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**the liminal: rediscovering value in a journey**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Architecture (Professional) degree, the University of Auckland, 2012.

## Abstract

Our value of the journey is lost.

Today one arrives at their solution, desire or destination quickly and efficiently, losing the value of the journey and experience of residing in the liminal in-between.

In an age of instant knowledge/communication/travel/noodles the liminal is restricted to the landscapes, physically and culturally, that facilitate this rapid transience.

This thesis argues that the transience of liminal landscapes are of value as they offer society a reprieve from the drudgery of the everyday. The value of the liminal is in its ability to rejuvenate the individual, the ability to step away from the pace and responsibilities of the everyday and live in the moment.

Through the critical exploration of relevant literature, artistic and architectural precedents, and experimental research through experiential driven design, the importance of the conditions of escape are revealed.

The disregard of the value of the liminal is rife in many aspects of modern society; this is especially true in the tourist development of the New Zealand coastline. The design portion of this thesis addresses coastal developments disregard of its liminal essence and its resultant degradation of the places passed through. Concentrated on the coastal settlement of Tutukaka, Northland, which acts as a resort, service centre and suburban bach Mecca, this author investigates what it is to authentically reside in the liminal on the New Zealand Coast.

This thesis serves to recapture the essence of the explorer rather than the quick gratification of arriving.



I would like to express my very great appreciation to my parents for their on going support and love, considerably tested these past five years.

Also I am particularly grateful for the assistance given by supervisors Pip Cheshire and Rachel de Lambert whos insight, encouragement and enthusiasm has been instrumental in completing this thesis.

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## Definitions

### Liminal

Origin: late 19th century: from Latin, *limen*, *limin-* "threshold" + -AL.

1. Relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
2. Occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.<sup>1</sup>

### Phenomenal

2. Perceptible by the senses or through immediate experience.<sup>2</sup>

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1 "Definition of Liminal," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed 6 September, 2012, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/liminal?q=liminal>.

2 "Definition of Phenomenal," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed 6 September, 2012, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/liminal?q=liminal>.

## Introduction

Liminality, derived from the Latin word *limen* is defined as a boundary or threshold, alludes to movement through a location, the journey.

Due to the strength of consumerist mass culture, the value of the liminal is diminishing. With large leaps in technological advancement, the transfer of ideas, goods, and people are a mere internet search away or quick and cheap flight. In this modern world individuals crave their solutions, desires or destinations to come quickly and efficiently, not realising the loss of the value in residing in the liminal.

This thesis serves to persuade the reader that the transience of liminal landscapes, both physically and culturally, are important experiences to the evolution and wellbeing of our societies. These liminal landscapes offers an individual a reprieve for the drudgery of the everyday, are spaces of rejuvenation and recuperation from the pace and responsibility of modern life.

The disregard of the value of the liminal is rife in many aspects of modern society; this is especially true in the development of the New Zealand coastline. The liminal essence of our coastal borderline is increasingly being shrouded by tourist accommodation. Rather than embracing the qualities of the coastal escape and the ludic, today coastal development emulates the conditions of the everyday places we leave behind. The very liminal qualities we seek out when travelling to the coast are the qualities we degrade by developing in the mode we currently do. The current model of the transposed suburbia must



be abandoned, and a sensitive mode discovered, if we are to preserve what it is to reside on the liminal coast.

In efforts to convince the reader that the argument above is valid and important research, this thesis covers a broad range of matter, broken down into the following respective areas of inquiry. Chapter one sets up a context to the overall thesis; the New Zealand coastline as a liminal space and its degradation in the face of insensitivity to liminality by developers. Chapter two investigates the origins of the term 'liminal' to clearly define the driving concept of this thesis. Chapter three illustrates the use of liminality as a conceptual driver for a range of creative precedents, revealing the value in residing in a liminal state. Chapter four outlines the links between the liminal and architectural theory in phenomenological architecture. Discussing theory and precedent, steps towards an expression for architecture in the liminal are achieved. Lastly, chapter five addresses the contemporary development of the New Zealand coastline and its disregard of the value of the liminal. Concentrated on the coastal settlement of Tutukaka, Northland, this author defines a specific model for residing in the liminal.

This thesis serves to recapture the essence of the explorer rather than the quick gratification of arriving.



Figure 1: Study.

## Chapter 1 The Coastal Places Passed Through

*The Coastal Places Passed Through is separated into three parts, making up the context in which this thesis is set. The first part discusses the coastline as a physically liminal landscape and the effect this liminality has on its occupants. The second talks of the importance of the coastline to the New Zealand sensibility and the role liminality plays in the kiwi pastime. The third illustrates the lack of acknowledgement of the liminal when developing the coastal landscape, therefore degrading the very places we hold sacred. This chapter hopes to illustrate the importance of preserving essential liminality of the New Zealand coastline.*

### 1.1 Liminal

The New Zealand coastline offers a multitude of layered liminalities, from its physicality to the way we experience the landscape.

The landscape is pure liminality.<sup>1</sup> Landscapes are never at the start or end, they are always in a between phase, combining different life durations, times, rhythms and intensities of experience.<sup>2</sup> The New Zealand coastline epitomises this in-between condition.

The coast is a space that is neither land nor water.<sup>3</sup> It is a threshold or border land, the interface between dry land and sea, ever changing by tidal shifts and seasonal rhythms.<sup>4</sup> The tidal nature of the coast is most revealing of its liminal condition; the dynamism of the low tide beach borderline expanding and extending, whilst at high tide this world might be lost completely.<sup>5</sup>

The borderland of the coastline, more specifically the beach, is a metaphorical condition as well as a physical one. Historically, with vestiges of this behaviour still seen today, the beach was a place just beyond the realms of normal social convention. The coastline was the place where pirates and smugglers hid their booty, where youth park up cars and talk to the opposite sex, and where clothes and inhibitions

1 David Crouch, "Afterword." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 240.

2 Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality-the danger of empty spaces." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 21.

3 Robert Preston-Whyte, "The Beach as a Liminal Space." in *A Companion to Tourism*, ed. by Alan A. Lew, C. Michael Hall, and Allan M. Williams (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 349.

4 Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality-the danger of empty spaces." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 21.

5 Kevin Meethan, "Walking the Edges." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 70.

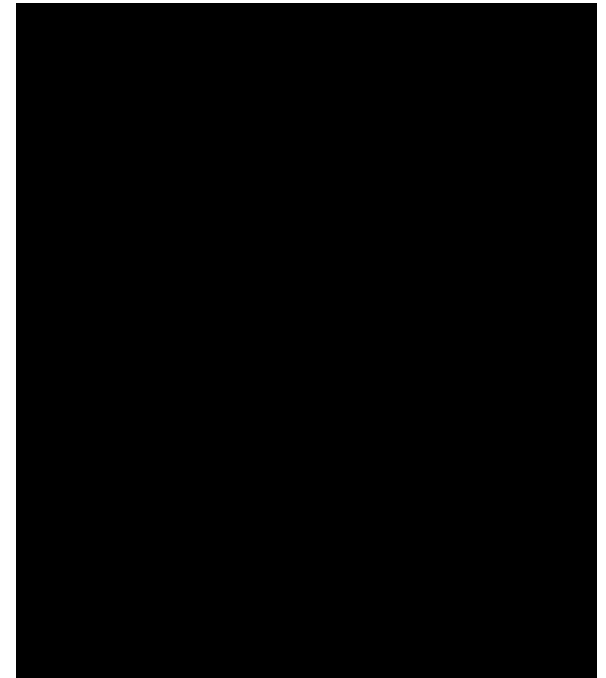


Figure 2: The borderland.

are shed. A place of escape, play, discovery, and of freedom.<sup>6</sup>

The liminal in-between is a place of uncertainty, in-between one place and another there is no expected or planned, only flux. On the coast conditions of the tranquil and aphrodisiac can be quickly replaced with the agitated, unruly and frightening as quickly as a change in tide, wind direction or season.<sup>7</sup> Just as the beach can be a place of freedom of expression and play, it can equally be a place of loneliness and solitude.<sup>8</sup>

The liminal landscape of the coast offers a level of intensity of experience unrivalled for many. This landscape is not a gaze, a horizon or a perspective but a multi-sensual expression of the poetics of potential.<sup>9</sup> It can be the smallest action of stepping on to the sand that instantly emotes the feeling of upliftment. The connection between foot and sand creates a frisson of awareness, unifying action and consciousness, leaving little distinction between self and environment.<sup>10</sup>

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6 Kevin Meethan, "Walking the Edges." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 70.

7 Robert Preston-Whyte, "The Beach as a Liminal Space." in *A Companion to Tourism*, ed. by Alan A. Lew, C. Michael Hall, and Allan M. Williams (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 349.

8 Kevin Meethan, "Walking the Edges." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 70.

9 David Crouch, "Afterword." in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 239.

10 Robert Preston-Whyte, "The Beach as a Liminal Space." in *A Companion to Tourism*, ed. by Alan A. Lew, C. Michael Hall, and Allan M. Williams (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 351.

*'Nature's most potent antidepressant, the beach moves us with the power of a drug, the rhythm of its tides and shifting margins reorienting our sense of space and time, its aphrodisiacal cocktail of sun and water firing our slumbering hedonism.'*<sup>11</sup>

A heightened awareness, whilst residing in these liminal spaces, is the result of living completely in the present. There is no escape from the senses or time and space. This enhancement of the emotional and physical sensations is said to increase the occupants' inner capabilities, which in turn increases their self-confidence. Residing in liminal landscapes not only heightens one's awareness but also their sense of self.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2 Identity

Liminality is integral to the attachment New Zealanders have to their coastline. These are the borderlands where we first settled, threshold spaces that we escape to play and unwind from the everyday, where our fondest memories are formed in the intensity of experience.

<sup>11</sup> Lena Lencek and Gideon Bosker, *The Beach: the history of paradise on earth* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998), xix, quoted in Robert Preston-Whyte, "The Beach as a Liminal Space." in *A Companion to Tourism*, edited by Alan A. Lew, C. Michael Hall, and Allan M. Williams (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 351.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Wearing, Deborah Stevenson, and Tamara Young, *Tourist Cultures- identity, place and the traveller* (London, UK: SAGE, 2010), 84.

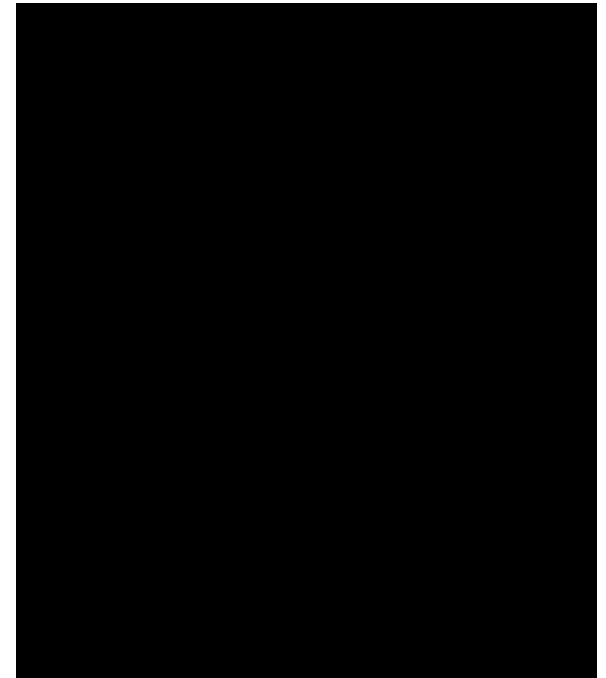


Figure 3: Oriental Bay, Wellington.

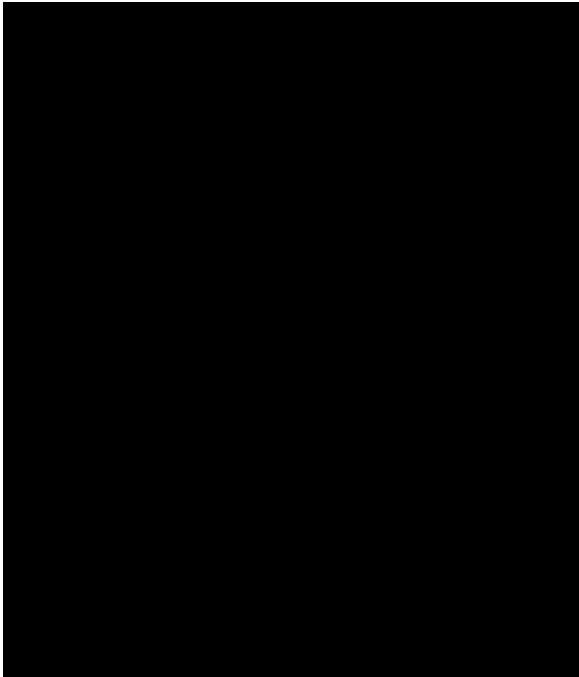


Figure 4: Intimacy on the Coast.

Historically, the human occupation of New Zealand has been totally embedded into its maritime culture. The first human journeyed to New Zealand over 700 years ago and brought with him a strong maritime culture from his island home. Equipped with the necessary navigational skills, and sailing sophisticated double-hull waka, human culture developed in the new land, quickly discovering and settling in the numerous islands in and surrounding New Zealand. This unique Maori culture continued their close association with the sea. Settling close to the watery shore, the proximity afforded plentiful sea, forest and wetland food sources, protective observation and sea bound transport routes.<sup>13</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century European settlement was well underway, but they did not bring with them an affinity with the sea that the indigenous communities had on arrival. The European saw the sea as dangerous as many did not know how to swim; the sea was a place of work, not play. Drowning's and shark attacks were a common occurrence, but morally this borderland posed the largest threat. In the conservative society of the time, the beach provided space for young men and women to mix freely in skimpy attire, away from the supervision of protective parents and other adults.<sup>14</sup>

It was not until the turn of the century until swimming in the sea was established as an accepted pastime. Sunbathing and water sports such as surfing and sailing flourished in the interwar years, largely attributed to scientists of the time advocating the health benefits of exposing the skin to sunlight. The

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13 Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?* (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 2009), 35.

14 Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?*, 55.

beach culture in New Zealand truly came of age during the 1950's and 60's, and by the end of World War Two the seaside holidaying habits of families were completely entrenched in to the New Zealand identity. Taking time off over the Christmas and New Year Summer period to escape to the seaside and stay in the family bach or camp is a ritual for many New Zealand families even today.<sup>15</sup>

These experiences, especially those in the early years, play a large part in shaping the lives of New Zealanders. This impact is predominantly seen in the creative industries, where a large range of work is shaped by the artists' experiences on the coastline. New Zealand creatives, such as painters Leo Bensemann, Doris Lusk, Colin McCahon, writers Katherine Mansfield, Maurice Shadbolt, Keri Hulme, and poets Sam Hunt, James K Baxter and Witi Ihimaera, are deeply inspired by the dynamism and unpredictability of our coastal locations.<sup>16</sup>

The conditions of the liminal attract and inspire; scores of holiday makers every summer period flock to the coastline to revel in the space between. Our identity is shaped by this edge condition and the feelings and activities it facilitates. Development on the edge to accommodate the masses must be in tune with the coastlines liminal essence if this New Zealand identity is to be retained.

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15 Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?* (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 2009), 35.

16 Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?*, 55.

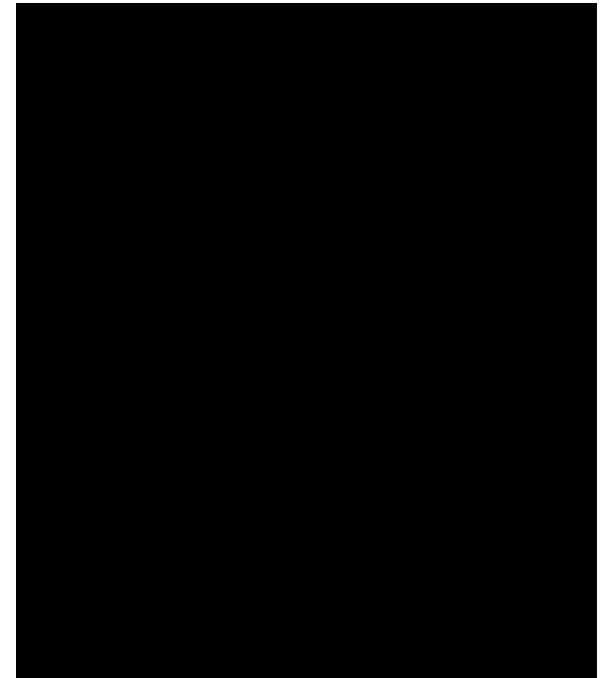


Figure 5: *Seaweed on the Beach*, Colin McCahon.

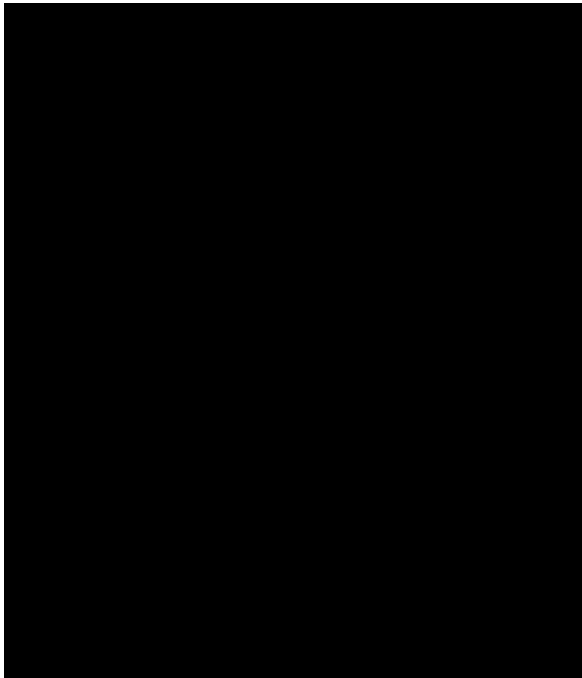


Figure 6: The bach.

### 1.3 Development

Traditionally tourist development of property on the coast was simply built for the benefit of regular families to escape to the coast in school and Christmas holidays. Today these coastal properties are reserved for the very few that can afford them; the chaos of an up-market suburbia replaces the charm of leaving home behind to live informally and simply at the seaside.

The ability to escape to the coast is intrinsic to the New Zealand identity; with the current suburban model quickly eroding the conditions of the liminal changes must be made.

The bach is as entrenched in the identity of New Zealand as its coastline. Derived from the word 'bachelor', the bach is a basic dwelling that offers only the bare essentials, a place where people can escape from the chaos of the everyday and engage in the outdoors.<sup>17</sup>

The bach first appeared in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, reserved, largely, for the recreational pursuits of fishing and hunting of men. The first coastal recreational shelters were constructed in the 1890's at Taylors Mistake Beach on the northern coast of the Banks Peninsula. With the lack of road access at the time, building these constructs was very much a do-it-yourself task.<sup>18</sup> Construction methods were simple, easy and cheap resulting in a patch work of materials, a topsy turvy aesthetic that spoke to the informal and temporal nature of the residences and residents.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?* (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 2009), 75.

<sup>18</sup> Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?*, 75.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.



The bach provided a complete break from the everyday. A simple shelter that encouraged the residents to converse with nature, to break away from the conservative values of the time, to play, explore and revel in the coastlines watery edge. This mode of development is the most effective in terms of embracing the liminal qualities of the New Zealand coast. One is encouraged to look back at a time of informality, freedom and play, whilst embodying the needs of the modern occupant.

