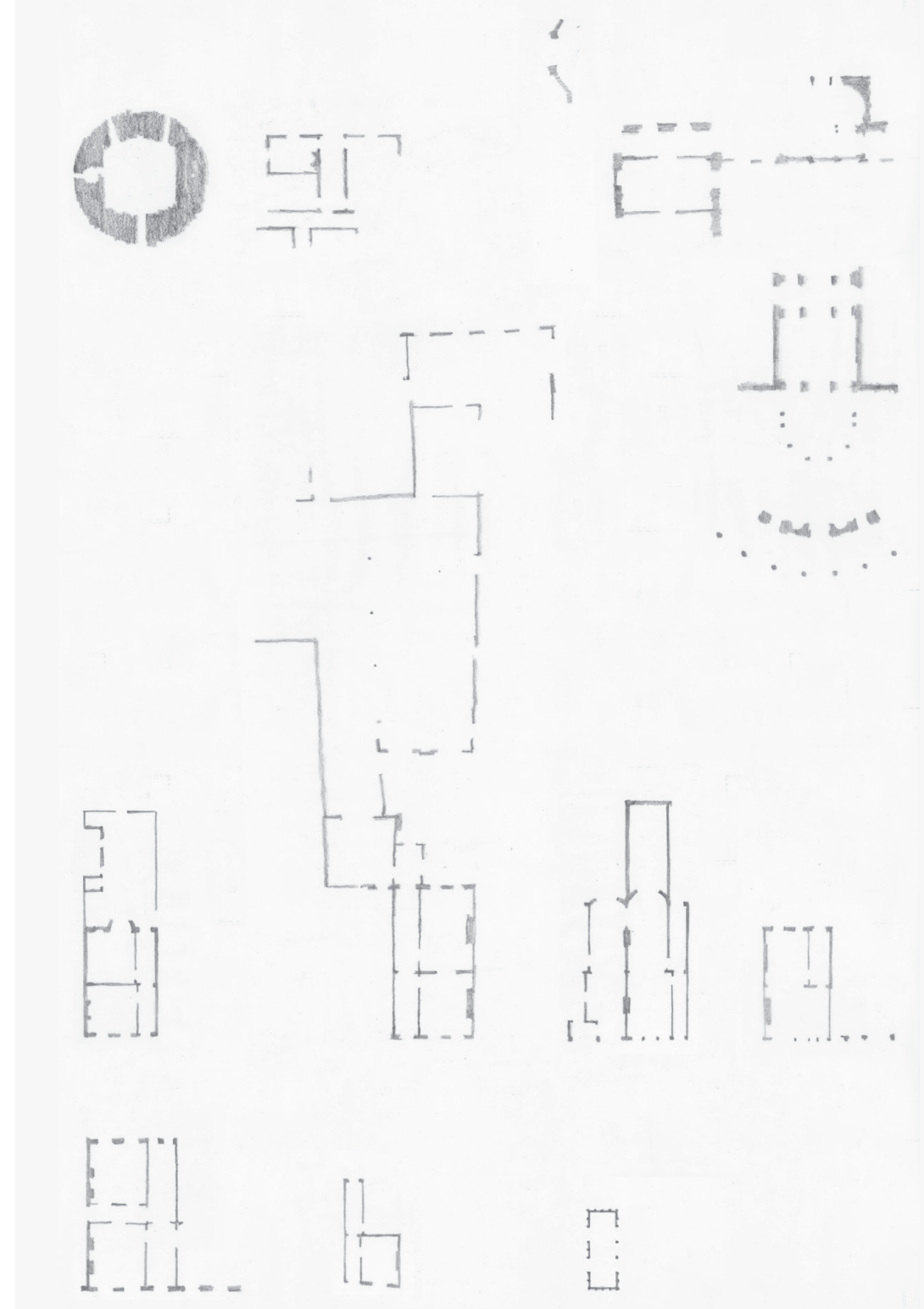
I like the idea of an artwork that is really part of the public or private space, part of the architecture, something that is mesmerising and yet so solid and perennial that you can walk on it every day. I find them very opulent and humble at the same time. No other artwork gets trampled. Each tesserae is part of a bigger picture and they all coexist together to create one gigantic image, a bit like us maybe...





photography by Mari Campistron, taken in Sicily

all drawings by Freddie Phillipson | on the right, the building fabric of James Joyce's Ulysses, drawn at the same scale



## March

17 years? Thought through my eyes

## April

Design. Not illustration. From plans to outline of underage smoker  
Paper to language..speaking

The bay window, 7 Eccles St. It's all there and not there  
How non-visual topographic thinking could be  
Continuously unfolding  
It is an analogue

The rooms of Ulysses – all to scale?  
Virtually everything accounted for, from Dublin 1904 or Joyce's next 17 years  
Dad asked is it really literature?  
We deal in abstractions, anything that can be subjected to tools of representation  
– hence topography we think of usually as contours –  
Archaeology of territory

Architects are silent; our work stops where his begins  
Not the mark of disdain: empathy and involvement  
These 'houses'  
Absence of description accords to them a special presence, their own part of our perceptual field  
They are hiding in plain sight

Silence doesn't mean absence. Scrupulous about what words can, and cannot, do  
I am for the same  
"What's any of this got to do with James bloody Joyce?"

