

108 Ephemeral Fragments

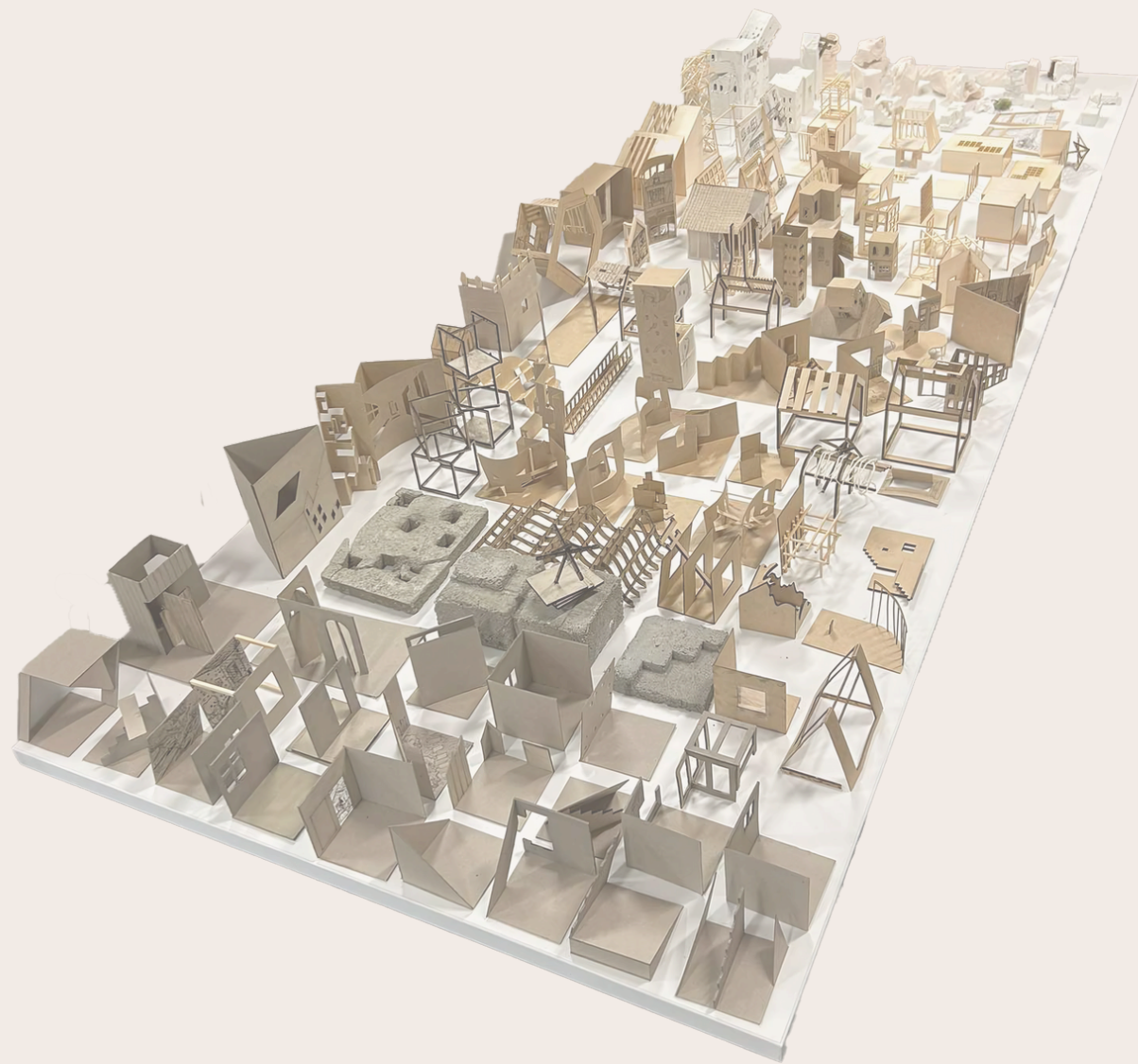
A Poetic Ontology of Yesterday

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Abstract

Ephemeral Fragments explores the elusive narratives embedded within remembered spaces framed by Feng Shui principles through research, model making and poetry. This design-led research project explores how childhood memories shape our connection to the world, using Feng Shui principles to examine my early life experiences. Through a mixed-methods approach combining drawing, model-making, and poetry, the project uncovers insights into the fragmented narratives of my personal childhood recollections and the poetics of nostalgic spaces. By embracing an interdisciplinary and non-anthropocentric approach, memories are utilized to cultivate a deeper sensitivity towards the non-human aspects of space. This thesis uses the debris of my memories to question; *how can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?*

The Bagua Map; a Feng Shui compass is used as a prompt to extract memories and the architectural elements engaged in them. The fragmented memories are categorised into nine sections of the Bagua map; abundance, recognition, relationships, family, health, creativity, knowledge, career and travel.

As a Chinese born Aotearoa citizen with a superstitious upbringing, Feng Shui has been integral to my memories of built environments. Models of specific fragments of these spaces at varying degrees of detail, scale and refinement capture fractions of the architectural spaces that contain the narrative of my life. The fragments are then reimagined for the final models, where the fragmented memories of each of the nine sections are enmeshed; creating structures in which multiple timelines coexist. These nine models express the unexpected personal discoveries that were uncovered while allowing memory to lead the design process. Through this iterative process, I explore the metaphysical dimensions of space, where memories fabricate a new materiality of built environments. Recreating architectural fragments of the past uncovers the spiritual topography of memory, where the tangibility of built environments converges with the intangibility of recollection. These reconstructions—moments frozen in time—hold the resonance of what has been, illuminating the lustre of forgotten places; the life force within fragments of yesterday and all the yesterdays.

These fragments tell a story of the places I have been.

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To Dr Tan, noot noot.

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To my brother Jesse, sorry I never sent you my thesis for proof reading! Writing a thesis feels more humiliating than I anticipated but at least you get to read it now.

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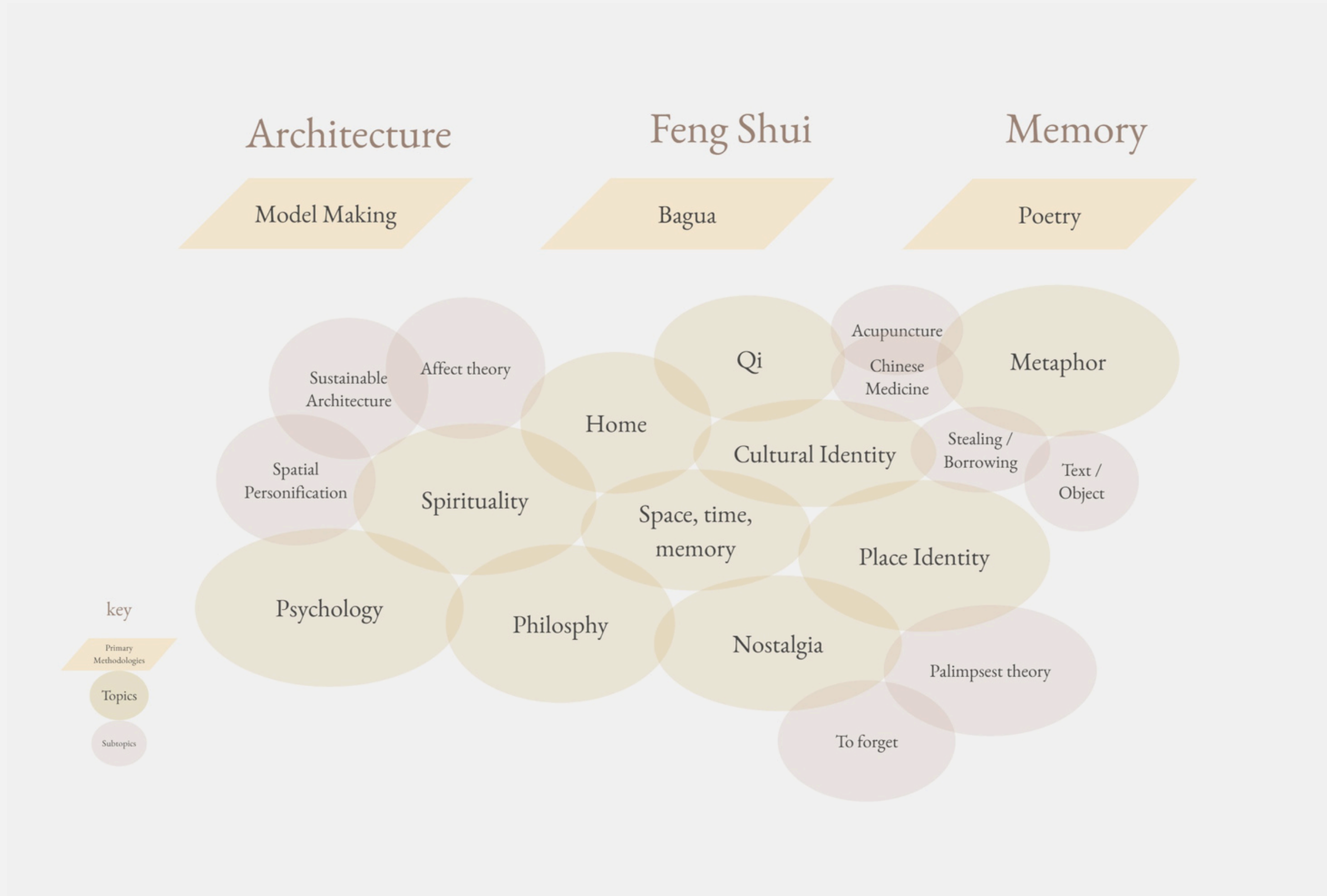
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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Yufei Wang





Introduction

This project utilizes Feng Shui to explore the belief that early life experiences and encounters within a remembered space profoundly shape personal identity, health, and connection to the world. This realm of design-led research explores the lasting impact of childhood memories on an individual's life journey. These spaces are primarily within the domestic realm, although some fragments also capture memories of public spaces. The project positions reality as the dynamic interplay of physical, cognitive and spiritual aspects. My fragmented memories of past spaces are used to explore the impermanence of all within the physical realm. This impermanence is observed through spiritual ideologies which are the basis of Feng Shui.

Inspired by the project *100 rooms of solitude* by Dino Chai, this research employs a methodology of expression through drawing, model making and poetry to uncover insights of wider theoretical and personal contexts. These personal contexts include memory-scapes, home, emotional terrains, and cultural background of the author; communicated through fragments of domestic memories. Key research areas include the fragmented narrative patterns of personal childhood recollections, the poetics of nostalgic spaces and the potential influential role of memories on architectural design processes.

The philosophy of this project is rooted in architectural practice, but lies on the crossroads between that of architecture, literature, philosophy and psychology. An interdisciplinary approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of all matter on earth. This project cultivates a greater sensitivity towards the poetics of remembered places through Feng Shui principles framed by personal recollections.

My practice is framed by the ideologies which define the ancient art of Feng shui. The Taoism philosophy is that ‘Qi’ (life force and energy) is found within every aspect of a space. Qi can be enhanced or diminished by variables found in traditional feng shui principles. Qi manifests as the experience of a space; this is represented in this project as the 9 sections of the Bagua map (abundance, recognition, relationships, family, health, creativity, knowledge, career and travel) as a both an enabler of “fate” and a product of it. The memories represented in these fragments are driven by spatial qualities such as orientation, flow, composition, light, entrance, landscape, elements, materiality, location and scale. These spatial qualities are captured in fragments of the past and are each captured in a way which feels authentic to the memory itself. The fragments are categorised using the nine sections of the Bagua map which inform the final models.

During my upbringing in a spiritual household, I was taught to constantly be aware of the energies around me. The memories explored in this research tell a story of these fragments in time and explores a slice of my past life. Contexts such as geographical location, cultural background and physical actuality of these physical spaces are not explicitly stated within the course of my model making and poetic approach. Rather, the feelings within these memories are obtained within the model making process. Every fragment is ephemeral, but this thesis captures the abstruse experience of these spaces.

The chosen methods of storytelling, poetry, photography, and modeling are used to manifest experiential qualities of domestic and urban spaces. These forms of expression tether the ever-shifting energies of a space to portray the memory and speak of ephemeral qualities which transcend the physical constraints of a space. The act of model making realizes both tangible and intangible qualities captures the Qi. This extraction of metaphysical components allows exploration of the principles which define a space, these experiential qualities shape the memories that form within a built environment. These memories paint a picture of the symbiotic affect between self and space, offering the potential for spiritually informed design interventions in future design projects.

<p>WEALTH & PROSPERITY</p> <p>Element: Wood Colors: Purple, Green, Gold, Red Décor: Art, Lucky Bamboo, Jade Plant, Round & Gold Mirror, Vision board, Horse figure or art, Symbols of money and wealth, Number 8, Luxury items, Fountain or aquarium</p>	<p>FAME & REPUTATION</p> <p>Element: Fire Colors: Red, Orange, Dark Pink Décor: Business cards, Name plate, Lamp, Candles, Fireplace, Awards, Certificate or diploma, Symbols or images of fire To avoid: everything that represents element of water</p>	<p>LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>Element: Earth Colors: White and Pink Décor: Decorate in pairs with Candles, Pillows, Hearts, Fresh flowers, Images or figures of 2 Horses, Photos of you and your partner, Symbols of love and relationships</p>
<p>HEALTH & FAMILY</p> <p>Element: Wood Colors: Green and Brown Décor: Family photos in wooden frames, Plants and flowers, Lucky Bamboo or Bamboo décor, Symbols of health or well-being To avoid: everything made from metal element</p>	<p>WELL-BEING (CENTER)</p> <p>Element: Earth Colors: Yellow, Beige, Earth tones Décor: Carpet or a rug</p>	<p>CHILDREN & CREATIVITY</p> <p>Element: Metal Colors: White Décor: Children images or artwork in metal frames, Art, Kids toys, Family games To avoid: everything that represents element of fire</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM</p> <p>Element: Earth Colors: Blue Décor: Books and bookshelves, Meditation symbols or items, Plants, Wisdom quotes, Anything related to knowledge and learning</p>	<p>CAREER & LIFE PATH</p> <p>Element: Water Colors: Black Décor: Mirror in dark frame, Glass decorations, Art or symbols of water, Aquarium or fountain, Images of a dream career or business</p>	<p>HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL</p> <p>Element: Metal Colors: Gray and Silver Décor: Suitcase, Travel accessories, Address Book, Business cards, Helpful contacts, World map, Globe, Symbols of spirituality, Souvenirs</p>
<p>Starting Point (The Door)</p>		

146. Bagua Map: Taqua Fengshui.

108 ephemeral fragments



Methodology

The thesis occupies an expanded field of architecture through research and design of remembered spaces through the lens of Feng Shui and personal experiences. Utilizing an existing methodology by Dino Chai, this research utilizes an interdisciplinary design approach, where the research question of *how can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?* is explored through the act of model making, drawing and free verse poetry. The design research methods applied are inspired by existing projects, but are given new meaning when applied to my personal context. These forms of enquiry disrupts the conventional trajectory of envisioning future spaces. Instead, this project deliberately looks backward, navigating the realm of memory to reconstruct and reinterpret the intimate and often overlooked domestic spaces. The act of reflecting on past spaces reveals a means of understanding the complex dynamics between self, space, and memory.

This multidisciplinary approach was inspired by the existing methodology used by Dino Chai (2011) in *100 rooms of solitude*. Chai began his project by making one model every day from everyday memories for 100 days. These models are presented alongside his poetry, stories and vignettes which describe the memory associated with it. Chai writes “The project... explores the idea that everyday experiences have a profound impact upon the design process. At the same time, the act of designing transforms the memory and the reality of everyday existence into something that is novel. “. Chai highlights the capacity of design to transform memory. Through this change the recalled space is no longer ordinary. Chai uses the word “novel” to indicate this unique turn of the everyday into something which is magical. By recontextualizing Chai’s methodology, I build upon existing knowledge and personalize the approach, tailoring it to personal and philosophical contexts.

“Stealing and Borrowing” in “Design as Research” by Gesche Joost (2016) discusses the strength in drawing from existing design methods and challenges traditional notions of originality in design. Joost argues that borrowing and stealing are essential components of the design process, rendering the traditional view of designers as solitary geniuses problematic. Designers often draw upon existing knowledge, adapting and recontextualizing ideas to create novel solutions. Joost’s discussion highlights the tension between the desire for originality and the inevitability of influence. Acknowledging the role of borrowing and stealing can allow a greater focus on developing innovative solutions rather than obsessing over originality. By utilizing the existing methodology of Dino Chai, I can further test the opportunities and constraints of this method through personal contexts. The “Text / Object” section of Joost’s text explores the blurred line between linguistic and material representations in design. This concept challenges traditional notions of design artifacts as solely physical entities, instead positing that they embody textual qualities that carry meaning and semantic significance. Conversely, texts themselves can be viewed as objects, possessing the power to materialize a mere thought. The text-object concept informs the development of the design artifacts within this project. Text in the form of research and poetry informs the model making process, illustrating the reciprocal relationship between language and materiality. This design-led methodology prioritizes creative practices as the primary driver for understanding of the research proposition. Designing becomes a means of learning and testing a proposition (Downton, 2003, p.98). Theoretical literature and place-specific information contextualize the ideas within broader scholarly thinking and justify the unconventional and abstract approach of this project. Theoretical contextual research is embedded in the design-led process and the findings are reflected in the outcome, allowing the natural rhythm of designing to lead the research’s direction. The term research in this thesis also includes the autoethnographic aspect of personal memories depicted through model and poetry. Remembering is a means of research into self that inspires the design process and vice versa. This research evaluates its impact on the broader theoretical agenda, but also prioritizes individual experiences. Model making and poetic framing are used to express the ontological nature of personal memories in and around domestic spaces. The process of model-making captures memories in an abstract and fragmented manner, distilling the essence of a place into a tangible form. By fragmenting spaces into remembered experiential qualities, a focus is put on phenomenological qualities of past spaces rather than their material presence. This approach acknowledges that my memories of spaces are rarely precise or comprehensive but rather a collection of fleeting impressions, sensory experiences, and emotional resonances. A combination of model making and poetic interventions are used to capture the subjective experience and life force of a space. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003, p. 5) describe how art-making reforms experience into symbols reinterpreted as objects, such as artifacts, gestures, or words. Delving into the memory of spaces reveals hidden patterns, textures, and rhythms that underlie my experiences, evoking the ontological dimensions of space. Compressing a space into evocative forms communicates the experience in a way that is both intuitive and visceral, speaking directly to my emotional and sensory self.

Model-making in this thesis is a form of phenomenological inquiry that seeks to uncover the underlying structures and experiences that shape my perceptions of space. The act of translating fragments of memories into a physical form enhances my understanding of how spaces shape my experiences and in turn; how my experiences shape my understanding of space. This methodology recognizes that my remembered perceptions are seldom exact and gives into the mistranslation of the past by leaning into the recollective experience to depict the feeling within the memory. This approach challenges the notion of built environments as a static form and explores the playful interpretations of these places. The act of making is also treated as a form of play to reflect the childlike nature within the memories of my adolescence. The intuitive act of play integrated with the making methodology allows me to remember through the physical act. Various materials such as case board, clay, plaster, card and wood are selected to reflect the emotional or physical materiality of the memory. This materiality is further explored through the organization of these models into the Bagua Map categories. Model making is a literal hands on approach to remembering, with the model both communicating and exploring the memory.

Poetry

A key methodology within this design-led research is poetry. Poetic framing is used to express the nostalgia of places in time I cannot physically revisit, yet I do so with poetry. In this project, free form poetry is used within the design and the research aspect of the methodology to accompany the model making process. The research, poetry, and design process influenced each other in a continuous cycle and are not formatted chronologically. The poems in this research don't tell a story in a traditional way. Instead, they focus on specific experiences to show how memories can be fragmented. These literary vignettes of my past are embedded within the design chapter with the corresponding physical model. Poetry as a design form explores the intersection of language, space, and experience, while the research aspect is executed by placing myself as the user of a built space to gauge the affective experiential qualities of the space.

The intersection between poetry and architecture explores spatial relationships amidst metaphorical landscapes by applying the design of poetic stanzas onto built environments. Poetry is often regarded as a literary art form that possesses design qualities. The arrangement of words, rhythms, and imagery in poetry creates spatial experiences that engage the reader's senses. Poetic devices such as metaphors, simile, and personification can be used as literary design elements that describe spatial experiences. Metaphors establish connections between seemingly disparate entities, much like the relationships between design elements in a composition. Simile and personification introduce new perspectives and emotional resonance, akin to the empathetic connections between users and designed spaces. These poetic devices are depicted within the model making methodology of this thesis and embedded throughout the poetry. Poets like Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson employ spatial metaphors to convey complex ideas, while T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound experiment with fragmented forms and stanzas to reflect the disjointed nature of modern experience (Hollander, 2013).

The methodology in this project is a departure from the conventional and does not follow a strict chronological narrative. Instead, fragments are modeled as they are encountered, to fully engage the intuitive process of remembering. This project disrupts the conventional trajectory of architecture, prompting a reflective examination of how memories of domestic spaces persistently resonate within us, shaping our perceptions of the built environment. This process reorients the design lens toward the past, proposing that a richer understanding of prior habitats can enlighten a more empathetic design methodology for the future, present and even the past.

Metaphor plays a crucial role in both poetry and architecture, as it allows for the creation of complex, multilayered meanings that resonate with readers and users. Metaphors in poetry are used to convey emotions, ideas, and experiences, while in architecture, metaphors can be used to create buildings that evoke specific emotions and ideas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A metaphor is a word or phrase that figuratively describes an object or action, suggesting a resemblance without literal meaning. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) note that metaphors help us understand experiences by applying a language from one domain to structure another. The model making and poetry in this thesis communicate intangible feelings portrayed through abstraction and metaphor. Ricoeur (2003) highlights the role of linguistic imagination in creating and recreating meaning through metaphor, which has both rhetorical and poetic functions (p. 12).

The language of the memory translated into the physical realm is represented by the playful translation or mistranslations through these forms. The power of a metaphor is used in this sense to manifest an intangible thing, such as a memory and feeling, into a physical form; a model, drawing, poetry, or text. Unlike the act of modeling an existing physical object or landscape, these non physical thoughts are easier materialized when transferred to a metaphorical sense. Metaphorical thinking is applied in the design aspect of this project by personifying experiences of place into physical models. This is done by modeling elements of a space in a way that may be inaccurate, but is reflective of my remembered perception of it. For example, a staircase I remember from my childhood may not truly be as steep as I remember it to be, but I will make the model as steep as the child version of myself remembers it to represent the experience of climbing up the stairs. In this sense, poetry is used as a design form to metaphorically represent selected memories.

