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This Master's Degree Project is an investigation into the conceptual strategies of fashion, their subsequent cultural implications, and their potential as a foundation for architecture. The critical essay establishes a theoretical platform for the architectural design; it proposes that in the era of mass media, it is impossible to produce an architecture independent of the mechanisms of fashion. Moreover, it suggests that a reconceptualization of the role of fashion within the discipline of architecture is a necessary pre-requisite to establishing a modern practice. Fashion, when defined as *the deliberate construction of desire*, becomes about creation as opposed to application. In this way, fashionable architecture results from the synergistic operation of the many conditions of fashion and not from the adornment - *or dressing up* - of surfaces. The design component is a proposal for a signature line of architecture entitled the *mobius HOME COLLECTION*. The four small, ready-made houses conceptually transform the nature of architecture from an elite service to a mass marketed product. As a fashion, each house becomes a desirable commodity, is representative of a particular lifestyle and constructs individual and collective identities. Architecturally, they attempt to express an enduring modernity: both timely and timeless.

ABSTRACT

architecture

consumer

desire

fashion

fetish

image

lifestyle

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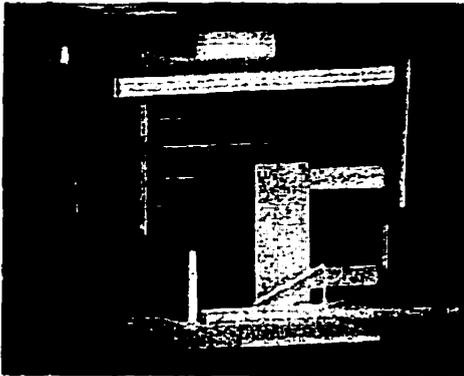
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In essence,

fashion is the production and marketing of desire.



It traffics in saleable illusions, the promise of plausible fantasy. Neither tangible nor ephemeral, fashion miraculously exists as an enhanced reality; mass media, of course, is its proven mechanism of dissemination. The constructed *truths* depicted in fashion magazines, flawless models in psychosexual situations, inherently contribute to the subsequent self-actualized experience of the consumer. In other words, fashion is about *possibilities over product*, we buy the clothes because we desire their effect.

To understand this phenomenon is to realize fashion's two dichotomous foundations. First, it upholds and promotes the virtues of individuality only through the promise of membership to an exclusive group. To be *in* fashion is to be a participant in an organized cultural montage, to be *out* of fashion is to

be illegible. Second, fashion is designed to accommodate the multitudes even though its strategy is often personal appeal. The ubiquitously conceived product, once acquired, becomes signature. Ironically, these contradictions strengthen the power of fashion as the voice of the individual within the context of mass culture.

Fashion transcends utility; it is more than simply clothing because it is emotive of something else. However, it is important to note that at the root of this transcendence is the notion of construction. *To fashion* something is to make shape or construct it in a certain way; "in a certain way" indicates an intent on the part of the maker. *Fashion is not accidental; it is the deliberate construction of desire.*

The frivolity of fashion stands in opposition to the permanence of architecture. Mark Wigley suggests that "while the dwelling is closer to the individual than his own shirt, people employ architecture as a collective product of ready-made fashion rather than the unique clothing of an individual. Even then, the ready-made dwelling is unable to keep up with the rapid changes in the fashion of ready-made clothing. The unwieldy quality of architecture's material apparatus and complex organization prevent it from assuming the flu-

idity of forms of dress, even though its producers deliberately play on this quality to activate the superfluous wishes of the consuming public. Architecture ends up caught somewhere between the artificial demands of fashion and the realistic demands of modern functional life." (Wigley: 1995, p 316)

From a naive viewpoint, the role of fashion within architecture seems limited. It is most often seen as a treatment for surfaces and spaces; accessories, ornaments, caps, finishes and appliqués all work to perform their own fashion agendas independent of their often resilient architectural contexts. **The purpose of this investigation is to challenge the typical, and arguably superficial, relationship between fashion and architecture; it is the position of this thesis that architecture can actively engage with the formulae of fashion and still maintain its integrity as architecture.** The design component furthers the theoretical trajectory in its attempt to transform the ready-made house from fashion faux-pas to fashion force; it is a critical exploration of an emergent housing paradigm. The architectural investigation centers on a question: can fashion be constructed rather than applied?

LIQUID.

760 Ocean Drive, South Beach, Miami

We begin here. Beautiful people wearing beautiful things congregate at this most exclusive club. Models, actors and agents fill the spaces and mix ever tighter. The music thumps as the sun drenched day gives way to night. Meanwhile, "two blocks south of the Delano, Michael Graves' new \$25 million beach front condominium is drawing fire for both its overscaled architecture and its media campaign. Larger than life photos of Graves adorn billboards throughout metro Miami, urging viewers to own a Michael Graves original." (Barrenche: 1996, p 102)



14 - 20 Bo Klok.

Helsingborg, Sweden

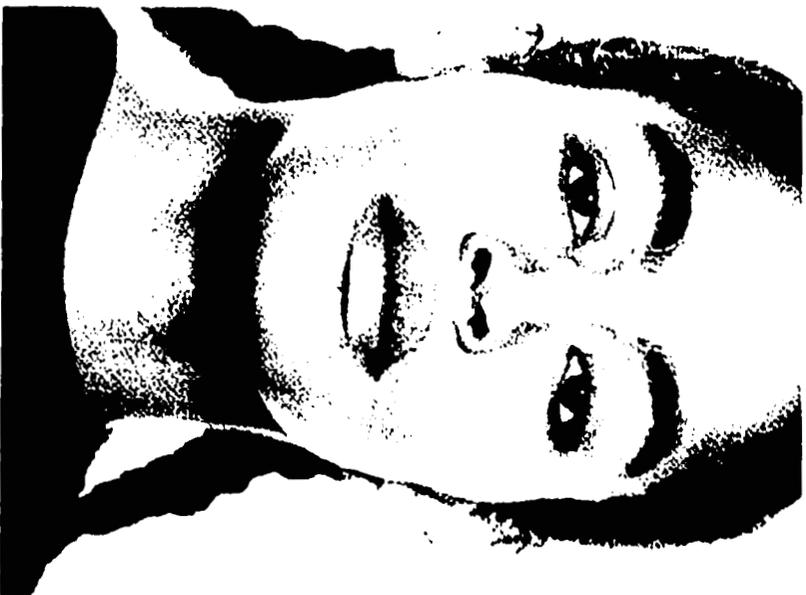
"Volvos cruise up and down the waterfront. Ever-so-blond haired kids wait at the bus stop. Shoppers dash through puddles from one shop to the next." (Blueprint No. 144: 1997, p 23) Hundreds of flat-packed cardboard boxes arrive by truck at Bo Klok. Two men and a crane spend five days unpacking and then assembling the components. Across town, scores of people queued up "from five in the morning to sign up for the first 108 flats located on four sites. Having furnished a sizable proportion of homes in Europe, North America and the rest of the world, IKEA is now building them." (Blueprint No. 144: 1997, p 23)

The chic disco clan at Liquid and the rain soaked shoppers in Helsingborg have something in common; they are all confronting the onset of a new architectural paradigm. **This is architecture as product; architecture as fashion.** When architecture enters the realm of the image, like in a billboard advertisement, it enters the domain of fashion. Ultimately, *this architecture is consumed*; it completes the remunerative acquisition of meaningful merchandise: the *Sony* stereo, the *Prada* shoes, the *Audi* turbo and now the *IKEA* house. Taken together, these products synergistically construct the identity of the individual and place them in very exclusive company. These are the patrons of fashion, the *stylish set*.

Sociologists write about fashion,

Photo: Architecture: vol. 06, no. 11

architects merely talk about fashion.



Fashion is short lived and ephemeral; architecture is *permanent* and *specific*. Fashion is sold through the media; architecture is *featured* in magazines. Fashion designers produce for the masses; architects design for the *individual*.

Given the apparent tension between architecture and fashion, what accounts for the emergence of this new hybrid? Are the once separate worlds of fashion and architecture now converging, or is the market finally legitimizing a union which has always existed?

Some architects resist these implications; others embrace them. *Richard Meier* states (ironically in *Vogue* magazine) that "architecture is not fashion. It cannot be subjected to daily or monthly fluctuations. The ideas have to be able to withstand time." (*Vogue*: December, 1997, p 289) Conversely, *Jacques Herzog* comments that "there are quite a few things which architecture and fashion have in common; exploring fashion gives us a sense of our times. All of these desires and tastes of a moment taken together create the spirit of the time." (Kipnis: 1997, p 8) These anecdotes are indicative of the ongoing struggle to quantify and discipline the presence of fashion within the practice of architecture. It is the position of this thesis that architecture is *not* fashion. However,

it can be fashionable. Fashion can be constructed. This is not a contradiction. In essence, both Meier and Herzog are correct in their statements. Architecture appeals and reacts to the mechanisms of fashion; in fact, the subjective and seemingly illogical set of rules which organize fashion also make an impact on architecture. If these mechanisms are overlooked or denied, then architecture will potentially fail, as Jacques Herzog says, to contribute to "the spirit of our times". But, if architecture succumbs to the ease of fashion, then it fails to contribute to the cultural landscape in any meaningful way. There is a fine line dividing fashion and architecture, which at the best of times, is very insecure.

The purpose of this critical essay is two-fold. First, it seeks to uncover the operations of the fashion mechanism within the context of architecture. Second, it aims to establish a theoretical platform from which to launch an architectural design strategy. Formulating an understanding of the concept of fashion is the necessary first step to achieving these resolutions.



FASHION*

is most commonly understood as being associated with clothing,

women's dress in particular, or other consumer products which are concerned with physical appearance and adornment. But to restrict our conceptual understanding of fashion simply to clothing is to negate its true nature. It is a complex and ever-changing social mechanism which has a much broader impact on a variety of human operations. In actuality, it is a phenomena which manifests itself through consumer goods, like clothing, but it is not inherent in the goods themselves. "Fashion poses a doubled view of culture: a view of how those in power want to present that culture; and, a view of how, at least within a range of choices, a culture wishes to depict itself." (Warke: 1994, p 142) Many academics have concluded that the operational logic of fashion evident in clothing, appears in other disciplines. "It is easily observable in the realm of the

pure and applied arts, such as painting, sculpture, music, drama, architecture, dancing, and household decoration."
(Blumer: 1995 p 378)

Taken from this position, *fashion behavior* "invokes rules and codes of dress, adornment and gesture to articulate attributes of the social body. At a collective level, fashion maps social conduct, and, in turn, is shaped by it. Fashion statements appear to mark a moment, but the fashioned body is never secure or fixed. The body is constantly re-clothed and re-fashioned in accordance with changing arrangements of the self." (Craik: 1994, p 225) In her definition, Craik articulates the fragility of fashion with reference to both the individual and social body. The body is secured by the identity which fashion provides, but this identity is also vulnerable to fashion's inevitable changes in course.

Like the body, the identity of architecture is unstable when it is fashioned. Because fashion is a temporal arrangement, any durable good, like architecture, is prone to dismissal. As a precaution, architecture often "keeps its distance from the world of fashion to which it is inevitably related." (Wigley: 1995, p 325) But, in the application of this safeguard, architecture may fail to address the moment, *to assert itself now*, and then take its rightful place in the historical continuum.

This argument seems to favor a more fashionable architecture; this definition implies one which is unapologetic

about the moment and concurrently withstands temporal fluctuations. However, when the f-word is used in association with architecture, it is often employed as a criticism of an architecture which is inherently superficial. This is true both historically and at present. "In his 1929 lecture Le Nouveau: Pourquoi Toujours du Nouveau? van de Velde opposes the 'newness' of his architecture to the 'novelty' of fashion. [He advocates for] an architecture that *elevates* itself above fashion." (Wigley: 1995, p 88) The vulgarity of the word in this context indicates a fear of the subordination of architecture by fashion. Merging fashion and architecture immediately puts one on the defensive. To say that architecture is "fashionable" is to discredit it. Even Frank Lloyd Wright contributes to the anti-fashion movement with his soliloquy: "*I'll live. As I'll Die. As I am. No slave to fashion or sham!*" (cited from Warke: 1994, p 125)

In the 1997 Canadian Architect Awards of Excellence issue, Brian MacKay-Lyons comments that awards juries risk "being criticized by the environmental community as just another *fashion* awards. We must stop characterizing environmental issues as good content, and formal issues as empty *fashion*." (cited from Ledger: 1997, p 15) His comments identify a pervasive trend in architectural criticism: the term *fashion* epitomizes architecture devoid of any real content. Blumer counters by saying that academics who treat fashion in this way demonstrate "a failure to observe and appreciate the wide range of operation of fashion;

a false assumption that fashion has only trivial or peripheral significance; a mistaken idea that fashion falls in the area of the abnormal and irrational and thus is out of the mainstream of human group life; and, finally, a misunderstanding of the nature of fashion" (Blumer: 1995, p 378). To discount the significance of fashion within the context of the social disciplines, like architecture, is to discount - arguably - the most significant factor which constructs, regulates and organizes social behavior.

Fashion exists as the *graphic interface* between the individual human body and the rest of the world; it is the *wall of the body*. Through the acquisition of clothing and other products we construct our own individual identities, place ourselves as members within easily identifiable groups, and communicate to others non-verbally, who and what we are. As an *interface*, fashion is that which is applied or acquired; it is something which is in addition to ourselves. It is the momentary sum of the parts: watches, shoes, cars, hairstyles, cosmetics, stereos and *architecture*. From this viewpoint, fashion is "a genre of consumer product or mode of behavior that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen behavior is perceived to be socially appropriate for that time and situation." (Sproles/ Burns: 1989, p 4)

Now, having established a working definition of fashion we can further investigate the connectivity of fashion and ar-

chitecture. The logic which governs fashion has undeniable architectural implications. Most sociological theory which attempts to explain the reasons for the formation of fashion, and its subsequent cultural significance, can be distilled into four categories. As a framework for discussion, these four essential conditions of fashion (obsession, escape, contradiction and eternity) demonstrate how architecture both appeals to and reacts against the mechanisms of fashion. Without the simultaneous operation of each of these four conditions, fashion - and arguably fashionable architecture - will not be formed.



The formation of fashion is contingent upon a **sexually charged** relationship between consumer and product.

OBSESSION*

The etymological origin of the word fashion stems from the Latin roots "factio", meaning to make or do, and "facere", meaning fetish. (Barnard:1996, p 7) A fetish is a sexually charged attraction to an object; in other words, it is about obsessively desiring something. Thus, as etymologically derived, "to fashion" something is the deliberate act of constructing desire. *In capitalistic societies, this action manifests itself in the creation of desire for consumer goods which are in surplus.*

Fashion, defined as the construction of desire, expresses a specific three-way relationship between maker, product and consumer. The character of this relationship is distinct from that of other goods; it is intoxicated by erotic overtones. These feelings are departures from the more utilitarian rationale which defines a consumer's relationship to non-fashion goods. Because of this distinction, the maker of the fashion product must adopt a very specific position; if *to fashion* something is to construct desire, then the primary intent of the maker is to ensure that the product is *desirable*.





In order for this condition to occur,

the product must be visually accessible to the consumer, either through physical display or advertising. Modern technology easily facilitates this condition; "fashion no longer involves the lower classes imitating or aping the upper classes," (Barnard: 1996, p 124) which is how fashion circulated prior to the advent of advertising. Instead, mass media advertisements, which ignite consumer obsession for a product, construct this psychological phenomena; successful ads are a well crafted blend of seduction and antagonism.

In Fashion and the Cultural Logic of Postmodernity, Faurschou highlights an important shift in the conceptualization of the fashion object which legitimizes this condition. In the early twentieth century, "capitalism advertised and marketed its goods in a manner based on the qualities of the goods themselves; advertisers claimed in a general way that the products would improve but not substantively change one's way of life." (Faurschou: 1988, p 80) The straightforward and descriptive advertising of this era indicates that consumer products were marketed solely on their utilitarian attributes. She argues that this "production oriented phase" has since shifted; now, we are in a "consumption oriented phase" where the product has the potential for a meaning beyond its functional nature. "Modern ob-

jects retain the capacity for symbolic investment, whether that of use value, prestige or the expression of identity." (Faurschou: 1988, p 81)

Thus, fashion is about possibilities over product; consumption over production. According to Baudrillard, the modern fashion object has been "released or liberated from its psychic determinations as symbol." (Baudrillard, 1993, p 67) Because of this liberation, and the shift from the pragmatics of production to the possibilities of consumption, our response to fashion has transformed from one evaluated on the basis of *need* to the more subjective criteria of *want*; desire now supersedes utility. "The value of objects [is] less and less associated with workmanship, material quality, and rarity and more and more derived from the abstract and increasingly malleable factor of aesthetic appeal." (Ewen: 1988, p 38) Therefore, "fashion is set through a process of free selection from among a large number of competing models; the creators of the models are seeking to catch and give expression to what we may call the direction of modernity." (Blumer: 1995, p 382)

In the modern context of "free selection" from "competing models", some objects will become fashion, and others will not. Knowing this, "the natural concern" of the fashion designer is "to be successful in gaining the adoption of their creations." (Blumer, 1995: p 382) Hence, the intent of the designer is to make their products *attractive* to the consumer; the more *attractive* the product, the more the

public will desire it's consumption. Advertising and display have become the means to render an object *attractive*; in effect, they induce the condition of desire. The proliferation of advertising has created an environment where the image is more important than the object. Effectively, "this makes the object disposable." (Ewen: 1988, p 24) Thus, the formation of fashion is contingent upon a strong magnetism between consumer and *image* of product; this creates a belief that the act of consuming the product will have a particular, and ultimately *desirable*, effect.

