

A blurred night cityscape with light trails and a person in the foreground. The image is heavily motion-blurred, showing streaks of light in various colors (yellow, green, blue, red) against a dark background. In the foreground, a person is visible, their form also blurred. The overall scene suggests a busy urban environment at night.

interior cities

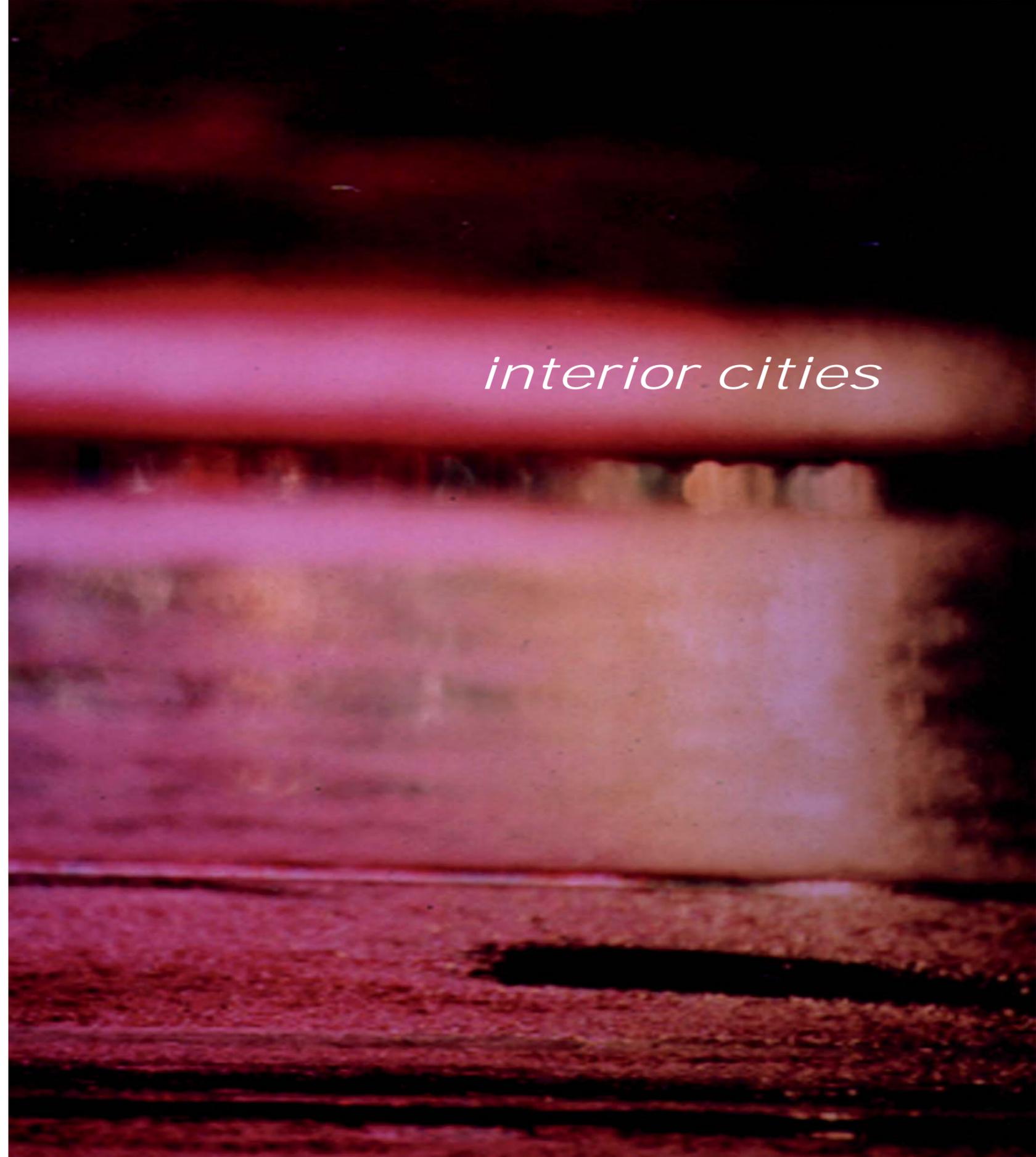
Beyond the physicality of the grid, beyond the streets and office towers, beyond the institutional, the formal and the planned, lies the city as experience; as memory; as imagination; as spatial body and spirit. This is the territory that Interior Architecture and Design perceives, maps and expresses.

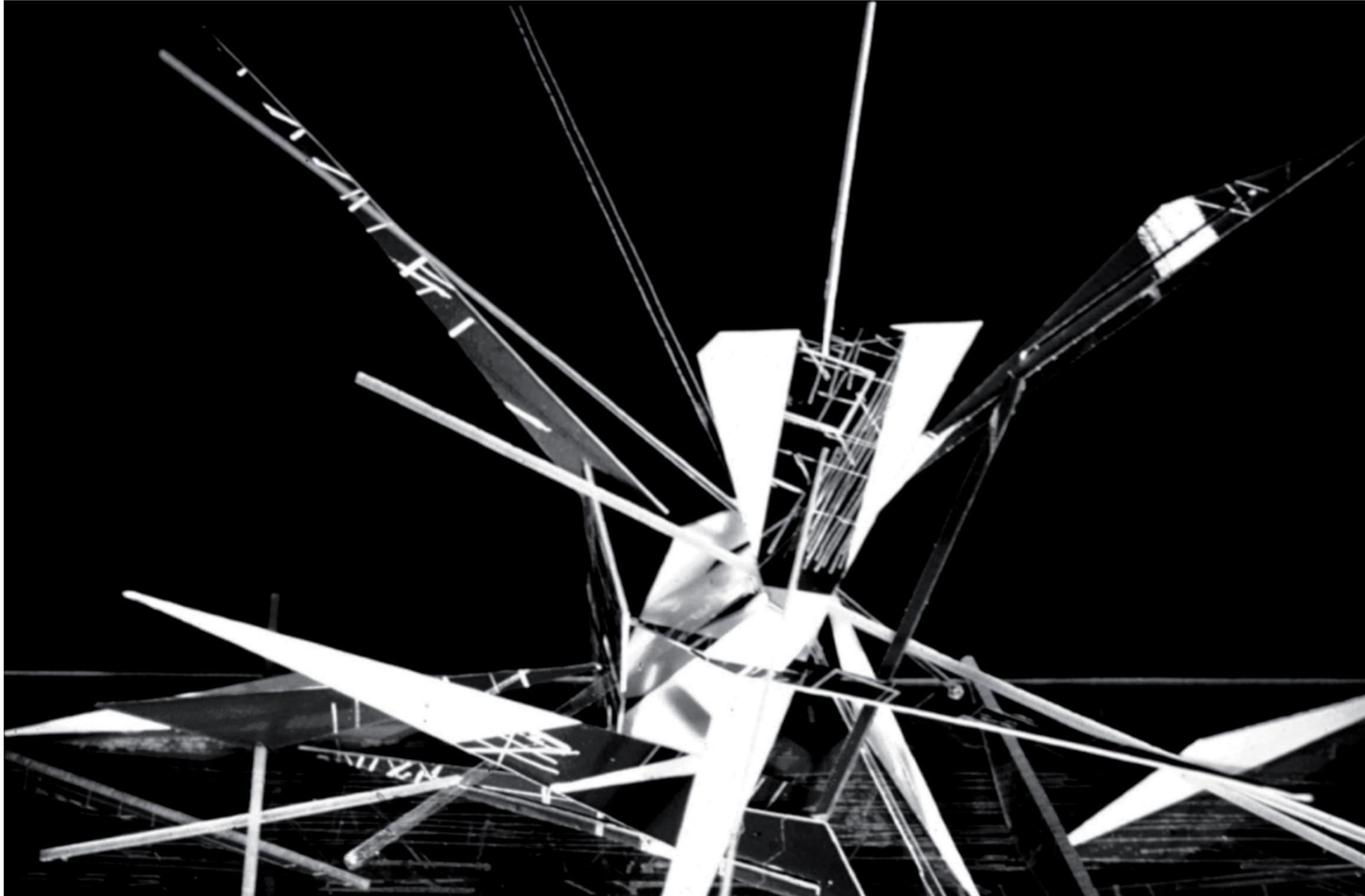
Designers continually assimilate the city within new terms. While physical phenomena make up the palate of the interior designer, the manipulation of these raw materials into design projections relies on the ability of each designer to construct critical responses to the dynamic of the city and its culture.