Photography of designed models are presented with corresponding poetry within the body of the fragmentation design section of this project. Poetry accompanies visual depictions of memories to enrich the profoundness of the fragment. The deconstructed nature of a poem reflects the fragmented state of the memories and offers a peephole into emotive states of personal recollection. Spatial relationships within poetry such as lineation, stanza structure, and enjambment also provide parallels to the use of spatial elements in architecture design.

Scope and Limitations

This research undertakes an open-ended, speculative inquiry into the complexities of memories anchored primarily around domestic locations of my past, leveraging architecture as a catalyst for exploration. The design-led research approach embraces a phenomenological iterative process to produce architectural speculations rather than a resolved outcome. It intentionally sidesteps technical considerations such as structural systems, traditional materiality, and building codes to focus on a theoretical exploration of architecture's role in shaping personal narratives and enriching our connection with place.

The research into the effect of architecture elements on a human subject is explored by placing myself as the subject and the observer. Self discovery is used as a means to broaden scholarly knowledge of architectural psychology and space. Remembering is the primary form of research and speaks to the reciprocal affect of architecture through psychological, spiritual and philosophical means. However, this project does not conclude psychological architecture as being good or bad. Instead, it simply observes the patterns of living within and around architecture.

The actuality of places referred to within this research such as photographs, maps and explicit places are intentionally excluded from the scope of this research to allow an open-ended exploration into the depths of recollection.

Spiritual concepts and histories are explored through the research of this project that are subjective to one's personal beliefs. These theories are explored as a means to develop the conceptual sensitivity to the nonphysical elements of a space.

The theoretical research, poetic vignettes and design process often occurred simultaneously or in irregular intervals of each, with each process inspiring momentum in the others. The arrangement of design work in this thesis is not in chronological order of the time they were made. Nor are the memories arranged in a typical timeline progression. Instead, the design work and research are formatted to conform to traditional thesis chapters.

The vignette poems within this research do not typically move forward as a typical narrative. Rather, they dive into the depths of a niche memory to convey my view of memories to be of fragmented nature. This fragmented nature of memories is expressed in a way which speaks to my memory itself, but the thought patterns may be either foreign or feel familiar to the reader.

The models created depicting memories do not serve as an accurate representation of the places they speak of, rather they are representations of the internalised depiction of the memories of these spaces in conflux with my preexisting views of self and the idea of home. My ideas of place, self, memory and time are portrayed in a sense which feels true, however, these ideas are merely interpretations of what has been perceived. It must be acknowledged that these interpretations are shaped by internal biases and that the memories spoken of are tarnished by the passage of time and re-recollection.



Theoretical Context

Space, Time, Memory

The relationship between time, memory, and architecture is complex and multifaceted, with each component influencing the others in profound ways. Buildings and spaces can shape our understanding of time, preserve historical events, and evoke memories. However, research in psychology and cognitive science has demonstrated that memories are often susceptible to distortion, manipulation, and forgetting (Schacter, 1999). The process of recall is prone to errors with memories being influenced by a range of factors, including social suggestion, emotional state, and cultural context (Loftus, 1996). Furthermore, the passage of time can lead to the degradation of memories, making them increasingly vulnerable to being forgotten (Ebbinghaus, 1885). This relationship of architecture and memory is strung together by the passage of time. Architectural form can influence the way a place is remembered and the memory can be further changed as the years go by.

Psychologist Daniel Schacter (1996) writes that memory organizes our environment through both objective and subjective processes, comprising three long-term memory systems: semantic (factual knowledge), procedural (skill acquisition), and episodic (personally significant events) (pp. 17, 52, 82-83, 134-135). This project focuses on the third system in relation to spatial experience. Repeated activation of these cognitive systems through sensory cues can recover associated incidents and emotions, potentially uncovering previously unrecalled memories (pp. 82-83). The concept of passing time is based entirely on perception and memory. The only sure reality is the present point in time. What we know of the time passed is only through recollection, and that, only through the lens of our perceptions. The role of memory is arguably the most important aspect of neurology and inevitably; the human experience.

Confabulation is a memory distortion mechanism which fabricates information to fill memory gaps, potentially generating false recollections (Friedman, 1993). Factors, including social influence, emotional intensity, and cognitive biases, can activate confabulation, thereby distorting memory (Schacter, 1999). The influx of information can alter, distort, or supplant original memories (Schacter, 1996, pp. 98-133). The susceptibility to external suggestions, known as suggestibility, can also alter memories by incorporating added information (Loftus, 1996). This can occur through subtle cues, misinformation, and social pressures, leading to modified memories (Schacter, 1999). Recent research has probed the connection between memory distortion and architecture, underscoring the need for a more refined understanding of how buildings shape our memories (Klein, 2013).

Childhood experiences - including activities, incidents, encounters, emotional responses, and choices - have a lasting impact. These experiences influence future actions and interactions, creating new episodic memories for all involved. Although episodic memory appears fragmented (Schacter, 1996, pp. 80-81, Crites, 1971, p. 35), autobiographical memories seem to be organized (Schacter, 1996, p. 151) and intertwined through narration, whether shared with others or reflected upon personally (Schacter, 1996, p. 90). Episodes are consolidated and embedded through discussion, contemplation, sleep, and recollection. If experiences are not processed and reflected upon at the time, or revisited for further insight, the memory may not be stored as effectively. Stephen Crites (1971) posits that remembered experiences inherently possess a narrative quality through time (p. 26). Crites argues that experience has an internal chronology, with a past, present, and future, yet consciousness of the present moment coexists with this timeline (pp. 32-34, 37). Memory preserves the original experience, while internal narratives embed and interpret events over time through reinterpretation (pp. 36-37). In experiencing the present, we recall the past and anticipate future actions through "dreams, worries, and wishes" or "guesses and predictions" (Crites, 2001, p. 38; Bergson, 1991, p. 228). Memories influence our everyday decision making and prediction of various potential future events. In this sense, the past never truly goes away, but rather, lives on in various forms.

The fragmentation of memory is foundational to this research, it argues against a singular recollection of space, event or place and for the relational and competing interpretations within a memory. This disassembly of components often takes the memory off into various rabbit holes and tangents which surface recalls of finer spatial details. The detailed memory of a space can either yield an accurate remembrance of the space or a completely unrecognizable confabulated space. The very act of confabulating memories reinforces the belief that this memory is accurate. The act of model making and poetry writing to remember past spaces creates something which is neither memory nor place, but a third thing which is simultaneously memory and place. This third thing does not physically exist but the act of creating brings it into fruition. This memory-place is often simultaneously unrecognizable and nostalgic. Like a home which does not exist, or a lover you have not met.

Affect

The affect theory sits on the basis that humans are a body of emotion and reactions which respond to various external and internal forces. Affect is thought to be an intuitive force which flows through the body before a conscious thought or feeling takes place. The theory is primarily rooted in psychological and philosophical constructs. Built environments can be seen as "affective landscapes" that possess the power to shape human emotions (Stewart, 2011). The theory suggests that buildings are not merely passive containers for human activity, instead they are active participants in the production of affective experiences (Brennan, 2004). Aspects of built environments, such as lighting, color, flow, and texture, can significantly impact human well-being (Kaplan, 1995). Affect Theory studies have shown that natural light exposure can enhance mood and cognitive functioning (Veitch & Newsham, 2000), while certain color schemes can influence emotional states and social interactions (Lüscher, 1927).

The affect theory in the context of built spaces challenges conventional paradigms by uncovering methods of leveraging affect as a design tool. The methodology of this research of drawing from affective experience to create architectural models and writing uncovers insights into the ways in which spatial environments are experienced and inhabited. The application of this theory challenges the notion that built elements possess a fixed essence and that time unfolds with a seamless continuity, revealing the hidden tremors that unsettle the foundations of "reality."

Feng Shui

Feng Shui's holistic approach recognizes the intricate relationships between environment and memory. Design principles within Feng Shui design highlight the role of affect theory when influencing a built space. The concept of Qi is a principle in Feng Shui philosophy which has been influential in shaping architectural design. Qi is described as a vital life force that permeates the built environment and influences occupants' emotional and physical well-being (Lai, 2016).

Feng Shui concepts associate meaning to specific spaces, colors, and materials that influence perceived experiences. The Bagua map divides spaces into nine areas corresponding to different aspects of life, such as relationships, career, and wealth. Analyzing childhood spaces through the Bagua map lens reveals how specific areas may have shaped nostalgic experiences. For instance, the family and relationships area (Zhen) may have been a warm, cozy space fostering social bonding, while the wealth and prosperity area (Xun) may have reflected abundance, stability, and security. Feng Shui elements - wood, fire, earth, metal, and water - also contribute to nostalgic experiences. Wood represents growth, renewal, and family, while fire symbolizes warmth, energy, and passion. Earth embodies stability, comfort, and nurturing, metal is associated with clarity, precision, and mental focus, and water reflects emotions, flow, and transformation.

Built environments designed with Feng Shui considerations can enhance occupants' well-being and vitality (Lai, 2016). Wang (2020) discovered that Feng Shui-influenced architectural design elements, such as curved lines and natural materials, can contribute to a sense of comfort and relaxation. The psychological impact of these atmospheres can be understood as the affective qualities of a space. Strategic placement of design elements can optimize the flow of qi, thereby creating a harmonious and nourishing environment that resonates with the essence of life (Lai, 2016). An environment that nurtures Qi evokes positive emotions and affective responses in occupants, such as feelings of calmness, comfort, and well-being. The life force within a built space is expressed through the health of its living occupants. Nurturing these affective forces begins with an attunement to them.

Qi

While the affect theory in Feng Shui draws the relation between bodily reactions and a space. The concepts of feng shui also position a built environment as a body of space with similar needs as that of a human body. The concept of qi in Feng Shui shares striking similarities with the principles of Chinese acupuncture, particularly in the context of architectural design. Qi is translated as “vital life force”, but the concept of qi is simultaneously far more complex and simple. The concept of qi is embodied in feng shui or Chinese acupuncture concepts. This parallel is rooted in the understanding that qi is a vital energy that permeates all aspects of the natural world, including the human body and the built environment (Hwang, 2014). Flow is the key aspect of vitality in qi within the body of a space and a living being. The body needs an uninterrupted flow of blood, nutrients, and air to be healthy, a space needs constant air flow, lighting, and circulation to promote comfort and health of the space and consequently; the health and happiness of those who occupy the space. The expression of life force can also be related to the Māori idea of Mauri or life force. Mauri holds parallel values to the idea of qi. Māori values and mythologies often personify non-human entities such as ecological and built elements, ode to Māori values such as mauri (life force), whanaungatanga (kinship), kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and Manaaki Tanga (respect). The value of recognizing ecologies as living allows humans to realize the undeniable worth of these elements. This aligns with the Māori belief of whakapapa (genealogy), which acknowledges the interconnectedness of all life forms.

The qi of the space is not merely an intangible concept, it is personified through the elements, components, and compositions of a body and / or space. The physical aspect of qi is informed by the walls, lighting, ventilation, materiality, and arrangements of a space. Similarly, the nutrition, air and hydration of a living organism will surely affect its health. The immaterial side of qi is thought of to be the energy and vitality which constantly flows through space and our bodies. The physical component of qi feeds the intangible forces and vice versa. This flow of qi is the force which allows life to flourish. This flow's disruptions trigger health problems in a living being or congested a built space, which consequently causes health problems.

Within traditional Chinese acupuncture, the flow of qi is stimulated through needle insertion at specific pressure points. Feng Shui manipulates qi through strategic placement of architectural elements like walls, doors, windows, and furniture to create a harmonious environment. Both practices recognize specific points and areas corresponding to key aspects of human experiences. In acupuncture, pressure points relate to bodily organs and systems, while in Feng Shui, building areas correspond to aspects of life like wealth and relationships. Both practices balance qi flow to promote health, well-being, and harmony. Imbalances and disparities in built or bodily spaces result in both bodily and spatial health.

Acupuncture's recognition of interconnected body systems is reflected in Feng Shui's recognition of the importance of architectural space interconnectedness. Designing one building area impacts overall space energy, just like manipulating one pressure point impacts body energy (Liu, 2005). Applying acupuncture principles to architectural design creates built environments supporting human well-being. By recognizing qi flow importance, architects design spaces promoting health, harmony, and well-being (Wang, 2012). This requires understanding relationships between the built environment, human experience, and qi flow.

The concept of qi found within the bodily and domestic scale can also be observed within a global, intergalactic, and microscopic scale. It is also found in an immeasurable scale in the form of human experience and memory. The memories of the spatial body of the domestic home in my memories are expressed through the “mundane” details of the physical home. These fragments explore the emotional impact of everyday spatial experiences. No matter how seemingly insignificant the detail seems at the time, the effect of the physical home is profound even through the foggy window of memory. In this research, the life force of a space is represented through memories of “yesterday”. Represented through models and poetry, these memories correspond aspects of Feng Shui principles and aspects of the Bagua map to answer the question of *how can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?*

Qi in the context of Chinese medicine is the functionality of your bodily functions. Similar to the flow of ecological cycles and architectural spaces, blockage of Qi will cause health problems and disrupt natural cycles. The methodology of model making is used as a tool to explore personal memories of domestic spaces. This is done so in a fragmented manner, extracting key components of these spaces which speak to aspects of the vital life force embodied in space. These fragments can be viewed as the “pressure points” of the occupied domestic spaces. The human body is conceptualized as a representation of the natural and built environment. Pressure points correspond to specific ecological and built elements, while organs and systems are personified as relational built entities, acknowledging their dependence on environmental factors. This approach recognizes the holistic reciprocal relationships between human health and the natural environment, emphasizing the role of built elements to bridge the gap between humans and their natural home in the ecosystem which they have been alienated from through rigid structures and impermeable man-made surfaces. Ecological personhood recognizes the intrinsic value of natural components and promotes regenerative design strategies. The reciprocal relationship between human occupants and their surroundings fosters a relational ontology that prioritizes harmony and balance between humans, the built environment, and the natural environment. The life force of a space, or Qi, is acknowledged as an entity that flows through the built environment. This entity is shaped by the personified ecological elements which influence human well-being. Designing spaces that respond to natural light and ventilation patterns, incorporate water features and ponds, utilize natural materials and textures, and adapt to seasonal changes, architects and designers can adapt built environments to embody the life force of a space. This approach can transform the foundations of architectural design, highlighting the value of ecological personhood and the life force of a space. By recognizing the agency and personhood of ecological elements, architects and designers can create built environments that are truly alive, embodying the dynamic entity that is Qi.

The methodology of creating fragmented models of domestic spaces, informed by personal memories, reveals a profound connection to the concept of personification and personhood of ecological elements. Ecological elements in a built space captured in these models include human inhabitation, air flow, building materials, natural light sources and incorporated greenery. These aspects all contribute to the defining life force of a space either by nurturing or diminishing it. By personifying this life force of built environments, the models embody the essence of ecological personhood, fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of human and non-human entities. This connection is further contextualized within the cultural framework of Feng Shui and the concept of Qi. The abstraction of these aspects of Qi demonstrates the potential for architectural representation to transcend its physical nature, speaking to the human experience and the intrinsic value of the natural world. While these fragments hold a lens to the past, this act of iterating fragments of spaces can inform a methodology for future methods to implement a more integrated mindset with fostering Mauri Ora (vitality of life force) during the phases of an architecture design project.

The process of creating fragmented models involves selecting specific elements of domestic spaces which hold significant memories. These elements are then abstracted and recontextualized, creating a new narrative that embodies the essence of the original space. This abstraction personifies the life force of the space, allowing the model to transcend its physical representation and speak to human experience. These memories paint a picture of key architectural principles which can be utilized to inform a sensitive and thoughtful design approach.

Place Identity

Memory of places occupies a peculiar niche in the human experience, intersecting geography, psychology, and philosophy. Philosopher Edward Casey's work on "The Fate of Place" explores the intricate relationships between memory, place, and identity. Casey argues that places serve as repositories of memory, influencing our sense of self. This idea resonates with the notion of "genius loci" (spirit of place), which captures the essence of a location's distinctive character, shaped by cultural, historical, and environmental factors.

Philosopher and ecologist Joseph Grange (1989) observes that our physical connections to environments are shaped by posture, proximity, and emotional resonance (p. 74). Recent anthropological research on space suggests that the interplay between architectural and landscape environments, human habitation, and movement transforms mere space into place. According to Grange, place and humans become deeply intertwined, forming a rich, concrete, and particular fabric (p. 71). This process of "embodiment" (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003, pp. 2-7; Lang, 1989, pp. 201-213) means that space is not just imbued with meaning, but our bodies become dynamic spatial entities. As argued by environmental psychologist Setha Low and architect Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), our experiences and language transform cultural forms, which are then embodied through our actions within these spaces, creating a world where spatial fields are in constant motion (p. 6).

Place memory incorporates aspects of place and of time. The memory of a place draws from a time before the present and a space which essentially does not exist. Spaces are changed over time, and it is impossible for a space to be exactly the same twice. Space without time is a stagnant nonentity. But this static "space" does not exist, as all matter exists under the prospect of change. The ever-shifting folds of time are constantly causing changes in our built environments and this change is further distorted by remembering or misremembering space.

The constructed fragments do not attempt to capture a space accurately, but rather lean into the mistranslation of physical spaces through memories by acknowledging the fragility of human recall. In this project, the ever-shifting nature of place memory is represented through distorted forms, contorting and tessellated shapes, converging of spaces and abstract qualities. This abstracted form of space challenges the idea of built spaces as a lifeless form and preludes to the depth of space and its connection to time and memories.

The memory of a space can arise in many ways; as a walk through the sun dappled vegetable garden behind your home, a smell of a steaming coffee on a specific rainy morning in September, the echo of your tv in the cavernous navy expanse of the empty lounge, the aroma of sizzling onions before dinner time, the roughness of the cheap couch cover. These memories are multidimensional in a way which is nearly impossible to accurately capture without disassembling into fragments. The memory of a space is seldom separate from our sense of self and emotion. Instead, personal identity is directly related to how one perceives the surrounding environment through sensory, emotional and intuitive means. This concept is called place identity. Place identity, a subset of identity theory, is the idea that individuals derive a sense of self from their social and environmental contexts (Stedman, 2002). Place identity emerges from the internalized interactions between individuals and their physical environments, shaping their sense of belonging and attachment to place (Relph, 1976). Varying factors of place identity include cultural background, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Korpela, 1989). Individuals who have a strong sense of place identity tend to have increased well-being, life satisfaction, and community engagement (Lewicka, 2010; Sullivan, Kuo, & Brunner, 2001).

A keen sense of place identity occurs from having a healthy and stable home life, with sufficient emotional support and a sense of stability in life. Individuals who have an unstable home environment will find it inhibits development of place identity. When an individual's living situation is marked by uncertainty or turmoil, it can disrupt their ability to form a secure attachment to their surroundings. An individual who has experienced frequent moves or changes in environment may struggle to integrate their memories of various places, leading to a disjointed sense of self (Manzo, 2003).

In the perspective of place identity, an unstable home can cause identity fragmentation. Identity fragmentation refers to the disruption of an individual's sense of self, leading to a fragmented identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). This can occur when an individual's experiences of different places are disconnected or contradictory, making it challenging to form a cohesive sense of place identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). Conflicting experiences in different places can also contribute to contradictory emotions about those places, creating a sense of dissonance (Lewicka, 2010). Additionally, trauma or stress associated with specific places can lead to fragmentation of memories, making it challenging to form a cohesive place identity (Herman, 1992). This can result in feelings of disconnection from place, disorientation, and a sense of disbelonging (Proshansky et al, 1983).

Reflecting on memories can help with reintegrating fragmented place identities (Korpela, 1989). The act of revisiting fragmented memories encourages a more cohesive sense of place identity by creating connections to these existing places. This connection is strengthened each time the memories are revisited.

The space between architecture and memory is a symbiotic one, each informs and enriches the other. This reciprocal relationship relies on personal human perception in the form of external or internal cues enabling us to recall specific details of a place. Memories appear in fragments, and our assumptions chronologically organize these fragments in a way which may or may not be reflective of reality. The way these fragments are connected shapes our understanding of time but the fragmented in time and space hold indescribable value. The fragmentation of memories in this project paradoxically causes disparate places to become interconnected by dissolving the boundaries between past and present. Different places in time become connected by the act of remembering. The past is reduced to the memory of it and physical art forms are used to encapsulate these ideas. The act of making from memories translates these fragments into something that is original from both its original memory and the reality of the moment in the past.

The notion of home serves as an anchor for memory, providing a framework for recollecting experiences. Remembering seeks the essence of architectural form, allowing the built environments of the past to be understood in a meaningful way. The artifacts within this research communicate memory of a place that contributed to a sense of place identity. The crossroads between self-identity, space and recollection allows a deeper comprehension of an individual's surroundings and their place within them. Intricate relationships between space, time and human experience are embodied in this overarching notion of place identity and are extremely personal to each individual being.

To Forget

Every act of memory is an act of forgetting.

The tree of memory set its roots in blood.

To secure an ideal, surround it with a moat of forgetfulness.

To study the self is to forget the self.

In forgetting lies the liquefaction of time.

The Furies bloat the present with the undigested past.

"Memory and oblivion, we call that imagination."

We dream in order to forget.

- THE APHORISMS

Forgetting is perceived as the opposite of remembering. However, we need to forget in order to remember. The English word "forget" originates from Old High German, where the prefix "for-" signifies abandonment or neglect, and the Germanic "*getan" means "to hold" or "to grasp." This dual etymology reveals that remembering involves mentally grasping something, to hold onto it. Everyday there are memories which are discarded; misconceptions, confined mental constructs, useless information, outdated perspectives and harmful emotions. In each case, forgetting involves letting go, opening our mental grasp, and relinquishing our hold. To forget is a freedom from remembering and the burdens that come with it. The act of forgetting entails releasing a memory from our consciousness, to put it down and let go.

In Buddhism, forgetting holds a unique significance differing from Western philosophical contexts. This concept is integral to the Buddhist path to liberation, enabling practitioners to transcend attachment and the notion of a fixed self. Central to Buddhist thought is the concept of anatta (no-self), emphasizing the impermanence and lack of a permanent, unchanging self. (Buddhaghosa, 1999) Buddhism also views attachments (upadana) as sources of suffering. Forgetting attachments enables practitioners to break free from the cycle of suffering (samsara) to attain nirvana, transcend ego, recognize the interconnected nature of reality, cultivate compassion and master detachment. Buddhist teachings on "smriti" (mindfulness) emphasize the importance of spatial awareness, recognizing the interplay between physical environment and cognitive processes (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1974). Mindfulness is essential in Buddhist practice, involving observation of phenomena without attachment. This mindfulness cultivates a present-centered awareness, allowing practitioners to experience reality directly, and attain liberation (nirvana) (Buddhaghosa, 1999). (Rahula, 1959; Suzuki, 1949). Buddhism advocates for transcending conceptual frameworks (vikalpa) that perpetuate artificial distinctions, reinforce dualism, and hinder direct experience (Nagarjuna, 1995; Buddhaghosa, 1999). Vikalpa, or conceptual proliferations, are considered obstacles to realizing the true nature of reality (dharmata) (Mipham, 2000).

