

The Dance of Soma and Psyche

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Fig.1

“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 acknowledgments), nor material which to a substantial extend has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father-in-law, Dr. Fereydoun Behnam, who unfortunately is no longer with us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who gave me the means to complete this thesis. I am heartily thankful to my supervisors, Rafik Patel and Carl Douglas, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final stages has enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

Especially, I would like to give my special thanks to my husband, Keyvan Behnam, whose love and patience enabled me to complete this work. I owe my deepest gratitude to my parents for their love and support. It would not have been possible to complete this work without them.

ABSTRACT

“How colourless and formless I am. When will I ever see the am that I am?” (Lewis, 2000, p.355)

This quote by the 13th century poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī, known to the English-speaking world simply as Rumi refers to ecstasy and formlessness. According to him, ecstasy is a state in which one is taken away from reality. What happens during ecstasy is a transformation in the abstract perception of time and space. It is the moment of unconsciousness when one's true identity is unveiled and can be experienced through Sema dance. Sema dance is a meditative ritual that embodies divine movement and the experience of ecstasy through bodily gestures with its roots created by Rumi. Sema dance is part of Sufism, which is in turn a core part of Islamic philosophy and mysticism (Sufism, 2009).

The same body movement can also be depicted through the static representation of traditional Islamic calligraphy. By translating calligraphy into architecture in this way, it is possible to explore both the corporeal experience of the dance movement and the spatial experience of a structure as well.

Through an interior architectural project, I intend to create a spiritual dwelling and residence for the Islamic calligrapher, Hassan Massoudy, in an apartment in Dilworth building. The project aims to critically analyse the ecstatic movement of traditional Islamic calligraphy through architectural design in relation to the philosophy of Sufism.

INTRODUCTION

*"Your love lifts my soul from the body to the sky and
you lift me up out of the two worlds.*

I want your sun to reach my raindrops,

So your heat can raise my soul upward like a cloud."

Rumi (Shiva, 2000)



This exegesis contextualises my project philosophically, culturally, historically, and theoretically. In order to discuss these aspects, I have divided my exegesis into three main sections. The first section, *Ecstatic Bodies; Ecstatic Architecture* emphasises the unexpected link between body and architecture (space) through a feeling of ecstasy. It presents the spatial affiliation between ecstatic bodies and ecstatic architecture. The key to this exploration is the investigation into ecstatic, weightless and fluid space. In this section I examine the expression of movement in architecture; concepts of balance and imbalance; and a sense of stasis, repetition and flow that can finally allow a space to express movement and ecstasy.

Fig.2

The second section, *Islamic Calligraphy and Performative Gesture and Movement*, outlines the relationships between the flow and movement in Islamic calligraphy and movement in body gestures. It discusses Islamic calligraphy and how it was used to replace figurative painting and sculpting of human and animal subjects. These art forms were considered idolatry and as worshipping something other than God is forbidden in Islam, it was prohibited. Islamic calligraphers translate the movement visible in the human body into the lines of script; in other words, body movements are injected into the words and letters. The connection between Islamic calligraphy and body gestures, especially in Islamic rituals such as Sema dance and Islamic prayer, are discussed in this section. This section also demonstrates the importance of Islamic calligraphy in Islamic architecture and how the calligraphy was used to give a more spiritual and mystical feel to Islamic architecture.



Fig.3



Fig.4

In the third section, *Unfolding Sema Dance into an Architecture of Well-being*, I will explain the process of finding an architecture that originates from the heart of Sema dance in pursuit of happiness and ecstasy. This section raises the question of how far the emphasis of physical sensations can legitimise a work of art and an ecstatic space, and examines what insights it might offer for an ecstatic engagement with architecture. In this section I focus more on the characteristics of ecstasy, in which one loses consciousness of one's surroundings. I will be considering bringing this ecstatic quality into a design project, which is a redesign of a residential apartment in the heritage Dilworth Building for Hassan Massoudy. By choosing a domestic residence for a calligrapher, my aim was to examine gestures a body makes when sleeping, washing, working, eating, praying and gathering with consideration to others under the same roof. Also, I was interested in how this ecstatic space can be inspirational for the calligrapher to produce work as well as doing normal activities. The Dilworth building highlights a feeling of solidity in contrast to the ecstatic sense of my proposed interior structure which is fluid. Also, the fluidity of the sea and the lightness of the clouds that can be seen from this apartment play important roles in inspiring Hassan Massoudy to produce works of art (Massoudy, 2002).

This exegesis also represents the preparatory work carried out in this project which led to the final design project. A series of experiments, using different materials and methods, are included in this exegesis, from the conceptual photography to model making. These experiments were essential to gain key insights and integrate them into my design project.



Fig.5

ECSTATIC BODIES; ECSTATIC ARCHITECTURE

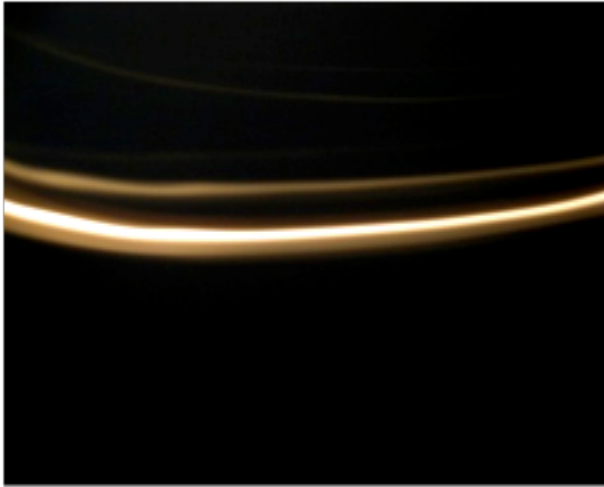
As stated by Robert Maxwell, “the ecstatic is the moment where the new becomes visible” (Jencks, 1999, p.84). It is the moment when our materialistic shell fades away and our true identity is revealed. But how is ecstasy defined? Ecstasy is defined as a mental and physical state of delight, wonderment, rapture, and spiritual “transcendence” (Jencks, 1999, p.21). Ecstasy is a contradictory reflection of the coexistence of presence and absence, consciousness and unconsciousness, and fluidity and solidity (Lim, 2007). Ecstasy carries a free-floating delight that can be experienced through some forms of art, such as dance, music and even architecture.

There’s a line of poetry by Rumi, which says: “you’re sitting here with us, yet you are also out walking in a field at dawn” (Lim, 2007). Here Rumi alludes to the quality of ecstasy (*khalseh* in Farsi); what happens in this abnormal state when one’s mind separates from one’s body. It is a release from reality where one’s soul travels and connects to the divine world, which leads one to a state of well-being and euphoria (Jencks, 1999).

Architecture has the potential to boost an ecstatic feeling in us and is open to the emphasis of the feelings that an individual experiences. By entering an ecstatic space, one experiences the timelessness and a sense of fluidity in that space, which can finally lead to a joyous even ecstatic feeling. Ecstatic architects are not just interested in beautiful textures and forms, but in the transmission of emotions and ecstasy and transferring them into architecture. Ecstatic architecture creates thinking based on fluidity, mixing forms, crossing shapes, and light and shadow explosions (Rewers, 2006). In some of the contemporary architecture, like Frank Gehry's New Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the explosion of space and light has been the usual representation of ecstasy. Its essence lies in the dynamic and mystifying passage from geometrical to meandering forms, from stasis to ecstasies, and from hardness to softness (a moment of confusion). By introducing confusion, Ewa Rewers states, "chaotic, polymorphic, ecstatic architecture" (Rewers, 2006) becomes "a source of aesthetic pleasure" (Rewers, 2006).

Fig.6





My main goal is to expose this ecstatic feeling by means of creating a materialistic ambiance, and creating the fusion of an earthly and heavenly experience at the same time (an out-of-body experience). A paradox of consciousness and unconsciousness, heaviness and weightlessness; an out-of-body experience is a state that a person can attain by ecstasy. It is a moment of timelessness. In my design project I am attempting to create a space where one can discover oneself and evoke the feeling of ecstasy—not a space to be isolated in.

The unique quality of Sema dance and its effect of creating *Khalseh* has deeply influenced my project. The same sense of giddy delight that can be experienced through ecstatic architecture (space) can be induced by the Sema dancers (whirling dervishes). By a force that is impossible to resist, one that carries the body upwards against gravity, in which a sense of “to be put out of place” (Jencks, 1999, p.142) has been experienced. Once the whirling dervishes enter ecstatic states, the body experiences a sense of timelessness. The body opens; the soul is released as if one reaches a state of cleanliness and purity.

