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## Abstract

### *Dissection to Dissolution:*

A contemporary dance facility and clinic for Calgary - this project explores various themes bound in existential thought; more precisely it examines the notion of the living present which can often be exemplified through movement. By revealing the various processes found in dance as an art form, the potential to crossover into other disciplines exists: as conceptual ideas from dance manifest themselves into the role of architecture.

### the essence of perception:

the transcendental body bound to light and air

Motion is a founding element of human art. It is primal and seeks expression through the body, through movement that gestures towards an embodiment of meaning. Dance is lived expression that has its ephemeral presence within the immediate, that propels us forward, a falling in the universal body. As the construction of any art fuses its medium with aesthetic intent and intuition, so it is that through the act of dancing itself intention will be realised. The body is the essential being caught in the immediate realisation of the event; an aesthetic that unravels within a temporal time-space relationship, denoting literal or figural translations through its gestalts. Grounding the fundamentals of dance is the notion of 'being in the world', a philosophy that seeks the creative impulse as a presence that sculpts a space, a clearing, amidst sense and non-sense.

*Dance is human expression, it is the presentation of the real and the unreal. -Heidegger-*

Existential thought is the hybrid result of existentialism, a theory of conduct integrated with a theory of knowledge and meaning. Existentialism helps to explain what grounds dance as an art aesthetic which fuses existential phenomenology, the body, and the transcending dimensions of art. Existentialists subscribe to a systematic theory which can be referenced in light of phenomenology, providing a means "towards overcoming dualistic concepts of dance, which regard the body as an instrument, movement as the medium, and mind or soul as the mover or motivational source of dance." The lived-body concept attempts to dissolve the object-subject split, "recognising a dialectical and lived dualism but not of body and mind." The union of body and mind resists the Cartesian view of the body as only a mechanistic organism and inferior to the intellect. This thesis argues that dance is an art aesthetic which implies a whole being centred not as a system of isolation but

*...in reality, [to where] the whole self is shaped in the experience of dance, since the body is besouled, bespirited, and beminded. Soul, spirit, and mind, are not separate what we term physical, rather they are intrinsically tied up with it.*

The whole self is the implicit foundation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception. Merleau-Ponty maintains that "our will becomes the form of our body", transcending dualistic concepts of object and subject. Merging the disciplines of psychology, physiology, and philosophy, Merleau-

Ponty resurrects the ontological understanding of being in the world. He posits a classification of the body as being privileged because its position is never disengaged from one's objectivity. The body is the culmination of one's senses; it is not detached from the intrinsic organisation of what constitutes 'me', but simply "remains marginal to all my perceptions that are with me."

*...the body is the schema of my world that it is the source of an abstract movement or projection which carves out within that plenum of the world in which concrete movement takes place a zone of reflection and subjectivity: it superimposes upon physical space a potential or a human space.*

The phenomenal body thus can be regarded as creating a 'human space' out of initial gesturing, extending the centre of one's self to receive within it a site of ideas. The phenomenal body is defined as the matrix of human existence, it is the centre around which the world is given its correlate of activities. The perception here is that the world invites inhabitation, and it is perceived as deeply as you and I perceive it, "and yet its being is never exhausted of the view I have of it."

'therefore physiology cannot be conceptualized without psychology'

To look at something completely is to perceive it as the 'whole' of what its behavioural structure is, for the scrutiny of form "is not a question of real structural compositions", but a perception. Comprehending form as not "an element in the world, but a limit toward which biophysical and psychobiological structures tend", appears somewhat dogmatic. The notion of limit here tends to posit an idea of constraint within bounds, a prohibition of movement, frozen growth-potential. Heidegger sheds light on the synthesis of limits through his description of space in which something is cleared and free, yet within a boundary:

*A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that at which something begins its essential unfolding.*

The essential unfolding begins in symbolic behaviour. Merleau-Ponty classifies this unfolding on a type of continuum where the limits are defined from low to high and present in all animal and human behaviour:

- i. syncretic forms: the responses of the organism are so to speak total for a specific situation rather than drawn from a variable repertoire which would involve the use of signals not determined by the organism's instinctual equipment.
- ii. amovable forms: found in higher animal behaviour, where

reactions are structured in accordance with the perception of time-space relationships. Involves responses as a relation between relation.

iii. symbolic behaviour: [essentially human] unfolds through structures or gestures which are purely internal dimensions of consciousness, foreign to the world. The analysis and integration of the structures behaviour avoids the dualism of objectivism and subjectivism through a conceptualisation of the body organism as a mode of being in the world through its openness to the solicitation to the world.

'Symbolic behaviour' exists as a composition created from a space-time and means-end relation. Dance operates at this level: existing as more than movement, it refers to a range denoting literal meanings or taking us beyond movement through poetic metaphors in dance. To clearly illustrate 'symbolic behaviour' it is helpful to look at what comprises the physiology of a simple dance movement.

Relearning movement requires one to redirect a movement sequence with initiation primarily in mind as that 'intention' directs the sequence correctly or infuses it with postural

inaccuracies. The goal then is to acknowledge that muscular action does not occur in isolation but involves several groups, and to find the correct initiation which will impart the desired chain



of actions. A simple illustration is the action of moving the position of an arm. The arm can be lifted through the scapula. The result, however, is not the full extension of the arm in space. The motion is unable to correct itself in the midst of action even if a conscious decision is made to do so. To execute the movement most effectively, the initiation should occur from the core of the body and emanate through and out of the fingertips, "the scapula will then smoothly and automatically undergo the upward rotation necessary for the full completion of the movement." In dance science, an incorporation of spatial direction is the necessary factor which facilitates a correct execution of the desired movement and visualisation techniques in refining sensorimotor learning.

Integrating mind and motion in this illustration seems compatible with Merleau-Ponty's analysis of how physiology is intertwined with phenomenal givens. Exemplifying this with the simple exercise of putting on a coat, dependent upon both proprioceptive and exteroceptive stimuli;

*thus the apparent position of my coat and its virtual variations involved in the course of putting it on must be a function of my body schema.... The structure involved in putting on my coat involves the integration of two distinct constitutive layers, the physiologic process of grasping concrete space in the visual field, and the normal perceptual behaviour which integrates concrete space with virtual space.*

Integrating biology, psychology, physiology, and philosophy reflects the wholeness of being in the world, and, through the body, intuition grounds itself to have intent soon realised as "the world, in as much as it harbours living things, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at the place where behaviour appears."



### the phenomenal body:

being held out into the nothing

*The reality of dance is in its corporeality - its lived concreteness.*

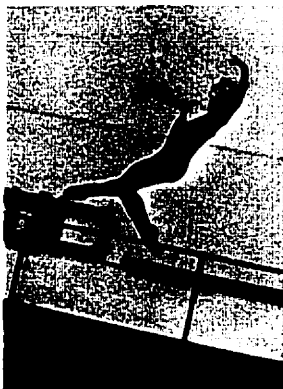
It is the body that creates a sense of the real through the intangible workings of the mind, intuition, and imagination.

Heidegger speaks of one's being as dwelling - the way we are on the earth and how we inhabit it. To inhabit, to inscribe one's self within space, has affiliations with the idea of building - from the essence of what exists, implanting, regenerating, and rejuvenating what already is. The word 'bauen' reaches into the spirit of dwelling:

*The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on earth, is bauen, dwelling.....bauen, also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil.*

As we inscribe a place for ourselves on the earth, we work towards that place, 'preserving and caring for it' building upon the foundation of what already exists. We work and preserve in pursuit of ourselves, Heidegger defines 'being' as the unified presence of the fourfold of the earth, sky, divinities, and mortals within things. A dancer enlightens her self through her movements, which are a collaboration of her mind and body. This is her art which she strives to perfect; it is not instinctual nor is it accidental; it is the ongoing pursuit of development, of building. A dancer learns in the form of neoteny that is constantly merging with the past, of what she knows prior to the present. It is a "sense of dwelling [which] is dependent on the original building which is poetry."

Dwelling is not primarily inhabiting but taking care of [schoen] and creating that space within which something comes into its own and flourishes. Dwelling is primarily saving [retten], in the older sense of setting something free to become itself, what it essentially is.



The nature of dance thus begins with an anchoring, a grounding that in essence is the construction and perpetual cultivation of the human being. Dance is the purest art form, for it nurtures the most basic material of a human

being. Dance is a sign for life, its breath and pulsations fluidly transcending a skin- deep beauty, its embodiment filled with meaning derived from life. As dance engages in the metaphysics of doing, it lives in the present-centred moment, closest to dwelling in that the spirit of dance touches the fourfold and is complete in this sense. The dancer need not strive for a fifth, as the fourfold is complete.

in light of presence; presensing

the working body from 'visibility to invisibility'

*Essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible - a painting mixes up all of our categories, in laying out its oneiric universe of carnal essences, of effective likenesses, of mute meanings.*

The foundation of art requires the execution of skill for meaning to be realised. It is practice, the daily ritual of habit, of exploration, that witnesses the growth of an artist. Dance often has connotations of freedom. A notion that has embedded itself into modern culture is that to dance is to be liberated. As Baudelaire aims to have the painter put forth his soul and sensibility into the context of the immediate, the 20th century, in quest of expressing futurism, vorticism, and constructivism, sees the dance figure as a symbol of the search for serenity. Dance explores the naturalness of motion, a lightness bound by no constraint, the primitive and the exotic as depicted by Mondrian and other *Destijl* artists. Literature also underlines the essence of dance to emancipate ideas of freedom as when Derrida quotes Nietzsche's proposal "that the writer learn to dance with a pen." Perhaps this proposal was an attempt to challenge the frenetic schedule of modern life by illustrating that to dance is for acts to come naturally. Janet Wolff, in her essay "Feminism, Theory, and Choreography," feels it is too easy to regard dance as only instinctual, proving too problematic when used as "a particular trope [which] depends on a mistaken idea of dance as intuitive, non-verbal, 'natural,' and that it risks abandoning critical analysis for a vague and ill conceived 'politics of the body.'" This opinion is crucial to understanding that dance in fact is learned and not natural. Countless dance types exhibiting differing characteristics are united through "language and the intellect [which] is already implicated and inscribed" within the bodies of the dancers."

A dancer learns through fall and recovery, a pendulum of motion anchoring itself through a ground of knowledge acquired by learning about the fundamentals of the body. Grounding has connotations to the earth: antaeon in concept, it references the classical Libyan giant, Antaeus, whose strength was derived from and continually renewed by contact with his mother, the earth. To 'fall' is to throw one's self into the unknown while 'recovery' incurs a sense of stillness, an equilibrium sought to equalise and recreate composure. This drama lies at the basis of the Doris Humphrey technique: based on the Nietzschean philosophy of form and expressiveness, it evolves from the fall of Apollonian balance into the splendour of Dionysian ecstasy, the flight

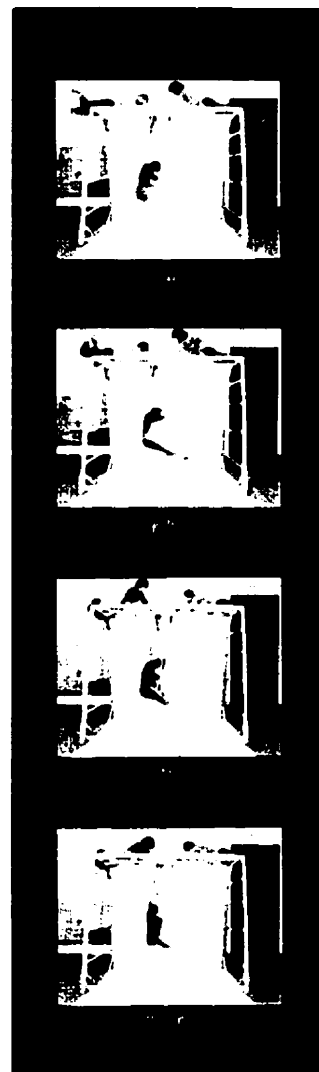
towards imminent vertigo where "man experiences the intoxication of abandon." This structure of dynamic oppositions follows the order of the universal laws of nature where man succumbs to gravity's pull and, falling, he then seeks a balance. This pursuit of abandon is a stepping into the unknown where the body in its physiologic and psychologic make-up intertwine to move forward and beyond. Accomplishing such feats, the dancer first learns how motion is a neurological function of the body, a complex merging of mind and movement towards the desired aesthetic.