Forgetting is often viewed as a cognitive failing, yet it holds cognitive and philosophical importance. Important memories are in constant playback in both the conscious and subconscious mind. The multitude of non beneficial subconscious recollections clutter the mind and prevent efficient mental processes. The act of forgetting holds a paradoxical role in shaping identity. By shedding memories, one is able to distance themselves from past experiences. This selective amnesia enables personal growth, allowing reassessment of values and beliefs (Nietzsche, 1874). The importance of forgetting challenges traditional notions of knowledge by highlighting the provisional nature of understanding. Forgetting also allows for the clearance of outdated information, making room for fresh insights. The act of letting go of memories allows for improved cognitive function towards the memories and tasks which support personal growth and survival.

Existential philosophers highlight the role of forgetting in liberating individuals from the burdens of the past. Heidegger's concept of "forgetfulness" (Seinsvergessenheit) posits that forgetting enables engagement with the present, unencumbered by historical determinism (Heidegger, 1927). Forgetting serves as a mechanism for curating inner thoughts. The contents of the mind—thoughts, memories, emotions—constitute internal reality. This inner world governs the relationship with external reality, filtering perceptions and experiences. The quality of internal reality determines the quality of life. Releasing unnecessary memories refines the narrative, ensuring the internal world remains evolving. The remembered narrative becomes reality, often overshadowing the external world. This raises a fundamental question: Does the act of forgetting allow one to exit the realm of remembrance and live life in the present?

"To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to become one with the ten thousand things."
- John Cage

Palimpsest Theory

The term “Palimpsest” originated from the processes involved with medieval manuscripts where new text was inscribed over previously erased text. This erasure process was never fully effective, allowing earlier layers of text to remain discernible beneath the surface (Mitin, 2010). The multilayered character of these manuscripts led to the adoption of palimpsest as a metaphor to highlight the multiplicity of texts or phenomena. The palimpsest manuscripts serve as a visual representation of hidden or partially obscured layers of reality.

The concept of place as palimpsest was introduced by Donald Meinig in 1979, in "The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes". Meinig describes landscape as "a panorama, a composition, a palimpsest, a microcosm", suggesting that every place offers multiple layers of meaning (Meinig, 1979, p. 6). Richard Schein (1997, p. 662) highlighted the palimpsest's potential for overwriting and the coexistence of various historical and contemporary perspectives. These interpretations demonstrate diverse ways social groups and individuals "read" the landscape, influenced by factors such as identity, occupation, lifestyles, experience, imagination, and emotions (Mitin, 2010). These findings explore how external and remembered landscapes can differ but at the same time; they coexist. The palimpsest theory of place communicates not only temporal changes but also the differences in perception of space over time.

A place, regardless of its origin, becomes a complex accumulation of "erasures, accretions, anomalies, and redundancies over time" (Crang, 1998, p. 22). Through the lens of the "linguistic turn" (Lees, 2002), we can interpret place as a text, albeit a challenging one to decipher (Cosgrove, Jackson, 1987). Palimpsest theory likens physical spaces to a worn, edited, and re-edited book with illegible handwriting. In the context of my research; the worn book is my past homes, and the illegible handwriting is the memories I've had in the same places. The artifacts generated from this design-lead research communicate the ways I have inhabited homes and the spaces around them in different ways over time. The models, accompanied by written vignettes, illustrate the ways the same spaces have been reinterpreted over time.

Physical place reinterpreted as a text invites multiple interpretations, echoing the concept of "intertextuality" in modern and postmodern theory (Brockmeier, 2001, p. 222). This perspective recognizes the intricate nature of interpretation of space, where diverse voices and meanings intersect. This theory applied to objects or drawings becomes a metaphor for history and memory. The visibility of earlier layers symbolizes how the past is never truly erased. Similarly, memories allow us to bring to life a place where the past exists in the present. Palimpsest is a tool which can be used to represent the layers of memory in a space. A space exists in many forms and new memories are formed at every point in time. New memories do not erase the old ones. Rather, they add more layers to a space over the top of the existing memories.

Palimpsest is a metaphor for the coexistence of different time lines and perspectives simultaneously in a way which transcends the physics of time and space. Memory is used as the driver to resurface the barely discernible layers beneath “today”. This project strings together the spaces of “yesterday” as a palimpsest to illustrate the interconnectedness of all timelines.

Drawing as a palimpsest

Artists and theoreticians have explored the act of drawing and its relationship with memory, time, narrative. Curator Emma Dexter (2005) notes that drawing mediates because it connects us to our environments, past human activities, and continuously describes its own creation (p. 6). We use drawing as a tool for communication, creating marks and lines that overlap, adjust, and reinforce each other, revealing the process and order while remaining incomplete. The drawing aspect of this project is used to depict remembered spaces, but the act of drawing transforms the memory itself. Drawing has the capacity to create illusion and implicitly evoking objects, activities, and emotions, existing in the present while referencing past and future. (Kovats, 2005) Newman (2003) observes that gestural marks, whether expressive, compulsive, or automatic, can be interpreted by the viewer as traces of human presence or events (pp. 101-105). Hélène Cixous (1998) notes that such drawings capture "the living of life" (p. 25), conveying movement, time, narrative and emotions (p. 23). These observations suggest drawing can effectively represent inhabited spaces and can be used as a liminal bridge between the imaginary and the existing.

Redefining ‘architectural model’

A model is defined as; ‘A representation of reality, where representation is the expression of certain relevant characteristics of the observed reality and where the reality consists of the objects or systems that exist, have existed, or may exist’ (Echenique 1970 p.25). Modeling can be used to depict aspects of realities or objects in many disciplines. In the context of architecture, an architectural model is most used to represent an existing or proposed building design. The fragments of this research propose a shift in the way “Architectural model” is perceived. The depictions of space, while conveying an architectural aspect, speak of places which don't necessarily “exist” in the way they are depicted. The fragments which follow are architectural models of existing spaces. Yet the act of remembering and the process of making transforms these places into a new understanding of architecture.

Home

The memories modeled in this project are based in and around key homes of my past. Domestic spaces hold distinct memories of my past as these are the spaces I spent the most time. These spaces were the setting for the majority of the narrative of my life and shaped my personal identity. Home was a place that was constantly shifting. It was somewhere where at times I felt the most safe and other times felt overwhelmingly jeopardous. 'Home' is a term often used to describe the address of residence of an individual, but it can also be used to describe a space or time that feels safe. Sometimes a physical home does not feel like a home. Other times, a place which we do not reside in offers a safe haven and the undeniable 'home' feeling. A place often does not have one feeling all the time. The fragments express the multifacetedness of the memories within homes which felt different everyday.

The literature on the meaning of home has been divided into psychological and phenomenological approaches, as well as sociological approaches. Després, (1991) acknowledged that the former often overlooked the societal dimension of home, but her review had limited reference to sociological literature. Three concepts associated with home are privacy, identity, and familiarity, each having a specific significance: privacy for spatial relations, identity for psychological relations, and family relations. It is argued that our understanding of home is constructed through dialectics of phenomenology and dynamics of processes that cannot be broken down into separate "phenomenological" and "sociological" meanings. The non-sociological literature on the meaning of home has been well reviewed, all types of study have revealed the same recurrent meanings: center of family life, retreat, safety and relaxation, freedom and independence, privacy, continuity and permanence, financial assimilation, and social status. (Despres, 1991)

The concept of home is something which can be explored through psychological, architectural and socio-physiological approaches. The concept is connected to personal orientation, privacy, family and identity. The attachment theory states that humans create internal representations of the external environment (Giuliani, 1991:136). People become invested in specific items in the environment because they identify with them and want to maintain that feeling of identification in their daily lives (Bretherton, 1985). This sense of attachment can also be applied to built structures and locations. According to Proshansky "place-identity" refers to attachment to a specific location, whereas "home" refers to a core location for a person (Tuan, 1980; Giuliani et al., 1988).

In "The Poetics of Space," Gaston Bachelard explores the psychological significance of the house as a symbol of intimacy and psychic state. He draws on the work of psychologists, particularly Françoise Minkowska, who have studied children's drawings of houses as a means of understanding their emotional and psychological well-being. Bachelard notes that the house is a "psychic state" that reveals a person's deepest desires, fears, and experiences. He cites examples of children's drawings, which often feature houses with characteristics that reflect their emotional state. For instance, a happy child may draw a house with a warm and welcoming appearance, while an unhappy child may draw a house that appears cold and rigid. Bachelard also highlights the importance of kinesthetic features in children's drawings of houses, such as the path leading to the door, which can indicate a sense of invitation or accessibility. He notes that the door-knob is a significant detail, as it represents the function of opening and closing, and can be seen as a symbol of transition and transformation. Through his analysis of children's drawings, Bachelard reveals the ways in which the house can be seen as a reflection of the self, with its various features and characteristics representing different aspects of the psyche. He argues that the house is not just a physical structure, but a symbolic representation of our inner lives, and that it can be used as a tool for understanding our emotional and psychological experiences.

Nostalgia

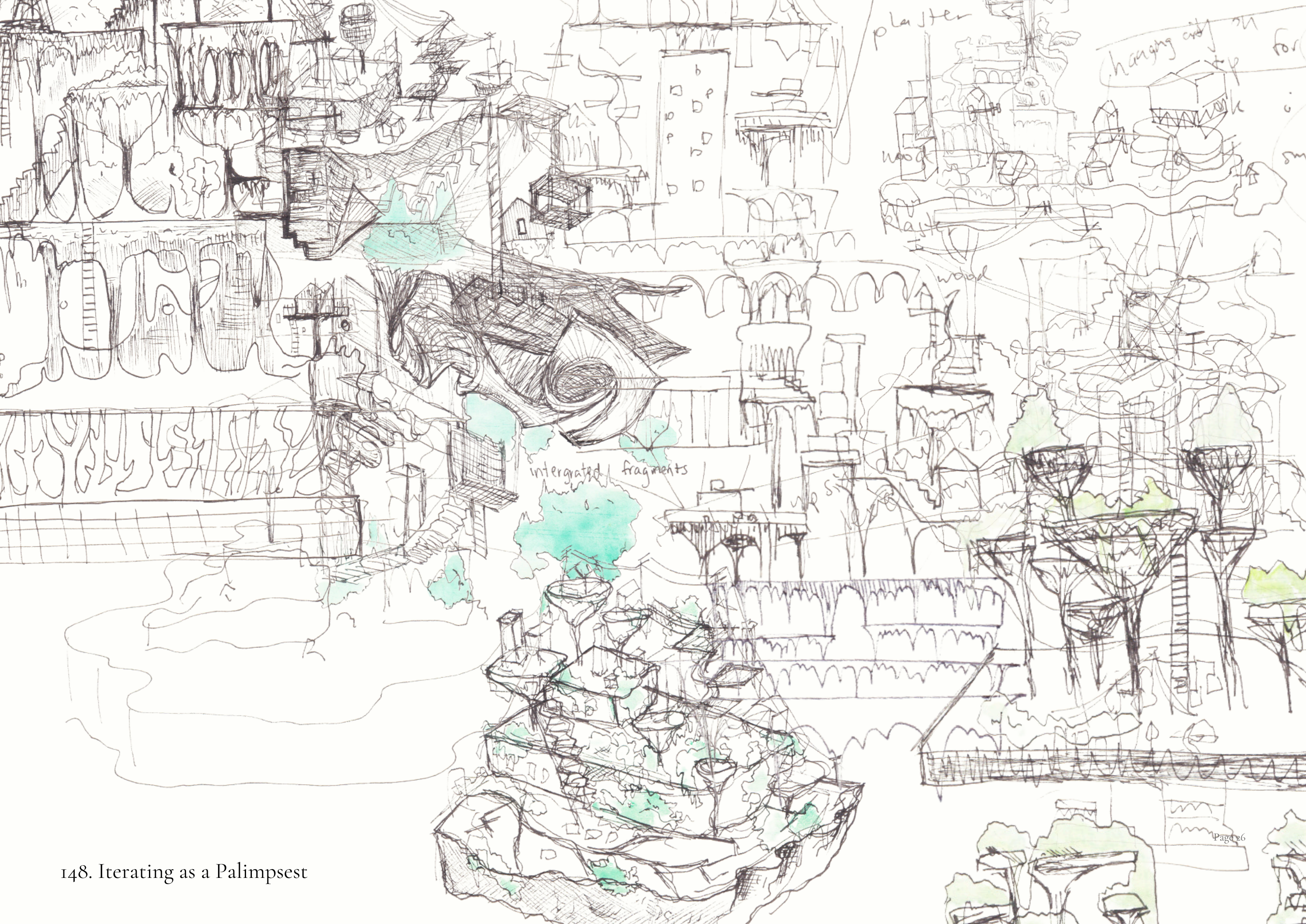
Nostalgia is the poignant longing for what has been, a yearning to relive past experiences. This act often involves idealizing the past, often to the degree where memories become distorted by preconceived notions (Boym, 2001). Research suggests that nostalgia is linked to confabulation, where the emotional intensity of certain recollection alters memories. If feelings of longing are associated with a memory, the memories are often shifted to be in favour of the positive attributes of the experience. (Sutin & Robins, 2007). The consequential reality of past events often diverges from their nostalgic representation (Walker, Vogl, & Thompson, 1997). Nostalgia often stems from dissatisfaction with one's present life, prompting the perception that life was better in the past (Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004). This nostalgia-tinged perspective can lead individuals to romanticize childhood homes as idyllic havens, unburdened by adult responsibilities (Hertz, 1990). The philosophical underpinnings of spirituality and nostalgia share common ground with Taoism and Buddhism. Buddhist philosophies of impermanence and interconnectedness resonate with the bittersweet nature of memory. Taoist Feng Shui approaches emphasize that balance and harmony resonates with nostalgia's bittersweet nature and offers a holistic approach to understanding nostalgia's role in shaping our emotional experiences. Feng Shui's focus on chi flow and balance parallels the Buddhist concept of dependent origination (pratityasamutpada). This principle posits that all phenomena arise from interconnected causes and conditions. In this sense, nostalgia speaks to both psychological and spiritual concepts. These concepts are expressed in this project through utilizing design as a form of self discovery.

Childhood homes and built spaces hold profound significance in nostalgia, symbolizing a sense of security, comfort, and belonging. These environments shape our earliest experiences, influencing our emotional and cognitive development (Bowlby, 1969). The concept of "home" is particularly pivotal, representing a sanctuary of safety. Childhood homes often evoke vivid memories, which nostalgia romanticizes (Doucet & Wenger, 1993). Nostalgic longing for childhood homes and experiences can serve as a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, and uncertainty (Davis, 1979). This nostalgia-tinged perception of childhood homes can anchor a sense of identity, which offers a refuge from present-day uncertainties by providing a sense of connection to their past self and the spaces that once were. However, excessive nostalgia can also hinder personal growth and prevent individuals from engaging with the present (Sedikides et al., 2004).

Built spaces visited during childhood, such as one's family vacation spots, grandparents' homes, and local parks and playgrounds, also contribute to nostalgic experiences. These spaces become imbued with emotional significance as they host milestone events and celebrations. The architectural and spatial features of these built environments can evoke powerful nostalgic responses, including smells and sounds, textures, colors, and tactile memories of specific objects. Research in neuroscience and psychology suggests that these sensory experiences are intensely interconnected with emotional processing and memory consolidation (Damasio, 2004; Ochsner et al., 2005). For instance, the smell of a particular cooking spice or the sound of laughter in a childhood home can transport individuals back to a bygone era. A childhood home's wraparound porch might evoke memories of summertime gatherings, while creaky wooden stairs could recall countless ascents to bedtime. Public spaces like local parks, community centers, and libraries can also evoke strong nostalgic responses. The spatial elements of nostalgic spaces create sensory experiences which convey the essence of the idea of home. In this thesis, my own experiences of nostalgic spaces are expressed to communicate the memories that shaped my idea of home. The act of model making and poetry are used as a way to revisit the places that I often yearn for. The act of making allows me to relive the nostalgic places which no longer exist the way I remember them.

The human mind is so constructed that it cannot begin to understand the new until it has done everything in its power to relate it to the old.

Henri Bergson



plaster

hanging out on top for work

wood

wood

integrated fragments



Design

Design Process

This thesis originated as a design research project rooted in Feng Shui principles. I began by analyzing the qi flow of my childhood homes' floor plans, which I recreated from memory and overlaid with sketches on butter paper. Due to the absence of photographs and access to these properties, this process led me to explore the remembered perception of these spaces. Further research into memory and confabulation through the works of Friedman (1993) sparked an interest in representing these spaces through the lens of memory, rather than reality.

As my research expanded from Feng Shui to the psychological aspects of place memory, I discovered that my own memories of places emerged in fragments, rather than as comprehensive floor plans. Dino Chai's "100 Rooms of Solitude," inspired me with its poetic and innovative approach to capturing the elusive nature of memory. While his project inspired the rhythm of model making and poetry, this project differs in design style and personal context. The personal context within this project inspired by my perception of space, which is deeply rooted in Feng Shui principles. I integrated these principles into the creation of models. I applied the Bagua map to organize the models into nine sections, allowing me to express the poetic quality of my memories while maintaining the practical and spiritual aspects of Feng Shui that have shaped my understanding of space throughout my life.

Fragments of Yesterday

From an early age, my mother and grandmother had taught me about the ancient principles related to Feng Shui. This knowledge greatly impacted by perception of built spaces and how I viewed myself in relation to them. The memories that are contained in this research are my attempts to remember and make sense of the various parts of myself; from the complexity of cultural identity, the contradictions of science and spirituality, the contingencies of tomorrow and even the uncertainty of memories. The Bagua map is not only used as a modular system to apply Feng Shui principles onto spatial perception, but also as a representation of my mental perceptions of space which has been shaped by my cultural background.

The fragmented nature of the models created a compelling opportunity to create something new with the existing pieces of past spaces. As I organized the fragmented memories into the Bagua map, I discovered that this process bridged the tension between the parts and the whole. The Bagua map, with its nine sections, provided a framework for me to reconcile the disparate fragments of my memories. This process of organization allowed me to navigate the complexities of my memories, where the boundaries between reality and fantasy, past and present, became increasingly blurred. The Bagua map served as a tool for me to negotiate these ambiguities, to reconcile the contradictions between my remembered experiences and the physical spaces that no longer existed. In this way, the tension between the parts and the whole was resolved, as I came to understand that the fragmented nature of my memories was not a limitation, but rather an opportunity for growth and insight. The Bagua map had become a tool for me to navigate the complexities of my own memory, to uncover the patterns that underlay my experiences. The Bagua map had allowed me to transform the disjointed pieces of my memories into a cohesive and meaningful whole.

The Bagua map has its roots in ancient Chinese philosophy and cosmology. The term "Bagua" literally translates to "eight trigrams" or "eight areas," representing the eight fundamental principles of reality (Wong, 1996). The Bagua map's origins date back to the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE), where it was used as a tool for divination and understanding the balance of yin and yang energies. The map was initially used in conjunction with the I Ching, an ancient Chinese text that explores the nature of reality and the interconnectedness of all things (Wong, 1996). There are two primary types of Bagua maps: the "Earlier Heaven" (Fuxi) Bagua and the "Later Heaven" (King Wen) Bagua. The Earlier Heaven (Fuxi) Bagua is considered the original and more spiritual of the two. It is associated with the natural world and the cycles of nature. The Later Heaven (King Wen) Bagua is more commonly used in Feng Shui practices and is associated with the human experience and the built environment, the more modern 9 grid Bagua map stems from this version (Skinner, 2004) The 9-grid Bagua map differs significantly from its earlier counterparts, the Earlier Heaven and Later Heaven Bagua arrangements. One of the primary distinctions lies in the arrangement itself, while earlier Bagua maps resemble a rounded compass, the modern Bagua follows a grid system. The Earlier Heaven and Later Heaven Bagua arrangements focus on the trigrams and their relationships, whereas the 9-grid Bagua map simplifies the trigrams into a 3x3 grid. In addition to the 8 trigrams, the 9th section of this grid is the center, which is assigned to self and health. The Earlier Heaven and Later Heaven Bagua arrangements have a stronger spiritual focus, emphasizing the balance of yin and yang energies and the interconnectedness of all things. In contrast, the 9-grid Bagua map, while still rooted in spiritual principles, is more practical and focused on analyzing and balancing the energy in physical spaces. This increased accessibility has contributed to the widespread adoption of the 9-grid Bagua map in Feng Shui practices. This simplification makes the 9-grid Bagua map more applicable onto modern floor plans, which are typically square or rectangular. This difference in grid structure reflects a shift in focus from the spiritual and symbolic to the practical and spatial.

As I delved deeper into the process, I began to utilize the architectural models of fragments in each of the 9 sections to form a whole larger physical model for each section. Every element was physically integrated or inspired the final form for each of the 9 final models that represented the Bagua sections. These models represent my interpretation of each of these sections and how it's framed and redefined through the remembering process. The assembly and composition of these models represent ideas about the fluidity of memory, the fragmentation of experience, and the reconstitution of meaning. The models become vessels for the memories, emotions, and experiences that I've associated with each section.

The deliberate choice of materials, such as MDF, wood, cardboard, clay, and plaster, has allowed me to create models that are not just mere representations of physical spaces but are imbued with each material's unique character, texture, and associations. The physical act of assembling the models – cutting, pasting, and arranging the fragments – became a meditative process that allowed me to see the Bagua sections not just as abstract concepts, but as tangible, three-dimensional spaces. The models became portals to these spaces, allowing me to reinterpret the memories that I'd associated with each section.