Fig.7-8
Whirling Candle



Through one of my experiments of taking pictures of some spinning candles in a dark space, I was aiming to create something that shows how form can dissolve—echoing the way that the conscious self dissolves in ecstasy. The contrast of dark and light this produced gave me the idea of how lighting can create the mood that reflects my inner sense.



Fig.9-12

ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY AND PERFORMATIVE GESTURE AND MOVEMENT

Islamic calligraphy is a “religious art driven by a divine imperative, a will to come face to face with the infinite” (Marks, 2006). Islamic calligraphy refers to the artistic writing of the Arabic script, either in the Arabic language or in other languages transcribed in the Arabic script. As well as being a communication tool, Islamic calligraphy has become the primary visual art in the domains of Islamic religious influence (Islamic Calligraphy, 2010). The usage of calligraphy eventually extended into every aspect of design, ranging from wall paint to pottery and exterior carvings on small and massive scales. Islamic calligraphy is associated with the geometric Islamic art depicted on walls and ceilings of mosques as well as on paper. Islamic calligraphy also became a dominant and determining characteristic of Islamic architecture as illustrated by its extensive application to the interior and exterior walls of mosques. Without calligraphy, Islamic architecture would be reduced to simple masses and volumes, resulting in a loss of a prime component of its identity.

Calligraphy has arguably become the most venerated form of Islamic art, since it provides a link between the religion, literature and architecture. As stated by Charles Jencks, “Architecture, like literature, asks for a willing suspension of disbelief so that, like the reader, the viewer can enter a virtual world (not the world of virtuality)” (Jencks, 1999, p.12).

Fig.13

Spiritual scripts, names of prophets and Imams and religious quotations adorn the walls, domes and entrance ways of the mosques and other sacred buildings, bringing spirituality and sacredness to a space. Calligraphic inscriptions on structures are not just about ornamentation or beauty, but a source of ecstatic aesthetic pleasure.



In early Islam, 7th century, Islamic calligraphy was restricted to a geometrically calculated form of writing, but since the 16th century it has developed into a lighter and more dynamic form. Dynamic gestures of the body became more visible in the calligraphy. It is believed that Islamic calligraphy with its knotted, meandering, twisty and tortuous nature, acts as a substitute for the depiction of the human form in sculptures and murals. Unlike the strong tradition of portraying the human figure in Christian art, Islam forbade images of human beings and even animals, as this may tempt the followers to idolatry. This prohibition led to the use of calligraphic scripts, often involving repetitive geometrical patterns that expressed ideals of order and nature (Islamic art, n.d.).



Fig.14
Geometric Form

Fig.15
Dynamic Form



Islamic calligraphy is very much inspired by the activities and the rituals that occur in a space, such as practicing Namaz (Islamic prayer) in a mosque. Namaz is a set of choreographed movements, varying from completely upright to almost foetal, in which the forehead touches the ground. Islamic architecture and calligraphy are inspired by the

body movements and gestures that comprise the body movements visible in performances such as Namaz. Architecture and calligraphy work in parallel to create an atmosphere suitable for the rituals performed in a space. To create a heavenly and ecstatic atmosphere, Islamic calligraphers take lots of factors into consideration, from the type of calligraphy, colours and textures to the places the scripts are written. According to Eymen Homsî, the Iraqi architect, calligraphers “vied one another to devise a system for elongating letters” (Homsî, 2008), without disturbing the balance of a space. The relationships between the body, words, and the architectural space emphasise their sharing mutual space. This serves to highlight the shared, inseparable and dependent space that is encompassed by calligraphy, literature and architecture.



Fig.16

Islamic calligraphy has its figurative side too. By interweaving written words, calligraphers produced anthropomorphic figures (a human, a face), zoomorphism (symbolic creatures, lion, horse, bird), or even non-living representations (a mosque, a ship). These figurative images are used to help visualise the shape of letters to trace. As

mentioned before, in the Islamic tradition, drawing human or animal figures has an implication of idolatry, therefore words and shapes were chosen to express artistic messages.

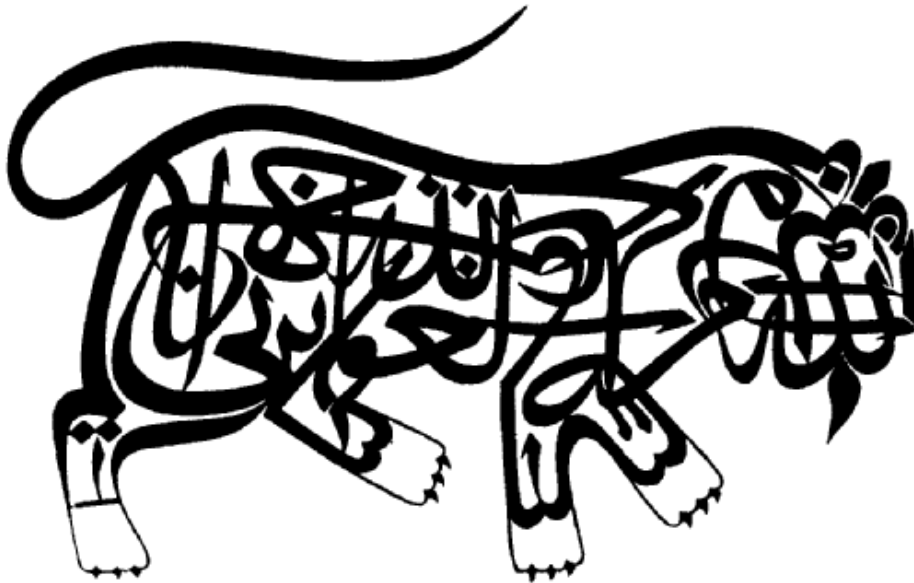


Fig.17

In Islamic calligraphy, the meaning and number of verses, their location and length, their density and texture, their colour and material all bring a different energy and feeling to the space. The script is usually contrasted against the background to accentuate the movement and flow. This can cause one's eyes to circumambulate in space. For instance, inside a dome a circular inscription can be read only by making a full counter clockwise turn while looking up. The epigraphic scheme may have achieved several things, such as coordinating the number of verses in a particular chapter of the number of openings in a wall, or the length of the verse with the diameter of a dome, or the content of a verse with the symbolic meaning of elements it attaches to. In my design project, I will be redesigning the interior space of the apartment based on the form of Islamic domes. The construction of the domes is imperative in the Islamic

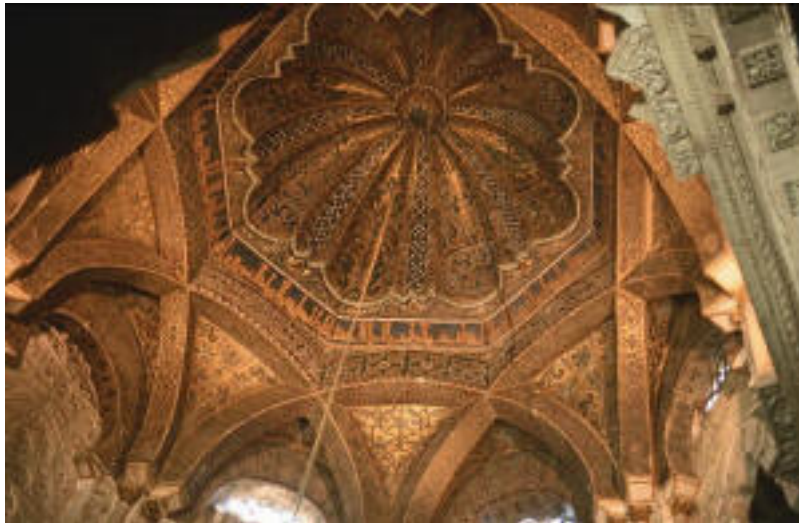


Fig.18

architecture, as its high ceiling with a pointed end uppermost symbolises unity and reaching God. Jencks conceptually describes domes as a fascinating way of “reaching the stars” (Jencks, 1999, p.42). Domes are typically visually heavy and undoubtedly follow “compressive stresses” (Jencks, 1999, p.40). Islamic calligraphy was a solution to dissolve the dome in an attempt to defy gravity and make it lighter, more fluid in order to create an ecstatic space (Jencks, 1999, p.40). In the Islamic architecture, the friezes are also often deliberately long and horizontal, forcing the eye and the moving body along the space. These examples all demonstrate the sharing mutual space that body, architecture, and calligraphy share.