## May

Halltable, sidedoor... qualified, situated in typical dwelling – not located  
Leopold Bloom : twelve letters on a page. Building and life, black lines on paper  
Cracked looking glass

Tower NH. School NH. Beach. House H. Streets. Streets/cemetery. Office H. Streets. Library NH.  
Streets. Bar H. Pub H. Beach/church. Hospital H. Brothel H. Cabman NH. House H. Gibraltar –  
House – Dublin - Home..Exile

Unhomely, Ineluctable  
Make a theme of the background  
Bloom never goes upstairs..?  
Mnemonic. So terse - conjures up  
Depth minimal. Byzantium. Pictures...versus situation

"Versions" : adaptation of building fabric, or adaptation of type

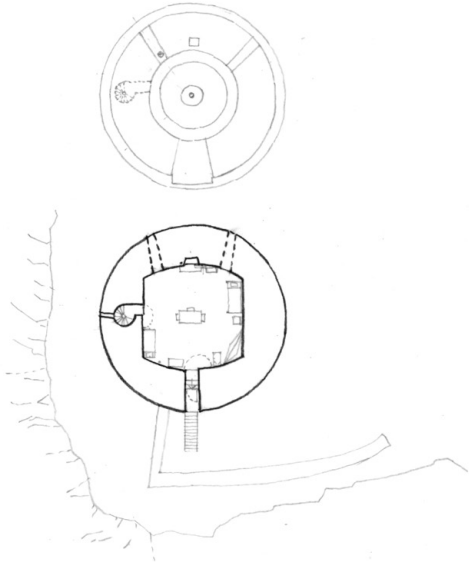
Suspends assumed relations. Like bringing all to the fore  
In this sense it is re-enactment – not illusion  
How much to allow us to interpret?

Simple buildings. Complex multifoliate patterns of behaviour. Recurring

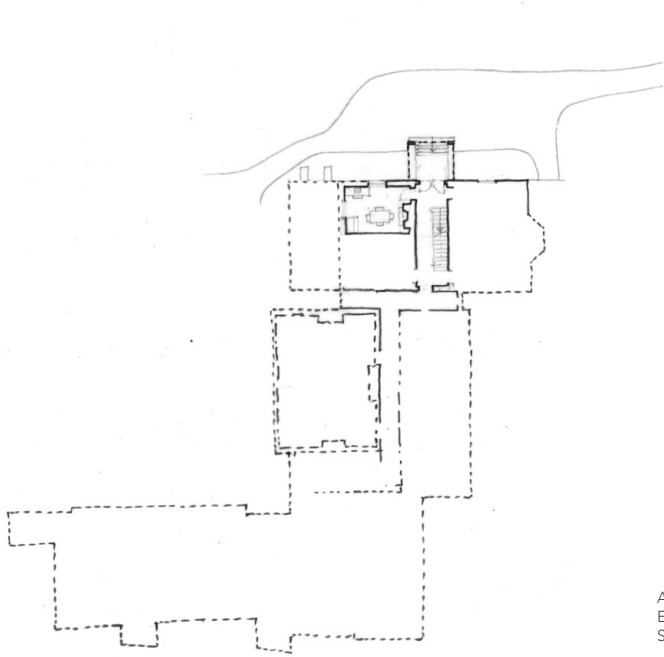
I never traced - so a recollection. Ulysses..Abbey Memory system  
A quarter of a century. This table  
How do you locate a thought anyway?