The 1980's marked a radical shift in the way New Zealander's choose to reside in their liminal. Unlike previous times, a new generation of successful business people and professionals could afford to build large, modern second homes at the beach. The egalitarian nature of the modest bach was shoved aside by the competitive 'holiday home'. To reside on the coast is now not enough for the owners and developers of this new mode of residency, the holiday home is not only a shelter but a symbol of wealth. Status is displayed through opulence, scale, proximity to the shore and (for the ever astute business man when considering the re-sell value) the all-important 'beach view'.<sup>20</sup>

These holiday home settlements, either grown up and over the modest bach communities or carved out of virgin country, result in dominance over the other residencies, coastline and surrounding landscape. The transposed suburbia of holiday development creates a shroud over the beauty of informality. The holiday maker moves from one home to holiday into another, there is no longer a sense of the escape. The liminal is not found in this new model of development; one cannot feel a sense of discovery in an

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<sup>20</sup> Raewyn Peart, *What's Happening to the New Zealand Coast?* (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 2009), 75.

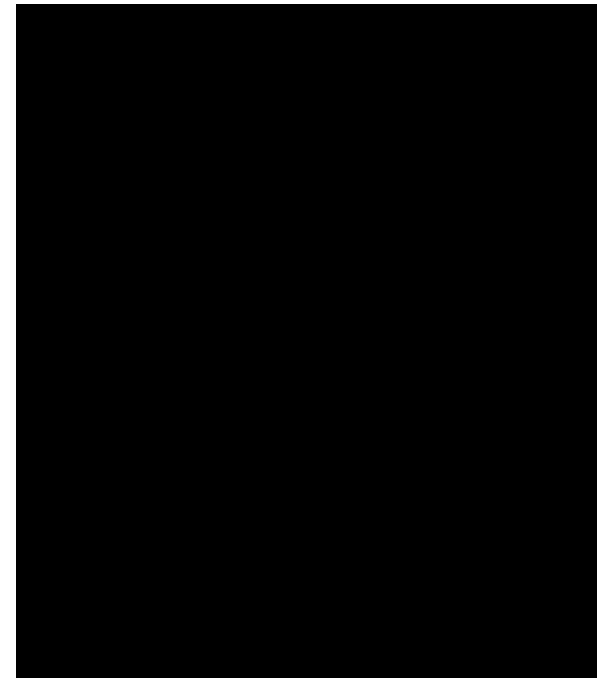
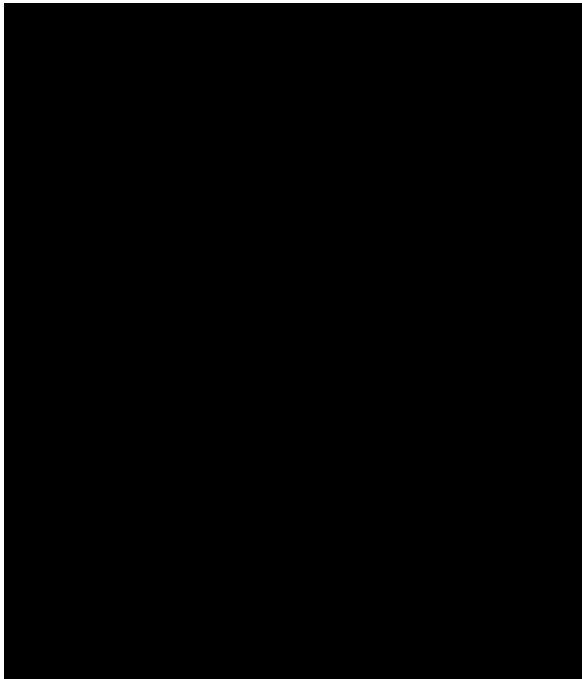


Figure 7: The holiday home.



environment that has morphed into the one he has just left.<sup>21</sup>

The liminal qualities of New Zealand coastline are unachievable in these new suburban holiday home developments. A new model of residing in the liminal on our coast must marry conditions of escape, journey and discovery, with the needs of the modern holiday maker before every edge condition of our fair land is tarnished by such insensitivity.

Figure 8: Transposed suburbia: Omaha.

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21 Bill McKay, "Omaha Beach Invasion," *Architecture New Zealand* January (2007):46.



## Chapter 2 The Origins of the Liminal

*The Origins of the Liminal is split into two parts, the ideologies around the liminal of Arnold van Gennep's The Rites of Passage and Victor Turner's development of this concept to theorise the human behaviours of our contemporary time. By delving deeper than the dictionary meaning and defining the liminal in its early conception, development and its use today in liminal studies, this chapter serves to establish a rich background in the liminal concept. This education must be achieved before one can understand the true value of residing in the liminal state.*

### 2.1 Conception

'Liminal' is a term that can be traced back to classical philosophical thinkers through concepts of the sublime and the subliminal, integral components of the aesthetic and philosophic, from thinkers of note such as Plato and Longinus. Today the current application of the term in liminal studies is regarded to be conceptualised by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep.<sup>22</sup>

Arnold van Gennep, an anthropologist of French descent, first used the term 'liminal' in its contemporary

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<sup>22</sup> Kay, Lucy, Zoe Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, ed., *Mapping Thresholds- thresholds in cultural and literary texts* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 7.

sense in his noted work *Les Rites de Passage*, published in 1909.<sup>23</sup> *The Rites of Passage* speaks to the ceremonies and rites accompanying an individual or collective in 'life crisis'. Van Gennep's investigation of the 'threshold' rites is considered to be his unique contribution to the study of anthropology.<sup>24</sup> Despite Arnold van Gennep's insightful investigations of pre-Christian societies and theories, at the time his contribution fell on deaf ears in larger social science circles. It is not until the literatures translation and Victor Turner's rediscovery of *The Rites of Passage* sixty years later that the profession and its counterparts really took notice.<sup>25</sup>

In *The Rites of Passage* Arnold van Gennep theorised that life is thresholds of action and inaction; one must act and cease, wait and rest, and then begin again.<sup>26</sup> Rites of passage are the rituals that facilitate the transience between one action and another, ceremonies signifying the individual's (or sometimes collective's) transition between one social status and another. Van Gennep's work first classified existing rites of passage, consisting of three sub-categories, namely rites of separation, transitional rites and rites of incorporation.<sup>27</sup> This schema of rites of passage

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23 Kevin Meethan, "Walking the Edges- towards a visual ethnography of beachscapes." in *Liminal Landscape-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 22.

24 Lucy Kay, Zoe Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, ed. *Mapping Thresholds- thresholds in cultural and literary texts*. (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 7.

25 Solon T. Kimball, "Introduction." in *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), v.

26 Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 189.

27 Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality- the danger of empty spaces" in *Liminal Landscapes-travel*,

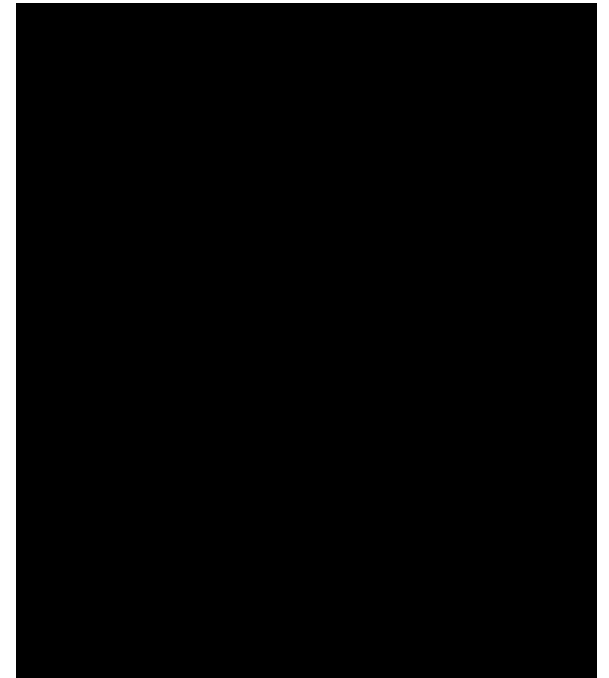


Figure 9: Pre-Christian new moon ritual.

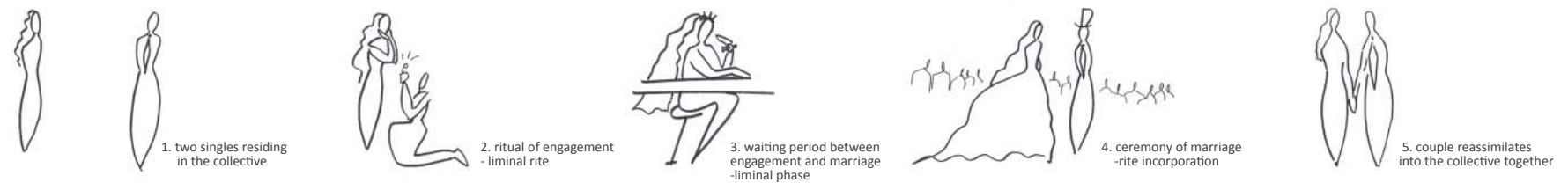
addressed the different ways a person could transition between social statuses.<sup>28</sup> Rites of separation are the rituals where the individual separates from the collective, for example funeral ceremonies that celebrate a person's departure from this world to the next. Rites of incorporation are found in marriages and celebrate the joining of two individuals to transition into another social status together. Lastly, transitional or liminal rites celebrate the transition, or the liminal period, in which the individual is neither in one social status or another but in the in-between phase, found in rituals such as pregnancy and betrothal.<sup>29</sup>

The liminal is broached again when defining the space these rites are played out in. The spaces are defined in a three-part system: the profane, the sacred and the in-between liminal space. The profane alludes to the everyday, the individuals who are going about their day not participating in any rites of passage. The sacred are those individuals performing rites of incorporation, separation and transition. These individuals are sacred in the eyes of the people occupying the profane space. The liminal spaces are those individuals in transition between different social statuses; the rites of transition mark the beginning of these this liminal phase. For example, two single individuals not going through a rite of passage are in a profane state; if one gets down on his knee and proposes, it is a transitional rite, and in this moment the two are sacred. Once engaged, the waiting period before the marriage is said to be liminal, a waiting phase before the individuals marry in an incorporative rite, and they are in a sacred

*experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 23.

28 Solon T. Kimball, "Introduction." in *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), vii.

29 Solon T. Kimball, "Introduction.", viii.



realm once again. Once this incorporative rite is complete the two reincorporate into the profane in their new social status. So completes the journey for the individuals from singledom to become a married couple.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 10: Ritual of marriage.

As well as defining the liminal as a mental threshold between one social state and another, Arnold van Gennep went as far as indicating that a physical threshold might precede the spiritual rites to symbolise the passage.<sup>31</sup>

The liminal phase plays an important role for both the collective and the individual. These liminal phases in the rites of passage act as a safe guard for those in the profane; the act of an

30 Solon T. Kimball, "Introduction." in *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), vii.

31 Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality- the danger of empty spaces" in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 24.

individual passing from one action or social status to another is seen to be dangerous and disruptive to the collective.<sup>32</sup>

Whilst for those in the liminal phase, these stages offer regeneration in life. Van Gennep believed that in any system, including the human system, energy found gradually becomes spent and must be renewed at intervals. The liminal represents the intervals from the everyday, a space to recoup from responsibility and the needs of others.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2 Development

Victor Turner, an anthropologist of English descent, is responsible for the opening of the term 'liminal', and the range of application in liminal studies.

Turner first stumbled over the Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* when he himself was experiencing a liminal phase. Having sold his house, and awaiting a US visa, Turner, in his 'state of suspense' recognized the importance of van Gennep's insight. So inspiring was van Gennep's writing that Turner, on the spot, wrote his first exploration in to the liminal *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in the Rites of Passage*.<sup>34</sup> Through Turner's subsequent works of the study of African tribal and ritualistic

<sup>32</sup> Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Solon T. Kimball, "Introduction" in *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), viii.

<sup>34</sup> Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality- the danger of empty spaces" in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 23.



societies his ideas about liminality developed through works such as *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Nbembu Ritual* (1967), *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), and *Dramas, Field, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (1974).<sup>35</sup>

In Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*, the term liminality affords the definition of the 'in-between'. The liminal is defined by the in-between of the profane and sacred, and the liminal rites that mark the transition into this in-between state. Victor Turner work focused extensively on the in-between interface.<sup>36</sup> Turner analysis of pre-Christian society and reflection on the contemporary suggested that the psychological and literal places in-between are places of uncertainty. These liminal spaces, and the uncertainty they produce, evoke reactions such as silence, incoherence, madness, and the threat of death, yet, these are also spaces that can be liberating, enabling transgression of social boundaries, challenge the limits of subjectivity and enhance creativity.<sup>37</sup>

Turner suggests in his famous article, *Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: an essay in comparative symbology*, that liminal experiences in modern consumerist societies, to a large extent, have been replaced with 'liminoid' moments. This is in light of the diminishing number of rituals the

<sup>35</sup> Lucy Kay, Zoe Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, ed. *Mapping Thresholds- thresholds in cultural and literary texts* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 8.

<sup>36</sup> Drewery, Claire, *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 2.

<sup>37</sup> Drewery, Claire, *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf*, 2.



Figure 11: Eliade exploration, plaster modelling.

contemporary individual is involved in.<sup>38</sup> Liminoid derives from the liminal, ‘-oid’ deriving from Greek ‘-eidos’ meaning resembling, a liminoid resembles without being identical to the liminal.<sup>39</sup> Liminality suggests that an individual must be in a cross road of ‘life crisis’ to experience such a state, whereas Turner believes the liminal experiences can occur without the existence of a transition in a individuals life. In liminality people ‘play’ with elements of the familiar and de-familiarise them during the transition between one state and another. Turner suggests that contemporary individual plays independent of transition and achieves the regeneration that the liminal periods afford.<sup>40</sup>

*‘...we may be disorderly in games either because we have an overdose of order, and want to let off steam, or because we have something to learn through being disorderly.’<sup>41</sup>*

Turner states that what ‘*we have to learn through being disorderly*’ is what is achieved in liminality and the liminoid: to embrace different facets of uncertainty, and rejuvenate.

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38 Bjorn Thomassen, “Revisiting Liminality- the danger of empty spaces” in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 27.

39 Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in comparative Symbolology,” *The Rice University Studies* 60, no. 3 (1974): 64, accessed August 9, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/63159>.

40 Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in comparative Symbolology,” *The Rice University Studies* 60, no. 3 (1974): 64, accessed August 9, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/63159>

41 Brian Sutton-Smith. “Games of Order and Disorder” (paper presented to Symposium on “Forms of Symbolic Inversion” American Anthropological Association, Toronto, December 1), accessed August 9, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/63159> .

Since Turner, the concept of the liminoid, and its predecessor liminality, has been employed in fields of study as diverse as health, management, travel, cyber space, governance and sexuality.<sup>42</sup> Through its range of use the concept is getting vaguer, not only used in its simplest understanding as an in-between but is now in a broader sense as a term to describe duality, fluidity and the unfixable.<sup>43</sup> By Victor Turner's work suggesting that the values gained in the liminal can be achieved without a physical or mental transition, the liminoid created a situation where the original term lost its fundamental essence.

It is this thesis position that, even though the liminoid is a break from the everyday through play, this is not enough to gain the value of experience the liminal. Change through transience is fundamental for the individual to enter the liminal phase and experience the uncertain. This is not to say that Turner did a disservice to van Gennep's work, his work freed the liminal from not only being achieved in 'life crisis' but in other transient situations in a individuals life, for example in travel. A digression back to the pure liminality of van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* is not completely achieved when this thesis investigates the term but, as it is seen to be closer to that of the liminoid, the term 'liminality' will be used.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Kevin Meethan, "Walking the Edges- towards a visual ethnography of beachscapes," in *Liminal Landscape-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 69.

43 Lucy Kay, Zoe Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, ed., *Mapping Thresholds- thresholds in cultural and literary texts* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 8.

44 Bjorn Thomassen, "Revisiting Liminality- the danger of empty spaces" in *Liminal Landscapes-travel, experience and spaces in between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 27.

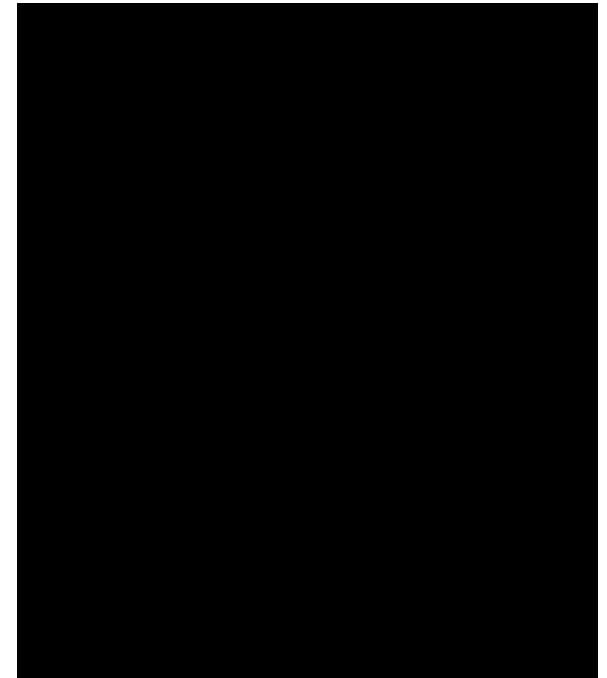


Figure 12: Travel to break away and play with different facets of ones personality.

### Chapter 3 The Poetics of Liminality

*Poetry, short stories, film and sculpture, of noted literaries Brian Turner, May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, director Andrew Kotting, and sculptor James Turrell, are creative works that illustrate liminal moments and their value to the individuals experiencing them. Through analysis of these works, The Poetics of Liminality reveals of the specific values an individual can gain in a liminal phase. This chapter hopes to begin to bridge the divide between anthropologic terminology and architectural design.*

#### 3.1 Poetry

*Visiting Kai Kai Beach*, by New Zealand poet Brian Turner, illustrates the frission of the present in the liminal.

The reader is taken on a journey to the liminal borderline; every sense intertwined and occupied in the external experience in front of the individual.

*' We came this way once and would hope  
to come again, by land or sea,...'<sup>45</sup>*

The coastline induces a crescendo of experience, the individual becomes immersed in the flux of the liminal landscape, self and place begin to bleed into one and the same.

*'...The sou'wester blustered but did not bother us  
and the sun's light smarted*

*on the shivering reaches of Blueskin Bay.  
We climbed the tow-browed cliffs*

*at the southern end of the beach  
and wandered along the gently-sloping headland*

*to the light on Heywards Point. There, we lay  
in ripe grass in the warm late winter sun*

*and felt the ancients move among surrounding hills,*

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45 Brain Turner, "Visiting Kai Kai Beach." in *Here On Earth*, ed. David Eggleton (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 1999), 132.

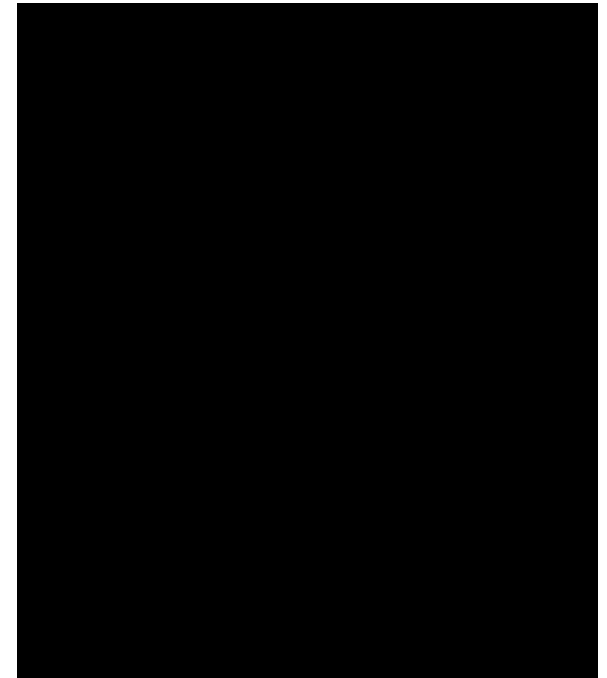


Figure 13: Visiting Kai Kai Beach.