The following fragments are categorized by the 9 sections of the Bagua map. While the 9 grid Bagua is typically used to analyse the spatial components of a floor plan, the Bagua in this project is applied to the components of my memories. The 108 fragmented models were used to construct 9 larger models to depict these 9 sections of the map. This was done by either visual inspiration from the fragment or the disassembling and integration of the physical model into the final model. The 9 sections of the modern Bagua map are interpreted in relation to my personal recollections of places and the emotions attached to them. The models are a result of applying the sections onto abstracted memories and the interpretations of these 9 sections may not resonate with all viewers. However, I hope that by creaking open the door of my past, the fragments of yesterday can evoke a deeper contemplation of your own memories and interpretations of space.

f
ra

gme

nt

s

The fragments that follow
allude to the spaces of yesterday

Nonsequenced
Unlinear
Unmoored

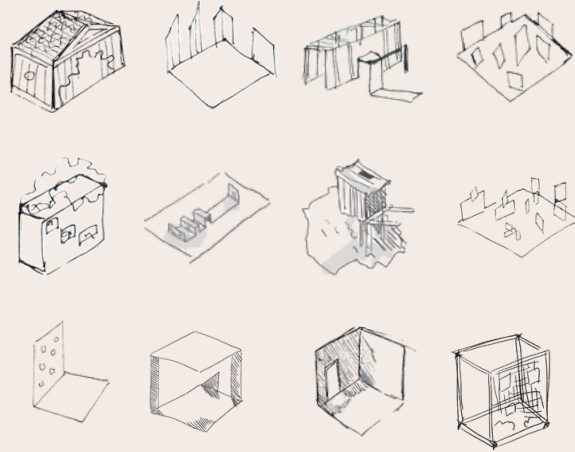
They drift, suspended in a realm without gravity
Shattered facade
Shuttered windows

Doors open to forgotten rooms
A stone path to yester-home
Creak open that rickety old gate again

Observe
Because you cannot obtain
The forgotten spaces of yesterday
Compositions rearranged at every recall
Lost and found
Then lost again

Elusive shards of yester-year
Fragments coalesce, only to dissipate

Ephemeral, luminous, gone
The lustre of the lost
Lost and found
Then lost again



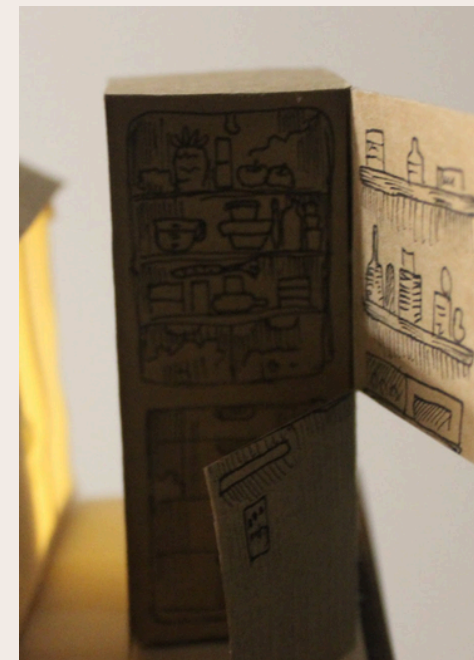
113. Wealth and Abundance fragment sketches

I: Wealth and Abundance

The first and southeast sector of the Bagua map corresponds to the realm of wealth and abundance in Feng Shui practice (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence an individual's financial prosperity, material wealth, and overall sense of abundance, with the presence of auspicious energies, such as the #8 prosperity star, enhancing wealth-generating potential (Lillian Too, 2003). According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the southeast sector is associated with the element of wood, which symbolizes growth, expansion, and renewal (Lau, 2005). Balancing the energies within a wealth and abundance sector of a home is said to optimize an individual's financial fortunes and cultivate a deeper sense of prosperity and well-being (Wong, 2011).

In my memories, a sense of abundance would manifest as a warm feeling place. However, these places were quite scarce. These places with a wealth of warmth and abundance are utilised in the larger scale model for this section. The scarcity of wealth and abundance is expressed through the intermeshing and hazardously placed fragments resting on stilts to represent the lack of consistency with this feeling in this realm of memories.

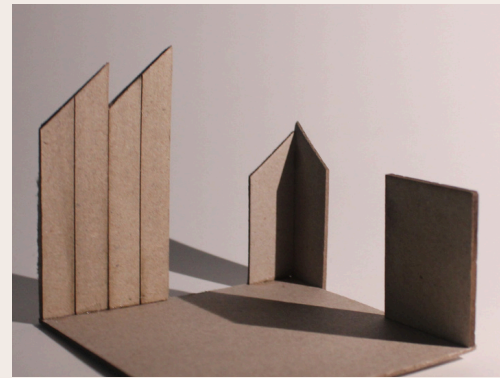
This model employs butter paper, card, caseboard, and softwood sticks to evoke the layered and often intangible quality of abundance. The structural lightness created by softwood sticks reflects the idea that abundance is not always built from permanence, but from repetition, rhythm, and openness. The fragile assembly of parts references how value is perceived not through singular mass but through accumulation and careful arrangement.



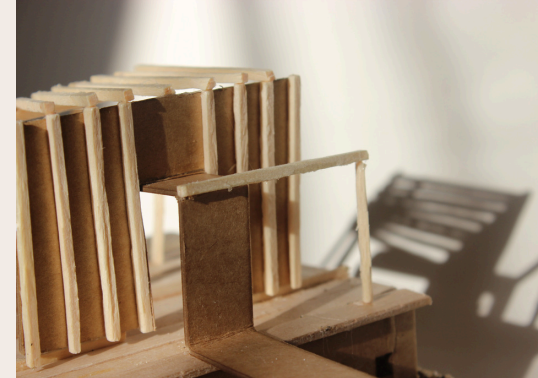
109, 110, 111, 112: Wealth and Abundance Model



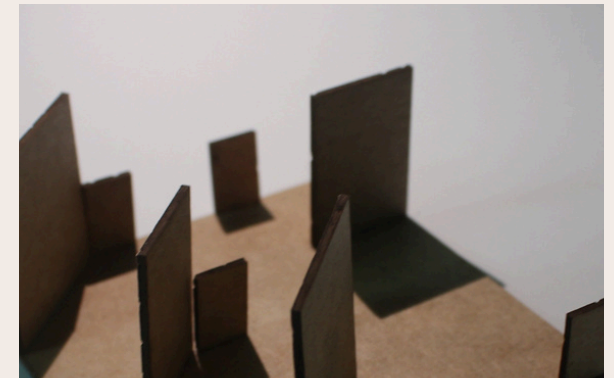
100. Home is not within this realm



49. Plywood fence



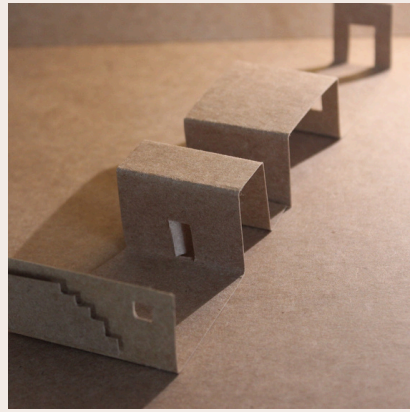
75. A sunroom that I dreamt of.



67. Where they congregate



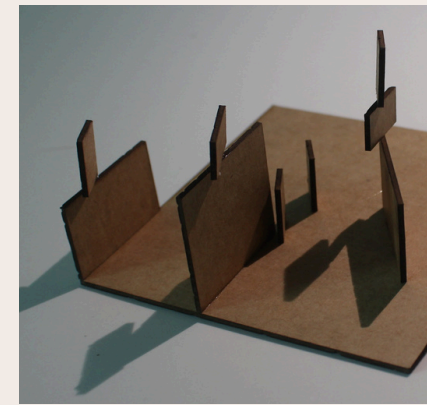
57. Mossy walls



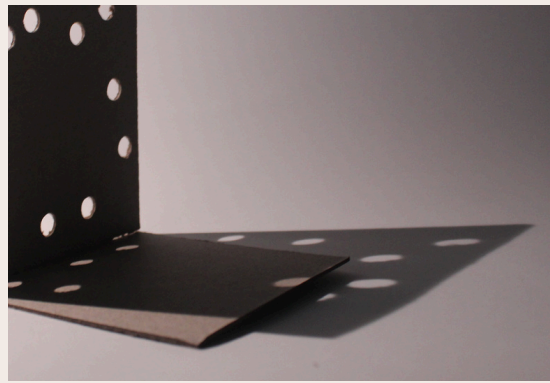
20. Space unfolds



8. Boat shed behind the beach.

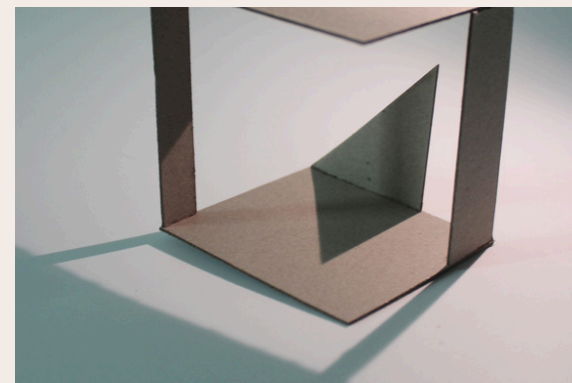


68. And climb



71. Constellation of inconsistency

Sometimes I forget the sequence of events,
I recall my brother's birthday, and the year we got new bikes.
That was when Grandma's stories were still alive.
There was that old eucalyptus tree at the park
The rope swing worn, barely holding on.
But really, I've forgotten the order of things,
I remember walking through the woods,
and I think I wore wings from the dollar store.

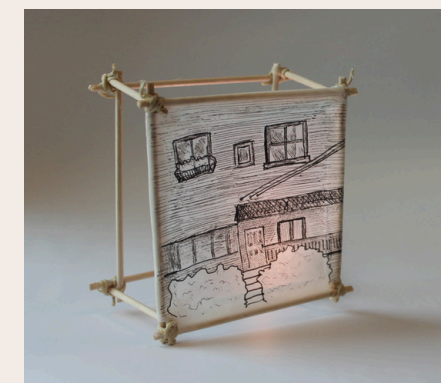


72. Don't fall

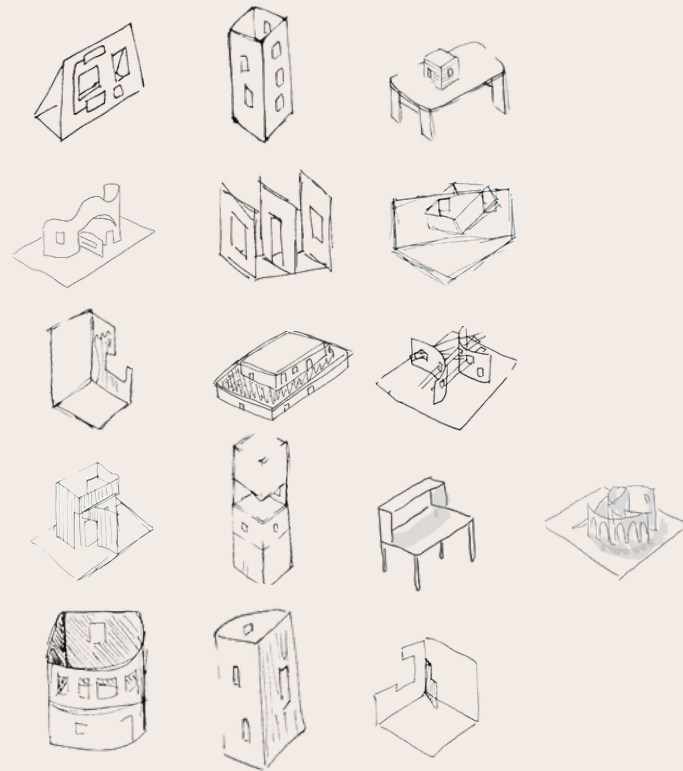
Then maybe I was at the beach,
The salt of the sea in my eyes.
I remember the warmth of my purple sweater,
Or maybe it was red.
But sometimes I forget the way it went.
When it was time to go on all on my own,
I asked how I'd know which path to take,
To make it back home.



63. Open doors lead to you



36. Translucent instability



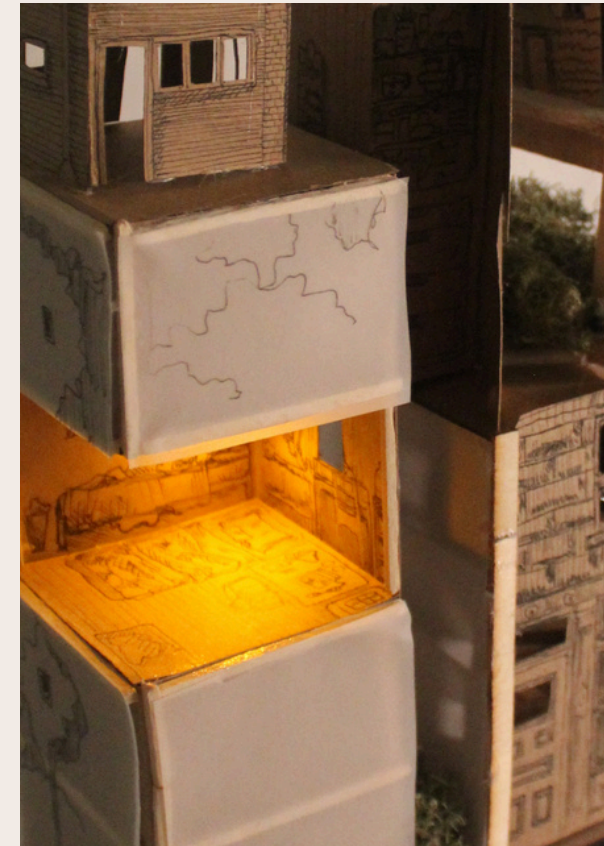
116: Fame and Recognition fragment sketches

2: Fame and Recognition

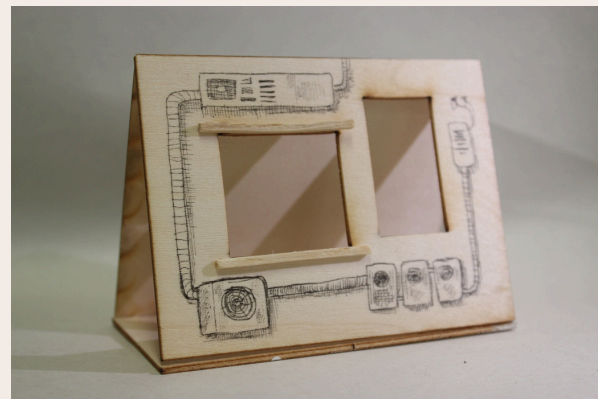
The south sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of fame and recognition, plays a role in an individual's pursuit of reputation, accolades, and social standing (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence one's ability to gain recognition, build a strong reputation, and achieve success in their chosen field (Lillian Too, 2003). According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the south sector is associated with the element of fire, which symbolizes passion, energy, and illumination (Lau, 2005).

The Fame and Recognition model symbolises the desire to reach new heights, represented by the stacking of various buildings. The fragments incorporated speak of memories which impacted my self identity. And therefore, my ability and desire to build a reputation that reflects the contents of my mind.

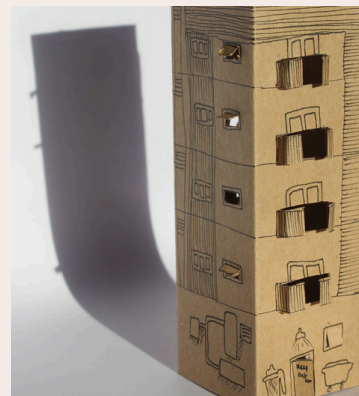
Butter paper, card, case board, and softwood — are repurposed here to create a spatial expression of visibility and fragility. Recognition is framed as a construct that is both illuminated and unstable. Butter paper diffuses internal light, symbolizing the filtered way people are seen or remembered. The light structural elements suggest that the public image is carefully held, vulnerable to collapse if overly burdened. The model presents recognition not as solid monumentality, but as something mediated, layered, and dependent on perspective.



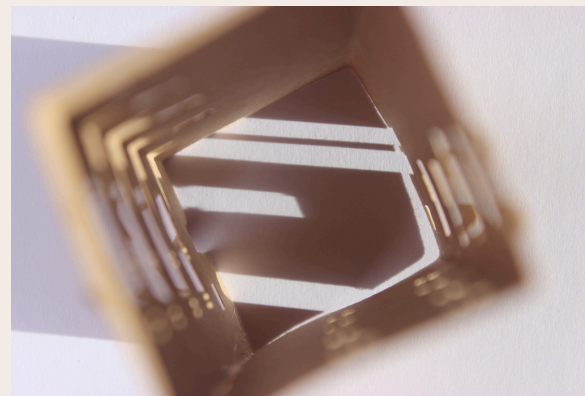
114., 115: Fame and Recognition model



77. Humming ventilation



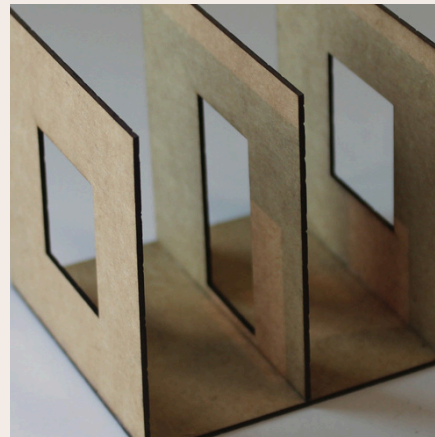
97. Coke zero and \$7 chardonnay.



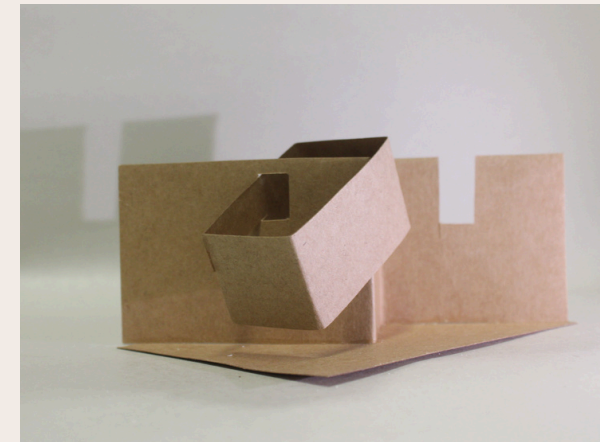
85. Skip breakfast and lunch



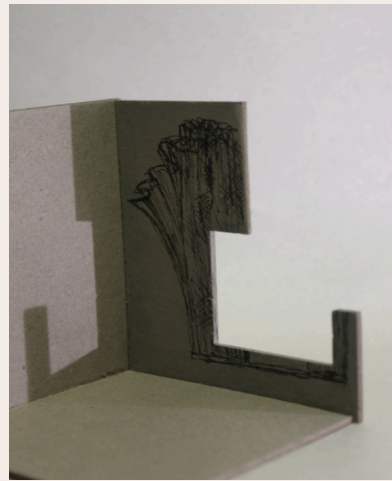
22. These walls talk



43. East - west sunlight



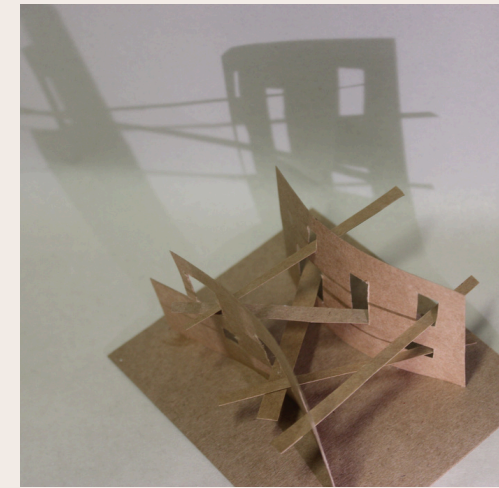
51. This room revolves around the floor's axis



89. Linen curtains adorn your beach house

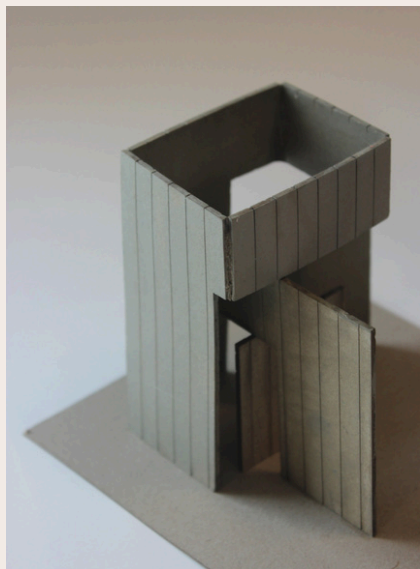


76. Tyres crunch on a lawn of sand and gravel.



83. Harpoon homes

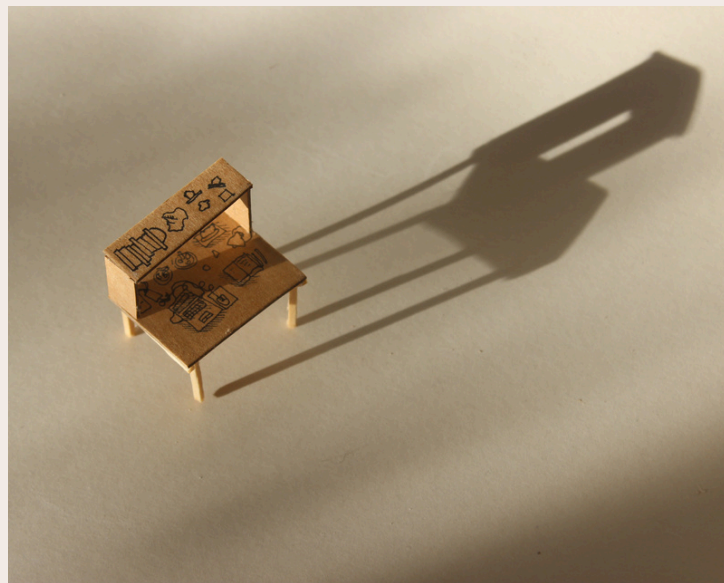
Red sunlight fades to dark
And the nights are
Pure onyx up there.
Yet the pinpricks of starlight
Pave the way
still.



46. Domestic convergence



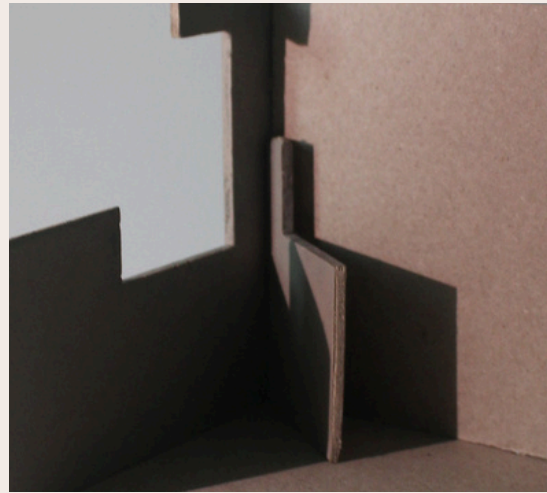
98. Level II is vacant
Except for me..