UNFOLDING SEMA DANCE INTO AN ARCHITECTURE OF WELL-BEING

In most cultures, a dance, often to a rhythmical music, was used to accompany a ceremony (Royo, 2006). In the Middle East, Sema dance was one of the ways to achieve a state of well-being with a harmonious relationship with nature. Sema is a ritual, meditative dance, first performed by the poet Rumi. The number of dancers in a group may vary. Each dancer spins individually whilst moving in a circle with the other dancers, following a series of whirling rhythmical movements, in deep concentration that creates ecstasy for the dancers. As far as Sema dance is concerned, this dance is a part of a moral and inspirational heritage from Rumi, as well as a part of the cultural belief and history of some Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran, Turkey and Egypt. Sema simply means hearing and it is known as the sound of a joyful song that evokes inner happiness by entering in an ecstatic state (Friedlander, 2003).

The spinning and the harmonious moves in Sema dance are suggestive of the cycles of nature (the changing seasons, the orbiting planets), and it is a way of reaching a higher state, empowering and enlightening the soul (Friedlander, 2003). Each Sema dancer whirls to define a circular space, and while spinning, they carry the message of love and passes it on to the viewers through their hands. The dance is performed in flowing robes, which create a whirling effect across the performance space. Sema follows a set ritual of steps and motions, which are intended to represent the spiritual journey of the dancers (Friedlander, 2003). During the dance they are transforming everyday space within the Semakhane (Sema house) into a sacred and spiritual space, activating isolated locations and converting an ordinary space into an extraordinary one (Homsí, 2008). I don't see architecture as simply a way of designing a shelter, but as a way of creating a positive or in some cases negative mood within us (De Botton, 2006). I believe architecture like everything else is potentially alive and as Jencks described it, is "empowered and perceived as having a character, a state of mind and sometimes even a soul" (Jencks, 1999, p.28).



Fig.19

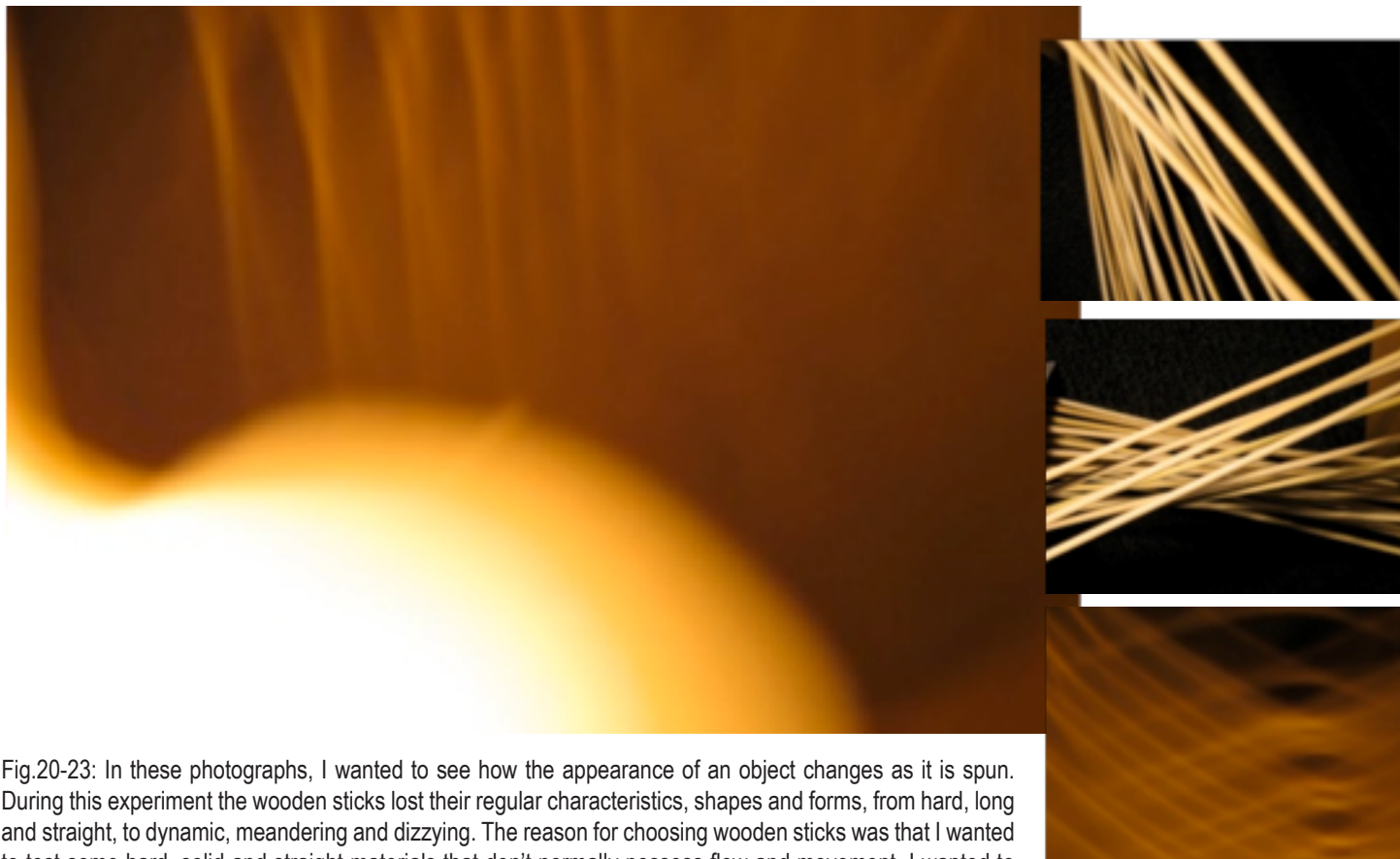


Fig.20-23: In these photographs, I wanted to see how the appearance of an object changes as it is spun. During this experiment the wooden sticks lost their regular characteristics, shapes and forms, from hard, long and straight, to dynamic, meandering and dizzying. The reason for choosing wooden sticks was that I wanted to test some hard, solid and straight materials that don't normally possess flow and movement. I wanted to experience how this tough looking material can change its characteristics to become more dynamic when photographed as the camera spins. The effect on my perception of *spinning* the wooden sticks is similar to the effect of spinning for the Sema dancers and the audience—producing, a self-induced, dizzying voyage into the state of unconsciousness, timelessness and formlessness.

Some choreographers and architects believe that dance and architecture share the same concern. “Scholars have drawn parallels between dance and architecture as equal, complementary, cultural forms. Dance and architecture lay claim to a shared vocabulary and ethos likely because they also share something immediately apparent—space” (Royo, 2006). The shared space of dance and architecture is more than we see and know physically. Dance defines a virtual world that exists for the dancers and their spectators—a world simultaneously within and outside the physical environment. Similarly, for the viewer, architecture creates a realm that can both be seen physically and experienced spiritually. The dance of the whirling dervishes is a rhythmic ritual performed to reach a state of altered consciousness. The dancers’ self-induced, dizzying abdication of space goes together with a simultaneous energy flow. Motion and energy flow in an ecstatic space can enhance well-being (Well-being, 2001).

In the ritual of their dance, they seek release from self in an abandonment of space. To emphasise their purpose, they wear black cloaks to symbolise tomb and white skirts to symbolise shroud (*kafan* in Farsi). Sema dance is a procedure in which the standing body unfolds into a complete unfurling position. A choreographed set of postures brings the body into an ultimate unfolded position accompanied by a feeling of ecstasy and as a result well-being (Friedlander, 2003).

Fig.24

There are strong links between nature and body, and we share and relate to living and dead things through empathetic projection. Sema consists of seven stages and each stage is a symbol of a certain thing. The first stage is the removal of a black cloak, which represents the tomb and, by taking it off, rebirth. The conical brown or white felt hat represents the dancer's tombstone and presents a sense of security and the solidity of earth. The following stages accompany unfolding. While they are whirling, their right arms are above their bodies, palm facing upward and at the same time their left hands face downward. This symbolises that the benefits from God's grace and blessing, they pass on to the world (energy flow) (Friedlander, 2003). The last stage is the state of altered consciousness or khalseh. In this moment dervishes can reach out and touch the ultimate and feel the ecstasy. Ecstasy may be described as an out of body experience, an experience in which one's consciousness or perception separates from the physical body, such as during a near death experience. During ecstasy, the person may have a bird's eye view of their body, or a panoramic view of everything around them and well beyond his or her normal field of vision (Friedlander, 2003).



