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Michele Renee Dawson had defended  
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Masters of Landscape Architecture through the  
Department of Landscape Architecture of the  
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Brian Katen: advisor, Ben Johnson: committee member, and  
Dean Bork: committee member

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## j u x t a p o s e d

Michele Renee Dawson

*Carlo Scarpa, Italian architect, designer, painter, had a vision of a deliberate juxtaposition of the presence of the past against the backdrop of the present. Such are the conditions that describe various palimpsests, partially legible windows into the past. Reconstructing Ca'Foscari (1935-37), Scarpa's first real commission marked the realized reconciliation between the old and the new. The finished work of the Ca'Foscari reflects the poetic manner in which the presence of history and the present moment are allowed to be what they are, no more, no less; yet the two operate in ethereal symbiosis. A perforated semi-transparency and sophisticated manipulation of light evolved to become the governing strategies for future projects. Revelatory changes in materials establish a relationship with an evolving urban fabric. Scarpa believed that arranging such exhibits as the Ca'Foscari project, kept these delicate reconciliations between the two at the forefront of one's mind.*

*In an era of placelessness, Niall Kirkwood states that history's failures are repeating themselves. In efforts to "Hold Our Ground" he makes the revelation that spaces built from the 1990's on may deteriorate faster than expected as landscapes evolve. Spaces are redesigned with new forms masking what was.*

*Kirkwood proposes a working paradigm providing a legible insight into a site's past.*

*This thesis investigation is intended to explore possible reconfigurations of history's artifacts, lending themselves to a dialogue between the past and present as applied to a conceptual palimpsest. This is possible taking Scarpa's ability of weaving a new work into the ongoing dialogue of an evolving fabric paired with Isamu Noguchi's ambiguous fusions of modern/historical impulses strung with Walter Hood's improvisational analysis whereas the material the site informs the design.*

*This demonstration project will take form as a revelatory unveiling of Love Plaza's history, one of Philadelphia's many reused canvasses.*



Philadelphia is a city balanced between the old and the new. Yet the city of immigrants and industry, of crowded rowhouse neighborhoods and deeply rooted old world habits giving way to a perceptibly to a distinctly modern Philadelphia.

a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

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d e d i c a t i o n

This work is dedicated, in loving memory, to a true student of learning, Mr. John Thomas Marsh Sr.

purpose of graduate thesis

The faculty of the Department of Landscape Architecture defines mastery as possessing the ability to identify critical questions confronting our profession/discipline and demonstrating the ability to investigate and respond to those questions from a scholastically grounded position.

In order to work from an informed position a person must be **learned**-a scholar. Recognizing that the profession is very broad, we ask students to develop the scholastic dimensions of their program so study within an area of focus. Expertise in the focus area is built through careful selection of elective courses and through the overall body of work within the department. Since the thesis and thesis studio are capstone educational opportunities where the diverse elements of the program of study can be brought to bear on specific issues/questions they are the primary vehicles through which students demonstrate mastery.

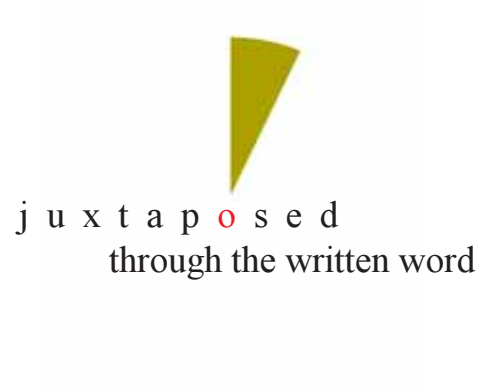
This demonstration project is submitted as thesis studio versus the traditional overview thesis. The thesis studio allows the student to begin a formal thesis investigation. The studio is designed so that each student defines the scope of the project to be completed. This studio provides the opportunity for each student to begin practical/applied investigations of a chosen thesis subject matter while concurrently conducting formal research and development of the position paper.

A proposal supported by a reading list is written for the thesis studio work. It is intended that preceding courses prepare students for the task of executing a proposed design solution to the problem of the student's choice.

The following is the end result of my academic investigation.

p a g e n a t i o n

-  01. Juxtaposed through the written word
-  29. Juxtaposed through a graphic hand
-  32. Design Intent
-  36. Strategy
-  38. Elements
-  44. Approach: Hood + Scarpa + Noguchi
-  54. Concept
-  56. Governing Form
-  60. Master Plan
-  64. God is in the D E T A I L S
-  78. Notes
-  86. Reflection. What's left to ponder?



**Intro:** *Reawakening Human Memory through Form*

History books serve as catalytic methods of reawakening human memory. An act performed since the civilization of man, history fights to remain within present streams of consciousness. Meaning of place in the landscape often operated as a byproduct gone unnoticed; that is until our nation began to rebuild itself with a memorial to honor those that had lost their lives to the September 11th attacks of 2001. During the aftermath architects and landscape architects alike dealt with the challenge of how to write the next chapter of the Twin Towers site, a clean site or was it? Such close observation boiled down to two questions of how to appropriately retell the story of September 11th. What was to be salvaged? What would be lost to change? It is with the utmost intention that finding a means of reconfiguring ways in which history's artifacts lend themselves to a dialogue between the past and the present as applied to a conceptual palimpsest. A document of the times, palimpsests are comprised of series of superimposed translucent layers that accumulate upon a base or foundation. These layers have accrued over time signifying the residual artifacts that linger as a place and its culture changes, evolves and grows. In an era of placelessness, Niall Kirkwood states that history's failures are repeating themselves. In efforts to "*Hold Our Ground*" he makes the startling revelation that spaces built from the 1990's on may deteriorate faster than expected as landscapes evolve. Spaces are redesigned with new forms masking what was. Kirkwood proposes a working paradigm giving way to new morphologies for manufactured sites over time providing a legible insight in a site's past by way of palimpsests as a response to the question: "Should landscape architects strive for permanence? (Kirkwood 48).

Landscape architect Walter Hood, architect Carlo Scarpa and Sculptor Isamu Noguchi took up an endeavor to seamlessly juxtapose the past against the present. Hood allows sites to inform design pat-

terns through revelatory improvisational analysis reawakening memory, mental fingerprints through iconographic form. Scarpa bridges the gap between the past and the present to unify a space, weaving a new work into the ongoing dialogue of an evolving fabric (Olsberg 9). Noguchi creates ambiguous fusions of modern, historical impulses while retaining its identifiable character (Friedman 7). Under the influences of a built reconciliation that transcends time and those story tellers that interpret narratives both past and present plucking at the strings of human memory, I take my position.

### **Scarpa:** *Ethereal Symbiosis*

Since Roman days, *spolia*, ancient objects have been “included within modern creations, fusing past and present styles” (Elsner 22). Carlo Scarpa, Italian architect, designer and sculptor (1906-1978) had a vision of a deliberate juxtaposition not of the past, but a presence of the past set against the backdrop of the present. Italian garden design became restorations and historical recreations prompted by post World War II public project programs (Dodds 30). Through Scarpa’s innovation he came to be revered as one of the few “landscapists” of postwar Italy. Though he is identified as an architect by trade, Carlo Scarpa’s commissions were rooted mostly in art installations, exhibit designs, and museological reorganizations. His landscapes permanent, temporary or borrowed are often depicted as exhibitionist displays. The architect strongly believed that both architecture and landscape architecture operate as “communicating vessels” with thematic concepts of “directing vision” (Dodds 32). Italy’s 1961 exhibition was graced by Scarpa’s temporary landscape at Fusina that initiated the thematic use of the *parete interrotta* or the interrupted wall, a design element influenced by abstract expressionist Paul Klee. This screening wall, a plane of concrete punctuated with multiple openings, often served as the focus of encompassing elements within each space. Interrupted walls also became exhibition pieces

demonstrating the integration of natural and artificial light enhancing, bridging, zigzagging paths, directing movement in diagonal patterns moving people through the entire space. One of Scarpa's critics Pier Carlo Santini states, "This wall is the key element of spatial coordination" (Dodds 36). This temporary Italian landscape is deemed, "...part of a twentieth-century tradition of impermanent modern gardens" (Dodds 35).

An eloquent application of the interrupted wall is illustrated through Scarpa's reconstruction of the Banca Popolare di Verona's head office. This project exhibits Scarpa's ability to explore the possibility of architecture constructed like a painting or poetry around questions of memory, allegory, narrative and metaphor (Olsberg 9). Scarpa states that the architect, "could not copy the architecture but instead had to understand it" if he was to establish an embodiment of continuity (Olsberg 109). To "understand architecture" Scarpa shifted his attention to those problem areas that architects and builders before him addressed: cornices, windows, plinths, and steps. Reforming these basic architectural components Scarpa demonstrated that, "the problems involved are the same as ever, only the answer changes" (Olsberg 109). Scarpa's experimentation with light, space and surface evokes an interest in architectural forms on a variety of planes. Squares, circles and ovals (typically punctuating large planes of concrete as openings and entryways) were an addition to signature bridge-forms, focuses of Scarpa's imagination. Welding them together in sculptural harmony produced artistic facades. The facade itself is considered as an, "artifact reinforced by secondary details" because, "modern architecture, abstractly stereometric, destroys all sensitivity to framework and de-composition (Olsberg 115). Carlo Scarpa took great strides to create architecture that will improve over time, as he further explored this concept at the Brion Family tomb of San Vito d'Altivole.

In 1976 Mrs. Onoria Brion commissioned Scarpa to design a private tomb that resides adjacent to San Vito d'Altivole's public cemetery in memory of her late husband, Guiseppe, co-founder of an innovative electronics firm. The couple were to be buried together beneath an arcosolum. An arcosolum similar to a catacomb, embraces the deceased's body beneath the Earth's surface. The interior of the arcosolum is embellished with a fragmented painting takes form as mosaic, Scarpa's reinterpretation of ritual Venetian painting. From the northeast corner of the property the Brion couple and future visitors are afforded an attractive view south across the property bathed in sunlight. Scarpa's chapel and arcosolum has succeeded in creating, "a traditional image of the dead" (Olsberg 129). The importance of the Brion Family Tomb lies in the innovative ways Scarpa was able to "embody social ideas about life and death serving as a collective expression" of the residents of San Vito d'Altivole (Olsberg 129) taking a private space and extending its availability to the greater public. The proposed design ratio suppressed intimate structures against the availability of civic open space. What couldn't be suppressed was in turn "borrowed" through views. Scarpa's design was manifested through juxtaposed simplistic forms elaborated by detail, drenched with meaning. A powerful expression of such manifestation is the funereal procession from chapel to burial site. A large gate punctuates the beginning of the procession. The funereal procession path is paved with concrete strips infilled with grass to break the harsh hardscape. Over time the weight of the cortege (wagon that carries the body of the dead) and its wheels has etched remnant imprints providing a visual communal memory of the path taken to eternal rest.

In Scarpa's work approach and manner were intrinsically linked. Scarpa was remembered by former student Sergio Los, as speaking in fragmentary sentences similar to ways that fragmentary details between past and present came together. Unlike his speeches, Scarpa's designs were able to

weld themselves together in a more cohesive and appropriate response to a particular project. He is noted as having the ability to recontextualize [pavement interrotta] in various sizes, scales and materials in order to underscore the instability of the site's meaning (Dodds 36). Stability, according to Carlo Scarpa, is found in the architectural staples of apertures, openings and orifices. Through these vehicles Scarpa felt free to take advantage of the plasticity of the present, fragmenting the past and joining both to create forms capable of shifting alongside its immediate and changing context.

**Fragmentation:** *Land Recycling*

*"...abandoned form may have an integral life of its own worth respecting it may constitute an inevitable personality"*

-Stanley Abercrombie

Americans tend to shun historic foundation operating instead on an out of sight, out of mind position. Yet within this era of heightened awareness of environmental consequences we, as a society, can no longer afford the "throw-away environment" (Cutler and Cutler 68). If something doesn't work out the first time, scrap it and move on to another clean slate and try again. Combine this attitude with the Jeffersonian ideal that each man, woman and child is endowed with their right to achieve the American Dream and all it has to offer. Over time the American landscape has been smudged, at times scarred from repetitive redesign, a result of unsuccessful projects left behind to a change of needs and the ever-evolving demands of use. However, by recycling spaces we, as culture are provided an opportunity to make a statement about historic, cultural and social values of the American civilization of our time. As these needs change there is no reason why new meaning cannot become ingrained into the new forms

that morph into a shifting urban space. Cutler and Cutler state, “the needs of a city must be evaluated in terms of an existing functional context, juxtaposed against the city fabric” (Cutler and Cutler 67). Of the design solutions proposed today, do they manifest an appropriate solution, a byproduct of productive progress or are we, as designers producing to enhance the quality of life of a city’s people? American cities have failed to design for its citizens, therefore its citizens’ venture to Europe to engage in an environment that better responds to the ergonomics of human form and comforts.

**Permanence:** *Designed to Last*

A critical component of my landscape architecture education involved a six-month study abroad to Corsham, England, a small town nestled within the Wiltshire countryside no more than a two-hour train ride to the west of London. Spring semester of 2001 was an enjoyable excursion to Paris, frequent visits to London and, of course, Rome. These European staple cities are considered precious landscape gems designed to last for centuries (Kirkwood 50). What anchors a landscape to outlive fleeting trends and take root as a classic work? A designer’s premonition into how the landscape decomposes. It is the “designer’s responsibility to anticipate all possible ways in which a landscape might fail” (Kirkwood 51). Doing so would defeat the purpose of undertaking a project at all considering that there are an infinite number of possible failures associated when introducing a synthetic construction into nature. Boston’s City Hall Plaza is presented as a failed landscape complete with “crumbling brick surfaces and disintegrating concrete” (Kirkwood 53). He then criticizes the use of a damaged concrete bench suggesting that the fault lies in the material choice. Alternatives lie either in a more expensive yet sound stone or a replacable wood furthering the site’s aesthetic lifeline. Kirkwood concludes proposing that City Hall should be “ripped out and designed from scratch but not before documenting the space”

(Kirkwood 53). Strange for a man to contradict himself offering up a working paradigm that allows existing remnants of previous design and uses to wiping a slate completely clean and starting over. In starting over with a clean slate, lessons to be learned are out of sight therefore out of mind. However, a residual landscape with legible overlays, an innovative documentation of City Hall's evolution, retained lessons stop the repetitive cycle associated with poor design and/or the disconnect of how a design operates on paper and how it exists in its physical form. Scarpa has proven that such an intervention of abandoned form is not only worthy but attainable.

**Permanence:** *Memory of Rome*

*“...suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a physical entity with a similarly long and copious past—an entity...in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one.”*

-Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Discontents

John Elsner captured a true understanding of Rome explaining it as a cultural palimpsest with sedimentary layers of modernism accruing upon the bedrock of history. Section cuts intersect at specific points allowing visitors the experience of “walking through living history” (Elsner 18). Memories of how “Rome contorts itself to accommodate its ancient past” (Elsner 20). Standing on a Roman sidewalk, gelato in hand, elevated by stratas of time, peering into historical depressions of remnant fingerprints left behind. Professor of Architecture Marc Treib suggests that reasons for historical absenteeism may reside with, “our nation’s rejection of history and all the baggage it carried in strides toward American modernism in the landscape” (Treib 48). An optimistic Scarpa was enabled to successfully reuse urban

artifacts from cultures and times before. Baggage became an opportunity, through his eyes, as he was renown for never possessing a single perspective toward something (Olsberg 2007) and at restoring one's memory of forgotten awareness. Scarpa had an advantage following Rome's lead "seeing not a breaking with the past, not a rejection...but rather a creative re-use of fragments" (Elsner 20).

**Meaning:** *Memory*

Judith Wasserman, Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia examines place and memory in the landscape. Wasserman begins with a look into time and how certain cultures perceive it. She discovered that Western cultures tend to view time as a linear stream of consciousness. That once a moment has passed it is all it will ever be. Consequently each moment is unique since the exact circumstances needed to bring such moments about a second time will never come to pass. Non-Western cultures tend to view time as, "an entire hydrological system" (Wasserman 190) in this manner time has a way of coming full circle. That is, time is exercising a process in which events and happenings occur in a predestined manner.

Maya Lin's Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama is offered as an illustration of Non-Western time understanding. "We are not satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream" words paraphrased from the book of Amos chapter 5 verse 24 by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and used by Lin for the guiding concept which gave form to the memorial. Lin capitalizes on the reflective quality of water to allow the past and present to come together through a ritualistic touching of heroes who have gone before etched in polished black granite. Through this experience visitors see themselves as participants in a larger story that is still unraveling years after the fact. Leslie

Marmon Silko's book Almanac of the Dead denotes a similar approach embraced by Maya Lin, that, "history is both past and present" (Wasserman 192). Lin's goal is realized, "repeated thousands of times, through the act of touching, water becomes an act of communion" (Wasserman 190).

Cultural homogenization increases the rate in which history's stories are erased (Nabhan of Wasserman 193). Erased along with these stories are understandings of cultural landscape elements. According to Wasserman, "the memorial navigates between design and history...assisting in reflection and reconciliation" (Wasserman 193) in an attempt to enliven a dialogue between anyone who chooses to participate. The "memorial" in this case is no longer the formal place etched with names occasionally visited. Instead the memorial lies in the everyday places visited during lunch and weekends. These repetitive visits create an active dialogue realized in the designed landscape as, "good designers juxtapose elements in new and revealing ways many of these forms are universally recognized" (Wasserman 193). When these elements are successfully executed everyday spaces become more than an viewing objects, these elements become awakening forms that encourage active participation or active dialogue. If memorials can function solely as civic gathering spaces then many other civic forms operate as memorials provided with this active dialogue approach to places of memory.

**Meaning:** *Connect to Context*

Scarpa opened, "a work of architecture maximizes expression and meaning" but must landscapes mean? Marc Treib, Professor of Architecture at the University of California at Berkley contributed an article that questioned the significance of the landscapes we, as designers create, should we as landscape architects attempt to reveal meaning in the landscape? (Treib 47). Though Treib uses garden

design in order to investigate significance in the landscape, questions raised are pertinent to this position.