4. Woke up in the late afternoon to do my homework.



19. Wall whirlpool



70. Miss Placed

Remember that old porch with the creaky floor?
Painted the green of my brother's toy soldiers.
Or my mothers lipstick I found under the sink.
The glide of it on my lips,
Then the sting of the hit.

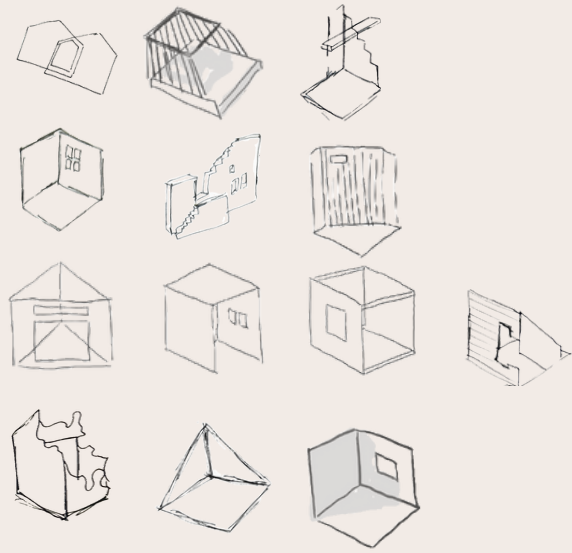


91. The scent of warm bread
wafts onto the street



94. Deep fryer

There's nothing better than hot chips from the local takeaway
After a hot day swimming in the murky Auckland water,
There's sand on the chips from our goggles.
The sweet artificial flavor of tomato sauce,
With the fragrant crunch of hot grease.
My brother and I are hunched over the
stained paper swaddle
in the backseat.
Our hair still crusted from the sea,
Faces still textured by the shore.



116: Relationship fragment sketches

3: Relationships

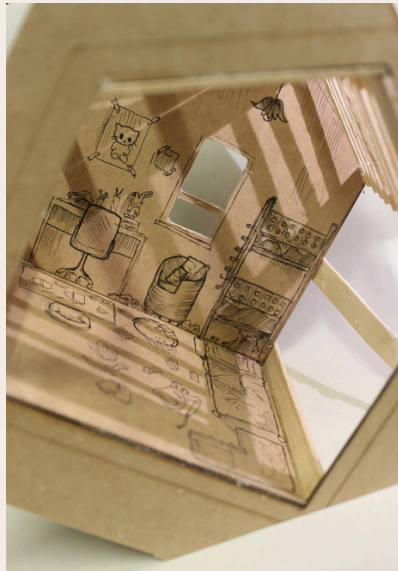
The southwest sector of the Bagua map corresponds to the realm of relationships and love (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence an individual's romantic relationships, partnerships, and overall sense of connection with others. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the southwest sector is associated with the element of earth, which symbolizes stability, nurturing, and harmony (Lau, 2005).

The Relationships model can be interpreted as a detail section of a home. These interiors have been sketched on, showing signs of inhabitation and life in these walls. These signs of inhabitation speak of my relationship with home and those who occupy the same home as me. A safe and stable home life is the foundational ingredient to having healthy relationships.

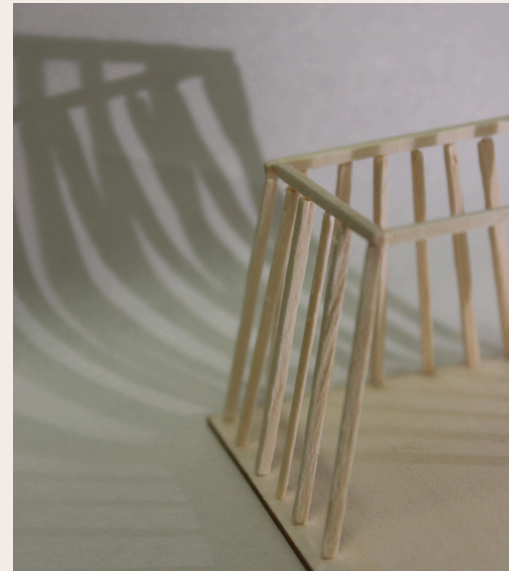
This model reflects the complex, layered, and often non-linear nature of relationships. Sketching becomes both process and artifact — a method of layering thoughts, interactions, and emotional states. The repeated overlay of line and form within the card structures alludes to how relationships are drawn, redrawn, and sometimes erased. The fragile balance between pieces speaks to the negotiation of closeness, boundaries, and mutual support that defines intimate human connection.



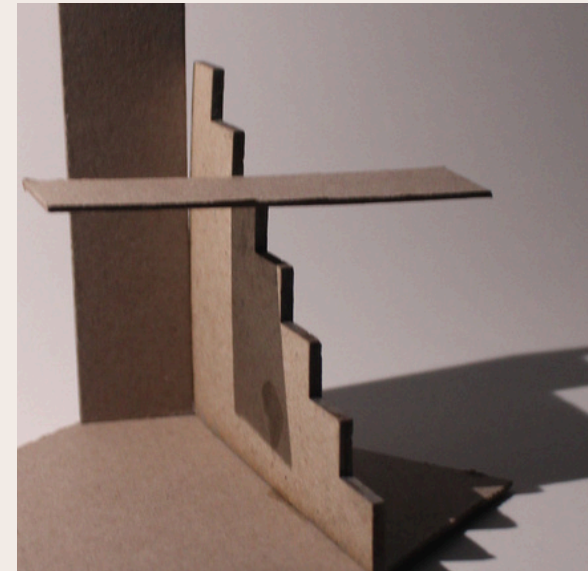
117, 118: Relationship model



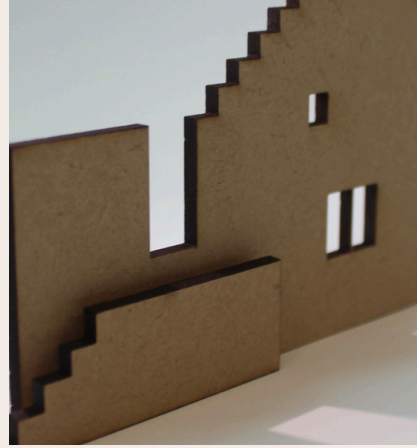
79. Begin to sink into that soil



12. Hang my head back to see the city



64. Creaking wood under beige carpet



45. Basement above



87. Rustling footsteps outside

The first day I learnt to forget
I was on the Whananaki coastline
At your beach house.
I was wearing linen,
It's fibers chafing against
My sunburnt shoulders.
We had a row about,
Something I can't remember now.
But I remember the moths
Dancing around your porch light
like sparks taking off into the dark.



60. Desktop window

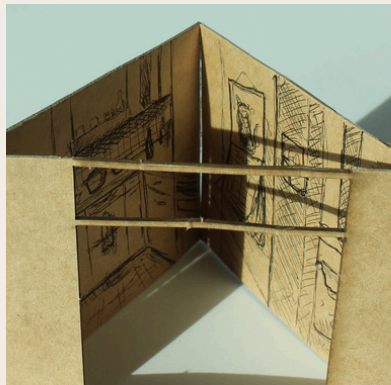
This is my first corner window.
My last bedroom was a small square framing barren field and construction sites.

This corner window oriented west blazes orange at night, periwinkle in the dawn.

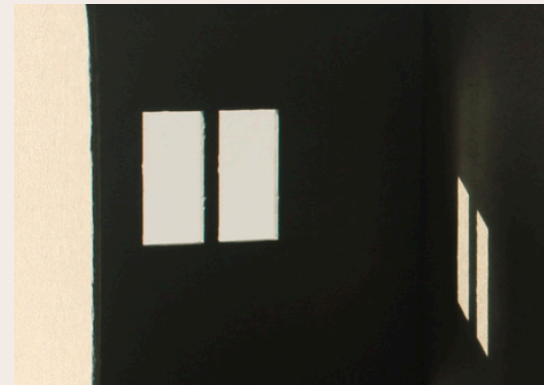
In the cauldron of hot summer days I drift off into a nap, the pages of my paper
back drooping with my eyelids, the lullaby of the sprinkler outside.
This corner window has two layers of translucent curtains, one lace and one pale
yellow mesh.
They flutter when I creak the swollen frame open to invite the croon of caramel
autumns.
Winter's damp embraces the buttercup yellow mesh with creeping black mold.

The morning paints the windows dewy
outside indiscernible
other than shifting shades of blue.
Cobalt, indigo, cornflower, cerulean, ultramarine, navy.

The pressing weight of the morning
Blue as a mantra;
I know them like the back of my hand by now
cyan, aqua, periwinkle, sky, azure, sapphire.
Slowly the shadows depart.

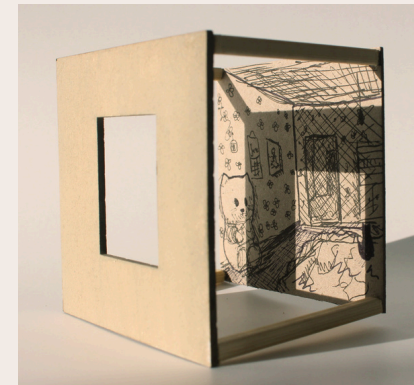


27. The walls close in on me

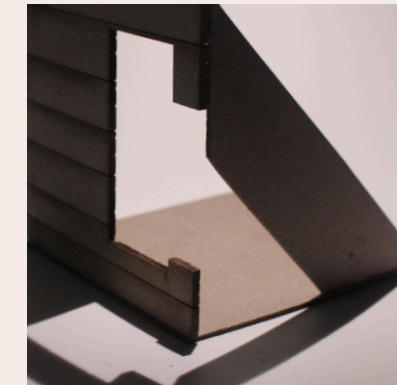


30. Cast your open nets towards me

The garage is up the driveway
in front of flat 1.
The lawn faces a rickety fence,
Behind it the neighbors long driveway.



24. Iridescence of familiarity

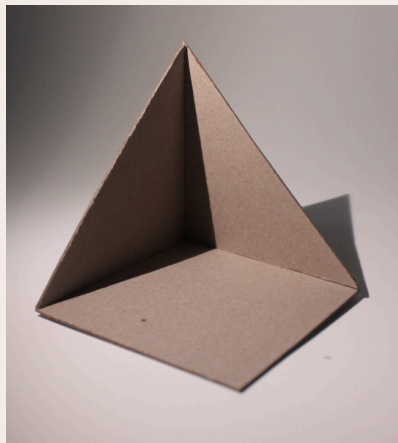


69. Ode to forgetting

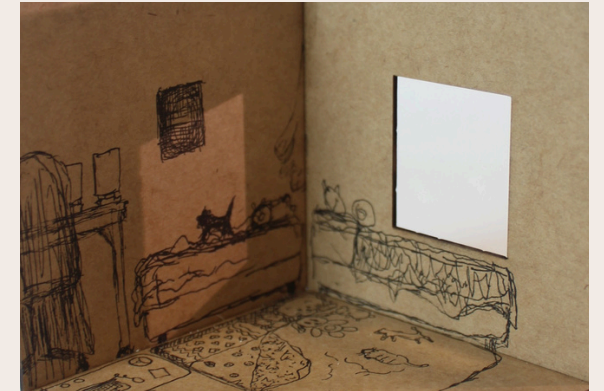
Sometimes I forget the rhythm of yesterday.
On the occasion I glance over my shoulder
There's an incomplete wall,
or a sun faded image;
Warped and discarded,
Rain logged,
Bloated with tears I don't remember crying.



44. Melting home



52. Becometh the shadow of itself



1. Living inside a bedroom window

The grips of wakedness won't release me in the evenings.
pale moonlight casts a square of light onto my barren walls.

I am moving out of mum's home for a small studio in the city tomorrow.
All my posters and items are thrown hazardously into lumpy bags strewn in the corner
of my room.

Lumps of blue tack left on the walls are the only sign of inhabitation left in this room.
It's strange how much a room can change without rennovation.

The space of a place exists between the walls and the foundation and the ceiling.

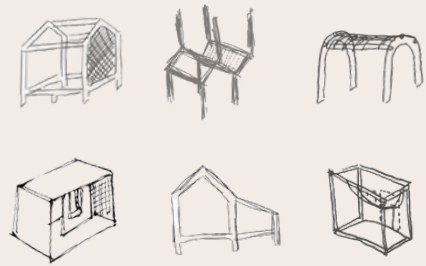
The joists and the rafters, the insulation panels and the wooden boards.
The space between these structures are a tangled mass of memories which are wound
together tightly like a ball of rubber bands.

They threaten to explode, pinch and sting whoever applies enough pressure.
The moonlight that caresses these empty walls, also falls like a stream across my skin. In
this space which is so unlike it was yesterday.

If I allow my fatigue to defocus my eyes a little, my mind still conjures up the walls of
yesterday. Filled with my oil paintings, messy sticky notes with hearts and smiley faces,
calendar with scribbles and crosses on almost every date.
As I refocus my eyes on the empty walls, In my mind I can still see my calendar with 28th
of February circled in red.

Moving day!! i wrote with a smiley face

I shouldn't have added the smiley face



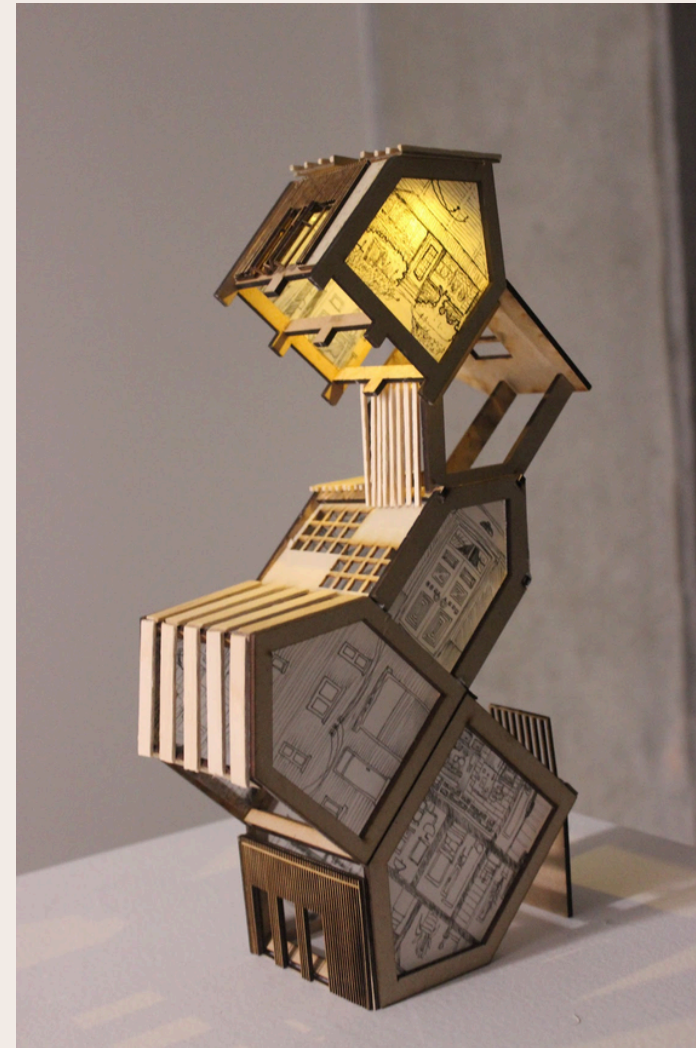
121: Family fragment sketches

4: Family

The east sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of family and community, plays a significant role in an individual's sense of belonging, social connections, and overall well-being (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence one's relationships with family members, friends, and community, as well as their sense of responsibility and duty towards others. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the east sector is associated with the element of wood, which symbolizes growth, expansion, and renewal (Lau, 2005).

Family in this model was primarily represented by the idea of home. These fragments of the remembered home are represented metaphorically with the symbolic “house” shape. These shapes are stacked and tessellated amongst themselves. Converging and intermeshing. This is a metaphor for the memories of moving homes often while growing up. This model represents the lack of stability in my family and home life through my remembered fragments.

The use of MDF and butter paper, along with tessellated house shapes and intricate sketches, speaks also to ideas of inheritance and generational memory. MDF offers a visual and material density — a groundedness — representing family as a foundational system. In contrast, the transparency and repetition of the paper elements reference family patterns that echo through time. Tessellation becomes a visual metaphor for replication and variation within lineage, while the hand-drawn components suggest memory as both historical and interpretive.



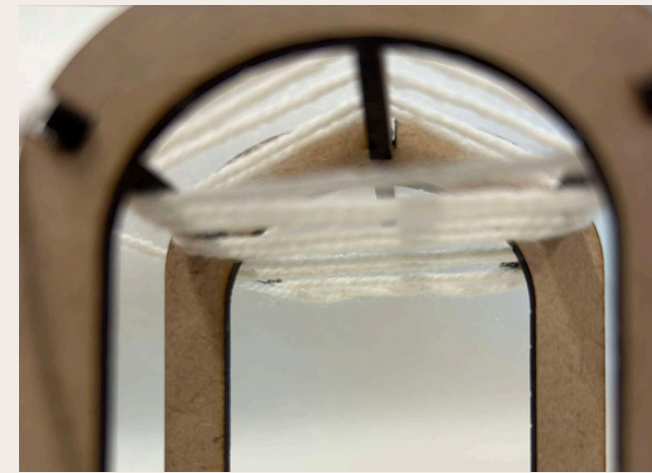
122, 123: Family Model



6. Sheer desperation.



37. Cookie cutter state housing



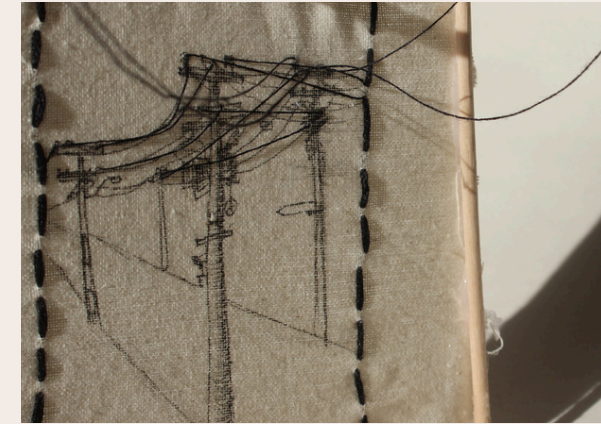
5. A bed fort in an unraveling home.



102. window frame



35. Down the path on the right side of the home



2. Tinfoil peeling off the windows.

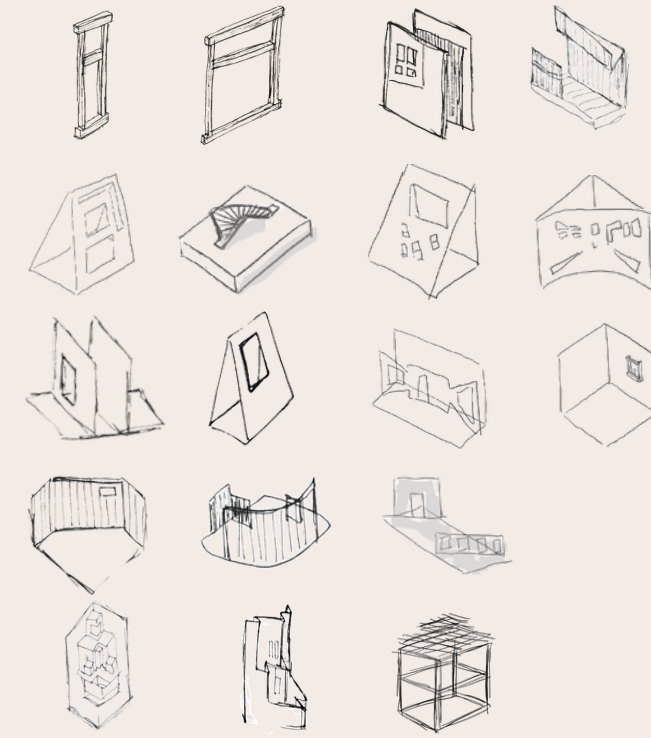
Take me
 back to that old green terraced house on Eastdale road.
 With tulips in the front yard.
 Back to that palm tree with the pigeons
 that would coo all night.
 Their white mess all over the driveway underneath.
 Back to the terrains of the park across the road from home.
 The tree canopies we would swing amongst like monkeys.
 Back to that beaten path at the entrance.
 Hunched stoic trees lined each side,
 their large figures
 adorned with ephemeral pink blossoms
 that would depart
 their hooked twig-fingers within a week.

Back to the grass slick with morning dew.
 Greener than the lawns we have now.
 Back in my day.
 Back to the steaming 包子
 fresh from the bamboo 蒸笼.
 That we would enjoy standing on the cracked concrete
 leaning on rusted railing
 with peeling white paint.
 They don't have cracked concrete like they did back then,
 or rusted railing with peeling white paint,
 or a long driveway with pigeon poo splattered all about.
 Well,
 they kind of do,
 but not like they did back in my day.



124, 125, 126, 127: Health and Self model

NOTE: The 9 Bagua Models are still in process and will be completed for the final review; the current models pictured are still in progress and may change

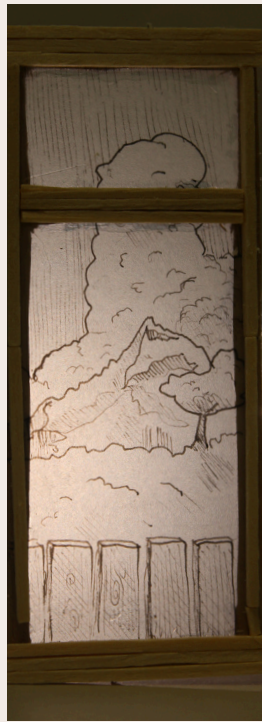


128: Health and Self fragment sketches

5: Health and Self

The center sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of health and well-being, is a critical area of focus in Feng Shui practice (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence an individual's physical, emotional, and mental health, as well as their overall sense of vitality and well-being. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the center sector is associated with the element of earth, which symbolizes stability, nurturing, and harmony (Lau, 2005).

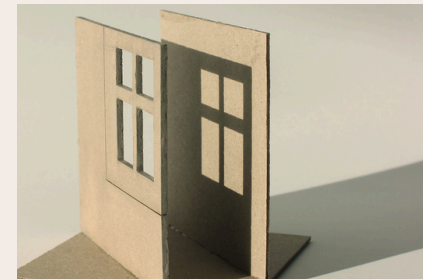
The fragments in this section were utilised in the Health and Self model to create an artefact that represents my idea of this section of the bagua map. The structure can be reinterpreted as a multi story wooden open area which allows for harmony with oneself and nature. It's open plan allows natural lighting and ventilation to flow into the shaded areas, while wooden shading and frosted glass retain privacy and an enclosed feel. The memories attached to these fragments speak to memories which contributed greatly to a sense of well-being, growth and development in my life.