The more that's happening, the closer you are, the less you see  
The sideboard after furniture move. Hit your head

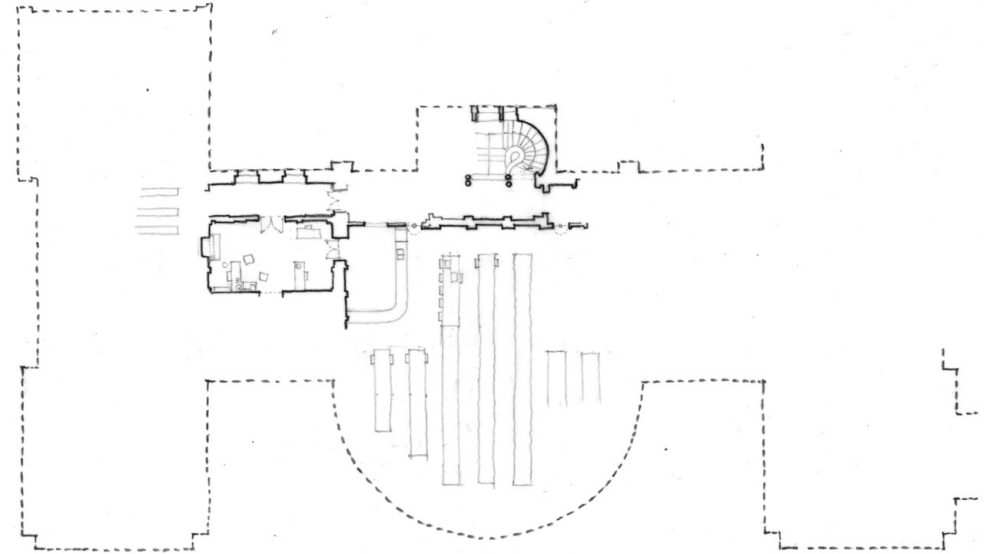
You could rebuild Dublin from his book, but only because he's left so many lacunae that we have to  
Furniture reveals the room  
Resistance to the general, to "spatial" or dimensional thinking  
Fragments, piece them together if we choose  
Avoid perspective, because no one thing adds up to the..meaning  
The measurable is necessary to situation, meaningless in itself: a category of particular



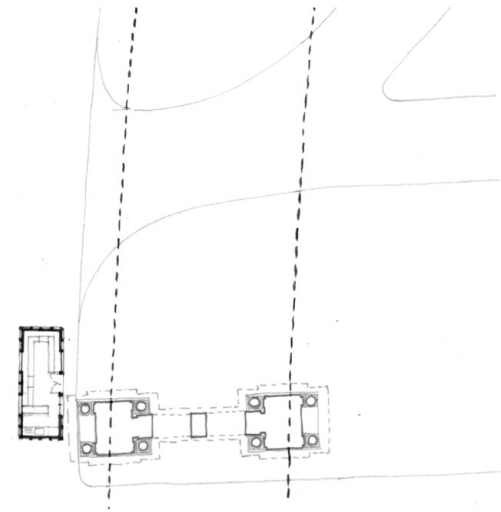
Above  
Episode 1: Martello Tower,  
Sandy Cove



Below  
Episode 2: Clifton School,  
Dalkey  
(Summerfield House)



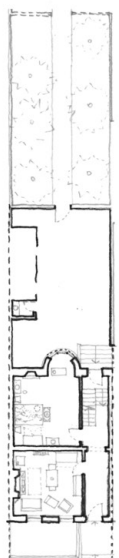
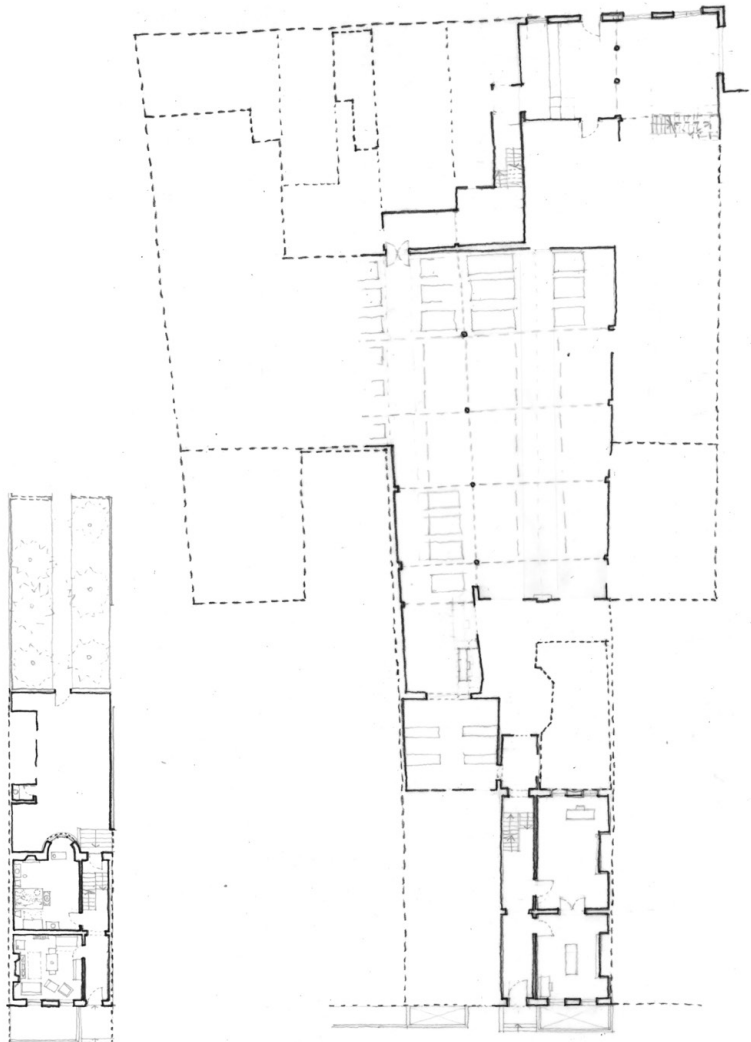
Above  
Episode 9: National Library  
of Ireland