The logic of the obsession mechanism exists in architecture. It is most visible where architecture is objectified or product-like. In these cases, architects and clients are replaced by producers and consumers. The house, as the most ubiquitous building typology, is readily endowed with the potential for the formation of a consumer fetish: it is the most fascinating architectural typology to the public. Because fashion necessitates fetishistic behavior between consumer and object, the object must be accessible - either through publication or display - for this behavior to occur. In the case of the ready-made, mass production house, the architectural object is often preemptively available for scrutiny in the form of a *show home*. An object fetish transforms the object from sign to signifier, or as characterized by Derrida as "a substitute for an absent referent." (Rabine: 1994, p 69) In this example, consumers will fetishize the show home; the goal of

the show home is to entice the consumer into purchasing a replication of itself. Even though it is physically tangible, the show home functions as an *image*.

Lavishly decorated, fully furnished and crisply new, the show home appeals to our erotic impulses through sight, touch and smell. Ewen comments that "to a large extent, this describes the practices of the style industries today. In their continual search for ever-evolving novelty, all manners of human expression and creativity are mined for their surfaces: their look, their touch, their sound, their scent." (Ewen: 1988, p 52) Architecture, as a media icon depicted graphically in books and magazines, has it's surfaces and spaces "mined" by the makers of production houses. These surfaces are then replicated in a seemingly endless number of combinations. Because there are no significant changes in construction technology, plans or programs from year to year, but very significant shifts in consumer style preferences, the fashioning of the production house is strictly limited to a reconstitution of the surface. The show home always represents the latest incarnation of a media created "must have" style; *it is an image of an image*.

As published in magazines like Architectural Digest and Metropolitan Home, consumers develop a desire for interiors, surfaces and spaces. Colomina argues that "architectural magazines, with their graphic and photographic artillery, transform architecture into an article of consumption." (Colomina: 1996, p 43) In this

sense, however, it is the images in the magazines which procure the fetish and not a readily consumable architectural product; thus, satiation is achieved only through the acquisition of *simulations*. Arguably, home decoration and interior design benefit from this situation. In effect, this permits a fashion agenda separate from architectural reality.

The advent of this phenomena can be traced to the Museum of Modern Art's exhibit Modern Architecture: International Exhibition of 1932; this effectively transformed public perception of architecture from applied art to *commodity*. In the exhibit, "the private house was singled out as the vehicle for the popularization of the style" and in doing so "paradoxically returned modern architecture to everyday life by transforming it into a commodity, a fashion to be consumed by a world-wide and, to a large extent, middle-class market." (Colomina: 1996, pp 207-212) The public became attracted to the houses of the exhibit because they were different from their own; they were representative of a new and desirable style. Ironically, the intent of the exhibit was not realized. Although it introduced and popularized the Modern aesthetic, it did not effectively transform the nature of domestic architecture; most people do not live in Modern houses. The exhibit did, however, result in an increase in the acquisition of other consumer goods which are of a Modern design.

Although only shown through models and photographs, the presence of

these architectural objects fulfill the requirements of the fetish; they enabled close observation which, as a result, perpetuated undeniably obsessive behavior. The traveling exhibition was staged in department stores where audiences of "middle-class and mainly women" (Colomina: 1996, p 209) satiated their fetishes by purchasing the wide range of consumer goods: "rugs, chairs, lamps, tables appliances and so on" (Colomina: 1996, p 209) that were for sale adjacent to the exhibit. The consumer objects were similar, but not identical, to those depicted in the photographs of the houses; these products became a *proxy* for the architecture of the exhibit. Ultimately, these "rugs, chairs and lamps" were superimposed into the private, domestic environments of the exhibit visitors; hopefully, to them, this would result in an architectural makeover.

Blumer argues that the formation of fashion is contingent upon "a relatively free opportunity for choice" between competing models and that "this implies that the models must be open, so to speak, to observation and that the facilities and means must be available for their adoption." (Blumer: 1995, p 388) This would seem to exclude any architectural typology other than housing because in most cases, architecture is revealed as a part of a process. However, the railway *Signal Boxes*, by Swiss architects *Herzog & deMeuron*, is one example of a non-residential program which appeals to the first essential condition of fashion. Jacques Herzog states that "it does not make

sense for every project to always attempt to create a new thing. We would not mind if some of our works, say for example the *Signal Boxes* became prototypes." (Kipnis: 1997, p 8) In fact, this is what has happened. After the completion of the first two, the Swiss government decided to make them a standard for the entire country.

In The Cunning of Cosmetics, Kipnis attests to the success of the *Signal Boxes*. He writes: "do you not feel the song of the *Signal Box*? Its architecture is entirely a matter of cosmetics, a hypnotic web of visual seductions that emanate from the copper band system. Would it be too much to liken them to sirens, to temptresses that lure the unsuspecting into dangerous territory?" (Kipnis: 1997, pp 24-25) Inadvertently these seductive "sirens" have, like the show home, enticed others to "purchase" replicas of themselves; in this case, the consumer is the Swiss government. Through the "cunning of cosmetics", a synonymous fashion mechanism, the *Signal Boxes* have become fetishized objects of desire. Many architects, like *Herzog & deMeuron*, benefit from the impacts of *obsession* to procure future work. In fact, fashionable architecture acts as a catalyst; it is an attractive product to the eyes of potential customers. Contrary to *Herzog and deMeuron*, many architects may philosophically resist duplicating earlier work, but to the client, reproduction in a fashion sense is essential.

the previous segment, *obsession*, proposes that consumer desire for a particular object is a prerequisite for the formation of fashion. This segment takes a closer look at the

publicity of fashion

which through *magazines and advertising* creates this desire; it also examines the subsequent impacts of this condition on the consumer psyche.

ESCAPE*

Fashion must simultaneously create and consummate fantasy.



American fashion designer Oscar de la Renta remarks that "in the old days fashion designers - seamstresses really - made and sold only dresses; today we sell a lifestyle to the whole world." (cited from Craik, 1994, p 58) It appears that the "dress" has undergone a historical transformation; in the past it existed only as its pragmatic self, but in the modern context of fashion it takes on the additional significance of being about a "lifestyle".

Fashion is formed when a specific group of consumers popularize a particular object from an array of competing models; the chosen fashion object embodies a desired lifestyle, but in and of itself does not create one. Fashion designer *Ralph Lauren* gained notoriety by producing clothes which emulate the qualities of English country life; consumers who choose his products do so because the symbolic associations with that lifestyle appeal to them, even though most do not live in the English countryside.

Thus, through the acquisition of

fashion, consumers perpetuate and legitimize its most potent externality: fantasy. The fantasy of fashion is disseminated through the advertisements of mass media. Early fashion ads were explicitly descriptive about the product itself; modern ads replace description with temptation. "The fantasies generated by fashion magazines do not confine themselves to the page. They are actually acted out by readers on their own bodies. Imitated from magazines, movies or videos, and worn in daily life, fashion erases the boundary between the *real* and the *fantastic*, between the private escape of fantasy and public intercourse." (Fabine, 1994, p 63)

Magazine ads offer the individual "a chance to survey themselves in many different situations. They enable women to imagine what they would look like, to men, in this situation or in this outfit, without having to commit themselves in any way to that situation or that outfit. It is tempting to see the function of these magazines as a sort of magical mirror in which a woman might see herself as she might appear at the Yacht Club, in the latest Volkswagen, wearing Versace or loung-



ing around in Laetina Allen.” (Barnard: 1996, p 117)

The blurring between the “real” and the “fantastic” creates a condition unique to fashion: plausible fantasy. Although there is nothing “real” in the media depiction of fashion, these illusions are intentionally purchased by the public; ultimately, the fantasies disseminated through the media effect the subsequent, self-actualized experience of the consumer. The fantasy of fashion is made plausible when it is adopted into the reality of daily life, *when it is worn*. Our traditional notions of the “real” and the “fantastic” are inverted by fashion; by wearing fashion, fantasy is made public and externalized, and by concealing the body, reality is private.

By publicizing private fantasy, fashion is not about escaping reality, but escaping to reality. Thus, the notion of *escape* characterizes the second essential condition of fashion. Simply put, fashion traffics in saleable illusions. “The media of style offer to lift the viewer out of his or her life and place him

or her in a utopian netherworld where there are no conflicts, no needs unmet; where the ordinary is - by its very nature - extraordinary.” (Ewen: 1988, p 14) Like *obsession*, this mechanism does not reside in the material apparatus of the fashion object, but instead lies in the potential of its consumption.

Fashion advertisements and photographic images in magazines and other mass media outlets are the most recognizable generators of fantasy. These media images perform a dual role; first, they are descriptive of the fashion object - they show models wearing clothes - and second, they construct a *scenario in which they are worn*. It is this scenario which is acted out on the bodies of the consumers in daily life thus consummating the fantasy of fashion.

Roland Barthes identifies the fashion magazine “as one of the premier machines of fashion.” (cited from Warke: 1994, p 138) Publications like *Vogue*, *Elle*, and *Cosmopolitan* depend on their ability “to force a controlled focus on the reader. The function of a fashion journal

is neither to initiate discourse nor to broaden perceptions; fashion journals operate from a *position of authority* dependent on a virtually monological form of utterance that functions to disengage the image from critical speculation and, therefore, from the dangers of uncontrolled discourse.” (Warke: 1994, p 139) This “position of authority” substantiates the images it presents as *right, correct and absolute*. The text in the fashion journal reinforces this position by frequently employing words like *essential* or relaying imperatives such as *do*, *don’t* and *must have*.

The magazine, as the emblem of fashion publicity and the authority on fashion trends, has a massive impact on the success or failure of a designer’s collection. Editors publish the images they think best reflects the tastes of their readers; *the goal of the editor is to sell magazines*. The fashion designer is reliant on the publicity that a fashion magazine affords; particularly in the cases of the large fashion houses like Gucci, Prada or Calvin Klein. At this level, advertisements alone are not sufficient; they need to be featured in the

fashion segments of every issue in order to reach a mass audience. Each month, the magazine carefully selects what it feels are the most appropriate clothes, shoes and accessories from a variety of designers, and then mixes and matches them in the various fashion montages of the issue. These photo spreads construct a scenario in which the clothes are worn: a rainy New York day, a cocktail party on the 40th floor or a Cape Cod long weekend. These vignettes seem to accommodate all fashions. The Gucci label, for example, will appear on one page - worn while yachting in Rio - and then reappear later in the Swiss Alps. To the magazine, fashion is geographically and contextually ubiquitous, yet still corroborates the current editorial position on style. With this in mind, it is essential to a fashion designer that his or her clothes fall into favor with the media. Inadvertently, the goal of the fashion designer is the same as the fashion editor: to sell magazines.

The fashion scenarios of advertising and magazines have a profound impact on the consumer. In The Fashion System, Roland Barthes scrutinizes fashion advertising in an attempt to uncover how images can create and consummate fantasy. He states that fashion offers consumers "a double dream of identity and play, or an invitation to play with identities." (Barthes: 1985, p 255) In other words, consumers engage with ads by placing themselves within the context where the clothing is presented. This allows for a selective process, trying on characters or possibilities as it may be,

without having to commit to any one situation. "In the vision of fashion, the ludic motif does not involve what might be called the vertigo effect: it multiplies the person without any risk of losing oneself." (Barthes: 1985, p 260) The instability of the fashioned body further strengthens this fantastical position; it permits the adoption of a variety of scenarios without requiring the permanent adoption of any one identity.

In Women Recovering Our Clothes, Young furthers Barthes' theory by suggesting that "fashion images are intentionally vague - thus, the variables in the formulae can be filled with any number of concrete narrative values, and our pleasure in the fantasy of clothes is partly imagining ourselves in those possible stories, entering unreality. The very multiplicity and ambiguity of the fantasy settings evoked by clothes contributes to such pleasure." (Young: 1994, p 208) The device of being "intentionally vague" is important because it permits fashion to appeal to a wider audience. By leaving the narratives of fashion advertising open-ended, it allows the possibility of multiple readings. The most effective advertisements are clever at being both particular and general; this allows the consumer to engage with the image - *to momentarily pretend*.

The process of selecting and then acquiring fashion requires the consumer to oscillate between fantasy and reality. Craik argues that "there is always a tension between the promise of fashion and

the lived experience. While fashion and advertising are invested with transformative properties which promise to revolutionize body - space relations, the practice of fashion is limited by practical concerns. Everyday consumers constantly negotiate fashion fantasies within the conditions of everyday life." (Craik: 1994, p 61) Fashion will not be adopted by consumers if the projected fantasies cannot be mediated in real world. Thus, fashion is most successful when it is able to generate fantasies which, in turn, can successfully merge into daily life.

Architecture, like fashion, fosters the notion of escape; this is most apparent when examining its depiction in the media. In many ways, the goal of the architect is the same as the fashion designer: to sell magazines. Publicity legitimizes architecture and procures future commissions. Magazines which specialize in interiors, like Architectural Digest or House and Garden, employ the same tactics as their fashion counterparts. Photographs do not portray reality; carefully controlled frames provide clues as to the identity of the possible inhabitants: books are visible on the coffee table, food and wine sit in the kitchen and clothing hangs in closets. "These forbidding environments, literally *disembodied*, become models for the home as it should look." (Ewen: 1988, p 90) *This constructs a scenario of inhabitation, but it is not real inhabitation because all signs of human life have been sanitized to conform with the image.* People are almost always absent from the photographs; this technique

makes the image more vague to allow the viewer to personally enter the narrative. In the architectural fashion journal, "the images themselves are selected more for their seductive qualities as images, *illustrating the eroticism of the architecture's animus*, than for their ability to operate as relatively neutral representations." (Warke: 1994, p 139) Consumers are attracted to the images not only because of their architectural merits but also because of the intrigue of the illusion. Who lives there? Are they like us? We peer eagerly into the most intimate of realms and ultimately compare the world of the image to our own realities. Reinforcing the images is the abridged text which time after time, employs the same adjectives: *spacious, comfortable or versatile*, regardless of the architectural context. It seems that architectural fashions are more diverse than our ability to describe them. This occurs, as McCracken suggests, because "the fashion system takes new styles of clothing or home furnishings and associates them with established cultural categories and principles." (McCracken: 1988, p 80)

Beatriz Colomina proposes that photography "transforms [architecture] into a news item - a fact." (Colomina: 1996, p 44) As a "fact", it becomes real, plausible and obtainable. If the image of an architectural interior generates the fantasy of a particular lifestyle, then acquiring the architecture *should* see the realization of that lifestyle. However, for the most part, this is not possible. Views into the interiors of houses are views into the interiors of others; *we are excluded by the image*

that intices us. But, in the context of fashion, it is the belief that *the referents of the images are obtainable*. Because of the endeavor and residue of architecture, accurate re-creation of a particular image is difficult, time consuming and expensive. Often, the only option is to attempt a replication through ornamentation, decoration and *simulation*. Thus, architecture becomes the adversary of fashion; it must be overcome.

The need to consummate architectural fantasies is most visible in the success of the ready-made, mass produced house. The production house is the true benefactor from the publicity of architectural fashions. The so called *dream home*, which promises the fulfillment of architectural fantasy is actually a victim of fashion; the ever-changing exterior styles stand as testaments to the fluctuating whims of the consuming public. The existence of a media saturated with images of beautiful and luxurious homes, each uniquely decorated, perpetuate the desires of consumers; housing developers have been successful in catering to the wishes of the public by offering a ubiquitous product only marginally manipulated to reflect the latest, and most popular style.