Through the practice of design, unique constellations of observed phenomena, perceived patterns and abstracted concepts are formed. The fabric of the city and every aspect of its being from inhabitants through to individual buildings, streets and spaces, can be understood as a fluctuating network of boundaries, hierarchies, interactions and rhythms. The city becomes a simultaneity, a series of seamless junctions merging past and present, nature and artifice, seen and experienced, public and private and interior with exterior.

The designer weaves into the tapestry of the city, probing the city's structure, creating new typologies of culture and exposing new ritual, suggesting new patterns of living that respond to the torrent of change. Design is constantly being informed by new models of habitation. The twentieth century has witnessed an ever increasing rate of technological advance within the realm of building material, construction methods and services, which has seen our inhabitable space become impregnated by layers of technology and information. Our work habits, communication, and interaction with our physical environment have radically altered. Information, now a commodity, floods our senses so that the past, present and future are sampled and fragmented, blurred and re-presented in endless variations.

By engaging with the physical, phenomenological, social, cultural, economic, political, historical and technological definitions that shape the city the brief for interior designers has grown complex and fascinating—traditional typologies of building, space and function have been superimposed by the needs of an ever developing culture of the new. The Interior City becomes liquid, evolving and transforming continuously, suggesting traces, moments, events and lives.





Beginnings

Cath Lovitt

We begin life exploring and imagining space. As children we investigate our surroundings and use our explorations of space to make sense of the world. Our very first understandings of space come through our senses—initially touch within our mother's womb. When we are born we are forced outside, only to find ourselves in different interiors: rooms within rooms within houses. A whole world then awaits for our developing consciousness to explore.

The practice of Interior Design exists at the high end of this exploration process. The philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of individual projects are wide ranging, working toward enriching the exploration of space through engagement with theoretical discourse.

The basis for an establishment of this design knowledge is a thorough grounding in communication techniques, technical conventions and an interpretative approach toward history and theory. These units exist autonomously, but are linked and interwoven in a complex tapestry of relationships bound by the design project.

The purpose of this method is not to attempt to isolate and individually explore formal building blocks of Design and Designing, but rather to map a path for an accumulative journey of creative imagination, which during its progress will raise issues concerning the nature and practice of Interior Design.

Surprisingly, the journey begins on the exterior, observing and recording existing environments and spaces. It then moves inwards, within a building's fabric, and guides students toward exploring within themselves. Ultimately, the journey dives into and through the form and structure of environments, to identify, explore and create spaces and spatiality.

THE ICON TRACE

Brian Tang

Portraiture

John Andrews

The human presence is central to the history of the interior. This is perhaps less so in other environmental disciplines which relate more harmoniously to economics, technology, sustainability and the land. Although these disciplines are not devoid of human interaction, they do not consider it the guiding precept.

The *Portrait* project grew from this key point, where the human was seen as being quintessential to the formation of interior architectural space. The figure in this respect was observed in detail, and recognition was given to how the constructed environment responded to the most precise demands of human activity.

Lectures were given in the art of portraiture in painting and photography, and particular attention was paid to the surrounding space including close and distant views and objects in proximity to the subject.

Gesture, stance, expression and position were studied with emphasis on the space occupied by the figure.



left to right: PORTRAITS Brooke Irwin, Korene Tan, Michelle Cox, Ong Hwee Jin, Susie Adamson

Looking Different

Jean James

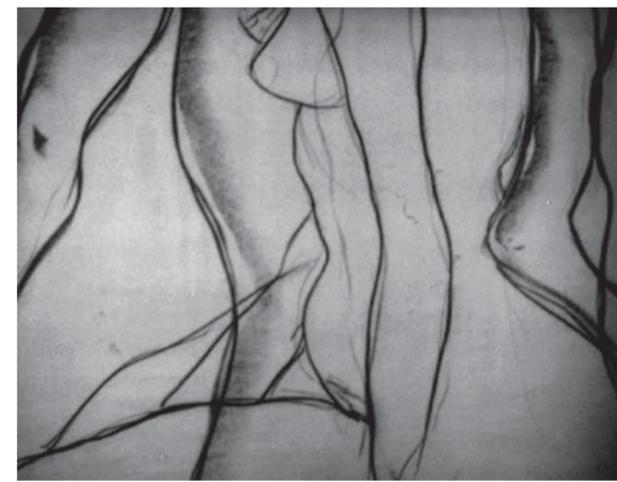
For designers drawing is the most important communication technique, from exploratory concept sketches to rendered presentation drawings and plans, details and specifications. The designer is constantly drawing.

Everyone can learn to draw. People who say they cannot draw are in no position to judge. As with any skill, drawing takes time and practice to master and there are guidelines that must be learnt. In order to draw we must first learn to look and understand, to perceive and then communicate.

As children we view the world synchronistically. At school our vision of the world is formalised and conforms to such delineations as perspective (itself a construct). In order to dissuade the mind of preconceptions, the conscious link between hand and eye must be severed. Drawing can then become a meditation; a means of pure contact between the viewer and the subject.

The direct and accurate contact between hand and eye, develops a framework for 'knowing' the subject. Without this framework the viewer operates in a vacuum of accumulated misinformation. It is only when we fully understand the framework of the subject that we can begin to engage with abstraction.