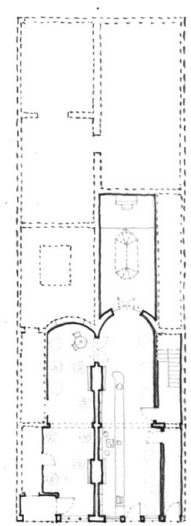
Below  
Episode 16: Cabman's  
Shelter, Butt Bridge

Reconstruction drawings  
by FP

0 5 10 20m



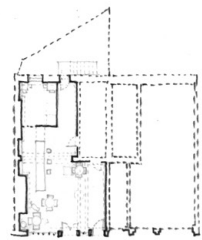
House



From left to right:  
 Episodes 4, 17, 18:  
 No.7 Eccles Street,  
 basement and ground floor

Episode 7:  
 Freeman's Journal and  
 Evening Telegraph offices,  
 Middle Abbey Street

Episode 11:  
 Ormond Hotel  
 8 Ormond Quay

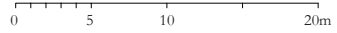
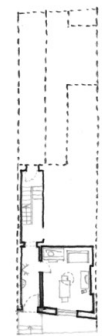
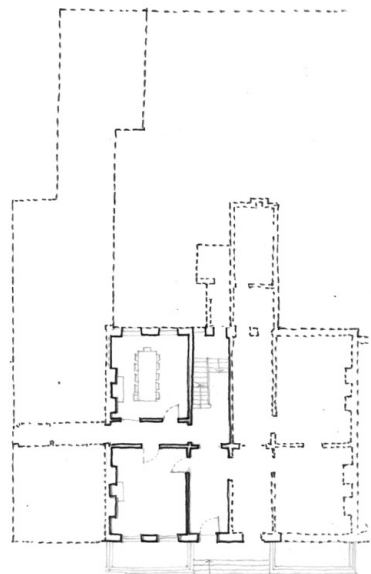


Episode 12:  
 Barney Kiernan's pub,  
 8-10 Little Britain Street

Episode 14:  
 Holles Street Maternity  
 Hospital

Episode 15: Bella Cohen's  
 82 Lower Tyrone Street

Reconstruction drawings  
 by FP



## June

Between almost no architecture [Georgian, speculative] and too much [Victorian, eclectic]

Midden heap

What can you take away before there is no architecture at all?

Fragments / synthesis

Chaosmos. Order accommodates disorder

Near ubiquity: sometimes we can't see it for what it could have been. Princes and paupers – a great leveller

Has not subsumed the real city into words. Opposite of Gesamtkunstwerk

Architecture – an art of anticipation (but we can't)

Always unfinished:

can be changed, but also:

only one layer of situation, which can't be determined by it

Internal monologue: what can't be contained...transformation into structure

What to reify – what to leave out

Omissions draw attention to acts of selection

It's becoming like a negative theology

## July

Something, and just a line. Never only one or the other

Toys - out of scale – or Duccio

Always re-making

In and out of background

Architectural form : an answer in search of a question

I am almosting it

This drawing is to U like Bloom to Odysseus

The overlooked. Pencil, hand

Almost nothing taken for granted

but building facts

or even these. Sidedoor etc. strangeness

What is significant - like drawers

things of no apparent consequence

and then the suicide note

the most complete buildings are the least relevant

Parallel worlds which occasionally overlap

how much you can ever formalise this : architecture: topographic order

like a stage set

caricature with serious intent

or you laugh because you're unsettled

dismemberment... counterpart to remembering

This house. This table

Around us the remnants of life in Athens: outmoded

Outside, a global pandemic

## August

For reasons we may never fully understand, we are perpetually compelled to make it so

Distributed thought

## September

Depends on them not being the same. Clarifying

I am trying to manifest the structure of difference...