*To dance well, technical mastery of the body is the first prerequisite.-Doris Humphrey-*

The dancer's first body is the working body; pragmatic, its aim is to utilise what has been learned and to implant skilful action into the dancing. As an art aesthetic it is the sensational mix of "subjective content, in that it is of our sentient selves, and that it has objective structure, a discernible form", and "when [executing] with clarity and precision, this dancing body is somewhat enlightened." This enlightening or clearing is sought through mindful skill and technical appreciation of the art. Heidegger theorises about what the real is within a piece of art, and how one is to discern between the real of the art and the essence of it:

*The Being comes into the steadiness of its shining. The essence of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work.....*

The essence of art is found through execution, working and reworking. As though it were a pliable substance, the piece evolves and grows through the attention and cultivation it is given. This process of evolution stems from the idea of making: an example of this process is Cezanne's resistance to the purely romantic style in his painting. Edgar Allen Poe also "attempted to make his poetry purely architectonic," insisting on the idea of making rather than just allowing art to become. It was Paul Valery who "realised that the awareness of the mystical process of poetry, poesis, leads to the speculation of techne in a broad sense." A dancer works through her body, demanding technical perfec-



tion, training or 'making' the whole of the body so that the external envelope is not derived but sympathetic to what is within. Grounding, then, can be said to be the foundation as it is inscribed in the body through an ongoing rehearsal, a daily regime that is taken up freely and inspires joy simply in the work of it. Martha Graham's piece 'Acts of Light' strives for this sense of delight for the work done, in and of itself, irrespective of the outcome:

*The metaphysical potential in work freely undertaken is revealed - celebrated, spinal breathings....It gradually gathers a bursting strength and joy; unfolding an eloquent movement vocabulary; the result of years of dedicated work. - Martha Graham -*

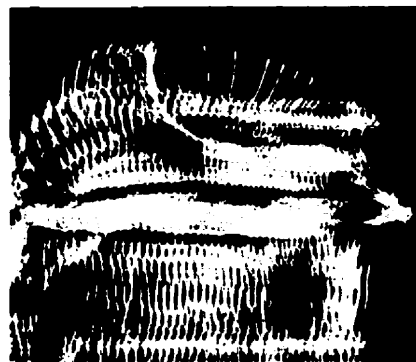
## dissection to dissolution

*I always warmed up early, long before class officially began. The studio itself did not matter....because the real terrain I occupied was my body. I wanted to be in total control of it. for that much of it is dancing: a lifelong commitment to the discipline of the body.*

The discipline of the dancer's body is augmented through analysis, a fragmenting, a dissecting of anatomical parts through its isolated workings. The body as a mechanism, an instrument through consistent refinement, promises a dancer the ecstasy and abandonment of a body in flight. The mid -point of fall and recovery harbours suspension: in terms of physics, energy has reached "the point of zero because there is no oscillation; in terms of dance experience, the body is poised triumphantly [in] mid-air, having successfully recovered from the perils of falling." Suspension is the force inherent in dance, the momentary negation of gravity as the body effortlessly sculpts the air. The idea here is that for a dancer to experience the point of freefall, precise analysis is imminent, a dissection which merges seamlessly into pure dissolution. Italo Calvino further clarifies this in his essay "Exactness", in which he argues for the legitimacy of form, structure, and clarity, which he sees as lost in the essence of the English language. He takes Giacomo Leopardi, a poet who found beauty in the vague, shielding his words with a translucency only in hopes of sharing a more pristine world:

*so this is what Leopardi asks of us, that we may savour the beauty of the vague and the indefinite...although, what he requires is a highly exact and meticulous composition of each image, to the minute definition of objects, to the lighting and the atmosphere, all in order to attain the desired degree of vagueness...therefore, Leopardi, whom I have chosen as the ideal opponent of my argument in favour of exactitude, turns out to be a decisive witness in his favour...the poet of vagueness can only be the poet of exactitude.*

Therefore  
exactness finds  
its way to the  
beautiful and  
the vague.  
Exactness in  
the realm of  
dance is  
precision and



clarity so refined that even slight varying gradations of technique are visible. It is this vocabulary of movement that enables a

dancer to let go of analysis and allow the intentional motion, which primarily required concentration and effort, to be free in the sheer dancing of it. This spontaneity - this immediate context - is splendour, for "it does not represent the mind with an occasion to rethink the constitutive relation of things; because rather, it offers to our sight, so that it might join with them, the traces of vision, and because it offers its tapestries, the imaginary texture of the real."

## in the Fall: the acceptance of the falling body

*there are two principles in dance, that of fall and recovery, movement is an arc of life stretched between two deaths, the vertical and the horizontal, movement is exactly what the curve describes; this curve is the trajectory which inscribes itself in temporal time and space. - Doris Humphrey -*

The beauty of the vague finds itself in the dance expressions of fall and recovery; an exactness in temporal trajectory. Dance as an essence of life. Through breath and movement dance creates a poetic presentation, a symbol of living. Temporal only within the bounds of the theatre, the rehearsal space, and the dance, the dancer signifies an infinite energy that resumes beyond. Man's authenticity, or proof of being in the world, is realised through motion, a ceaseless momentum that takes the vertical body through space. This natural motion is as pure and basic as walking; built on raising the foot backwards then forwards, the movement displaces the body's weight, carrying it through space. This displacement of weight is the focus of dance, and the counterpoints of fall and recovery are the fundamentals of everyday human experience that accept and resist the natural forces of gravity. The effort of falling, a succumbing to the earth's gravitational pull, is equalised in a sudden necessity for balance. The dancer, rooted in the earth, spine vertically soaring up towards the heavens, is centred and restores equilibrium. The tension - this energy flow- arises between these two principles and supplies a theoretical and practical delineation of modern dance based on man's everyday movement.

*Fall: From the static point of poised equilibrium the body begins to fall, slowly at first, and then with accelerating speed as it succumbs to gravitational pull. The direction may be forward, backward, spiral, or sideways. In the progress of falling the breath is gradually expelled.*

*Rebound: When collapse is imminent, a self-protective mechanism goes into action, and a counter movement takes place in which the body springs back as if with renewed life. This rebound, which is similar in motion to that of a ball bouncing upward or outward, forms a hard surface, is rapid at first, decelerating as it rises. At the moment of rebound, the breath is inhaled sharply; as the body begins to recover equilibrium, the breath fills the lungs.*

The interval between fall and rebound is the suspension that bridges the vertical and the horizontal, a phenomenon that seizes hold within the two planes, the in-between that abandons any static relation with ground or air. The interaction is dynamic, unknown; the diagonal between fall and rebound is a body in flight, an essence that binds itself with the air,



accepting gravity as the body spirals down. As the vertical axis of the body registers with the ground a new sensation is felt, a stillness in motion equally charged as the feet anchor the frame onto the horizontal platform. The freefall gives a clairvoyant perception, clearing a passage in which the dancer inscribes stories in space, sculpting air as if it were an opaque plane. The living present is recorded in chronoscopic time that holds no before, after, or during.

In Gravitational Space Paul Virillo speaks of dance and falling in terms of vertigo as an attraction which throws the body into the unknown, a falling or dizziness frequently sought through an ingestion of narcotics. But here in dance the intoxication is founded through a "gravity drug": pushing the limits, establishing how far one can fall without negating the interrelation between the body's weight and the natural forces of gravity. This is the true endeavour of the living present, catching the essence of life in a few potent moments:

*if perspective is linked to weight, then there is a moment where it can be experienced absolutely; and that is the "chute a vue", because there is the measure of falling weight that leads the rational man to decide. So the vision he has is directly connected to perspective, because it is linked to the vanishing lines - let me recall that vertigo is the effect of those receding lines - and at the same time it is linked to weight; it is the pure state of perspective. The true perspective is the perspective of the chuter a vue*

In the midst of falling, the lived present lies outside the realm of the ordinary, surfacing intermittently in an explosive jump or leap that is sustained long enough for the movement to be registered by both the dancer and viewer. Nothing exists outside this system of movements. This fleeting moment is perhaps the true perspective of life, barely catching a glimpse of the invisible where virtuosic acts appear in an instance through a flow of weight into space.

## the aesthetics of appearance and disappearance

*What makes up the transaction of danced movement is the exchange between the supporting leg and the free leg; the way in which the supporting leg loses its balance is what will be noted down. The quality of this loss of support is therefore what founds dance...*

Losing support, falling, exploring different undulations in man's kinesphere as the body plunges downward through space, a dancer configures and manipulates her physicality as the movement changes from a *grounded* nature, rejoicing in the weight of the body, to an accelerated pace that races through the air, exulting in its *ungroundedness*. The changes in weight are dynamic but a body's weight has often not been accepted in dance. Traditional ballet sought to express the body as a pristine

figure, light, elegant, a spirit that promised the illusion of a body in total defiance of gravity. During the French renaissance in Louis xiv's reign, the courtly ballet of the early 17th century presented and saw dance through only planimetric representation - that is, an aesthetic which aspired only to the pattern of movements across the floor.

The traditional ballet resembles a mechanical construct, focusing on only the pure technique of the dancer's anatomical positioning: the movements blur the essence of the whole being. Its ideal is a *supernatural lightness*, conveyed through movements that act like signs to depict this unnatural expression. The ballet dancer learns to conquer her own body, her thin physique attempting basic positions of stance where the feet are turned out, unnaturally as compared with the parallel alignment of the modern dancer, in exercises concentrated in only the lower limbs. Thus all traditional ballet movement is concentrated in the lower body, with the objectives of achieving enough strength to dance *sur la pointes*, registering a body that in lightness aspires to almost no contact with the ground plane. The ballet dancer's torso is limited by the ideal of a straight posture and a few regimented positions of the arms, leaving the upper body static, in contrast to the light, quick gestures of the mechanical feet.

This is a dance of *appearance* where the theatre expressions are most notably narratives portraying the light delicate female



dancer in a pas de deux, where the strength of the male is revealed in his grand acrobatic gestures. Even the placement of the ballet is center stage, a focus on one or two principal dancers while the others forming the *corps de ballet* are lost in a regimented unison of movement.

Perhaps lightness can be explored from a different perspective: not through an aesthetic that promises a fantastical, frivolous flight but exploring what we are as human beings through a pursuit of gravitation and levitation, a lightness of thought that bears witness to "a reaction to the weight of living." Italo Calvino appreciates the sentiments of lightness when referenced in terms of the weight we bear. Calvino explains how in the work of the poet Cavalcanti:

*.....a theme by no means light, such as the sufferings of love, is dissolved into palpable entities that move between the sensitive soul and the intellectual soul, between heart and mind, between eyes and voice....In Cavalcanti the weight of matter is dissolved because the materials of the human simulacrum can be many, all interchangeable.*

As the traditional ballet strives for the ideal portrayal of light through appearance, it masks the inherent qualities of what creates the whole person. Contemporary dance revolutionises traditional dance by moving past the *transparent* desires of the ballet towards a *translucency*, another type of lightness which

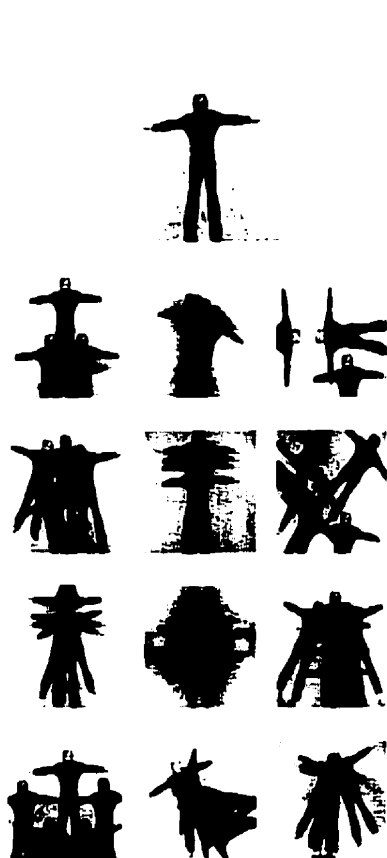
reveals the layering of human affections. Contemporary dance incorporates gestures as simple as breaking away from the traditional bounds of the theatre, offering not a single focal point, but ensembles where the dancers fill the entire stage. This lightness, of sorts, offers viewers a multi-dimensional

experience. Merce Cunningham employs this notion, in that his company strives to portray or represent the human body moving through space. His movement evolves through particular activities and thus dances are created in light of the proportions of the activity itself. Cunningham's choreography essentially is a work in progress that indulges in "a process of watching and working with people who use movement as a force of life."

Movement as a force of life characterises and encapsulates our *falling* into the sensations of the universal body. As the dancer or choreographer creates movement through this awareness, it is in *light of* intuition. The intent remains within the circle of the dance but the intuition begins the movement, linking itself to the imagination that envisions the potential of the body. Twyla Tharp's choreography is an extrapolation of a lightness that transcends the ordinary through using the ordinary:

*We began exploring movement to learn ways of building harmonic movement possibilities. We inverted phrases, turning movements upside down, flexing instead of extending the feet, changing circular motions from en dedans to en dehors, rotating parallel positions out and vice versa. The permutations were endless.... We learned to retrograde movements, running them backward, like film images in reverse.... I shunned unison movement - why subject these wonderfully unique minds to an abstract standard of uniformity?*

Transcending the boundaries of the everyday - bending, falling and merging with the rich potential that lies between the normative planes of up and down - intuition finds the diagonal where felt sensations are explored. Dance is founded through this kind of intuition, an act of *light* where the urge to move forward is grasped through the act of dancing itself, that which possesses reality. The basic intellectual act of intuition is "so close to mystical experience that it really closes philosophical analysis; it is simply a sudden *illumination*, infallible knowledge, rare..."