It seems antithetical that while the architectural media focuses on the interiors of houses, the strongest fashion statements of most mass-produced housing occur on the exterior; meanwhile, the interior is left relatively blank and unadorned. This permits consumers

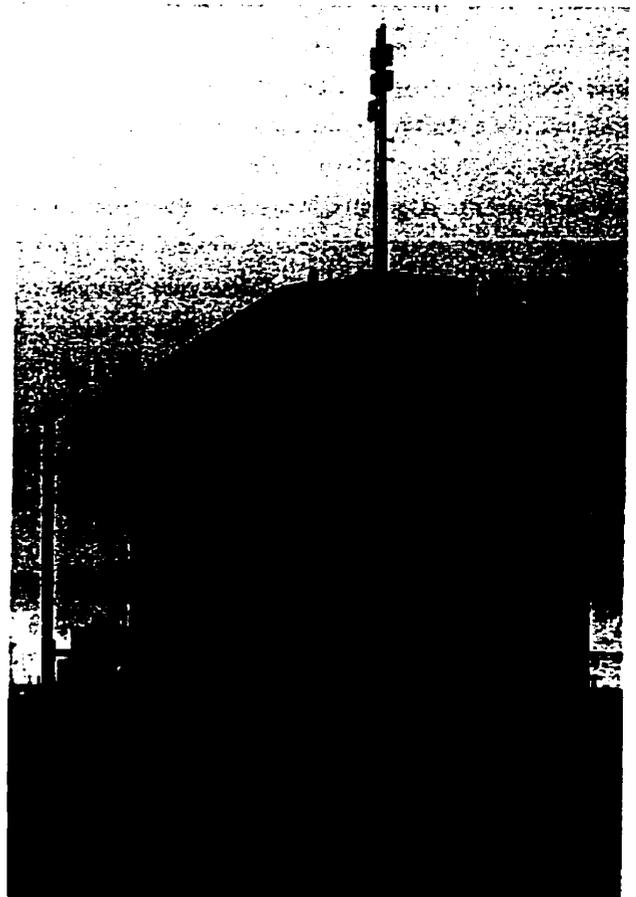
to fulfill their own fashion agendas inside, allowing them to ultimately live in the image of their choice. *The ready-made house has become the cocotte of architecture; by dressing up, it can consummate any fantasy*. Thus, through the manipulation of surfaces, the addition and subtraction of decoration, the architecture of the dwelling begins to corroborate with the agendas of fashion. Historically, this is evident with the advent of the white walls of modernist architecture where "the white surface can easily establish a fashion rather than resist it." (Wigley: 1995, p 323) Arguably, the white wall *creates a fashion* in its attempt to strip it away. The lifestyle represented by the white wall is ultimately modern; it is "lightweight and athletic." (Wigley: 1995, p 162) With modernism, it seems, there is an attempt to coordinate architectural and fashion programs into one, highly charged and efficient image.

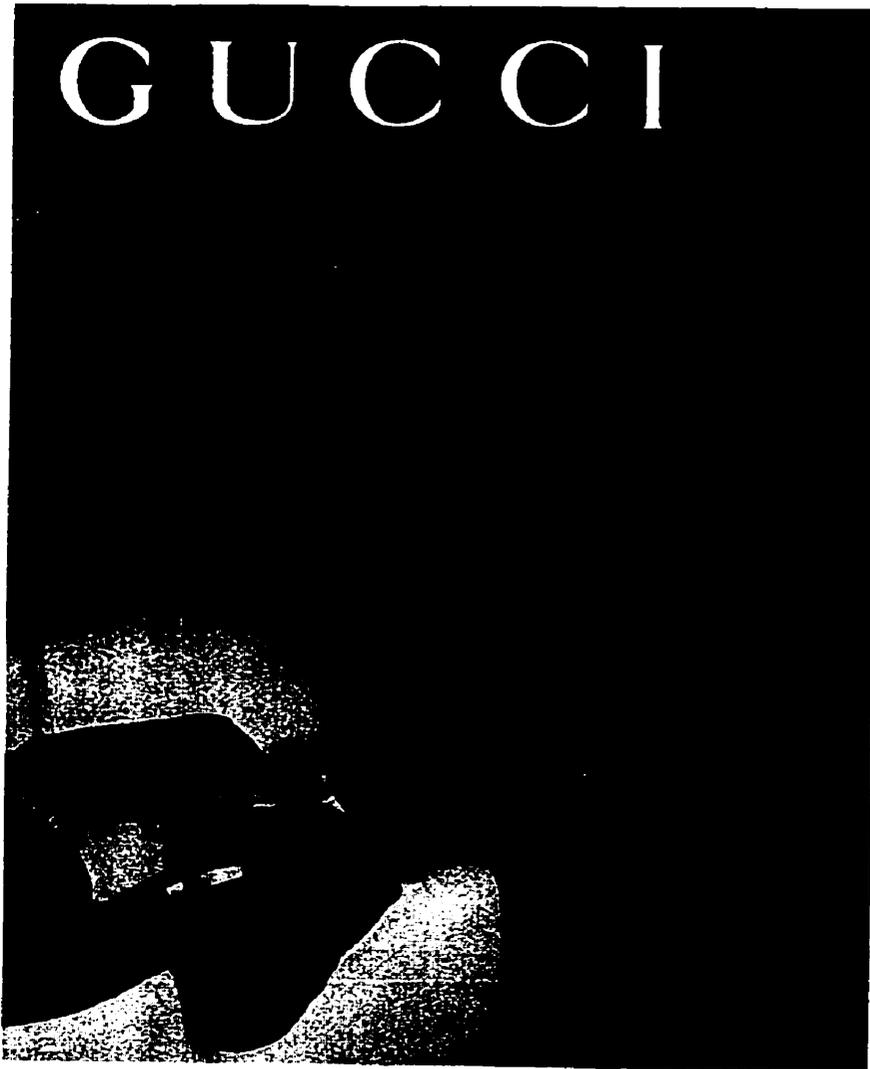
To the consumer, fashionable architecture exists when surfaces and interiors are conquered; when they fit the picture. By surveying magazine images or furniture showrooms and placing ourselves inside the illusions, we embark on a process which results in the selection of a domestic fantasy. By manipulating a new or existing architectural environment, *essentially decorating*, spaces are made to conform to the image. The fantasy is consummated. Good or bad, this process demonstrates an unapologetic, behavioral appeal to the fashion mechanism.

objects of obsession

Consumer desire and object fetish. B & B Italia sofa below, Herzog & deMeuron Signal Box right.

photos: ELCroquis: no 84, 1997





Scenarios in which the clothing is worn.
Gucci ad above, fashion scenario shot in
Rio right.

photos: Harper's Bazaar: March, 1997.

notions of escape



Architectural fantasies. "Modern
urban icon" by Williams and Tsien
top. "Ultimate retreat" by Rodriguez
bottom.

photos: Architectural Record: vol 185,
no. 4, 1997.





While the first two essential conditions of fashion, *obsession and escape*, detail the relationship of the individual consumer to the fashion object, the third condition describes the impacts of fashion within the context of greater society.

Marx describes fashion as being like **“social hieroglyphics”**



which clearly articulate “a definite social relation between men.” (Marx: 1954, p 79) Barnard, in his analysis of Marx’s text, points out that “fashion and clothing may be the most significant ways in which social relations between people are constructed, experienced and understood. The things that people wear give shape and color to social distinctions and inequalities, thereby legitimizing and naturalizing those social distinctions and inequalities.” (Barnard: 1996, p 7)

As a device, fashion can both communicate and conceal the social position of the individual; people are visually evaluated by others based on what they wear. Whether these judgments are right or wrong is inconsequential to the fact that clothing acts as a type of language that others are able to read. To be *in* fashion is to be a



CONTRADICTION*

*Fashion must appease the intrinsic human need
for both union and isolation.*

participant in an organized cultural montage, to be *out* of fashion is to be illegible. The designer label or brand name is one facilitator of this mechanism. As we travel down the hierarchical stratas of fashion, from Gucci to the Gap, we simultaneously parallel social rank and status. As income level rises, people advance to the higher tiers of fashion.

According to Loos, "the greatest enemy is the *parvenu*, the pretender who acts the part by assuming the costume of another class." (Wigley: 1995, p 90) Fashion can be employed to falsify social status; this is indicated by the proliferation of designer *knock-offs*. Fashion "relies upon the designer's unmistakable and presumably inimitable signature or style to guarantee its authenticity." (Fausch: 1994, p 14) When a design is copied, a signature is forged; likewise, when one wears a *knock-off*, they are forging an appearance. Fausch suggests that "a social alchemy occurs through the imposition of the signature. It acts as both site and instrument of a transubstantiation which, without changing the physical quality of an

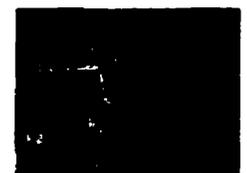
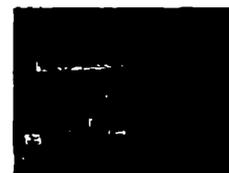
object, radically alters its social role." (Fausch: 1994, p 15) Effectively, it is this "transubstantiation" which creates the stratas of fashion, not differences in design or material quality.

In White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture, Mark Wigley states that "the best tailor offers a cut that satisfies the always double function of fashion - *mask and marker* - by which the surface layer at once bonds the individual to a group and detaches this group from others. This duplicity intensifies as the shared surface that sustains each such collective identity on the outside at the same time maintains individual identity." (Wigley: 1995, p 172) This "double function" characterizes the impact of fashion on mass culture. Fashion, as "mask" satisfies our quest for individuality within the context of a larger community. Individuals search out fashion which is most appropriate for them, essentially using fashion as the means with which to construct identity. Fashion, as "marker" appeals to our intrinsic need to belong to a group. Because fashion is a mass produced, consumer

good, it enables a great number of people to share a single identity.

From a sociological viewpoint, fashion creates and perpetuates a contradictory condition: Individual Identity is achieved only through membership to a larger collective. This contradiction is the third essential condition of fashion. With fashion, one can be "exceptional within the constraints of conformity." (Ewen, 1988, p 108) In effect, consumers buy into the unspoken promises of fashion. "You will be seen. You will be noticed. The symbols you display, your most valuable possessions, will permit you to stand apart from the crowd. You will be noteworthy and honored. You will be someone. You will have then joined the select group." (Ewen: 1988, p 58)

This contradiction is poignantly visible in fashion's highest tier: haute couture. Literally defined as "high needlework" (Warke: 1994, p 135) these prohibitively expensive designer lines are founded on "the exclusive image of the hand-crafted garment." (Craik: 1994, p 211) In its ex-



tremity, "haute couture is intrinsically anti-populist. It exists in the realm of parody and hyperbole." (Warke: 1994, p 135) Yet ironically, the couture customer, the apparent apex of fashion individuality, is forever the subject of assimilative agents. In reality, the patrons of haute couture merely *simulate* an avant garde; they are forever marked by the name of the designer. In fact, the designer label, whether Dior, Chanel or Givenchy, can never be separated from the identity of the garment. Despite the fact there is only one copy of each gown, all the couture fashions of a particular house bear a unified language; inevitably, the garment falls into a greater collection. The client base of each house forms its own exclusive group.

Sociologist George Simmel corroborates this theory with his writings in *Fashion*. He argues that "two social conditions are essential to the establishment of fashion, and should either of these tendencies be absent from or lacking in society, fashion will not be formed." (Simmel: 1971, p 301) He explains that "the first of these tendencies is the need for union and the second is the need for isolation: individuals must possess the desire to be a part of a larger whole, society, and they must also possess the desire to be, and to be considered as, apart from that larger whole. This accounts for much of all social phenomena: the whole history of society is reflected in the conflict between adaptation to society and individual departure from its demands." (Simmel: 1971, p 295) Like with haute couture, assimilation is the pre-requisite for fashion individuality. The tension between the *mask* and the *marker*, this apparent contradiction, is actually what secures the place of fashion within the context of human behavior.

It is an indisputable fact that architecture fosters the third essential condition of fashion; *the*

individual dwelling is the champion of communicating social status. In the context of mass housing, social status is most often rendered through the physical size and real estate location of the house; in effect, this marks the owner as being a member of a particular demographic. Membership to this subgroup is income dependent, and therefore restrictive; this satisfies the need for union. By contrast, the architectural means of satisfying the need for isolation are more complex. Loos believes that "the house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead all its richness must be manifest in the interior." (cited from Colomina: 1996, p 32) Colomina further explicates Loos' position by stating that "the outside is only the *cover* of the book, it is clothing, it is mask. The modern mask is a form of protection, a canceling of differences on the outside precisely to make identity possible, an identity that is individual." (Colomina: 1996, pp 32-37) The apparent divorce of inside and outside is architecture's defensive appeal to fashion. If *lifestyle* is a fantasy superimposed on the interior, then the outside has the paternal responsibility of protecting the intimate realm of that *image*. Craik describes the function of the mask as "disguising the true nature of the body or person. It is seen as a superficial gloss. Yet, we can regard the ways in which we clothe the body as an active process or technical means for constructing and presenting a bodily self." (Craik: 1994, p 1) Although seemingly "superficial" like "gloss", the architectural mask of a facade is the critical interface between our own bodies and the rest of the world; it projects as it protects.

In the case of the typical ready-made house, the "active process or technical means" involves the consumer's selection of a surface treatment; the result is that Tudor manors, Span-

ish villas and Neoclassical houses sit side by side in the suburbs. This is the housing developer's attempt to satisfy the human need for isolation and individual expression within a context of mass housing. It is unsuccessful because the cultural significance of these styles is muddled and inherently nihilistic, in part due to the pastiche nature of their application. In effect, the proliferation of so much empty variety in one context diminishes any chance for the "bodily self" to present a more substantial individual meaning. Hence, the typical ready-made house falls outside of the realm of fashion; it does not permit one to be "exceptional within the constraints of conformity."

Resolving this condition is a necessary step to realizing the goal of constructing fashion. Barnard states, in *Fashion as Communication*, that "fashion and clothing are the mass-produced means by which individual style is constructed; somehow we believe that the shirt, or the skirt, which both exist in their thousands of copies is 'us'. Ironically, mass produced garments are used to construct what is thought of and experienced as an individual identity, a way of being different from everyone else. 'That dress is so you', we say, for example, of a dress that may be worn by many hundreds of people at that very moment. In these ways, identity shades into difference and difference into identity." (Barnard: 1996, p 174) But, does the fact that the suit that we call "our own" is actually one of a thousand copies, degrade the experience of the consumer? Apparently not. In fact, it makes the selection of fashion more secure; *mass production means legitimization.*

Following from the example set by fashion, a means of expressing an individual archi-

tectural identity should be possible within a system of mass production. Mass production equals standardization; "standardization is understood as an effect of fashion rather than a form of resistance to it." (Wigley: 1995, p 86) In *L'Esprit Nouveau*, Le Corbusier proclaims that "houses must go up all in one piece, made by machine tools in a factory, assembled as Ford assembles cars, on moving conveyer belts." (cited from Colomina: 1996, p 159) In addition to Le Corbusier, architects such as Gropius, Hilberseimer and Belgiojoso argue in favor of a mass produced architectural product. *Domus* magazine suggests that "the subject of the prefabricated house lends itself to reflection on *architecture* designed as an industrialized prefabricated and totally standardized product, as are the majority of design goods. Considering post-industrial conditions, it has been realized that industrial goods have done better adapting to the new conditions of production than architecture has." (Domus: 1997, p 3)

This polemic is not new. In the late 1920's, Gropius experimented with the idea of the mass production; his Bauhaus collective was conceptually akin to a fashion consortium, although personally, he rejects this implication. To Gropius, mass production effectively *disciplines* fashion. He states that "the repetition of standardized parts, and the use of identical materials in different buildings, will have the same sort of coordinating and sobering effect on the aspects of our towns as uniformity of type in modern attire has in social life. *But that will in no sense restrict the architect's freedom of design.* For although every house and block of flats will bear the unmistakable imprint of our age, there will always remain, as in the clothes we wear, sufficient scope for the individual to find expression for his own personality." (cited from

Wigley: 1995, p 104) Ironically, Gropius employs a mass production theory as a way to combat the intrusion of fashion into architecture. Wigley, in an analysis of Gropius' text, states that "standardized architecture, *the architecture that resists fashion*, is a basic wardrobe of garments that go together in different combinations. Gropius' industrialized housing projects were always conceived as kits of standard parts that could be purchased and assembled in different combinations, mix-and-match architecture that, with the judicious addition of patterns and accessories, supposedly enables the endless variations *without* participating in the degenerating economy of fashion." (Wigley: 1995, p 105) In effect, Gropius' theory satisfies the third essential condition of fashion; at a conceptual level, a "unity of a basic cut, but individual variation of patterns and accessories," (cited from Wigley: 1995, p 105) architecturally fulfills the human needs for union and isolation.