my perplexity

My question: the point of contact between idea of 'house' or 'structure' or 'rhythm', and dumb slow walls doors windows streets...

two worlds

interpenetrating

Flatness: type, distributions

the shopping list

depth persists

Diary? ...type it up

## November

Γη – Μέτρον– Τόπος - Γραφή

The way up and the way down are one and the same

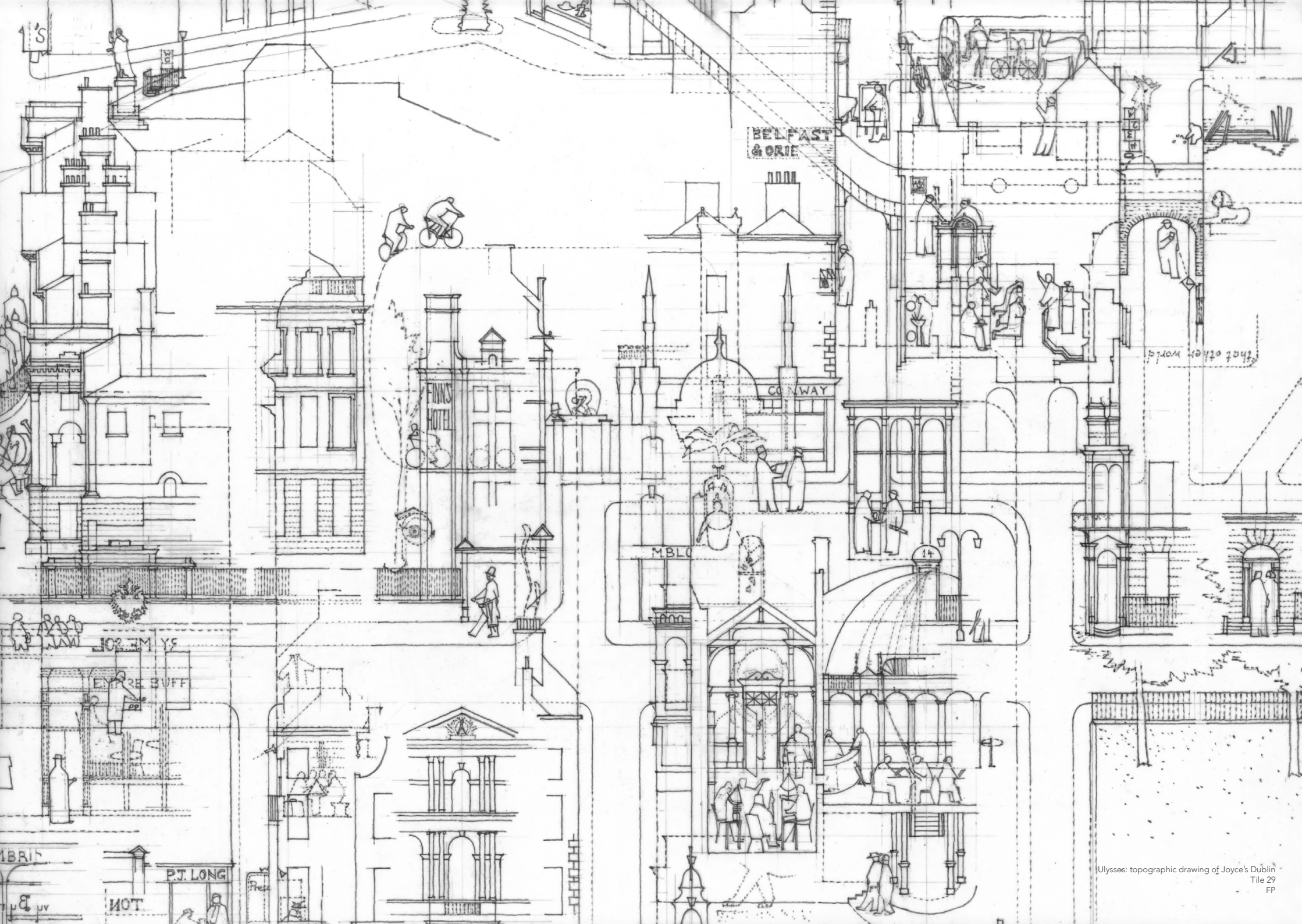
How is thought situated, how does architecture play a part

Somewhere: not what does it mean, what is it?

A failure – as important as FW is unreadable

Can't close this





BELFAST & ORIE

CONWAY

M.B.L.C.