*felt the pulse and poise of time,...*<sup>46</sup>

The value in the liminal described in the transient moment of *Visiting Kai Kai Beach* is the ability of the individual to escape the hopes, worries, fears of the past or future to concentrate on the present. In modern life, moments are swallowed by responsibilities, stress and day planners. This liminal environment, described beautifully in *Visiting Kai Kai Beach*, affords a break from the everyday internal pressures to completely immerse oneself in the present, catalysed by the impact the condition of the borderland has on its occupants.

The value gained in this moment of liminality is a total surrendering to the elements, the individual steps away from themselves to rejuvenate.

### 3.2 Short Stories

Liminality in the short stories of May Sinclair and Dorothy Richardson, and other authors of the modernist short fiction genre, is a well explored theme.

These short moments, recorded by the authors, are frequently structured around defining events that transcend boundaries, both psychological and social. A range of threshold states are typically focused on:

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<sup>46</sup> Brain Turner, "Visiting Kai Kai Beach." in *Here On Earth*, ed. David Eggleton (Nelson, NZ: Craig Potton Publishing, 1999), 132.

mourning, the literal or psychological journey, the uncertain, transient moments as well as scenarios set in transitional programs such as hotels, waiting rooms and railway carriages.<sup>47</sup>

The theme of the liminal offered female authors of Victorian heritage a powerful creative outlet. Virginia Woolf, a noted literary, cited that her short pieces offered her 'wild outbursts of freedom'. The neglect of criticism of the short fiction genre let it develop in the modern time, and as it was left unhampered, became a more unrestricted, experimental form of literary expression.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2.1 *The Return of the Prodigal Son.*

In *Return of the Prodigal Son* by May Sinclair, the protagonist enters a liminal phase and gains its value of self-reflection.

May Sinclair's rewriting of the biblical tale of the prodigal son in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* in 1902, is set in the protagonist's liminal stage of travel from place of work to childhood home. The liminal phase gives the protagonist, Steven Lepper, ample time to reflect on his idealised rise to glory, from drunk to affluent business man.<sup>49</sup> Reliving his story to a passenger on the train:

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47 Claire Drewery, *Modernist short fiction by women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 3.

48 Claire Drewery, *Modernist short fiction by women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf*, 3.

49 *Ibid.*, 3.

*'The first thing he did was to collar that capital and drink it too. Then he went and worked in the store where he'd bought the drink, for the sake of being near it—he loved it so. Then—this is the queer part of the story—something happened. I won't tell you what it was. It happened because it was the worst thing that could have happened—it was bound to happen, owing to his luck. Whatever it was it made him chuck drinking. He left the store where the stuff was, and applied for a berth in a big business in Chicago. It was a place where they didn't know him, else he wouldn't have got it.'*

*'Then his luck turned. If it wasn't the same luck. Just because he hadn't an object in life now—didn't care about drinking any longer, nor yet about women, because of the thing that had happened, and so hadn't got any reasonable sort of use for money—he began to make it. That's the secret of success, that is.'*<sup>50</sup>

Despite expecting a warm welcome on returning home, Steven Lepper overhears his family recounting his past bad behaviour and the little faith they have in his change in character.

*[Minnie] "Why? Why?" The girl came forward, spreading her large red hands before her. "Because we've paid all his debts. Because we've saved money and got straight again. Because we're getting to know one or two decent people, and it's taken us fifteen years to do it. Because we're beginning to enjoy ourselves for the first time in all our miserable lives. Because I've set my heart on staying with the Tanqueray's, and Fred Tanqueray will be there. Because"—a queer, fierce light came into her eyes—"because I'm happy, and he means to spoil it all, as he spoilt it all before! As if I hadn't suffered enough."*

*[Mother] "For shame, Minnie, for shame, to speak of poor Stevy so. One would think you might have a little*

50 May Sinclair, *The Return of the Prodigal* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1914), 25.



*more affection for your only brother.”*

[Minnie] *“Look here, Mother” (Minnie again!), “that’s all sentimental humbug. Can you look me in the face and honestly say you’d be glad to see your only son?”*

(The son’s heart yearned, straining for the answer. It came quavering.)

[Mother] *“My dear, I shall not see him. I’m a poor, weak old woman, and I know that the Lord will not send me any burden that I cannot bear.”*<sup>51</sup>

Hearing his mother and sister’s dismay of his imminent arrival, Steven feels alienated and is cast adrift from his surroundings.<sup>52</sup>

The value of self-reflection in the liminal stage is one of the actions evoked in this phase. Although Steven Lepper’s reflection in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* were ultimately idealised figments of his imagination, this illustration of reflection in the liminal is still valid.

The liminal provides the space to reflect on ones’ self: space away from the everyday chores and responsibility that invade every thought in contemporary way of life.

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51 May Sinclair, *The Return of the Prodigal* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1914), 40.

52 Claire Drewery, *Modernist short fiction by women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 27.

### 3.2.2 *Ordeal*

*Ordeal*, a short text by noted modernist women's writer Dorothy Richardson, outlines the recuperation and rebirth an individual can experience in the transitional period of the act of dying.

In *Ordeal* Richardson follows the protagonist, Fanny, on admittance and pre-surgery in a nursing home. One would be in their right mind to consider that the act of dying to be one of extreme anxiety and depression, but Richardson presents this liminal period as an uplifting and exciting period. The rest home as a last 'holiday' from the trivialities of the everyday responsibilities and relationships: a reconfirmation of the individual's true self independent from external pressures.<sup>53</sup>

*'With a deep, blissful sigh she felt all the tensions of her life relax. She was back again in the freedom of her own identity, in pre-marriage freedom, in more that childhoods freedom, with all the strength of her maturity to savour its joy. In bright daylight the afternoon lay before her, endless- the first holiday of her adult life...'*<sup>54</sup>

Fanny does convey her uncertainty about being put under for the serious operation, but it is to her surprise in the upliftment of the liminal, and the sense of a new being when confronting her own demise

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<sup>53</sup> Claire Drewery, *Modernist short fiction by women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 52.

<sup>54</sup>

that truly resonates in the piece.<sup>55</sup>

*'She had thought in advance that her sense of personal life must cease when she entered the door of the nursing home. But instead it was intensified, as if, brought up against a barrier from behind which no certain future poured into it, her life flowed back upon itself, embarrassing her with its livid palpitation. Her known self, arrested thus, was making all its statements at once...'*<sup>56</sup>

A sense of rebirth and recuperation is an unexpected result of the liminal act of dying, between life and extinction, one not unwelcome for Fanny in this frightening time.

The liminal as a state that provides the individual passing through a sense of rebirth and recuperation is not unprecedented, even the earliest writing of Arnold van Gennep in *The Rites of Passage*. As mentioned in the chapter previous Arnold van Gennep argued that the value of liminal phase is the individual gaining time to digest the upcoming transition of social status from one to another. A sense of rebirth and recuperation are the tools in which the individual regenerates the energy needed to re-enter the profane.

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55 Claire Drewery, *Modernist short fiction by women: the liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 52.

56 Dorothy Richardson, *Journey to Paradise: short stories and autobiographical sketches* (London: Virago, 1989), 70.

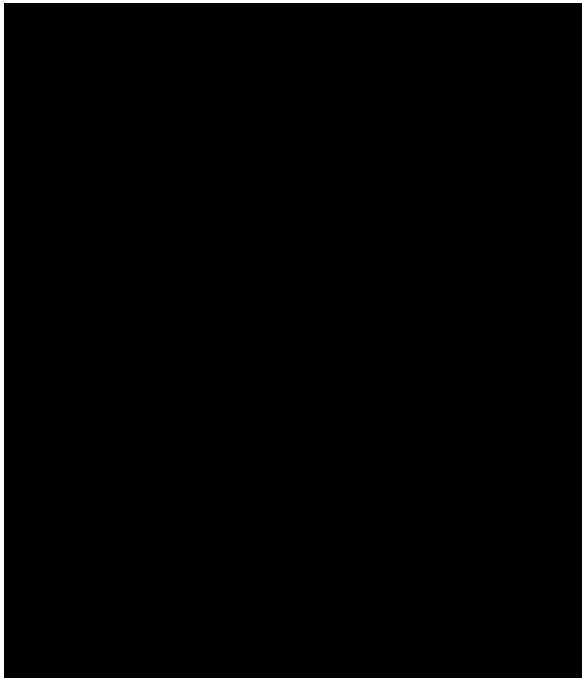


Figure 14: Gran and Granddaughter sharing quality time.

### 3.3 Film

The 'road' film genre is awash with liminal references. The road as a vehicle of leaving, escape, movement, play, journeying and ultimately arriving bears a strong resemblance to Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* description of separation, transitional and incorporative rites. One leaves, transitions and arrives, a seductive concept when contemplating the correlation between the road film and the liminal.<sup>57</sup>

*Gallivant* is a 'road' film that explores the relationship between the director's, Andrew Kotting, handicapped daughter and ageing mother, aided by the liminal space of a journey around the British coast.

Director Andrew Kotting unites his 80 year old mother and handicapped daughter in a journey of discovery of the coastline, its occupants and landscapes. The journey acts as scarce opportunity to build lines of communication between Eden, a little girl suffering from a condition where speech is unattainable and a short life guaranteed, and her grandmother, Gladys, also precariously teetering on the edge of life. As speech communication is between the two is impossible, communication is developed through play. Moments of the ludic between the two encourage interaction and dialogue in

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<sup>57</sup> Simon Ward, "Danger Zones- the British 'road movie' and the liminal landscape," in *Liminal Landscapes- travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 185.

Eden's sign language and Gladys slow uptake of the language. Touching scenes of the two in a dinghy, on the swings, in a tent and on the road shows the building of affection for each other and Eden's development as a result of the attention and encouragement of her grandmother.<sup>58</sup>

The road in *Gallivant* acts as a vehicle to arrive at the ludic environment of the coast line. The coast, and its liminal qualities, allows Eden and Gladys to break away from their everyday (Eden's special school and Gladys retirement home) to completely dedicate their time to each other. The liminal space of the coast gives the two an accessible and interesting common ground in which they can explore, create, play with and 'talk' about. A common ground between two very different individuals, that without, communication and emotional bonds could not form.

### 3.4 Sculpture

The sculpture *The Elliptic Ecliptic*, from the *Skyspace* series, by the famed contemporary sculptor, James Turrell, can be seen as liminal through its transitive and meditative nature.

The sculpture *The Elliptic Ecliptic*, from the *Skyspace* series, is situated on a hill overlooking St Michael's

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<sup>58</sup> Simon Ward, "Danger Zones- the British 'road movie' and the liminal landscape," in *Liminal Landscapes- travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 191.

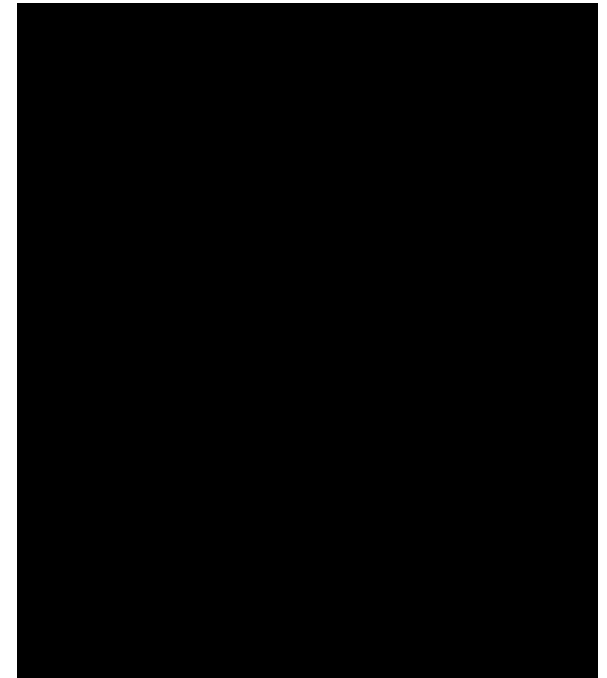


Figure 15: Eclipse diagram.

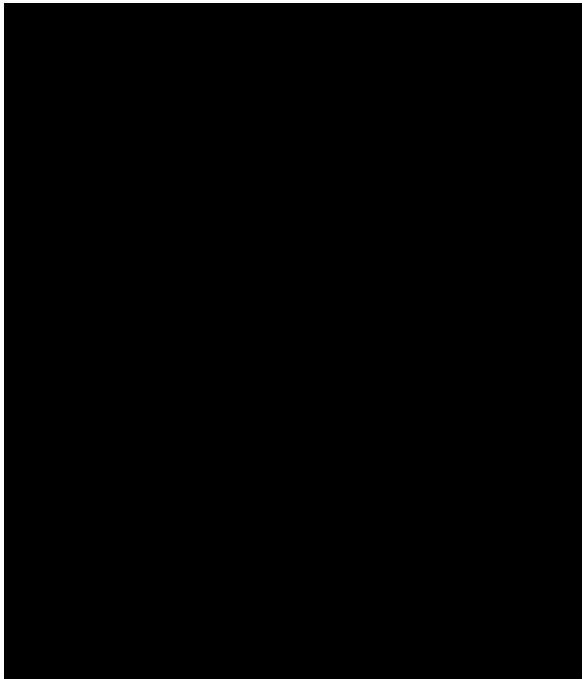


Figure 16: Technical drawings of The Elliptic Ecliptic.

Mount in Marazion, England. Instantly recognisable as the sculptures with the aperture in the ceiling, *The Elliptic Ecliptic* differs from others in the *Skyspace*, as the aperture is elliptical in nature, rather than typical rectangular opening. The elliptical aperture provides us with clues to its true intent; the ellipse forms a frame for the cyclical nature of the celestial orbits, a window to the universe in the event of an eclipse.<sup>59</sup>

Despite what simply looks like a hole in the ceiling, the work of James Turrell is extremely well considered. A combination of external and internal artificial lighting, reflective materiality, use of pure geometry, and precise detailing creates an environment of enhanced reality; it is the sky as you have never seen it.<sup>60</sup>

*'The colours can be intensely sublime and beyond what we would normally see. The amount of light in the space allows for the seeing of several planets and a few stars, but there is a blackness of depth and softness that is unparalleled, because it has no surface. The blackness is a complete black body, absorbing and sucking light. It rises simply out of the contrast between the inside of a space where there is light in relation to a space where there is none.'*<sup>61</sup>

The sculpture is seen to be liminal in a variety of ways: its in-between nature, break from the profane,

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59 James Turrell, *James Turrell Eclipse* (Germany: Michelle Hue-Williams Fine Art, 1999), 49.

60 James Turrell, *James Turrell: the other horizon* (New York, NY: DAP, 1999), 53.

61 James Turrell, *Air Mass* (London: South Bank Centre, 1993), 52.

and transitional experience created.

*The Elliptic Ecliptic* is described to be a piece of art in-between disciplines. Turrell paints with light, sculpts experience and design spaces of architectural integrity. The liminal, in its simplest form an in-between, is typified by this work's undefinable discipline. Turrell is seen to be a master of experience rather than the arts.<sup>62</sup>

*The Elliptic Ecliptic* achieves a break from the profane/collective by drawing the occupant into a space of alternate reality. Isolated from the outside world, with only a stylised sky plane in view, the occupant is enthralled with the intensity of experience and oblivious to external rhythms and pressures. For the moment you are in the sculpture you are transported, the only concern is the experience you behold, the here and now.<sup>63</sup>

Transience, the nature of the pure liminal this thesis cites, is what enthralls and hypnotises in *The Elliptic Ecliptic*.

*'I can feel it changing, getting darker. Is this colour just a memory, or perhaps a dream? It is now black, a black so deep it makes you shiver. Looking out through the aperture I cannot see any stars, although I know they must be there. But this is not blackness; it is full of something from long ago and with the potential of something yet to be.'*<sup>64</sup>

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62 James Turrell, *James Turrell: the other horizon* (New York, NY: DAP, 1999), 48.

63 James Turrell, *James Turrell: the other horizon*, 46.

64 James Turrell, *James Turrell Eclipse* (Germany: Michelle Hue-Williams Fine Art, 1999), 10.

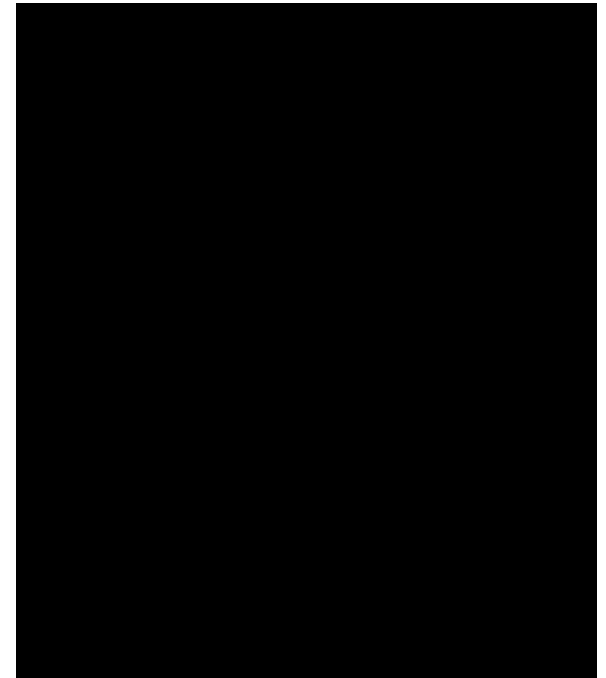


Figure 17: Interior of The Elliptic Ecliptic.

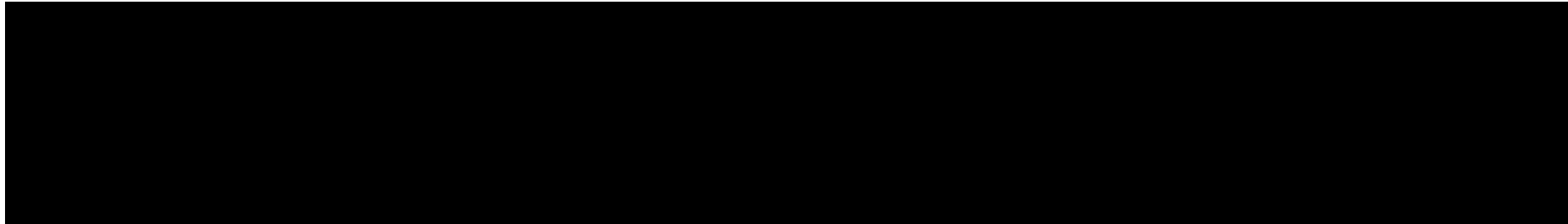


Figure 18: The Elliptic Ecliptic *time lapse*.

Transition is the state of uncertainty, the catalyst to the occupant of the liminal receiving the value of residing in this phase. The periodical change in lighting, colour and view, ticks through time and season, ever changing, never static. The occupant is enthralled with the constant periodical change, the value in this moment is the meditative condition connected with the rhythms of nature and time.<sup>65</sup>

*'I look around the enclosed space and notice that it is now occupied, but I hadn't noticed anyone enter. I go outside, into a clear starry night. That blue is still with me, and I have a feeling it will never go away. For a moment in time, I feel I have learnt how to touch the sky.'*<sup>66</sup>

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65 James Turrell, *James Turrell Eclipse* (Germany: Michelle Hue-Williams Fine Art, 1999), 10.