## the aesthetic body of disappearance

*Day and night I try, in my studio with its six two thousand watt suns, balancing between the extremes of the impossible, to shake loose the real from the unreal, to give visions body, to penetrate into unknown transparencies.*

Just as traditional dance is a dance of appearance, contemporary dance today is faithful to the aesthetics of *disappearance*. The pliancy of the body can change through figure to fragment, differing in scale and proportion, amalgamating physique and spirit. A dancer blends these forms, it seems, with no effort at all. These merging forms create sensational shapes, embodying one's thoughts which provoke certain perceptions. It is as if the body in dance at times removes itself from corporeal restraints and merges with the realm of the unreal. Transcending analysis, intuition works through the *weight* of images: seemingly *light*, they offer the dancer a method of possessing reality in the larger and more universal magnitude of this idea:

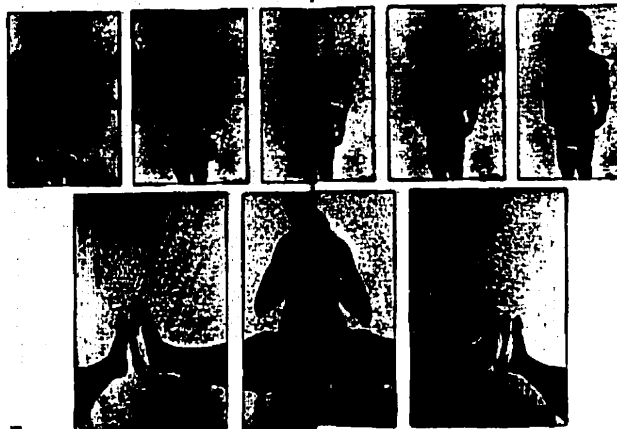
*Intuition is the act that possesses reality: An absolute can only be given in an intuition, while all the rest has to do with analysis.....through intuition the unique features of the world arise, through analysis objects reduce to their common elements.*

Dance then becomes a virtual world where expression is translated through actual movement and even surpasses it to reach the immaterial. These dynamic images or bodily metaphors are created by the dancer through her movement, bringing the metaphysical into the physical body, melding feeling with form to produce sentiments felt by both dancer and audience. A dancer's work is translated in this manner. The unification of the physical and the metaphysical penetrates a spectrum coloured with affects that are each time realised in a different light. When dance attains to this level it acquires an interwoven sensibility that "is driven by not only actions, but also the passions, of the mind and the body. It is the rich synthesis of spontaneity and the affectivity that marks the continuity between the ontological principle of power and conatus."

This is the means by which the dancer communicates with the

audience, conveying the meaning of the work through dynamic images that make the virtual visible but not tangible. In her essay, *Speculations*, Susanne Langer writes of the human forces that dance presents to us, awakening the inner life, the fifth sense that within us probes and questions, evoking deep sentiments:

*Whirling and circling, gliding and skipping and balancing are such basic gestures that seem to spring from the deepest sources of feeling, the rhythms of physical life as such. Because they present no idea of things outside the organism, but only objectify vitality itself.*



This objectification of vitality is the source of emotive qualities in which lies the essence of life. It is a poetic expression of the real heightened to a supernatural level of ecstasy where visions are given to the dancing body. These visions are ephem-

eral yet weighty in meaning. As we move forward on our highly technologized planet, our expectations have begun to be founded in *things*, in matter as a replacement for thought:

*images... have a weight...the decline of the image is a decline of reality....In my opinion there is a tragedy of the visible in this misguided realism that we have been caught in for the last century...the visible is nothing, matter is everything. But what does that mean? That means that the image is not valid because it is not concrete, or in other words that you are valorizing a tactile image over a visual or auditory image....One sees that the image is weighty, that the image is a thing.*

Matter then should not replace thought but rather complement it. The art of dance points towards this line of thinking as it manifests itself through a constant fluctuation between the animate and the inanimate, interweaving the material body and its spirit. Essential is that the dancing body, as the universal body, encapsulate its vision and strength for the future, for that "which makes mankind human, the *ground* for humanness, lies in its *ungroundedness*."

## pliant bodies: architecture and dance

'it's in the quick'

*There exists a definable membrane through which meaning can move when translating from one discipline to another. What I mean by membrane is a thin, pliable layer that connects two things and is, in this case, the middle position [dance] + architecture....As a design tool the idea of translation is defined as a rendering of the same ideas in a different language from the original.*

Merce Cunningham's choreography deals with a sort of *vicissitude*. In architecture this assertion deals with a *fall into a precarious place*, "it has a quality of mutability in response to chance occurrences: these events are made possible by a collision of internal motivators and external forces which seem to be accidental." Parallel to the dance context, Deleuze explains this sense of change in reference to a smoothness that exists within a continuous variation, a *pliancy* that captures the complexity within its folds delineating a continual form. The fall into the unpredictable for Cunningham sits amidst the ordinary. His system of movement actually centres on a field of events, pliant in the fluidity of exchange between dancer and movement, space and time. The ideal is to simultaneously express precision and freedom, a technique which encourages dancers to learn to execute movement correctly but within their own style. It is movement that exists in a realm of endless possibilities where spatially there are "no fixed points in space" as all areas of the floor plane equally explore space and time. Cunningham's sense of time transcends its concept as dancers engage in movements of different rhythms, scattered across the stage, dancing not to the music's impulse but in rhythm with the body's weight changes. He infuses a system of chance occurrences into his choreography, a *random method* to explore the

varied order his sequences could go. He uses chance elements in his dance compositions, reflecting some of the unpredictability that life itself offers. Cunningham bases numerous dance pieces on the notion of

accidental happenings which forge forward in the moment, creating exhilarating and unforeseen structures of movement:

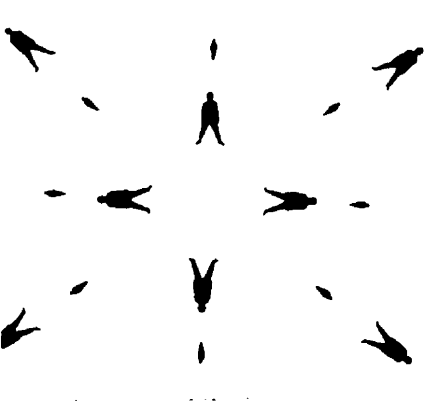
*In Merce's dances, abstraction and kinesthesia are expanded by the fragmentation of several vying foci, which he has been able to use as an esthetic coup...- a perceptually assimilative device that allows the eye to take in greater, more inclusive, and multiple ranges of overlapping details, and how the parts resonate or coalesce together on stage, or in the mind's eye. Cunningham uses fragmentation in reverse flow, to great advantage and catalytic effect, to expand the options of his movement manifold, as a kind of compositional microscope.*

Dance for Cunningham is colored with raw energy, a vibrancy that is foreshadowed in the open field of performance: a choreography that happens *in the quick* within the context of the immediate "which doesn't have to be linear, [because] today people follow a field." The linear presupposes a certain way of thinking and Cunningham is more interested in creating a situation that evolves out of a serendipitous event shaping a figure eight - figure-eight in the sense of neoteny, reworking a movement over and over again in a different light because "something can provoke one suddenly to realise that there's a whole other area to explore."

Architecturally, it seems that linear forms reacting to external forces would in fact also mutate towards a curvilinear development, sensitive to the immediate site and context of the environment in which it exists. Such architecture would be *choreographed* to exist precisely in form but spatially free within an open field of possibility, sensitive to internal motivators and external forces. It would be a lyrical architecture, folding in and over itself, layering its parts to provide a complexity of pieces that blend together to form "one object of dense abstraction."

The architecture team of Van Berkle & Bos maintain that architecture is richer in form and experience when it is left open to other forms of information such as the narrative, greatly allusive to a vast array of images. Blending theory and practice, the collaboration offers critical overlaps, creating a fluid architecture of in-between, receptive to contemporary life and the built environment. Their work produces a hybridization of forms that is perceived to be a "direct translation of the masses of information that surround us." Contemporary architecture, then, can be said to be somewhat intangible in its inherent ability to create fleeting images of an evanescent experience, and to be like dance through its continual and changing response to its surroundings:

*The smooth spaces described by those continuous yet differentiated systems result from curvilinear sensibilities that are capable of complex deformations in response to programmatic, structural, economic, aesthetic, political, and contextual influences....Whether insidious or ameliorative, these kinds of cunning connections discover new possibili-*





*Even architecture, which may be the most structurally objective of the arts, is full of expressive tension, feeling and stylistic identity.*

The vital bodies of architecture and dance are similar as one mirrors the other in their contributions to the improvement of life. Architecture fosters vivification through a "spectrum of emotions generated by absolute passion...That spectrum of emotion is the organising 'idea' in the non temporal art." This organising idea is the architect's crux, a choreographed sequence within an open field where space and movement

merges with one into the other to create an unpredictable event. An architectural experience is filled with affective spaces which develop from this conception of the poetic idea. For architecture, as in dance, the idea of working is "not an isolated representational process, but integrated into the conception of the building." The conception sustains the feeling of a temporal art as it creates opportunities for *happenings*; it is the center of the structure which maintains its presence through its relationship to the ground, once again affirming gravity and the weight of being. The



conception creates the architectural essence of what it is, not what it appears to depict:

*It is not simply a figure of the exclusion of representation in favour of presence. Rather it represents the ongoing control of representation. The tradition of philosophy is the sustained attempt to get control by recovering something that precedes representation, restraining representation by establishing the architectonic limits provided by the ground. It searches for the most stable ground to exercise the greatest control.*

The placing of limits, the connection to a thing, is the beginning of creating what the spontaneity might be, where freedom might be found. As Cunningham incorporates chance elements within his choreography they are not haphazardly applied but based on a system of studied movement patterns which remain intact. The mutations evolve from fragmenting the movement: in reverse, through addition, subtraction, a multitude of spatial delineations and time displacements that explore the heights and depth of conceptual space. The excitement arises in how the piece emerges on opening night and how it will again metamorphose in the next showing. Yet the movement is

always grounded in what it began with architecturally: sequences are derived internally, spatially, and through programme development. Like the dance piece where movements build one onto the next to form gestalts, meaning in architecture comes from a cumulative effect as bodies move through spatial sequences:

*Their frames derive significance from juxtaposition. They establish memory of the preceding frame, the course of events. To experience and follow an architectural sequence is to reflect upon events in order to place them into successive wholes.*

Meaning is sustained in *memory* as dancers leave us with fleeting images that can only once again come to fruition through thought. The architectural experience like the dance encounter, translates information via a transitory moment in conceptual space. Through multiple layers, combinations of chance elements, and discovering orientations, architecture and dance perpetuate the desire to continually search for different experiences.

*Not a matter of turning or looking up to the heights of things, anymore than delving down..... but of looking along the surfaces, in their intervals and midsts for what may yet happen, coming thus to see that 'the most profound is the skin.*

Skimming the surface, *in-between* the layers, multiple readings are found to signify the onset of what is yet to come. Pursuing different orientations not only pushes the limits of a membrane, be it body or structure, but also breaks the bounds of a definable membrane. An architect of intention first, Tadao Ando marries both literal and conceptual references in his work. Like the dancer who articulates the art of dance through her body, Ando's architecture references the built object while retaining the poetic intention. It is a pure architecture, emanating from the ground, the earth itself, its sheer existence explodes the membrane:

*But this space of Ando is now outside of, or other in the Japanese sense....a between of the between....In Ando's work visual resolution is not an issue - deals with a suspension of signs, a suspension of the visual screen that keeps us one step from the chaos - Ando calls natural.*

Abstracting the elements of nature and disposing them within an architectural order, Ando intensifies what already exists. His architecture provokes a spirit of vitality, confronting people with natural elements, bringing a phenomenal awareness to his design regime that permeates the built realm. He primarily fills spaces with aesthetic sense, taking architecture back to its

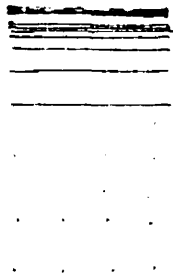
foundation in simple, powerful notions such as the condensation and purification of light. His drawings allude to more than an architectural blueprint, "his sketches embody a myriad of lines, fluctuating between ideas of materiality and 'voidedness' [which make] form and space virtually inseparable." The essence of Ando's architectonic dance is the *in-between* within the "myriad of lines", where structure is never disengaged from its conception. Form and space are fluidly bound and the question "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" is simultaneously asked and answered.

interval: theory – process – design

the parti:

*Much as the foot leaves its imprint in the sand and as the sand remains as a trace of the foot, each of these residues and actions are outside of any rational or natural order; they are both and neither.*

The objective of the parti sketch is to simply illustrate the first gesture of the architectural *idea*. It is simultaneously a simplification and a densification, an embodiment of an idea that can be read on the most basic and complex levels. Like the dancer's rehearsal the initial concept is explored multidimensionally as a *work in progress*. The basis of the conceptual idea *imprints* the thematic notion throughout all layers of study, opening up a broad range of potential. As the layers evolve temporally, the initial idea remains if only as a *trace* of the original intention. In this thesis investigation, the parti is a notation of movement



from *dissection* to *dissolution*. Conceptually this speaks of a fragmentation, anatomizing each part as it relates to the whole. Formally, the pieces stand separately but as they move farther out from one another, there is a simultaneous sense of disintegration and

integration as the forms begin to merge with the air, dissolving the beginning and end of one from the other.

Expressed primarily as a linear movement, my intention is to abstractly denote the transition of motion from a quality of *mass in the sense of being rooted, a grounded body of the earth*, to an attribute of *light* "where the body is in motion and has the highest degree of information" recreating the initial line into a field of space. This inquiry lies at the basis of this thesis.

Through a study of this particular sequence the idea is to translate the movement from theory into architectural form, rendering this notion through the language of design.

The generating idea evolved out of concentrated points that stand as bars closely positioned. As they move out and forward, they disengage, no longer fixed points in space that speak of a static *linearity*, but rather *dynamic* points equally changing and randomly scattered throughout, read within a field of conceptual space.