JOSEPH YF

EXP. RE. BUFF

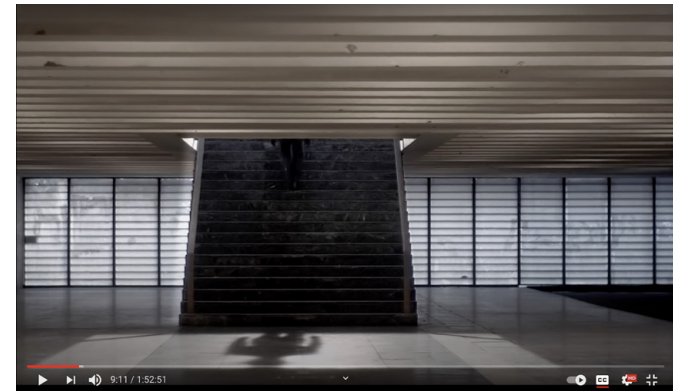
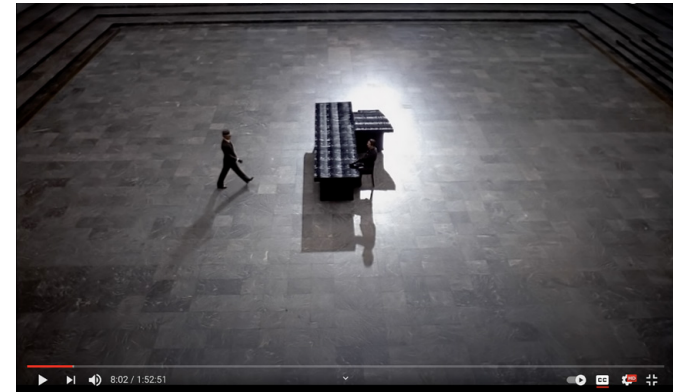
LIBRIN

P.J. LONG

NOT

THE FLOOR IS, AND  
MUST BE A GAME OF  
MATERIALS. (...) TO  
GO OVER IT MUST  
BE AN ADVENTURE  
(...) A PROGRESSION  
OR SUCCESSION  
PRESCRIBING ITS OWN  
LIMIT.

GIO PONTI | *In the Praise of Architecture*, 1960



Stills from *The Conformist* (1970) by Bernardo Bertolucci

Adalberto Libera

## A VEHICLE FOR PUBLIC ORNAMENT

Euphrosyne Andrews | February 2022



photography by Euphrosyne Andrews

author's revision of the first published essay

Walking through a city's streets it can be easy to determine the intended use of a building by looking to its materials. The aesthetic and tactile qualities of a space have an effect on the behaviours and relationships formed within it. From the security and familiarity of domestic furnishings or objects of decoration that we associate with the home, to the withdrawn interiors and blank facades of a modern office block designed to facilitate professionalism and productivity, our interactions are subconsciously shaped by the spaces we inhabit.

As a result, our behaviours can be deliberately altered and the associations we make guided by material selection, in a conscious attempt to direct a specific function. This is especially apparent in the boundaries between public or private, and as well as the third spaces which exist in between. These are social spaces without the constraints of the home or work environment, which are crucial to our public life and interaction within communities.

Accelerated by the current Covid -19 pandemic, in which entire populations have been confined to the home, virtual space is becoming an adaptable alternative to the physical third space. With established examples of social spaces such as pubs, cafes, theatres and other public buildings closed, the under represented spaces of our society are exposed. Parks, pavements, subways, social housing all hold key roles in the building of a unified society. With design decisions that hold public experience and participation as priority, they can provide space for physical interaction and the building of communities. It is in relation to these spaces that public ornament and material choice are of great significance.

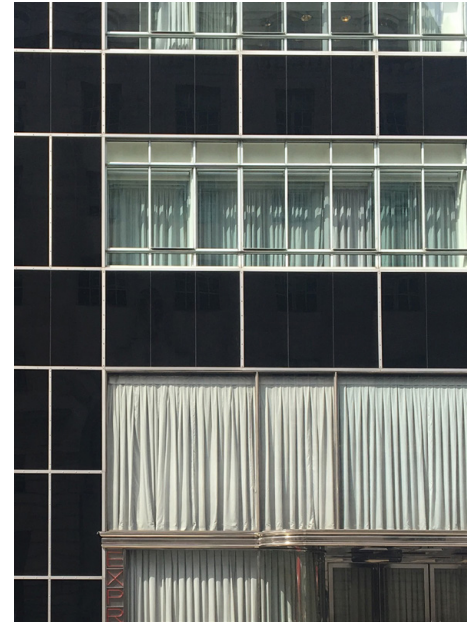
The ceramic tile, dating back to c 4700 BC, embodies links between the history of decorative arts and politics, architecture and social behaviour, acting as a case study into our relationship with ornament. As a material that holds connotations of the domestic and utilised for its functionality, tiles have held a formative role in the development of our spatial relationships whilst blurring distinctions between the fine and applied arts. From lavishly glazed ceramic facades, vibrant tiled subways and entryways, to decorative brick pavements and concrete

screen blocks, the tile exists as one of the earliest forms of public decoration, synonymous with the third space.