Treib researched, “a renewed concern for meaning in landscape architecture” as catalytic food for thought in response to a significant lack of published works by fellow individuals within the design profession (Treib 47). Ultimately, meaning, according to Treib, “results less from the effects of a particular design than from the collective associations that accrue over time” (Treib 47). Five of six current approaches in 1995 include: the Neoarchaic, the Genius of Place, the Zeitgeist, the Vernacular Landscape, and the Thematic Garden.

A Neoarchaic approach is an archeological exercise that retrieves that which is hidden at some point. Earthworks artist Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* a stone, sand spiral compositional path during low tide is an appendage extending from beachfront into ocean allows natural wave patterns to deconstruct the earthwork in a gradual manner. It is intended that elemental materials being stone, wood, rock, or earth be reintroduced into the present. Sculptor Isamu Noguchi is another such artist who reintroduces the same natural materials into the modern world with a fresh touch; substituting volcanic rock with polished black granite; sand is modernized with sandstone pavers set in fluid concentric circles recreating ocean waves traditionally created dragging a rake through the sand.

Genius of Place reveals the spirit of a place as a means of rooting landscape design in a particular locale (Treib 49). Exposing sedimentary layers of urbanity and modern technology to unveil a truth about a place. Genius of Place is a response to an uprising of placelessness overlying a superficial form atop a landscape background. “History became an image to be dusted off and applied to any current

proposal as a means to validate it” (Treib 50). Completing the exfoliation process design could be logged simply by looking for those landscapes that don’t quite fit into the immediate context.

Representing the spirit of the times or *Zeitgeist* is an approach that reflects an artistic concept that art is capable of reflecting the times in which we live; therefore, artistic byproducts are capable of doing the same. Treib states that the *Zeitgeist* approach often mimics the Neoarchaic approach since history can influence the present especially in the arts. Architect Bernard Tschumi’s 1982 award-winning design for the Parc de la Villette competition in Paris exhibits the *Zeitgeist* concept. Tschumi’s design presents the visitor with a cinematic sequence throughout the site. Exposing the “fragmentation of postmodern culture” (Treib 52) this strategy is strongly expressed through the use of scarlet-red follies grided onto the site. Carl Andre’s Stone Field Sculpture residing in Hartford, Connecticut another example, Andre’s intention closely associated with Genius of Place behind the installation of boulders, arranged into axial gridiron forms, represent native stones found in an around the area of Hartford.

Vernacular Landscapes are identified as, “inevitably transformed when ‘borrowed’ by design professionals” (Treib 52). ‘Borrowed’ in this case is a loose term in Treib’s eyes considering that once the landscape is “released” of further manipulations it holds little resemblance to the landform that it once was. Growing concern behind the abuse such landscapes endure is mainstreaming itself into sensitive environmental design practices introduced at the undergraduate Landscape Architecture education level. Mainstreaming sensitive environmental design practices attempts to strengthen a connection of resources in an uninterrupted vernacular state compared to its engineered or ‘borrowed’

state. Mining practices both yesterday's and today's remove entire mountains for precious coal energy, iron ore and copper deposits. Once an area is depleted of all profitable amounts of natural resources all that remains are tons unhealthy soil a result of years of environmental engineering.

“Constructed meaning in the Didactic landscape is rooted in the theory that form is intended to inform the visitor about the natural workings or history of the place (Treib 53). Through the Didactic, designers, engineers, and horticulturists attempt to restore what has been shattered due to the effects of nature or continuous remaking of spaces. There must be a legible juxtaposition of what remains [past] against what is introduced to the site [present]. Revealing the history of a site for example is providing a more meaningful place. Treib cautions that ‘Didactic thinking’ alone is not sufficient for such a landscape. Other determining factors, physical manifestation [construction], skill, and how the visitor interprets the space as positive or negative determine if the space is truly successful. Scarpa's drawings depicted as poetic and technical have been considered didactic in nature according to Nicholas Olsberg, former director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and author of the book *Carlo Scarpa: Intervening with History*.

Thematic Gardens, according to Marc Treib, are spaces designed to cater to a singular concept or theme. Theme, according to Treib, “constitutes a perceptually apparent idea used to fashion the garden's form” (Treib 53). Disneyland a discussed example has a governing concept of fairytales and make believe. This idea is displayed in the landscape by trimming hedges into identifiable Mickey Mouse ears, silhouettes of Dumbo and other iconographic Disney characters mitigated into landscapes saturated with enough paint and plastic to convey the magic that is Disney. If the concept is not properly executed the place will overwhelm its visitors. No longer an enjoyable place visitors will chose to

flee rather than participate. Landscape Architect Laurence Halprin states in his Notebooks there is a fine line between relevance and significance when proposing an overall concept. A more authentic representation of concept integrated into the landscape is Sissinghurst's "White Garden" created by Vita Sackville-West Sissinghurst is a, "well-known example of color used as subject" (Treib 53). Gazing into shades of white during unbearable English summers eludes the body into feeling cool and comfortable. Parc Andre Citroen's "Black and White Garden" of Paris is offered as another design that provides appealing colors to the eye with little tension.

Questions arise how outsiders and visitors were able to interpret the signs of time and space of a particular era. John Dixon Hunt is referenced by Treib as arguing that such thematic landscapes, more particular English garden landscapes, "were a coherent system of signs devised to be legible to both maker and visitor" (Treib 55). As Niall Kirkwood's investigation of the deterioration of man's design projects in the face of nature's power so to does Hunt state that time worn markers in the landscape lose their significance and the meaning that was once legible now is illegible. Once illegible there is little for an outsider to interpret in the way of better understanding a Didactic landscape (provided that society, emphasis and the meanings behind society's signs are ever-changing). Treib conclusively deduces that meaning itself becomes ever-changing.

With an understanding of the aforementioned design theories; it will be possible that the proposed thesis project demonstration share a comprehension that meaning will be constructed into Philadelphia's John F. Kennedy/Love Plaza in order to reveal the evolution of the site through form. Earlier, the Didactic approach aimed to use form to enlighten visitors about the natural workings or history of a place (Treib 53). Through a Didactic approach, I as a designer am attempting to reassemble

a vitality that has been shattered, a result of a city's changing needs and governing rules directing the actions of Philadelphia's public.

**Noguchi:** *Ambiguous Fusions*

*"If they [designs] meant something in the past (of course we have to like them as forms) then they will mean something to us again today."*

-Isamu Noguchi

Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) sought to adopt historic principles assimilating them to modern practice (Ashton 106) as he himself attempted to fuse the Japanese ideals of his father with the American ideals of his mother. Noguchi's sculpture is considered an ambiguous fusion of modern form with historical impulses taking form through Neolithic materials of stone, wood, marble and bronze. Through my eyes however, I see the juxtaposition of a singular piece with the past residing adjacent to the present. Just as his work is an exploration of how past and present adjoin themselves into an interactive sculptural element so to was the sculptor himself. Noguchi began his artistic journey investigating object-making.

Considering himself, "a traditional sculptor who makes contemporary images that relate to history" (Friedman 7). Noguchi was able to see all sides simultaneously accepting the notion that in order to create historical illusions the artist had to look beyond mere adaptation of ancient form. Developed under the direction of Romanian artist Constantine Brancusi, Isamu Noguchi's early work mimicked the biological and geometric undercurrents of Brancusi's work. As Noguchi became more comfortable with his own ideas his forms began to digress from Brancusi's influence. Noguchi sculptures began to

embrace forms that, “elude exact interpretation allowing his sculptural pieces to operate within multiple dimensions” (Friedman 7). The statement can describe but isn’t the element of strength and longevity behind Noguchi’s work.

Noguchi’s early works have been described as compact formalism. He found a love of stone, a material he depicts as, “nothing new, it’s old as the hills; it’s our fundament” (Hunter, Foreword). At the tender age of thirty, tender for an artist, he honed onto a vision of connection to the past through natural material of stone and wood. These materials would become the constant. Noguchi expressed variation through modern form, whatever geometric component that may be, was informed in part as to what a piece chose to be. That is if a piece of sculpture is in tune with the material as it should be, according to Noguchi, then the challenge exists in seeking form hidden within the material. It is then the role of the sculptor to reveal what lies beneath.

A twenty-two year collaboration begun in 1930 with Martha Graham brought Noguchi a step closer to molding landscapes. Graham and Noguchi shared a passion for classical interpretation of mythological, historic events retold through modern psychological terms. As a child Isamu developed a passion for, “Japanese folk tales and mythology as a manifestation of the collective unconscious” (Friedman 8). This creative energy served him well into the creation of masterpieces such as *Frontier*. This dance about the opening of the American west, Noguchi’s first attempt at portraying a landscape, was depicted by Graham as successfully capturing both physical and cultural attributes of the central plains.,

*“...the distance of the plains that I feel this girl is looking at, almost for the first time. She arrived in a new area, a new landscape, and Isamu brought me this very simple,*

*elegant thing-just ropes indicating the distance, the trail and the tracks of the railroad train, and the inevitable fence that gets built as soon as pioneers take over”*

*(Friedman., 25).*

Guided by the Noh drama, where time and space are stilled, Noguchi’s surreal stage settings aimed to maximize poetic results through the simplest, most direct means as with 1944’s *Herodiade*, a woman who comes to realize that she has not escaped the effects of time. Isamu Noguchi’s stage design, and later his landscapes activate an enormous area with few simple forms.

Between 1969-1973 Martha Graham fell ill and her company refrained from producing shows without Graham’s guidance. During this absence of stage design work, Noguchi freed himself to make the final transition into landscape design. Three of his more well-known landscapes include: the Parisian UNESCO Garden Patio des Delegates et la jardin japonais, the Sunken Circle Garden for the Chase Manhattan Bank, and Yale University’s Beinecke Library Garden.

UNESCO’s garden commenced as a simple collaboration with Architect Marcel Breuer between 1956-58 that grew into an obsession. Swiftly, Noguchi’s vision for a romantic version of a traditional Japanese garden required a larger parcel if it was truly to be a haven for reflection. For Chase Manhattan Bank Noguchi designed a “hermetic enclosure” (Friedman 61) entitled Sunken Circle also aimed to recreate the same romanticized version of a traditional Japanese Zen garden. Concentric circles of granite bricks mimic ocean currents traditionally expressed through meticulous raking in the sand. Designed as a contemplative space in the midst of New York City’s Wall Street District one is allowed to gaze at Noguchi’s islands in the sea providing a, “meditation space in the midst of urban frenzy” (Friedman 13).

Triangulation is a term used to describe a social happening in the landscape when people attract more people into a place. Considering Noguchi's minimalist landscape, Yale University's Beinecke Library is a physical representation of triangulation. The library plaza consists of a pyramid representing Earth's past, a ring or circle of energy and a "tipped" cube on its point signifying chance are all arranged atop a grided stone base. To generate such a field of energy Noguchi states"

*"...three is a very convenient, elemental number. After all, one is a unit, you don't have any place to go. With two, you have a choice, but with three, you have an asymmetrical situation. Three is triangulation you can go into trigonometry and all sorts of relationships of viewpoint. It's about the minimum you can have"*

*(Friedman 65).*

In this simple piece Matisse would be satisfied by Noguchi's revelation of how the parts alone are not enough, that it is the relationship to the whole that enlightenment is to be had. It's about the minimum you can have. The fact that Isamu Noguchi was able to create such dynamic landscapes that emit energy yet are capable of being without being categorized reveals the power of his genius.

### **Form:** *and its Determinants*

Viewed as a geometric entity, form is a relatively simple element, however, when meaning and life are applied, such forms evolve increasing their complexities. Authors Abraham Edel and Jean Francksen have stated that forms are a direct result of the human tendency to find and create order, allotting a place for everything and everything in its place (Edel and Francksen 7). Carlo Scarpa agrees

with the following statement about art's link to reality, "It's the effort that man has made, since his beginning to make clear for himself, through forms, his own existence" (Olsberg 205).

Elements associated with form operate in a dichotomous arrangement, a balance between the sensory and conceptual, the material and the immaterial. Form is considered to be an equilibrating factor. Edel and Francksen state that the initial idea of form is an integration of science and art. All that form may become as a marriage of science and art is reduced to its most rudimentary elements such as logic and epistemology. Logic provides an ideal standard for the mind as of the early 80's. In order for the mind to understand what is accepted as ideal it must distinguish between form that is accidental (unintentional) and form that is essential (intentional). Epistemology is, "the flux of beliefs against the grasp of the truth" (Edel and Francksen 8). Epistemology is similar to logic, both looking for a cultural correct, unchanging ideal that is compared against foreign ideals to better understand which form will be reinforced as ideal.

In order to clarify philosophic ideas of form and some of its problems, Edel and Francksen have asked the following questions of form:

*In what sense is the product [form] active or dynamic not just a finished product?*

The world is considered a collection of events and not things in Greek philosopher Aristotle's theory. With this understanding form calls for changing uses. Often in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, "the shaping of space has to do with an intangible reaction of the people who move within that space" (Edel and Francksen 13). It is in the way that the homeless convert a fountain into a bathing area, a place to launder clothing, as well as a consistent drinking water source. It is in the way

a tree branch is utilized as a storage space for trash bags full of necessary belongings. Form, in turn, enlivened when it is reconfigured to satisfy evolving needs. In many instances, I find that, the undesirables who inhabit urban centers draw similar needs and how they can be met to the forefront of the public's consciousness. Edel and Francksen caution that the magic needed to bring form from the drawing table into a thriving space within the urban fabric.

*How are form and matter related?*

In an era where new materials become available and, in time, affordable opening windows of opportunity to mold them into more complex forms. Which sets the precedent for the other? Scarpa states, "that a sense of space is cause for the effect of a completed piece of sculpture, followed by the for-the-sake-of cause the goal or the *telos* of the process the notion exercises a means to an end.

Plato on the other hand viewed forms as unchanging as, "intellectual sources of explanation of standard conduct" (Edel and Francksen 8) Form according to Plato, is grasped in thought yet experienced through the senses. Because of human intellect, we humans are able to comprehend meaning beneath forms. Investigations into human activity and its experiences are to understand how form guides towards a specific goal. Additionally, "there is no evolutionary change in forms; they are what they are but there can be a shaping of existence to embody a given form" (Edel and Francksen 9). In other words, an artists/designers' maturity is projected to a given form, in this way form is considered to evolve. The overall responsibility of form is to operate as a guide of the designer's position or overall concept.

*How do we construe relations between form and function?*

Grounded in Greek idea that form strongly relates to function, form operates as a, "single phe-

nomenon with multiple perspectives” (Edel and Frankesen 11). This question is similar to segregating form from function, entities capable of performing together is a productive as asking which communicated by physical phenomena, matter, a sense of mass” (Olsberg 115). Again any response is dependent upon the situation and prevailing circumstances in which a project call for either form or material to take the stage form is deemed needed to, “recognize the relativity of all categories: contexts, conditions, and purposes” (Edel and Franckesen 13).

### **Design:** *the Idea of It*

Since Aristotle, art “has existed because it helps bring order to human experiences, thus maintaining history” (Csikszentmihalyi 118) Gyorgy Keyes claimed that harmony had been abandoned over time and that balance has been replaced by chaos. This fragmented area is where the artist’s presence is needed to intervene delineating order from drama. Through the artist, art or form is able to reconcile ancient biological instincts and artificial social rules according to creator of the Maslow theory, psychologist Abraham Maslow.

Gaining further insight into the theories of various scholars author and psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi conducted an experiment that explored how people of a household view and regard common household items and if there was an underlying relationship between esthetics of the product and sentimental value attached to it. Of the 537 documented reasons why people feel an attachment to certain coveted items, 16% of recorded reasons given were directly related to esthetic, formal qualities. As a result Csikszentmihalyi concluded from the first set of interrogations that, “formal qualities alone

rarely made an object valuable to its owner” (Csikszentmihalyi 118). Of the times that owners were capable of recognizing esthetic values the artist’s endeavors held little reason as to why the artistic product held sentimental value. In response to the challenge Csikszentmihalyi then shifted focus from esthetic descriptions to descriptions of the object themselves. Those objects most frequently mentioned at the top of the list included furniture, graphic art, and photography respectively with sculpture plants and plates at the bottom of the list. When asked to elaborate why such objects are considered valuable Csikszentmihalyi discovered that neither formal quality nor design quality influenced as easily as the use and visitation opportunities with friends and family.

The same experiment results revealed that younger generations responded to the activity of potential of an object, that is the chances of how often the object would be used such as stereos, television, furniture and musical instruments. Older generations were more intrigued with items that evoked contemplation as a means of preserving memories of events, experiences, and relationships. Such findings were also applied to stereotypical notions of what men and women regard as “valuable”. Results applied to 7% of men who illustrated that, like younger generation owners, identified with the activity potential of an object, the greater the potential, the more valuable the item such as stereos, television, musical instruments and sports equipment. Twenty-two percent of women counter to men related with older generation owners associating with, “objects of contemplation” such as photographs, graphic art, sculpture, books and plants (Csikszentmihalyi 121).

Cultural symbols: circles, triangles, and squares were often used to express what people cared for within their society yet through the years such symbols have lost their staying power. Instead meaningful expressions are becoming more of a personal choice. “In search for universal values

Csikszentmihalyi asks, “Are there objective visual qualities that add up to ‘good design’?” (Csikszentmihalyi 122). Typically designers manipulate forms and colors to stimulate the brain causing the brain to accept such designs, thus connecting with his/her intended audience. The manipulation of simple geometric forms result in patterns that appear to be more stimulating to the brain versus a series of basic shapes. Such form manipulation makes the pattern easily accepted by the majority of a culture. Most people, however, do not accept a painted yellow sea or green horse as a realistic perception of the world. But these rarities are not dismissed because of an inaccurate color scheme in relation to the subject matter; instead they are “wrong” because of, “habits of symbolization people of a culture have accepted or rejected” (Csikszentmihalyi 123). Csikszentmihalyi states that the same notion can be applied to spatial relationships of cultural environments.