The initial study attempts to give form to the parti, a translation,

in physical materials from *dissection to dissolution*. It becomes a question of how this notion can manifest itself in material expression and as a tangible thing without renouncing the conceptual ties that bind the form as one. The form transcends as a single entity and although the pieces of equal size and shape are repeated, there difference lies in the qualities that characterise each material. The materials are broken down, layered within the construct by first establishing the *weight* of the fragmented body through to its eventual state of *dissolution*.

The *weight* of the construct speaks of natural movement as it is founded by its connection to the ground, the mass anchored below, a medley of materials yielding to the forces of gravity. At the opposite end of this spectrum lies the resistance to this weight; in *lightness* the materials have begun to change in state adopting a weightlessness characterised not through mere literal transparencies but moving beyond and into a metaphysical experience, a phenomenal transparency. The step beyond becomes a visual layering; somewhat allusive, it desolidifies what is immediately viewed by creating a perceptual collage of information. The temporal qualities of these materials equivocate further sensations as they play within a certain context, reacting to site and light. The momentum of the materials are predicted by the movement of the air:

*membranes, screens, filters, the surfaces of this architecture establishes a vertigo of delay, blockage and slowness, upending the vertigo of acceleration that has dominated design since the invention of perspectival drawing.....*

Lightness, within this study, is captured through its ambiguous nature changing rapidly with its placement and surroundings. The qualities of these materials mutate from translucent to transparent within different ambient conditions and thus the reading of the whole construct, in terms of weight and lightness, changes as the light parts alter. The two elements are interde-



pendent. *Lightness as enigma*, fluctuates and can therefore be held only within a moment.

The construct acts as a scale, an equilibrium maintaining light and weight as essential properties for balance. It is unified through thin bars which are embedded between each of the material stratifications. The bars metaphorically react as does the spine within the human body, anchoring it to provide a stability, yet engaging in a dynamism of movement beyond the physical periphery. There is a stillness in motion: the bars reach out, further suggestive of what lies infinitely past the immediate....it is the lived body of action.



Figure 1.1: *Lightness as enigma* (2007) by the artist

imprinting:

*After a few impressions, the stone broke in two pieces. Both the stone and the proofs were discarded. Rauschenberg made another, which broke after three impressions. Rauschenberg placed the two fragments back on the press bed, added another stone he called "the debris" and printed the edition.*

The 1963 lithograph entitled, Accident [cat.7] by R. Rauschenberg illustrates the peculiar sense of the *untimely* which is infused in the art of printmaking. Interweaving experiential and technical, the creative thrives in the unexpected moment and although a framework binds the work, *chance* is ultimately superimposed upon the final product. This quality lends an element of surprise to the art; spontaneity and skill become one. Never a predetermined piece, printmaking as a symbiotic process merges a conceptual body within a technical realm, the two continually shifting and settling only in the final moment.

The essence of this art is found in its execution. Working and reworking as though it were a pliable substance, the piece evolves and changes according to how variables mix and how chemicals react to one another. Lithography depends not on surface elevations as in other printing techniques, but on the simple principle of the unmixability of grease and water. "The lithographic stone must be etched, or processed, to accept ink on the image areas and to reject ink and accept water everywhere else. It is this step -*seemingly magical*- that has been the subject of endless analysis." The process guiding this thesis investigation, like the dance choreographer, focuses on the idea of *making*, of *poesis*, rather than just allowing something to become. These two bodies of technique and concept are comparable to *sense* and *sensibility*, and through printmaking allude to the initial parti interweaving concepts of *dissection* and *dissolution*.



The transition of the primary sketch as idea to printmaking pushes the notion further as it extends itself within the layers of color and form. The first print is my attempt to

encompass the idea of pure motion as bound between the constructive and the metaphysical. It begins as *lines* of sequential patterning, isolated fragments which extend forth. Reaching infinitely out, the moment is captured within a *field* of sheer motion as it encircles, and through the red is brought back to the beginning. Replenished, the cycle can begin again.

The second print explores merging bodies, the physical and the



ephemeral as relative to their rectilinear enclosure. The square forms depict movement from sense to sensibility. The black solid filled object denotes an informative stance, Cartesian in that the intellect supersedes the body. Collapse is imminent, the solid becomes void and the body frees itself from the constrained placement.

Printmaking exhibits a sense of complexity as it brings the viewer into the realm of the perceptual. Layers of color are absorbed in compositions, pigments overlaid or lifted recreate surfaces in a different light contributing to a sense of diversity and wonderment. Built up layers of color can literally transform a two dimensional surface image into a spatial experience, altering ones perception of real. The fusion of color, etching, tracing and process exhibit sensational qualities, these markings create a sense of motion for the eye.

It is precisely this sense of motion which configures what I think of as *landscape*. The final prints attempt to interpret this configuration of dynamic attributes that fall within the parameters of the architectural site. The chosen site exhibits qualities of the initial parti, the motion of dissection to dissolution extends in movement from landside to waterside. As the intention is to denotate the transition of motion from a quality



## site as nomadic body:

*Building transcends physical and functional requirements by fusing with a place, by gathering the meaning of a situation. Architecture does not so much intrude on a landscape as it serves to explain it; illumination of a site is not a simplistic replication of its "context"; to reveal an aspect of place may not confirm its "appearance." Hence the habitual ways of seeing may well be interrupted.*

In designating the body of a site as place, the context can vary according to how one sees and perceives. In the Heideggerian sense of what it means to "dwell", site as place is connected to the essence of what it means to build and how far this concept reaches. Heidegger transcribes place through the old German word, "bauen", signifying the way in which humans inhabit the earth and how one acquaints things with habit to create a sense of place. The word, "bauen" simultaneously means "to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for....Building in the sense of preserving and nurturing is not making anything." Not making anything", is rather an oblique statement, indirect in that it presupposes that nurturing the intangible is not valid since the resulting form is not physically tangible or visible. Here, I think the notion has to do with cultivating memory, impressing the sense of place through rituals of habit. It speaks of creating an experience of strong sensation and feeling, equating this to a place that is inscribed into the mindful body. Heidegger further illustrates a site as a place that has qualities which bring together an assembly of individuals. To bring forth, the site establishes itself primarily as a point of location where there is a prominent "thing" in which to establish its siting:

*...the bridge is a thing of its own kind; for it gathers the fourfold in such a way that it allows a site for it ...but only something that is itself a location can make space for a site. The location is not already there before the bridge is...many spots along the river can be occupied by something, one of them proves to be a location, and does so because of the bridge. The bridge is a thing; it gathers the fourfold, but in such a way that it allows a site for the fourfold. By this site are determined the localities and ways by which a space is provided for.*

A specific *point* or a prominent element begins to give meaning, or a sense of place, to a site, but this idea can venture further in that the experience of location or place becomes not a fixed or static one. Rather, as the site comes into contact with the significant thing it reveals itself as a field of observations; it is understood in the way of the nomad; significance found through

investigation rather than at conclusion. It is about the mobile condition where perception is ignited through motion and friction offering a *field* of information that favours no particular vantage point.

*From time to time, the journey is marked by moments of rest. But for the most part, it is an account of provisional explorations - an account occasioned by, and dedicated to, keeping thought in motion. Together, paths, points of departure and points of rest form a constellation that might describe the space of architecture.*

Site can be thought of as a shifting point of reference, denoting a crossing or an overlapping of intersections which collage into a network of views and attitudes. Site becomes a place primarily of its location, as Heidegger suggests, yet the locale continually shifts according to a mode of thought or experience that is



neither fixed or stationary. It is a vocabulary based in motion, a journey nurturing the perspective of the lived body in chronoscopic time. This is to say that it is through the experience of the person that the site becomes fully realised at any one time. It is in this critical line of thought that the site was analysed.

The site is located at the far north end of the Glenmore reservoir. Visually prominent, it rests at the top of an escarpment adjacent to the Glenmore dam. Known as the Waterworks reserve area, its location is within the city, 6.4 km from the downtown core, and located immediately within a natural terrain posited aside the Elbow river and the reservoir. A site of activity and energy, it is a location that is bound by tension through its siting as interval between city and nature. Access to



the site is via 19th st. and 56th ave., the area proper bound by Crowchild trail and the Glenmore causeway. An alternative route is the Glenmore pathway system which extends around the reservoir for 16 km. This multi - purpose path is heavily used by walkers, runners, and cyclists. The pathway continues along the escarpment past the grounds of the Glenmore dam road, over the Glenmore trail at the 14th st. interchange, and along the escarpment past the grounds of the Rockyview hospital. At the north end, this pathway system merges with the Bow river and the Nose creek paths which lead to Bowness and Fish creek parks. The surrounding area of the Waterworks reserve is mainly focused on land based recreational activities including: the Glenmore athletic center, tennis club, Lakeview golfcourse, safety city (bicycle training program), Emily Follensbee school, a speed skating oval and various sports fields.

The context is heavily layered with movement that flows through and around the area, an interwoven fabric of



recreational activities and topographical landscape.

The site is bound by 19th st. and 56th ave. S.W. while the east side is contained by the Elbow river. An escarpment wraps from the west towards the dam and the Glenmore causeway encloses the circular gesture at the south end, creating somewhat of a hemispherical vessel. The site affords views of both urban and rural landscapes, offering vantage points of both the downtown

skyline and panoramic vistas of the foothills and the Rocky mountains. It is a place that exists within the urban fabric of the city, although removed in that the immediate area is nestled in somewhat of a non - urban environment. Physically, the landscape acts as an intermediary area as it "lies at the western edge of the prairie zone, bordering on a foothills / mountain transition zone of grassland and mixed forest." This natural setting has encouraged various recreational activities ranging from water to land based activities, creating a rural retreat within the larger urban framework of the city. Its prominence stems also from the historical account of its importance to the City of Calgary. The construction of the reservoir occurred after a severe spring flood in the year 1884, and again in 1929. A reservoir for flood control was proposed and in 1932, N.C. Macdonald devised a plan for the "addition of hydraulic pumps to supply the city with 27 million gallons of drinking water daily. That year, 960.96 hectares were purchased by the city of Calgary and in 1933 completion of the dam and the reservoir were put into operation." At the time of the dam completion various interest groups were contending for a piece of land around the reservoir and in 1956 park proposals were first made. In 1963, Calgary adopted two by - laws which provided a framework for recreation use and development of the park and reservoir.

According to this historical account, the site is clearly a place because of its prominence. The site as location exists because of the siting of the dam, and the dam, as a thing, is important primarily because of its function as physical infrastructure which is of vital necessity to the city. Phenomenologically, the site is activated and acts upon its users, reflecting a dynamism between the two. It is precisely this combination of a physically prominent and important site in terms of meaning, history, and infrastructure within the urban environment that brings vitality through interaction of people passing

through and within the site which gives this landscape its *ground*.





## ungrounded ground

*...A path is always between two points, but the 'in-between' has taken on all the consistency, and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is in the intermezzo.*

The theoretical views of site, and eventual attitudes which configure my intervention, are significant to the idea of the nomad: an ideology perhaps which *grounds* itself in concepts central to life, to living, and to motion. The nomad wanders and seeks not location, but re-location, establishing space as progressive in that it is consistently being evaluated in a non-linear evolution. This idea is further implemented in the notion of the "mobile ground" which speaks of a place in flux, a "space of operation, a site of architectural work...It represents the play of contested powers because it is neither here nor there - its locus is of transition and challenge, of movement and change." It is in this vein that I will attempt to establish that being grounded is more closely integrated with the nomadic idea of transition and change, therefore understanding that it is in our *ungrounded* life experience that we establish a sense of *groundedness*. Binding the parameters of this notion, I propose three formulated thoughts which act to choreograph a theoretic

attitude towards site and intervention.

1. shift
2. dislocation
3. potential energy

*Shift* primarily focuses on an exchange or a replacement of one thing for another. To shift is in fact to move from one position to the next stance, or to experience a

differing view or outlook. Man's authenticity, or proof of being in the world, is realised through motion, a ceaseless momentum that takes the vertical body through space. Experientially, shifting opens up to a broader, more complex situation which in turn offers a multiplex range of information. No longer a linear process, displacement overlays differences rather than isolating them, creating new and ever-evolving situations.

The site was thought of in this light. The parti traces the motion from dissected movement to a state of dissolution exploring the shift as it occurs from the city's north-south orientation to the rural grid, more closely examining the movement from land to water. The site then is illuminated as an overlapping territory of

city and nature, questioning what it means to be in either place, positing the *in-between* as a potentially vital and transient area. The interval poses ideals that are sympathetic to the human condition; through displacement rather than linearity, juxtaposition over similarity, and superimposition over isolation.

*Dislocation* refers to a kind of mutable condition, morphing into a thing that is somewhat disengaged from its initial form. It expresses an unsettling of the canonical, breaking away, conforming to something other than the general attitude or rule. Taking the idea of *ground*, one immediately thinks of what lies physically beneath an individual, yet the word is also heavily supplemented with philosophical and architectural meaning. To be grounded is to have a foundation; a base from which to build upon, an origin from where to begin. Therefore, it is not surprising that early architectural attempts at expressing ungroundedness focused on somewhat literal interpretations.

In 1933, Le Corbusier challenges the idea of the natural ground by claiming its site to be infused with disease, a "dispenser of rheumatism and tuberculosis and declares the natural site to be the enemy of man." He proposes to sever the connection between building and ground, vehemently opposing the landscape as part of the architectural intervention. "As with Maison - Domino, the house is freed from the earth of historical tradition to move in an extendible boundless space, acquiring a Mondrian-like autonomy, where the ground is only a vestige."