In light of our modern day relationship with commercial mass production, the potential of the medium is expanded, offering increased flexibility of its application. There is huge scope for artists and architects to work together, maximising this potential.

Modernist design movement Krasna Jizba ('The Beautiful Room' founded in 1927, Prague) highlights this idea in relation to the home. Showcasing functional design with artists, designers and craftspeople working collaboratively, they aimed to improve the quality of life for individuals in accordance with the goals of a socially-orientated, democratic society<sup>1</sup>. The movement was born out of a need to fulfil post war demands of housing and the culture of living during this period, placing value on objects and buildings designed as one, with the needs and desires of their inhabitants as a priority.

In looking to artists, craftspeople and architecture of the past, the future of everyday public space can be reimagined. By applying the same methodology and application of ornament of established community spaces to the everyday, materials can be used to promote rather than discourage engagement, shaping the built environment for all.



photography by Euphrosyne Andrews

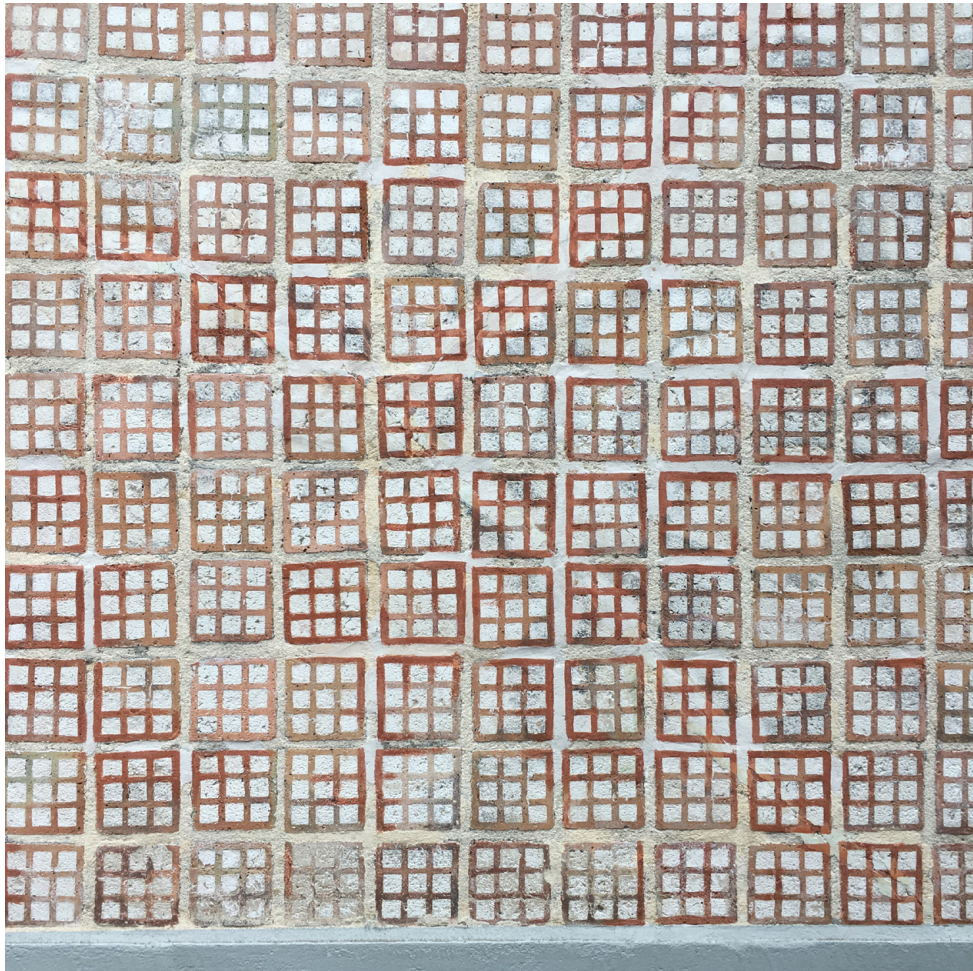
<sup>1</sup> Wall text from *Design from Democracy* (Prague Museum of Decorative Arts, 2019)



photography by Euphrosyme Andrews



*FROM THE DOMESTIC FURNISHINGS  
AND OBJECTS OF DECORATION  
THAT WE ASSOCIATE WITH THE  
HOME, TO THE WITHDRAWN  
INTERIORS AND BLANK FACADES OF  
AN OFFICE BLOCK DESIGNED TO  
FACILITATE PROFESSIONALISM AND  
PRODUCTIVITY, OUR INTERACTIONS  
ARE SUBCONSCIOUSLY SHAPED BY THE  
SPACES WE INHABIT.*