During the dance, as the movements increase in speed, body becomes fluid, in which the body motions can no longer be seen in detail. The postures are accompanied by the rhythmic sound of the music which creates an ecstatic atmosphere. Dancers start and end the dance by reading the Quran (Friedlander, 2003). According to Eymen Homsî, “words replace space and vision, being closer to the abstract nature of God. The overall effect is of turning away from visible space in an act of submission (Islam)” (Homsî, 2008). At the conclusion of the ritual, the unfolded position comes back to the ordinary folded position, returning the dancers to ordinary space, normal movement, ordinary speech and everyday consciousness. The dance represents the integration between the different parts of the body in movement. Translated into the field of architecture, this principle supports the view of taking nature and human elements into account during the design and construction phases.

Fig.25



Fig.26-27
Whirling Letters



Experiments with materials are an important way to gain useful insights that can be incorporated into my design project. A series of paper models were created by cutting some Arabic letters in the form of calligraphy. I started spinning these and taking photographs to capture their forms being dissolved. The main characters were not apparent in the newly created forms (the experiment with candles produced similar results).

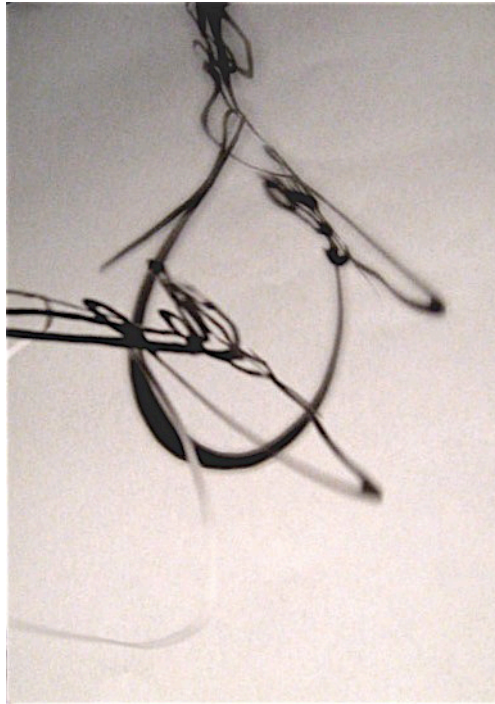


Fig.28-29



Fig.30

Spinning causes objects around us to fade away, as though in *khalseh*. One is unable to observe the distance between objects in this rotational movement—in other words they are perceived as a constant unbroken line. When spinning around, one can't see things as they normally are: colours, forms, light and shadow are mixed and act as if they have forgotten their rational behaviour. In the state of *khalseh* one becomes one with the space; dissolving and melting in it.



During Sema dance the standing body completely unfolds. A choreographed set of postures brings the body in an ultimate unfolded position accompanied by the feeling of ecstasy and rapture. Folding and unfolding are opposite movements that illustrate twisting and untwisting movements. Through a series of experiments, I have tried to project the unfolding steps using pieces of cardboard. Although the experience in the unfolded skirts of the Sema performers is different due to the fabric's yielding and flexible nature, these experiments with cardboard were useful to allow me to see the other characteristics of folding and unfolding.

Fig.31-36

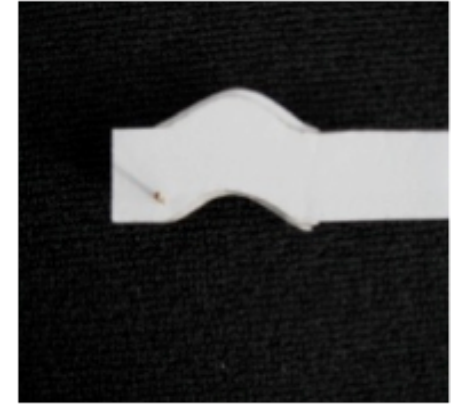
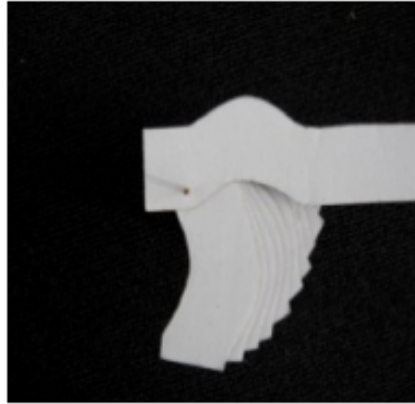
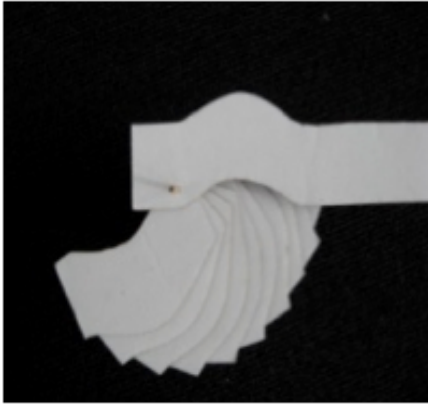
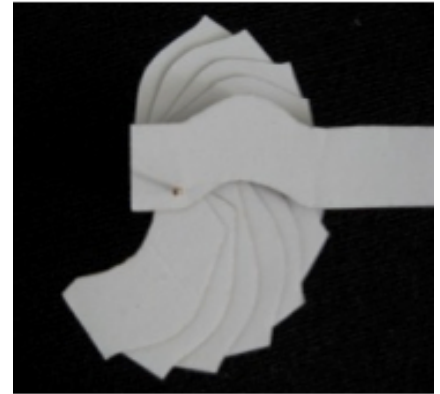
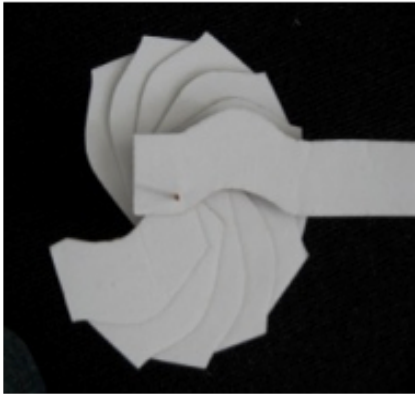
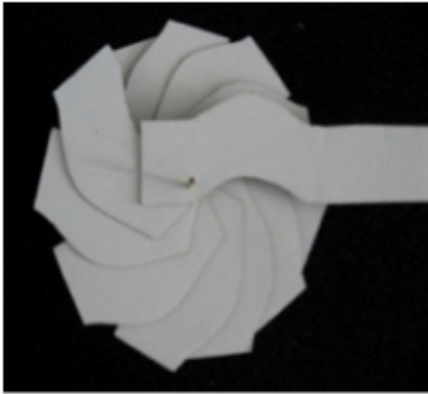
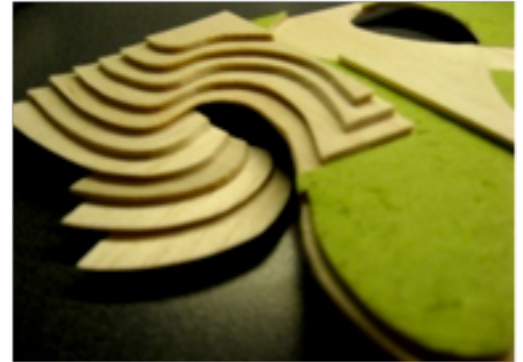


Fig.37-42

Folding and Unfolding- Here the shadows created at each step were like the shadows created in the space between the Sema dancers' skirts and the dance floor. Each step creates a different shadow.

Fig.43-45
Folding and Unfolding



HASSAN MASSOUDY: MAKING WORDS DANCE

Hassan Massoudy introduced large-scale letters and words with powerful and dynamic colours using traditional Islamic calligraphy. His calligraphy is a fine blend of new and old methods—innovative but at the same time respectful of the tradition. He has simplified some of the words and phrases that are derived from traditional poetry and philosophy and converted them into forms that can be understood even by non-Arabic speakers. Emotions and feelings that a viewer may have when looking at Massoudy's calligraphy come from the movement and dance of the lines, their weightlessness, simplicity, emptiness and fullness. In his calligraphy he makes the words dance and flow, much like the way that Sema performers move and dance (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.).



Fig.46

However, in Massoudy's calligraphy, not all lines and letters are weightless—some are static and strong and give a sense of strength and stability, contrasting with the fluid and ecstatic. This contrast can also be seen in costumes of the Sema dancers, such as in the contrast of the strong felt hat and the fluidity of their skirts. It is this contrast that emphasises the fluidity—if everything was fluid, we wouldn't feel the ecstasy. It is the solidity that highlights the fluidity and ecstasy, letting it shine out.