Using this method of perception, we can develop our personal calligraphy. We have the ability to manipulate the message by understanding the psychological impact of the image. We begin to understand the symbiotic relationship between notation, medium and technique. We gather a 'box of tricks' that holds a geometrically progressive series of combinations constrained only by the imagination.



There are many ways of capturing a moment in time and space, but none so sensorially imbued as drawing. Our feelings, our location, our senses all conspire to influence our gaze—but it is our innate sense of mapping that allows us to control this confluence.

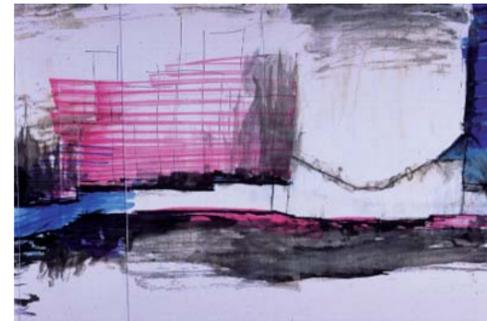
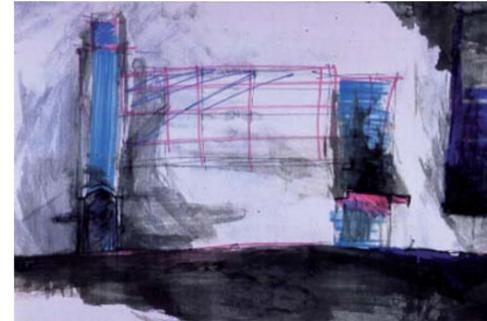
From non-analytical interpretative life drawing of the body to detailed analytical drawings of the skeleton and muscles, we become involved in the creation of a language of scale and form. This method of drawing educates the designer in the imaginings of real space. These mappings/drawings not only accurately depict the focus of the audience, but provide structure which enables the artist more subjective or abstracted interpretations.

Studying a point in the body can be a precursor to mapping relationships, loci and datum points in relationship to three dimensional space. In this way we plot the figure and its relationship to space, recording the trails, patterns and displacement of space. To understand the volume the body occupies, to feel the body in space, we need to put ourselves into the drawing metaphysically, imagining how that volume would be filled when occupied.

From the map of the London underground to Durer's Illustration of Perspective and Mondrian's Broadway Boogie Woogie, from Mappa-Mundi to Persian miniatures; all are expressions of particular locations in space and time. Mapping, as used by interior designers, is a visual representation of intangible spatial relationships; a personal invention of codifying space, a representation of collected layers of perception. The use of spatial cartography allows us to define our individual interpretation of space, linking sight and recording with imagination and design.



MONTAGE Sue



Urban Accretions

Roger Kemp & Peter Zellner

Standing on the roof of a tower block, one looks across the city. From this vantage point we are given a large scale understanding of the Central Business District. We can start to see how the city has been formed and the changes which have taken place over time. By looking at the variety of buildings and spaces we can assess the accretion of the city through its changing architecture.

As designers we use many ways to capture the contours of the city. Through sketching we can record the spaces and forms held within the urban fabric. In this way, connections are made between spaces and objects, allowing the essential information that defines a building/space/place to be detailed.

The use of *frottage* imprints textural traces, exposing the city's intersections and connections of materials and fabric. *Montage* techniques created via photography capture structures, layers, borders, superimpositions and human interaction in light and shade. Detailed drafting work adds precise measurement and recording, while sectional projections can conceptually slice through the urban fabric to uncover spatial relationship and volume.

This process of recording and imagining brings to the surface new ways of seeing which can be synthesised into a single entity. Discrete investigations can then be forged together into a single project. The result becomes not merely a collection of recordings but an extension of individual personal concerns.

This 'urban accretion' becomes a literal re-imagining of the city— a primary act of design.

URBAN SECTIONAL PROJECTIONS

Yelena Beylin



The Field

Ross McLeod

Each year we venture into the Australian bush, seeking inspiration for a design aesthetic from the Australian landscape and its penetrating white light.

Trips into the continent have included discovering the rich diversity of ecosystems found in Wilson's Promontory National Park on the southern-most tip of the mainland; drifting along the beaches of Gippsland and the Great Ocean Road; scaling mountain ranges in the Grampians of central Victoria; floating serenely in house boats on the Murray River; watching the sun set and the moon rise among the ancient, surreal lunar dune-scapes of Lake Mungo, New South Wales; holed up in the underground hotels and opal mines of Coober Pedy, South Australia; and taking in the vast horizon and endless sky of Uluru in the dead heart of the continent, over 2000 kilometres from Melbourne.

The camps provide an opportunity to tap the collective energy of a group of people engaged in an intense educational experience. The long straight drives through the Australian countryside, the sharing of cooking and cleaning duties, the relaxed rhythm of a day's work, and the celebratory banquets, games and cabarets at night forge a body of individuals into a comfortable group.

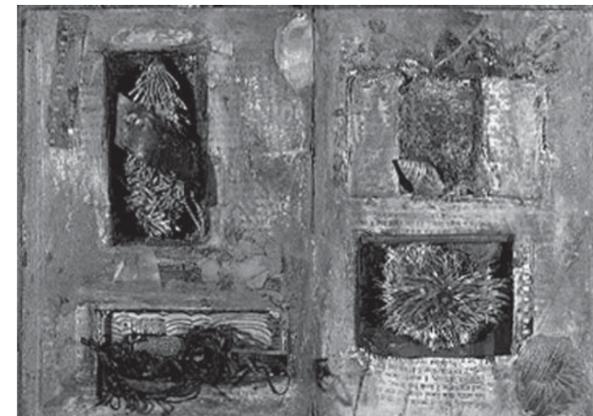
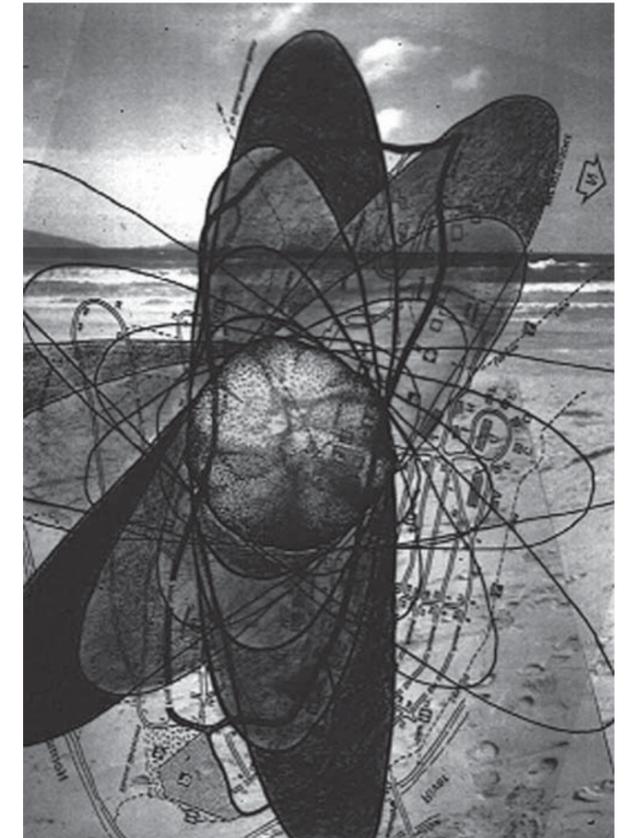
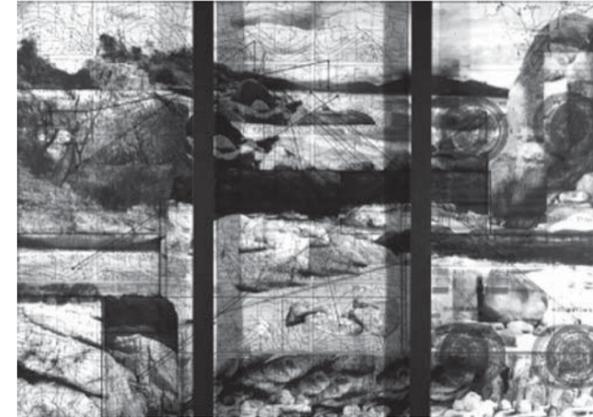
Each trip focuses on a wide range of interpretative responses to the condition of landscape and environment, exploring the relationships and phenomena which define a place in order to develop original techniques of observation and recording. The *map* and *journal* are the perceptual tools used to weave a thread of observation, describing and defining a particular environment from embarkation to return.