This is repeated in Villa Savoye where the house literally becomes suspended in the air: columns appear to be the only support that offer connection to the ground. It is the figure, irrespective of site that declares a sense of autonomy, rectilinearity and artificiality:

*The house is a box in the air, pierced all around, without interruption, by a long window. No more hesitations about playing architectural games with space and mass. The box is in the middle of the prairies, dominating the orchard.*

*Ungrounded*, however can be posed in a different light. Simply negating the ground may not be the only means of reflecting a sense of ungroundedness; a reinterpretation of what it means to be grounded should be considered. Common thought defines a certain *groundedness* or stability in the idea of the solid such as the earth, gravity, and weight. Chemistry, however, recognises



the solid by what is known as the 'defect.'. This is a type of irregularity, otherwise thought of as a dislocation, which acts to disengage the continuity of a line. The notion of a defect is not to be taken negatively but rather to understand that it exposes the potential energy of the solid ground. The solid is *ungrounded* through dissection and revelation of the defect. The discovery of this defect, in fact expresses the possibility for phases or states to be thought of as co-existing stably, rather than separately.

Thus, we as human beings become grounded not through a point of origin, but a pathway of life experience that is bound through evolution, a continual mode of change from which we learn. It is precisely in this *light of instability* that we grow to be more stable, grounded and comforted in the idea that our lives develop from an incremental process that is ever changing and transient.

Contemporary architectural theory then explores the ability to transpose static building forms to embrace and reflect such life sensations as the potential or the force of life in things.

"Ungrounded" then is not confined to one state but rather explores the cross boundaries of life, "of society, profession, genre, or what we call the vertical and the horizontal," as posed by J. Rajchman:

*Ungrounded - to find notions of history or memory from the progressive time of a new order toward a more complicated sense of time as process, always unfinished, to be taken up again in unforeseeable circumstances, as though each period brought with it a potential ungrounding that architecture might exploit or release.*

Potential energy explores the stores of energy in reserve. Based on the site, the Glenmore dam is used as an analogy to this idea. The water level in the dam can be released at any point therefore sustaining a potential amount of energy in its pre-explosive state. The process deals with gravitational attraction, a fall which will occur, but can happen in any one moment. Thus, tension occurs in this unpredictable circumstance. It occurs in space and time, in -between *grounded* live space and *ungrounded* live time. Paul Virillo deals with these concepts through "dynamic typology", a theory which explores architecture not only on the level of the vertical and the horizontal but "defers to the oblique axis and the inclined plane to realise the creation of a new urban order." The tilting of the plane prepares for the movement that is about to be encountered. Spaces begin to relate to the corporeal body through an unbound time that anticipates the trajectory, tracing the path of the dynamic body. This view leads to an eroticization not of the ground but

of dynamic ungrounding as P. Virillo finds:

*Once we give up the belief that our life world is rooted in the ground, we may thus experience ungroundedness no longer as existential anxiety and despair but as a freedom and a lightness that finally allows us to move. For movement and indetermination belong together; neither can be understood without the other.*

## construct

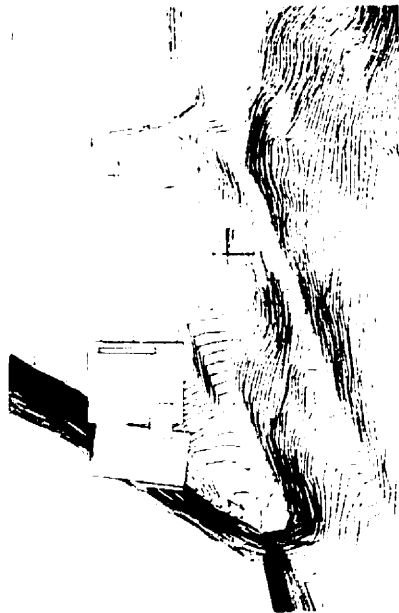
*Architecture is the result of thinking about the object as an act and as an invention. Its content is not distinct from its form, but rather they are one and the same.*

The underlying motif when looking at the site and construct was primarily to link the urban grid with the somewhat non urban conditions of the reservoir. Initially, this was established in alignment with the north-south axis of the city grid. Then, a gesture towards the landscape developed through a slight skew in movement, which lies in reference to the falling escarpment and the line of the water.

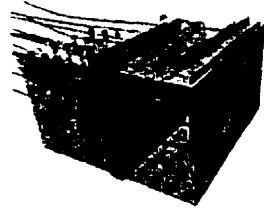
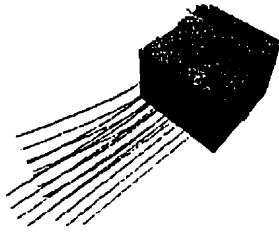
Formally, the massing strategy was to inform decisions regarding how the building was to simultaneously suggest a grounded sense of anchoredness and a sensation of weightlessness. The dichotomy of these two variables set up an immediate tension and through this difference, an initial massing of two simple cubes emerged and divided. The division allowed each one to signify a view in regards to the site; the first, land- based, reflecting the city in its geometric stratification, and second; a water based, undulating natural landscape. Each given a function, the first cube maintains the clinic programme of the building, merging with the ground plane and implanted as landscape, while the second cube reflects the dance component of the building, a massing which pursues notions of lightness.

The initial shift occurs in *plan*, a reflection of the dichotomy of the site that is an overlapping texture of city and nature, as well as the mutually distinct although collaborative programme of the building. The totality of the massing suggests a reading as one which transcends from the ground plane to a body in flight, a registration that shifts from the vertical to the horizontal axis. That is, an architecture which moves from the solid to the ephemeral. As a shift primarily focuses on the movement from one instant to its successive position, the building continually evolves from an alignment that

is fixed to a gradual 'falling away,' somewhat of a disintegration where the architecture becomes more of a framework of the surrounding natural elements, bringing a phenomenal awareness into the built realm.

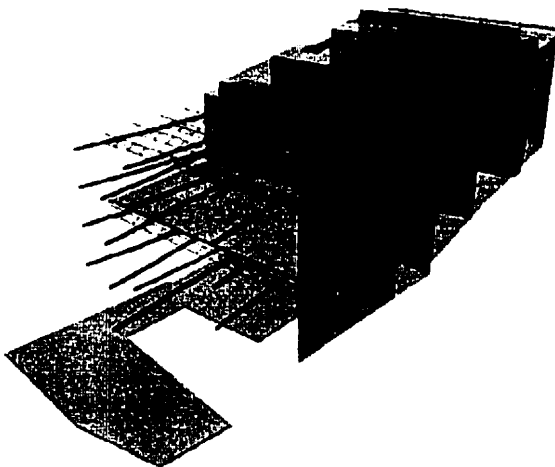


Through an initial exploration of shift, a series of computer generated concept models were created. The intention here was to primarily denote the transition from a solid to an

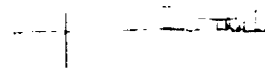


ephemeral abstraction - the beginnings of an architecture, solid in the sense of how a whole mass evolves into an ephemeral state through a gradual revelation of layers, exposing the virtual spaces beneath. This architecture reads as an abstraction in the sense of a whole box, which begins to evoke a greater sense of the real through its virtual space potential. As the mass dissolves and the structure begins to show, qualities of light, air, and spatiality are the focus. It speaks of the *possible* through its sheer nothingness, the void which encapsulates the structure of the theatre; the empty theatre which awaits the imaginable.

*...yet in the midst of this emptiness, one envisions events that justify this void, the resonance of probable stagings or the mute presence of the audience. For every virtual space, the possible is already present.*



The shift acts as a preparation to the dislocation. As the desire was to express the building as changing, morphing into



something unique from its initial form, the dislocation was expressed spatially through *section*. A displacement through groundedness to an eventual release, bound in the principles of fall and recovery, the two act as analogic to the anticipated sectional quality. As the displacement of weight is the focal point of dance, the counterpoints of fall and recovery are also the base fundamentals of motion - that is, everyday human experience that accepts and resists the natural forces of gravity. The tension between these principles was the objective sought in the architectural intervention. It supplies the interval amid fall and rebound which acts as the suspension that bridges the vertical and the horizontal - a phenomenon that seizes hold *in-between* two planes, abandoning any static relation with either ground or air. The result is a fluid transition from one form to the next, a pliant acceptance in the overlapping of elements. It is an architecture of the diagonal plane, neither grounded or ungrounded, pursuing an experiential reaction that lies in the context of the immediate. The *potential* found in the *virtual*, eliciting an architectural vocabulary based in motion, stabilised through the perspective of the lived body in chronoscopic time.

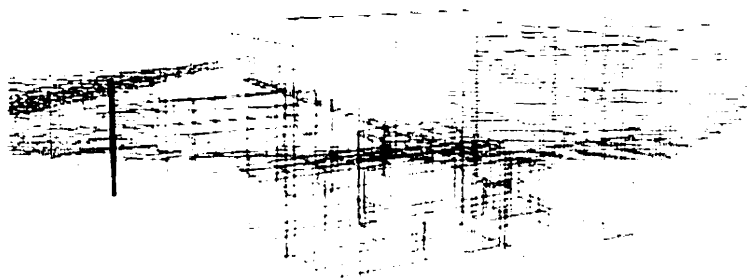


## hybrids

*Hybrid programmes mean different kinds of institutions...new experiences in space.*

The building was meant to exist at the 'triple point', a temperature at which three states of solid, liquid, and gas coexist simultaneously. Moreover the building accepts the site as partner, at times coalesced with it, often completely distinct from it, but always with regard to it. The building was seen as being in a constant state of flux, a negotiation which occurs between groundedness and light, a juxtaposition which gives the spaces a sense of energy, gravity, and vitality. Potential energy is suggested in the tensile whole, within the hybrid component of the architectural programme and throughout the internal and external spaces of the building. The layering of urban form and landscape exposes the *defect*; it heightens the tension of the site, which in turn, elevates the experiential component of the architecture. The building is a place of choreographed and accidental activities, a fusion of dance and architectural notation which overlap to create spaces of *potential energies*.  
*roof as ground*

Programmatically, the buildings initial interaction with the landscape is at the level of the horizontal ground plane. The building lies at the level of the existing landscape, an inversion of roof as ground, a reinterpretation of ground as sheltering roof plane. The roof offers panoramic views, allotting a visual collage that intertwines cityscape and nature, encapsulating the



movement of the surrounding site.

The roof is primarily a public space, a space of contemplation. An urban park, it is meant to act as a pause along the routes of the Glenmore pathway system. It offers a large surface area which acts as a platform to rest, to do activity [such as stretching], or to watch activity that occurs along the perimeter of the reservoir. It has the potential to act as an outdoor aerobic field

for summer classes. An experiential roofscape, it exhibits qualities that create the essence of place, on its own, yet it exists as part of a layered whole.

The large plane of the roof is broken up by a few disparate, although prominent, spatial elements; an objectified zinc wall, an open light well, a café/bar, and a translucent vertical garden plane. The juxtaposition of light and weight found amid these elements creates a tension of energy at this level. The *zinc wall*: an architectural element which penetrates through the entire building, reflective amidst a geometry of pools - a conceptual link with the reservoir, the wall acts primarily as a resting place and a water wall during the spring and summer months. A trough brings water to the drinking fountain as well as washes down the east facade wall, an effect that will patina overtime; gradations of colour marking the buildings age.

An *open light well* / interior courtyard is situated as a central focus point. It penetrates all levels, bridging the two programmes through a wash of light within the interior of the building. Access to the light well occurs only from within the theatre foyer of the building, eventually merging, via a stairwell, with the exterior courtyard. At the roof level, the perimeter of the light well is enclosed by a railing which is integrated with the elevated platform that takes visitors to the café.

The *café / bar* is meant to be experienced as a casual place to relax or enjoy a night cap. The south facing facade, glazed and virtually frame less captures the spectacular view of the reservoir and the mountains, and attempts to dematerialise the idea of enclosure.

The *vertical garden plane* acts as a wall that spans two storeys, initiating in the dancers rehearsal studio, it hangs, suspended over the water plane. Positioned on the diagonal, the inclined plane punctures the floating roof plane above. Views are directed not only to the surrounding landscape, but the vertical wall draws views into the dancers workplace and further back towards the reservoirs waters. Back lit with natural southern light,

shadows of green emerge from the vertical garden, and a silhouette of movement delineates the spaces as virtual. The roof plane becomes the source of life; a phenomenal transparency latent with *potential energy*.

## *anchoring*

There are two main entries into the building, each a function of what is required of the contemporary dance centre and the clinic component of the architectural programme. The main entry ramps down towards the *clinic* and into the *library*; an entry denoted by stacks of books, this anchored earthy portion of the building is surmised in material mass, *heavy* in concrete physicality. Known also as the *patient education centre*, it acts primarily as an information source for physiotherapists and their patients, as well as dancers who seek information about particular injuries. The library component of the building vertically spans all three levels of the clinic, its aesthetic is rough and natural. A sky lit, perforated stairwell filters light through, staining the bareness of the concrete walls that serve to spatially delineate a reception area at each entry level. The clinic component of the programme is a facility mainly comprised of medical - therapeutic services and research offices. Functional, its placement recalls the poetic idea of movement that bridges *dissection* to *dissolution*. The idea stems from movement that is learned, corrected, *dissected*; a linear expression derived prior to an elevated *motion* that exists in a field of dynamic points, equally changing and randomly scattered throughout space. Architecturally, the clinic is inward looking, *grounded*, accepting of its weight, perhaps, *an area too heavy for the site*.