Fig.47

In 1972, Massoudy produced the show *Arabesque*, with the actor Guy Jacquet and the musician Fawyz Al Aiedy. In this public performance a strong connection between music, poetry and calligraphy was introduced to the audience; the simultaneous combination of music and poetry with calligraphy projected on a screen. The three forms of art seemed to mimic each other's rhythm and fluidity, despite their fundamental differences (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.).



Fig.48

One of his shows, called *Calligraphie d'ombre et de lumiere* (calligraphy of shadow and light), focuses on creating calligraphy works before the eyes of the viewers (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.). The works were projected on a screen at the same time and created a contrast between the black letters and bright light. "The movement accelerates; the word charged with energy eventually finds its perfect balance" (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.). The rhythms, movements, and geometry of the calligraphy are uncovered. The compositions are created and these dynamics of the gesture gives life to poetry and inscriptions Massoudy utilises in this show (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.).



Fig.49

In 2005, Massoudy together with the dancer and choreographer Carolyn Carlson, and the musician Kudsi Erguner and several other musicians and dancers, formed the show called *Metaphore*, a harmony of calligraphy, dance and music (Massoudy calligrapher, n.d.).

These three performances have inspired me to create a suitable space for Massoudy to live and work in, as they reveal a great deal about Massoudy's personality. The interest he has in poetry, dance and music and the harmonious relationship between these art forms lets him explore the underlying bond between them.



Fig.50

TOOLS AND FURNITURE REQUIRED FOR CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy Pen (*Qalam Ney* in Farsi): made of dried reed or bamboo about 5-10 mm thick. It is cut into approximately 20 cm lengths.

Pen Sharpener (*Qalam-Taraash* in Farsi): grinders and knives are required to shape the pens.

Ground ink (*Morakkab* in Farsi): experts like Massoudy often use coloured inks whilst beginners normally use just black.

Ink Container (*Davaat* in Farsi): small ink pots are used to store the ink.

Silky Ink-Controller (*Liqeh* in Farsi): is used in the Davaat to control the amount of ink the calligrapher takes each time and the amount of ink that he puts on the paper. It prevents any splashes of ink outside.

Paper (*Kaaqaz* in Farsi): papyrus and parchment and even coins were used before the advent of paper. More recently, textiles and papers have been used for calligraphy.

Pen mats (*Qalamdan* in Farsi): are used to lay out the pens.

Light source: as the writing method is from right to left, it is better to have the light source to the left side of the calligrapher to avoid any hand shadow on the paper.

Working desk: the size of the desk has to be at least 170 x 80 cm, with drawers to store the calligraphy equipment.

THE SITE

The site I have chosen is the corner apartment on the 7th floor of the Dilworth building. The Dilworth Building is a heritage mixed-use (residential- commercial) building at the corner of Customs Street and Queen Street in Central Auckland, New Zealand. This large building was once envisaged as one of the two similar buildings creating a gateway to the city. However, the mirroring building on the opposite side was never constructed. The building was constructed as a high-quality, Portland stone and concrete structure by the Dilworth Trust in 1925-1927 to “provide regular rental income for the school for disadvantaged boys” (Dilworth building, n.d.). The building was also partly occupied by the American consulate for many years, and used as US Army headquarters during the Second World War (Dilworth building, n.d.).

This twentieth-century building was built with a distinctive corner turret that made it one of the most prominent buildings in the city and also made the corner apartments more appealing.

The proposed design project intends to portray a sense of fluidity that contrasts the solid structure of the Dilworth building. The physical and historical solidity of this building gives a greater sense of security from within.



Hassan Massoudy attempts to translate the natural phenomena into lines of script. He states: "I am inspired by natural elements such as the light and rising lines of



fire, the fluidity of water, the fixity and hardness of stone, the lightness of the wind and the effects it produces: tornado, cloud, waves on the sea" (Massoudy, 2002, p.34).

When I read this quote from Massoudy, I instantly realised that the site contains most of these elements. The strong exterior of Dilworth building, the representation of fixity and hardness, recalls the same feeling that the Sema dancers' felted hats demonstrate. When I went inside the building, the light and rising lines of the sun were shining into the interior space—representing the divine and energy from God that the dancers inhale and pass to the surroundings (Massoudy, 2002). There was an interesting view from the corner balcony that framed the sea and clouds—its waves and fluidity. This site was the embodiment of Massoudy's quote—like a framework that transports the viewer to see the ecstatic in nature.

Fig.52

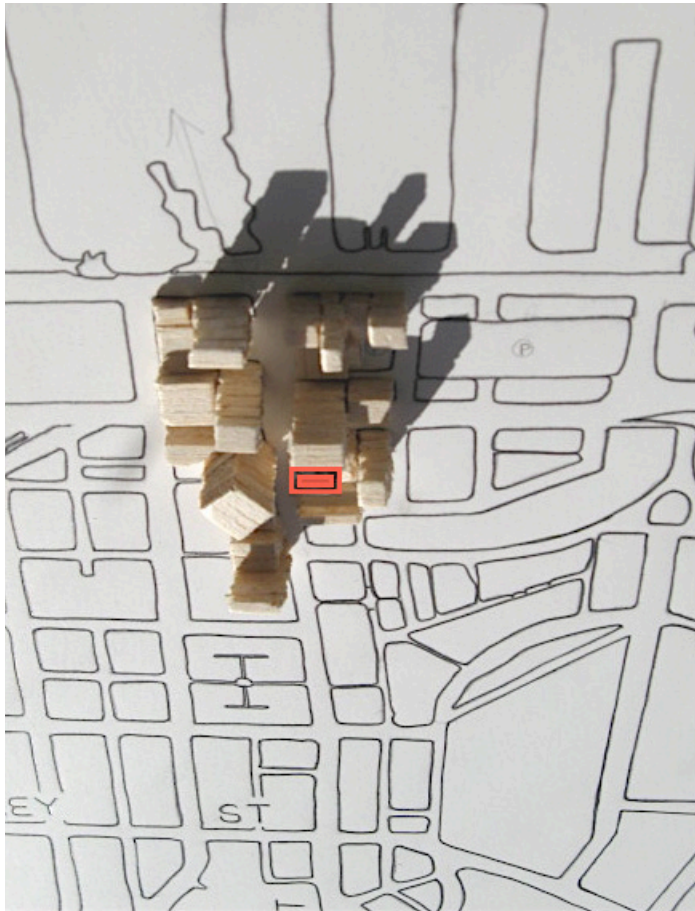


Fig.53

Red dots indicate the site (Dilworth building)