Once we settle in a campsite, the development of a relationship with the immediate surroundings becomes the focus of our activities. Observations of shifts in the environment become a way of defining spatiality. The monitoring of sensorial properties such as topology, sunlight, air currents, smells, textures, movement and activity offer an interpretative framework for the development of group and personal projects. These perceptions manifest themselves into *earthworks*, which express and identify a connection with the land.

At the end of this week-long immersion into nature we attempt to capture and record the perceptions developed, through the invention of representational strategies, articulating and interweaving the accumulated drawings, photos, images and installations. These *mappings* inhabit and supersede the reality of our experiences at the camp. They act as a containment of memory to embody the essence of the environment and our experience within it.



top to bottom: EARTH WORKS Group Installation, The Grampians; Cherie Sollars, Wilsons Promontory; Eleni Iakovakis, Wilsons Promontory



MAPPINGS AND JOURNALS Wilsons Promontory

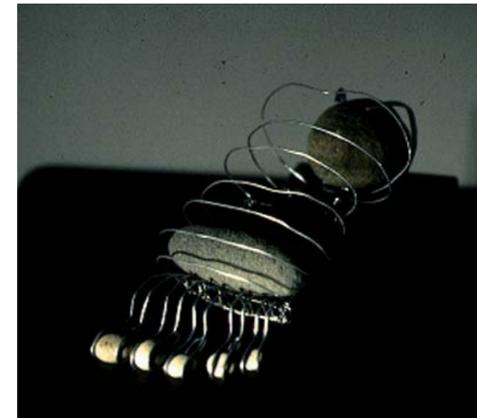
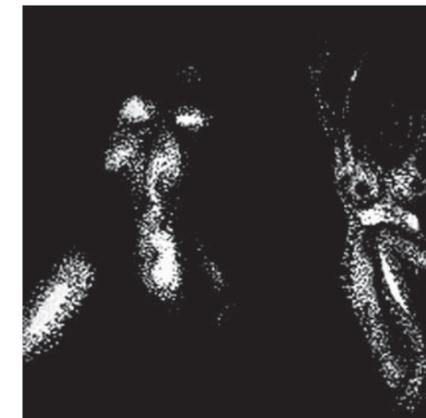
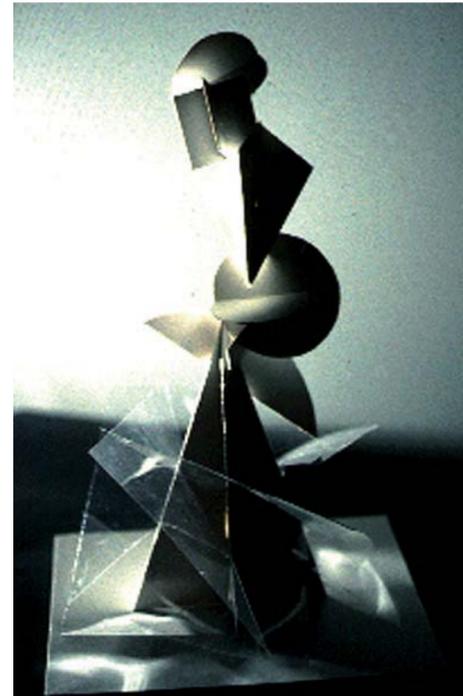
Body Space

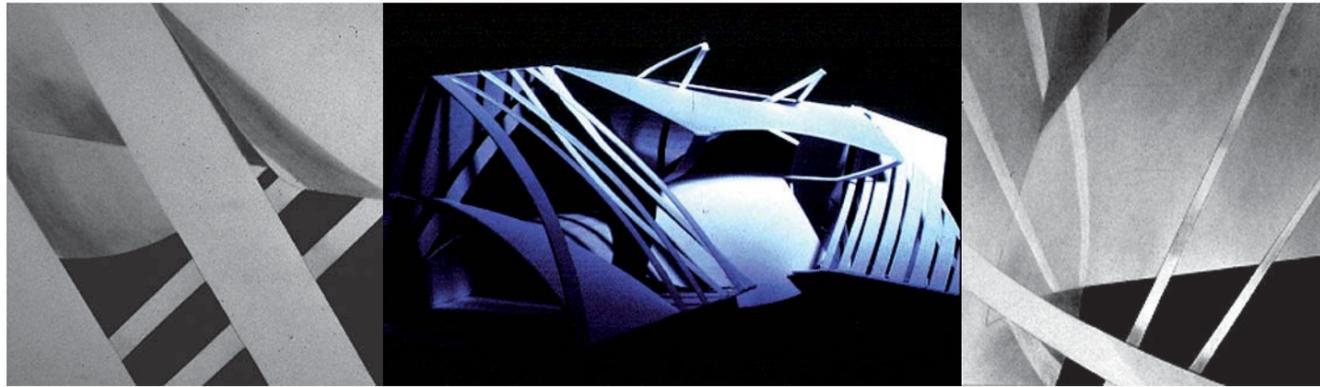
Ross McLeod

Long both the subject and object of design, the body is perhaps the original measure of all things. The ancients, finding in the body a perfect order, used its configuration to scale the structure of their temples and homes. In modern times the body has become a commodity for the industrial machine age, to be case-studied, charted and plugged into.