In contrast to the typical ready-made house, a mass produced house, conceived as a "kit of standard parts that could be purchased and assembled in different combinations," would produce variations of an established base model. Here, individuality would result from the manipulation of the assembly system itself and would not require the additional application of pastiche treatments to the facade. In other words, the parts could be reconstituted in a number of possible combinations; each combination would express individual choice. This satisfies the human need for isolation. Simultaneously, an established base model consisting of standardized parts and a consistent architectural language creates a collective identity. This satisfies the human need for union. *Ultimately, fashion could be constructed rather than applied.*



As a conclusion to this discussion, this segment examines the temporal nature of fashion; its enduring appeal is ultimately a question of time. Loos states that "fashion is something ephemeral only because we do not make things last. As soon as we have objects that last a long time and stay beautiful, fashion ceases.



The *death* of fashion is inevitable.

We should measure beauty in terms of time." (cited from Wigley: 1995, p 389) He then suggests that architecture should resist the trappings of fashion by saying that "ladies' apparel may be designed to last only for a season. It would be a sorry mistake to be similarly carefree or arbitrary in designing a house." (cited from Wigley: 1995, p 174) Here, Loos advocates for a permanence in architecture; in his estimation, this is inherently absent in fashion.

But can architecture be impervious to temporal fluctuations? Faurischou states that "modern society is driven to create a perpetual desire for need, for novelty, for endless difference." (Faurischou: 1988, p 82) This inevitably requires a rejection of things past and the favorable adoption of "novelty." Blumer corroborates by saying that "a fashion, once started, marches relentlessly to its doom; on its heels treads a new fashion destined to the same fate; and so on ad infinitum. This sets the fundamental character of the fashion proc-

ess." (Blumer: 1995, p 381) Arguably, architecture is no less immune to eventual dismissal than its fashion counterparts.

Roach-Higgins argues that "awareness of change is a requisite to fashion;" (Roach-Higgins: 1995, p 394) it is temporarily adopted by society only to be inevitably discarded and replaced by something else. Thus, the "collective recognition, acceptance, and use of a particular form of dress, which will eventually be replaced with another form, makes it a fashion." (Roach-Higgins: 1995, p 395) *Fashion, by definition, has a finite life span which will inevitably come to an end; within its operation, there is no eternity.* Fashion only represents the moment in which we live. In this sense, "fashion is always modern; it always seeks to keep abreast of the times." (Blumer, 1995, p 385)

In this way, fashion creates a consumer dilemma. Knowing that all fashion will inevitably



ETERNITY*

As time passes, so must fashion.

come to an end, one must weigh the benefits of purchasing against the opportunity costs of waiting. Media images of the fashion object attempt to cohere the consumer into immediate acquisition. Photography "offers visions of perfection. The most photogenic subject is one that freezes well, one that can be ripped out of time, suspended, motionless." Ewen: 1988, p 85) This tactic distorts our ability to effectively evaluate the temporality of a fashion. The world of the fashion image creates the illusion of *perpetual newness*.

Arguably, architecture must be able to "freeze well" like the idyllic fashion model. The "unwieldy quality of architecture's material apparatus and complex organization" (Wigley: 1995, p 316) is the sluggish foil of the fluid fashion cycle. Robert Venturi remarks that "clothes are more fragile than buildings and their design can evolve more quickly. Clothing is temporary by its very nature, and architecture by its very nature, is as permanent as anything human can be in reality. We change our clothes, but architecture is a surrounding constant." (cited from Fausch: 1994, p 368) *Unlike clothing, architecture is cumulative; in many ways, it is the ground upon which the figure of fashion plays out.*

Applying a fashion to architecture through ornamentation seems to accelerate an architecture's doom. According to Loos, "ornament is, by definition, fashion itself. To produce a modern architecture is not to strip the ornament off a build-

ing, but to preserve the building from the fast-moving time of the fashion world that would render it ornamental. To be a modern architect is to act in a way that does not accelerate architecture's inevitable participation in the evolution of fashions." (Wigley: 1995, p 174) But can the temporal tension between fashion and architecture reach a resolution? Does exposing a building to "the fast-moving time of fashion" automatically make it "ornamental?"

In an effort to cast architecture away from the cyclical nature of fashion, many architects employ a montage of architectural languages based on historical styles. Ironically, this falls back into the realm of fashion. *Bricolage*, defined as "a continual reconstruction of elements from the past" (Barnard: 1996, p 167) is common to fashion; presently, retro collections are the mainstay of the industry. Arguably, all modern architecture is a *bricolage* of sorts. Walter Benjamin describes this through the notion of a *Jetztzeit* "wherein the immediate present - this moment - is understood to exist as the apotheosis of a series of continuously shifting instants of revelation, where fragments from relevant pasts are incorporated into a plausible depiction of the present." (cited from Warke: 1994, p 131) In the post-modern context, *modernity*, which fashion always represents, becomes fragmented and historically ambivalent.

This fragmented modernity reveals an-

other timeline deeply imbedded within the fashion cycle. Seasonal fluctuations in fashion, when examined cumulatively within the overall historical continuum, involve nothing more than the plastic manipulation of an established base model; short term changes in fashion are simply variations on a theme. Technological change, the necessary pre-requisite for the establishment of new base models, is never able to keep pace with the frenzy of fashion. Designer *Christain Dior* corroborates this theory by stating that "the actual or basic and underlying shapes of dress change very little and very slowly over time." (cited from Barnard: 1996, p 165) This accounts for the establishment of the *classic* or *basic* elements which endure longer cycles. Contemporary fashion still centers around typologies present at the advent of the century: the suit, the dress and the jacket. While the silhouette alters and fabrics improve, we do not engage with new prototypes; modern fashion merely tampers with the normative lineaments.

If architecture is to be successfully founded in the polemics of the fashion mechanism, then it must have an inherent resilience which can negotiate the fluctuations of the temporal cycle. In effect, the paradigm for fashionable architecture must have an intrinsic worth *outside* of its status as a fashion; in the end, pulling architecture and fashion apart may actually make them more compatible. Loos writes that "the object of daily use

lives as long as its material lasts, and its modern value resides in its solidity." (cited from Wigley: 1995, p 174) If the longevity of "modern value" in objects is attributable to material strength as Loos suggests, then a resilient architecture must have a long term spatial utility. This does not imply that architecture should be staid in its expression. Modernity, for fashion as well as architecture, presupposes the notion of change. In this way, Le Corbusier praises women's fashion over men's because it has undergone *change*, the change of a modern time." (Colomina: 1996, p 333) Architecture is thus charged with a difficult task: it must be both modern and eternal or as McCleod states: "*both timely and timeless.*" (McCleod: 1994, p 53)

This "change of a modern time" seems to be a condition of fashion rather than a flight away from it. This condition is imbedded into a temporal cycle; a product's passage through the cycle is dependent on a number of criteria. Warke states that "just as fashion requires a consumer system, consumer systems require fashion. The capacity for an object-type (a piece of jewelry, a pair of shoes, a car, an office building) to undergo formal change is related directly to the size of the object, its cost, the time lag between its initial design and the final act of its consumption, the total amount of production occurring within a specific market, and the time interval between the production of the object and the dispersal of its carefully delimited representations throughout the market." (Warke: 1994, p 126)

Because of these factors, architecture will have a slower movement through the fashion network; however, smaller projects will progress more rapidly than larger ones. This accounts for the ability of the ready-made house, as the most rapidly constructed architectural typology, to more easily keep pace with current fashions. In its relative simplicity, this micro-architecture of sorts, oscillates between the resolve of architecture and the freedom of fashion.

When fashion faces architecture, architecture faces a dilemma. Due to its sheer size and complexity, it cannot easily participate in the economy or cycle of fashion. Yet, because architecture wholeheartedly indulges in the mass media spoils afforded by the modern era of publicity, all architecture inevitably contacts the fashion system. Architecture gets caught between its pragmatic self (big, cumbersome, time consuming, expensive) and the *image* it strives for (modern, versatile, spacious, ephemeral). This dilemma is unresolved; turning away from fashion is ultimately futile. Warke argues that "should an architect feel the compunction to be 'fashion-free', that architect must either be unfashionable (a posture that requires some knowledge of prevalent fashions) or be completely independent of those systems that survive through the marketing." (Warke: 1994, p 142) In the end, this would require a complete reconfiguration to the nature of architectural practice.



creating a contradiction



photos: Blueprint: no 144, 1997.



Individual Identity and mass appeal. Ikea house left and Life 1998 Dream House bottom left.

Exclusive group and signature statement - Rolex watch below.

Ikea dream house from

3000Kr*

* approx £300
per month

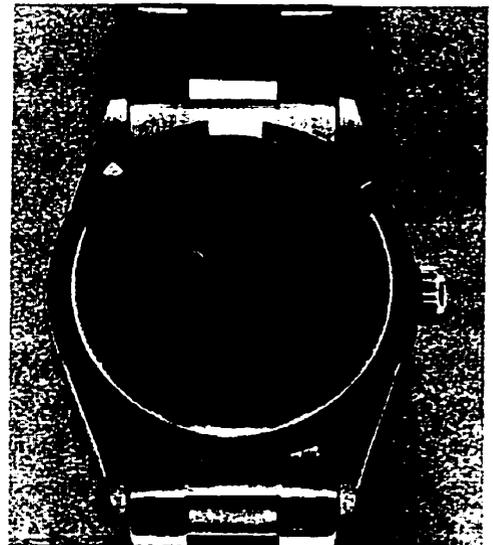


photo: Wallpaper: Jan- Feb, 1998.



photo: Life: February, 1998.



photo: Architectural Record: vol 186, no 4, 1998.

Bricolage time proofing. "Scandanavian vernacular and modernist design:" new house by David Salmela above.

Little change to the basic or underlying shape. Chanel classic suit right.

eternity vs. modernity

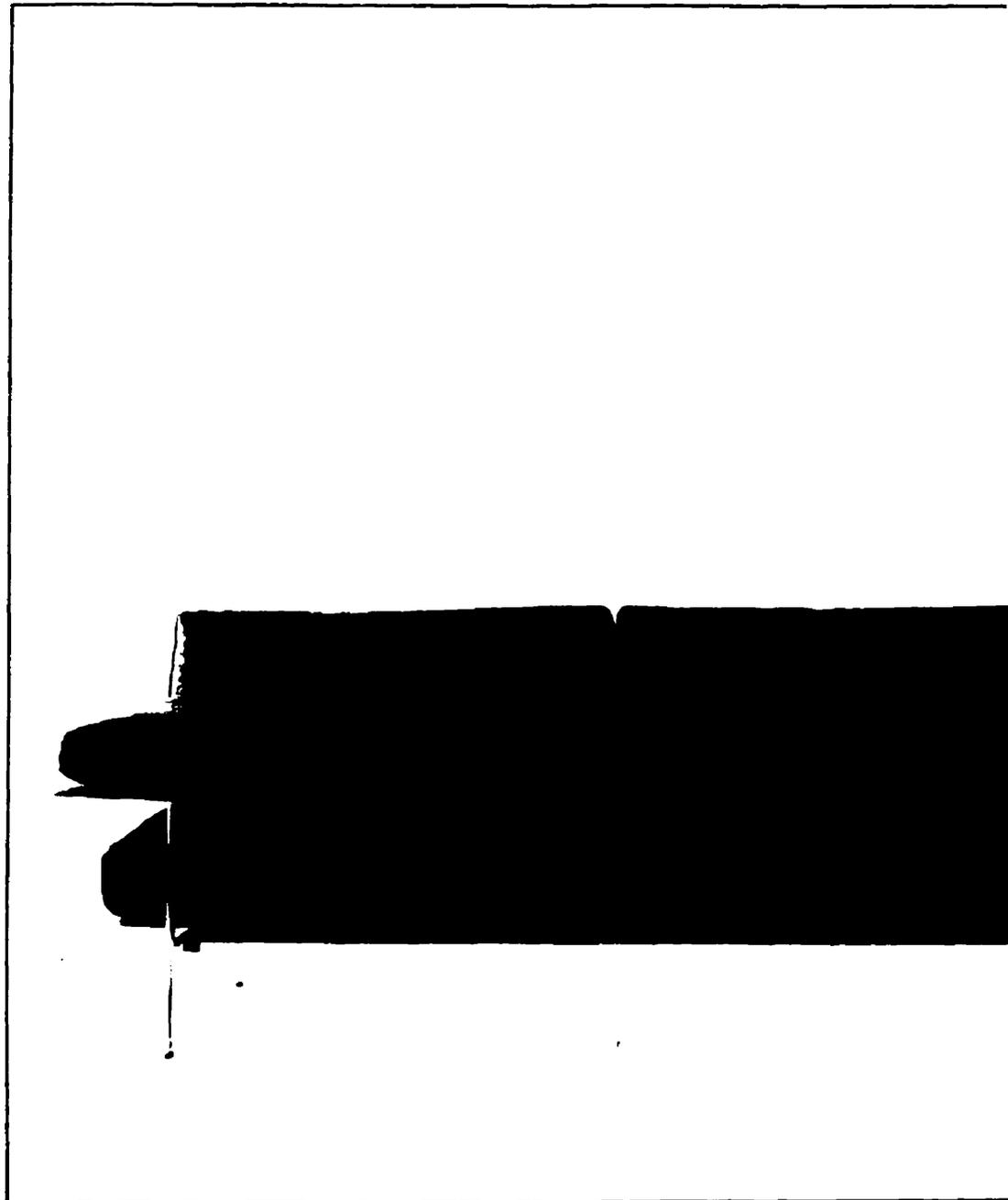


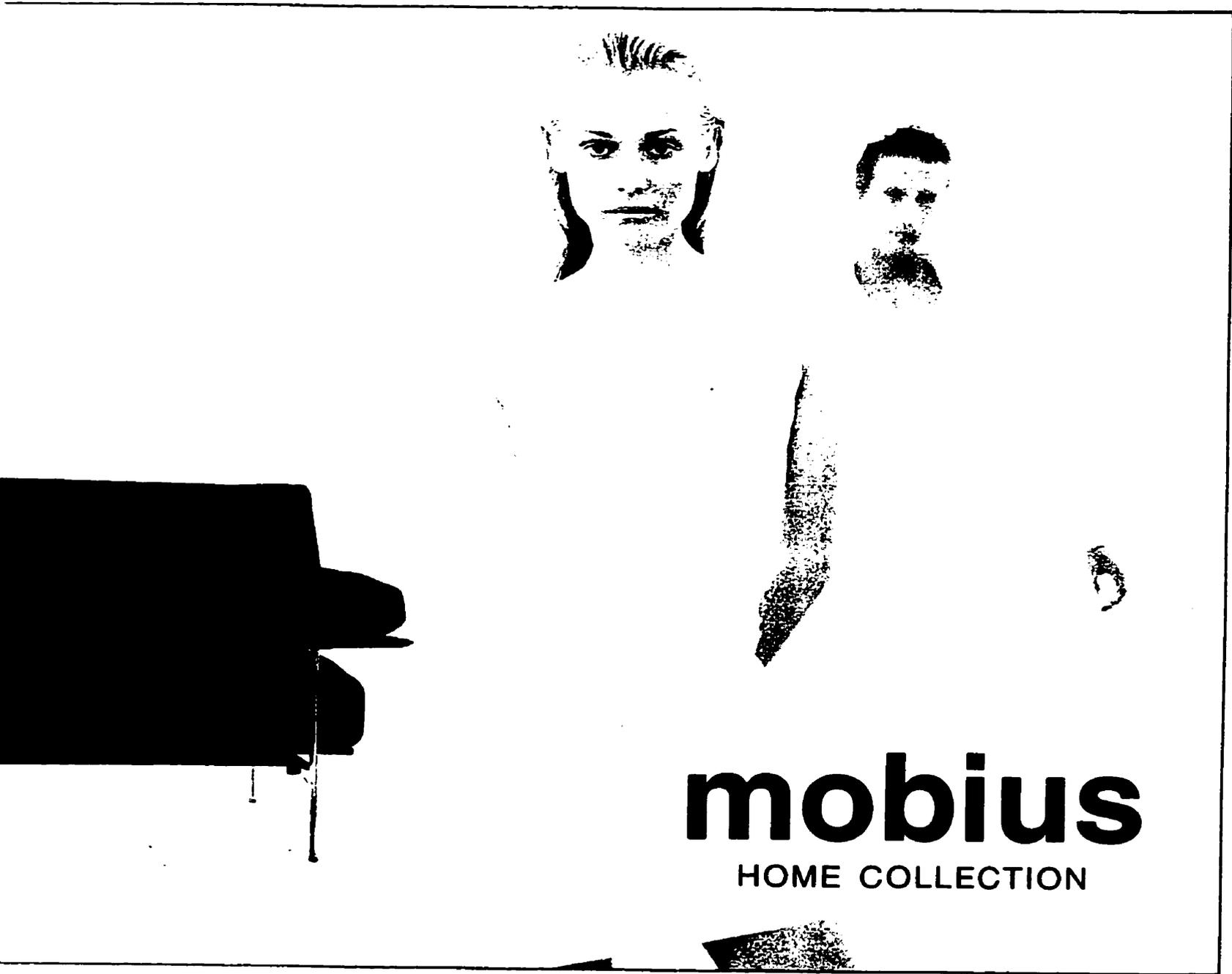
photo: W: February, 1998.