Researcher A.R. Luria conducted an experiment to discover if basic patterns of cultures living in an organized “carpentered world” (Csikszentmihalyi 123) could be just as easily interpreted by the people of another culture. Luria discovered a disconnect between object and the language used to identify it. What is acknowledged as circle took the name ring in the Uzbekan culture of the former Soviet Union. D.E. Berlyne sought out a reinterpretation of ancient ideas through modern neurological models the way Martha Graham sought to reinterpret ancient stories through modern psychological models. Through Berlyne, true pleasure perception is, ”balance of monotony against confusion” (Csikszentmihalyi 124) to clarify Csikszentmihalyi intercedes that, “optimal intellectual arousal results from design that has a basic pattern or order but enough variation to require active perceptual work to recognize and maintain the pattern” (Csikszentmihalyi 124).

People in a culture are taught to believe that a particular form is logical, truthful representation of universal order if presented in a convincing manner. Good design, in turn, is achieved as a, “visual statement that maximizes life goals of people, a certain subset of people within a culture” (Csikszentmihalyi 125). The relevance of the provided information of form and how it is perceived and accepted by certain cultures sheds light on how I, as the designer, intended to propose a form as an appropriate solution to the unsuccessful turnover associated with land recycling within downtown Philadelphia. I can then conclude, that if an appealing intellectual form is considered stimulating to Philadelphia residents then the form is easily accepted or absorbed into the urban fabric. When such a form is welcomed into a city by its natives, visitors will easily pick up on where to go to feel welcomed in an appealing form that speaks directly to the culture and experience of Philadelphia.

**Conclusion:** *train of Thought*

Since beginning this academic journey towards a Masters of Landscape Architecture, I have come to understand an underlying theme of my design and research works. This theme is best described as unveiling the potential of place by getting to the heart, the fundamental elements, that characterize a specific town, city or metropolis. Once the culture of place is understood I seek to give form to the fundamental elements and then integrate a completed design solution into a space that responds to the immediate context.

In order to properly do this I have to ask how this passion can be applied to a problem significant to the Landscape Architecture profession. Such a problem presented itself to the growing dilemma of

unsuccessful land recycling in urban metropolises. The nature of reoccurring failed spaces within dense urban fabrics; these are the areas where it is best to get it right in the hopes of preserving more environmentally sensitive landscapes. Another benefit to be had is an improvement in the quality of life. Yet there needed to be a way to ensure that the message imbedded in preceding forms retains its staying power. Staying power is when a form is imprinted as memory on the public's mind, therefore, I looked into reawakening human memory through form. Palimpsests physical documented layers of accrued history made visible serves as a guiding precedent, an accepted example. The idea of the palimpsest is secured as a definitive concept. Italian architect Carlo Scarpa successfully demonstrated how the conceptual palimpsest integrates itself into the urban landscape with acknowledged projects the Banca Popolare and the Brion Family Tomb. The discussion then addresses the problem of unsuccessful land recycling within urban metropolises. That in the wake of this problem America's landscape fabric has become fragmented as a result of sprawling overdeveloped, underused spaces cluttering our homefront. So, how does a designer know when to provide enough form to allow chance meetings and the activity of strong event programming to occur? This question made me wonder whether designers should take the trouble of creating artistic forms saturated with meaning, would the public understand thus appreciating the amount of work that goes into producing good design. Isamu Noguchi's forms are meaningful, appreciated and therefore successful. Noguchi approached his landscapes in the same manner that he approach his sculpture, as artistic expressions meant to be engaged. The thought ends by addressing the relationship between form, that is what form is defined as, the influences that shape and mold form; and design how form becomes an elemental component of design.

In effect, our fragmented landscape remains fragment because designers don't always know how to pick up the pieces or what to do with them. Under the guidance of Walter Hood and his ability to

extrude fundamental cultural form from specific demographics, Carlo Scarpa's eloquent integration of the presence of the past into the present and creative reuse of fragments working with Isamu Noguchi's power of evoking an energy, a thriving pulse of a place I offer a means of how to identify pieces were saving and, more importantly, what to do with them.

**Omission:** *Walter Hood*

Composing this paper originally included discussion of Walter Hood's influence. Hood is a vital aspect to the sequential design process moreso than as a literary subject. Hood's presence is seen in the preparation of the project concept.

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j u x t a p o s e d  
through a graphic hand



p i n u p



d e s i g n   i n t e n t






## Design Intent:

An underlying current has emerged into consciousness binding this demonstration project to earlier design works. That current exists in using appealing forms as a catalytic vehicle to reawaken the promise of a throbbing life or **energy** buried beneath years of redesign and change.

Such a **pulse** exists underneath brutal concrete forms that comprise Love Plaza as it exists today. Robert Indiana's sculpture has done much to draw attention to the space despite the fact that the plaza serves as mecca to skateboarders both on national and international levels; the space is often devoid of the energies that **thrive** within the heart of metropolitan cities like Philadelphia.

And so it is with the greatest intention that the forms created for this space **evoke** a sense of ingress or "**welcome**" into the plaza in order to egress or "explore" the rest that Philadelphia has to offer. Guidance for final forms were found in the seven elements considered essential Philadelphia: its murals and the stories they tell; its industrial past and its inventors who came with dreams of molding a great haven; its tie to the water as its original footprint is nestled between two waterways; its transit systems and how they respond to preliminary city planning strategies; the markets that clutter the city serving its economic responsibility yet opening the door to social happenings; its neighborhoods that establish their own relationship between itself, its district and its downtown; its **people** who **activate** each element to its fullest potential.



a p p e a l i n g   f o r m

Elmwood Park of Roanoke, Virginia was an earlier exploration of the power behind appealing forms as catalytic vehicles to reawaken the promise of a throbbing life or energy of a place.

With recent changes to Elmwood's immediate context; a community of senior citizens residing across the street. The opportunity had arisen for the park to undergo a change to better cater to the needs of residents and visitors alike to downtown Roanoke.

If the proposed design had any chance of succeeding, then form had to be paired with strong programming that illustrates Elmwood Park at its greatest potential.

It is intended that Elmwood become more than just a hub of activity but that Elmwood park serve as a starting point for community building and that the energy created from year round activity seep into the immediate context and metropolitan fabric.





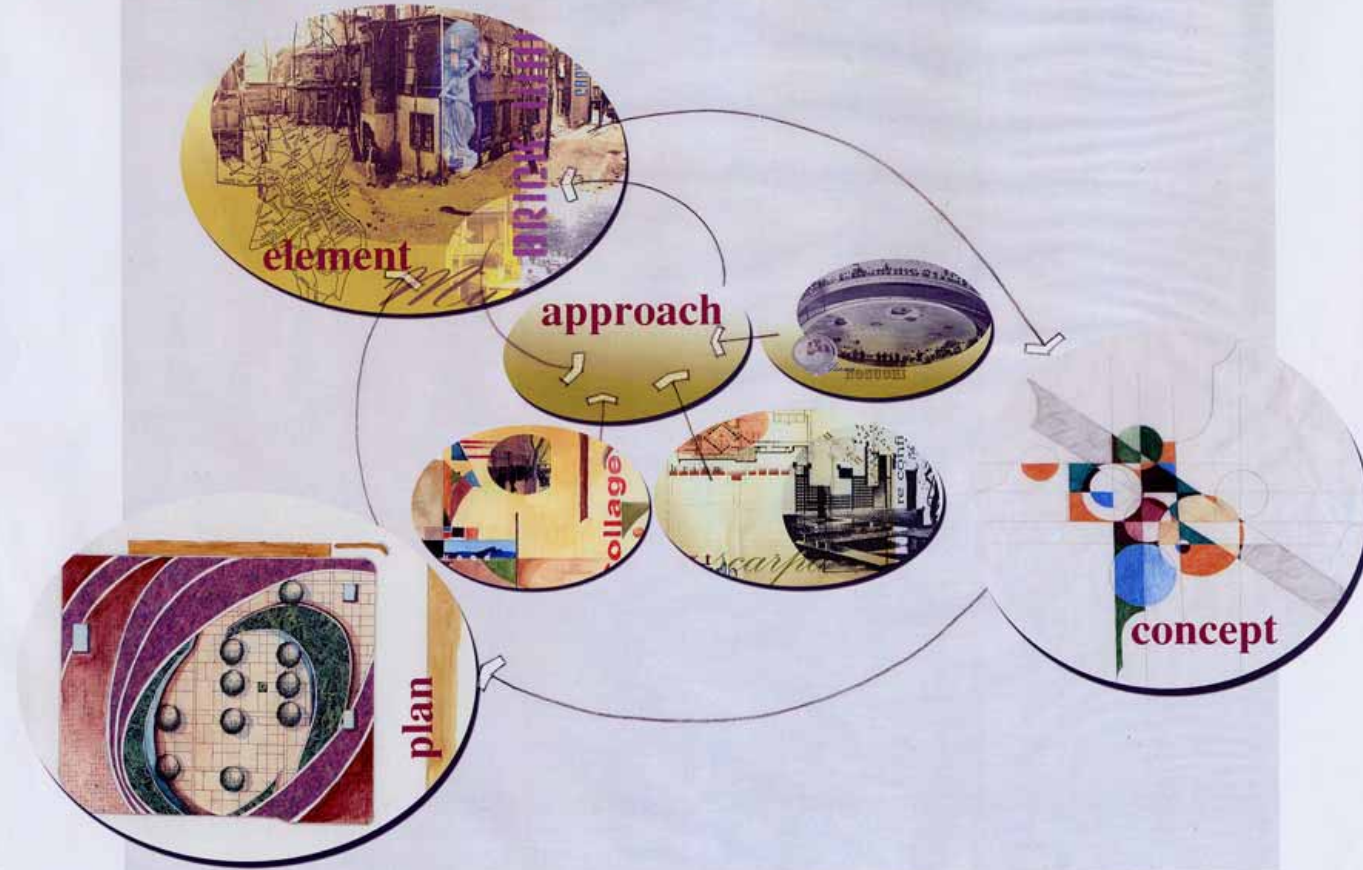
“In the end is my beginning” - T.S. Elliot

Once there's an understanding of both the iconographic elements that the general populus can easily associate with a particular city and those more intimate elements, the personal reasons why you return to a place, then its time to run these elements through the approach filter.

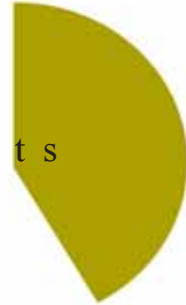
The approach consisted of three influences whose previous successes helped to arrange the element pieces into a legible concept. Walter Hood possesses the ability to weld cultural fragments into an appropriate contextual design solution. Carlo Scarpa is able to see multiple techniques of how to weld cultural fragments into larger wholes. Once there is a finished piece Isamu Noguchi is able to extrude a life that attracts people to stop and visit.

The concept activates a series of process drawings that evolve into the master plan. In this case the master plan completes the strategy.

strategy



e l e m e n t s



The elements of Philadelphia are those identifiable aspects known to those who are familiar with the city. Such elements cannot speak for all who know or don't know Philadelphia, the bias lies in the fact that these elements are a personal interpretation.

Each element is illustrated as collage instead of mosaic because mosaics often have a definitive edge. Collage on the other hand lack such an edge and adopts the notion that form is intended to reveal a life, a residue of an accumulated past allowing both past and present to occupy the same canvas.

Identified elements are Philadelphia's beginnings as a **port city**, its investments as an **industrial hub**, the **markets** each neighborhood possesses that set the stage for chance meetings, the optimistic use of abandoned brick facades into artistic **murals** that serve as wayfinders, the **people** of Philadelphia that activate the city and the communal means of **transportation** utilized to get around.





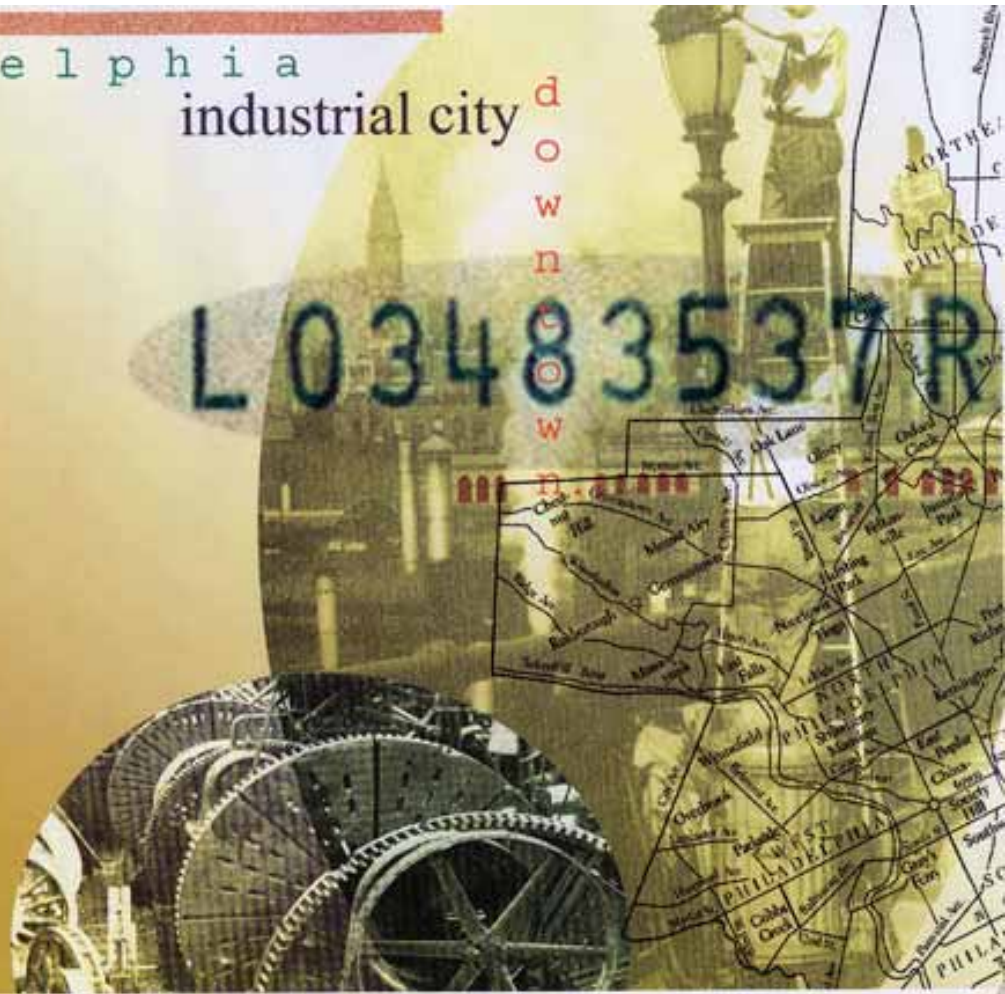
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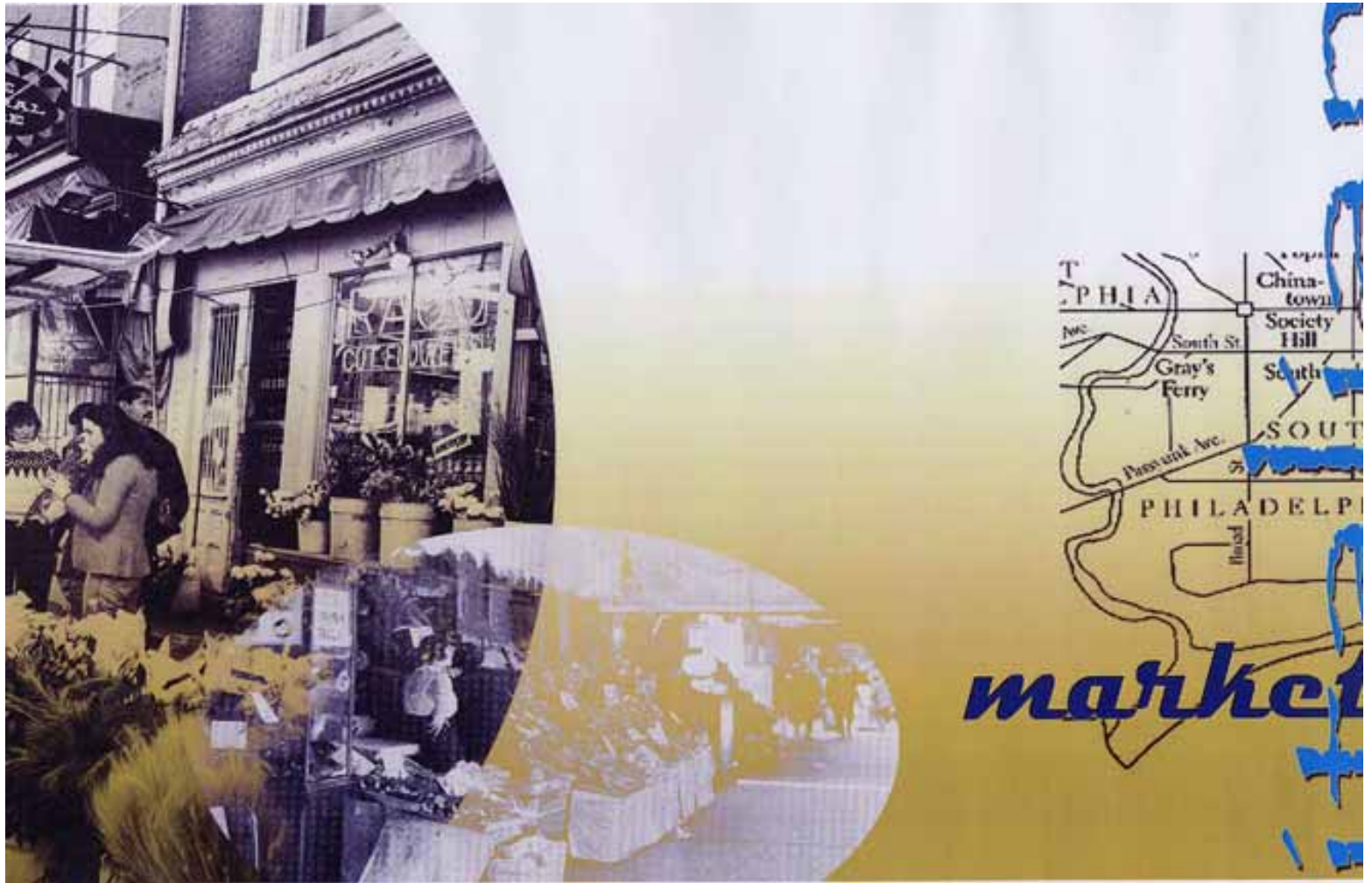
industrial city