This exploration extended our perception beyond ergonomics and perfect order, into the realm of absolute personal experience. Starting with the body as tool, we define the dynamics of its movement. Imagining the space the body occupies and developing an understanding of how we inhabit and move through space. We explore the human form and its spatial concepts via life drawing, structural drawing, analysis of positive and negative space. We utilise these skills while developing an abstraction of the space one's own body occupies through the construction of a maquette.

The maquette uncovers an attitude to one's own body through physical, emotional and psychological terms. The materials with which the maquettes are made enforce and extend the parameters of the body in space, expressing the human form within a dynamic context.





Synthesis

Andrea Mina

The *Synthesis* studio set out to explore different ways of working (observing, recording, analysing, inventing, and communicating) with the aim of inducing shifts in perception from normal to extraordinary. These perceptions occupy the formal and conceptual base from which considered decisions are made about the design of interior spaces. The project reinforced the students' ability to learn, to explore the creative process and to understand how ideas are generated, explored and developed.

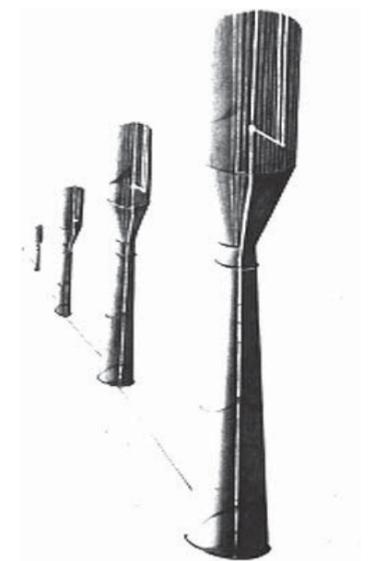
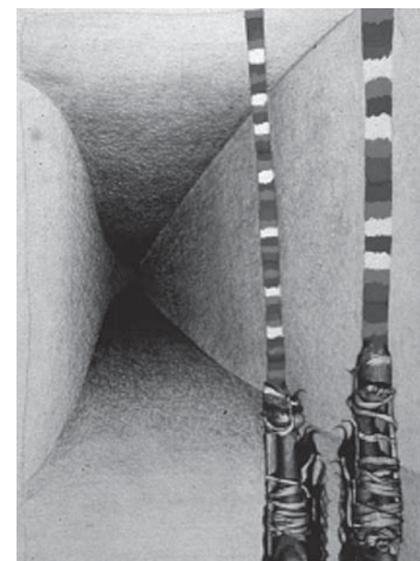
Synthesis takes the human body as its starting point by examining the space a body occupies at rest and in motion, and by developing a maquette as an expression of this study. An imaginary journey is undertaken using the maquette as a new source of investigation. The languages of volume, surface, structure and space are explored through perspective sketching.

Using the geometric and interior spatial relationships observed in the maquette, a spatial volume model is developed to describe and enhance these observations. The model serves further purpose by highlighting the inherent difficulties when representing space as opposed to form; the tension between representing the interior as opposed to its forming architecture. This dialectic is further explored through a closer examination of the surfaces that contain and describe the spaces. Openings are made in these surfaces to favour controlled views of the interior spaces rather than views of the model as object. Devices are also invented to simulate the experience of placing the viewer within the observed space.

The abstract yet precise language of technical drawing advances the project further. The modeled space can be defined through the strict conventions of the technical section. These sectional drawings focus on developing a confident handling of basic design drawing techniques. They include an architectural dimension in their interpretation through the demonstrated understanding of scale and technical detail.

The project was drawn to a conclusion through the design of a series of connected spaces/environments. These spaces were to be communicated and understood through a conceptual and physical narrative enabling a connection between various spaces, their forms and the imagined occupation of these spaces.

Synthesis was not about the design of a space, but an introduction to different processes and spatial imaginings that can be utilised for the design of interior space. It was about processes rather than product, and through these processes uncovering the intuitive leaps of faith that are at the core of spatial imagining. It attempted to unlock a personal approach to design by basing each own aesthetic on the abstraction of their physical being.



clockwise from top:

SYNTHESIS PROJECTS

Nadja Slovak, Deborah Allen, Cassandra Fahey, Eleni Iakovakis

Container

Roger Kemp

To consider a definition of 'interiority', we must look at 'space'. In attempting to define space it becomes necessary to try to define particular limits, to seek out the territorial boundaries. If we consider the elusive question as to the dimensions of the universe we are struck by the notion of limitless space, infinite space, however historically we have seen a need to classify and define solar systems and similar environs.

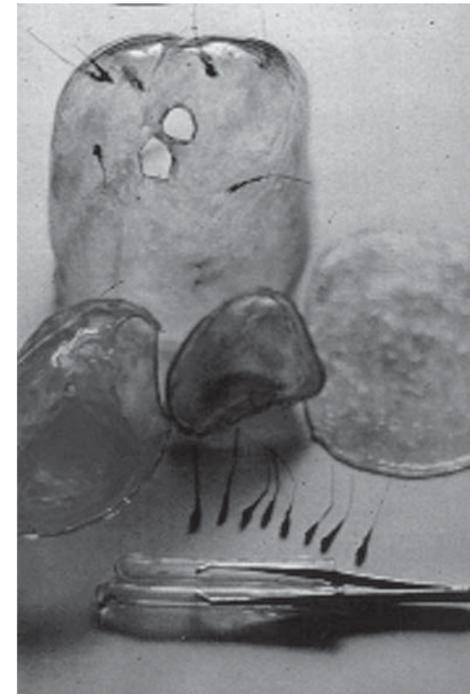
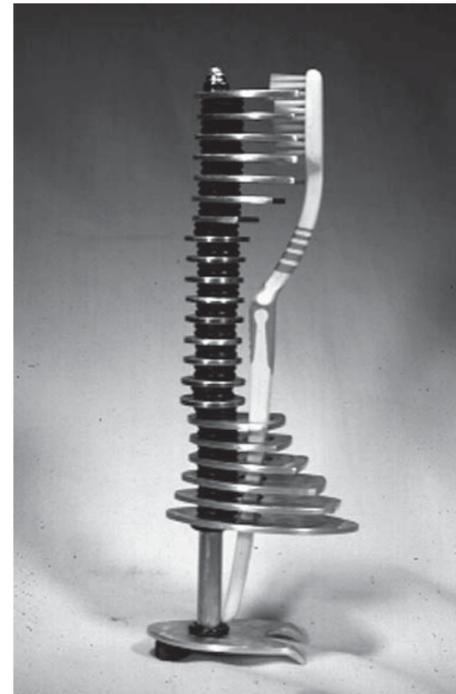
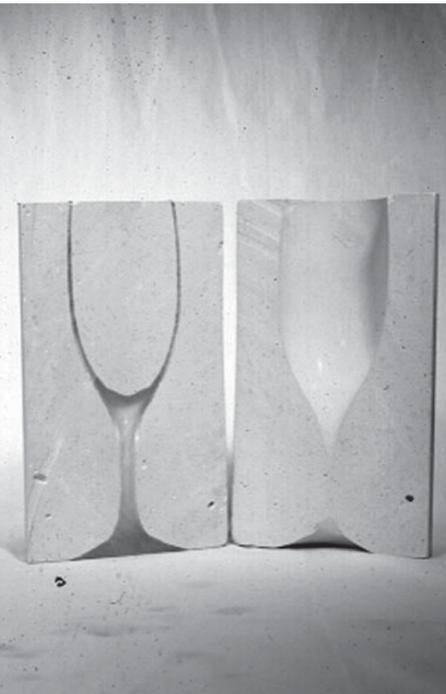
Issues of containment form a major role in the practice of Architecture / Interior Architecture whether the constraints be physical, financial, cultural, political or social. The container as architecture suggests applications of shelter, defined property, security, privacy and ownership, though the boundaries often become blurred. The extensive scope of these conditions suggests further breakdowns of spatial territory; accepting issues of transferral, threshold and easement in which issues of the delineation of the public and the private are raised.