Waitemata Harbour



Fig.54

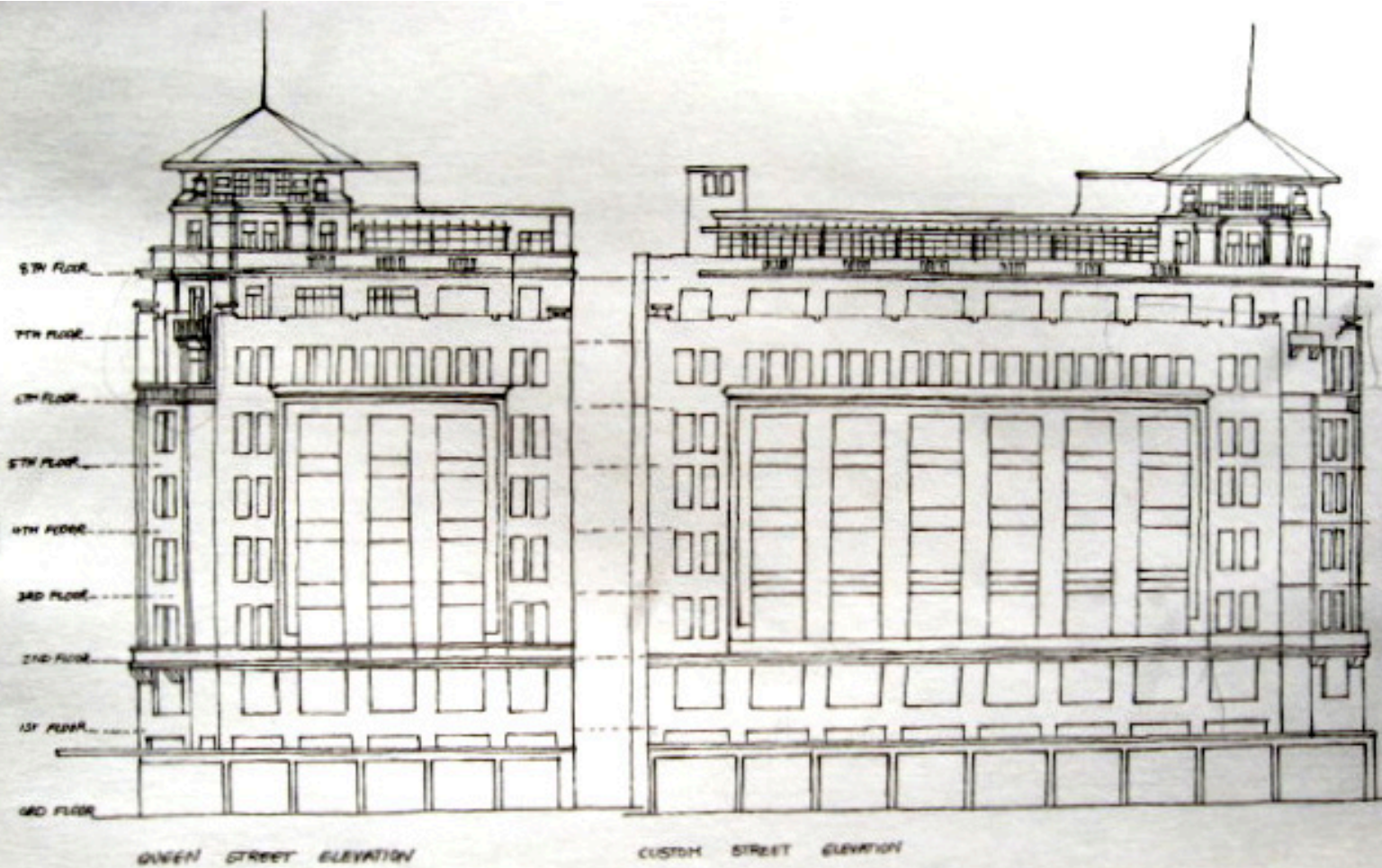


Fig.55

THE INTERIOR

The design process was started by analysing the existing layout of the apartment. Currently the apartment consists of two bedrooms, one study, a kitchen and two bathrooms. Massoudy is going to be the only full-time resident of this apartment, so I started by changing the layout based on his needs. First, I divided the space into two sections: one as a sleeping and resting area and the other for working. The main feature in the design of this apartment is a woven, basket-shaped structure, which separates the working, sleeping, washing and eating areas. It creates a perfect environment for Massoudy, to produce calligraphic works. The basket was the main object to separate different areas, as well as creating a living area in the middle of itself. Leaving the straight interior walls in the existing layout of the apartment was one way to separate the rooms. However, this was not the best approach for me to reach the desired ecstatic space, as the rooms were divided and not communicating with each other. The existing walls give a harsh sense of privacy and isolation, which I wanted to avoid—I wanted people to interact with each other from one space to another in a flowing dynamic way, creating an ecstatic mood. As Neil Leach states, “architecture is potentially a source of identification, not alienation” (Jencks, 1999, p.75).

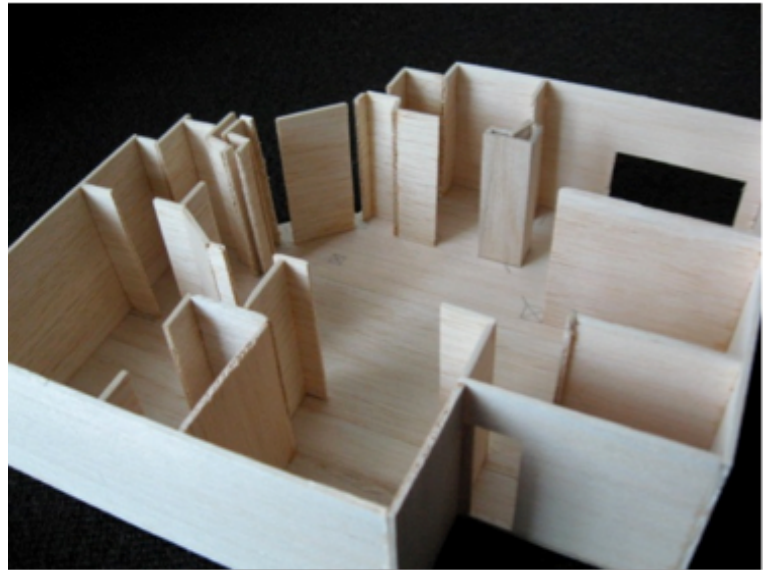


Fig.56
The Existing Layout

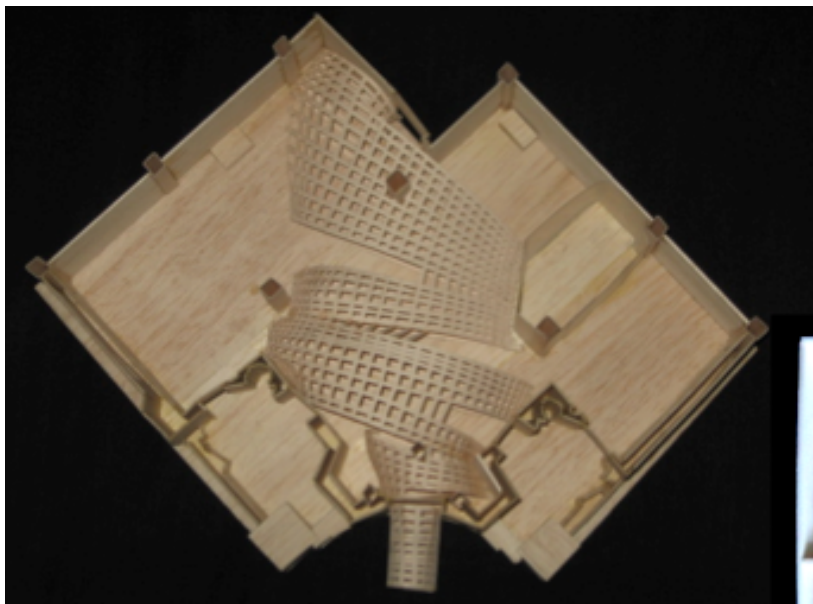


Fig.57
The Initial Model of the Apartment- Including the Basket

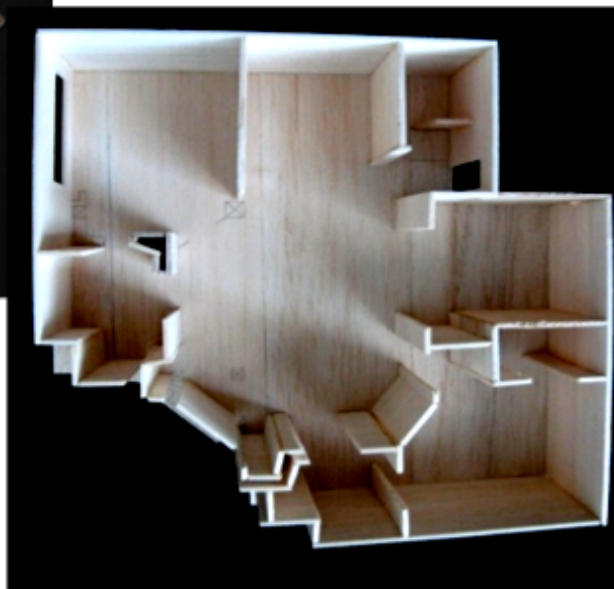


Fig.58
The Existing Layout

The structure blends with the overall site and appears to have been created by the repetition of the letter Alif, the first letter in Arabic. It is a straight vertical line, signifying the one (unity) and symbolising God in the Sufi tradition. In Islamic calligraphy, the straight line is defined as the trace that springs from a point, the centre of a circle. The line starts from a point, yet can also be considered a series of points. Alif's verticality rotates to form a circular shape; describing the field of all possible letters in the

writing (Marks, 2006). Some other Arabic letters are in direct opposition to the (vertical) Alif, like Be (the second letter in Arabic alphabet), which is formed from a horizontal line and symbolises the tranquillity of horizon. These horizontal and vertical lines have a corresponding affiliation with the horizontal and vertical positions of body, in the sleeping and awake and bowing position (the same movements can be seen in Islamic prayer). These relationships inspired me in creating the design of this structure.