66 James Turrell, *James Turrell Eclipse*, 10.





## Chapter 4 Architectural Theory

*Architectural Theory serves to breach the divide between the anthropological and architectural theory. This chapter is separated into three areas of investigation: the links between the liminal and phenomenal theory, the drivers and aims of phenomenal architecture, and a phenomenal architectural precedent that embodies the liminal.*

*This investigation is pivotal when considering the direction my design project will take in the subsequent chapter.*

### 4.1 Links

The links between the investigation of liminality in anthropology studies and architectural theory can be seen in contemporary phenomenological architecture. Concepts and aims of liminal and phenomenological architectural theory start to align when considering the two as a break from the collective every day, an experience focused on the here and now, and the value they both share as spaces of regeneration.

As the liminal is a break from the everyday to facilitate transience, similarly phenomenological architecture also strives to break away from the everyday clutter of life. The minimalist spatial, formal and material choices of phenomenological architecture reinforce this break. The minimalist aesthetic is seen by many as an opportunity to create an architecture that reacts to the noise, disorder and vulgarity of hybrids and contaminations present in contemporary consumerist life and architecture.<sup>67</sup>

It has been seen that the liminal is a state of present experience. The transitional character of the liminal enthralls and captivates the occupant; the journey through different sensations and senses keeps the occupant in the here and now. The worries and pressures of the collective are insignificant to the individuals' present liminal state, as seen in previous examples of when one steps on to the sand for the first time or in experiencing the work of *Skyspace*.

The human experience and perception is fundamental to phenomenological architecture.

*“The strength of our buildings is the immediate visceral response they have on a visitor. For us, that is all that is important in architecture. We want to make a building that can cause sensations, not represent this or that idea.”*<sup>68</sup> Jacques Herzog.

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67 Ilka Ruby, Andreas Ruby, Angeli Sachs, and Philip Ursprung, *Minimal Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 2003), 9.

68 Jacques Herzog (director, Herzog&de Meuron), interview, 1997, quoted in Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 196.

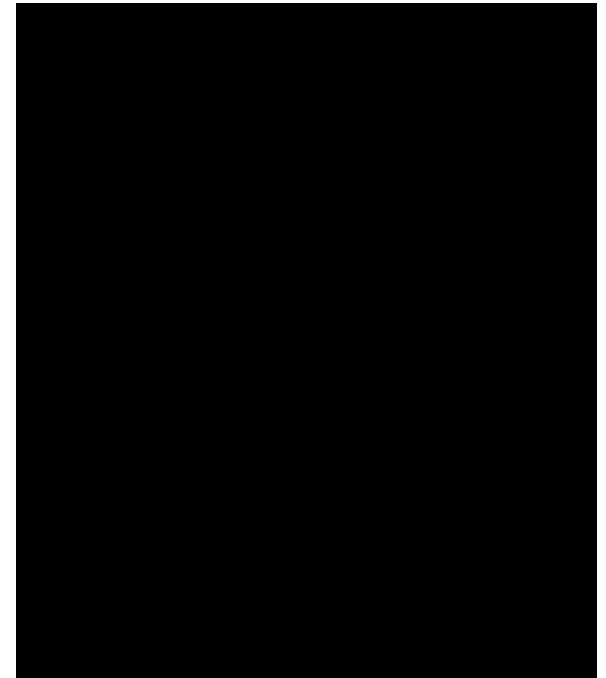


Figure 19: Impact of Herzog & de Meuron's Dominus Winery.

Architects Herzog and de Meuron, Peter Zumthor and Tadao Ando are figure heads for an architectural theory that emphasizes the importance of the experiential and the engagement of the senses when journeying through their programs. The Thermal Vals, a poster child for the theory and soon to be discussed in subsequent part of this chapter, immerses all of the occupant's senses in to the act of bathing. The sound of water lapping, the smell of scented water, the solid warmth of heated natural stone; every sense the occupant has is fully engaged with the act of bathing, there is no room for the worries of the exterior, only the sensations of the present practice exists.<sup>69</sup>

The liminal state and the space of phenomenal architecture are regenerating for the occupant in both conditions. By breaking from the profane and experiencing purely experiential moments in the liminal and the space of phenomenological architecture, occupants allow themselves to concentrate on the moment, their own internal reflections and relax from the rat race of the contemporary world. The internal spaces of phenomenological architecture offers the occupant an asylum from reality.<sup>70</sup>

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69 Sigrid Hauser, and Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Therme Vals* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2007), 27.

70 Ilka Ruby, Andreas Ruby, Angeli Sachs, and Philip Ursprung, *Minimal Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 2003), 19.

## 4.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the consideration of the 'phenomena' of human consciousness or experience.<sup>71</sup>

Much of the architectural theory over the last quarter of the twentieth century has been heavily involved with the meaning, politics and formal language of building. Whereas Koolhaas and his confrere's represented a backlash on exuberant form making and extra disciplinary claims, phenomenological architecture takes this train of thought even further.

*'I frequently come across building that have been designed with a good deal of effort and a will to find a special form, and I find I am put off by them...Good architecture should receive the human visitor, should enable him to experience it and live in it, but it should not constantly talk at him.'*<sup>72</sup> Peter Zumthor.

An architectural language that makes no reference to the languages before it, the phenomenological is seen to go beyond symbols, architecture of the metaphoric or in response to. The phenomenological is an architectural language that celebrates architecture in its own right; in experiential occupation and craft.<sup>73</sup>

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71 Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 210.

72 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 33.

73 Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the*

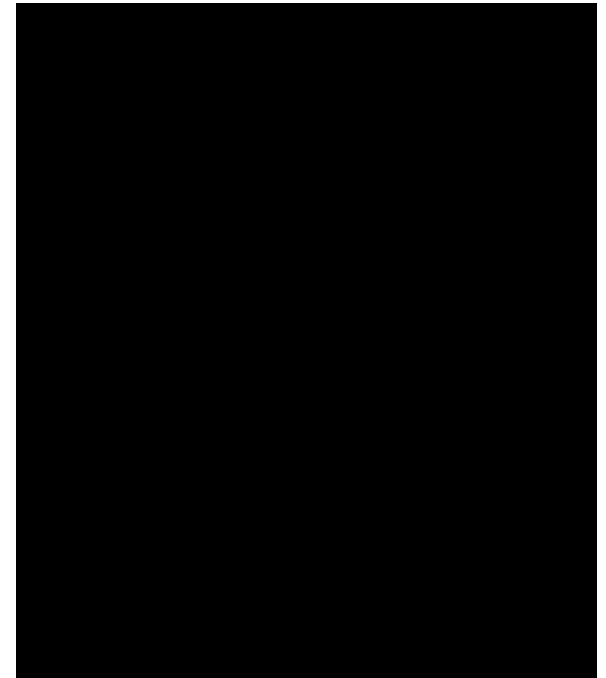


Figure 20: Zumthor's Therme Vals receiving the visitor.

The introduction of phenomenological theory in popular architectural discourse came about in the publication *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*, a collection of essays by influential architects of the time: Steven Holl, Alberto Perez-Gomes and Juhani Pallasmaa. First published in Japanese journal a+u, Holl edited in 1994, and later republished as a book, *Questions of Perception* emphasised architectures recent loss of plasticity. A loss of plasticity, or the loss of ability for architecture to receive the human form, is largely the result of architectures privilege of the visual over the other senses:

*'Every touching experience of architecture is multisensory; qualities of matter, space, and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle. Architecture involves seven realms of sensory experience which interact and infuse each other.'*<sup>74</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa

Steven Holl argues, in his contribution, that architecture engages the immediacy of our perceptions and can transport the individual from mundane to the transformative.<sup>75</sup>

The loss of plasticity is reiterated and the consideration of the range of senses of human perception and experience is emphasised. Holl sees these considerations as the catalyst to rectify the existing

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*present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 211.

<sup>74</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, "An Architecture of the Seven Senses." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 30.

<sup>75</sup> Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 41.

architectural situation and reaffirm the importance of the individual in contemporary architecture. Architecture that embraces the phenomenon of human perception is seen to transform our lives from the everyday mundane to a space of sensitized consciousness. Through the exploration of the seven senses, even the act of opening a door can have the power to inspire and transform everyday experiences.<sup>76</sup>

The essay *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*, split in to sections outlining the different perceptual considerations, is a clear insight into Holl's engagement of the human perception in design. These sections, or 'phenomenal zones', include: *Enmeshed Experience-the merging of object and field*, *Perspectival Space-incomplete perception*, *Of Light and Shadow*, *Spatiality of Night*, *Water a Phenomenal Lens*, *Of Sound*, *Detail- the haptic realm*, *Proportion, Scale and Perception*, *Site Circumstance and Idea*.

*Enmeshed experience- the merging of object and field* explores the complexity of the enmeshed. Enmeshed experience is a state beyond the physicality of architectural objects and the practicalities of programmatic content, but something more intangible. This experience emerges from the continuous unfolding of overlapping spaces of depth, materials and detail; an architecture where individual objects lose their clarity and merge with the context of the architectures situation. Holl draws parallels to the cinematic representation of Andrey Tarkovsky in creating believable scenes. For a film to draw the viewer

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<sup>76</sup> Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 40.

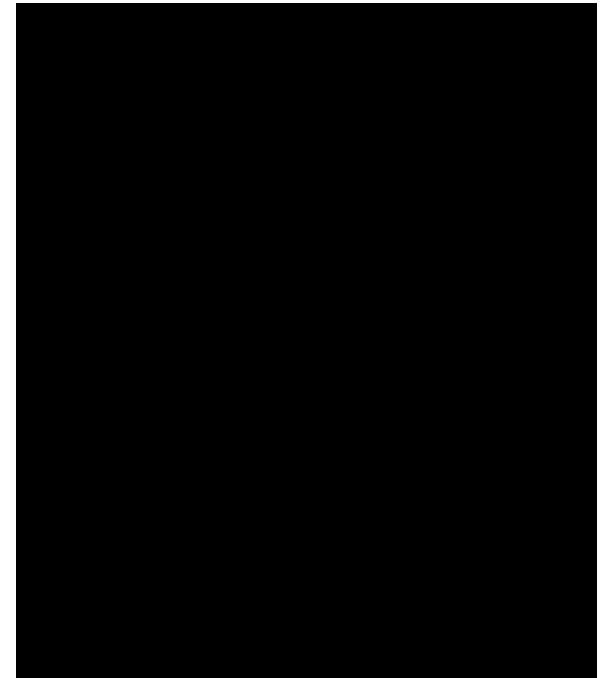


Figure 21: Depth of experience in Oxnard Residence, Holl watercolour.

into this alternate reality the director must successfully enmesh actor, script, lighting, context, audio to create a believable scene. This is the same in architecture.<sup>77</sup> This merger is catalysed by the overriding 'idea'. A conceptual logic fuses the subjective and objective, creating links to the questions of the architectures ultimate perception.<sup>78</sup>

*Perspectival Space-incomplete perception* explores the need to design in multiple perspectives. It is Holl's view that contemporary architecture cannot be conceived through plan, section and a money shot. Architecture must be experienced through multi perspectives, the journey through, past and around the architecture and its context must be considered at different angles, heights and speeds. This is in reflection to the different way we perceive buildings in the contemporary age; in aeroplanes, cars, running through or taking our time. Architecture must make allowances for the flux of contemporary life and individual perception of this.<sup>79</sup>

*Of Light and Shadow* explores the perceptual and metaphysical strength of light. Holl outlines the fundamental importance of light in a building, without it we could not visually perceive space at all. Similarly, it is the distortion of light that lets us perceive the character of space: solid and void, opacities, transparency and translucencies.

Holl cites that the ethereal variety of daylight orchestrates the intensities of architecture and the city.<sup>80</sup>

77 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 40.

78 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture.", 45.

79 Ibid., 55.

80 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception:*



*'What the eyes see and the senses feel in questions of architecture are formed according to conditions of light and shadow.'*<sup>81</sup>

*Spatiality of Night* explores the transformative nature of artificial light.<sup>82</sup>

*Time Duration and Perception* explores the concept of 'lived time'. In modern life time is fragmented. This fragmentation is due to the destructive effects of the mass saturation of media messages and virtual experiences in our contemporary lives. 'Lived time' is the antithesis of this. Lived time is measured in memory and of the soul; without the interruption of the virtual.<sup>83</sup>

*Water a Phenomenal Lens* explores the phenomenal qualities of water. Holl considers the transformative qualities of water: reflection, spatial reversal, refraction, and the transformation of rays of light. When one perceives a space through water, the perception of space is distorted, emphasising light or contrast of colour. Through water we are made to think for space in an alternate way. There is magic in the relationship between architecture and water.<sup>84</sup>

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phenomenology of architecture, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 63.

81 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture.", 63.

82 Ibid., 69.

83 Ibid., 74.

84 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 80.

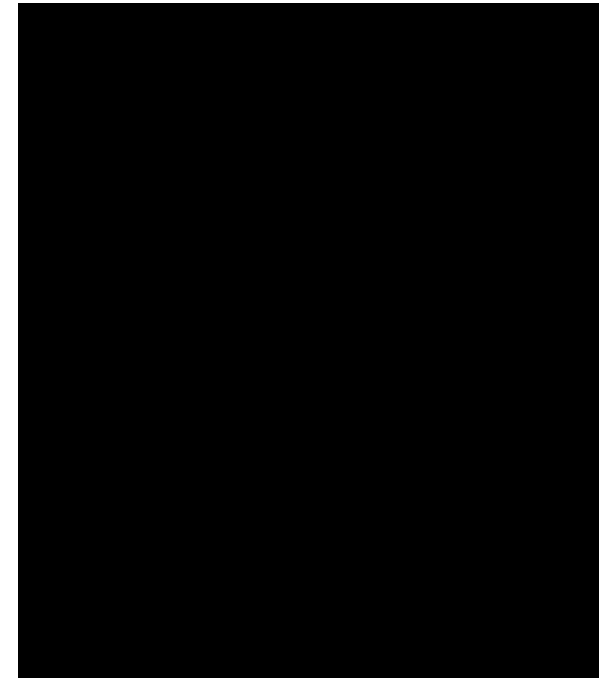


Figure 22: Change of spatiality from day to night, view from Holl offices.

*Of Sound* explores the relationship between architecture and sound. The echo and re-echo of a cathedral, monastery bells and the sound of a beautifully resonant chamber hall; in some programmes the acoustic qualities define the architecture. 'Sound space' is often a neglected sense in architecture if the program doesn't specifically ask for it, for example classroom, town halls, but must be considered if architecture truly delves into every sense<sup>85</sup>.

*Detail- the haptic realm* explores the sense of touch. The haptic realms of architecture are opened up when the materiality of said architecture is of a natural quality and crafted in an authentic way. Holl suggests that the use of synthetic material, such a vinyl coating and faux wood grain and stone, are to blame for the dulling of the haptic sense in architecture. Drawing an attractive analogy, Holl suggests the integrity of architectural space depends as much on the materials and details as the taste of a meal depends on authentic ingredients.<sup>86</sup>

*Proportion, Scale and Perception* reasserts the human body as the locus of experience. Human scale and perception has been especially neglected in the development of any urban centres, Holl tries to rectify this with the aforementioned push for human scale perspectives and the use of the proportioning system of the golden rule in design.<sup>87</sup>

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85 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture.", 87.

86 Ibid., 91.

87 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 116.

*Site Circumstance and Idea* explores the importance of site specificity. Every architectural project has its own set of programmatic requirements and site perimeters. The 'idea' must try to knit all of the phenomenal zones and the site circumstances in to a whole. It is the act of juxtaposing phenomenal and practical that yields a dynamic tension in architecture. A unique meaning and intensity is born in the architecture when project, perception and context are married.<sup>88</sup>

The essay *Questions of Perception* represents the cornerstone of phenomenological architectural theory and has gone on to inspire contemporary architects of note such as Herzog and de Meuron, Peter Zumthor and Tadao Ando.

Although not mentioning the liminal outright, Holl's work is dense with terminology that dances around the peripheral of what is to be liminal: the in-between, transformative, a break from the mundane and the concentration on the individual and his/hers perception rather than a monotonous collective, screams of what it is to be in a liminal state. *Questions of Perception* creates solid links between the theory of the liminal and the architecture of the phenomenon of perception, correlation between his work and subject matter of this thesis going as far as citing James Turrell in the *Of Light and Shadow* section of the essay.<sup>89</sup>

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88 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture.", 63.

89 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 63

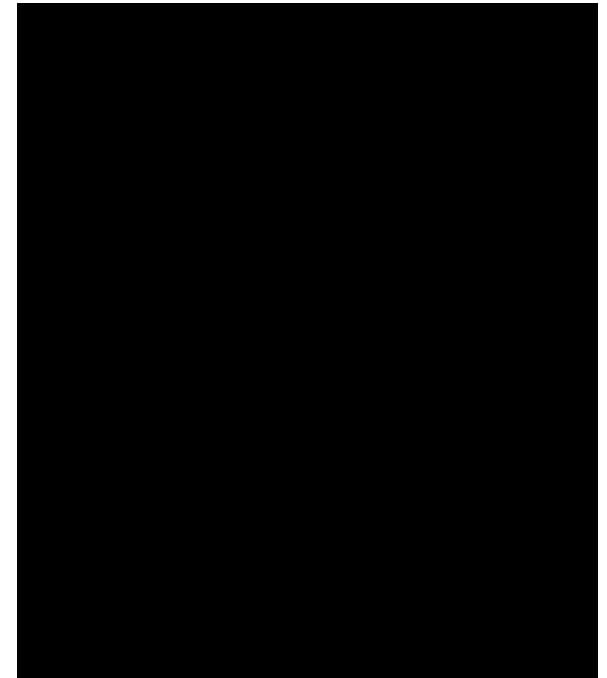


Figure 23: Interior of Benesse House Annex, Tadao Ando.

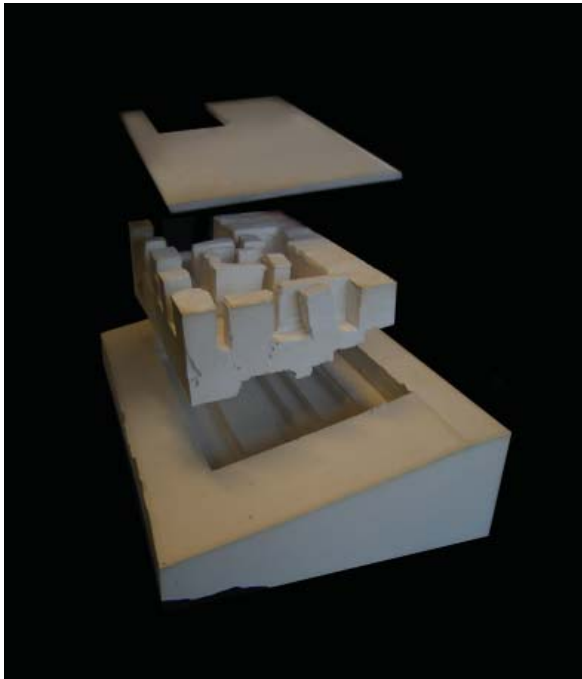


Figure 24: Therme Vals exploration, plaster modelling.

### 4.3 Case-study

Peter Zumthor

Thermal Vals, spa complex, Swiss Alps  
opened in 1996

To show the clear correlations between the phenomenological architectural theory and the case-study of the Therme Vals, the critical analysis of this project will be set out according to the nine 'phenomenal zones', outlined in Steven Holl's *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*.