An example of such limited definition is the frame used to compliment a painting or photograph. We may view the use of the frame as having a role in providing a construct of limitation, in capturing, enclosing and defining territory to allow a specific critique or observation. But how far does this boundary extend? At what point does the gallery supersede this role and frame the frame itself?

The containment of everyday domestic objects via packaging embraces similar concerns. As Renate Eco-range observes, 'The need to contain soon gave rise to different categories; it became necessary to keep, to transport and to distribute, slowly turning the container into pocket, bag, net, cage, box suitcase and wheeled means of transport.'¹

Mindful of the impact from a burgeoning design sensibility in the community, where domestic designer objects reign supreme and lifestyle can be purchased or sold, *The Container* project attempted to re-contextualise the everyday domestic object by providing a new micro-environment for it to be held, enclosed and accommodated. The placement, ritual of use, access to, viewing of, and human participation with each object was central to the initial research, forming a critique for the design of a containing space. The exploration of materials used in the production of this work allowed for new opportunities in the appraisal of both the object and its position within the domestic environment.

Traditional definitions of interior design and its physical and conceptual place develop from the inside out. Much of the work a student produces in design studios attempts to pursue further opportunities beyond traditional constructs associated with interior design. *The Container* project extended these specific design understandings via a re-framing of the familiar, exposing a primary decoding of the objects and environments with which we interact.



Bloids

Peter Zellner

The project cast itself as a pure experiment in which the shaping of form, structure and space was examined as a means of discovering new spatial possibilities. The means of working was founded solely on the possibilities of making a scale model.

The making of the model was approached by using an involved, evolving means of apprehending and working through notions of inhabiting irregular or novel spatial conditions. The usual view of the model as a means of representing a preconceived idea was abandoned.

In particular the Bloids studio referred to naturally occurring phenomena as a means of developing conceptual models and measurements for the making of our real models. Black holes, whirlpools, cyclones, fractal sets and vortices were understood as time and/or spatial accelerators—phenomena that compress, warp and bend space itself. Of primary concern was the means by which these time accelerators reconvene the relationship between exterior and interior space—the way in which they literally swirl the two conditions through and past each other.

The studio attempted to introduce students to non-Euclidean and non-Cartesian readings of space. It provided an actual means of incorporating novel approaches to the making of positive/negative, curved/wrapped and para-logical space into each student's design vocabulary.

Process

Loops and bends

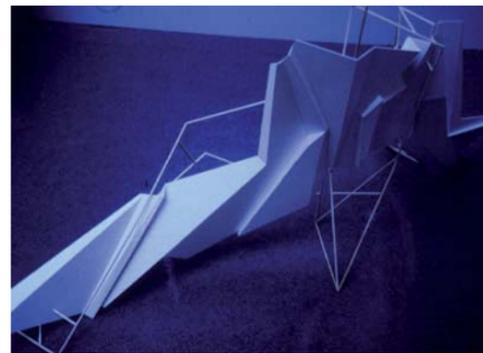
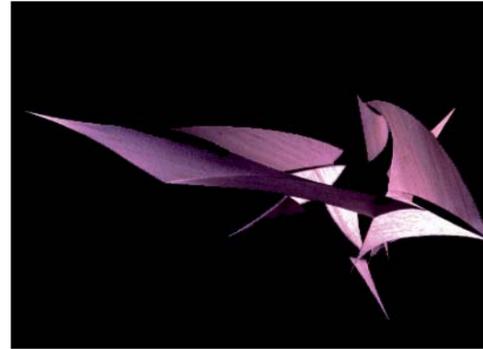
Warped surface structures were fashioned in sheet materials like heat-affected balsa. The exercise produced warped volumetric studies that shift from interior to exterior and back along a surface structure.

Torsional planes

Faceted card studies were produced in order to explore internal/external flows between hollowed interior and massive exterior volumes.

Blobs and voids

Solid or laminated blocks of foam were carved in order to create hollow a core: 'deep space' structures that exhibited the compressional conditions one might imagine in a black hole or wormholes—where mass is literally sucked through itself into another dimension.



Objects

Ross McLeod and David Robinson

'The real business of design is ... a way of widening the concept of the functional to embrace the subconscious and the unconscious ... to communicate new ideas about object and their function.'—Ettore Sottsass!