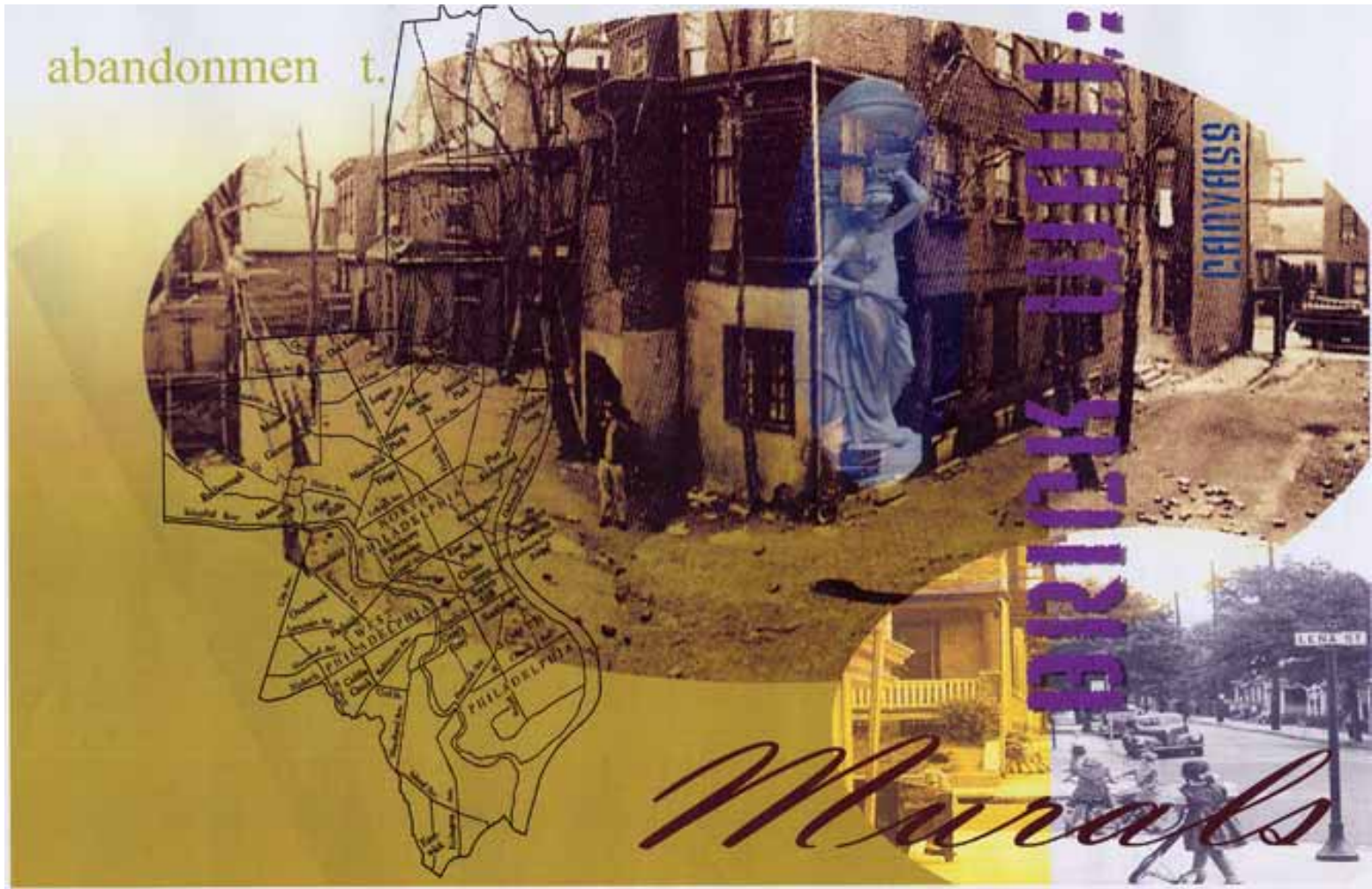
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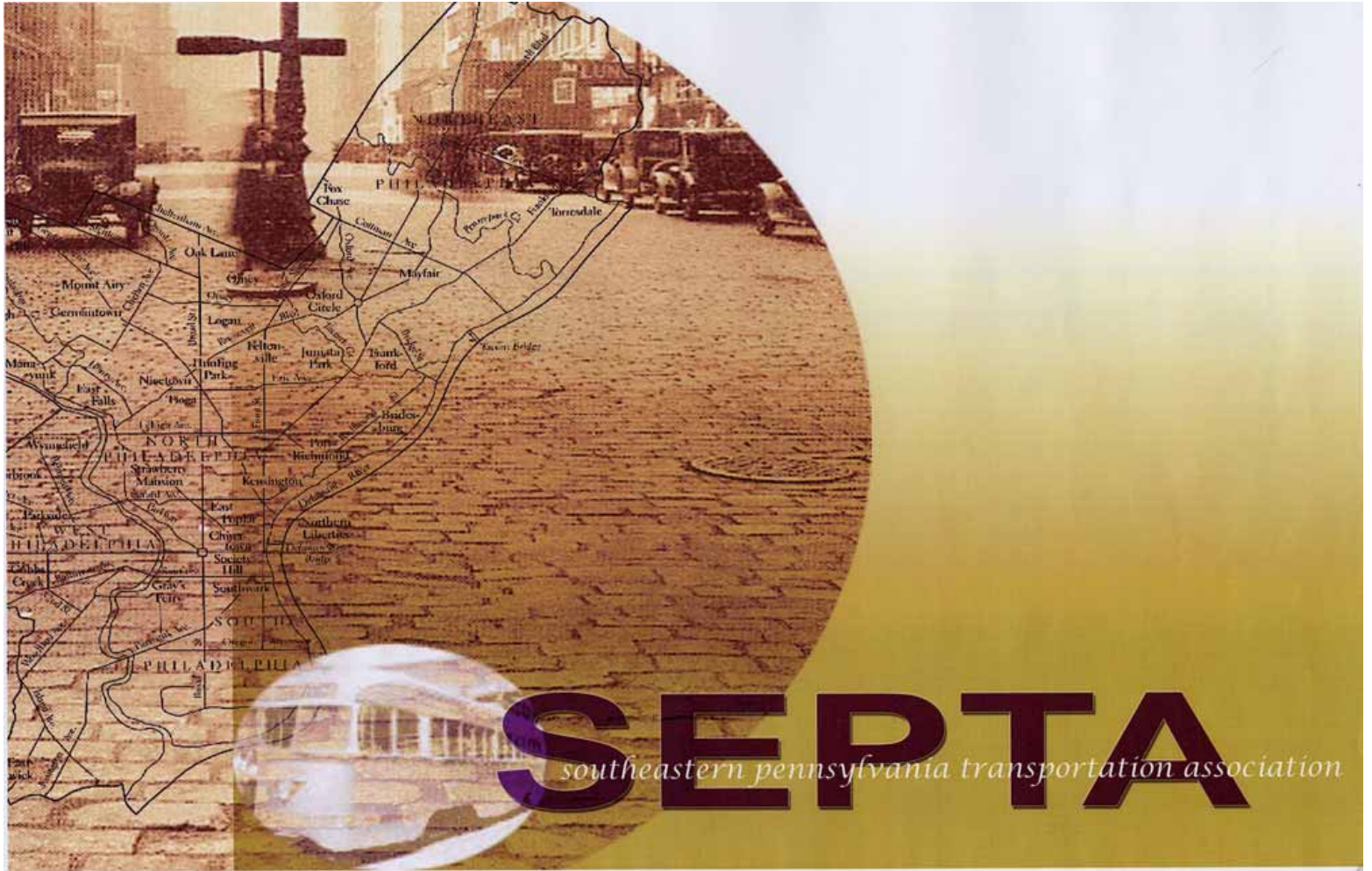
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*and industry*

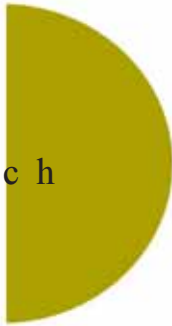








a p p r o a c h



Approaching what to do with elemental Philadelphia included influences from previous projects.

Walter Hood helped to identify each elemental component and how these separate pieces contribute to the bigger picture.

Carlo Scarpa is renowned for his ability to eloquently integrate the past into the present. His works served as appropriate templates to research considering an integration of past into present was the premise behind this demonstration project.

The objective use of form is to entice people, who entice more people who entice more people. This idea entitled triangulation is applied to the energy a place generates when populated by people.

Isamu Noguchi, approached his landscapes in the same manner that he approached his sculpture and stage designs as an artistic product meant to be interacted with.

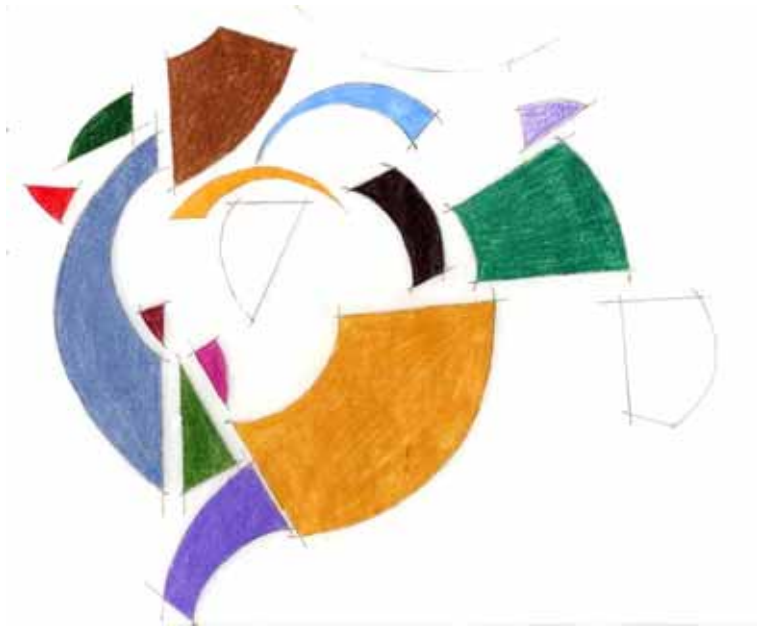


the c h a l l e n g e

Walter Hood took on a project in Los Angeles, California where he researched sixteen kinds of people from single mothers, addicts, inventors and cooks to name a few. Hood drew out the underlying characteristics and revealed the tunes that each character waltzed to. His findings were drafted into urban park, Durant Park, proposed forms were specifically geared towards the rhythm of each characteristic. The project was documented as Hood's book [Blues and Jazz](#).

Garrett Eckbo posed a challenge to Walter Hood's sixteen individual parks. How will you merge these sixteen designs into one park as these sixteen people have to be merged into one neighborhood?

Eckbo's challenge shed light on what I am attempting in Philadelphia. The city of brotherly love is comprised of many unique individuals, as these individuals cluster together to form community, and then neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are Philadelphia's foundation. Now how do I demonstrate this through form?

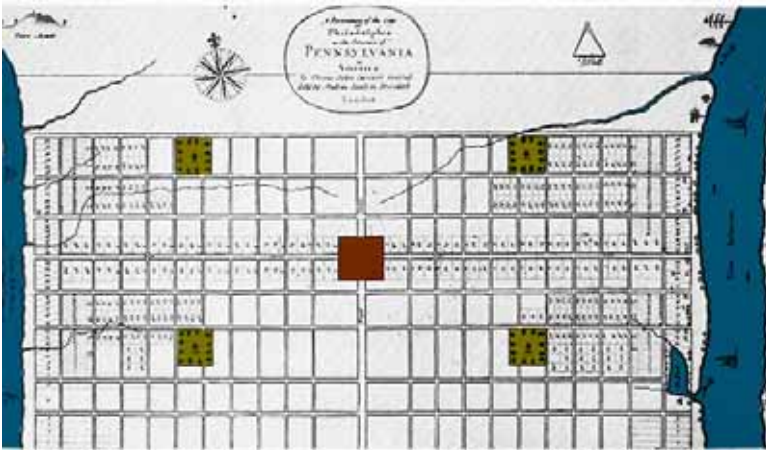


p h i l a d e l p h i a 1 0 1

Chartered to Penn's ownership in 1701 William Penn's utopian vision for the city of brotherly **LoVE** began as a gridiron plan in wait of a location. A space large enough to accommodate the 1200 acres that became home to Philadelphia Centre Square nestled between the Schuylkill River to the east and Delaware River to the west.

The heart of Center City is marked by the heart of government City Hall placed at the intersection of the two primary thoroughfares Market Street runs east/west and Broad Street traveling north/south. Today Center City occupies the distance between Vine to South Streets and the Schuylkill to Delaware Rivers.

Innovative public squares (Franklin, Washington, Rittenhouse, Logan) provide shaded relief from harsh urban living. They also help to divide Center City into four equal quadrants. This same innovative approach to public greenspace can be seen in historic Savannah, Georgia.



William Penn's Gridiron Plan



Penn's Gridiron Plan in proximity to current Philadelphia

c o n t e x t

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway formerly the Fairmount Parkway was initiated as a city beautification project. The diagonal form set a contrast against the city's grided backdrop.

Along this boulevard are significant points of interest:

**The Museum of Art:** is a representation of the city's cultural status.

**Logan Circle:** one of William Penn's original four squares turned Circle with the increase of vehicular traffic.

**LoVE Plaza:** a place of refuge during the lunch hour

**City Hall:** the heart of the city. Philadelphia's two primary thoroughfares Broad Street running north/south and Market running east/west intersect here.



## t h e   s i t e

The shell of the visitor center is a reminder of the time that LoVE Plaza served Philadelphia as an information center. With alternative information sources available the visitor center lost its appeal.

Richard Indiana's iconographic LoVE sculpture marks the primary entry to the plaza enframing the view along the Ben Franklin Parkway anchored by the Museum of Art.

Just as Logan Square adapted to changing transportation conditions, LoVE plaza did the same with the addition of a subgrade parking lot.

Kennedy Fountain, centered within the plaza serves as the primary draw for teenagers trying out new skateboard tricks. There is a controversy between skateboarders and the community. LoVE plaza's tiered concrete planes are a skateboarders dream. But such play puts a strain on concrete causing it to prematurely chip and crack.

Kennedy Fountain



parking garage entry



LoVE sculpture



visitor center



city hall



c o n c e p t

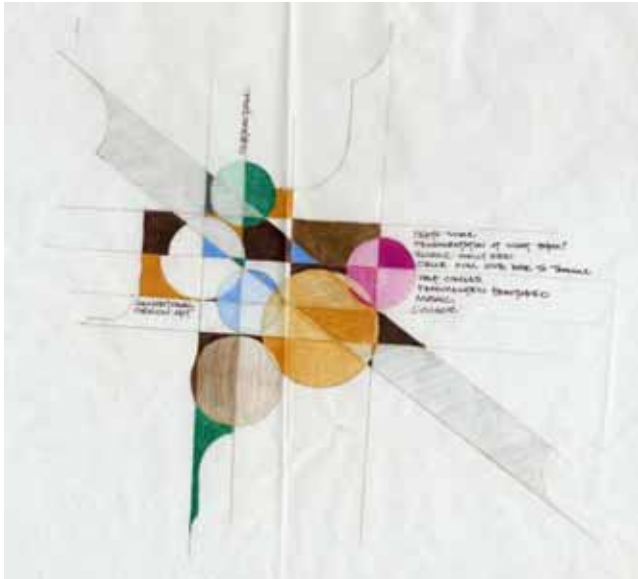


A notion comprised of a series of layers both abstract and physical superimposed against each other. Philadelphia's grided layout serves as a base.

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway is illustrated as the strong diagonal movement that bisects the site.

Neighborhoods (circles) overlay in relative proximity to each other. They are dissected by existing named streets running east/west and numbered streets running north/south.

This collage approach creates a three-dimensional ideal that goes beyond the surface digging deeper into the elements that add to the complexity of a city.



Concept

The concept operates as collage of the neighborhoods of Philadelphia as an overlay of circles atop the grided foundation of the city fabric.

The Ben Franklin Parkway is represented as the strong diagonal bisecting the site into northeast and southwest.

Insight was gained into how the space would service the city as a gathering space pulling influences from its immediate and extended context.