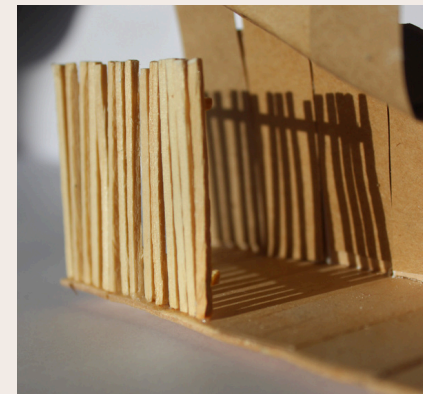
39. Horizons come to us



40. Draw back the lace curtains



61. Afternoon nap

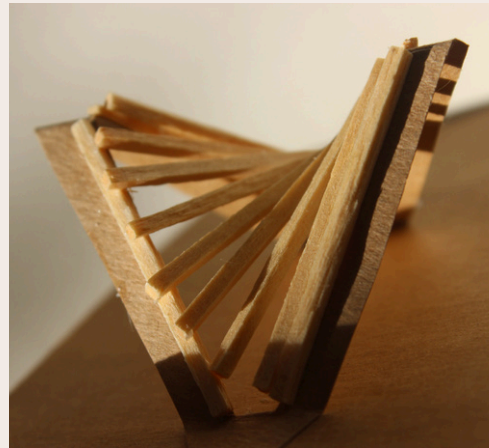


50. Walk home on a sunday

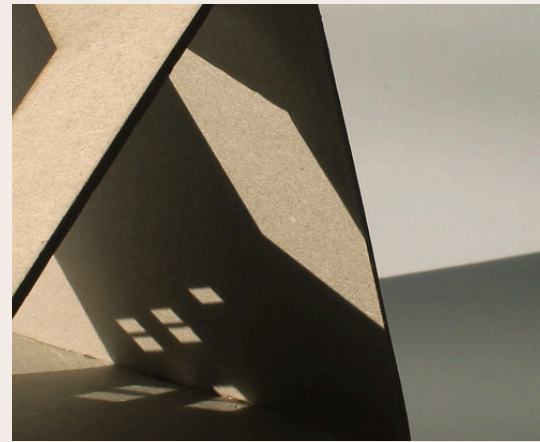
My brother and I went to the dairy on the flux of Rosebank and Eastdale.
Mum gave us a 20 but said we could only use 5.
We bought 2 packs of salt and vinegar chips, and feijoa flavored Starz.
The liquid was an odd blue color though.
I held it swinging from my fingertips on the walk down our street, the condensation dripping about.
Evanescent November heat wobbling the contours of black tar roads ahead.
We stopped at 48 and leaned against the splintering wooden fence.
With a twist of the cap, the bottle unleashed the effervescent fizz of artificial sweetness,
Dousing the splintering fence and I.



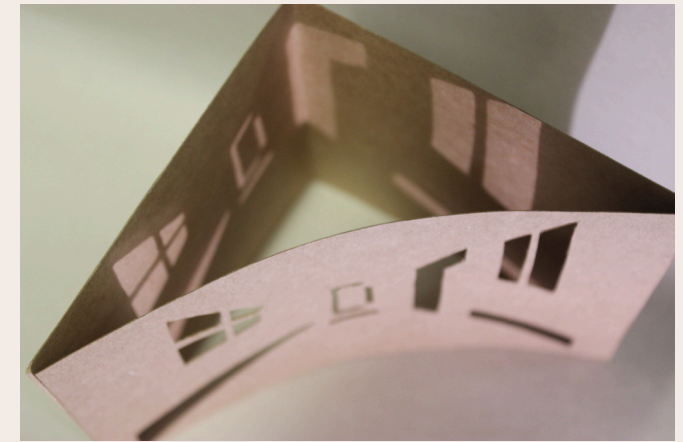
21. Window through a brick wall



9. Joists that fall and pick themselves up again



28. Cannot find the light source

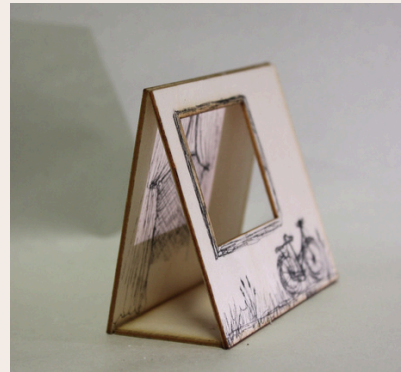


29. Headlights chase shadows across the walls



66. Shadows stretch in the silence

This house has so many rooms
but not a single window it seems.
I found a beige leather couch in one of them
white fluff ecstatically escaping the left arm.
In the other room there was a mattress and 3 mismatched socks;
one black, one red, one spotted.
Marred mahogany walls and plush carpeted landscapes
stretch into abyss.



84. The bike outside has a rusted chain



32. Solace in the dawn



26. Shattered pane

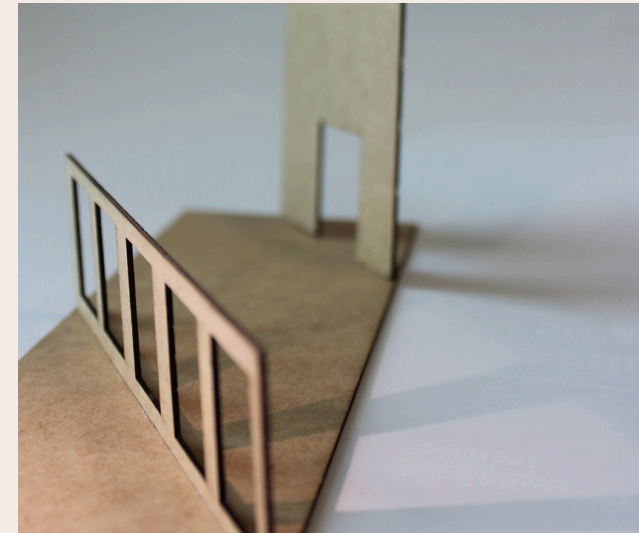
The sparse lawn turns into soil here
A muddy puddle to splash about
on days adorned with rain.
My brother says our house
is the color of puke,
but I think it's a pretty shade of mint.



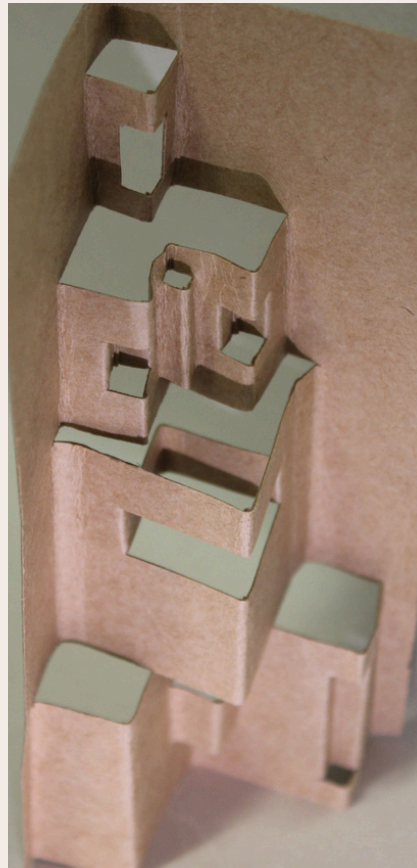
31. Solitary when the twilight comes



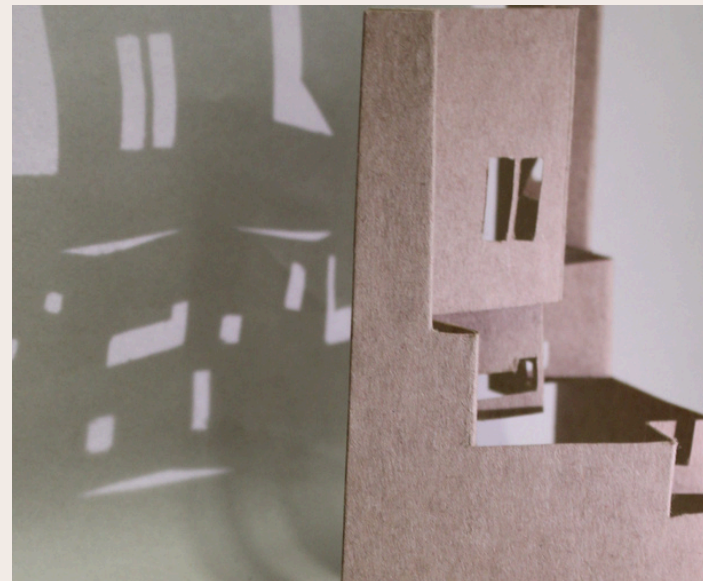
48. The corner of the balcony



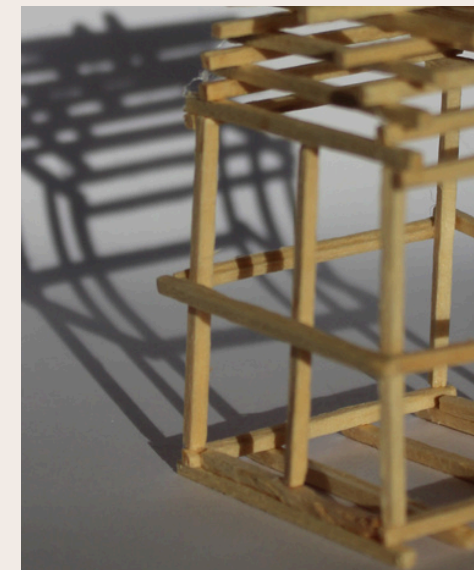
18. Shifted disposition



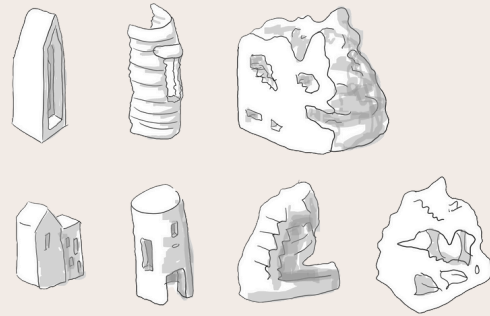
55. Apartment 1109, Apartment 110



53. Folding the space occupied



101. Reduced to this.

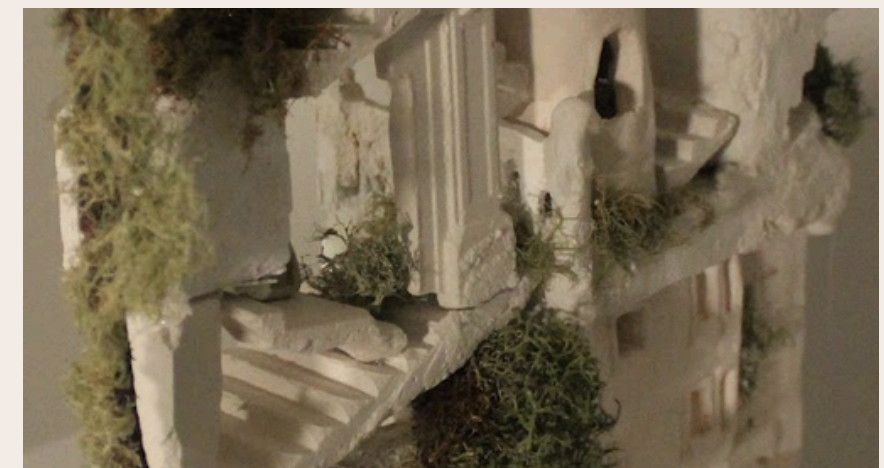


129: Children and Creativity fragment sketches

6: Children and Creativity

The west sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of children and creativity, plays a vital role in an individual's creative expression, inspiration, and overall sense of joy (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence one's ability to think creatively, innovate, and bring new ideas into being. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the west sector is associated with the element of metal, which symbolizes clarity, precision, and creativity (Lau, 2005).

Clay was selected for this section due to its tactile, malleable, and expressive qualities. Clay is often associated with childhood play and creativity (Malchiodi, 2013). In this context, clay represents the playful, imaginative, and adaptive nature of childhood memories. These materials allow for impression and imperfection, emphasizing process over product. Clay's capacity to hold a gesture — a thumbprint, a bend — aligns with the impulsive and intuitive aspects of creativity. Plaster, which sets in place what was once fluid, captures the moment of transition from idea to form. Together, these materials express creativity as both playful and grounding, with echoes of childlike exploration.



130, 131: Children and Creativity model

Whenever I am in class
I want to go to the ocean

I want to go to the ocean
and swim for a while
long leisurely strokes in silky water

Away from room 14 with
Sleepy afternoon sun
Illuminating floating dust particles

I want to go to the ocean
where we will be scared to jump in
and the water will be cold at first plunge
and then bloom into a buttery warmth

I will turn onto my back and bob in the water
shut my eyes to the caress of the sun
stretch my arms out like masts
and just bask

I want to float into the sea
still lying on my back
the ocean will keep me warm
but I won't think about the abyss behind me

I won't think about my notorious fear of the deep ocean
I will simply be swimming in the ocean
open up my eyes to the azure
glittering ripples at my feet

and jolt awake to room 14.



103. Room 14



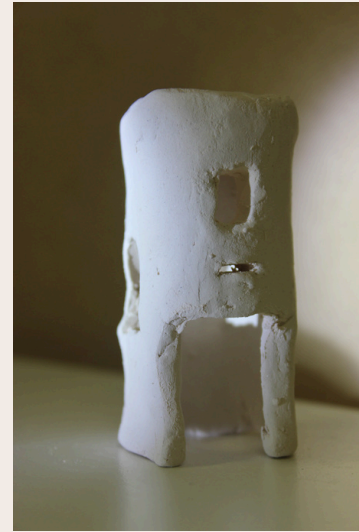
104. Turret room



104. The rooms in this home



105. Streets and their friends



106. Attic walls



107. Steps to distortions



108. Circulating the spaces

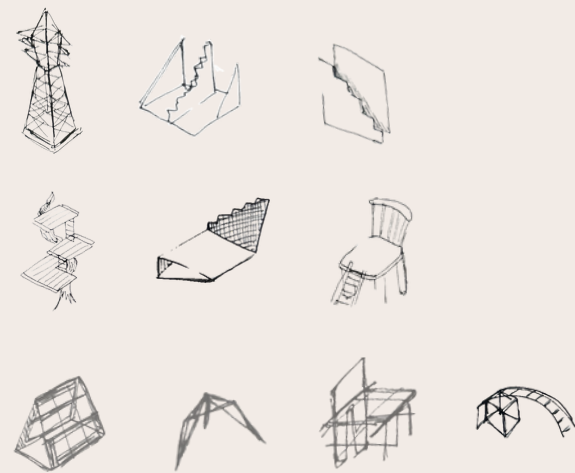
~~My house~~ mums house has a staircase which
succumbs to dizziness,
Shadows climb ladders, veiled by mundane hush,
Beneath which lies another silence,
unspoken
Not of leaves, nor the departed,
but the unknown.
Wilderness runs in abandoned halls.

The staircase gauges its echoing space,
worn by the rough of
seconds and eons.

I yearn for gardens where worn Kowhai ascend,
and days are slow.
Linen and daisy chains.
Vertigo from the swaying branches
and again at the staircase.

Unprepared for squeaking plaster,
the gasoline growl of night's crux.
Shiny vinyl and tired looking people,
nicotine scented stairwells.

And again the staircase
back at ~~my home~~ my mums home.
Three more boxes to carry
from my room
down the staircase.



132: Knowledge fragment sketches

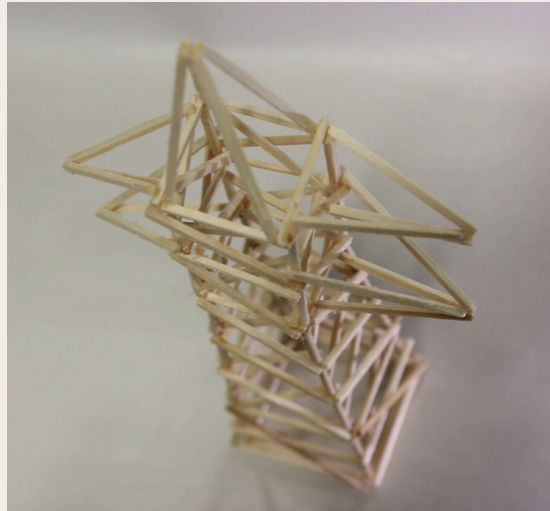
7: Knowledge and Wisdom

The northeast sector of the Bagua map corresponds to the realm of knowledge and self-cultivation (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence an individual's pursuit of knowledge, personal growth, and spiritual development. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the northeast sector is associated with the element of earth, which symbolizes stability, nurturing, and harmony (Lau, 2005).

The memories of this section extract details of times where I was able to gain insights of myself and the world around me. The model that combines elements of these fragments represents the endless pursuit for knowledge; including wisdom and enlightenment. The reoccurring symbol of the stairs symbolizes the uphill battle required to truly gain wisdom as a student of life.

This model integrates softwood, blond wood, butter paper, and a matchstick-built electric tower, forming a scaffolded space of reflection and elevation. The wood materials suggest growth and structure, while the tower element introduces verticality — a metaphor for the gradual accumulation of insight. Butter paper veils parts of the construction, implying that understanding is often partial and revealed over time. The use of everyday materials nods to the quiet, persistent labor of self-cultivation — built slowly, layer by layer.



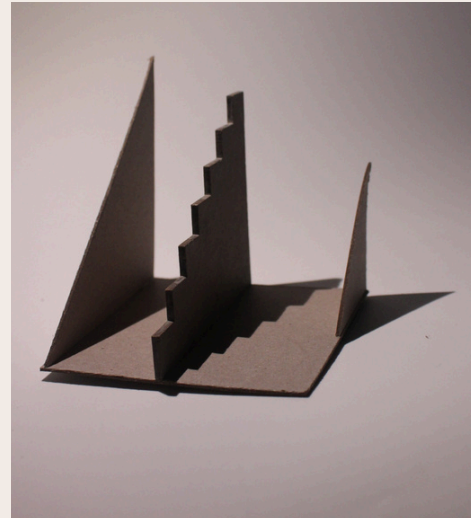


86. The transmission tower in the ocean

The passenger seat smelt like dampness
but we drove to the beach near my house.
It was easter morning
but it was that disastrous era of mine.
It could have been my mothers birthday
for all I knew.

The bottom of my glass;
What else is there on this floating rock?

We went to the beach,
But not in a fun way.
A nook, with a body of water
shrouded in shadow.
Power lines abuzz with anticipation
or dread
(for what I don't know).



47. "They say demons cant climb stairs"



65. Tread carefully in the shadows

I can tell who is coming up the stairs by the sound of their
footsteps,

Clumsy stumbling for my brother

Loud, heavy unmindful stomps for my father

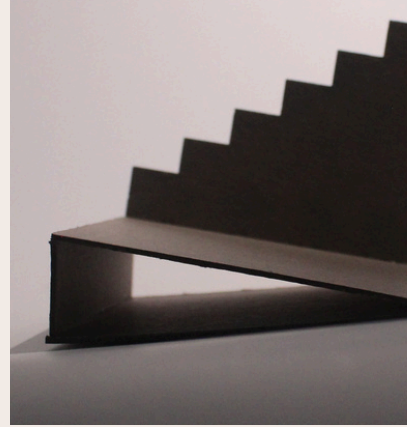
Steady, even steps for my mum

There is a creaky floorboard on the
7th-from-the-bottom step

The carpeted stairway is silent tonight.



74. Raft wars



62. Harry's hideout

The hot water tank is located beneath the stairs.

There is a small room for it which my family likes to call "Harry Potter's room".

I often come and sit in the dark at the side where the ceiling is the lowest.

I come here when my mothers voice is shrill with irritation or my fathers eyes flash with anger.

It's warm here, and I can hear the voices outside as if they are just sounds on the television.

The script to a sitcom.

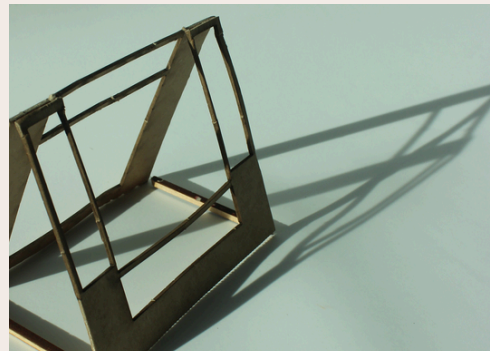
The footsteps going up and down the stairs feel like a hug in the dark.

Inhale the dust bunnies.
Practice for later.



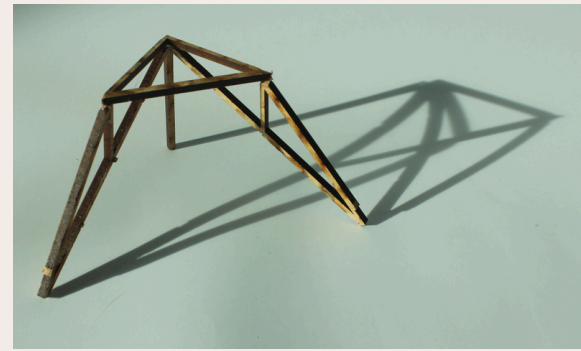
88. Lead me up to a lowly place

I learnt to forget on the coast
Where the ocean meets the horizon
But the sea foam
Couldn't sizzle away the
Coals of anger inside me.



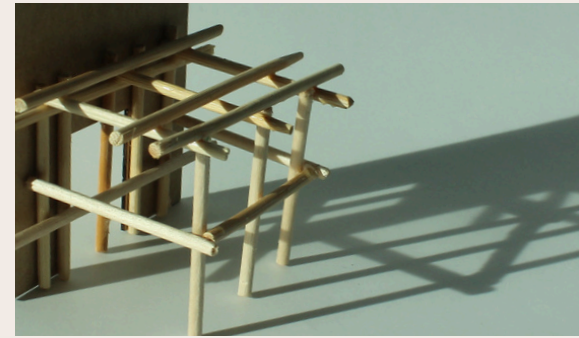
79. Swing without a swing

The bell has already released them
and their half empty Tupperware boxes
clanging in their bags
past the playground with their
mums and dads.



80. Monkey bars near the sand pit

Paint stained bark chips of green,
blue,
yellow.
Found a big piece under the see saw,
slid it into the pocket of my school uniform.