The Thermal Vals embraces the *Enmeshed Experience* by seeking to create a building that grows to become part and parcel with the landscape and history of the place. Conceptually driven by the marriage between 'mountain, rock, water' every decision made is informed by these elements, resulting in a building that seems hewn from one body, the mountainous context itself.<sup>90</sup>

*Perspectival Space* is fundamental to Zumthor's design process. Through an iterative process of multi-perspective sketches and modelling, a journey is created. The Therme Vals is devoted to the human perception, the journey through the program defines the layout and planning in the built form.<sup>91</sup>

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90 Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Therme Vals* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2007), 1.

91 Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Therme Vals* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2007), 71.

The palette of the Thermal Vals is said to be a minimalist 'rock, water and light'. With such demure building blocks *Light and Shadow* define volume, creates drama and encourages the procession through. Two variations of light are conceptualised in the Vals. The first emits from a square aperture, an icy blue light filters through a milky lens, intensifying the watery ibis below. The second emphasises the driving 'idea' of the cave, cracks line the ceiling emitting sever slivers of light, highlighting subtle colour and texture variation in the stone work finish.<sup>92</sup>

The Therme Vals investigates *Time Duration and Perception* and what it is to be in 'lived time' by striving to create an intensity of sensations and moods that linger in the occupant's imagination. The experience inside the Vals is so different and isolated to that of the everyday it almost seems as though time is at a stands still, the only indication of it passing through is the direction or lack of light flowing through the apertures. Rather than counting down the racing minutes of the everyday modern life, the occupant is completely immersed in the 'living time' of the ritual of bathing.<sup>93</sup>

*Water a Phenomenal Lens* is exemplified in the Therme Vals spa programme. A large percentage of floor plate accommodates the pools, their reflections enhancing the surrounding conditions, muting elements and exaggerating others. The water acts as a mirror to see the Vals in alternative light, opening up our

92 Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 211.

93 Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the present*, 213.

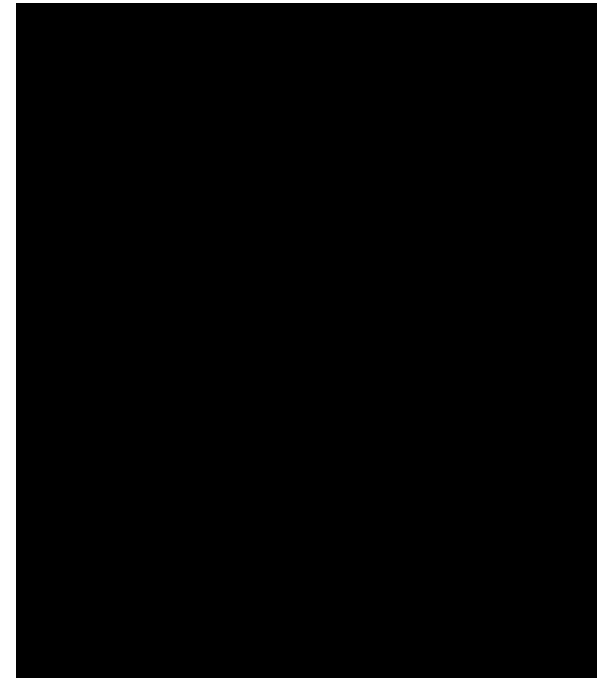


Figure 25: Interior perspective through development modelling, Thermal Vals.

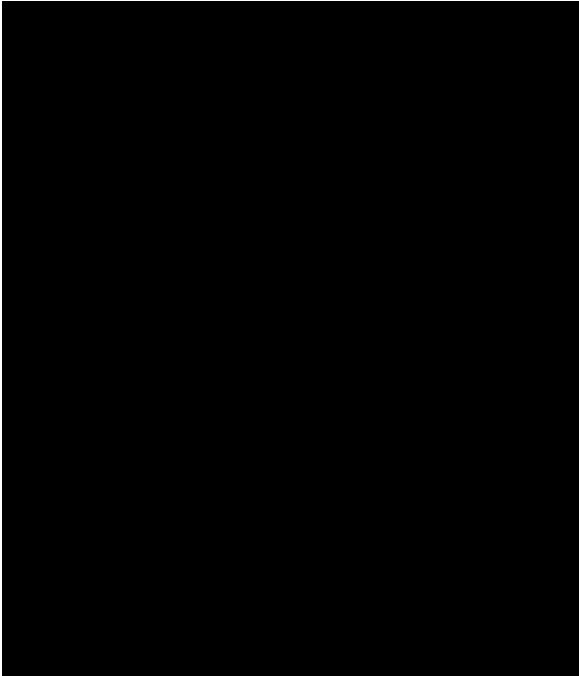


Figure 26: Interplay of materiality, light and colour of the Vals.

perception of the building to different possibilities.<sup>94</sup>

The soundscape of Therme Vals draws another layer of experience over the programme. One imagines when lying in a pool with their eyes closed, the ritual of bathing is still at the forefront of the occupants mind; water drips, water features gush and the slow echoing of calm conversation and footsteps envelope the bather in the experience. The teachings of *Of Sound* remind us that architecture is not only about the visual; to create a lasting expression all of the senses must be stimulated.<sup>95</sup>

The Therme Vals is conceptualised as a gneiss stone mass, the interior cave like spaces carved out of the single stone body. The level of craftsmanship is paramount when achieving an interior condition that creates the illusion of being hewn from a single body. The precise detailing, quality and consideration of materiality, and raw finish speaks to the *Detail- the haptic realm* explicitly.<sup>96</sup>

Zumthor, described as a mathematician in *Twenty Buildings Every Architect Should Understand*, employs the pure proportion of the golden rule in a layered composition to create spaces of both architectural sense and complexity. Unlike Holl's application of proportion as almost an afterthought in the design process, discussed in *Proportion, Scale and Perception*, Zumthor's use of proportion is a fundamental

94 Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Therme Vals* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2007), 1.

95 Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Therme Vals*, 43.

96 Harry Francis Mallgrave, and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the present* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 214.

determinant in his organisation of space.<sup>97</sup>

As previously discussed in describing the enmeshed experience the *Site Circumstance and Idea* are the fundamental building blocks in which Zumthor built the Therme Vals on. The building grew out of an idea which grew out of a context, without this specificity the Vals would never be.

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97 Simon Unwin, *Twenty Building Every Architect Should Understand* (NY, USA: Routledge, 2010), 214.

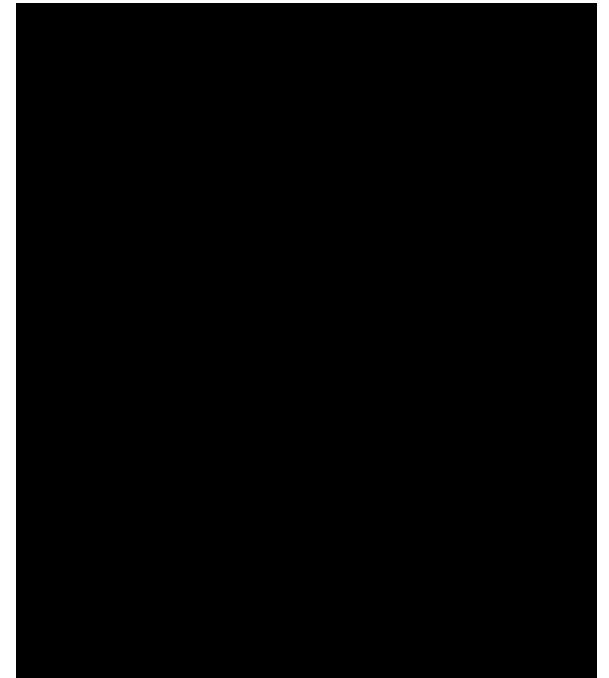


Figure 27: Layered proportion of Therme Vals.

## Chapter 5 The Architecture of Residing in the Liminal

A disregard for the value of the liminal is rife in many aspects of our modern lives; this is especially true in the development of the New Zealand coastline.

Due to demand, the liminal essence of our coastal borderline is increasingly being shrouded by tourist accommodation. Rather than embracing the qualities of the coastal escape and the playful ludic, today the coastline emulates the sub(urban) conditions of the everyday places we leave behind. The very liminal qualities we seek out when travelling to the coastline are the qualities today's planners, developers, architects and designers degrade by developing in a suburban mode. The current model of the transposed suburbia must be abandoned, and an in-tune model discovered, if we are to preserve the liminal and its value to the individual when residing on our coast.

The architectural solution, soon to be illustrated, embraces residing in the liminal Tutukaka Coast in a bid to gain the liminal's value. This short term, multi-dwelling retreat serves to negotiate the occupational tensions on the coast whilst rediscovering what it is to escape the everyday. Through a process of reading, diagramming, drawing, and modelling the resultant architectural expression and building is a large departure from the norm.

This Liminal Retreat embraces the phenomenological stand point and creates an architecture of human perception rather than human consumption. To illustrate this explicitly, this chapter is divided into the nine 'phenomenal zones' outlined in Steven Holl's pivotal essay *Questions of Perception*.<sup>98</sup>

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98 Steven Holl, "Questions of Perception- phenomenology of architecture." in *Questions of Perception: phenomenology of architecture*, 2nd ed., ed. Steven Holl, 39-43 (San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006), 40.



## 5.1 Site Circumstance and Idea

This investigation of a specific architectural model of residing in the liminal is given context by being sited at Tutukaka, Northland, New Zealand.

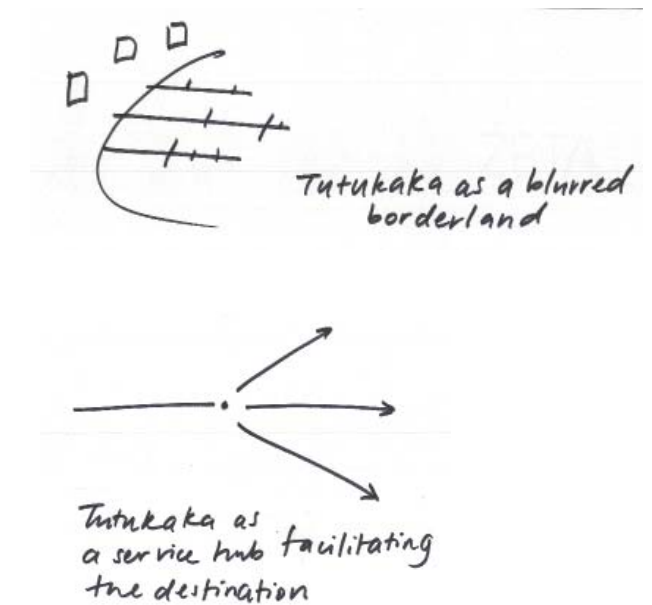
A place of layered historical and present liminalities, it is Tutukaka that sparked an interest in the degraded state of the New Zealand coast and the role an acknowledgement of the liminal could have in rectifying this condition.

The pre-European settlement Tutukaka was a place of transience. By the 1700's the Tutukaka coastline was densely occupied by several sub-tribes of the Ngapuhi and Ngatiwhatua. Both a social and warfaring people, the Maori used this stretch of the coastline, in particular, for stop overs in travel from north and south.<sup>99</sup>

European settlement also speaks to the transitional nature of Tutukaka. Established as a place of note due to the world renowned deep sea fishing in the area, Tutukaka has been servicing the fishing tourism industry even in its earliest conception. Now shrouded in tourism infrastructure, the marina, hotel, restaurants, Tutukaka is embedded in transience.<sup>100</sup>

99 Alison Frances Herbert, "The archaeology of Whangarei Harbour: the unique palaeoenvironment of the Harbour and its importance in prehistoric Maori settlement." (master's Thesis, The University of Auckland, 2009), 46.

100 Florence Keene, *Tutukaka Coast* (Whangarei, NZ: F.Keene, 1993), 11.





- a. hotel
- b. retreat
- c. schnapper rock restaurant and dive! tutukaka
- d. anglars club
- e. marina offices
- f. marina
- g. marine repairs

Tutukaka Coast, New Zealand  
site plan  
scale 1:5000



*The in-between of marina  
between hotel and beach  
is the site of Tutukaka  
after tropical disaster when  
of 1970s*

1. Surveying the inbetween of the two dominant elements of Tutukaka; the hotel and the marina.



2. Looking through the marina to catch sight of the historic fishing club.



3. The plague of insensitive tourist development on Tutukaka. The re-built hotel exhibits faux Mediterranean styling, is over scaled and one dimensional.

The existing township of Tutukaka displays a sense of transition through servicing the mass transition of tourists. Although transience is present, there is no sign of an acknowledgement of the liminal. Instead of embracing liminality and encouraging tourists to spend time reveling in this inbetween space, the insensitive development and stagnant environment only hurries the visitors through faster. This rapid tourist transience degrades the condition of the coastal liminal.



4. Journey

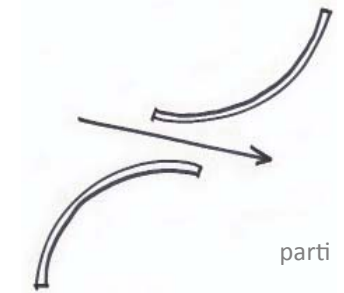
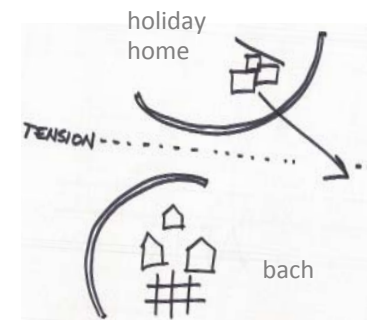
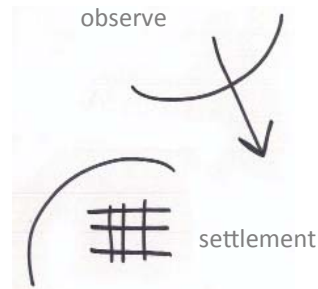
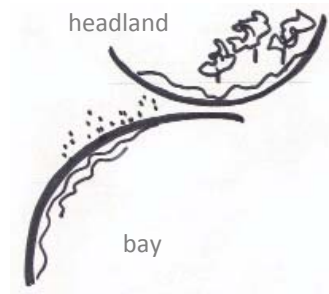
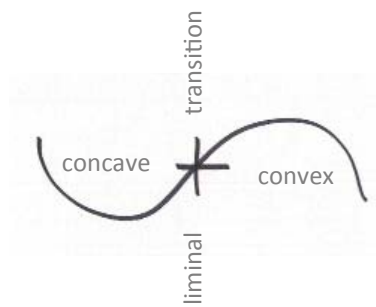
Although the rapid tourist transience existing in the township degrades the value of the liminal of the coastal borderland, the journey to Kukutauwhao Island reveals promising possibilities. When one travels through, they revel in the flux of the journey, taking in views, smells, feeling and sounds. This slower, more receptive transience concentrates on the place passed through rather than the destination. A attractive concept when considering the new model of residing in Tutukaka.



5. Moment in the journey.



6. A threshold moment in the journey.

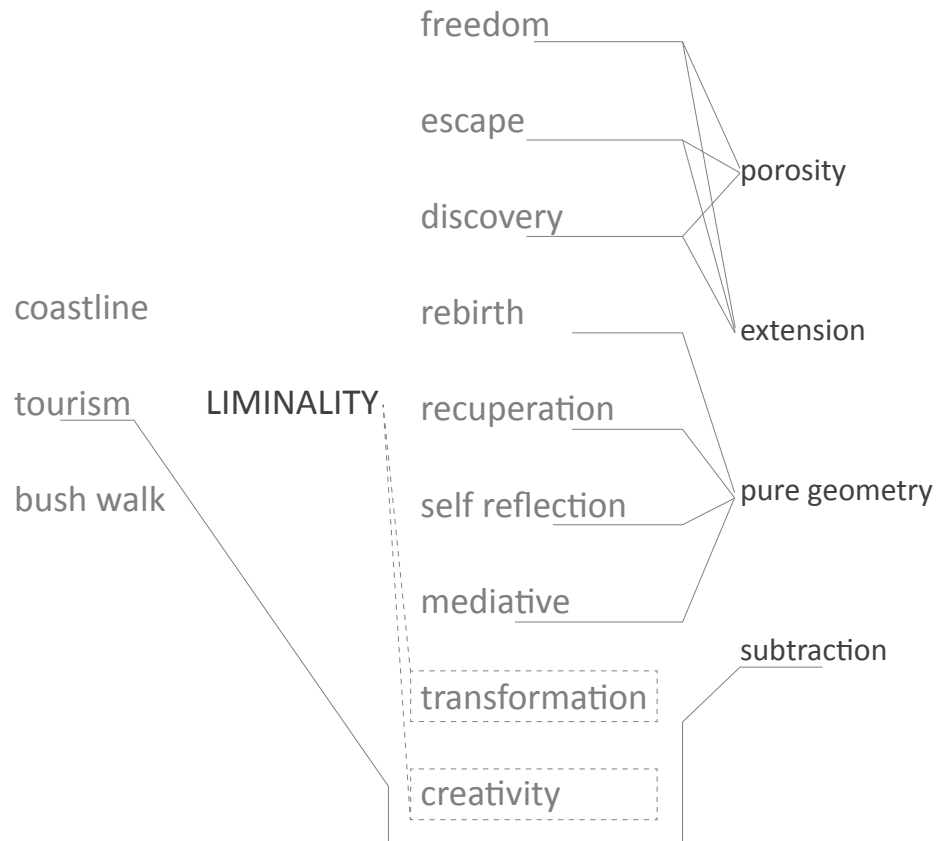


The 'idea' or parti emerged when considering the site circumstances. The liminality present in the site, tension between its physicality and occupants have been instrumental when considering the form the Liminal Retreat should take.

## 5.2 The Enmeshed Experience

The Liminal Retreat embodies the *Enmeshed experience* by processing the theoretical research regarding the value in the liminal and extrapolating an conceptual architecture.

Through diagramming, architectonics, aesthetic, materiality and interior environment are revealed. The conceptual result has a complexity and depth to inform the majority of the decisions made in the architecture. This approach strives to embody the values of the liminal without spelling every individual value out to the occupant; rather the values lose clarity and unfold to in a holistic experience. Rather than the architecture telling the occupant what they should be feeling, they feel whilst residing in the Liminal Retreat.