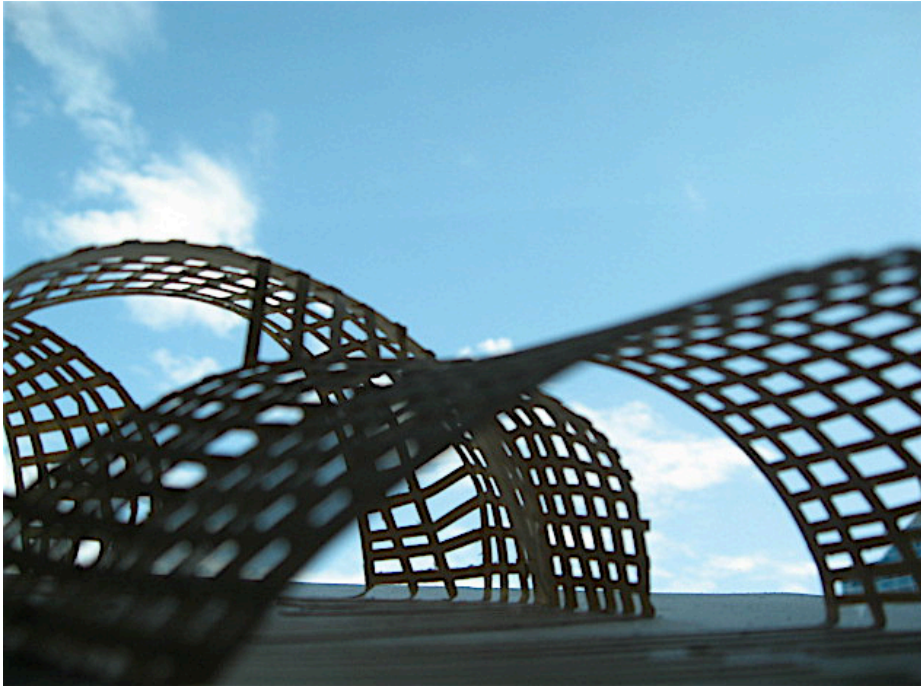
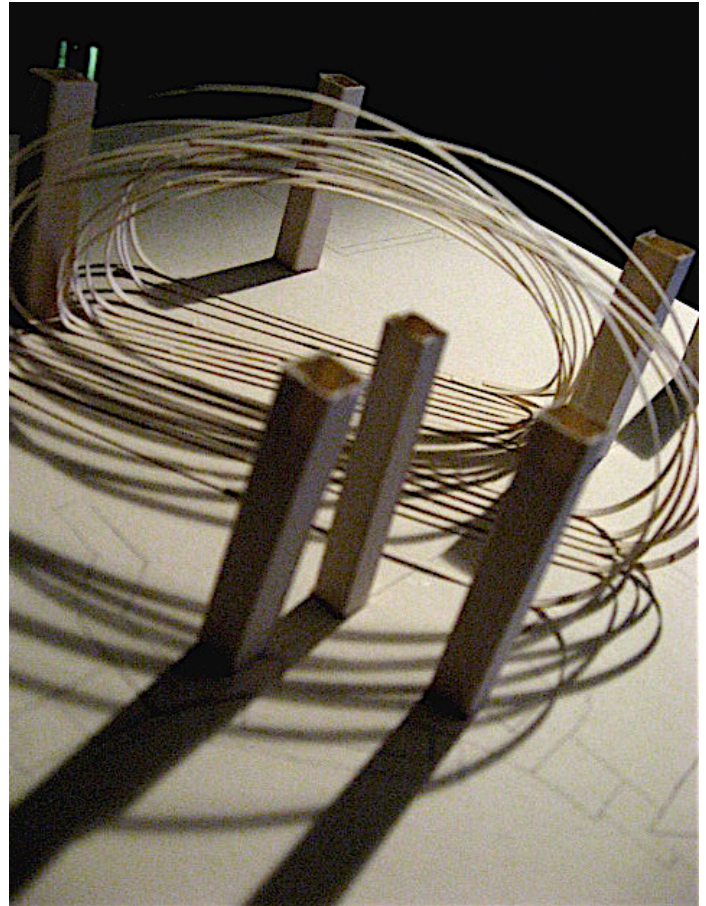


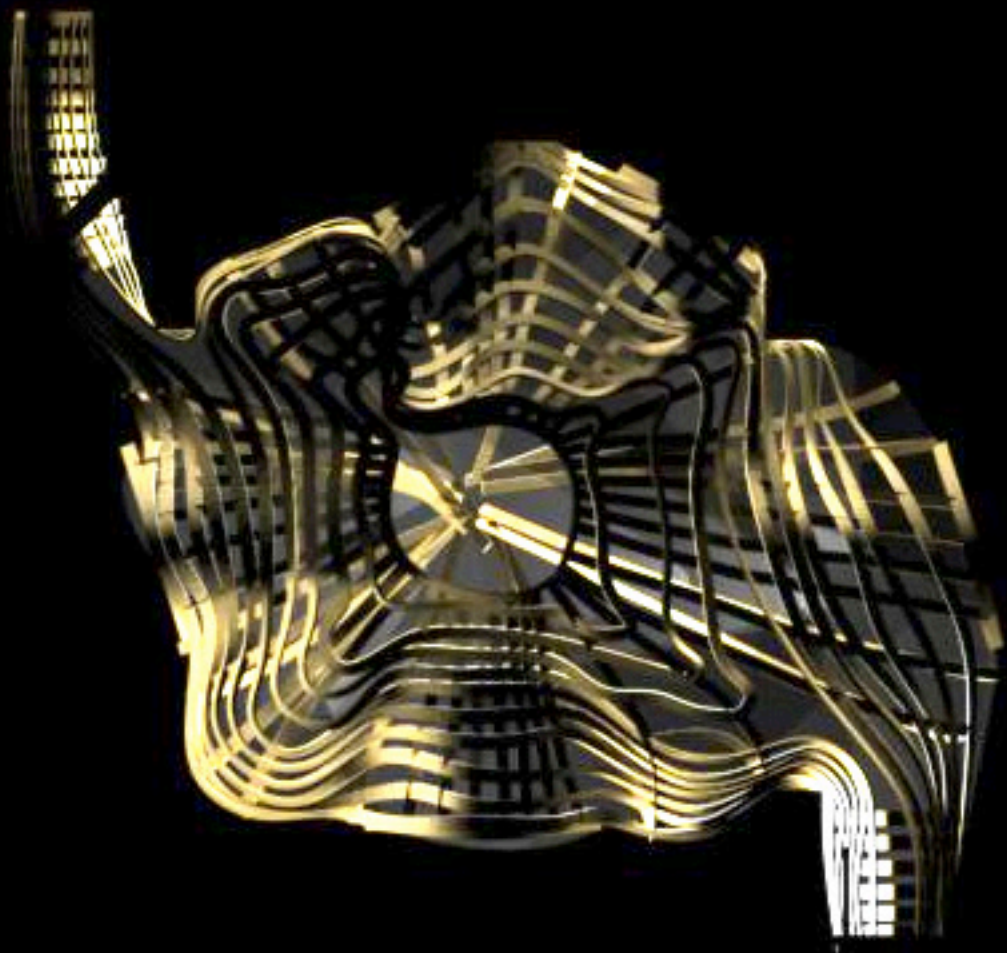
Fig.59

The space begins with a narrow corridor, and then opens up into a circular shape in the middle of the apartment (living room) between the four existing columns. It then narrows down and finally opens up again when it reaches the exterior balcony. The movement towards the view of the sea adds to the ecstatic experience that I wanted Massoudy feels in this space. This opening up and narrowing down creates a rhythm, just like the inhaling and exhaling of breath, bringing the idea of well-being.

Fig.60

The existing concrete columns in this apartment also play a significant and crucial role in the space and will be given the impression of security and solidity in contrast to the fluidity of the basket.





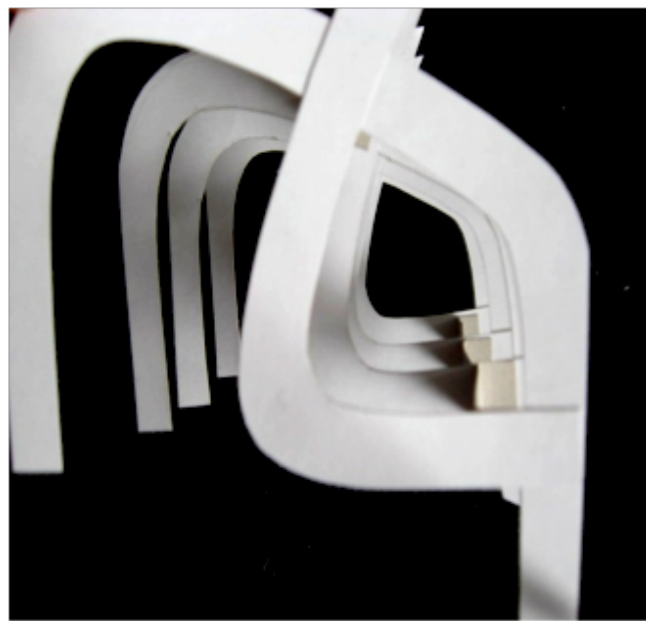
Rhythm has been very important in my project. All the forms of art that have inspired me share an underlying rhythm, a quality that I wanted to bring into designing this apartment. From the rhythm in the Sema dance, calligraphy, poetry, music and Namaz to our basic everyday life, such as breathing and heartbeat—we all experience rhythm consciously and unconsciously. The weaving and the repetition of the horizontal and vertical lines, visible in the basket-shaped design will give a sense of rhythm and cadence to the space.