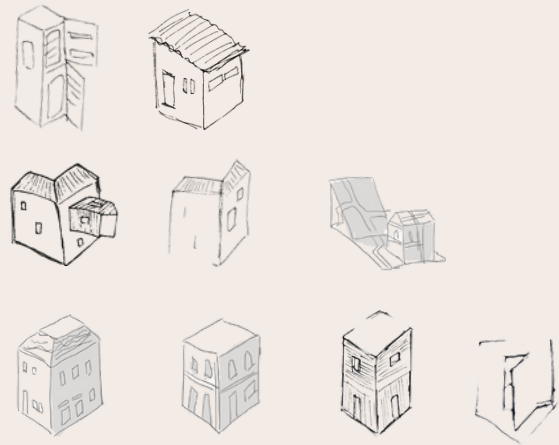
81. Even the builders have gone home

Swinging from the monkey bars is good fun.
I've gotten quick with lots of practice,
but my hands hurt now, so I stick to the slide.
It's now empty here
and the sky a bit sad.



82. 5:30pm on a school day

Shoot up the ladder,
over the tunnel
from the top of the slide.
And cast hopeful gazes towards the car park.

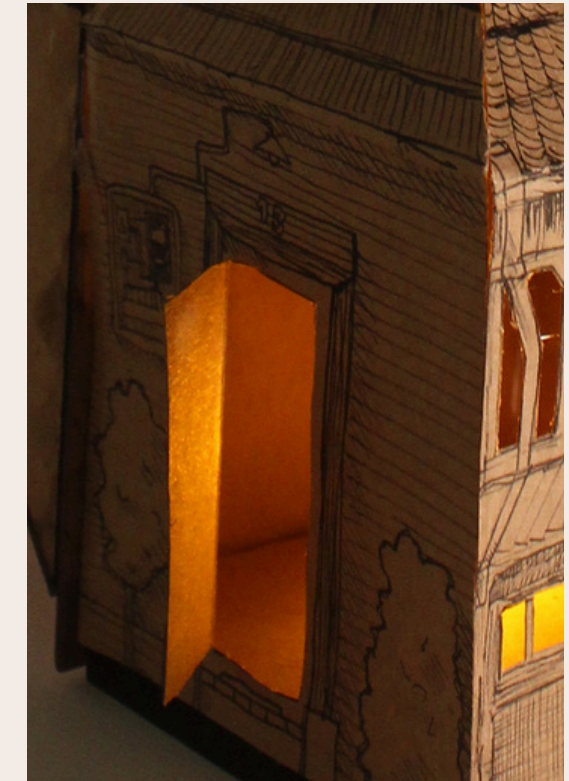
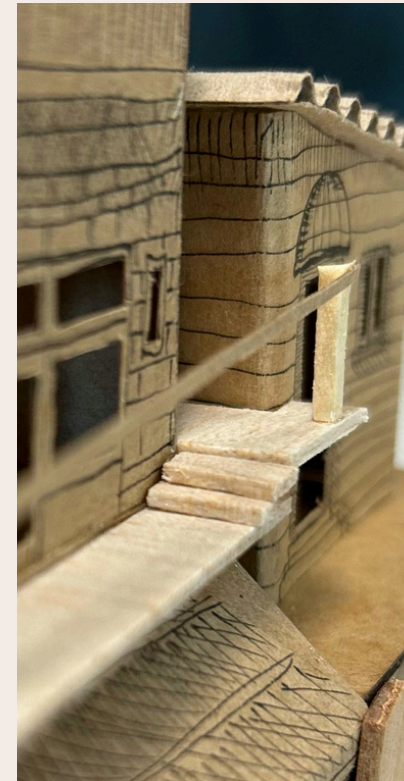


135: Life Path fragment sketches

8: Career and Life Path

The north sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of career and life path, plays a significant role in an individual's professional development, life purpose, and overall sense of direction (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence one's career advancement, job satisfaction, and ability to navigate life's challenges. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the north sector is associated with the element of water, which symbolizes flow, adaptability, and resilience (Lau, 2005).

The model for this section combines elements of the memories that contributed to my sense of direction in life. The models in this section are primarily hand drawn models made out of brown card to convey a sense of simplicity, elegance, and precision. Brown card is a blank material that belies the complexity of added detail. The use of black pen on blank card symbolizes the power one has in shaping their own life path and highlights the importance of attention to detail in professional and personal pursuits. One's life is like a blank paper, and the memories we make are the marks we draw onto it. The models focus primarily on the facade of impactful buildings which played a part in pivotal times of my life. The combined model integrates these buildings in a way which represents the whimsy of remembering.



136, 137, 138, 120: Life Path model



95. We need soy milk

shopping list on the fridge door:

bread
bananas
avocado (if cheap)
potato chips (mum wont buy them)
potatoes
oil
jam
饺子皮*
oranges



42. Shed

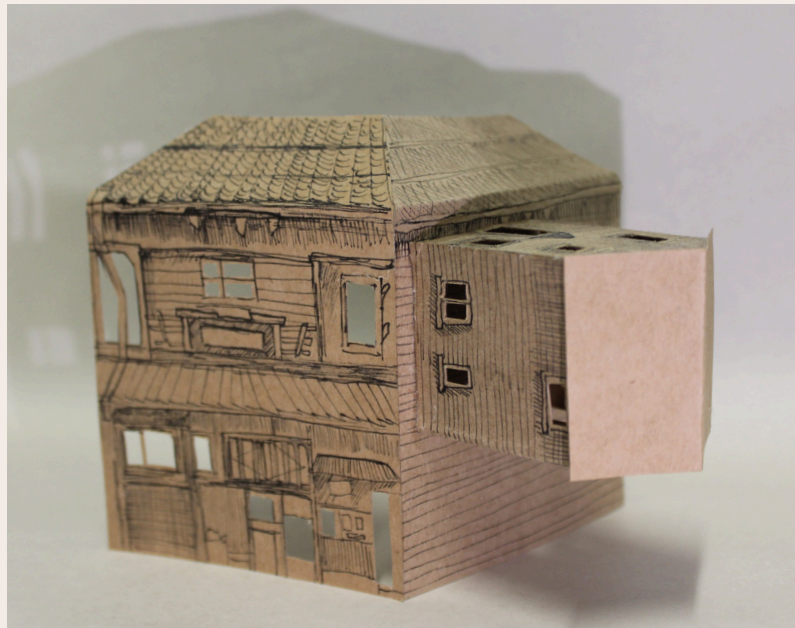
There's a garden shed out back with a wonky door.
Weathered rust blending with foliage.
The worn door creaks when the wind blows,
groans and screams when it's stormy.

Tools lie scattered and still;
A rusty trowel, a half-filled watering can.
The scent of damp earth and decay.

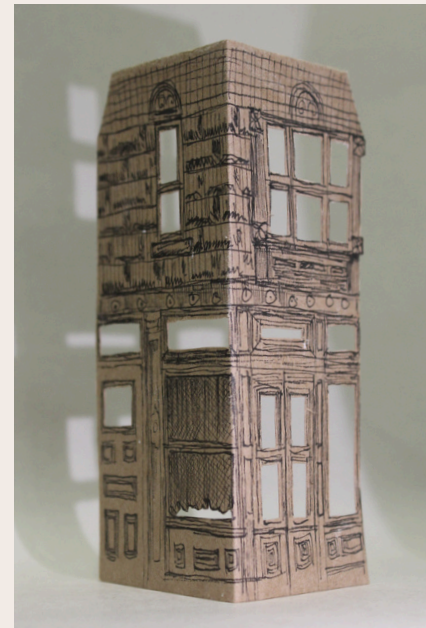
Morning light filters through his grimy windows,
Illuminating dust motes and forgotten items.
He remains
still.
A constant presence.
Yet un-looming.

The door creaks softly in the breeze,
A reminder of its presence.
Every time I nearly forget.

*饺子皮: Pre-made dumpling skin



80. I think I know where I am



92. Empty, but the curtains stir



17. Knee pads

I once rode down the hill near our house on my scooter,
pavement greeting my young flesh at the bottom.
I remember the *woosh*
of the wind in my ears,
the consequent bright red
on my futile knee pads.
The “why did you take the scooter down such a steep hill!?” 王八蛋*!

Now I stand at the crux of the same street
upon the merest of inclines.

Same pavements,
tougher skin.

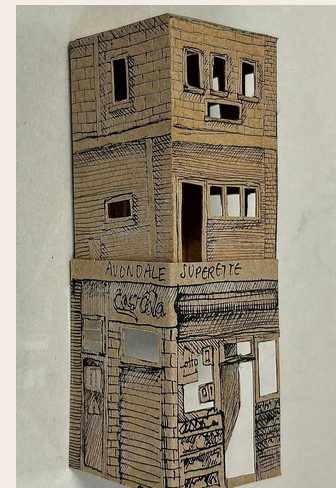
*王八蛋: idiot



14. For lease



15. Piano lessons with Liu 老师*



93. Fejoa soda, salt and vinegar chips



96. 5:46pm on a wednesday

*老师 Lao Shi : Teacher



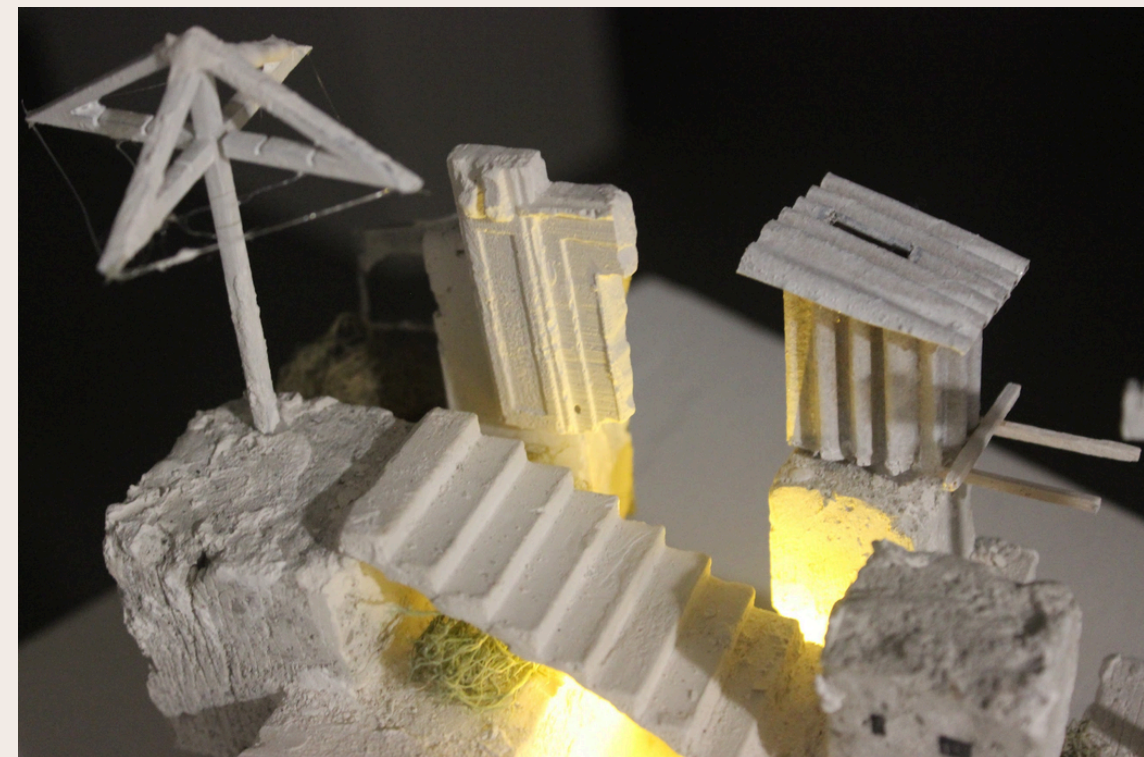
139: Helpful People fragment sketches

9: Helpful People and Travel

The northwest sector of the Bagua map, corresponding to the realm of help and support, plays a vital role in an individual's ability to receive guidance, assistance, and mentorship (Wong, 2011). This sector is believed to influence one's relationships with mentors, teachers, and helpful individuals, as well as their ability to ask for and receive help. According to traditional Feng Shui principles, the northwest sector is associated with the element of metal, which symbolizes clarity, precision, and determination (Lau, 2005).

The use of concrete and plaster for this section was motivated by the desire to convey a sense of solidity, stability, and foundation. Concrete, in particular, is often associated with notions of permanence and durability (Buchli, 2013). In the context of Helpful People and Travel, these materials represent the dependable and supportive relationships that provide a sense of grounding and security.

Many of the memories in this section are extracted from my time growing up in my Grandma's home in Zhuozho, China. My time here left lasting memories, yet the quality of these memories and the memories of the architecture of residential China is vastly different from Aotearoa. The different texture of these memories is also communicated by using the selected materials. My grandparents were a pillar for me in the time I spent in China, forever making delicious meals and helping me with homework while I attended school in China. These models represent my memories and interpretations of Helpful People and Travel.



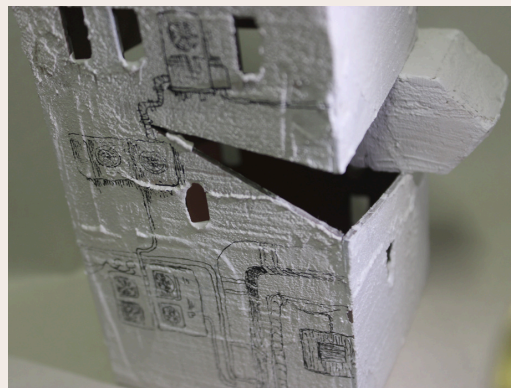
140, 141, 152: Helpful People Model



59. At the park across the road



56. The climb



90. I still remember it from the city

Pinpricks like the mesh blindfold
To rob me of my past and
Blind me of my memories.
The first day I learnt to forget
Was a memorable one.
The last one of many



10. The heat comes earlier each
year



73. A warm hello, a bitter goodbye



11. Smog
and dust permeates
Every orifice of my body.
See how the vibrato of the floor
shakes them about inside my lungs.
Cast a slate gaze through
Yellowed windows.

“Taller buildings than Auckland eh?”
Grandma pats my back reassuringly,
“Don’t worry, 宝贝. It’s just a few months”



99. Go back the way you came.

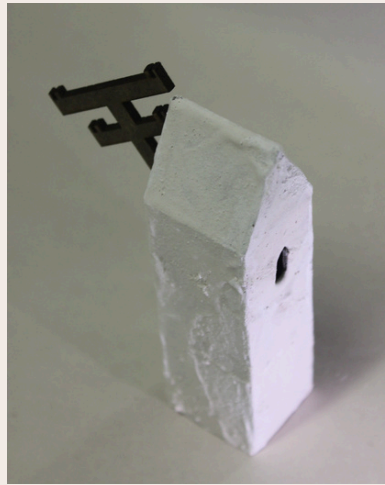


3. The bedframe doesn’t fit through the door.



78. The weight of eventide;

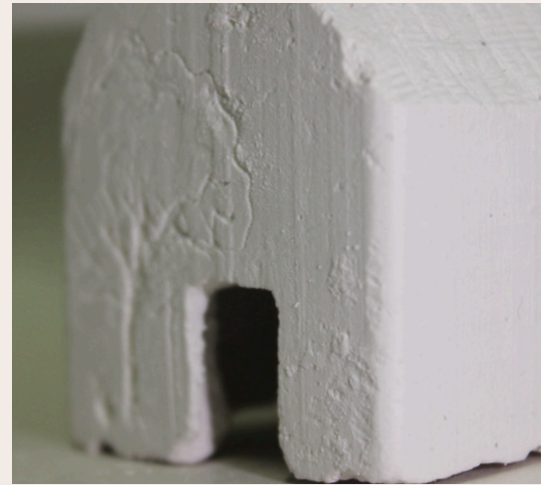
douse my senses in kerosene.
Fatigue haunts and pulls like a
ventriloquist.
I fall into slumber,
And jolt awake before I hit the
rocks.



13. Not an electric tower



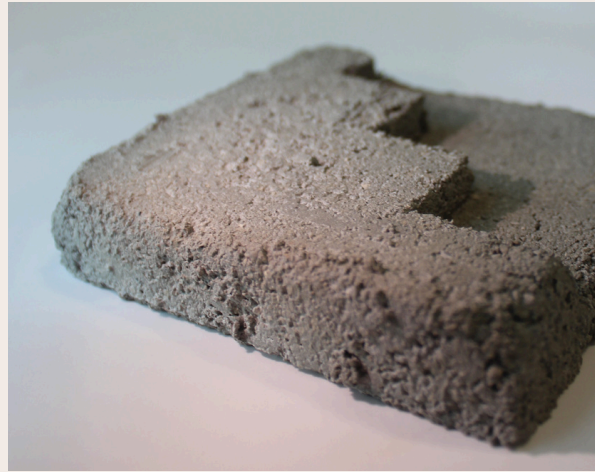
16. Four bedroom abode



41. Imprints of the Kowhai outside.



58. Succumb to vertigo



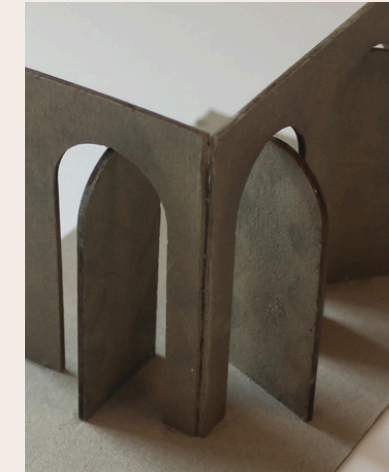
7. Granular stairs.



33. The tension between these walls



34. The weight of eons



38. Various states of openness

老家 (lao jia, old home)

涿州 is my 老家
 a few hours north of Beijing
 less if you travel by train
 here, not even Chinese people have heard of it
 so I tell them Beijing is where I'm from
 and they "ahhhh" with recognition

crunchy 糖葫芦
 sweltering summers above 30 Celsius
 we've got it all in 涿州
 cracked concrete apartments
 facades that wink or grimace?
 under the weight
 that was passed down through generations
 but even if your shoulders cry out
 you must 谢谢 through grit teeth
 because mother knows best

The door is left ajar.

A crescent silver of light that

Slices through me

Yet swallows me whole

Mum doesn't let me shut the bedroom door
 when I sleep
 Says it blocks the Qi.
 But I know it's because she doesn't want me to
 climb out the window anymore.

The doors ever swiveling on its axis

Conjure up a hurricane in here
 to swallow me whole

老家: Old home/Hometown

涿州: Zhuo zhou - A small town north of Beijing

糖葫芦: Chinese dessert of fruit covered in rock sugar

谢谢: Thank you



152. Author at work

Exhibition



153. Exhibition Models

Interactive exercise with exhibition attendees

Attendees and Examiners were asked to remember a space that lives within them and draw it. Then they were questioned; Tell us about this place? How would you model this? What emotion lives within this space?

Drawings were then added to the exhibition, to become a living part of the memory archive that was this exhibition.

The visitor contribution component functions as an extension of the thesis's core inquiry: how memory, space, and meaning are layered and reconstructed through personal experience. By inviting visitors to draw or describe a remembered space, the installation creates a shared act of spatial reflection. This interactive layer positions memory not as a fixed or solitary phenomenon, but as something continually shaped by presence, dialogue, and interpretation. The contributions expand the project beyond the author's own recollections, transforming the exhibition into a living archive of remembered architecture. In this way, the act of contribution becomes part of the palimpsest — layering new memories onto the spatial field and reinforcing the thesis's interest in memory as collective, fragmentary, and reconfigurable.



155-158. Visitor exercise

Design Reflection

This design chapter has presented the process of creating 108 physical fragments, each representing a section of the Bagua map, as a means of exploring the application of Feng Shui principles to memories of architectural spaces. This has demonstrated the value of using creative, hands-on methods to explore the application of Feng Shui principles to personal memories and interactions with built environments. The process of creating the models has shown how the Bagua map can be used as a tool for personal reflection and growth, allowing individuals to tap into their memories to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the symbiotic relationship between self and place. This research process has shown in response to the research question that: Yes, we can indeed use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places.

The process of reinterpreting the fragment models within the Bagua map can be understood as a form of "cultural remapping" (Hall, 1990), wherein the complex relationships between cultural identity, personal experience, and physical space are reconfigured. This process of cultural remapping is particularly significant in the context of diasporic identity formation, wherein individuals must navigate multiple cultural contexts and negotiate complex relationships between heritage, culture, and place (Bhabha, 1994). The use of the Bagua map as a framework for reinterpreting the fragment models also highlights the importance of considering non-Western ontologies in the development of architectural and design practices (Chang, 2016). These can be seen as a form of "counter-mapping" (Peluso, 1995), wherein dominant narratives are challenged through the creation of alternative knowledge.

This project has also highlighted the importance of considering the impact of materiality in the representation of memories. The making process led to a deeper understanding in how materials behave across different scales, and also how the finished product could convey the materiality of the memory itself in the intended manner.

The tactile nature of the materials, the weight and texture of the clay, the smoothness of the plaster, and the roughness of the wooden sticks, all contributed to a deeply embodied experience of remembering. The use of found materials, such as the wooden sticks and brown card, also added a layer of complexity and meaning to the models. These materials, which were often discarded or overlooked, took on a new significance as they were transformed into objects of memory and emotion. This process of transformation, from the mundane to the meaningful, is a powerful metaphor for the ways in which memories and emotions can be transformed and reinterpreted over time.

While materiality was explored on a modelling scale, this design research can also be applied to larger projects to uncover the ways in which materiality influences human cognition. Individuals utilising this design-based approach can uncover the ways their cultural and personal contexts influence the representation of memories. These are the experiences that can be leveraged to create architecture that reflects the diversity of human experience.

Significance of Research

Contributions to Architecture and Identity

This study contributes to the fields of architecture, personal identity, and cultural heritage by exploring the intricate relationships between memory, space, and identity. By employing a novel methodology that combines fragments of self-discovery, modeling, drawing, and poetic exploration, this research reveals the ephemeral and poetic nature of architectural spaces.

Challenging Prevailing Architectural Paradigms

This study offers a counterargument to the dominant architectural paradigm that prioritizes efficiency over ecological considerations. By presenting a design language that embodies the poetics of space, this research promotes a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between built environments, occupant health, and well-being. This contribution has far-reaching implications for the design of future architectural projects, encouraging a more holistic approach that integrates spiritual practices and indigenous knowledge.

Unpacking Personal and Cultural Identity

The research highlights the significance of remembered places in shaping personal and cultural identity. By examining the influence of internal biases, past experiences, and memory distortions on recalled spaces, this study demonstrates the complex and dynamic nature of identity formation. This contribution advances our understanding of the interplay between individual memories, cultural heritage, and the built environment.