The purpose of the architectural investigation is to **construct fashion** in the form of a ready-made house. Domus magazine reports that "the working sphere of the architect has been redefined. Form-driven post-Modernism with its theory of images and historical references has definitely arrived at the end of its development. The individualistic formalistic chaos - with deconstructivism as post-modernism's final stroke of decadence - has run out of steam as a result of its own arbitrariness. At the same time, in a society that is mainly based on service industries, the position and role of the architect becomes questionable. On the other hand, there is the recognition that modern marketing strategies play an important role in spreading new architectural ideas and concepts. The current trend in architecture [is towards a] standardization. So-called *signature projects* are sold with new marketing strategies (Life Magazine, Stern, Newstandard) or pre-fabricated homes [are sold] as a kind of premium line." (Domus: 1997, p 19)

This thesis presents a hypothetical signature line of architecture.

It consists of four distinct models; each one a variation on a single architectural language and program. As infills, they will fit most inner city lots and in their modest scale, they sit comfortably within most neighborhood compositions. Le Corbusier suggests that "the house is no more than a series of views choreographed by the visitor. The house can be anyplace. It is immaterial. Detached from nature, it is mobile." (cited from Colomina: 1996, p 312) In this respect, these houses belong to an emergent typology of architecturally designed *mobile* homes; each one creates its own site and its own set of spatial and visual experiences. In this way, this collection alters the demographic of the architectural client. These small, yet highly styled houses are not for the elite, but a more typical home buyer. This effectively reinforces the industrialized dream of the modern consumer where "styled objects, once the province of an upper class, now become reproducible" (Ewen: 1988, p 75) and available to all. In addition, these models accommodate the double function of the modern house: inhabitation and investment. Thus, the intention is to present a versatile product which not only characterizes a specific lifestyle ideal, but one which also holds its value over time.





mobius

HOME COLLECTION

constructing

-
1. design four houses.
 2. designate the houses as products for consumption.
 3. employ a presentation strategy to ignite consumer desire.

-
4. create four fantasy lifestyle scenarios:
introvert single, introvert couple, extrovert single, extrovert couple.
 5. develop a single program which accommodates all four scenarios.
 6. manipulate the spatial arrangement of the single program:
develop four distinct architectural sequences.
 7. guarantee the advertised fantasy by constructing the site and views.

-
8. develop the houses as a unified set:
create an architectural signature line called **mobius HOME COLLECTION**.
 9. employ a unified architectural language based on three elements:
-an inner city infill lot size of 25' x 120' with a rear lane garage.
-a continuously wrapping exterior wall.
-a two storey storage and service module which defines the interior spaces.
 10. manipulate the three elements to create an individual identity for each house while maintaining the overall unity of the collection.

-
11. design small houses intended for one or two people. Use the modest envelope guidelines. Create an inexpensive architecture which is more disposable to the consumer. They will be resold when the owner's lifestyle or needs change.
 12. redesign the collection on a regular, but not seasonal basis. Continue the fashion cycle.

FASHION

OBSESSION The formation of fashion is contingent upon a sexually charged relationship between consumer and product.

ESCAPE Fashion first creates, then consummates fantasy.

CONTRADICTION Fashion appeases the apparently contradictory human needs for both union and isolation.

ETERNITY As time passes, so must fashion.



mobius

HOME COLLECTION

premises

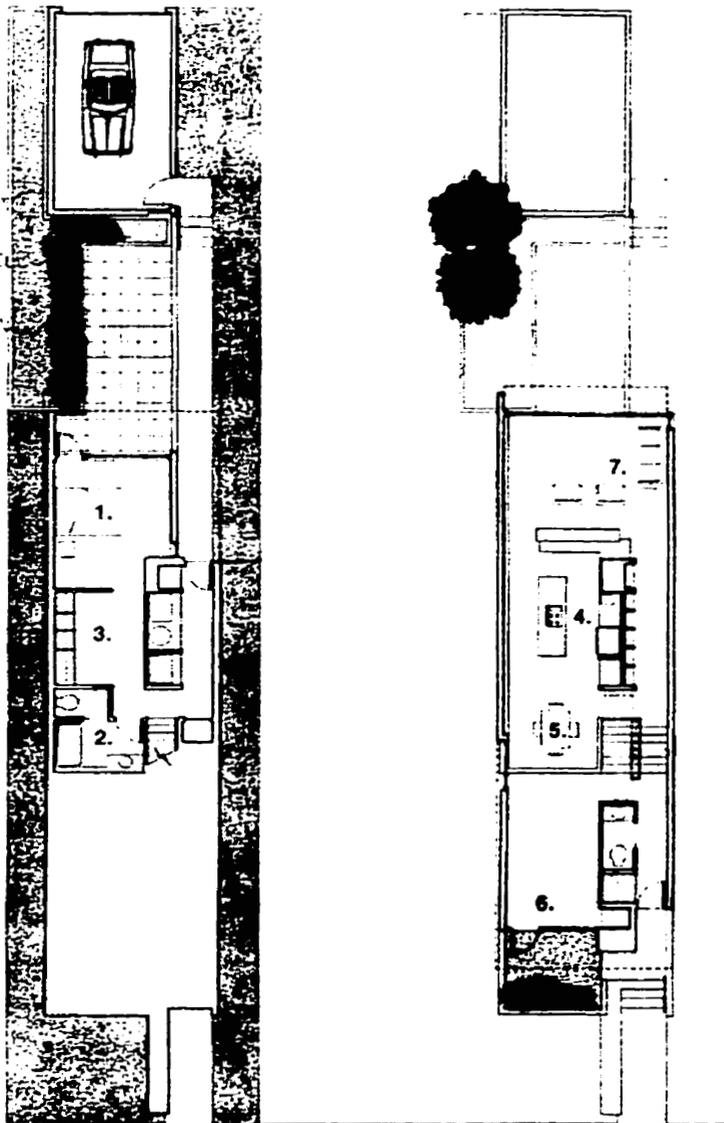
1998



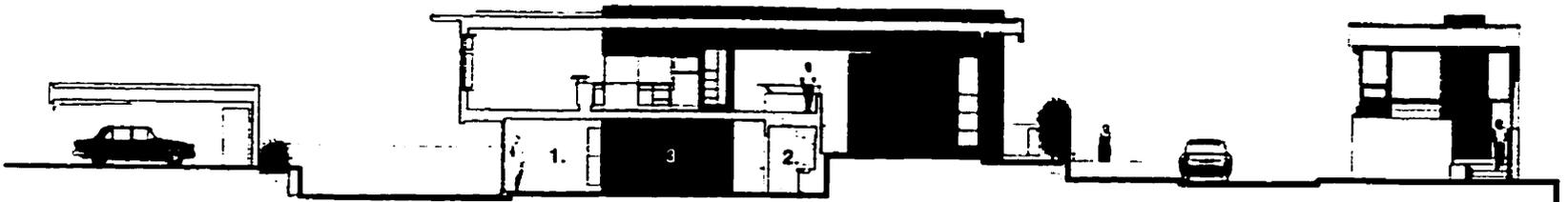
premise

no. 1

Small house. Hidden bedroom with terrace view. Miniature garden in front of tall study.



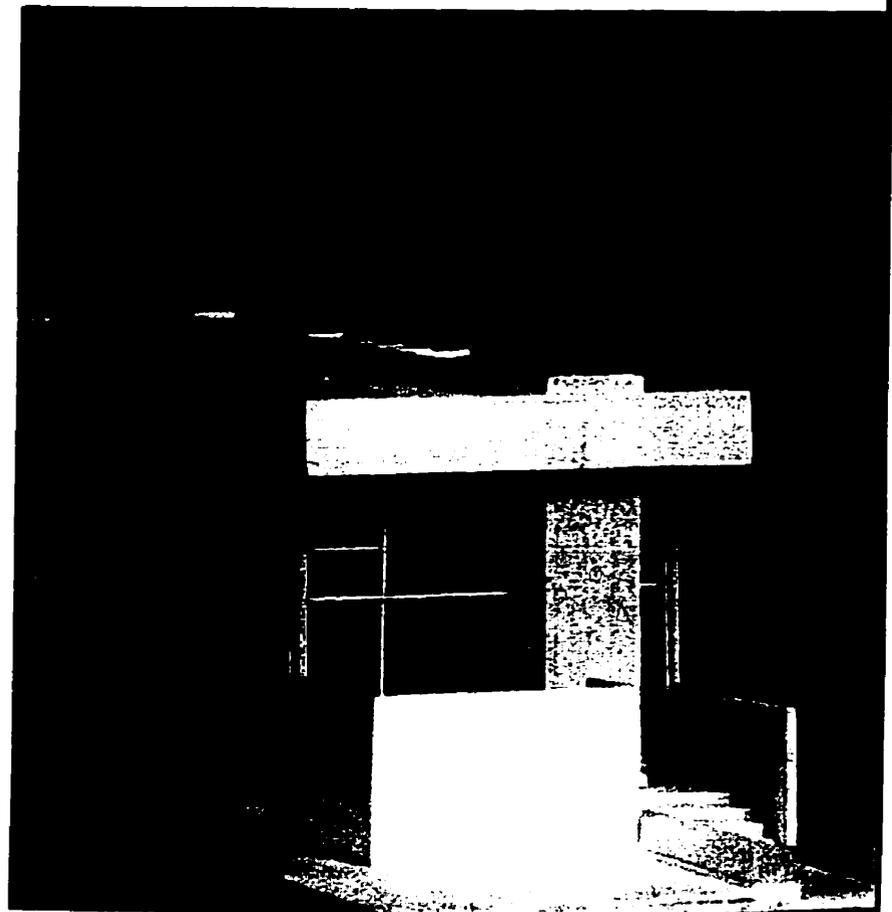
1. **sleep**
2. **bathe**
3. **dress**
4. **cook**
5. **dine**
6. **study**
7. **relax**



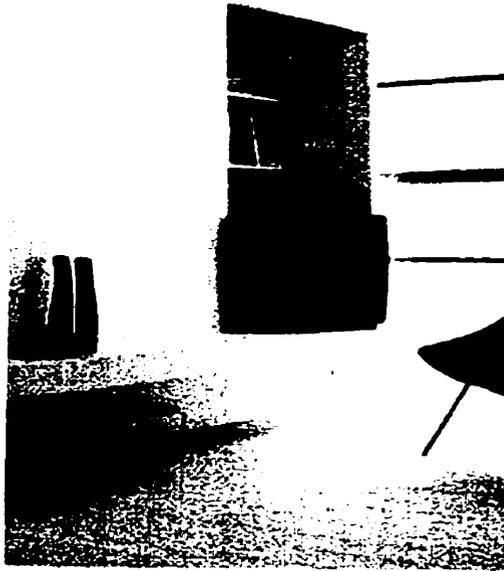
1.



3.



buy
yourself



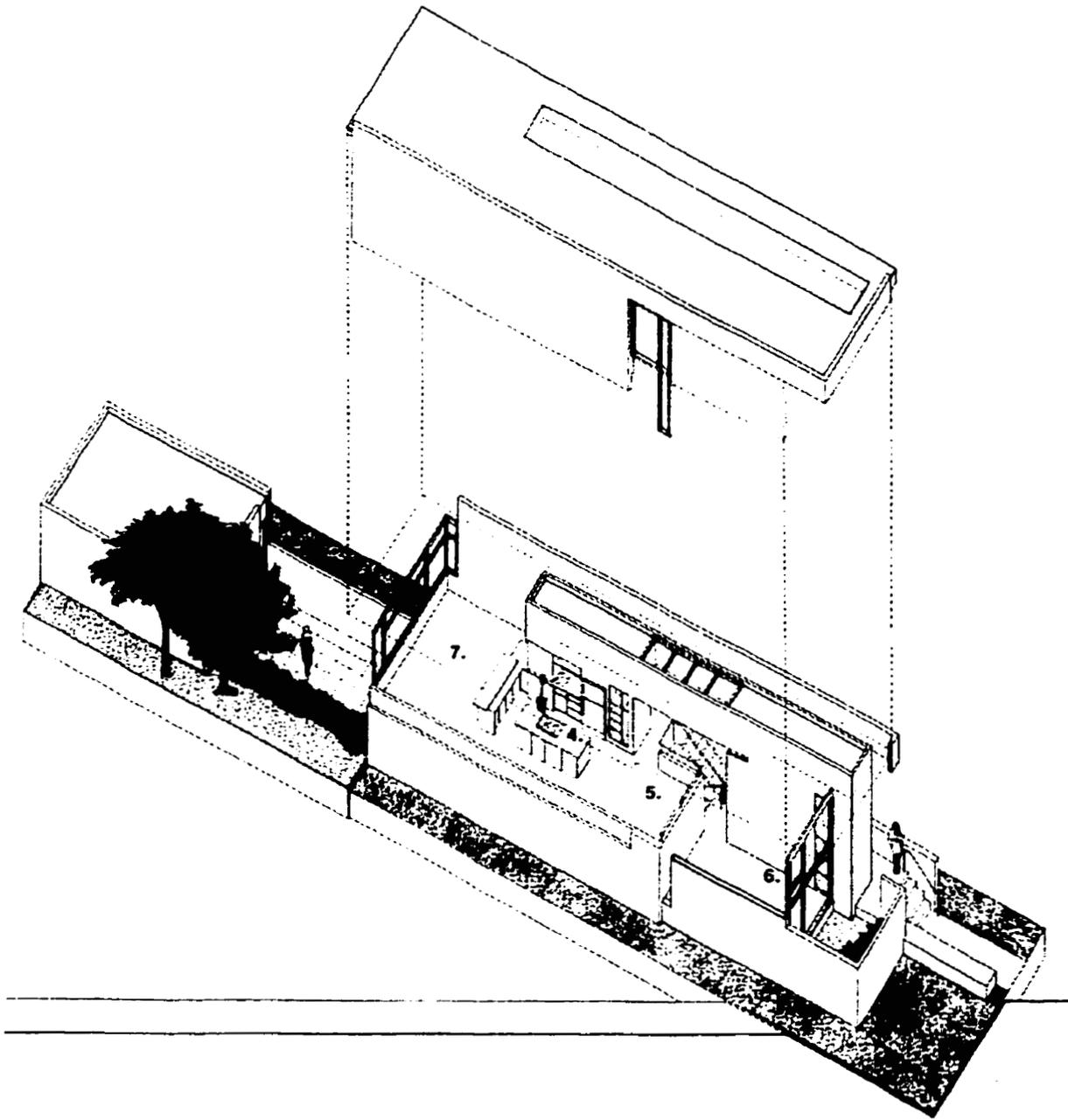
6.



premise
no. 1



7.