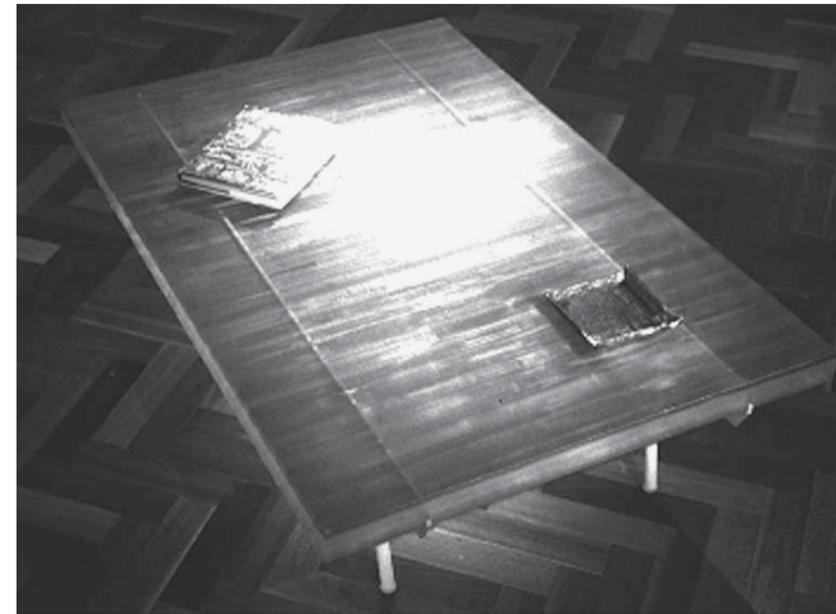
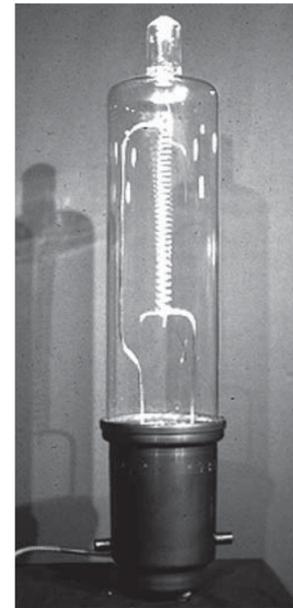
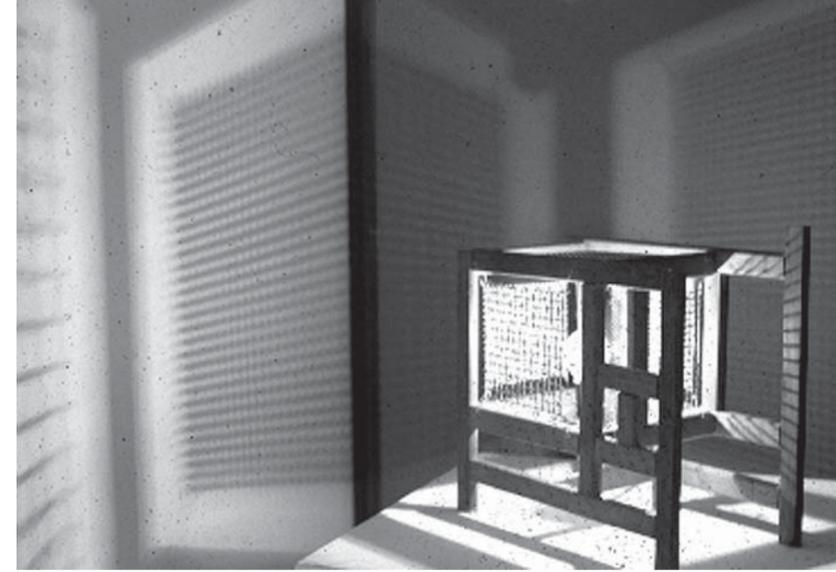
Our life is populated by objects from the purely functional to mementoes of sentiment. Our dwellings and work places can be understood as landscapes in which objects hold a plethora of functional, personal and cultural detail.

Early in the twentieth century, architects, designers and sculptors sought purity of form in everyday life through modernist abstraction techniques. We are all familiar with the Bauhaus statement that 'form follows function'. The renderings of this dictum evolved from the efficient German rationalist view of object as tool or instrument. This austerity gave way to voluptuous aerodynamic shapes pioneered in the fifties through American 'dream home' affluence. In the 1970s and 1980s the symbolic metaphorical characters of new wave Italian postmodernism led the way, expounded by the 'Memphis' and 'Alchymia' groups of designers and popularised by Alessi products. Today form still follows function, however the scope of 'function' has expanded far beyond a single dimensional ergonomic or technical need. It is now recognised that the function of an object is not merely its mechanical usage. An object's function is also to provide joy, identity and prestige.

Students were asked to approach the design of objects at a 'ground zero' approach, where nothing is assumed as being a typical furniture form. Students develop their own briefs through a careful analysis of the contemporary domestic environment in which new types of interactions and relationships are sought to meet the changing patterns and needs of modern lifestyles. Through the design of products and objects the designer becomes a cultural interpreter defining societal needs and desires and focusing this understanding into the contained language of the everyday object.

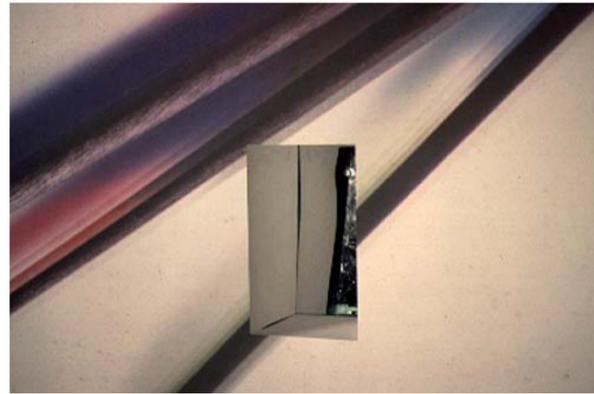
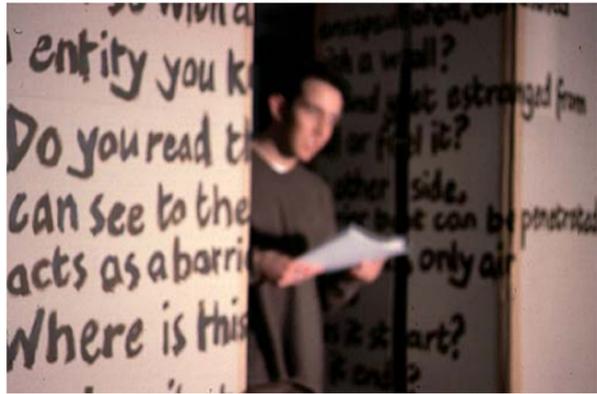
Within the marriage of artistic vision and manufacturing reality lies the essence of good design. Through a basic understanding of materials, workshop techniques and processes, students are encouraged to develop a personal approach to the imagining and creation of objects and furniture. Working closely with crafts and tradespeople and through developing a language of communication via construction drawings and technical jargon, students were encouraged to appreciate the possibilities and limitations of industrial techniques and in doing so create a vital link between the designer and the manufacturer.

As students work through from primary investigations to initial concepts to end products, the objects take on a life of their own. Decisions come from not only the designer but became inherent through the object themselves. For an object to stand alone, it needs to satisfy a given purpose and relate and express a given function in a poetic and aesthetic way. The relationship of form, metaphorical sources, function, materiality and production techniques becomes intertwined within a complex of contemporary domestic perceptions. Objects and furniture are most successful when they work on all these levels simultaneously, combining a cerebral formality with instinctive poetry to become something greater than the sum total of their parts. This is when an object has life. When its meaning is a subtle blend of reference and reverence. When the object becomes a character which inhabits our lives, an icon of our rituals and values of daily existence.