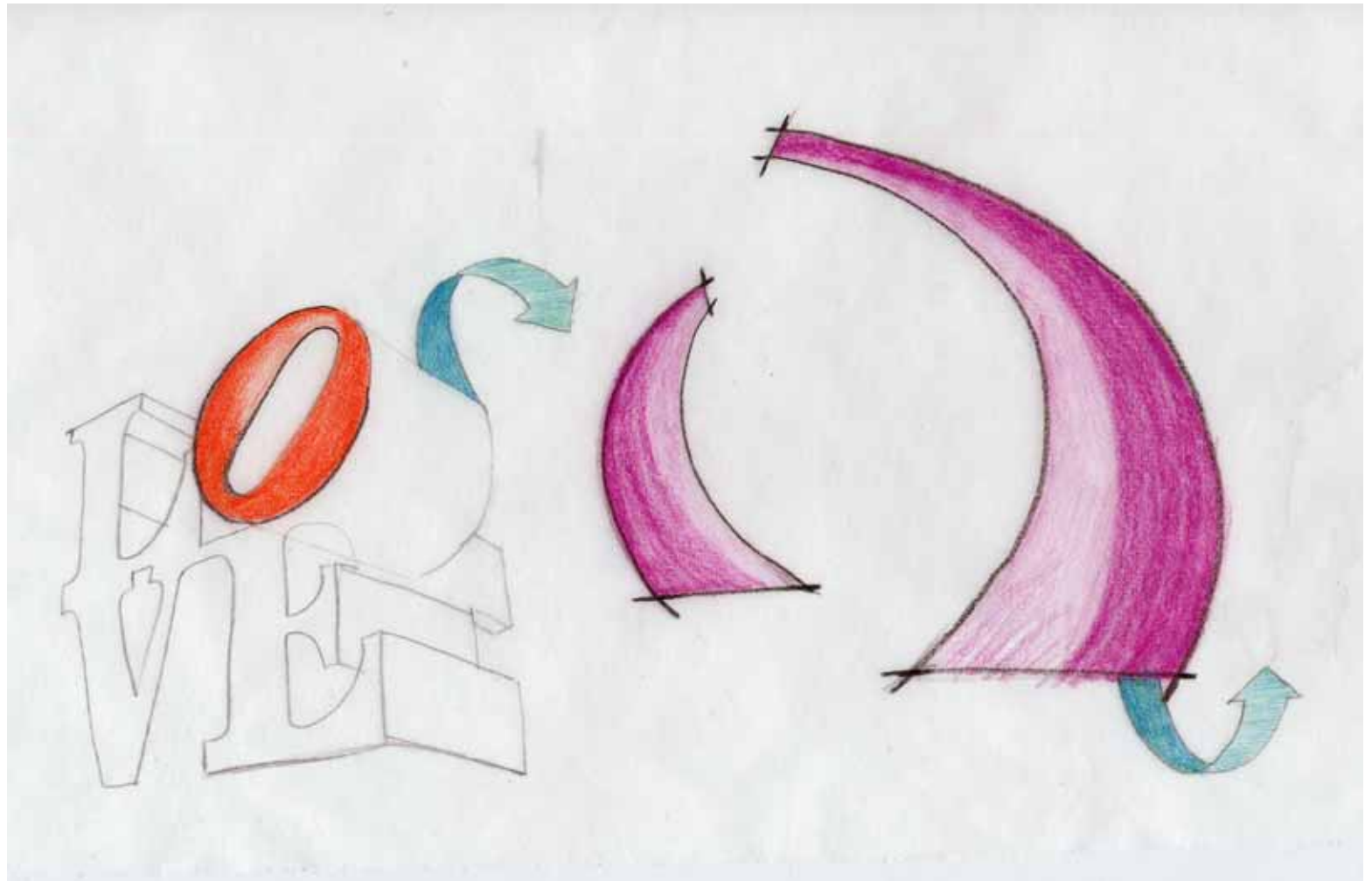
From this diagram the decision was made to further pursue the idea of collage, that is pulling together the various components of a city and through a cut and paste approach have them read as a whole.



Starting point:



Richard Indiana's **LoVE** sculpture is perched at the primary entrance to **LoVE** Plaza. A tilted "o" form generates a luring energy that if utilized in the right way could speak larger volumes beyond the site.



e v o l u t i o n   o f   f o r m

The underlying form for LoVE Plaza took shape while in search of a form that was **all encompassing**.

I had been asked, “was it [the governing form] always there?” Looking back through the heap of process drawings each vital arc was highlighted to better view the progression towards the master plan. Yes. The governing form had always been there but when did it begin to mean something? Around drawing eight. Significance of this illustration lies in the fact that it begins to break away from the stark diagonal direction associated with the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Instead the form becomes a bold movement, movement that signifies a present energy.

The hard work had been accomplished, all that remained were a series of refinements molding this found form onto an illustriative master plan.





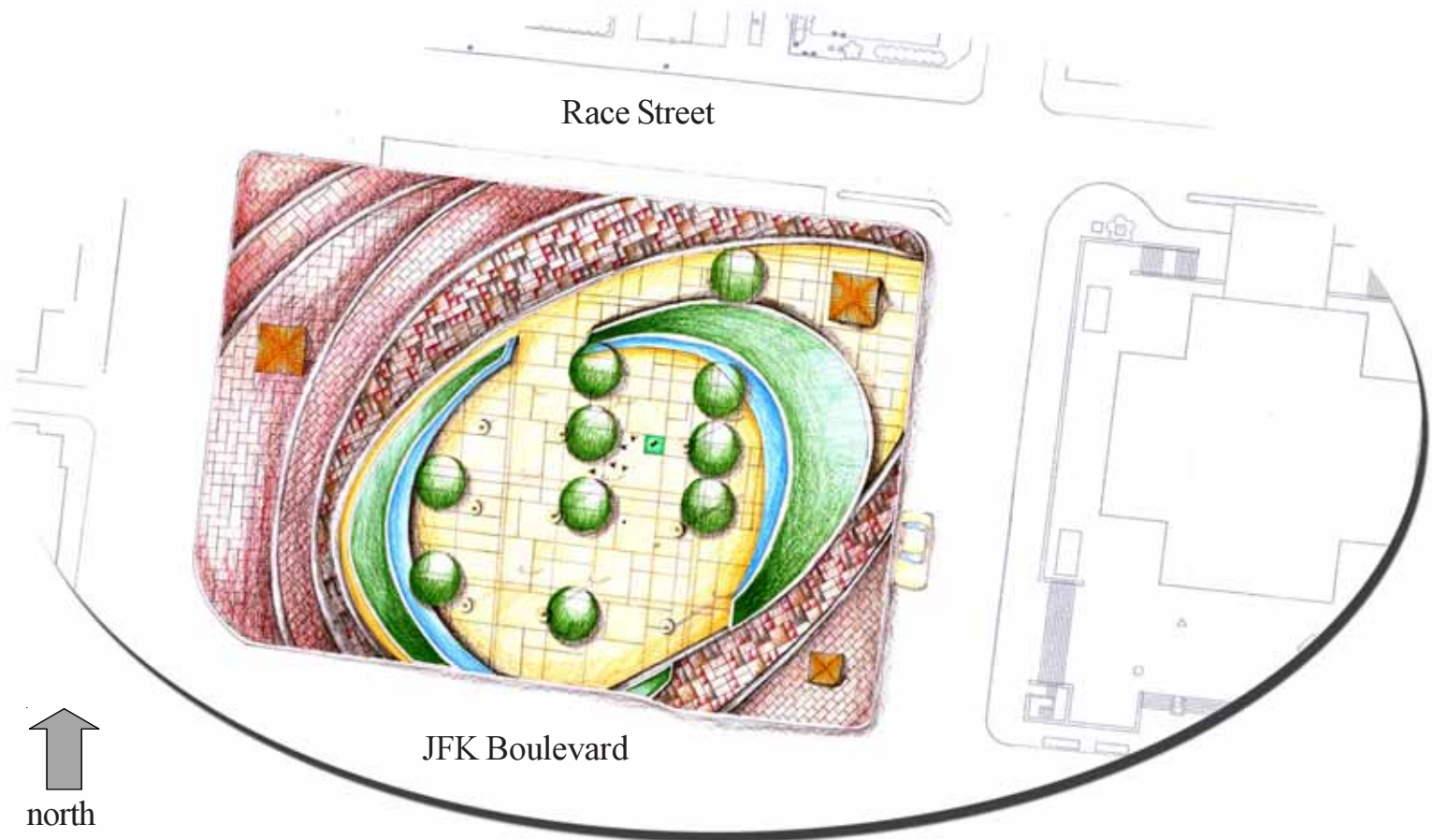
“If they meant something to us in the past (of course we have to like them as forms) then they will mean something to us again.”

-Isamu Noguchi

Noguchi’s quote gets to the heart of what the master plan is to represent. Philadelphia is a city where the past and present operate within the same plane. A sedimentary approach to topography allows both to coexist within Love Plaza.

Paving patterns of forgotten neighborhoods will reawaken their existence and significance to the city.

The grid of Honeylocust trees reinforces William Penn’s initial gridiron layout for the city. Water flanks the central plaza area calling attention to Penn’s placement of a city between the Schuylkill River to the west and the Delaware River to the east.



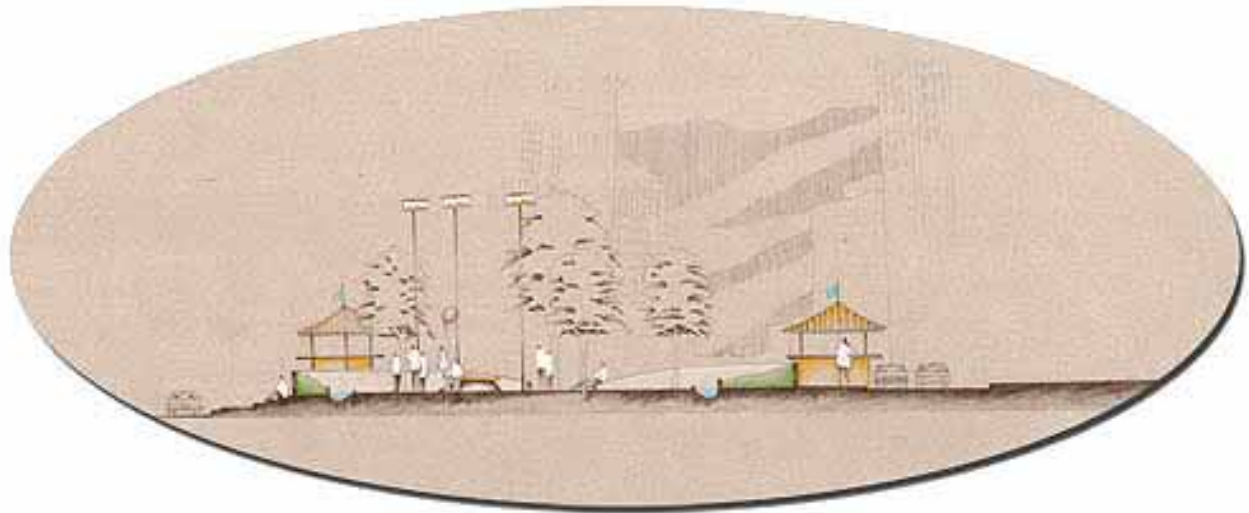
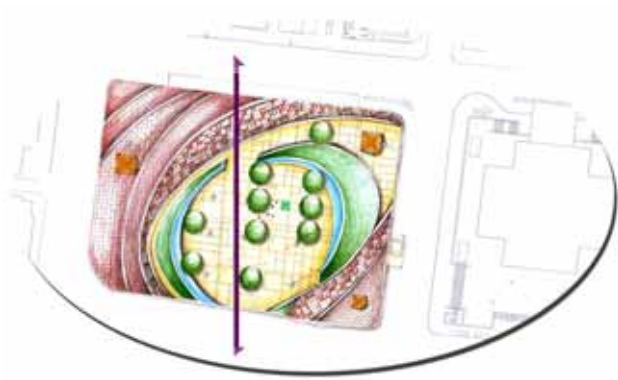
Race Street

JFK Boulevard



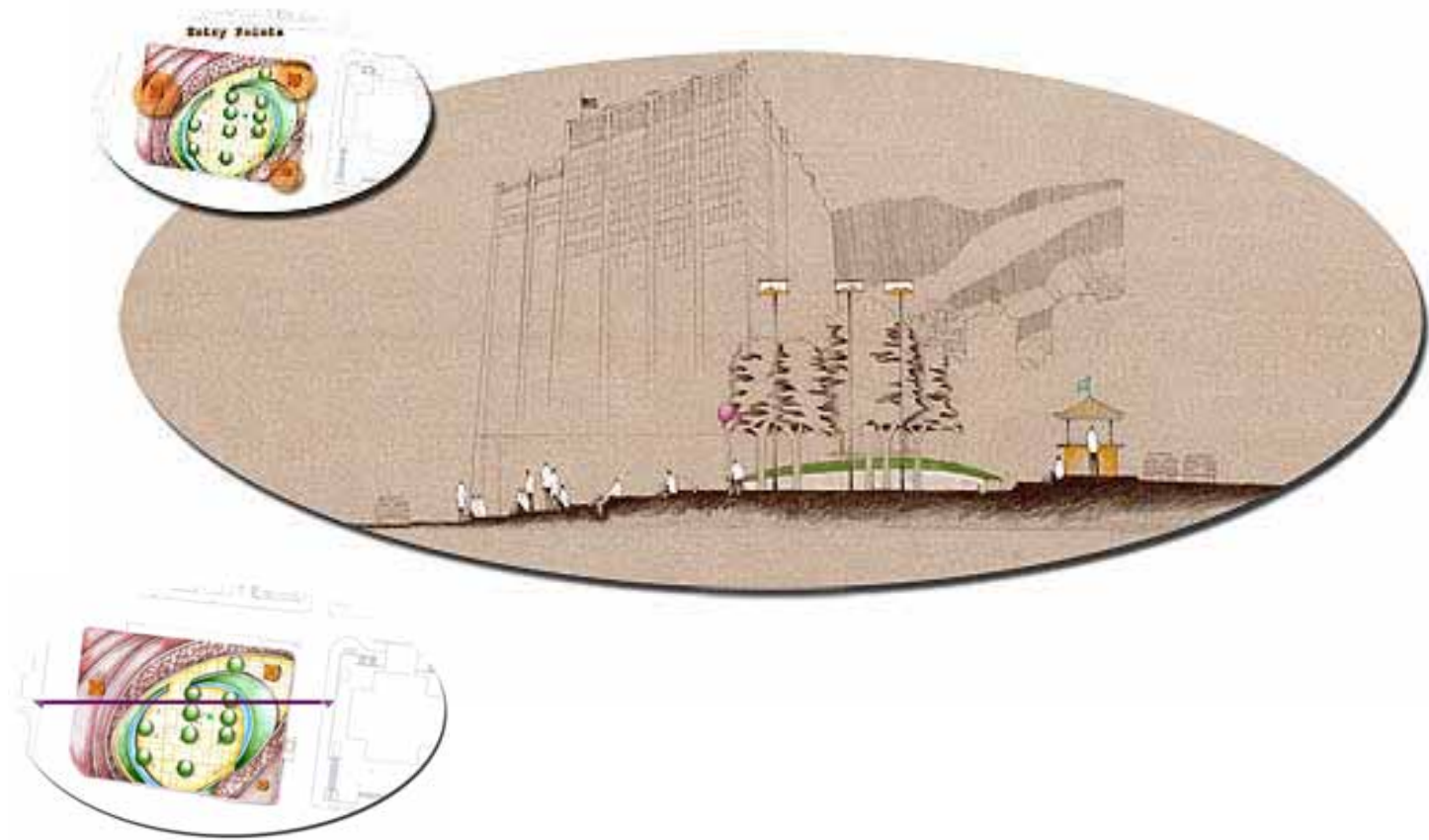
north

not to scale



section a

section b





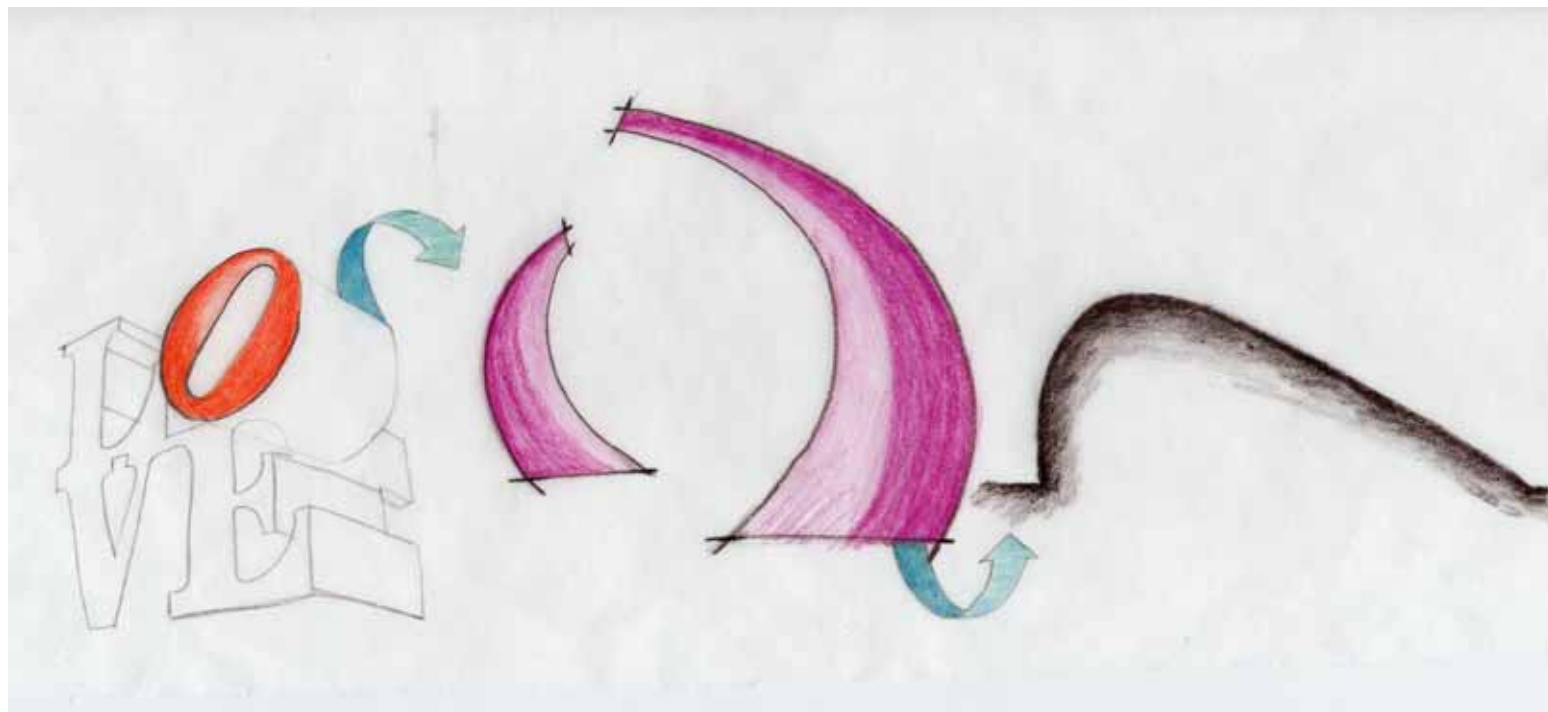
In the initial strategy, it was assumed that the master plan would be the final product. Yet there was a disconnect between what the master plan and elementals expressed. The strategy wasn't complete.