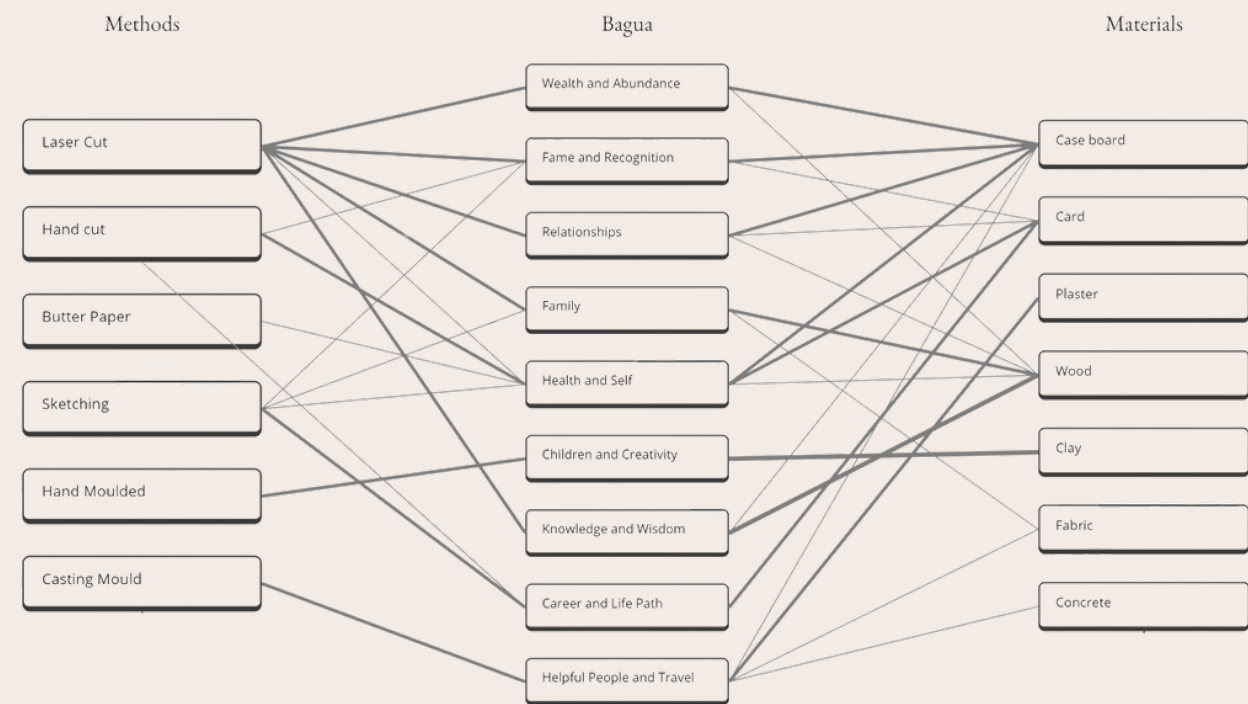
Feng Shui and the Reclamation of Indigenous Knowledge

The incorporation of Feng Shui principles in this research serves as a catalyst for the reclamation of indigenous knowledge and spiritual practices in architectural design. By acknowledging the wisdom of indigenous cultures, this study promotes a more inclusive and sustainable approach to design, one that honors the intricate relationships between humans, nature, and the built environment.]

This research contributes meaningfully to the fields of architecture, personal identity, and cultural heritage by unveiling the poetics of remembered places. By challenging prevailing architectural paradigms, unpacking personal and cultural identity, and reclaiming indigenous knowledge, this study paves the way for a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between built environments, human experience, and cultural heritage. As we move forward in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, this research serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of remembering the wisdom of the past into our designs for the future.



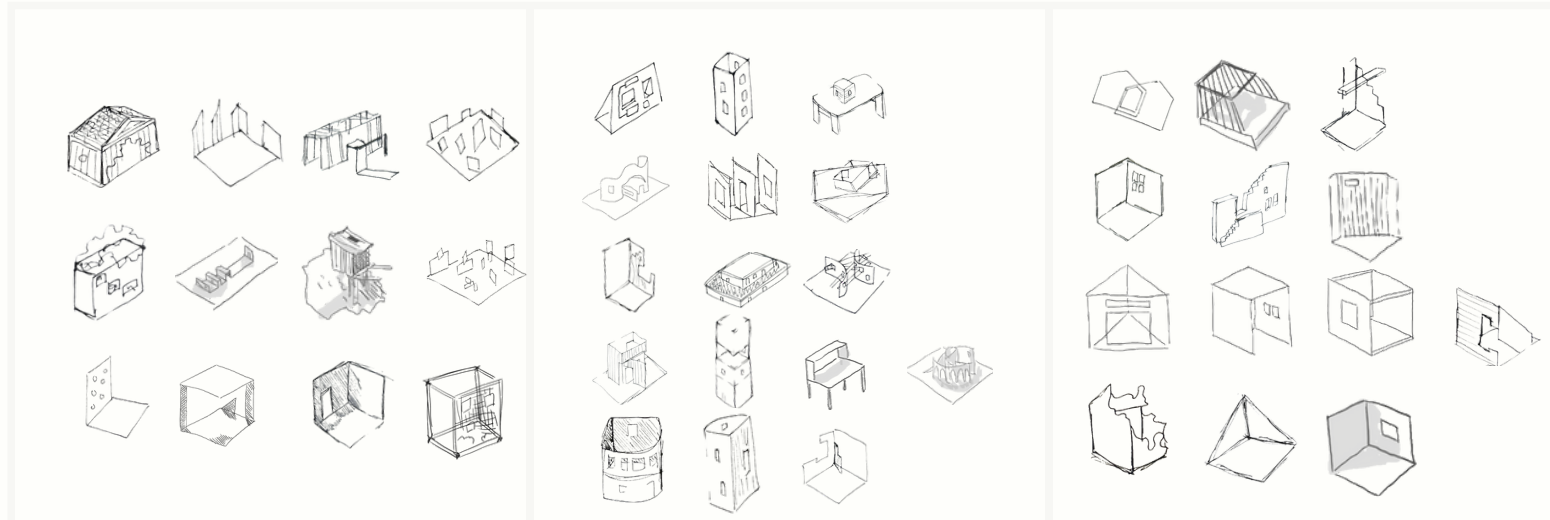
150. Bagua flow chart



151. Model Bagua diagram

Fame + Reputation

Wealth + Prosperity



Relationships

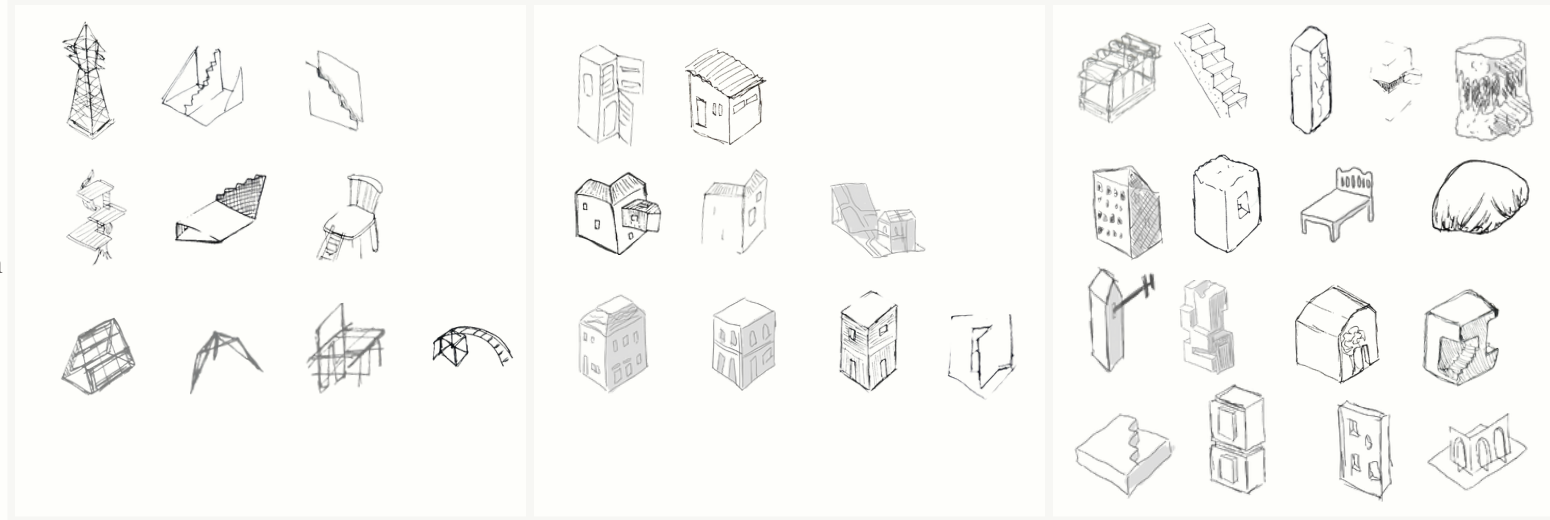
Family

Health + Self



Children + Creativity

Knowledge + Wisdom



Helpful People + Travels

Career + Lifepath

Conclusion

The question of “*How can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?*” is answered through fragments of self discovery from modeling making, drawing and poetic exploration of remembered architectural elements. The methodologies employed offered a nuanced approach to remembering; one that allowed for me to realize architectural spaces as something that is both ephemeral and poetic. The often tedious process of designing 108 fragments allowed for the incessant probe of self discovery to reinterpret new depths of the memories. This introspective process can potentially trigger an infinite regress of existential inquiry, a phenomenon to which I succumbed numerous times throughout the project. The aimless act of remembering is in need of a more concrete framework, therefore theoretical context is used to tether the elusive memories to more concrete concepts such as feng shui, place identity, confabulation etc. Engaging in a process of extracting and reconstructing my firsthand experiences realizes that the remembered perspective of space is inherently influenced by internal biases, shaped by past experiences, and filtered through the lens of memory, which can be distorted by several factors such as upbringing, socioeconomic status, age, self-esteem, family dynamics, and numerous other variables. Consequently, every memory is, to some extent, biased. The act of reconstructing a remembered space requires a profound contemplation of the place and positionality of self within that space. Reflecting on the fluid nature of memories leads to examining the potential biases or preconceptions that may contribute to shifts in memory. This context, combined with Dino Chai’s (2011) existing methodology provided an effective framework to address “*How can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?*”.

Model making at a large quantity explores memories but also presents potential future design methods. The exigencies of the design project's timeline initially led to a reliance on mass-produced models, characterized by simplicity, rough craftsmanship, and homogeneity. This approach parallels the prevailing uninspired uniformity in contemporary architectural design, driven by efficiency considerations. However, this methodology yielded innovative strategies for generating design forms which embody the poetics of space within a condensed time limit. The dominant architectural paradigm prioritizes efficiency over ecological considerations, citing time, labor, economic, resource, and cost constraints. This methodology presents a compelling counterargument, offering a tool to explore efficient designs that speak to the ontological aspects of space to promote occupant health and well-being. This research project draws upon memories to develop a design language that revives and communicates spiritual practices, echoing the wisdom of indigenous knowledge that has been gradually marginalized since the advent of capitalism. Intuitive acts making can be leveraged as a design study for future projects to reinspire the poetics of architecture.

The question of “*How can we use Feng Shui to explore memories of architectural spaces to reveal the poetics of remembered places?*” tested through the selected methodologies of poetry, architectural model making, drawing and research only raises further questions. While the methods employed are testament to my remembered spaces, this research verified that the full extent of these memories are ungraspable. Through the process of exploring my memories I found that the harder I tried to hold on to the details, the more they would slip out of my mind’s grasp. The methods employed assisted in the remembering process, but they could not achieve the impossible; to fully capture a memory of space in its entirety. The essence of memory can only be absolute as it is; a memory. Regardless, the process of this repetitive memory retrieving process resulted in a more cohesive sense of self, made cohesive by months of existential spiraling. Although an absolute sense of self is still underway, I have hope that the fragments of tomorrow will allow me to continue this journey of self discovery. This thesis presents a methodology to unravel cultural value systems such as Feng Shui in new places. These methodologies, when applied to my personal experiences, offered insight on my own journey as an aspiring architect in Aotearoa with a Chinese background. This research uncovered the ways in which I can utilize fragments of my personal identity and cultural background to strengthen my future design processes.

As I close this chapter, fragments remain embedded within these pages, and within me. The act of thorough recollection polished the face of yesterday into a luminous mirror, I can see myself clearer in the reflection. Through this self-discovery, I hope my yesterdays evoked a contemplation in you too. The architecture of yesterday shaped my gaze, informing my present-day design decisions. These fragments will not end here. instead fragments of todays and tomorrows will continue to accumulate. These fragments will hopefully fall into place, to fill the city of tomorrow.

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Figure 146: Bagua Map, Taqua Feng shui. (2020) <https://www.taqafengshui.com/fengshui-consultations>

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150. Bagua flow chart
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155. Author at work
153. Final Models
154. Exhibition Models
- 155-158. Visitor exercise

Experiment #1

After producing the fragments, I experimented with an iteration of a final model. For this model, I employed a mixed-media approach to craft the platforms, combining polystyrene and plaster to achieve a unique texture which mimics organic land forms.

Process:

The base is made from carved polystyrene to create the form. A thick layer of plaster is applied, which was then shaped and molded while still wet to form details.

To add an organic touch, I incorporated natural elements:

Driftwood sticks, smoothed by the ocean's forces, support the higher platforms.

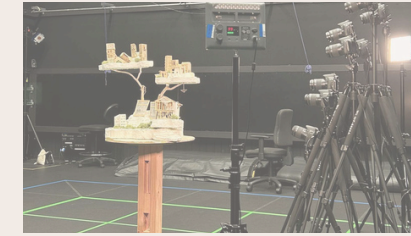
Delicate lichens – *Ramalina farinacea* and *Usnea subfloridana* – sourced from the childhood parks mentioned in the poems, add a touch of ecological authenticity.



Digital Model

The physical defragmentation model was then converted to a digital model using photogrammetry. This enabled my purely physical methodology to be translated into a digital form.

Future directions could include combining the photogrammetry model with BIM Software or integrating virtual reality for a fully immersive experience into the ruins of yesterday.



The digital model allowed for enhanced analysis and manipulation, providing opportunities for further exploration and innovation. With the digital version, I could easily share the model with other researchers and collaborators, facilitating a collaborative approach to problem-solving. This transformation from physical to digital not only preserved the original work but also expanded its potential impact for future research or broadening the research. The digital model allowed for me to create digital drawing from the file, these drawings are discussed on the next page.



Digital and Hand Drawing

The 3d model produced from photogrammetry was used to produce digital sketches. These digital sketches were then printed and additional hand drawings were added onto the digital outlines. These hand drawings were then scanned into a digital form and further digital sketching was done over it using photoshop. This process was repeated 2 more times, producing an image which resembles the physical model yet differs.

This process of digital and hand drawing translated over multiple processes is much like the process of revisiting memories. Each time, the memory may differ slightly or take a different tangent. Over many years, a memory may be completely transformed.

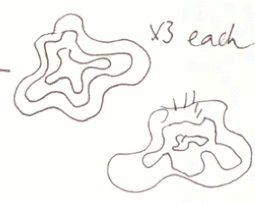
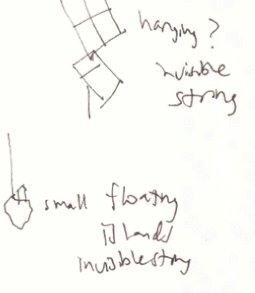
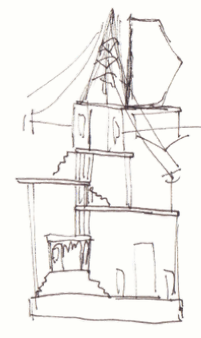
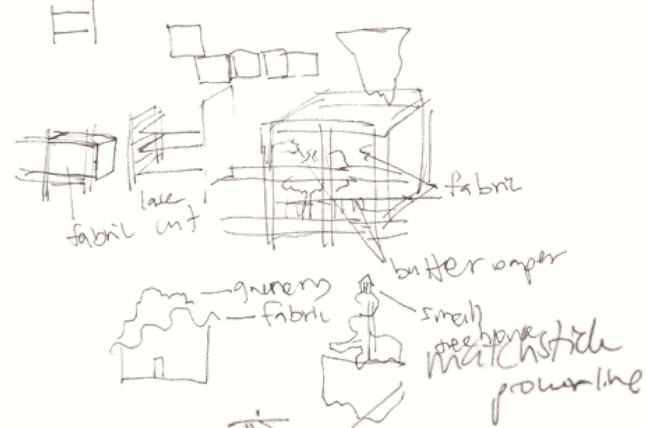
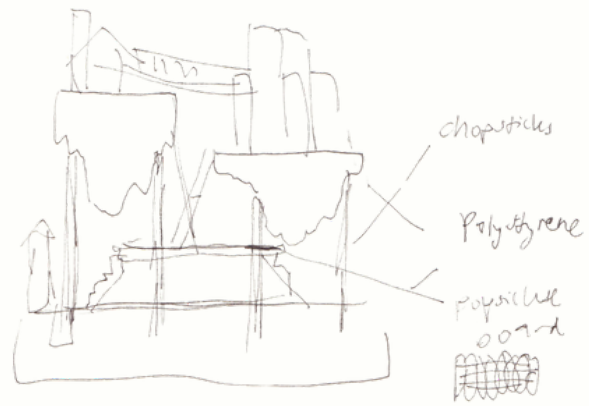
This drawing positions the model as a playful entity, aspects found in my fragments are incorporated into the background and colour is added to the sketch of the model.



Experiment #1 Iteration Hand Sketches

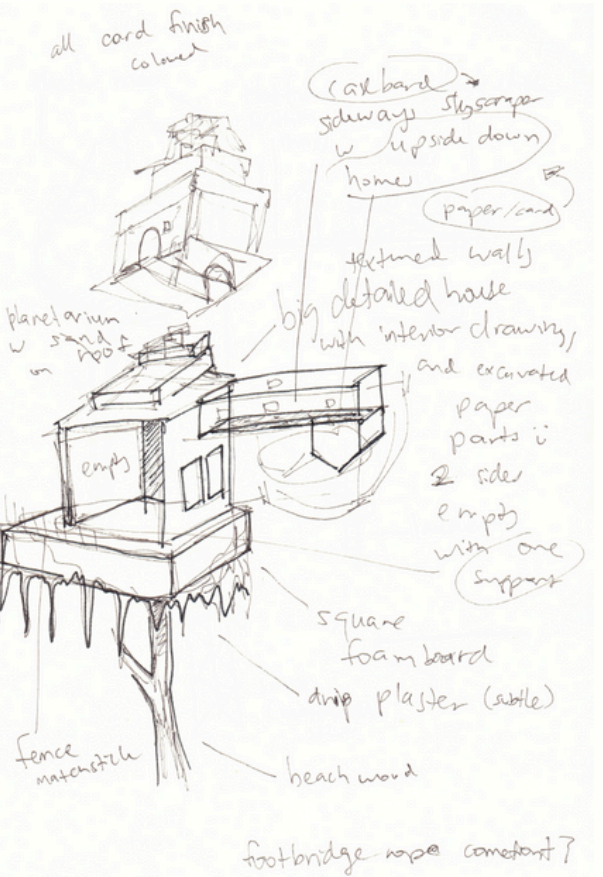
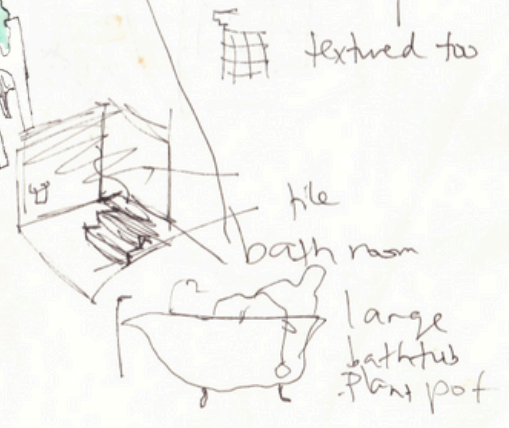
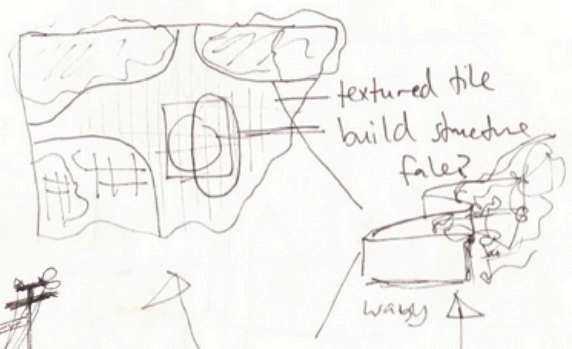
143. Process Work

Process Work continued



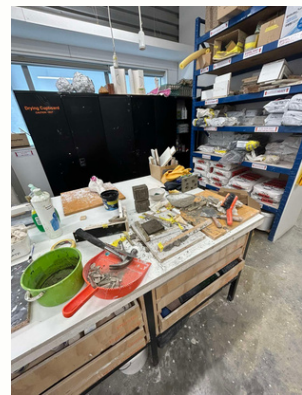
- mountain language by:
- making base irregular
 - make base leave LITTLE room rear platform base
 - add continued 2x more times mini min.
 - make square 1.5H
 - make platform w square cardboard observation deck on first platform form
 - more arch: to FIT INTO shape: matchstick + modular looking org
 - powerline matchstick model
 - connection via power lines + bridges will HELP w coherence.
 - finish base THEN ADD into models.

garden of dreams



Critical reflection on experiment #1

Upon reviewing the completed model, it became evident that it would not serve as the final representation, as the plaster base failed to adequately convey the materiality of the various fragments. The exploration involved a diverse range of materials, resulting in numerous contrasting ideas that warranted a more comprehensive approach. Therefore, it was determined that creating nine models—each inspired by the principles of the Bagua map—would be more effective than focusing on a single model. This approach would allow for a clearer articulation of the concepts that guided the creative process and ultimately enhance the final outcomes. The initial design of this model aimed to illustrate the disorder of memories, and while it succeeded in capturing this essence, it may have leaned too heavily into chaos. In this, the poetic beauty in the ideas that inspired the fragments was lost. By embracing a series of models, the intention is to strike a better balance between chaos and clarity to show that memories are beautiful and messy. Two qualities which are not mutually exclusive.



Process



The process of making consisted of various materials and methods including

Wet Media:

- clay
- concrete
- plaster
- glue
- paint
- spray paint

Dry Media:

- MDF
- wood
- caseboard
- wire
- fabric
- polystyrene
- sticks

Methods:

- hand cutting
- laser cutting
- painting
- drawing
- sewing
- digital modelling
- casting
- molding
- gluing