The main notion of the clinic is that it is sports medicine based. This primarily has connotations with musculoskeletal injuries although the philosophy grounding this area can be identified through a much broader scope. It involves:

1. all aspects of the physiology of activity
2. injury treatment and prevention
3. the implication of the disease on the activity
4. the impact of normal processes such as growth, pregnancy, and ageing on performance

Sports medicine and sports science are multispecialty disciplines that support the various echelons of recreation and sport. The basic principles evolve from the need for enhancement of performance, prevention of injuries, and efficient, effective treatment when injury does occur. The physiotherapist works with the physician in correctly assessing the injury within the parameters of musculoskeletal sports medicine through the recognition of certain facts:

- mechanisms of injury
- early consultation
- accurate diagnosis

- intensive goal oriented treatment
- objective and functional treatment
- safe plan for return to activity
- injury prevention strategies

Due to a dancer's heavy training regime, overuse injuries frequently occur. According to statistics, it is estimated that "rehabilitation frequently accounts for 50 percent of a successful outcome after injury or surgery." Therefore, immediate rehabilitation allows for an expedient recovery and for a smoother reintegration into dance, or a sport specific schedule. Whether an overuse injury, or injuries resulting from simple training errors, the assessment will enable the dancer to more readily aware of how the injury occurred and how it has evolved overtime. The treatment then "involves designing progressively more difficult sequences of exercises based on an analysis of the stresses involved in the athlete's particular sport." The physiotherapist combines treatment therapy with a regime of exercise physiology and training techniques which suggest how to specifically execute various movements to prevent further physiologic inaccuracies. The clinic's aim is to function not only as an educational treatment centre for dancers, but a facility which recognises the injuries of all recreational participants.

The spaces are designed largely according to functional necessity, and each plan level lies adjacent to and feeds off of, the library corridor system. The lowest floor houses a section of the library as well as storage and archive space. Access to the clinic is at this level through reception, recurring again on the main level where services by therapists or physicians are offered.

The reception area includes an administrative office which is mainly used for filing, billing and the transcriptions of a patient's history.

## *balancing imbalance*

Central, the bottom floor serves as the therapy centre, primarily comprising of a shared office area, along with the necessary support spaces. This common space is infiltrated by eastern light facilitated by a wall with tall, vertical shafts of glazing. The centre is meant to be a medium sized clinic which would require approximately two physiotherapists on the floor at one

time, seeing as many as eight patients per hour.

The main *therapy section* enjoys a large workable area. Essentially comprised of 8' by 5' cubicles, [spaces that accommodate the 2' by 6' beds] these spaces are formed according to the hung grid ceiling structure which eventually spans into the dance theatre to serve the lighting requirements. The aforementioned structure allows for each treatment cubicle to have a flexible working environment for both patient and therapist. The spaces are not segregated through rigid partitions, but rather, curtains which are conducive to the array of movement that takes place within a session. Placed immediately in the centre, a stainless steel cabinet contains workable counter space, a sink and an ice machine, all of which are easily accessed by the therapist.

According to a type of sports medicine model, the focus is placed on the collaborative aspects of activity, ergonomics, and psychological aspects which, when combined, offer a general notion of fitness health. The idea places the *exercise floor* in close proximity to the therapy area. Its aim is to fuse therapy and exercise as one. Located near the dance preparatory spaces, dancers will have access to this exercise area as well, utilising the space as areas to stretch and focus prior to being on stage. Light pours through the light well into this double-volume space primarily in morning and early afternoon sessions.

Entering the *interior light well*, the rectangular line of the *reflecting pool* provides access to the outdoor courtyard of the building, possibly creating another outdoor plane for stretching, or providing yoga classes at the periphery of the water's edge, facilitating an invigorating therapeutic routine.

Juxtaposed with the light that filters through the glass well is the heavy *zinc wall*. Spanning 2 meters width and 7 meters tall within this double-volume space, it stretches through the next two levels terminating its height at the roof. Its presence is felt three dimensionally, hovering above, penetrating into and through the east facade. Here, it acts as an architectural container for the showers. It becomes an experiential cleansing: found vitality in a cool towering space, punctuated by the gravitational fall of skylight.

The zinc wall has different functions on the main floor. As an architectural and tectonic element it reads as a solid, monolithic piece. However, the interior is something different; it becomes a layered element, lead lined primarily in response to function. Housed in the interior of the wall are the *ultrasonographic, darkroom, and x-ray rooms*, spaces which require an enclosure that is lead lined to prevent exposure to radiation. This part of

the clinic programme will often be utilised by dancers who readily experience soft tissue injury, bone fractures or misalignments due to a vigorous dance regime. Also appointment based, the main floor has physicians which are on call for referrals; services for nutritional council and massage therapy are also offered, overlapping to create a holistic environment. *stretching thoughts*

The top level of the clinic primarily focuses on research. The spaces are designed to integrate the library component of the facility with the *patient education centre*, and with the corresponding work environment. The spaces include a *video gallery*, a flexible space which is shared by the research, medical, and therapeutic staff. The space can be used as a large seminar room, or partitioned off into four private meeting rooms. Well lit, the spacious room is west facing and naturally lit from above. The zinc wall again appears at this level with yet another function. It houses a line of computer terminals which access the library archives and main medical references. The tension of lightness and weight again sets up a polar relationship; as what faces it is the light translucent video panel. Sharing functions, the plane penetrates to the level below, acting as the *translucent x-ray wall* within a physicians office.

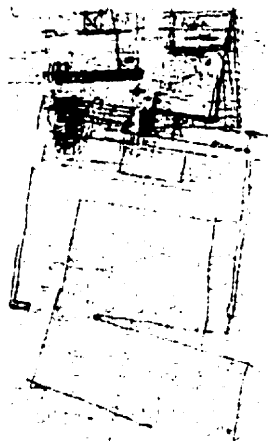
A large area is zoned for a research study and technician offices. This would include a main lab space used for various testing requirements such as video motion analysis; a digitised device illustrating how and what muscles are working; important research study that focuses on how movement can be made more efficient.

This level begins to thoroughly overlap both programmes of the facility. Adjacent to the lightwell lies the pilates platform, focused on a regime which employs strength and stretching as the base. The dancers will heavily utilise this area of the clinic. Access to the pilates studio is via a crossover that acts as a literal bridge from the rehearsal studio [dance] to the clinic. The bridge also acts as a viewing platform, stretching across, a gesture supported by the structural garden wall; here, onlookers are able to preview excerpts of dance works in progress.

*Flowing over the dam, water is an overlapping expressive reflection of the space of the landscape outside as well as the virtual overlapping of the spaces inside.*

### marking entry

The main movement to the building becomes part of a *choreographed* sequence, an architectural expression that overlaps the real with the virtual; the preparation of an interstice of two dancers crossing. It becomes part of the theatrical event, not only of performer, but of spectator, based on chance occurrences where bodies move and shift through spatial sequences. As most theatre events transpire in the evening, a warm singular slit of light emerges from the earth on the north side of the building, denoting a sign of approach which wraps the corner. The east facade is contained by a cascade of stairs, formed from the sites existing contours which run parallel to the trough of falling water. Water marks its journey from the roof level, staining the east side of the zinc wall, as it guides visitors to the entry proper.



The ground pinches at the main entry, revealing the water that lies below the earth's fissure. The water pools and then divides the ingress to the theatre lobby as it merges with and into the dancer's rehearsal studio. The impression of the water element is that it acts as a fluid marker, creating a processional sequence into the main foyer of the theatre. It

becomes a representation of what one will experience later. This element continually reappears, reaffirming the building as being in a constant state of flux, a pendulum of ceaseless motion. Water is seen in light of different states: from stillness to movement, and from cascade into absolute immersion. These conditions denote the water in elemental extreme: either as small bodies of water in a land of mass, or the reverse condition which images the building as a small island of concrete surrounded by water. Concurrently, the water becomes a reflection of both the reality and the hyper-reality of the landscape as it overlaps in reflection, the interior and exterior spaces of the built work.

### splicing programme

From within the theatre foyer, views are constantly played upon; shifting from public to semi-private areas where interaction with pre-performances can occur. Shadows of movement pierce from within the rehearsal studio, via the translucent glass plane on which images of dance and light fuse as one. A polarity of sightings reveals an exciting tension as the opposite side of the symmetric arrangement focus on elements from the clinic, such as the impenetrable zinc wall. These juxtapositions attempt to create a dialogue with reference to the buildings hybrid programme.

The theatre foyer is an open voluminous space that flows in and around the central light well. Patrons of the theatre fill the space prior to an event, setting the platform as a stage itself. Encased within the light well, a stairwell spirals down falling over the reflecting pool and out onto the level of the courtyard. A central stair, prominently placed, reflects the idea of being seen at the theatre, of display and exhibition. This exposed stair is meant to be used in summer months, displacing interior space outside; creating a place where people gather and socialise.

At the level of the exterior courtyard lies a linear, static water element; reflective of both interior and exterior space, the long rectangular pool bridges the distance between in and out. Facing south, views are directed onto the waters of the reservoir. A blanket of concrete lies against a three storey retaining wall, creating a courtyard that is somewhat an similar to the *back* of a building. Rendered in this language, the retaining wall houses a light, perforated steel stair, analogous to the quick and expedient fire stair, that wraps up and around the wall to the level of the café or upwards onto the roof scape. *warming up*

In *transition* from the foyer to the theatre, the processional gesture recurs in the descending staircase that mirrors the fallen escarpment of the landscape plane. Points of rest are established at each horizontal plateau and are punctuated by strong shafts of light from the hovering, sky lit roof plane. These planes lie parallel to the main level dance studio and offer glances into rehearsals: fore-imaging pre performance movement of dance works in progress. Adjustable louvers control the potential for privacy.

The *rehearsal studio*, is of extreme importance in any dance facility: An alias, it becomes the dancer's surrogate home; where technique classes and demanding rehearsal schedules fill most of every hour of every day. Since the theatre may not always be available for rehearsing due to shared space



arrangements or possibly deficient in space because of full scale theatre equipment or stage hand requirements, it is important that the rehearsal studio be appropriate in size and capacity. It not be so small that interferes with movements that intend a dancer to travel through space, and yet, nor too large that it makes dancers feel somewhat lost and not part of the spatial construct. It must occupy a surface floor area in direct proportion to the theatre floor; the preferred stage and studio dimensions are from 45' wide to 40' deep [approximately 15m by 12m], although many dancers and choreographers prefer a space of up to 60' wide.

The rehearsal studio spans an immediate dancing surface floor area of 65' wide and 45' deep [20m by 15m]. It was designed as a spacious configuration, providing ample space, high ceilings, and resilient, sprung, wood floors. It exists on the main level, but as a mezzanine it appropriates part of the theatre volume. The *wings* of the theatre, acting as shear walls, protrude and support the floor system of the rehearsal studio. Their elevational profiles, layered in 1 and 1/4" hardwood are delineated as three low walls, their surface utilised as barres for the studio. Implementing a permanent barre system into the architectural structure starts to layer parts of spaces, providing a complexity of pieces that blend together to form "one object of dense abstraction."

Layering the notion of the mezzanine, the translucent garden wall engages with a private stair that merges with a bridge; acting as a *crossover* between the two programmes; the link provides access to the *pilates* studio. This portion of the clinic will be readily used by dancers wishing to improve critical body techniques and alignments. Somewhat of a mezzanine, the crossover acts as a *gallery* - an extra niche of space which provides observers, such as the choreographer, rehearsal director, or other dancers of the company, a raised space from which to look over the entire rehearsal process.

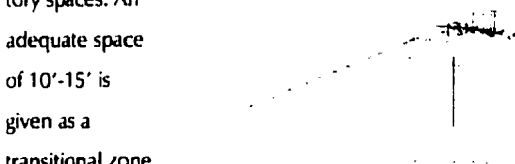
The studio is enriched with natural light that falls in from all directions; morning rehearsals showered in the reservoirs southern light, while the afternoon softens in intensity as the light falls via the clerestorey. A desired and more diffuse light falls into the space through the translucent garden panel, filtering in a soft, northern light from above. The studio layout attempts to provide a reflective space which is intended to inspire dancers and choreographers alike, heightening the senses as they respond to the surrounding natural conditions.

## twisting backstage

The dance programme of the building was meant to be expressed as somewhat of a *dissolution*, an architectural *body in flight* that is prepared through its reinterpretation of *lightness*: lightness as it deviates from the norm, architecture as it becomes experientially redefined according to landscape. The first strategy was embedding the *wall*; through its various punctures and reliefs it acts to facilitate *movement*; it becomes the *spine* of the dance programme. Every architectural element fostering the dance component of the facility is tied to this structural wall. In a simultaneous expression of continuity, yet difference, the fragmented wall in its sheer physicality is quite notable. Its line of shape continues yet distinguishes itself from the clinic, as it becomes a reactive form - that is, responsive to the surrounding landscape as well as attentive to the more general and functional requirements of theatre spaces. The immense walls are designed mainly for theatre storage, allotting space as well to the rehearsal studio above. A functional aspect that is expressed on the west facade of the building. Reflective of the exterior or the *backside* of the building, the enclosure is about recreating *backstage*, as side stage of this theatre.