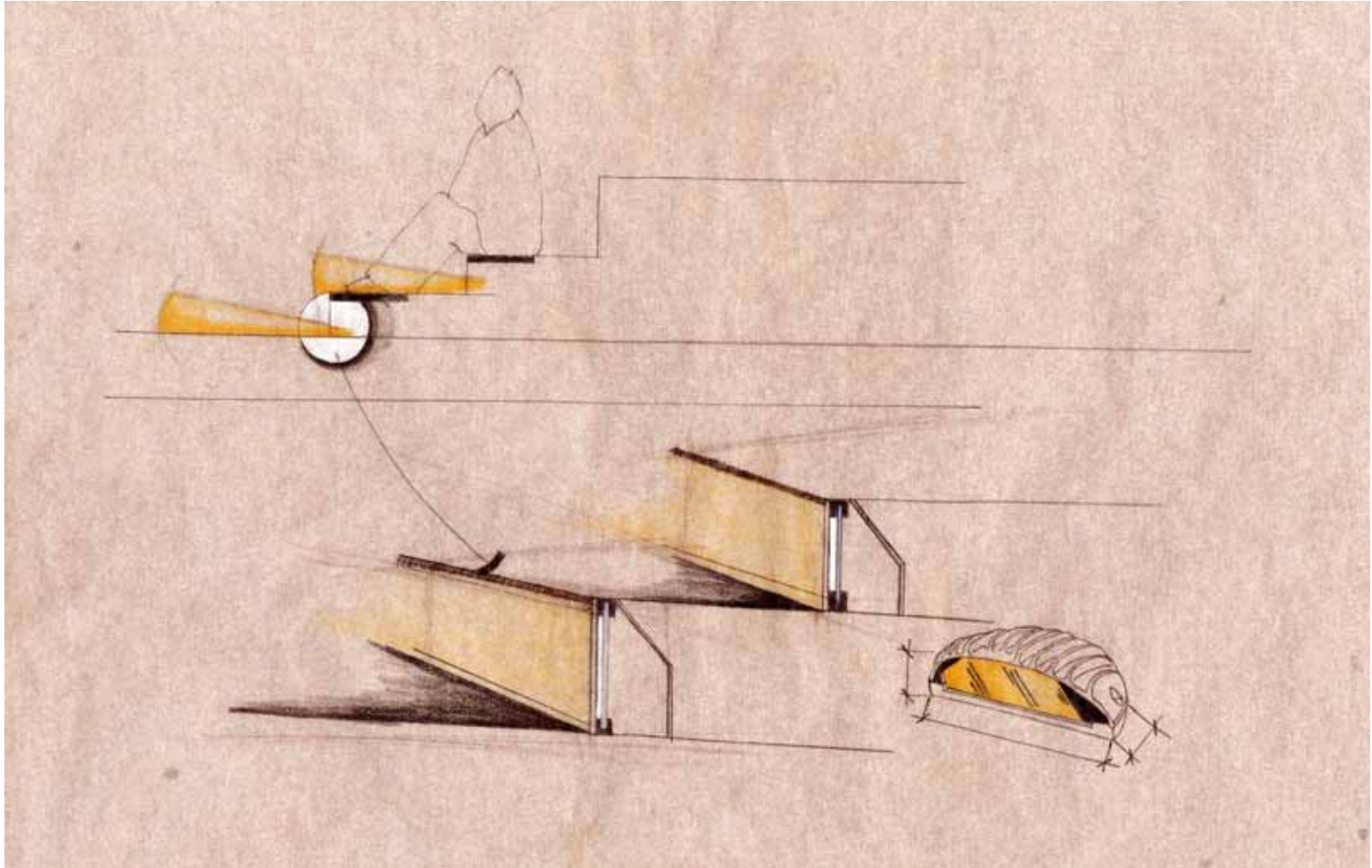
The next logical step was to dissect the master plan into a type of elemental (i.e. details). In this way the beginning and the end become one in the same as intended.

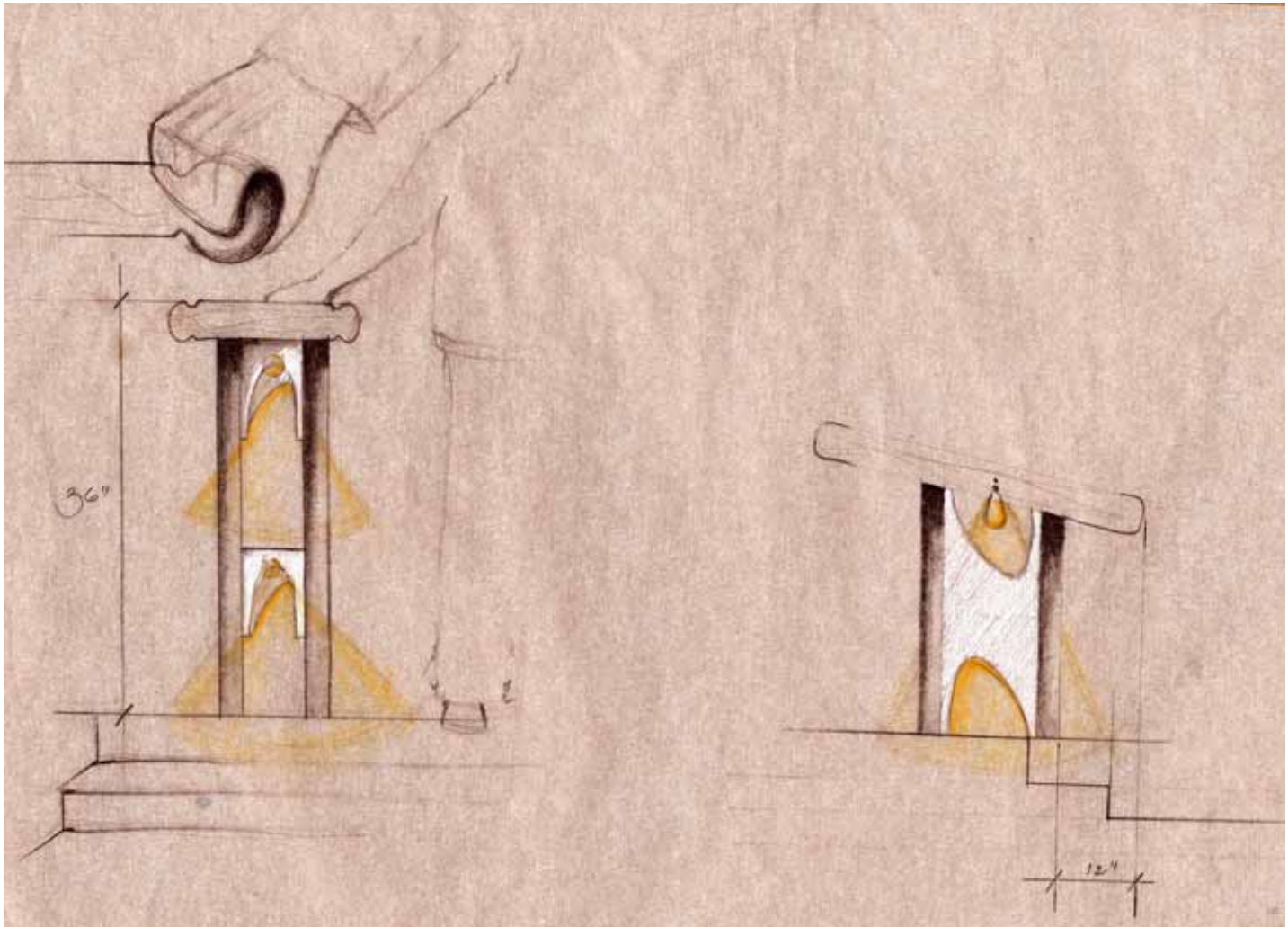
A guiding factor where to start was to take the governing form a step further into the light fixtures, the benches, bar stools and stairs.

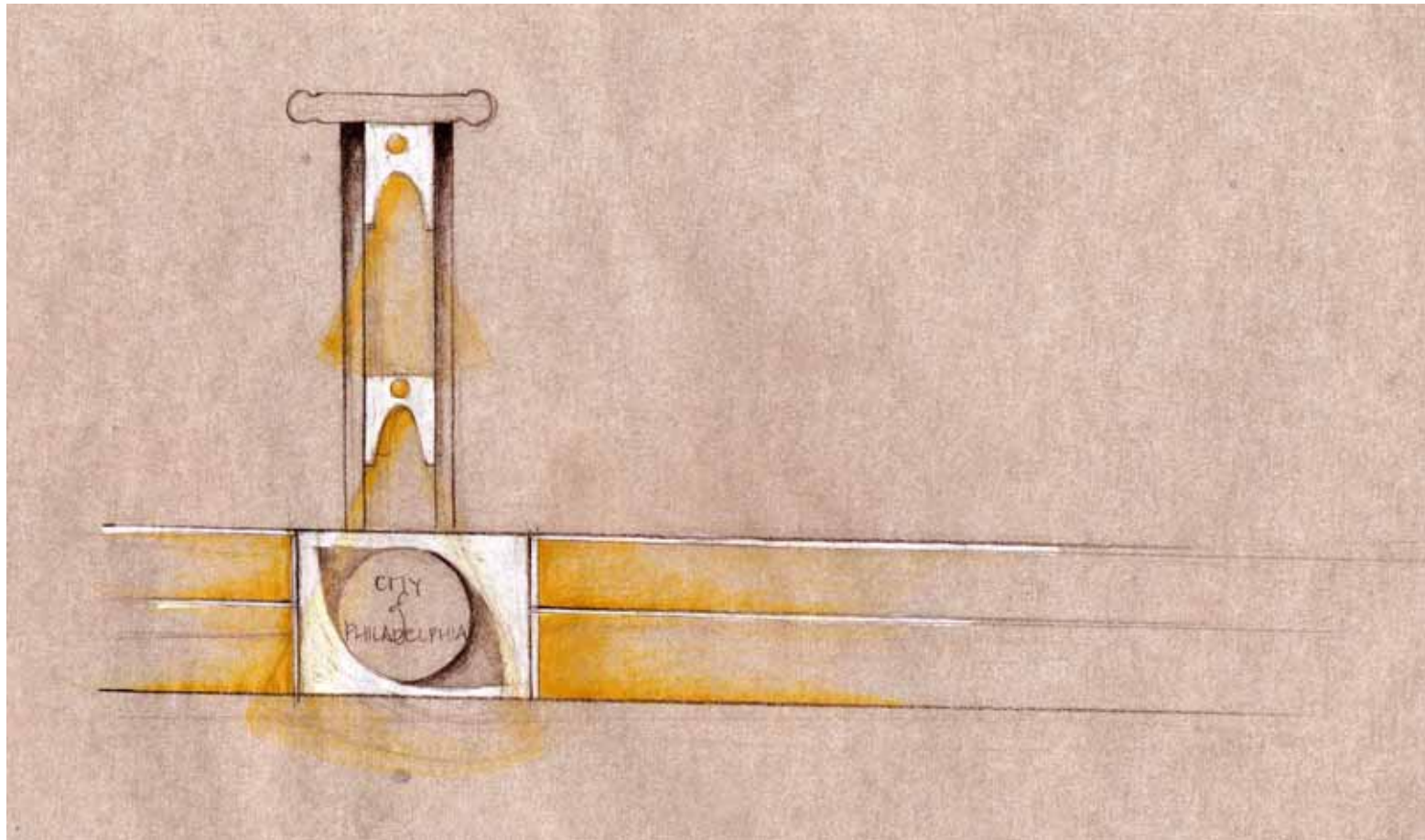
Philadelphia begins as a journey welcoming residents and visitors alike into a neighborhood metropolis. On a smaller scale the same embracing traits are found in the minute details.

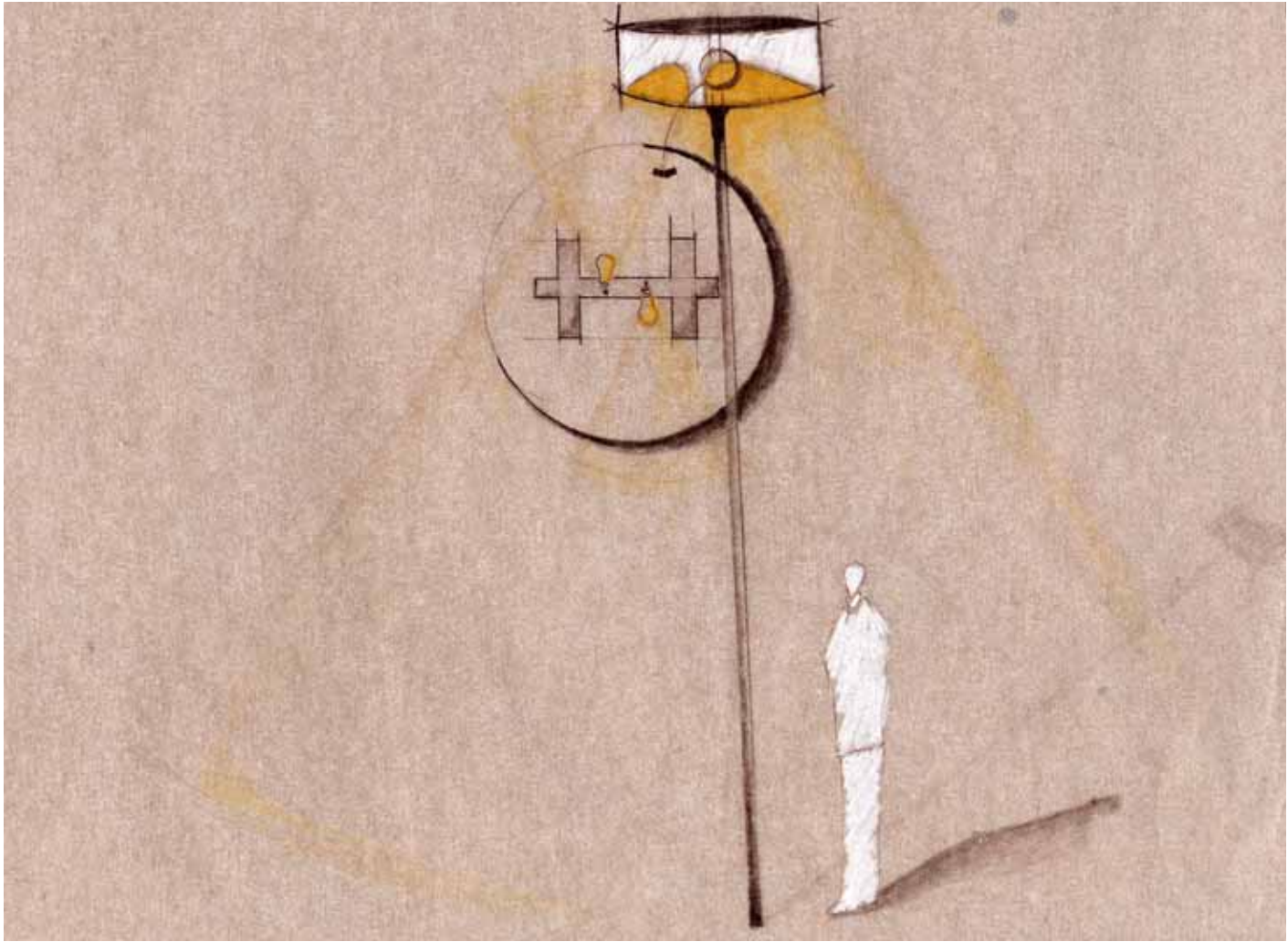
Graphically, trace paper over butcher paper displays the fact that I think in layers, each is dependent upon another.