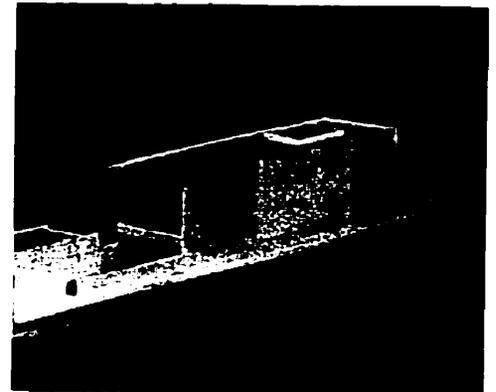
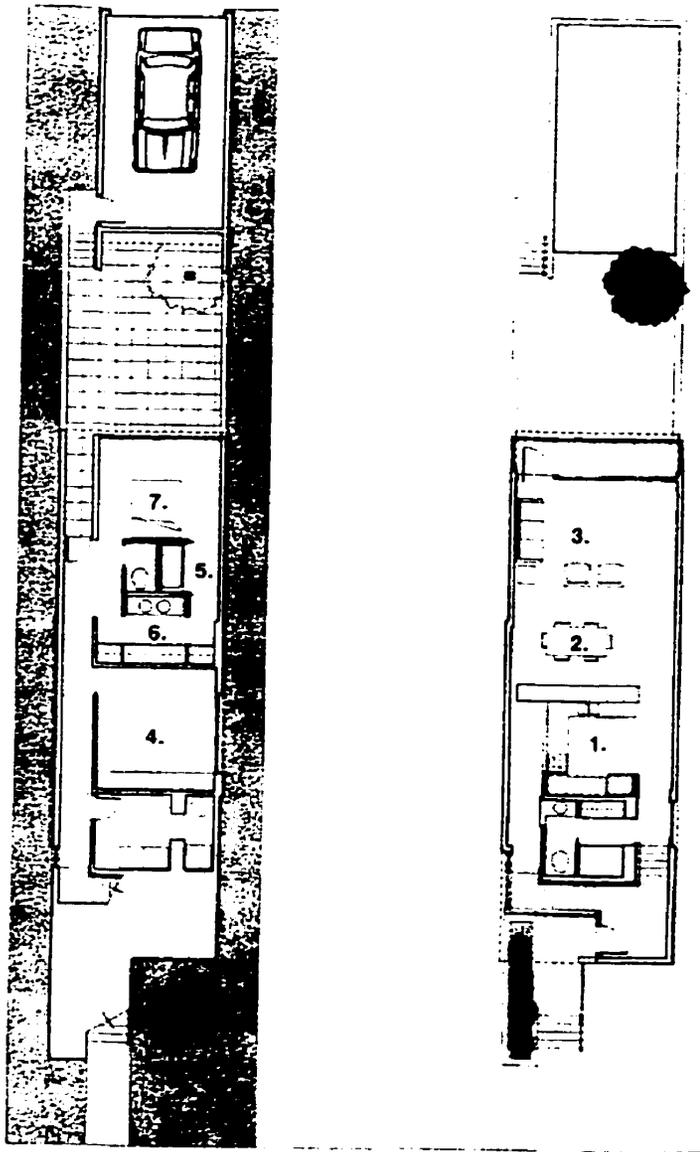
mobius

HOME COLLECTION

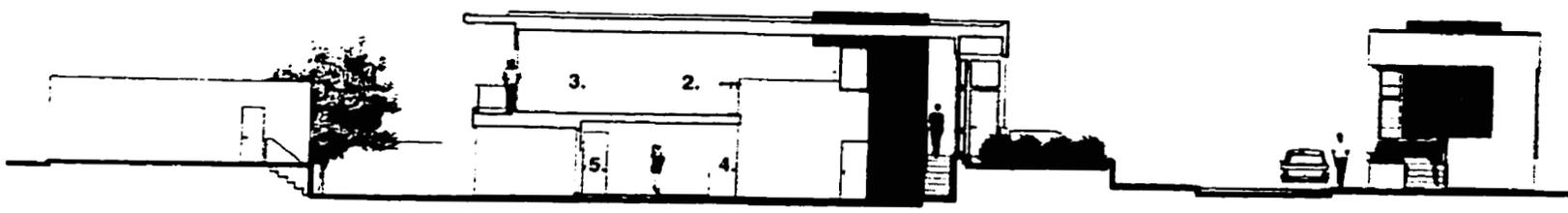
premise

no. 2

Two worlds in one house. Box for entertaining above. Owner's suite with private court below.



1. **cook**
2. **dine**
3. **entertain**
4. **guest**
5. **bathe**
6. **dress**
7. **sleep**



2.

two
story



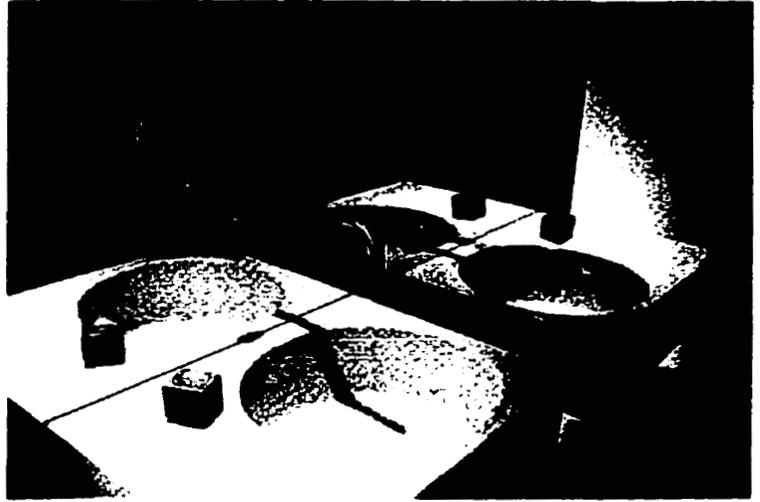
3.



6.



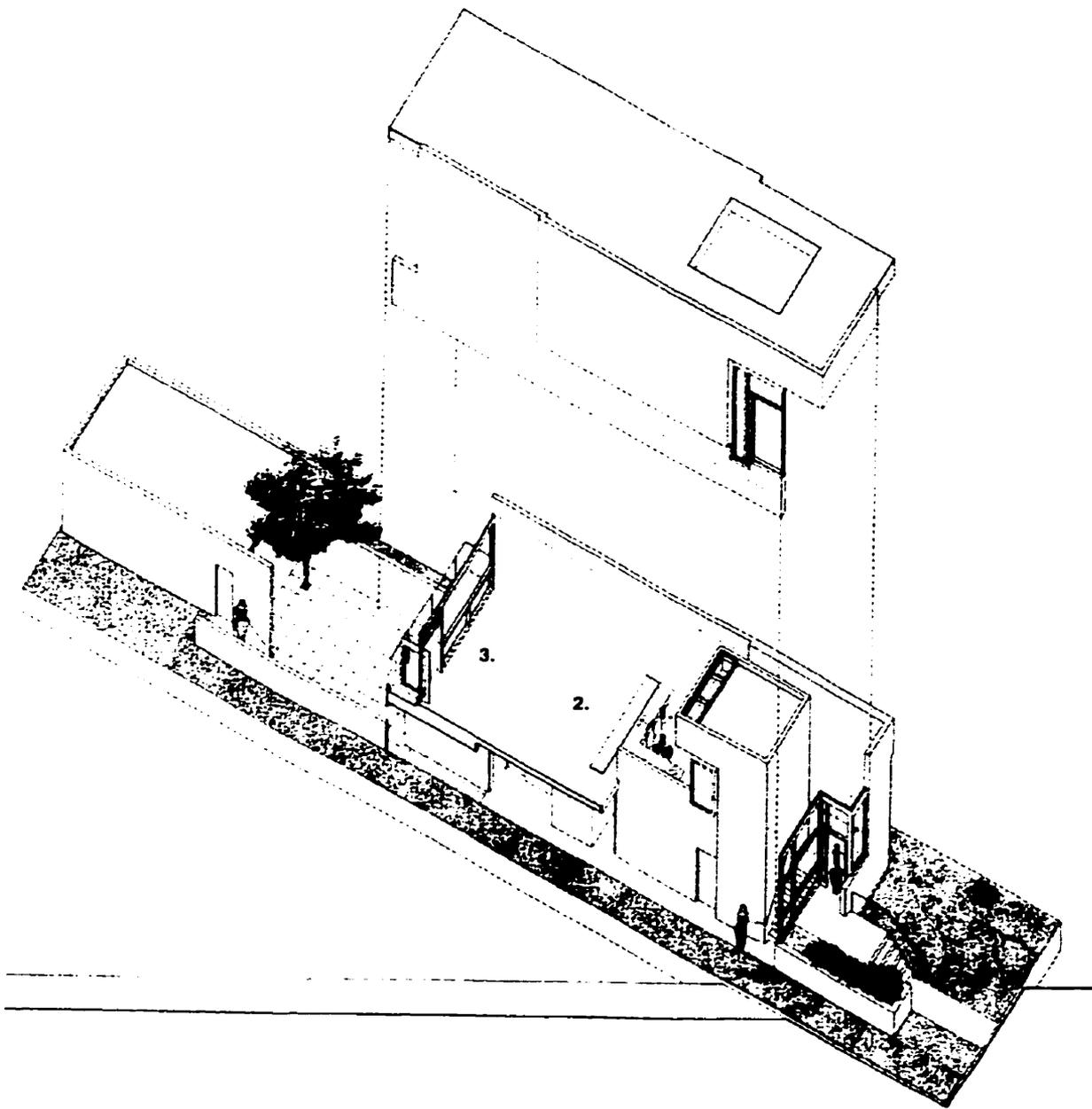
7.



5.

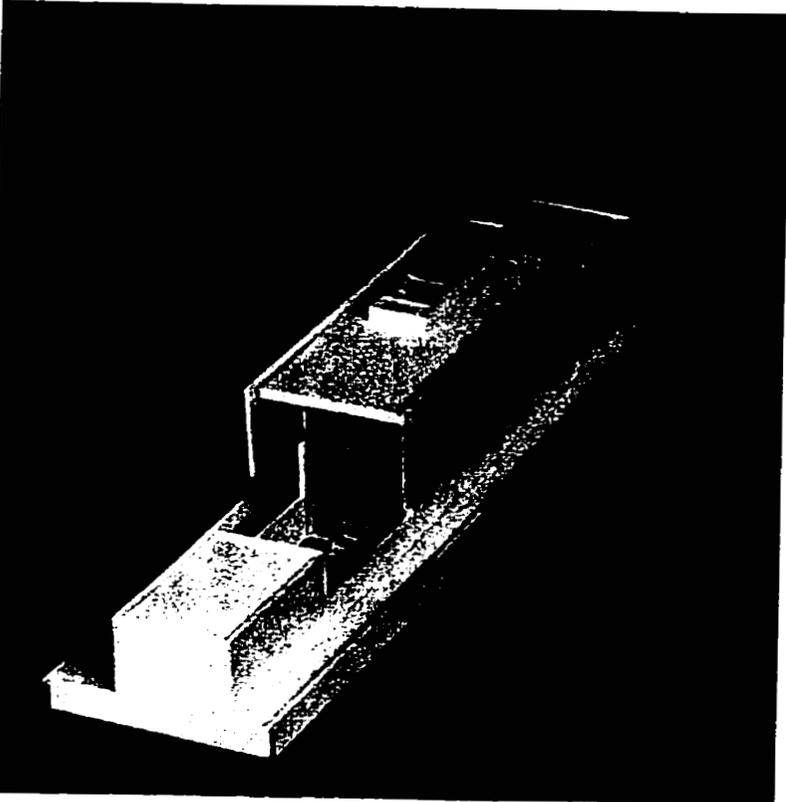
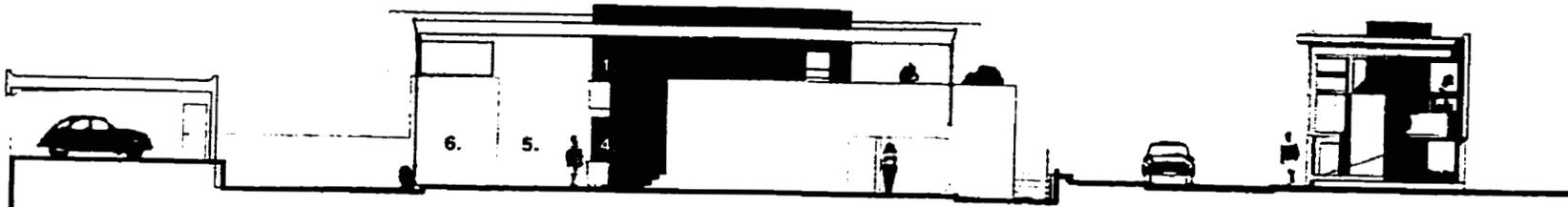
premise
no.2





mobius

HOME COLLECTION



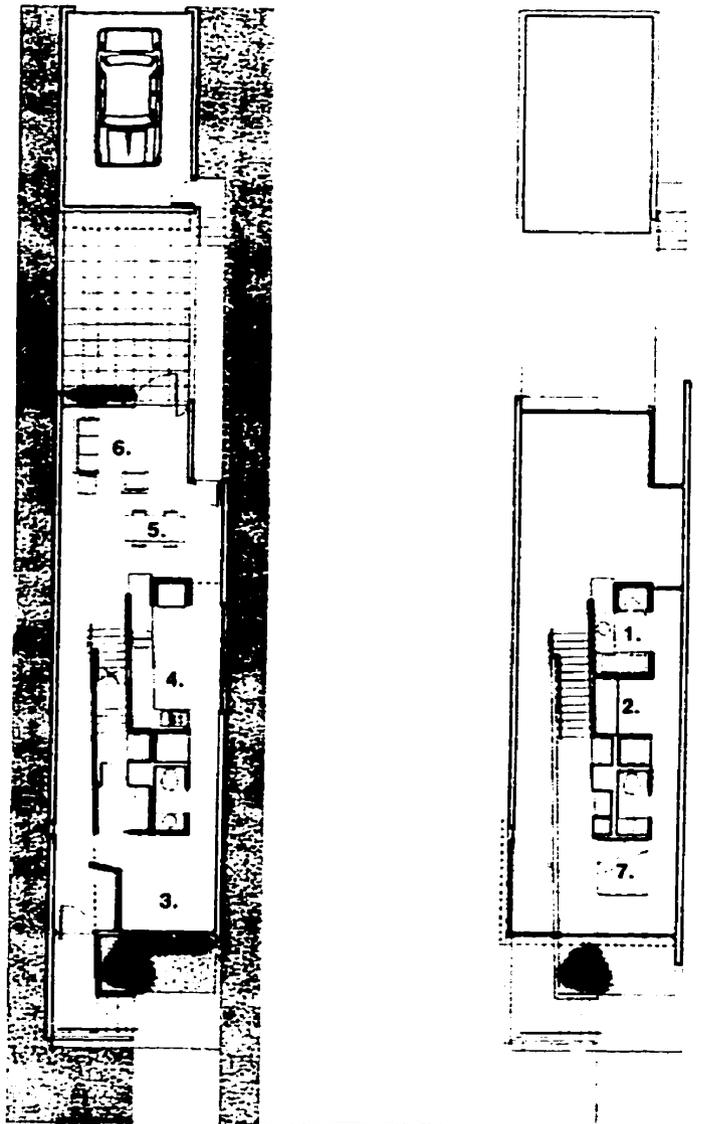
male box

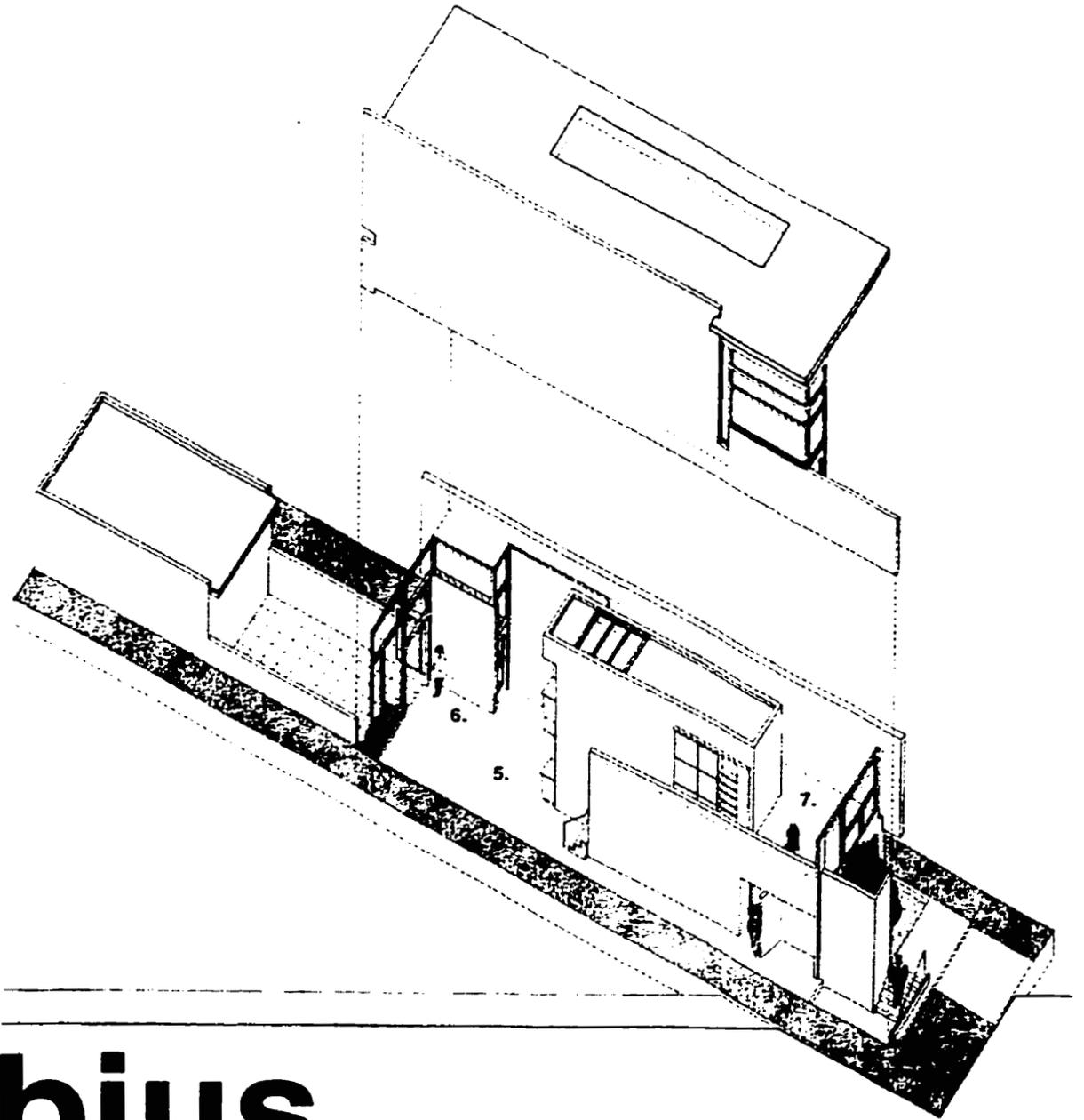
premise

no. 3

Studio house with one big space. Sleeping platform hovers up high. Lower arena to live and work.