*beginning*

*concept*

*value in the liminal*

*architectonics*

# POROSITY

tourism model  
tutukaka hotel

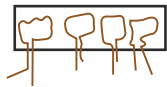


residing in the  
liminal

top level plan  
hotel



ground level  
plan hotel



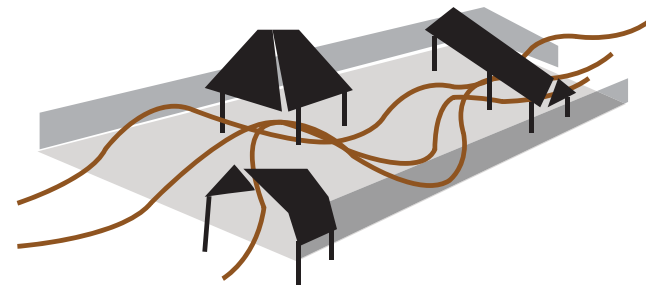
plan/section

section



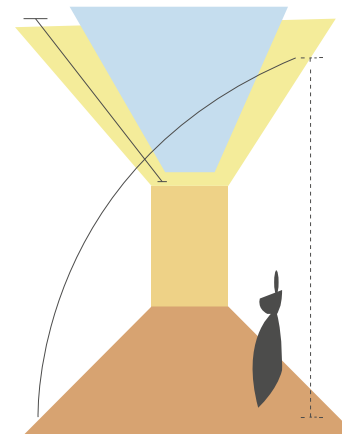
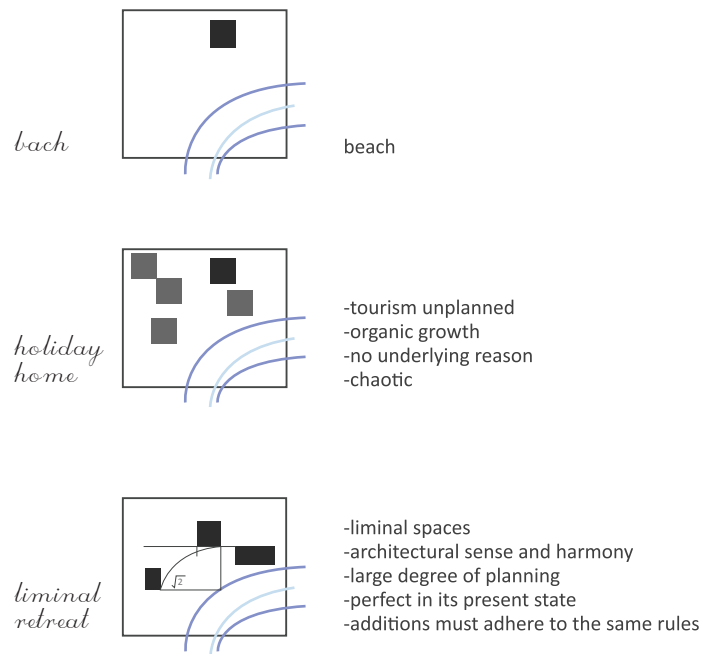
profane  
-start is the same as the end  
-nothing gained by passing through

liminal  
-porous  
-the journey through



*House for Ena Silva*  
Geoffrey Bawa

PURE GEOMETRY



Skyspace  
James Turrell



## EXTENSION

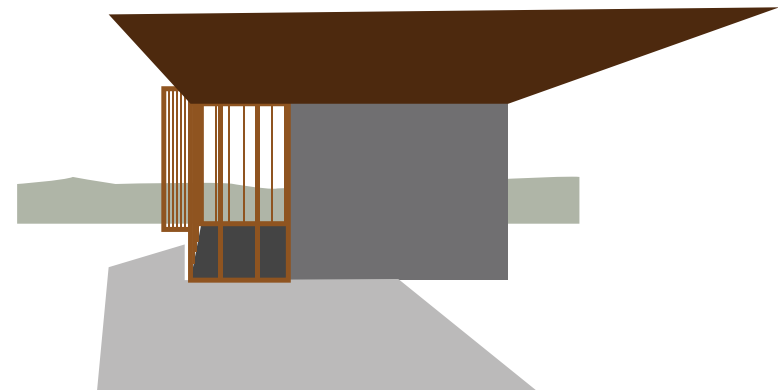


- extension of space
- journey
- promise
- anticipation
- intensification of the end experience

### INCOMPLETENESS IN COMPLETENESS

'I think architecture in India always had extensions, time was never thought as static. No project is complete or incomplete, it is a process, other wise it is dead.'

Dr Balkrishna v. Doshi  
director, studio mumbai

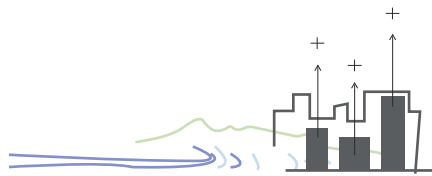


*Belavali House*  
Studio Mumbai

# SUBTRACTION

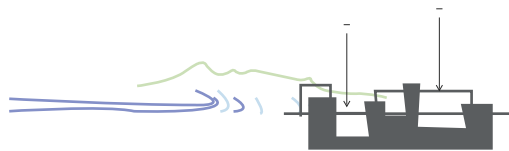


beach



tourism

- + of amenities, functions, entertainment, services, dwellings
- shrouding the intrinsic value of the place



liminal retreat

- + functions can be added without distracting and reducing value.



volume

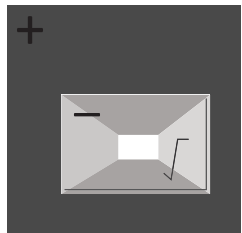


plan

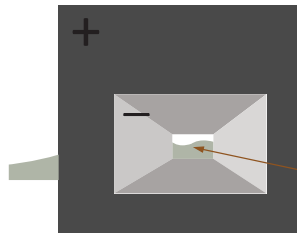


subtraction

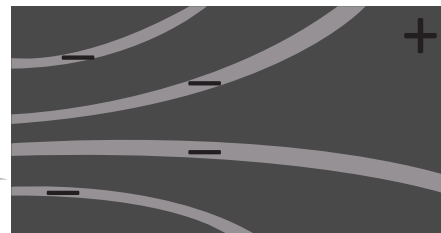
*Thermal Vals*  
Peter Zumthor



subtraction + pure geometry



subtraction + extension

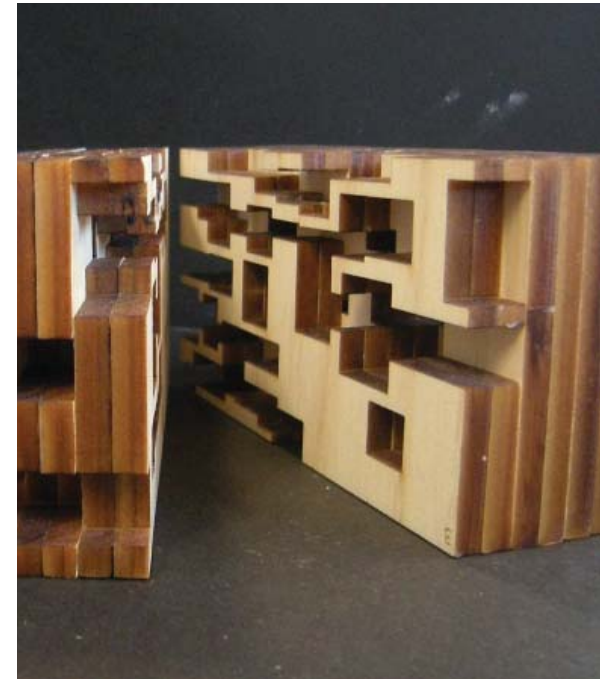


subtraction + porosity

+

+

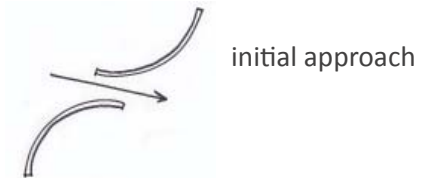
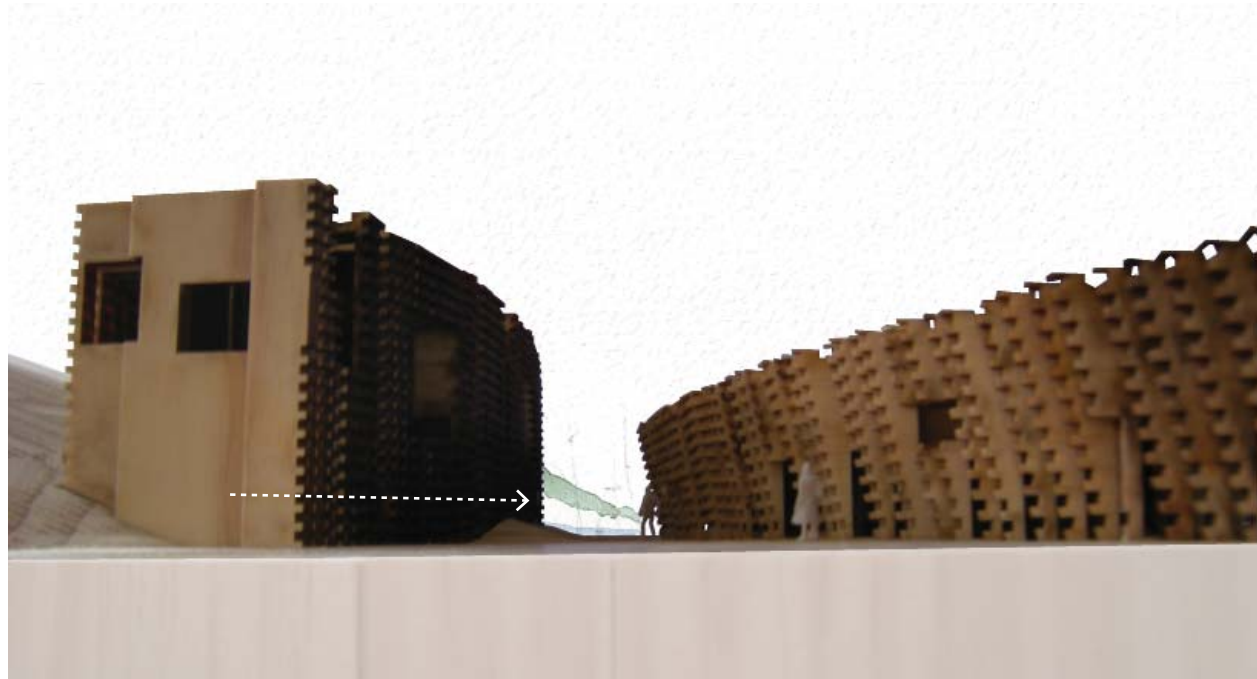
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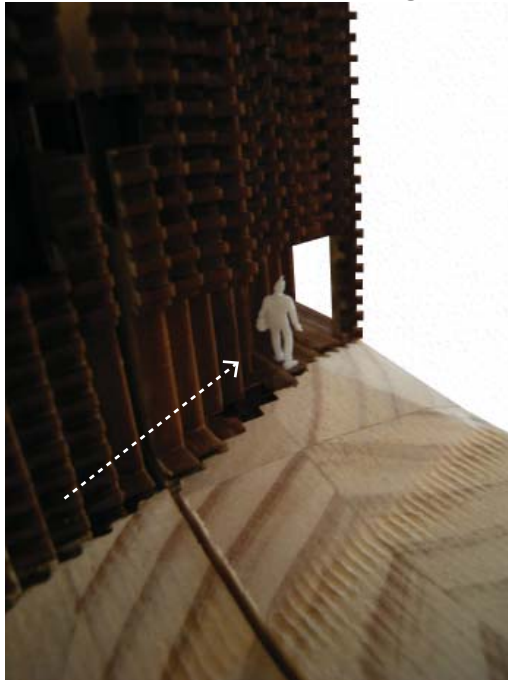
*amalgamation of diagramming into conception model*

### 5.3 *Perspectival Space*

*The Site Circumstances* and *The Enmeshed Experience* define the majority of formal considerations, but it is *Perspectival Space* that will define the journey through, paramount when talking about the value of the liminal. Embodying different facets of the liminal from transience to meditation, this journey is the strongest outcome in the project. Conceptualised as the building almost 'breathing', flux is created with the movement through moments of contrasting physicality. One moment the occupant could find themselves exposed, the next in an observant role, the next enclosed. With the help of a dense of materiality and dramatic natural lighting, this visual journey creates an intensity of experience unrivalled in any other residential model on the coast.



entering convex



entrance space



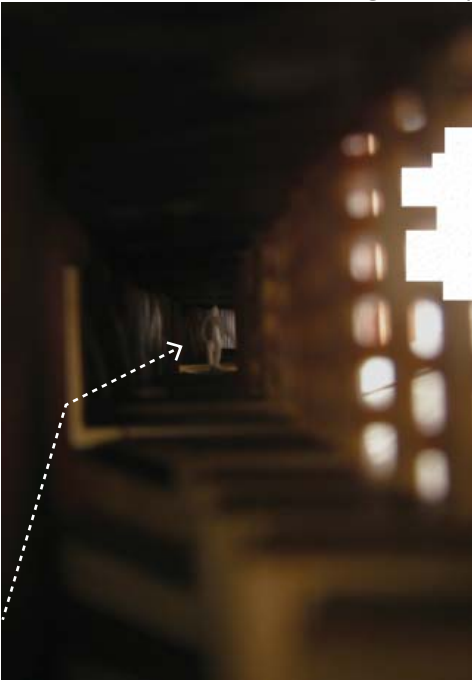
up into hallway



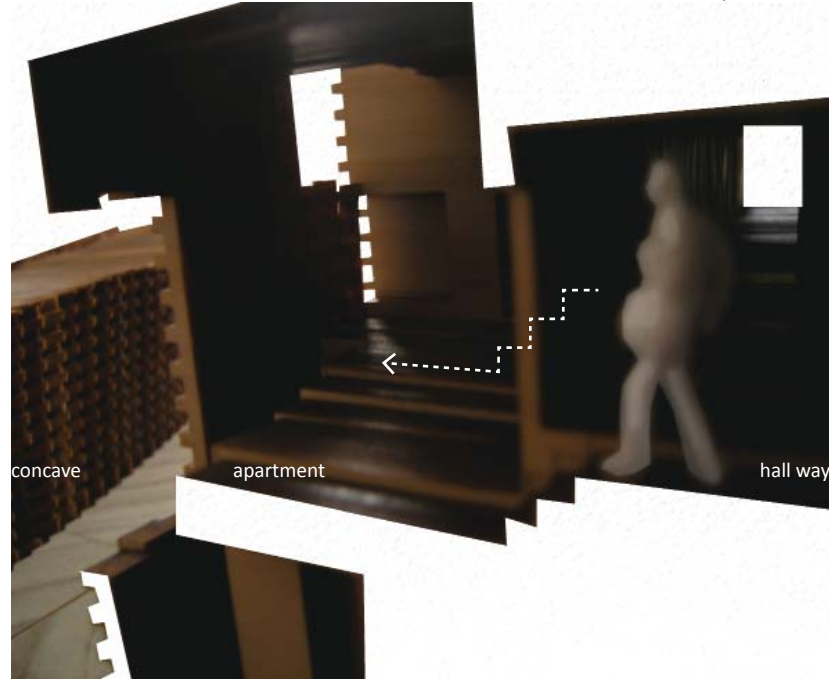
### journey through convex

Self-contained apartments  
that observe the transient  
activity below.

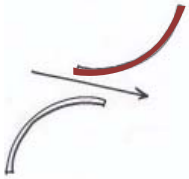
along hallway



entrance into apartment



living space



downstairs ...



... into ...

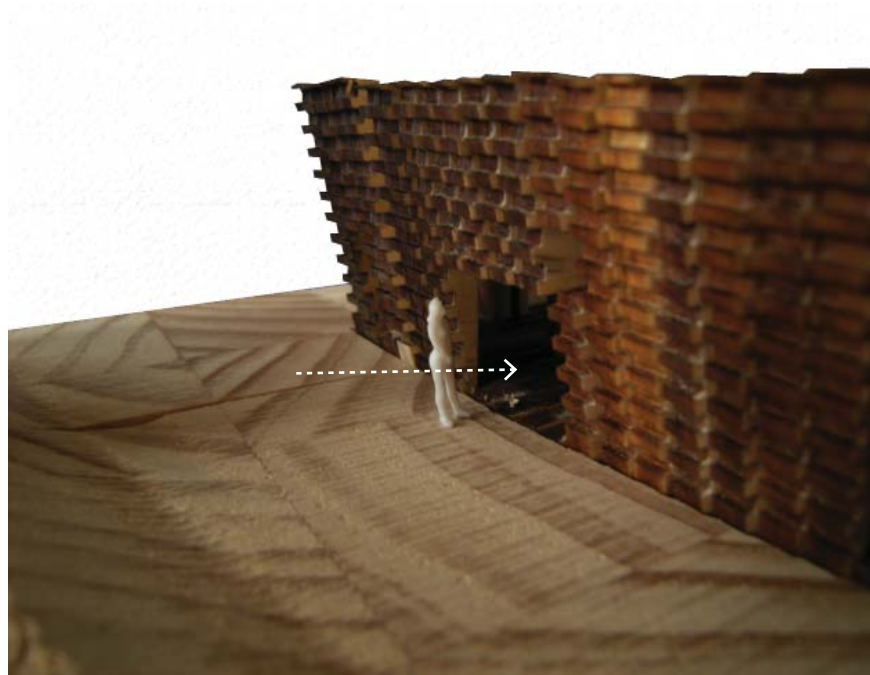


... bedroom

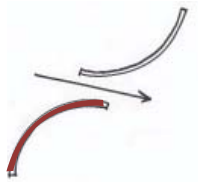
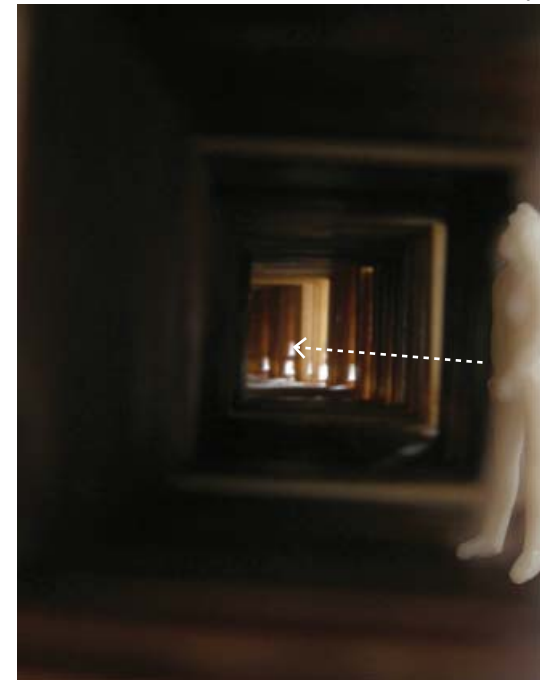


*convex journeys end*

entrance into concave



hallway

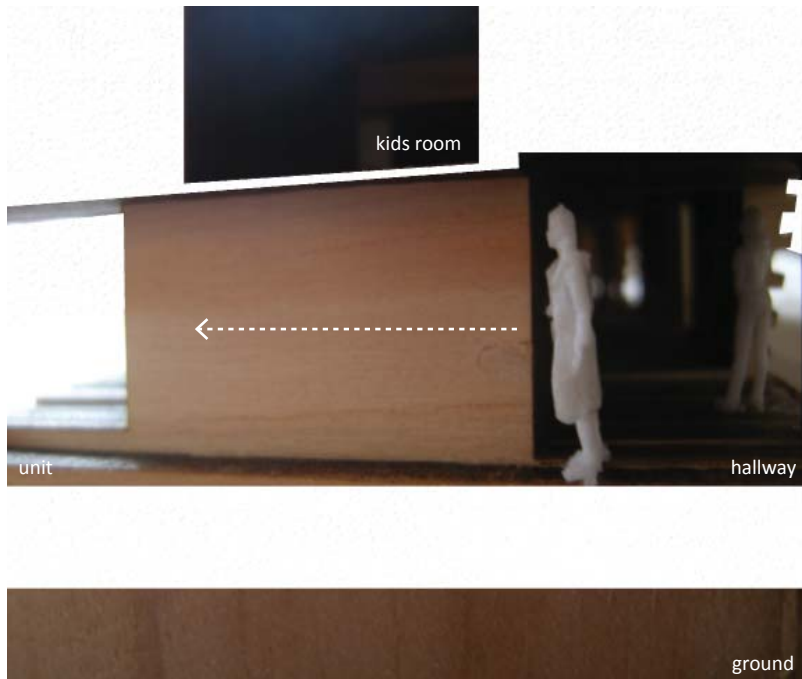


### journey through concave

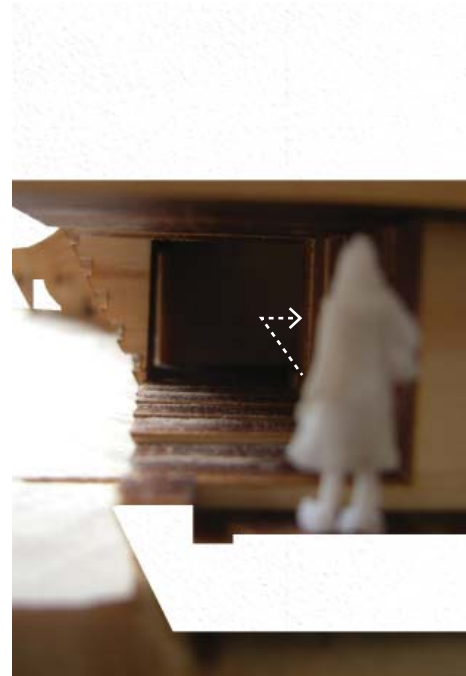
Units with shared lounge/  
kitchen/dining facilities that  
promote the ludic, encouraging  
communication.