As backstage *shifts*, the theatre *wings* also reconsider the traditional and equally symmetric placement. Here, the wings are aligned with the backstage wall, and feed directly off of the dance preparatory spaces. An adequate space of 10'-15' is given as a transitional zone

between the performing area and the off stage dance preparation spaces. The theatre wings act also as structural walls; shear walls that emerge from beneath the water and tie the theatre floor and mezzanine studio floor into one main structural system.



displacing theatre floor

The actual theatre attempts to create a space synonymous - although often autonomous in certain light conditions - with the surrounding landscape. The landscape permeates the built work, and the felt essence of the enclosing

environment naturally filters into a few architectural crevices. The *change of state* from land to water is felt and somewhat literally expressed within the building. As the theatre seats fall in line of the escarpment, a gestural pause occurs through a visible plane of water that lies as an architectural separation, delineating seating from downstage alignment. Sectionally this is expressed as earth, a natural mass that literally protrudes into the building - the audience is able to reorient themselves according to the changing landscape. It acts also as an experiential reference plane; spatially situating the dancing bodies. The theatre floor plane partially exists below the mezzanine level of the rehearsal studio. Past this line, the theatre opens up to an immense, voluminous space that begins to play within a field of light and spatiality, a field that relies on a sort of *vicissitude*. In architecture this deals with a fall into a precarious place, "it has a quality of mutability in response to chance occurrences: these events are made possible by a collision of internal motivators and external forces which seem to be accidental." The theatre exists within this kind of an open and unplanned system that implements random opportunities for dancers and dance events.

#### *mirroring backdrops*

The horizontal plane of the theatre floor begins to set up an atmosphere of circumstantial ambiguities; architecturally implemented, images or narratives begin to denote or impress ideas of *shift*. The social order of the theatre encounter is questioned. This displacement at first becomes apparent through the *scrim* that is located upstage of the theatre floor plate. The scrim is a traditionally basic and simple element. Consisting of a fine grain of transparent mesh cloth, it acts as a crossover for dancers. The composite of this material offers interesting qualities, characteristics that mutate from transparency to translucency in response to critical lighting conditions. Often lit frontally, the scrim will appear as an opaque backdrop; yet the conditions are easily reversed as the scrim literally disappears when lit from behind. The movement of the dancers annex the layers of this illusive scene. The audience perceives dancers on both sides of the scrim; bodies move in front of the scrim with silhouettes that dance, as they are projected onto the scrims surface through back lighting; simultaneously portraying the illusive and the tangible nature of dance.....*Bodies and shadows dance together....* The scrim, as well as other desired stage sets, is incorporated into the open system of the rehearsal studio and the theatre. Access to the counter weight rigging system is from the catwalks which can be accessed from the

gallery space, via the main level of the dance studio.  
*dissolving into h2o*

Ideas of *reversal* are inherent within this open system. Opportunities to transcend the aforementioned backstage - as onstage idea into even further ambiguity involves the overlap between inside and outside space. The interior dance platform extends out as one plane, simultaneously existing in two environmental conditions. As the scrim pulls up, the southern sunlight beams into the theatre space and the *backdrop now is a horizon of sky light blue; pure and ephemeral, it becomes nature*. Movement relates to both the interior and the exterior of this extended dance plane. Utilising the natural environment as the background's setting; opportunities for late night summer showings exhibit the *sky* as performance set. The moon becomes natural back lighting, and the floor plane lies as a horizontal overlay on the water. Evening performances will provide opportunities to shine light images out and past the enclosure line of the theatre, *pushing the limits of definable membrane*, dissolving the spatial boundaries through expansion. Technically, this *trompe l'oeil* occurs through the counterweight T-bar system of the flytower: the south enclosure is a fusion of glass with tiers of a grid-like mesh frame. Portions of the wall will be guided up by the mechanical guide-track system, allowing the interior platform to merge with the external environment.

Farther out onto the reservoir lies a long platform that is aligned parallel to the stage and supports another scrim. This water platform acts as yet another plane from which to view form, *reverse* conditions of an architectural body that *shifts* from landscape to waterscape. Access to this platform is via the *dislocated catwalk*; which emerges from the exterior courtyard and extends out onto the water plane, beyond the water based scrim.

Architecturally, a tenuous, cable bridge, that references the site through *movement* dictated by the water and through analogy; stop logs that lie as linear elements in the reservoir.

The poetic intent references the existential understanding of dance and the human condition; the search for the exhilarating, the *vertigo* in life, which propels



us farther into phenomenal space that encapsulates the void and searches through a stillness in motion.

Architecturally and experientially, the implication of an open, flexible system allows for variations in the course of events. This creates a continual shift in accordance to how choreographers design and how multiple meanings can arise from a dance piece; all in reference to a choreography that reinterprets movement within certain and ever evolving spatial orientations. The line that distinguishes a built work from its site or landscape has now shifted, an attempt has been made to blur distinctions and thus prompt viewers to see more clearly...

*...[in the] notion of the living present...there is no time for water, for stone...time only exists for the person who gazes at the stone, who watches the water flow...the living present is without past or without future: Its in the quick, its in the speed of falling into the world totally so, that is to say, in totality with the body of a dancer...*

Engaging in the singular world of the mind and the body, it is the lived body of action that brings us ever closer to an attitude towards life; sensing the world in the first perspective. This interaction crosses both the physical and the metaphysical worlds; inner and the outer spheres which overlap to form a clairvoyant perception of what the eye sees. Dancers work through this philosophy; their worlds are tied to a *space of motion, time and becoming*. As a type of *dwelling*, a dancer fuses movement and being through space and time.

Perhaps this is why the philosopher, Heidegger, describes being in movement terms. To be is to move. "Falling" is his analogic response to an authentic existence, which is not "something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which everydayness is seized upon." Heidegger celebrates an "unceasing movement and ever expanding time and space," giving it a dance framework that acts as a building block which propels momentum onward. For Heidegger, living is perceived through movement, and dance is the purest expression of this livelihood as it is engaged within its own system.

And so, through *falling* we grasp a new understanding of what it is meant to be grounded. Grounded in the sense of *moving towards, reaching or extending* forth at the image or the idea of acquiring stability; a permanent base or anchor which is sought through the juxtaposed worlds of impermanence and ungroundedness. It is precisely through motion and in the living present that we engage in a sort of transient stability perpetually evolving according to temporal space frames. We find sanctitude *en route*, and it is within the process of finding where and how to dwell, engrained by habit and memory, that we develop into who and what we are.

This thesis has argued that dance - an existentialist embodiment of discipline and creative improvisation - offers a multidimensional perspective on how architectural design can respond to the immediate context of how we live. Dance and architecture are both grounded yet conceptually free to meet the unexpected circumstance and celebrate its arrival. This project attempts to capture the nomadic idea of *transition, overlap and motion* within an architecture that explores *groundedness*, in light of dance and movement through the hybrid nature of

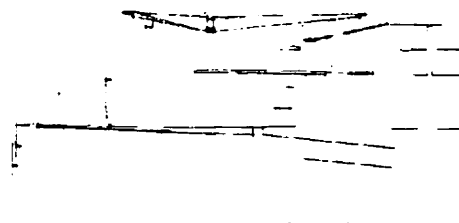
building use and programme.

No longer a linear process, displacement overlays differences rather than isolating them, creating a richer architectural movement that reveals energy and transient potential within an open system. And so the architectural body can be seen in light of a dancer's body: like dance, architectural design is grounded and light - a moving system, systematic movement.

*Body am I, lived through and through, and nothing else;  
and soul is only a word for something about the body.*

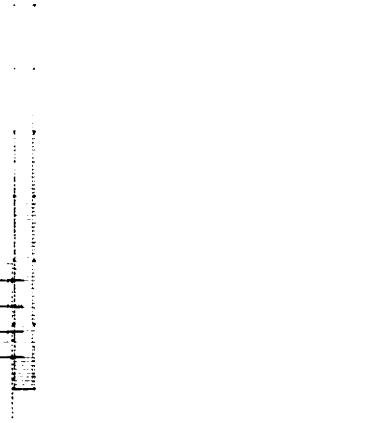
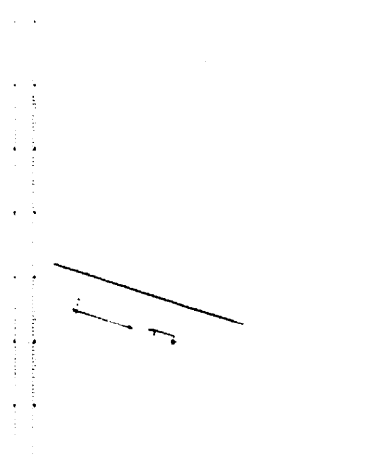
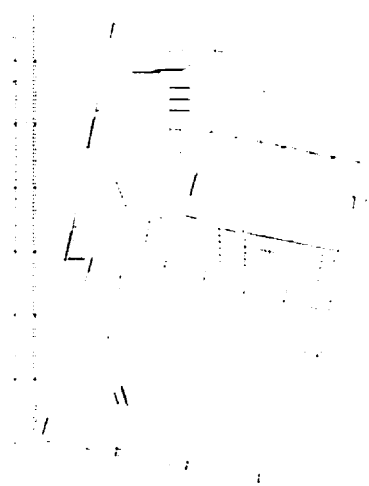
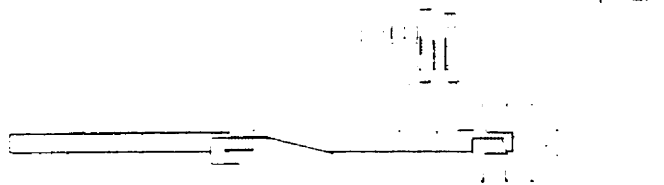
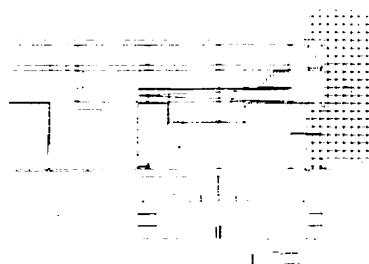
resolution:

the project as architectural body.



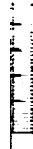
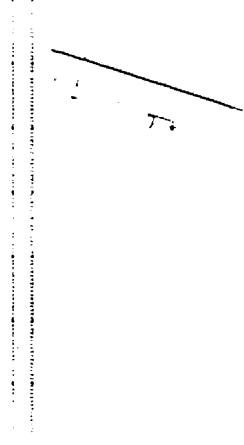
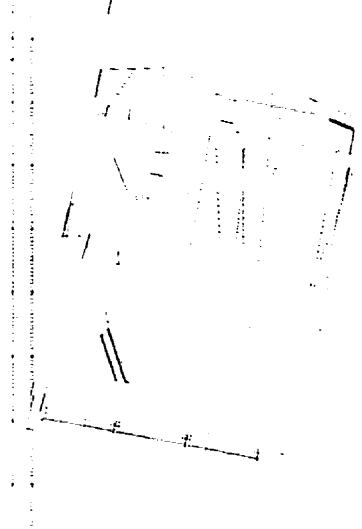