FERNAND POUILLON | Montrouge

photograph taken March 2019



photograph taken November 2018

leaf cement



GILLESPIE, KIDD AND COIA | St. Bride's Church, East Kilbride

photograph taken May 2017



FERNANDO TÁVORA | Tennis Pavilion, Porto

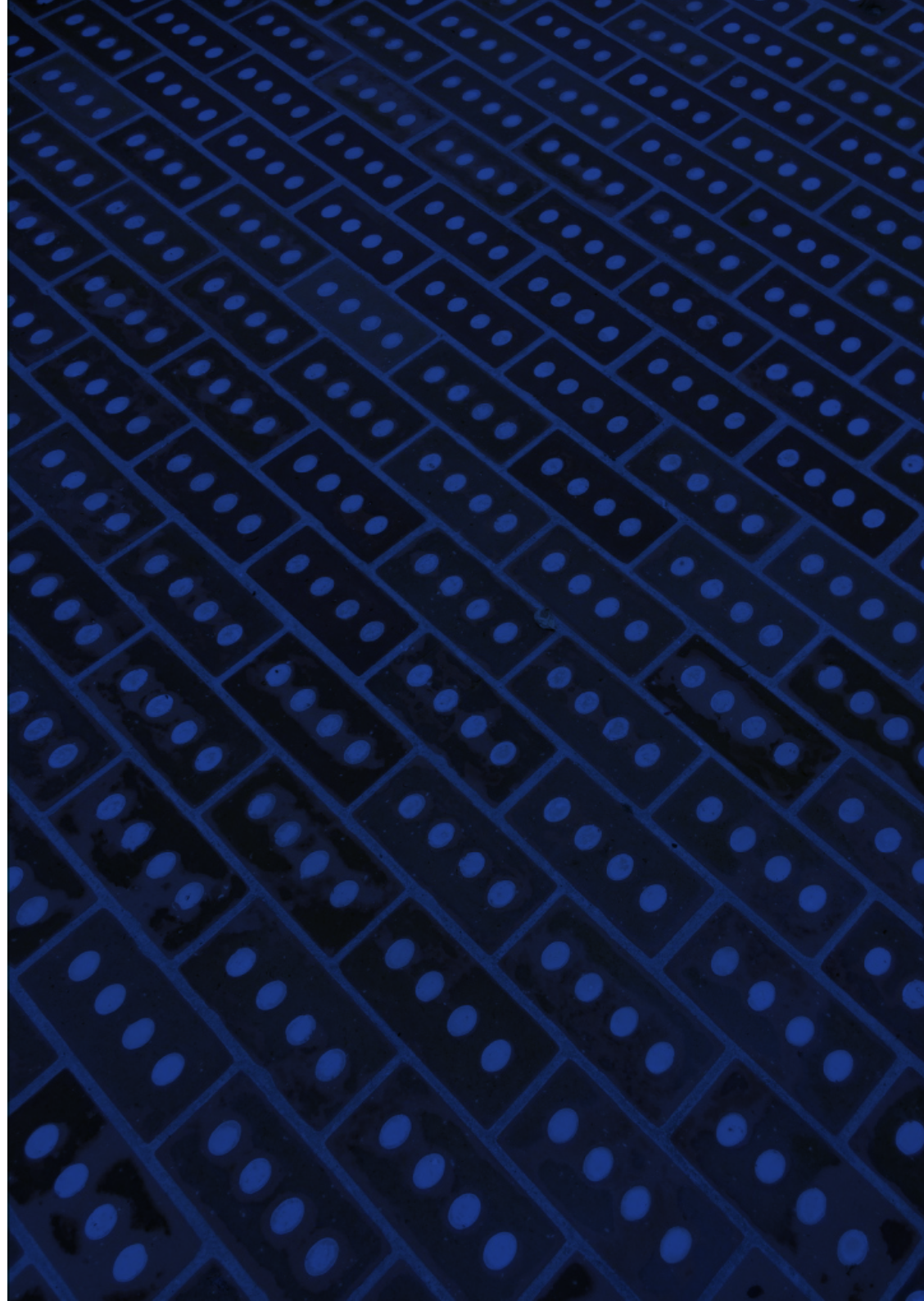
photograph taken December 2018





Corb on Habitat

on the left, photograph taken November 2019 | on the right, photograph of Carlo Scarpa's Casa Borgo taken in Vicenza, August 2016



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FEBRUARY 22