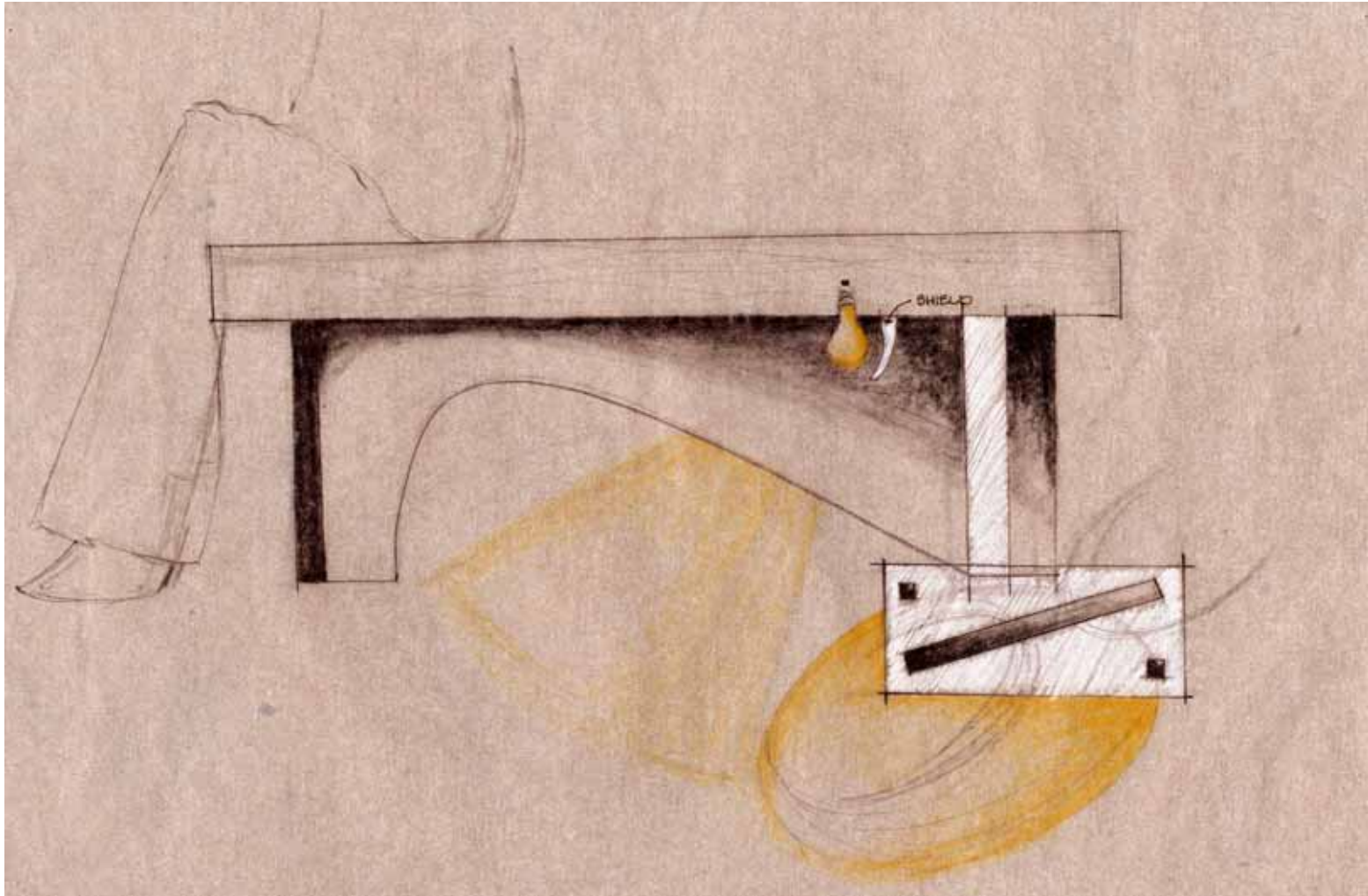


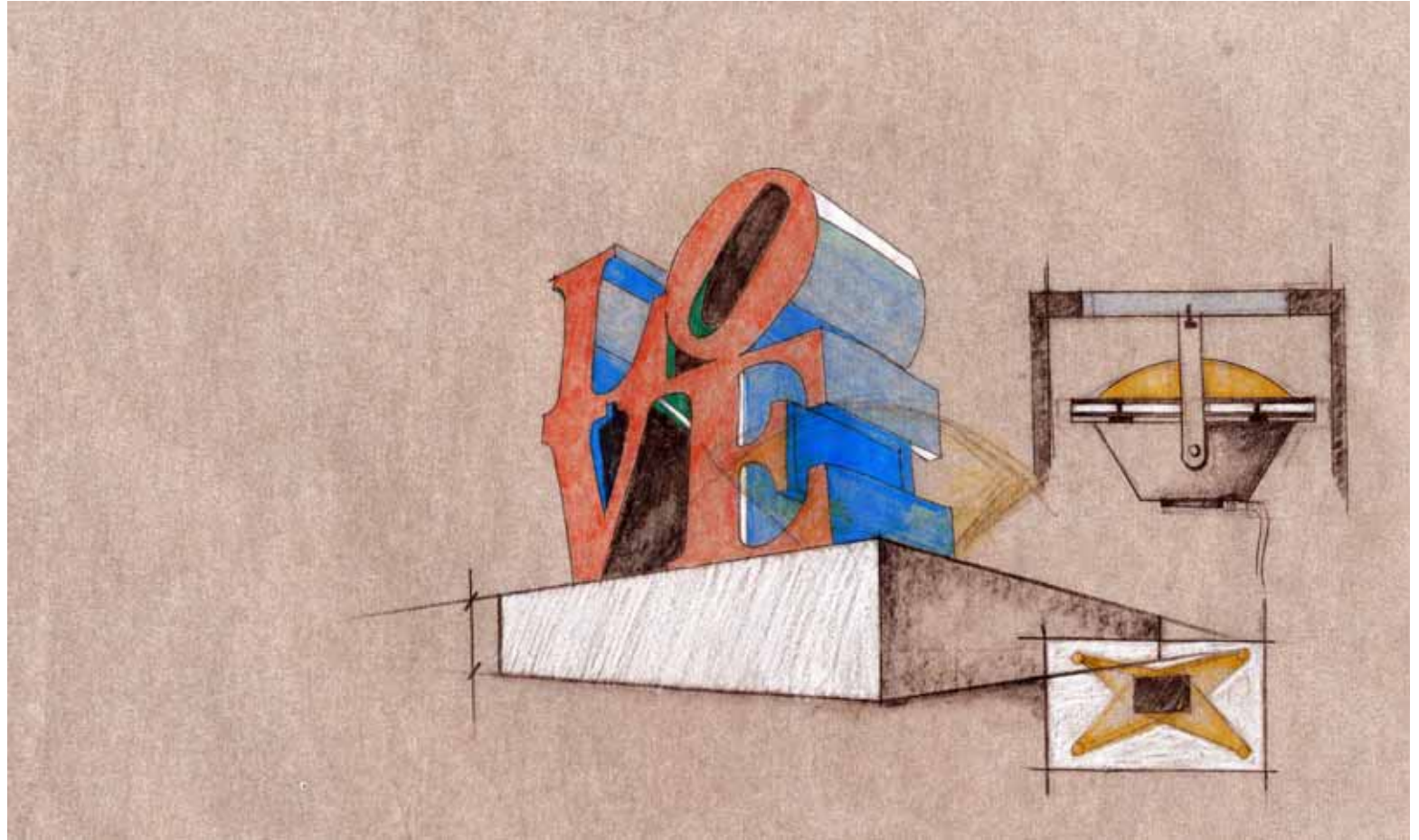


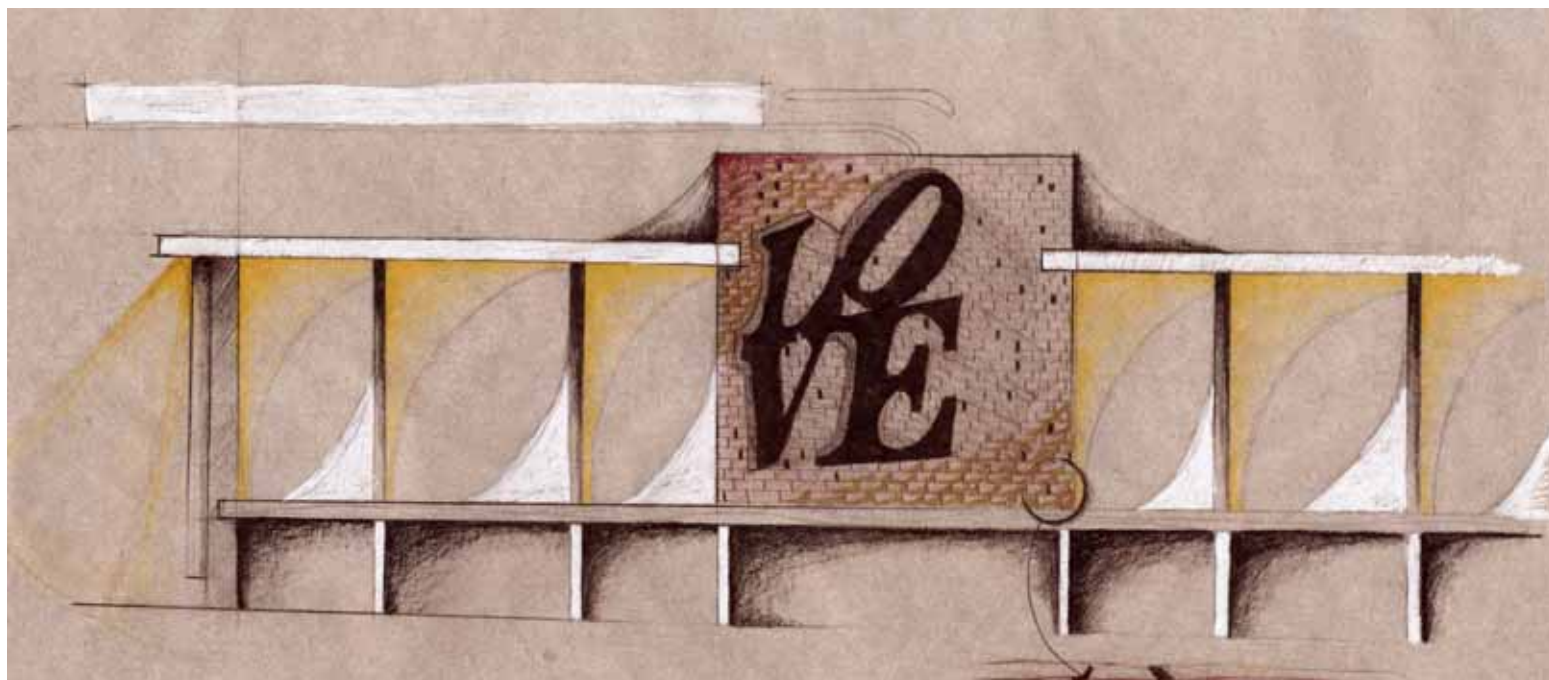


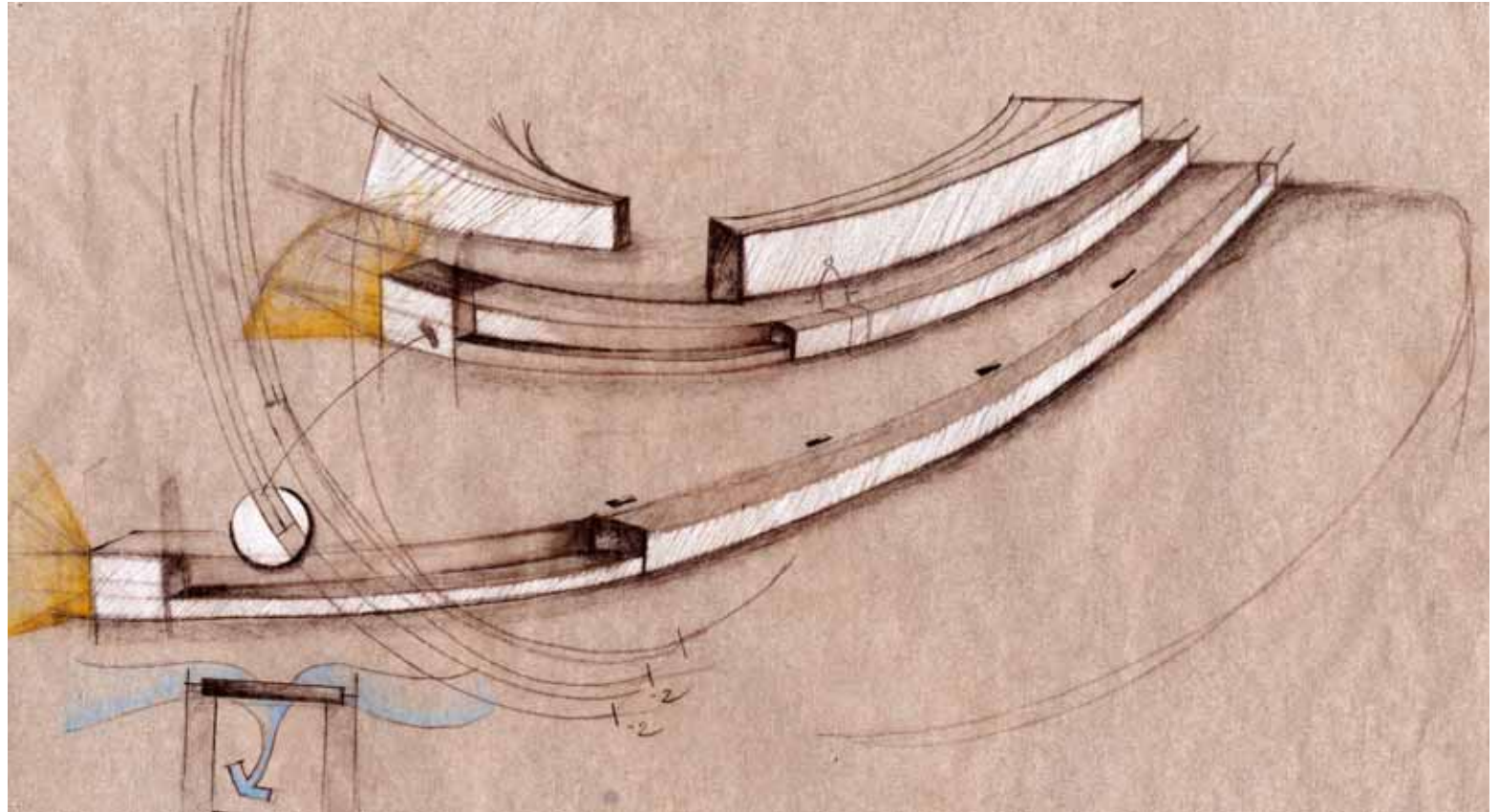


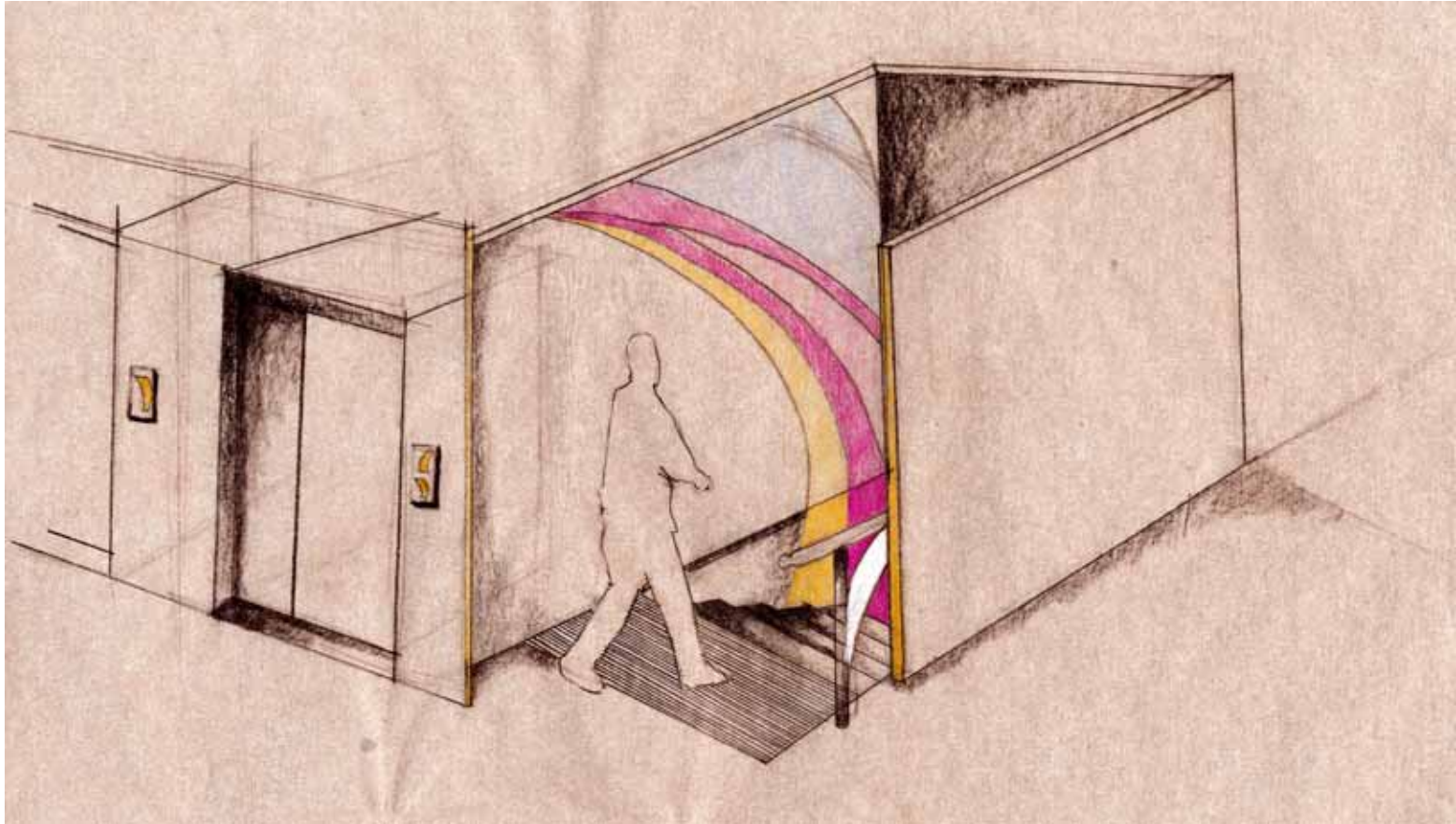


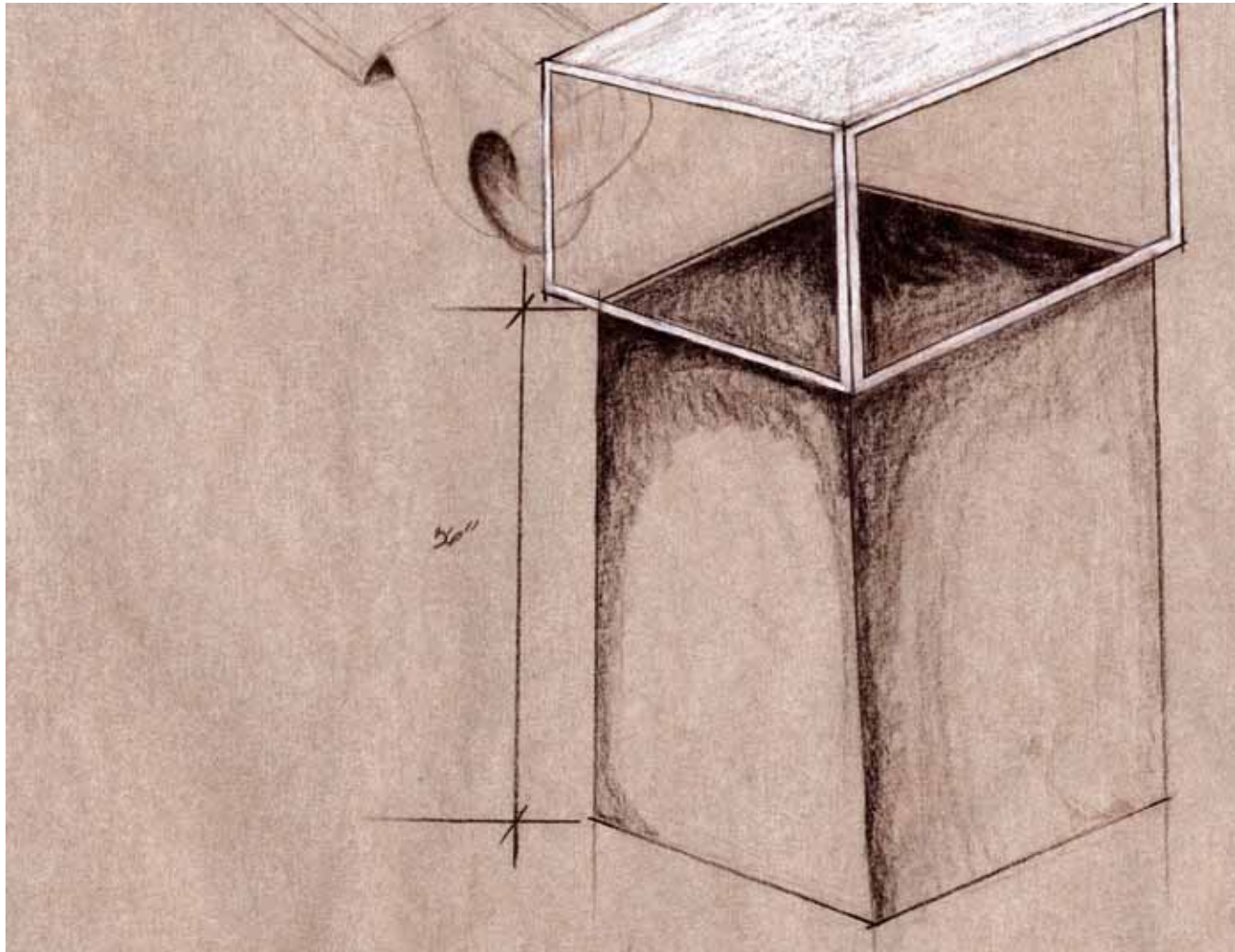




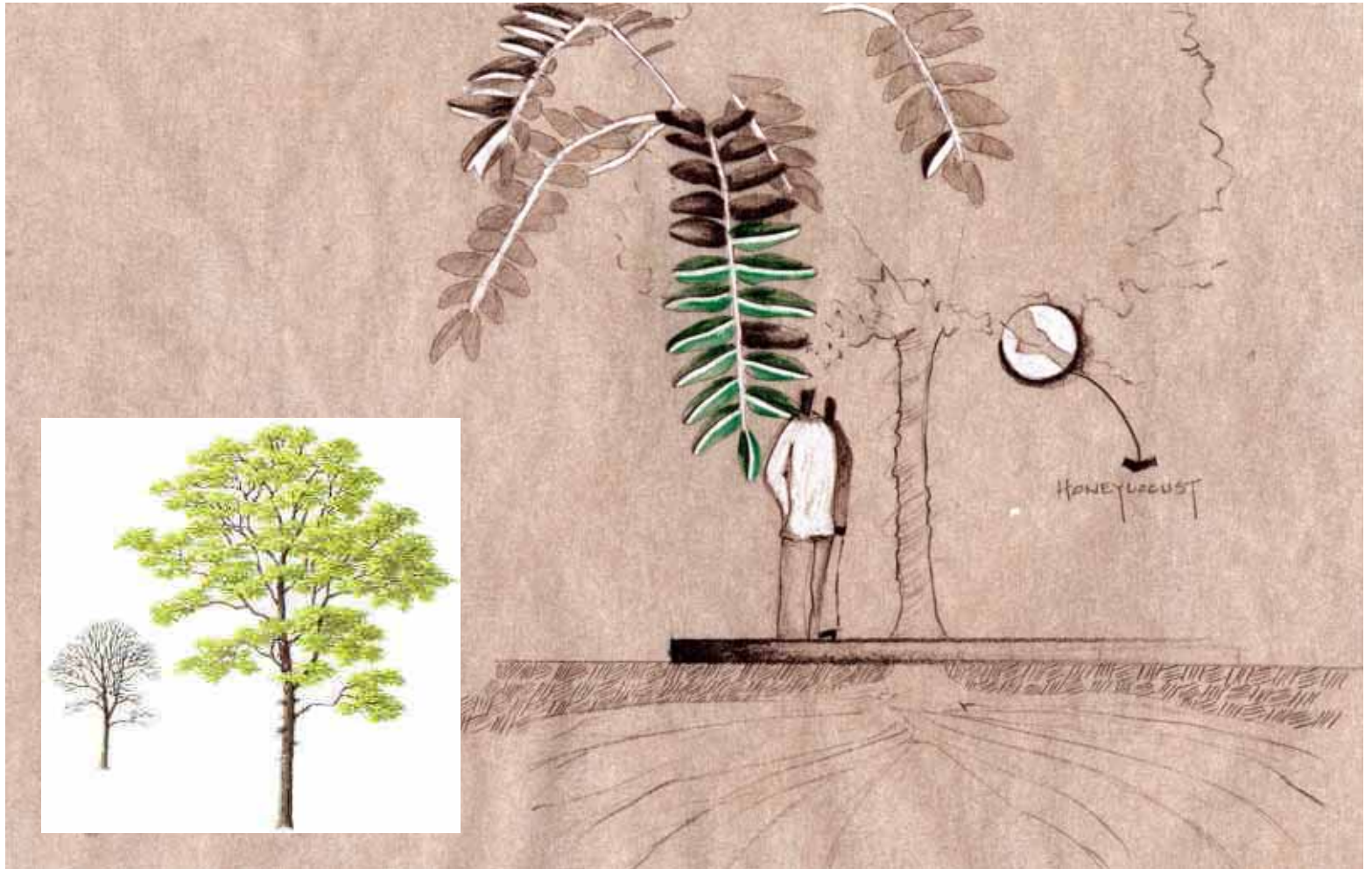


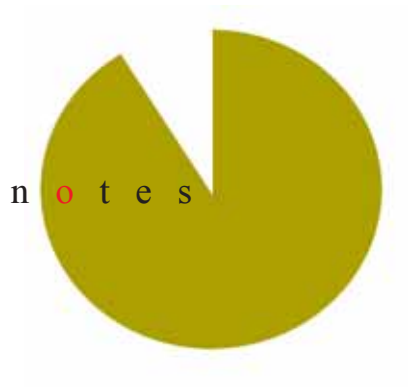












**Benjamin Johnson: note taker**

3 Land/Recycle/ Fragmentation

Recycled toward substantial: sustainability. Hard space

Past to Present. Vocal. For Space

Plan back to Community

Mural Project=Neighborhoods

Master Plan. could be and would be

Parallel surfaces

Function\\form

Light: natural. manmade.

Water. symbolic 2 rivers

Vegetation. Dynamic of seasonal time

Topography.

Overall section? 1. walls 2. mural 3. section

City grid. more personal.

Environment. water + beds

site as oversight. for city. environment

Question+ Answer

1. Dean know Philly? 2. Does become a form of inquiry? 3. Overview William Penn

Deformation of grid

Issues: Pavillion design. Stair. steps. Lighting. HSW

**Dean Bork: note taker**

Concept: form as catalytic presence to revitalize

Design intent: REdesign urban spaces to address underlying problem

Allowing forms to reveal the life of the site

A residue of the past made available \_\_\_\_\_.

Finding usable residue on-site

Marking changes over time

What is in fact appropriate?

Philadelphia: her city (family)

What is it about Philadelphia to tap into

3 sources: Walter Hood: finding the hidden within elemental.

Carlo Scarpa: transitory past into present

Isamu Noguchi: bringing out energy of the place

Concept Strategy: A collage form superimposition

Not a definite boundary as in mosaic

Essence of Philadelphia: Port, Rivers, Waters Edge, Industrial Hub, People Activated, Market, Industry,

Transportation their mistakes\_\_\_\_\_.

Hidden Treasure: NEIGHBORHOODS.

Places abandoned =upgraded

Mural projects= walls as canvas

Community= 4 neighborhoods. 1.N.E. Phila 2. North Phila 3. West Phila 4. South Phila

Site where it all comes together. Love Plaza

Site\_\_\_\_\_on Ben Franklin Parkway (Bisects city on Diagonal)

Pulling neighborhoods to the site

Form should look as if it is intended to be **there**

Existing Conditions: formal. A place to get information. Arrive. Depart.

Gathering you into the space. Form as evokative of energy. (Love sculpture)

Coming together into a whole.

Master Plan + God is in the Details.

finding that one detail that allows it to happen

The critical detail.

form. understanding the city.

Being Phila while you are there.

The details: the critical gesture/line. Where are they?

Question+Answer

Sarah:

Use of topography as a response to Franklin's city.

Ben:

The dynamic factors you have designed into the place.

Lights: giving direction.

Water: on both sides abstract rivers

Seatwalls: washes of light

Trees: city grid

Handrails: washes of light

Dean:

Describe one specific gesture to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Extending into fabric of city \_\_\_\_\_?

Materials= How neighborhoods operate

Activities: familiarity while being in the space “coming back to the neighborhood”

Paving pattern taken from what \_\_\_\_\_. city grid. bldg edges.

Literal reference in paving.

Brian:

Finding Phila.

Why go back?

Why do I like it?

Philadelphia as home \_\_\_\_\_.

Most Philadelphia details. Pavillion. Steps. Seats.

Dean:

Are there missing drawings?

How does it fit into the immediate context?

More knowledge of context will strengthen your concept drawing.

Taking it on faith as it is.

Ben:

Drawing of William Penn’s Philadelphia

**Sarah Ridgely: note taker**

Elmwood Park, Roanoke Virginia

Form as catalytic movement

Form as beyond physical function

Land resources at a limit. are we solving problem in redesign or just changing a face?

Form to reveal a life, a residue, a history, a past.

Elements. Approach. 1. Scarpa: past into present. 2. Hood. elemental. 3. Noguchi. energy+form

Collage concept. in form not mosaic because it lacks edge.

buildings, murals parking green space, dead facades as canvas.

Palimpsest.

Ben Franklin Pkwy. avenue as Champs Elyses. east as past, west as future, linear connectivity

Superimposition. parking. park. river. neighborhoods.

Existing site condition. ingress, egress. info gathering.

Larger scheme able to read as a whole. Into master plan.

Design blends back into urban fabric. The details help explain the elements

Question+ Answer

Ben:

Dynamic factors, water, light, vegetation

Sarah:

Topo as a place as respite

Dean:

Made a gesture to the surrounding neighborhoods? It seems to be an inward form.

Paving pattern in plaza?

Form as a literal reference.

Brian:

Ask Dean's question differently. You know Philly "was the form always there?"

What was it about Philly that you discovered through your design ?

What did you gain as a Philadelphian?

If you go back and look at the details which one is the most Philadelphian?

Which Process drawing was most important?

Sarah:

Will the space change?

Dean:

How does the site speak to its immediate context?

Your concept drawing would be more convincing if there was more about the capturing of the essence of the neighborhoods.

Ben:

2 places for additional drawings. 1. William Penn's Philly 2. Section drawings (go beyond site)