1. bathe
2. dress
3. work
4. cook
5. eat
6. lounge
7. sleep





mobius

HOME COLLECTION

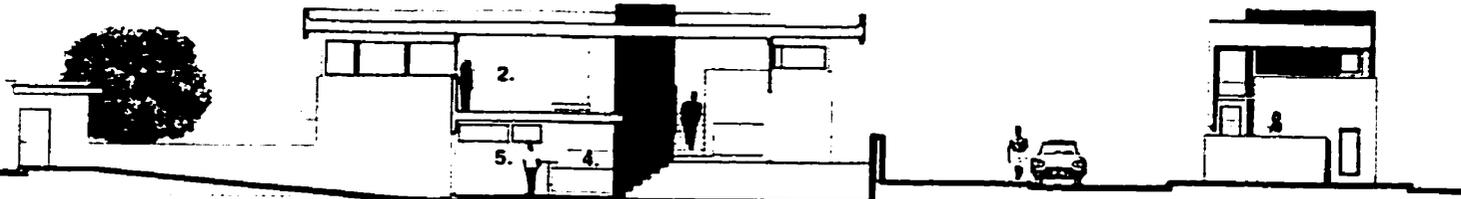


premise
no.3

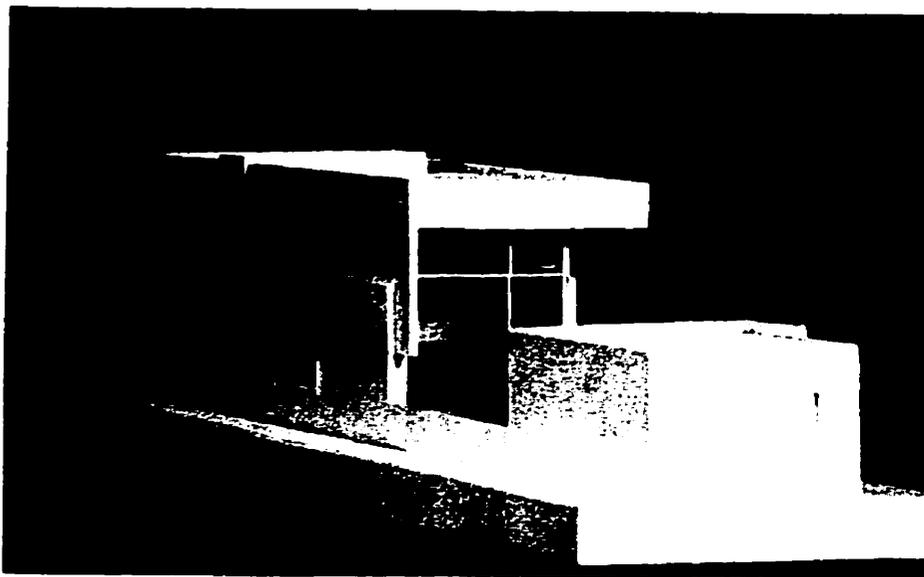


4.

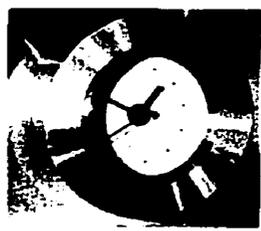




for
play



2.



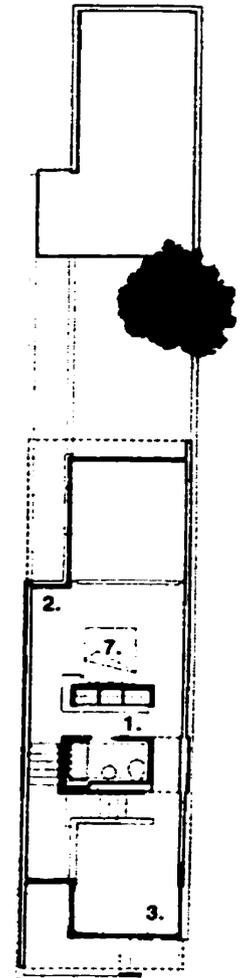
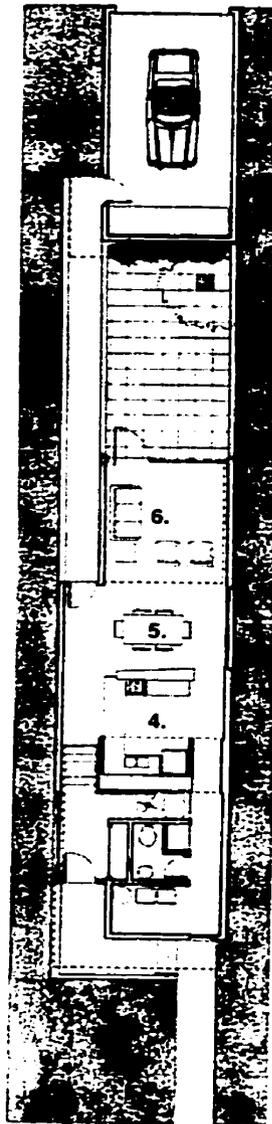
5.

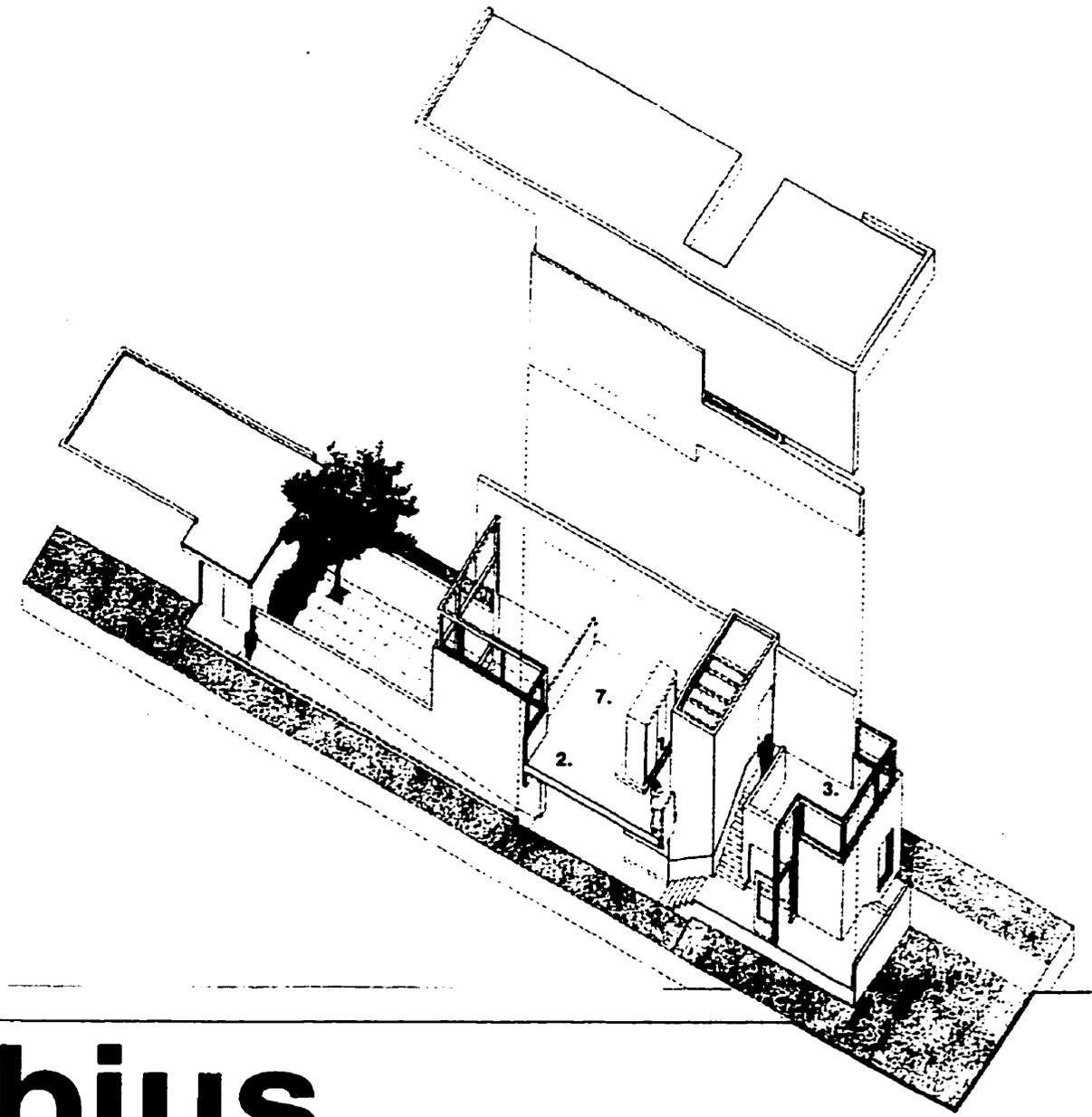
premise

no. 4

Loft house with interlocking walls. Very tall living space opens to terrace. Study in front watches the street.

1. **dress**
2. **look**
3. **study**
4. **cook**
5. **dine**
6. **entertain**
7. **sleep**





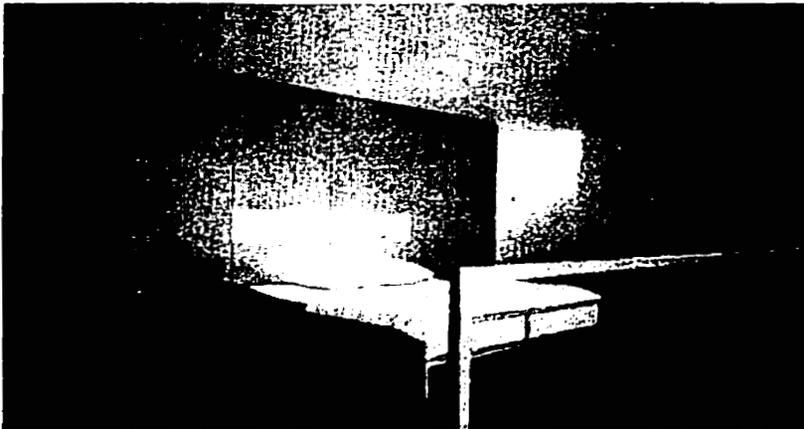
mobius

HOME COLLECTION

6.



premise
no.4



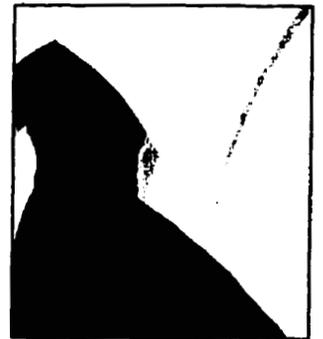
7.

SHOPPING

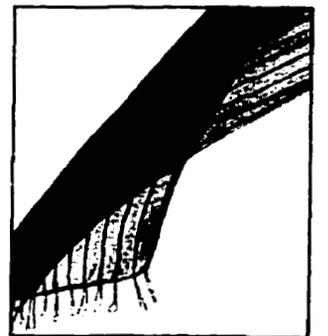
directory

far left: Very tight black jacket with lycra shirt and pants. Finished with shimmering tie. All by Gucci.

photo: Arena no.8, 1997



cover: Textured white shirt with velvety tie.



p 4: Irradescent scarf with neat line embroidery. Both by Emporio Armani.

photos: Emporio Armani, Multiplicity, no. 18, 1998.



p 8: Matinique
summer 1998
runway highlights.
Men's collection.

photos: Matinique
catalogue, summer 1998.



p 10: Cotton ba-
sics in black and
white. Layered
looks for men and
women. All from
cK by Calvin Klein.

photo: Arena, no. 8, 1997.



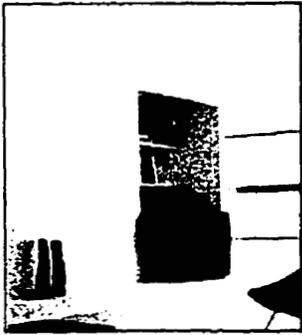
p 12: Black and
white dress worn
by Catherine
Deneuve in *Belle
de Jour*, 1967.
Available from
Yves Saint Laurent
vintage collection.

photo: W, April 1998.



p 13: Short 3 but-
ton topcoat. Wind
cheater with zipper
and fitted trousers.
All by Emporio
Armani.

photo: Emporio Armani,
Multiplicity, no. 18, 1998.



below and pp 38 and 40 - 43: Model for premise no. 1 wears Calvin Klein. House available exclusively from the Mobius Home Collection. Details on next page.

photos: all montaged by author from Wallpaper, no. 7, 1997.

p 42: Study with bright windows. Built in storage module for books and collectables. Available from the Mobius Home Collection.

photo: montage by author from Wallpaper, no. 7, 1997.





mobius HOME COLLECTION

premise no. 1

1250 square foot house with landscaped terrace and garden

1. entry
2. study/ guest room/ studio
3. dining
4. kitchen
5. living
6. master bedroom
7. ensuite
8. powder room
9. walk in closet
10. mechanical
11. laundry
12. terrace
13. garden
14. garage
15. walk way from garage

Wood frame construction with stucco clad exterior, painted drywall interior. Custom, wood trim windows. Concrete pavers for the terrace. Minimum lot size required is 25' x 120'. Construction time will vary.



p 14: Leather mule with geometric heel and square toe. Available from Prada.

photo: W, April 1998.



p 15: Very tailored blazer with metallic fasteners. Worn over the skin. From Giorgio Armani Collection.

photo: W, April 1998.



p 18: Floral print velvet shirt-jacket over straight pin-stripe trousers. Exclusively at Emporio Armani.

photo: Emporio Armani, Multiplicity, no. 18, 1998.



p 19: beige trousers with no zipper. Black slip on with lean profile. All by Prada.

photo: Wallpaper, no. 10, 1998.



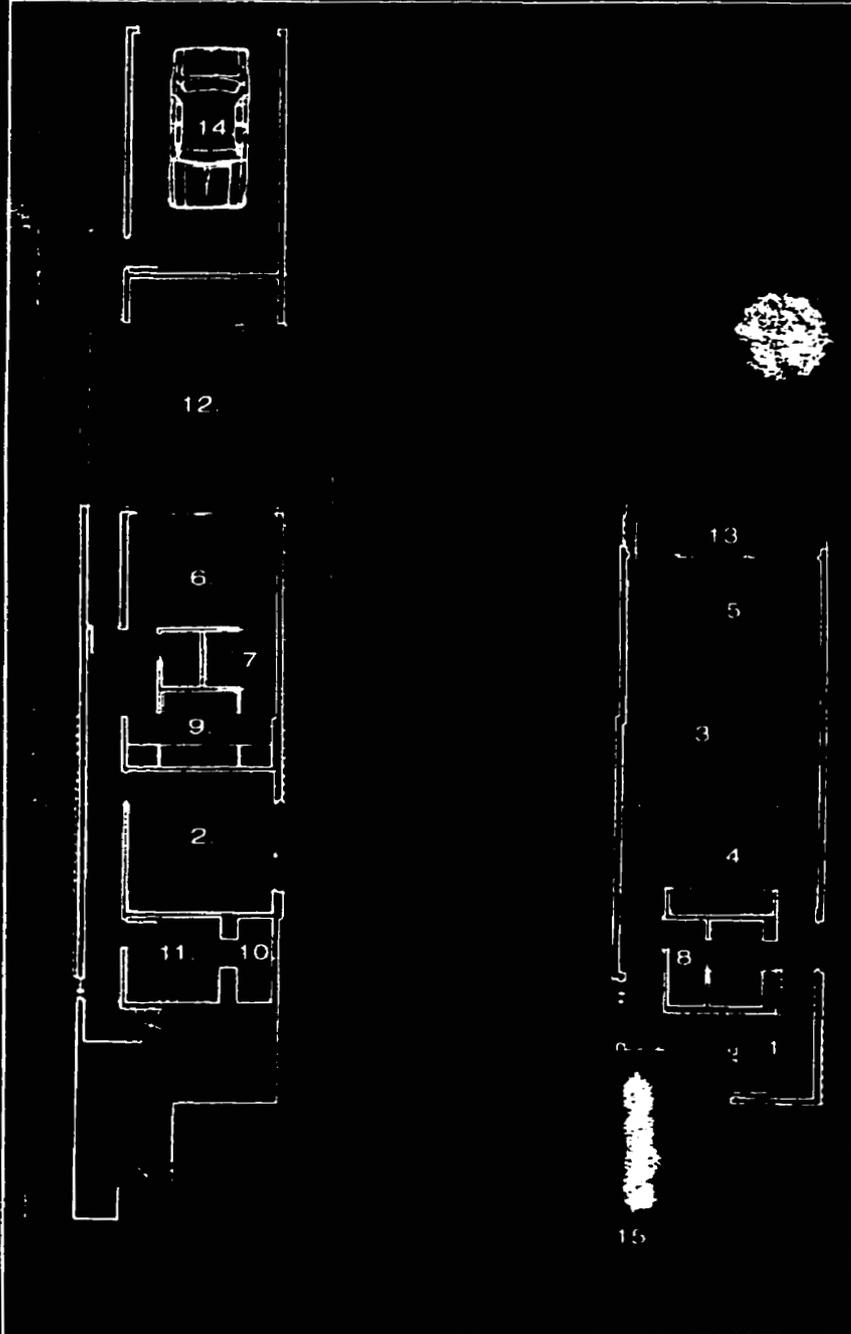
p 46: Freestanding
sinks with mirror
backs. Springing
chrome faucets.
Available from the
Mobius Home
Collection.