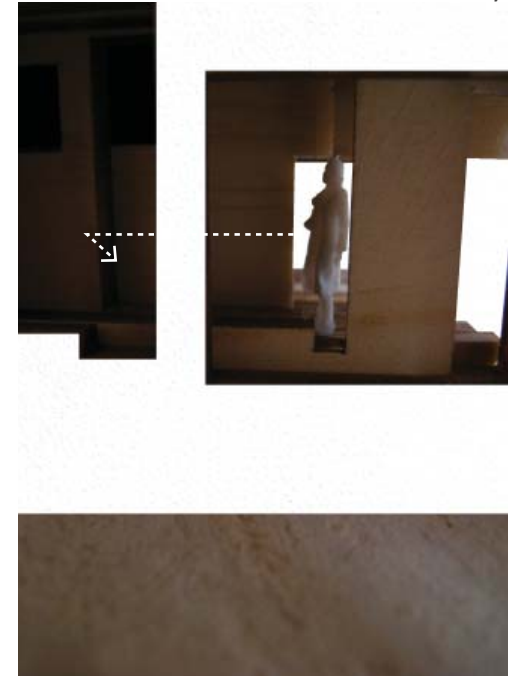
entrance into unit



veranda



interior of unit hallway



bedroom



*out of unit and into...*

the shared space



*into the landscape...*



*concave journeys end*



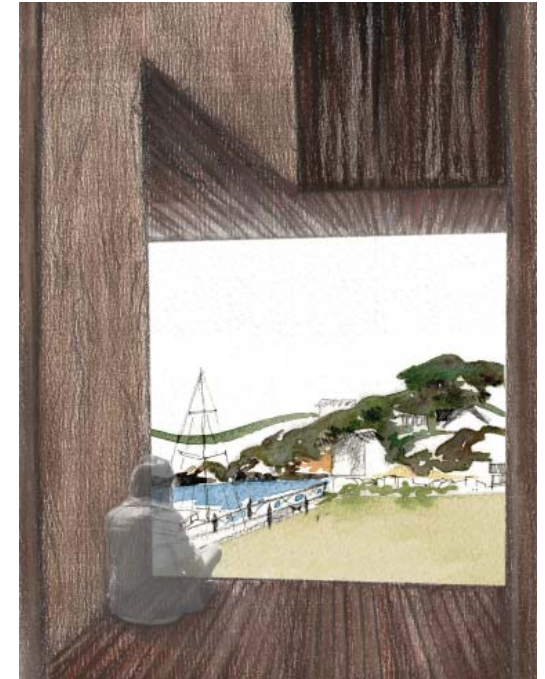
#### 5.4 *Haptic Realm*

As the design of the Liminal Retreat is conceptualised intune with the context of Tutukaka, so to must the materiality. The retreat is constructed in a light timber framing, lined and clad in untreated hardwood. The wooden materiality speaks to the traditional construction methods of NZ bach building whist giving the form a density that suggests its belonging.



#### 5.4 *Of Sound*

Unlike the Therme Vals the Liminal Retreat does not force a 'soundscape' on to the occupant. Rather, the openness of the building suggests that the sounds of activity on the coast will filter into the building. Waves crashing, children playing and motorboats chugging will speak to a context which this retreat is hewn from.

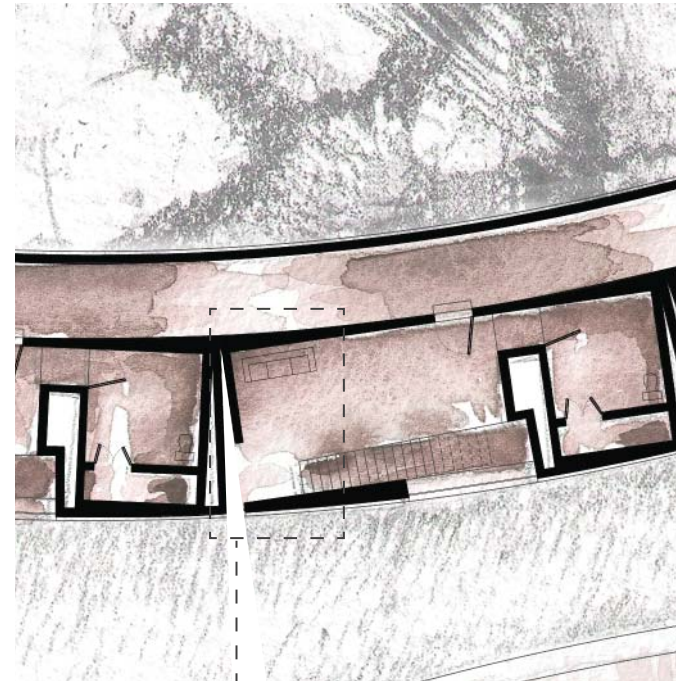


## 5.5 *Light and Shadow*

Dramatic lighting is intrinsic in making the journey through the program, and residing in the Liminal Retreat, a departure from the everyday. Due to the regular geometry of the apartments juxtaposed against the curving geometry of the convex form, a tapering space between is created (see detailed plan). This unhabitable is engaged as a light well, emitting directional light deep into the plan.



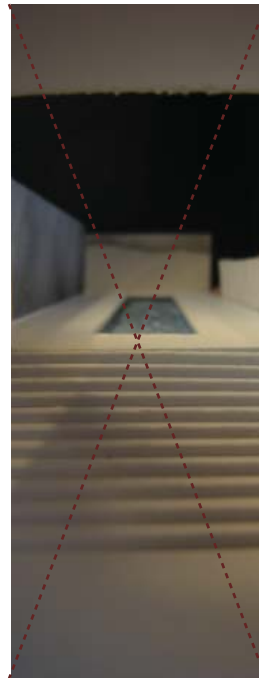
*light emitted into living space*



*section of plan illustrating light well*

#### 5.4 Water as a Phenomenal Lens

Many attempts were made in incorporating a water element into the Liminal Retreat, so it may act as a phenomenal lens. But, mainly due to the program of a residency close to the sea, every attempt in its inclusion was seen to be contrived. With the watery borderland so intrinsic to this project, any minor additions of water seemed to negate the impact of the experience.



#### 5.4 Proportion, Scale and Perception

Proportion is fundamental to this project. Not unlike the Therme Vals, complexity in simplicity is created by the intersection of pure proportions.

The flux of the journey through is negotiated, in part, by scale. Moving through spaces that change in scale rapidly creates a drama, and hopes to engage a sense of discovery when moving through.



*narrow intense spaces contrast with open larger ones*

### 5.5 *Spatiality of Night*

The night is transformative for the Liminal Retreat. In the day the impact of the exterior condition is in its dense cladding, whereas at night the considerable openings glow.

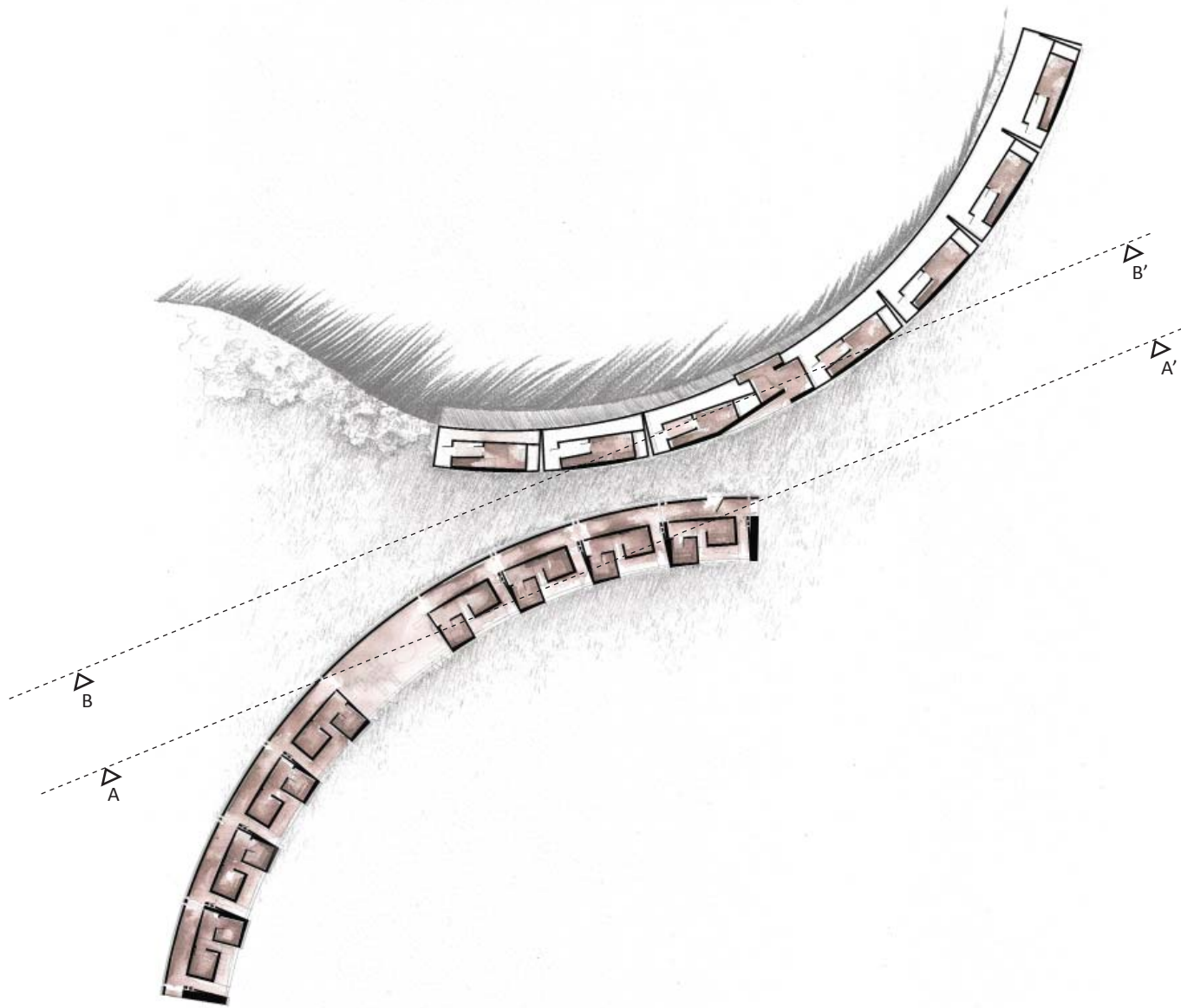


*day*



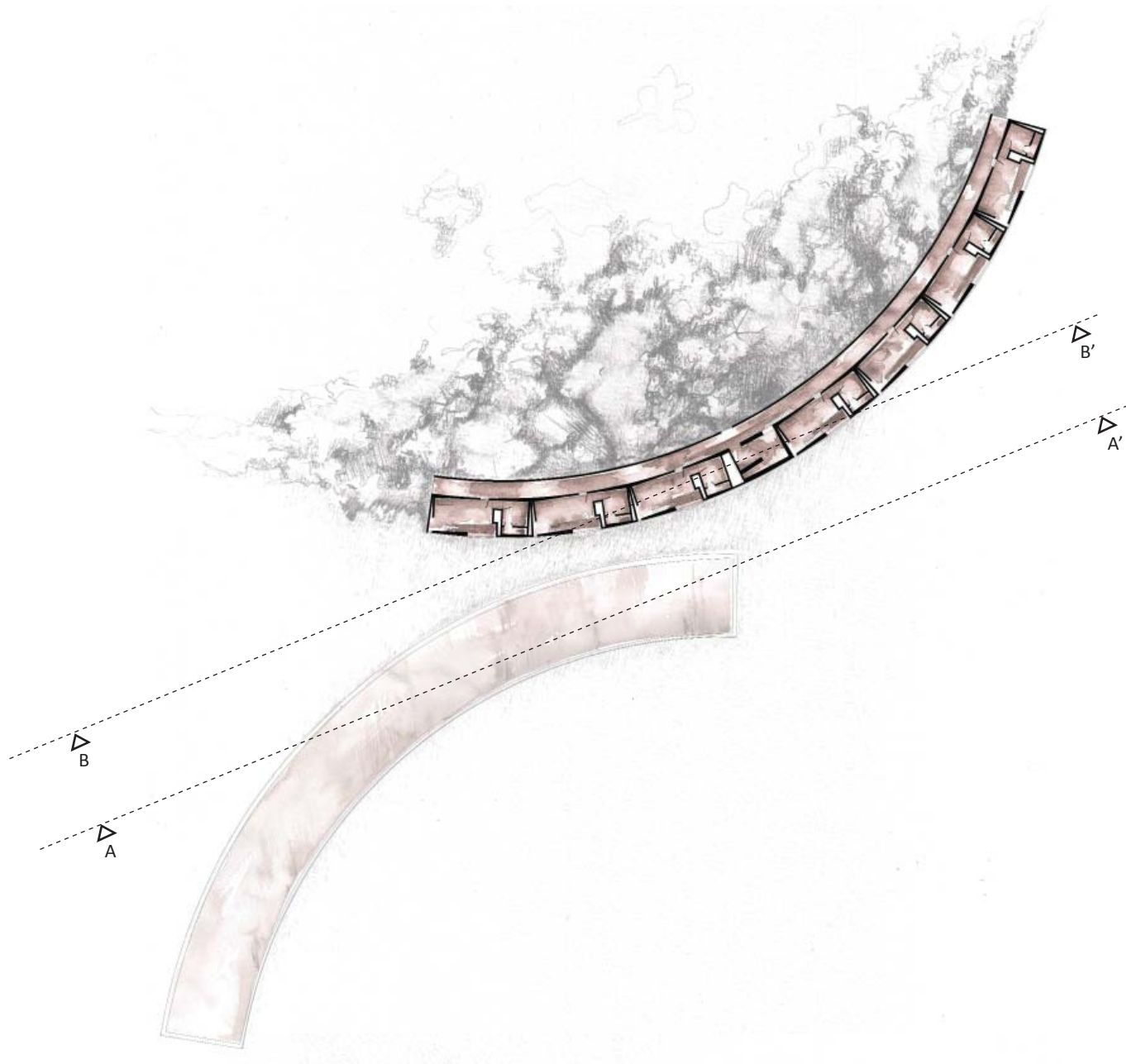
*night*



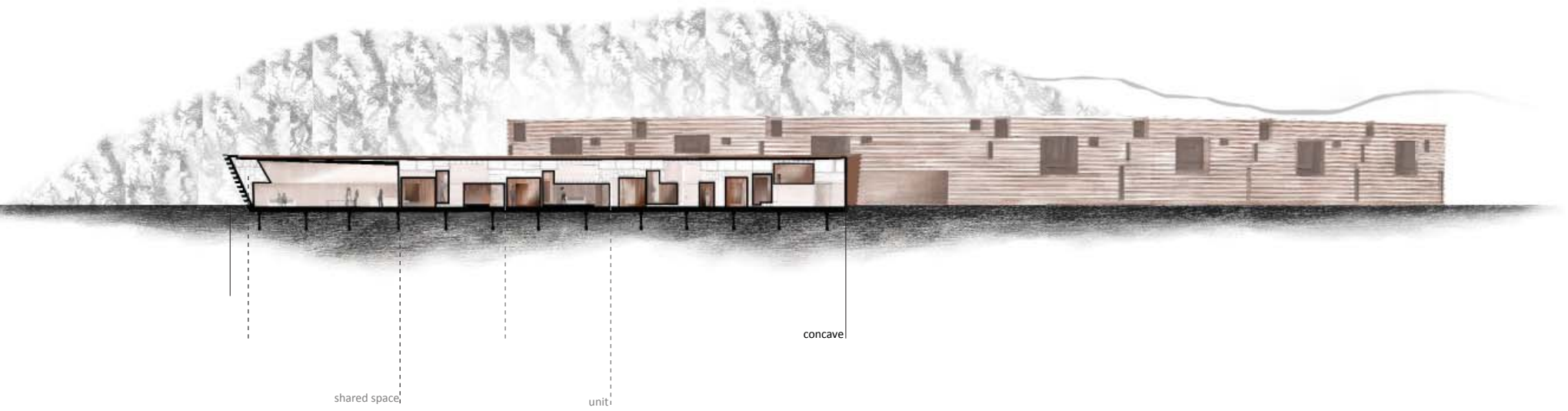


Liminal Retreat  
ground plan  
scale 1:750

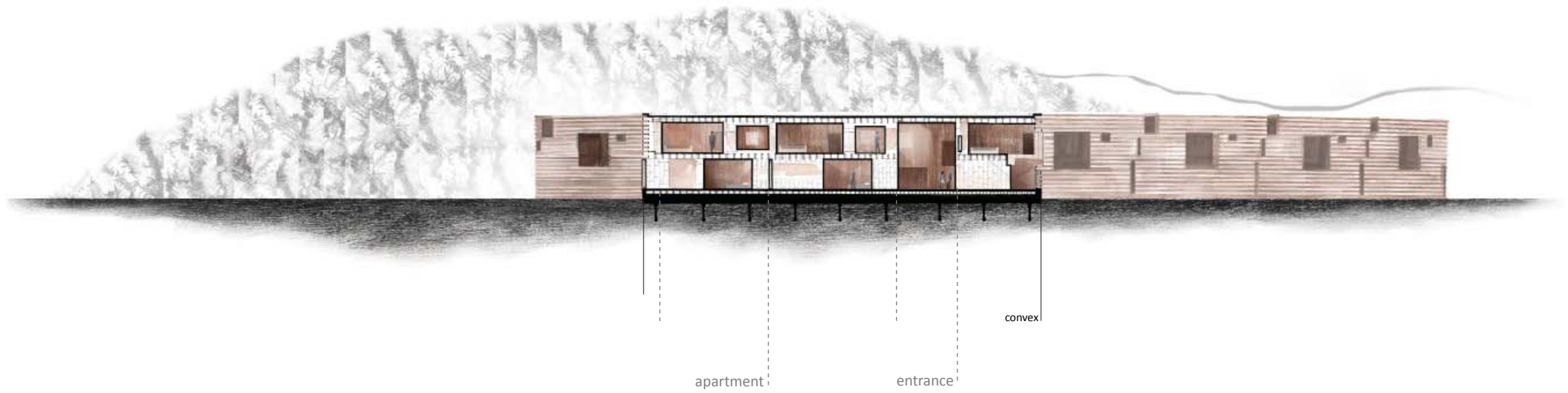




Liminal Retreat  
second level plan  
scale 1:750



Liminal Retreat  
section A-A'  
scale 1:500



Liminal Retreat  
section B-B'  
scale 1:500

## Conclusion

Liminality alludes to the experience of passing through a location, the journey.

Today societies value of the liminal is diminished. With large leaps in technological advancement, the transfer of ideas, goods, and people are quickly attainable, there is no time spent residing in the liminal inbetween. In this modern world individuals crave their solutions, desires or destinations to come quickly and efficiently, not realising that it is their loss of liminal value when the liminal period is passed by.

This thesis has argued that the transience of liminal landscapes, both physically and culturally, are necessary in our societies. These liminal landscapes offers the individual a reprieve for the drudgery of the everyday, are spaces of rejuvenation and recuperation from the pace and responsibility of modern life.