Elements need clearer connection through the plan

Brian:

Was sculpture (love sculpture) created and sited for Philly?

Its never been presented a san evocative piece of philly

Its the one existing ite element that you've re.energized. You can now see Philly in it through it.

Ben:

Evolution of site wasn't thoughtful. But you've pulled Philly in through 2 rivers.

Superimposition of city in pavers.

Sculpture centerpiece. Different way to look at Philly. Need sections. Sketcherly sections.

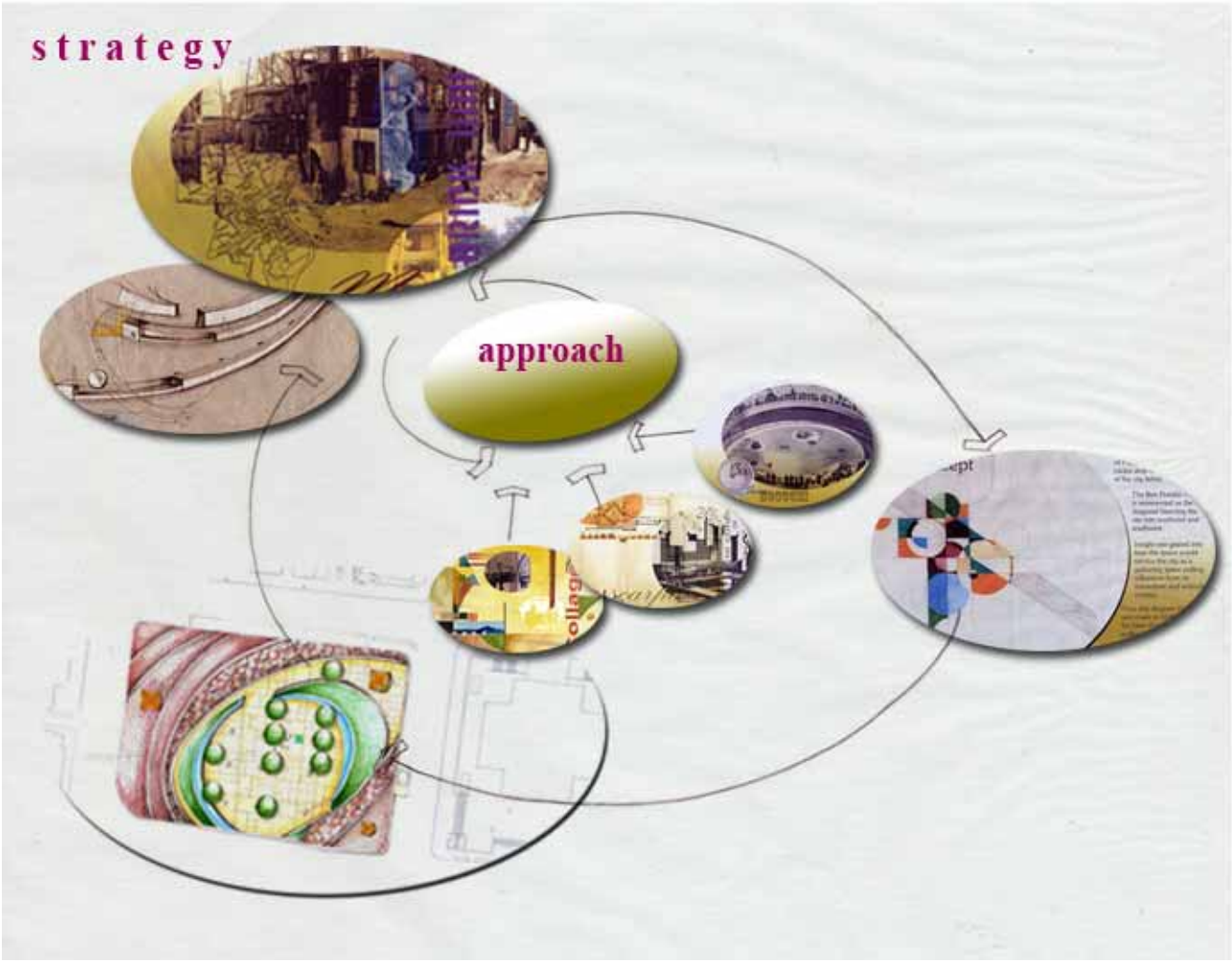


By now if you are wondering what's left to ponder?

everything. This portion of the book is a reflection of what would I do differently if I was able to undo past mistakes and shortsightings.

There was a big push to seamlessly integrate a form into its surrounding context. However, I didn't take the trouble to zoom in and out painting an overall picture of downtown Philadelphia and how the proposed design appropriately fits into this particular context.

The next challenge was to investigate whether the design strategy could be adopted by other cities. Whether the character of places like Chicago, Pittsburg, or San Fransico could be extruded into form with a similar approach. Being in search of warmer weather I decided to pay a visit to a good friend of Savannah, Georgia to test out the approach on such another city. The following is submitted as reflection.





First lets recap about what the strategy entails. An intimate walking tour provides a one-on-one experience with Savannah's elements to find out what speaks to me.

Once there's an understanding of both the iconographic elements that the general populus can easily associate with a particular city and those more intimate elements, the personal reasons why you return to a place, then its time to run these elements through the approach filter.

The approach consisted of three influences whose previous successes helped to arrange the element pieces into a legible concept. Walter Hood possesses the ability to weld cultural fragments into an appropriate contextual design solution. Carlo Scarpa is able to see multiple techniques of how to weld said cultural fragments into interdependent wholes.

Once there is a finished piece Isamu Noguchi has the ability to extrude a life that attracts people a key factor that determines a successful or unsuccessful space.



From the approach the byproduct is a strong concept comprised of abstract thought set against the city's existing form.

The concept sets the starting point for a series of process drawings that evolve into the master plan. In this case the master plan sets the stage to complete the strategy coming full circle back to the elemental (i.e. details).

Considering that the details are where the magic lies. I deliberately looked for the details within Savannah's historic district.

Thought: I am a visual person. By that I mean that it's more interesting to process information by way of visuals as oppose to notes on a board. Wouldn't it have been better if Philadelphia's elementals were documented as black and white photographs? Removing the appeal of color to illustrate how to actually "see" the city being observed.

The following are found elements.



Savannah began its industrial start as a manufacturer of iron and brick. Those fortunate enough to do so mark the entrances to their homes with the material that provides income. These elaborate designs have become distinguishing elements within Savannah's historic district.



Another identifiable marker is in the city's layout. Alleyways are utilized as backdoor entrances, discrete methods of garbage removal, appealing alternatives to parking cars in the streets. Doing so opens up bricked sidewalks for people to walk, run enjoying the full extent of Savannah's friendly streetscapes.

The architecture are cultural expression and status artifacts are situated as a welcomed enclosure.



A useful method of wayfinding if one is ever lost is to look down at the varied brick patterns. For example the herringbone pattern marked elegant neighborhoods with lush private gardens. The stamped brick below lain in an alternating pattern ran alongside a historic cemetery.



Adjacent to historic Savannah the original clay pits can be visited if one wanted to learn more about the brick-making process.



My visit couldn't have been timed better as the jasmine had begun to release its signature perfume. Such jasmine grows in residential backyards and along public lanterns.



Live oaks drenched with Spanish moss are a welcomed comfort against summer sun.

## C o n c l u s i o n :

Based on what was found I feel confident that if a square were to undergo a redesign the provided strategy would again produce an appealing, successful form for the following reasons.

1. The proposed solution is not a sweeping set of rules that disregard context and cultural expressions. Instead they are used to create a form that speaks to a particular area.
2. An honest interpretation of a place transcends all scales from the conceptual overview to the elemental details. Each step is saturated with an understanding of place.
3. There is room for variance. The approach filter can be replaced with other more appropriate influence who have a better understanding of the city and its site.

c o n s u m a t u m e s t : It is finished