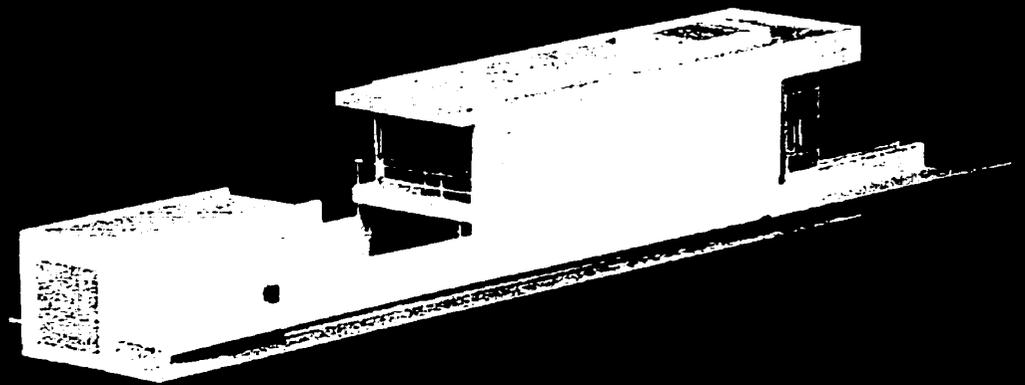
photo: montage by author
from Wallpaper, no. 10,
1998.



above and pp 38 and 44- 47:
Models for premise no. 2;
she wears Istante; he wears
Gucci. House exclusively from
the Mobius Home Collection.
Details on next page.

photos: all montaged by author from
Wallpaper, no. 10, 1998.





mobius HOME COLLECTION

premise no. 2

1350 square foot house with landscaped courtyard and deck

1. entry
2. study/ guest room/ studio
3. dining
4. kitchen
5. living
6. master bedroom
7. ensuite
8. powder room
9. walk in closet
10. mechanical
11. laundry
12. terrace
13. deck
14. garage
15. garden

Wood frame construction with stucco clad exterior, painted drywall interior. Custom, wood trim windows. Concrete pavers for the terrace. Minimum lot size required is 25' x 120'. Construction time will vary.



p 24: Essential black bag with single snap and hidden pockets. Available exclusively from Emporio Armani Accessories.

photo: Emporio Armani, Multiplicity, no. 18, 1998.



p 27: Men's cotton briefs with embroidered insignia. Flat iron shirt with crisp collar and cuffs. Both by Versace Men's Couture.

photo: Vanity Fair: March, 1998.



p 28: Three hole loafer in smooth buck. Double stitched sole. By Kenneth Cole.

photo: Arena, no. 8, 1997.



p 29: Loose fit wool suit over high stretch turtle neck. All By Kenneth Cole.

photo: Arena, no. 8, 1997.



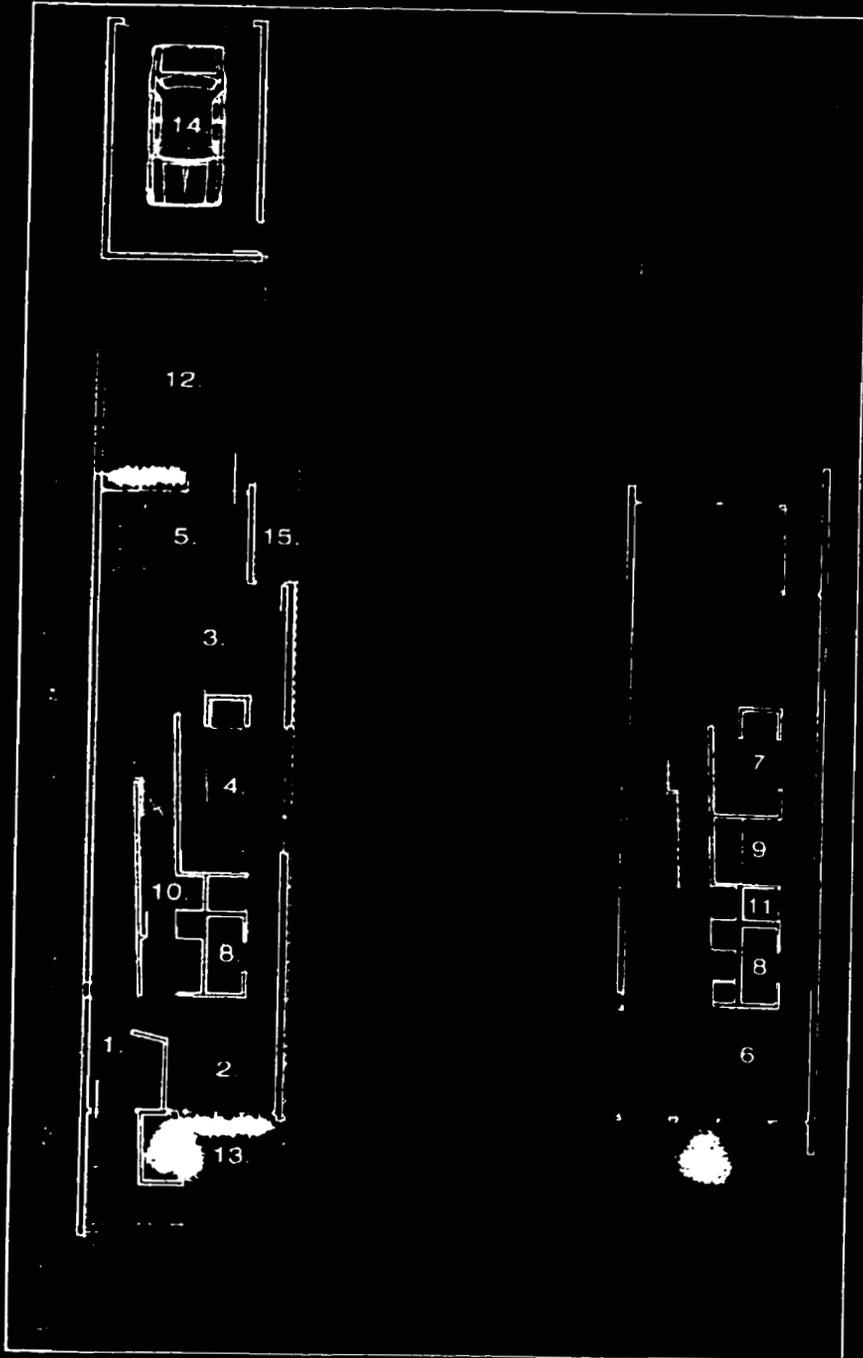
p 51: Snug kitchen with stainless steel countertop. Assymetrical cupboard pattern, brushed chrome pulls. Only from the Mobius Home Collection.

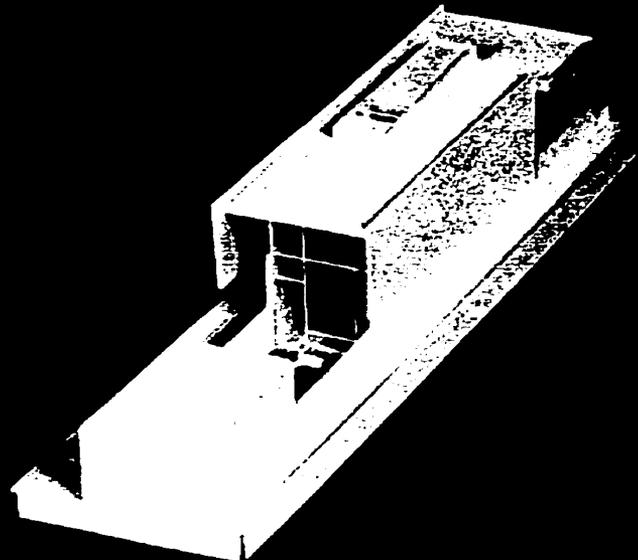
photo: montage by author from Wallpaper, no. 9, 1998.



above and pp 38 and 48 - 51: Model for premise no. 3 wears Jil Sander. House exclusively from Mobius Home Collection. Details next page.

photos: all montaged by author from Wallpaper, no. 9, 1998.





mobius HOME COLLECTION

premise no. 3

1200 square foot house with landscaped terrace and garden

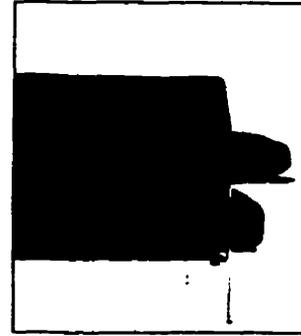
1. entry
2. study/ guest room/ studio
3. dining
4. kitchen
5. living
6. master bedroom
7. ensuite
8. powder room
9. walk in closet
10. mechanical
11. laundry
12. terrace
13. garden
14. garage
15. walk way from garage

Wood frame construction with stucco clad exterior, painted drywall interior. Custom, wood trim windows. Concrete pavers for the terrace. Minimum lot size required is 25' x 120'. Construction time will vary.



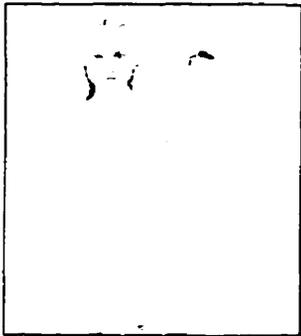
p 31: Tight fitting, shimmery jacket with slim pants. Transparent shirt with visible seams. All by Jigsaw.

photo: Arena, no. 8, 1997.



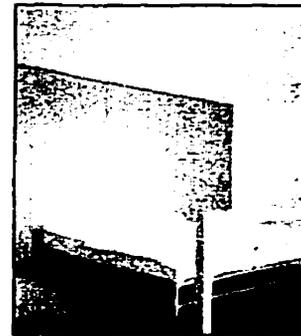
p 34: Black linen sofa with brushed chrome stick legs. Available from the Mobius Home Collection.

photo: montage by author from Wallpaper, no. 10, 1998.



p 35: (M) White hot shirt and pants by Hugo Boss. (W) Strapped nylon skirt and top by Prada.

photo: Wallpaper, no. 9, 1998.



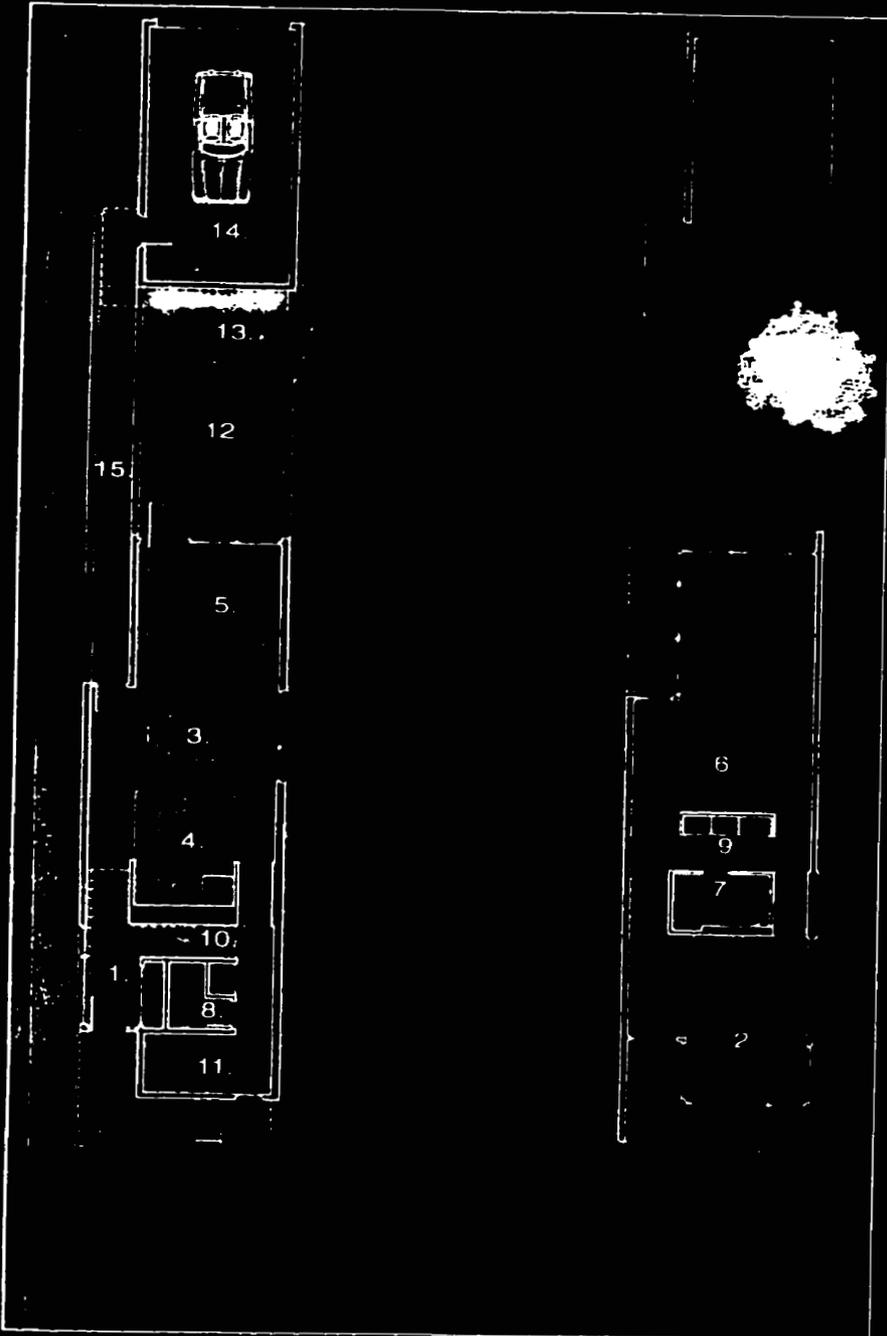
p 55: Loft bedroom with headboard storage module. Available from the Mobius Home Collection.

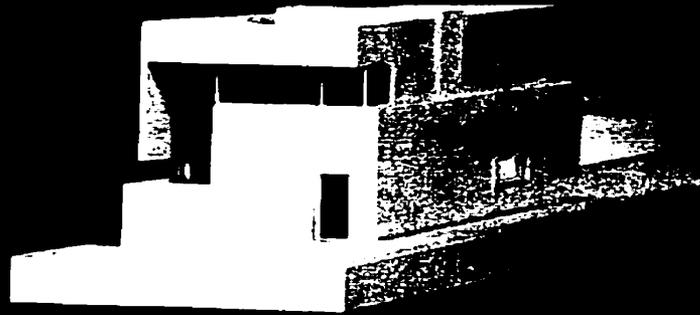
photo: montage by author from A & U, no. 326, 1997.

below and pp 39 and 52 - 55: Model for
premise no. 4 wears Alberta Ferretti. House
exclusively from Mobius Home Collection.
Details on next page.

photos: all montaged by author from Wallpaper, no. 9, 1998 and no.
7, 1997.







mobius HOME COLLECTION

premise no. 4

1170 square foot house with loft and landscaped terrace

1. entry
2. study/ guest room/ studio
3. dining
4. kitchen
5. living
6. master bedroom
7. ensuite
8. powder room
9. closet/ dressing area
10. mechanical
11. laundry
12. terrace
13. garden
14. garage
15. ramp from garage

Wood frame construction with stucco clad exterior, painted drywall interior. Custom, wood trim windows. Concrete pavers for the terrace. Minimum lot size required is 25' x 120'. Construction time will vary.