The liminal is not only disregarded in our cultural landscapes, but also in our physical ones. The ignorance of the value in the liminal is exemplified in the development of the New Zealand coastline. The liminal essence of our coastal borderline is increasingly being shrouded by insensitive tourist developement. Rather than embracing the qualities of the coastal escape and the ludic, today the NZ coast emulates the conditions of the everyday places we leave behind. It is the very liminal qualities we seek out when travelling to the coast are the qualities we degrade by developing in a stagnant suburban

model. If we are to preserve the liminality present in our iconic coastal landscapes new models of residency must be designed, and the existing built form put to rest. It is this theses position that a knowledge and acknowledgement of the liminal will encourage an extension of thinking when considering coastal development, of which the design portion provides a specific model for Tutukaka, New Zealand.

This thesis has served to recapture the essence of the explorer rather than the quick gratification of arriving.

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Fig 4: *Snapshots-4*. Photograph. <http://aucklandartgallery.blogspot.co.nz/2009/05/snapshots-4.html>, accessed Oct 20. 2012.

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#### Chapter five

Design chapter, all imagery produced by the author.

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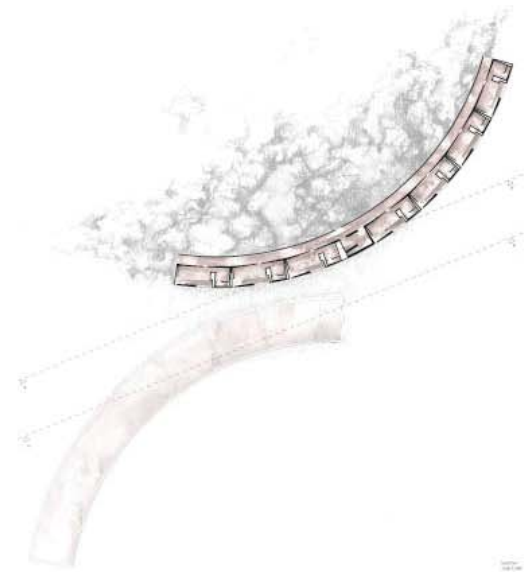
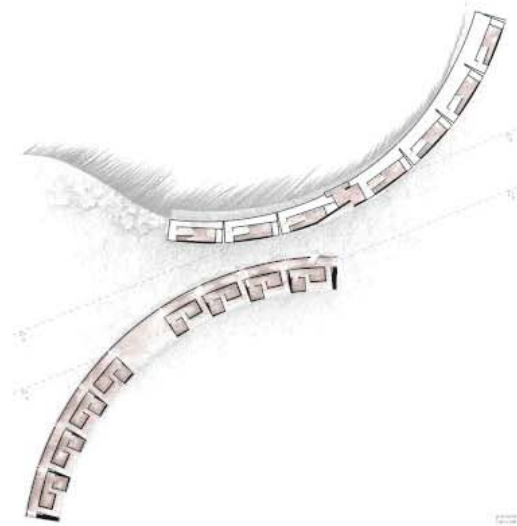
**The Liminal: rediscovering water in a journey**

The Liminal is a project that explores the relationship between water and land in a mountainous region. It is a journey of rediscovery, one that seeks to reconnect the community with the natural world and the water that sustains it. The project is a response to the challenges of climate change and the loss of traditional ways of life. It is a journey of rediscovery, one that seeks to reconnect the community with the natural world and the water that sustains it.



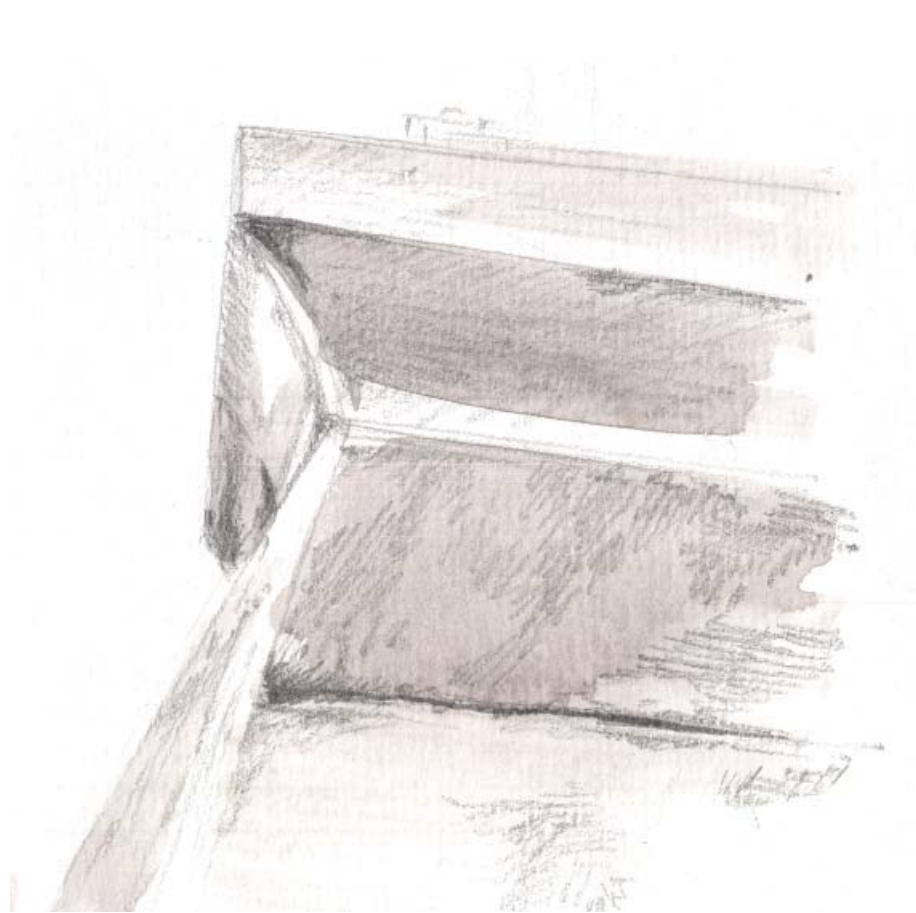
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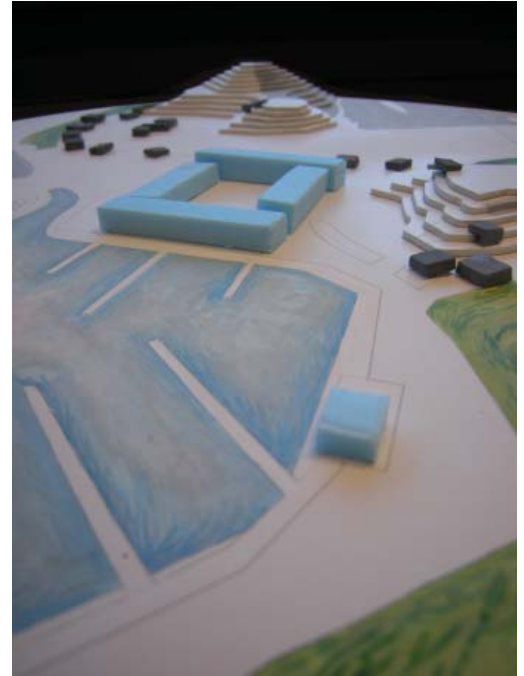
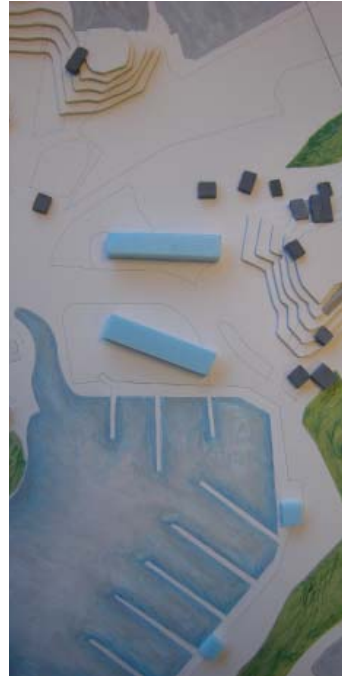




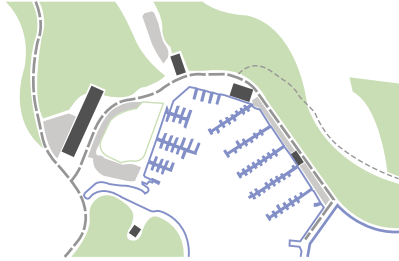
design journey (edited)



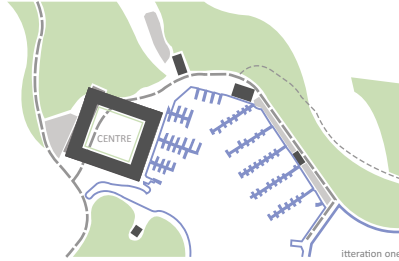




*lulukaka mapping scale 1:10000*

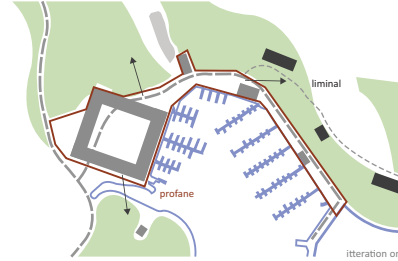


*existing*



iteration one

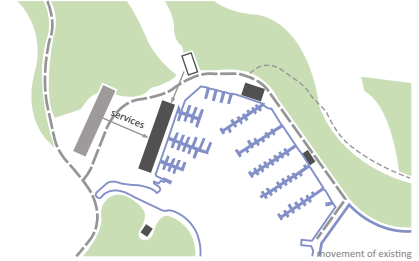
*semester one*



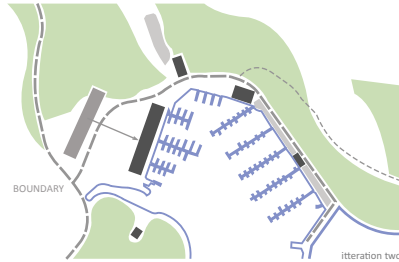
iteration one

*profane as lulukaka centre, liminal as escape*

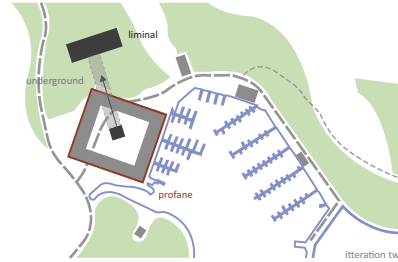
*marina as the necessary service and historical profane, liminal as an vehicle for improvement*



movement of existing

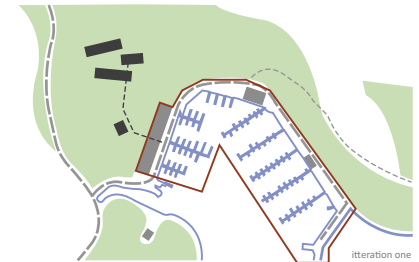


iteration two



iteration two

liminal  
underground

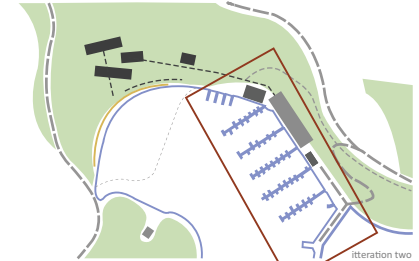


iteration one



iteration three

manipulation of the hotel mass must be driven by thesis



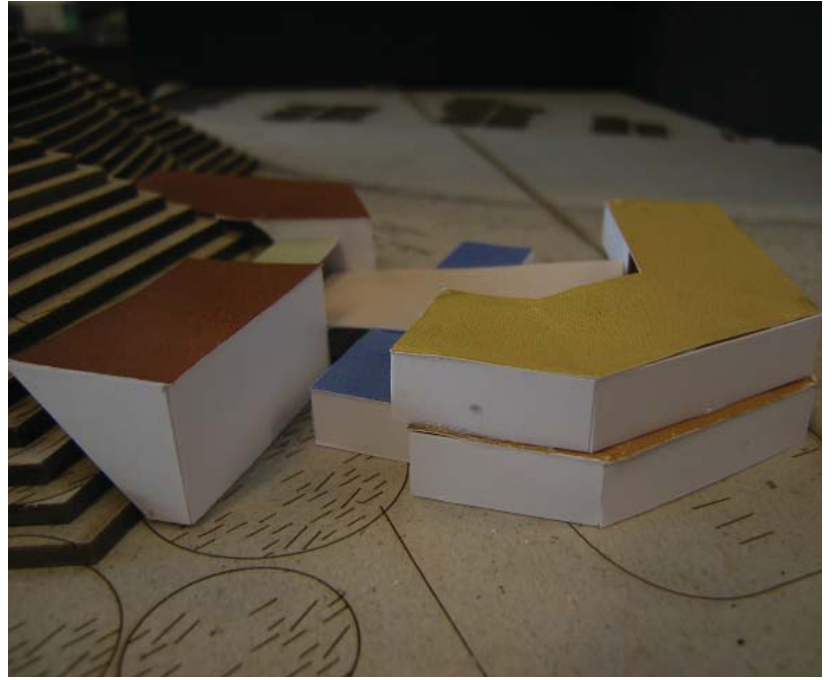
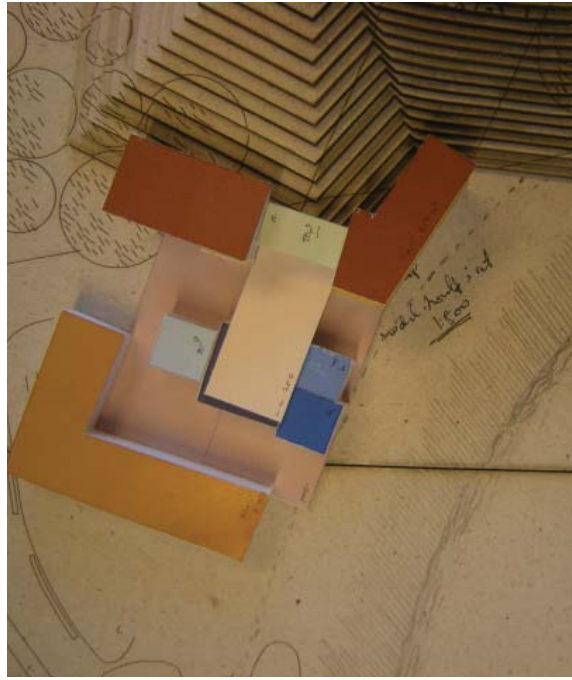
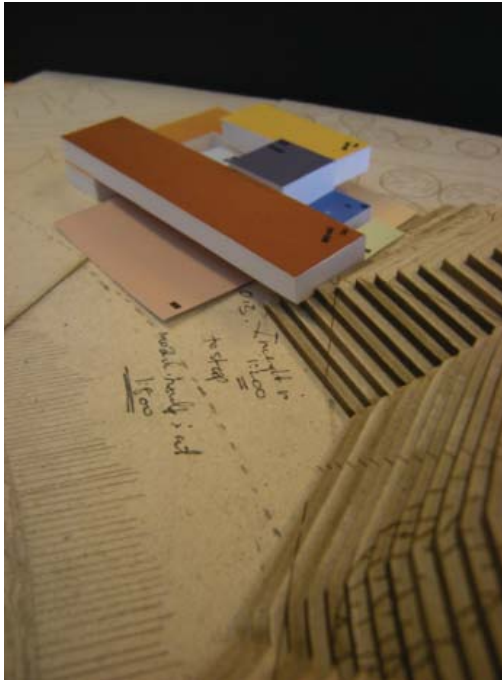
iteration two



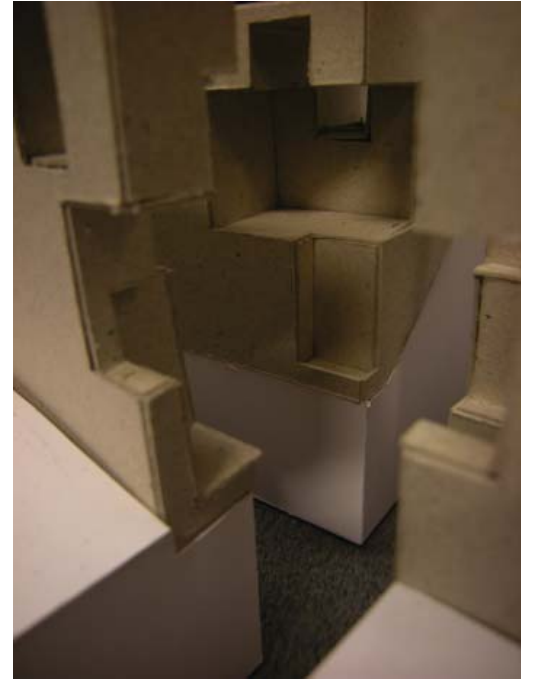




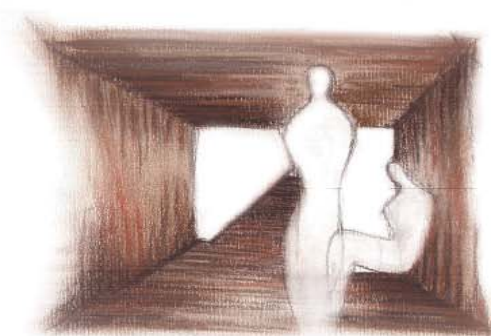


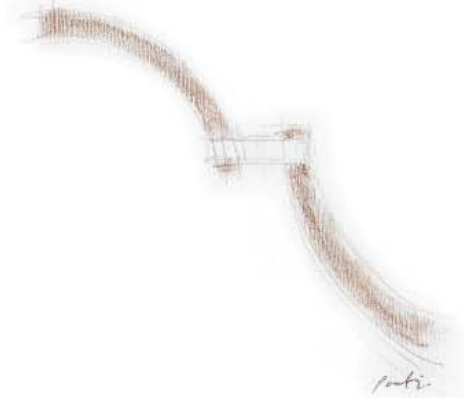
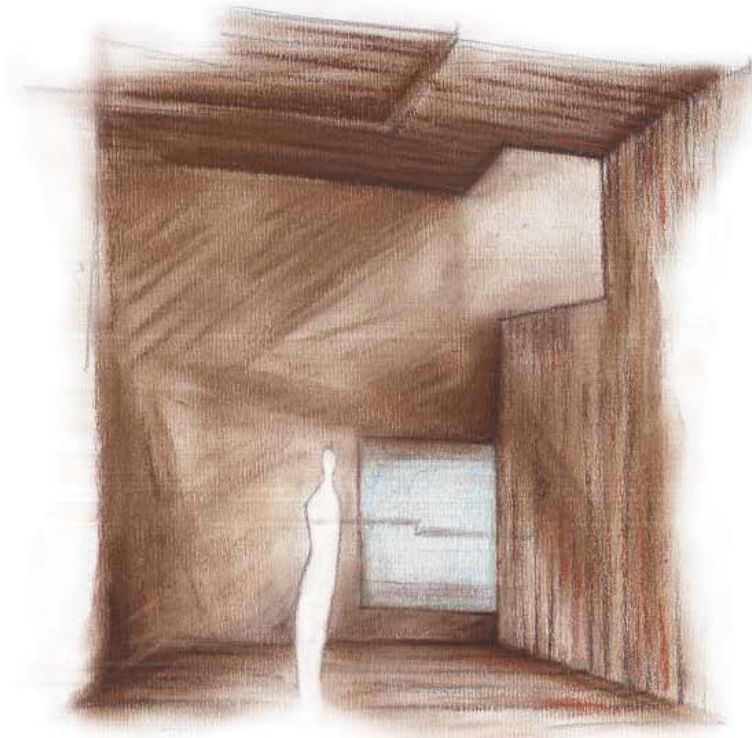












anti