'BULB' LAMP Jasmine Wong

top: MESH LAMP Claudette Leeming
 middle: RESIN COFFEE TABLE
 VACUUM FORMED ALUMINIUM BOWL Olivia Hrojevic
 bottom: CAST ALUMINIUM CHAIR Chris Grange

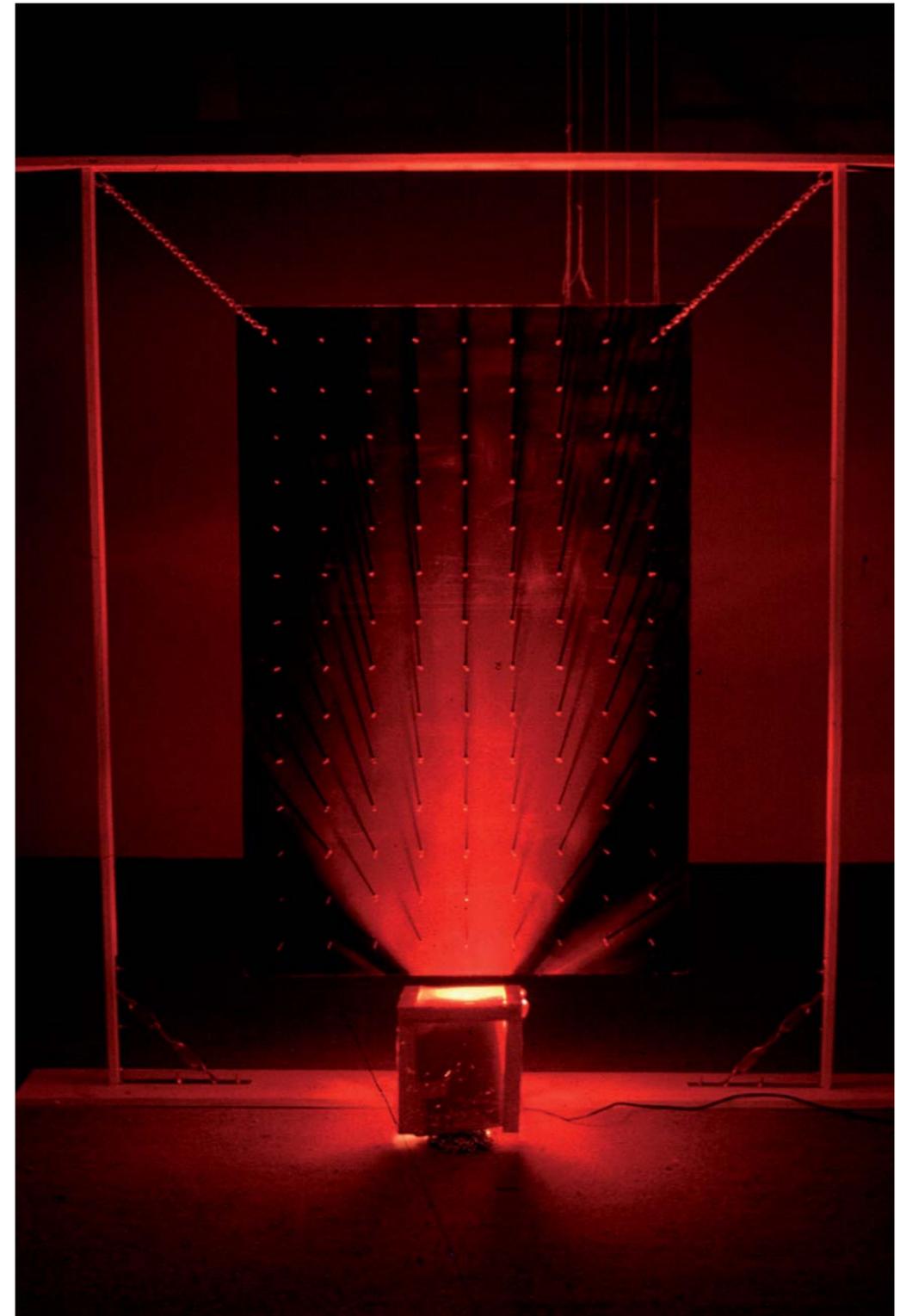
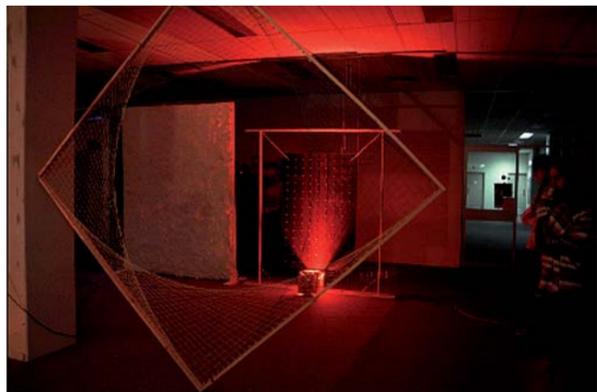


The Wall

Peter Zellner, Cath Lovitt, Andrew Simpson, Samantha Slicer

The Wall project was set as a collaborative design and construction exercise for first semester, first year students. A three day hyper-intensive challenge, the project asked students to overcome preconceived notions about the function and appearance of a wall in order to elicit nonstandard solutions to a sophisticated design challenge.

The project explored the idea of the free standing 'wall' as a condition displaying qualities of both surface and object, interior and exterior, function and emotion. As such *the Wall* project approached the idea of wall-ness as a moment of separation, and connection—a point of bifurcation awaiting new definitions.



Flaming Chandeliers

John Andrews

The split second a firework explodes in the darkness a simultaneous current of exaltation and pleasure rushes through the body. It is a feeling which owes nothing to structured thought, reason or explanation. The eyes are spellbound by the powerful release of energy giving life to millions of sparks until the cold air and gravity jointly extinguish this momentary spectacle.

The idea for the *Flaming Chandeliers* came directly from this emotion. The intention was to create a frozen firework. The impossibility of such an idea struck very early. Design is by definition a subject which generally supports solidity, commodity, time, function, etc. It does not sit very well on the shoulders of impulse. It was necessary therefore to develop an approach to the program which was true to the spirit of the idea and to carry this through to the final product.

Speed and fluency were key attributes governing the early stages of the project. The sketch design took precisely three seconds. The longer we went into the making, the more time it took to refine the details of welding, soldering, tying and twisting 1.5 mm steel rods. A total amount of 36 hours was needed to build the 3 second sketch. The same proportion of time could be set against the making of the firework to the explosion.

In terms of the spectrum of Interior Design practice, the *Flaming Chandelier* is a comparative glimmer. It was set as a model-making elective designed to acquaint students with the working of the construction workshop. More than this it has equipped the students with a valuable way of seeing, thinking and making simultaneously, which in turn allows them to unlock the depths of their imagination.



FLAMING CHADELIER INSTALLATION Building Eight Fire Escape, RMIT