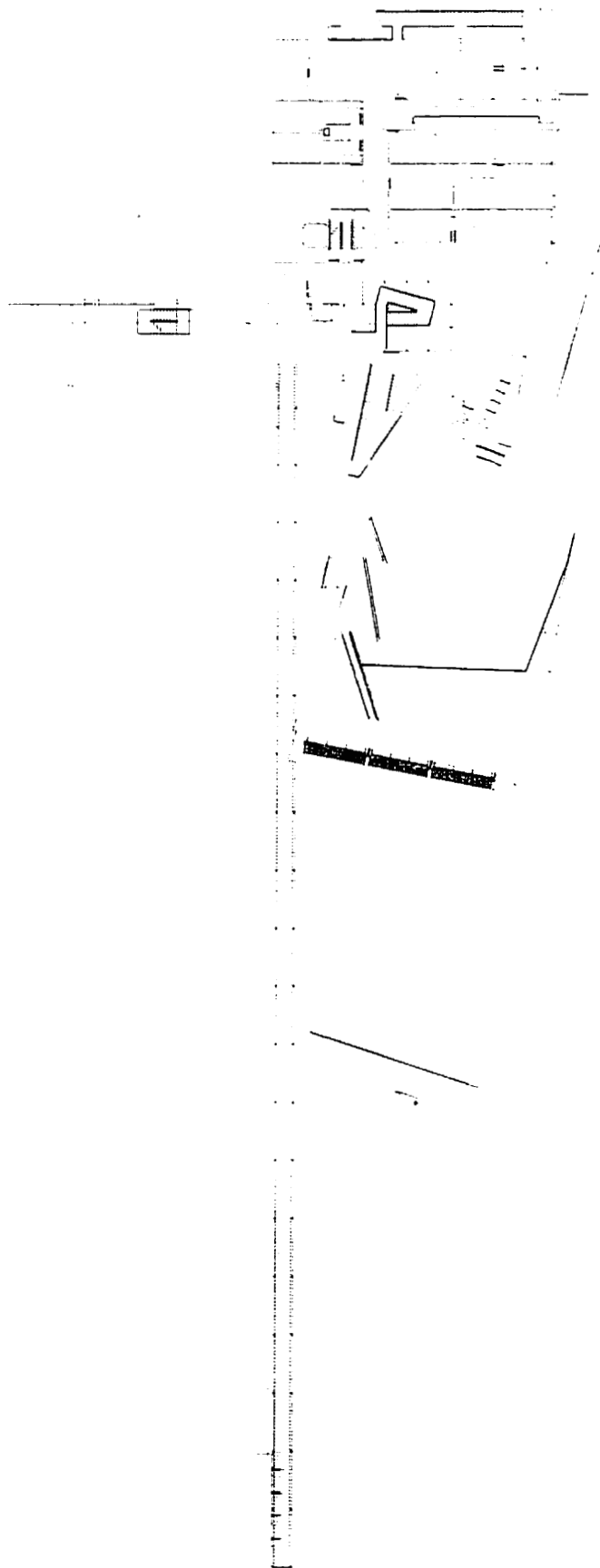




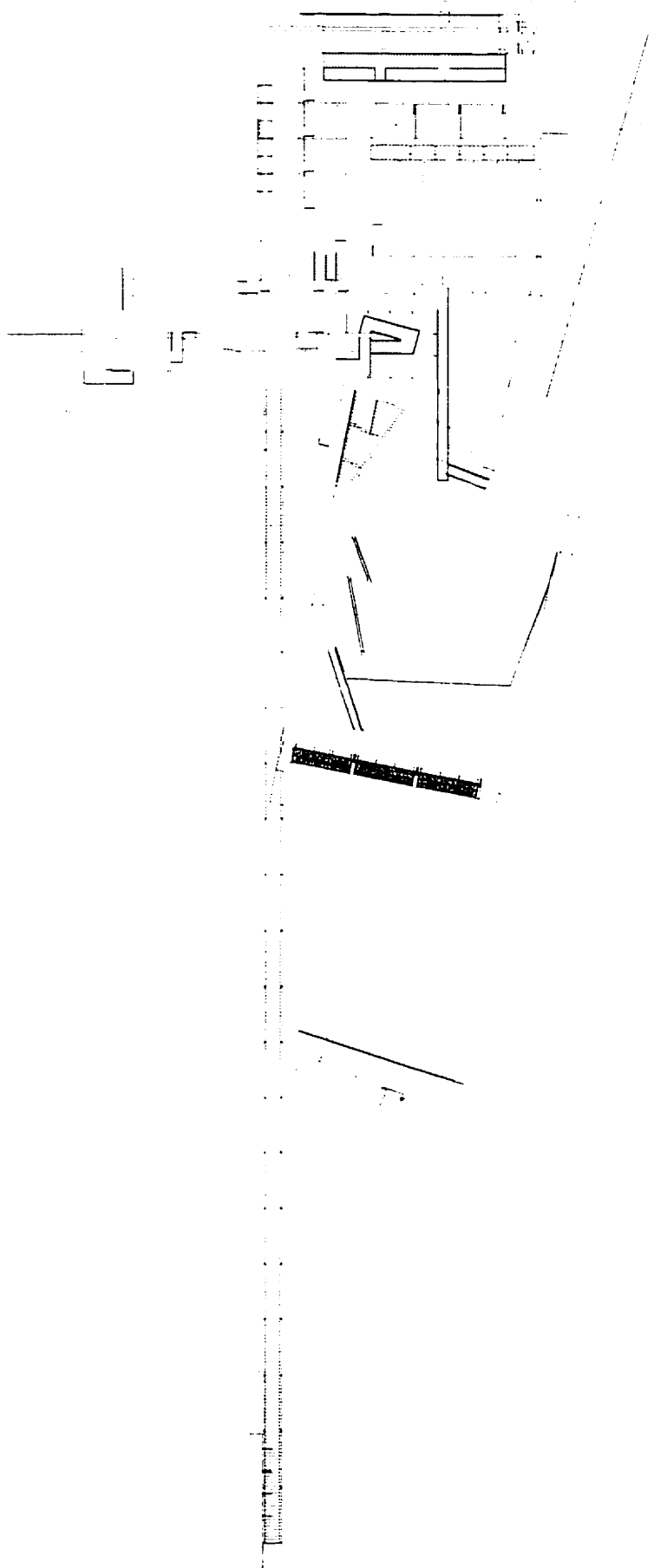




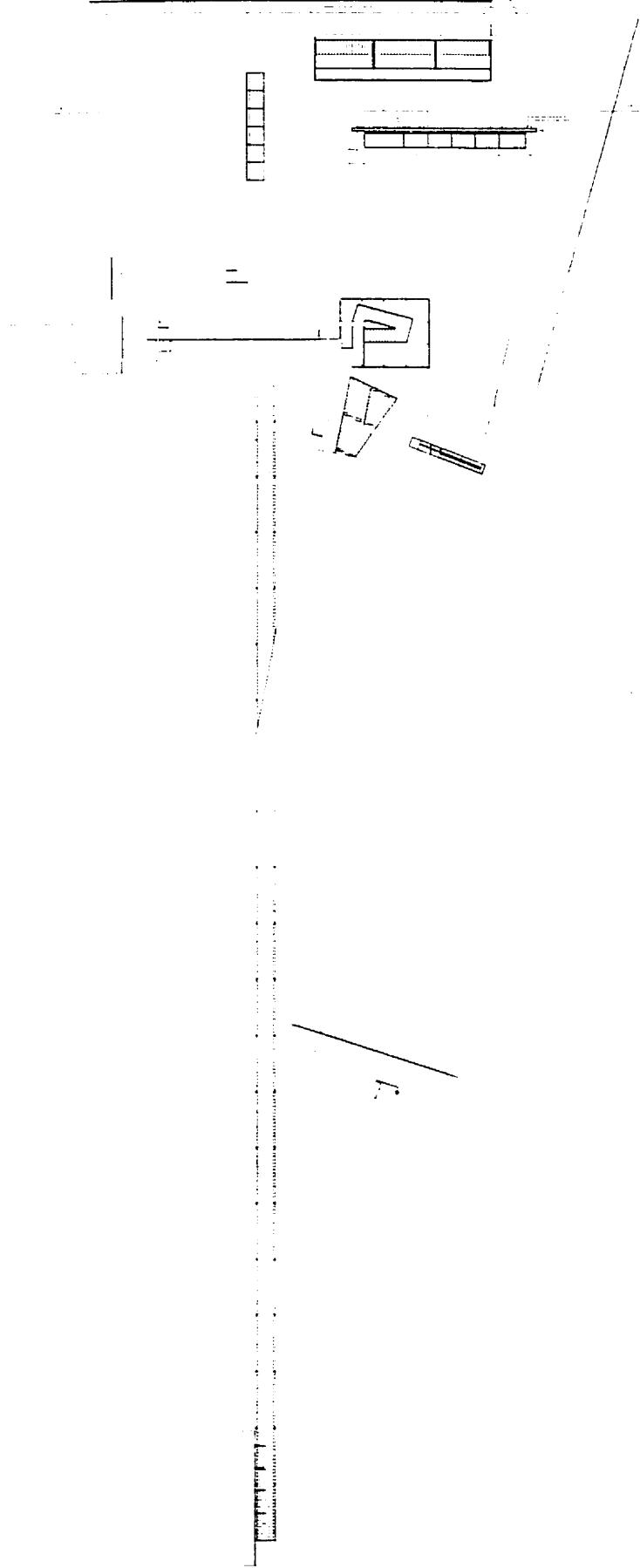






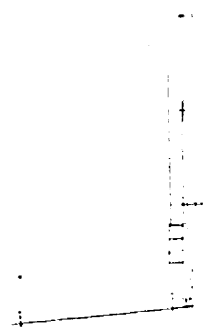
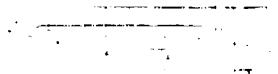
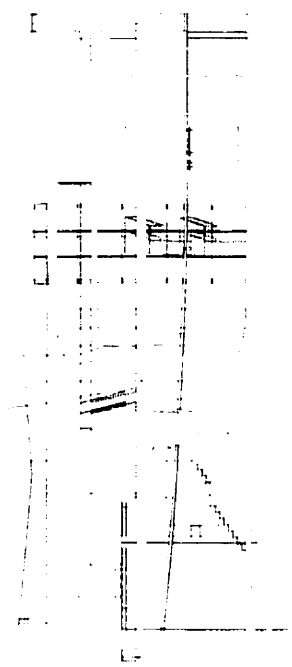
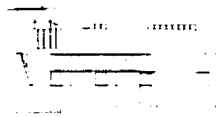




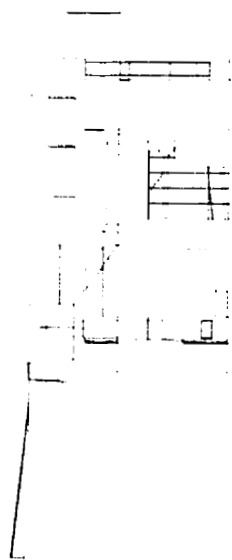
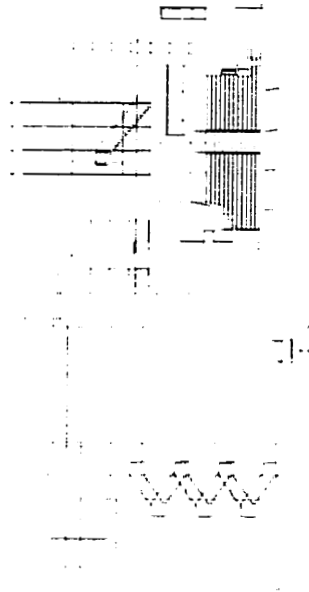






















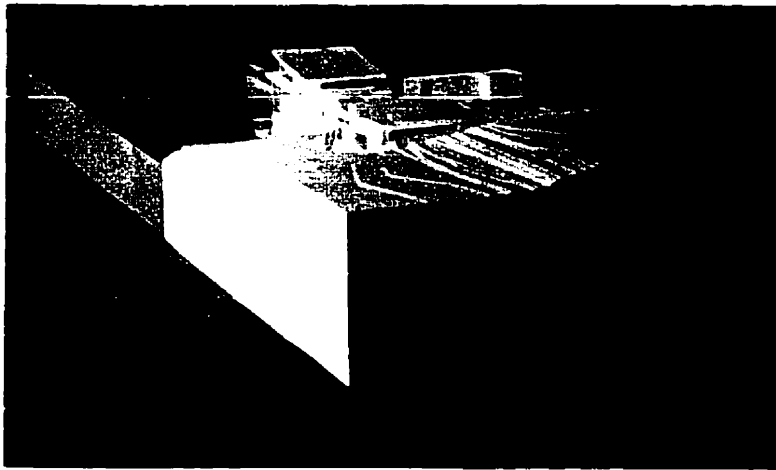


FIGURE 10-10

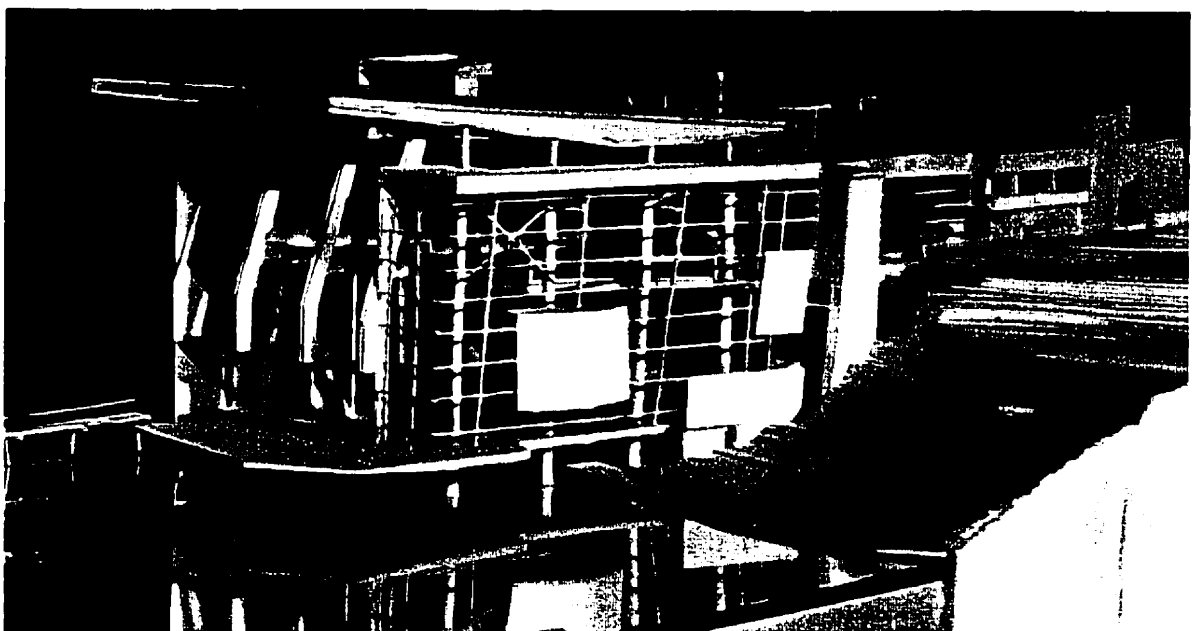
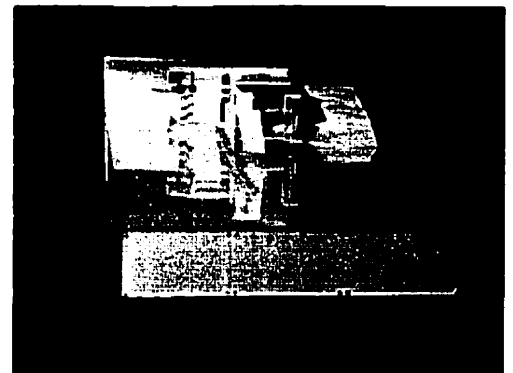


FIGURE 10-11





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