Fig.62



Fig.63-64
Initial Experiments in Designing the Basket



The other thing for me was to create an ecstatic mood that can be felt inside as well as outside the basket. One of my strategies was to use artificial light as well as making the most of natural light. Lighting is very important as it has to be satisfactory for the calligrapher as he works. He is a right-handed; therefore he needs the light from the left side so there is no shadow of his hand on the paper. I have chosen to place the calligraphy room on the north-facing side, so Massoudy can get the maximum daylight. Some of the artificial lights will be installed through gaps in the basket and some of them will be installed above the basket structure to create additional shadow effects. This means that the position and intensity of the shadows will change during the day to create an ecstatic and mysterious mood day and night. The light that passes through the basket structure creates a rhythmical and poetic mood which is inspirational for working during the day and smooth and fluid for sleeping at night.

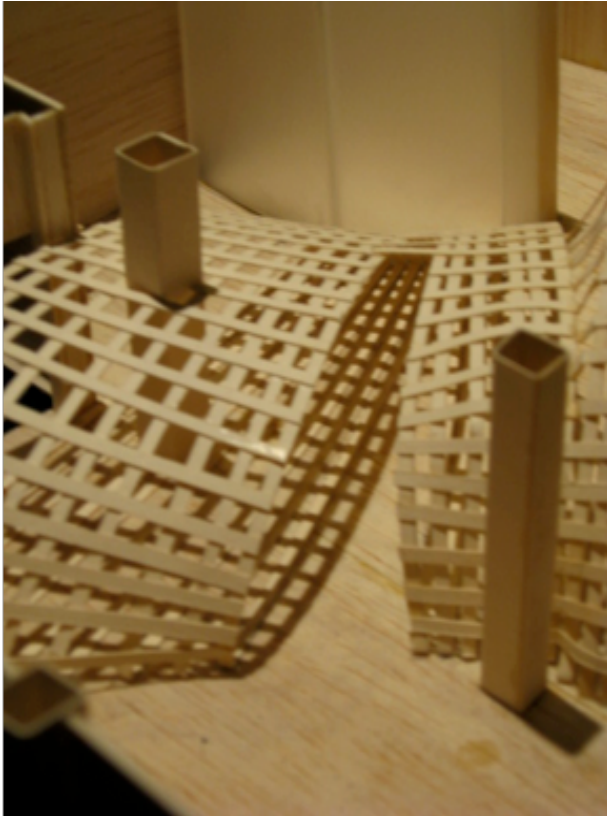


Fig.65

Fig.67

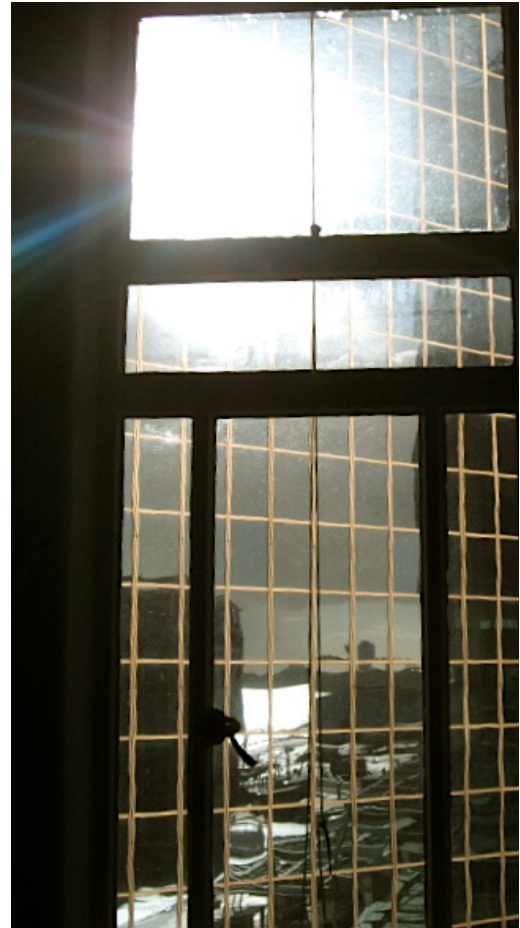


Fig.66
Inside the Apartment, Light Coming from North-facing
Windows Creating Shadows on the Floor



Fig.70
Islamic Forms

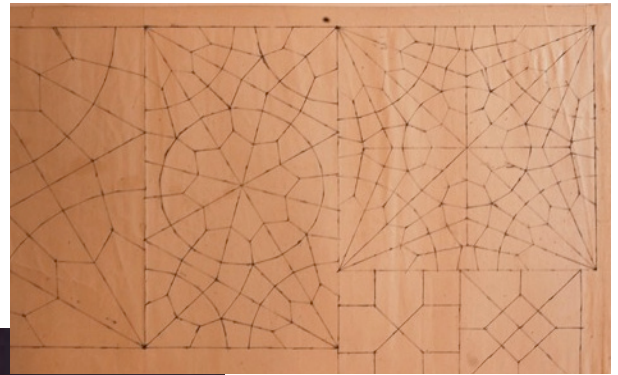


Fig.69
Whirling Dervishes



Fig.71
Islamic Forms

I have paid special attention to the materials I will be using, since specific materials can bring a certain feel to a space. For example, I will be using frosted glass for the bathroom walls and door. The bathrooms are the only places in this apartment that need privacy, but the matte finish glass will allow the outline of a person in the bathroom be seen from other spaces of the apartment. No details will be visible, just the overall shadow of the body, creating an interaction of spaces and bodies. In this way, even a human-made material can arouse emotion.

Most of the furniture used in this apartment will be moveable, since I want the resident and visitors to interact with each piece and move them according to their needs. For example, the client's working desk will have wheels to make it easier for him to move and find the perfect light and mood for work.

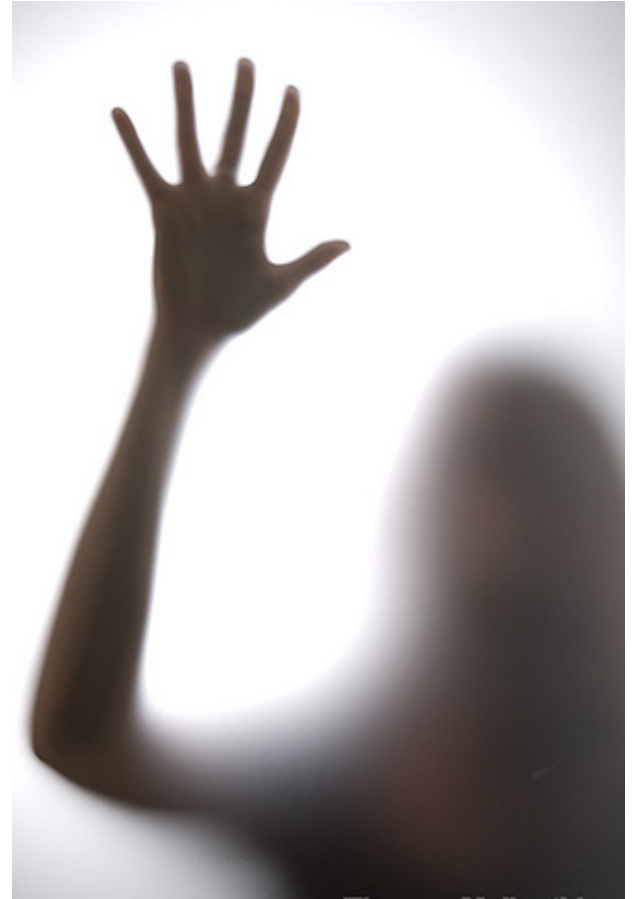


Fig.72



Fig.73
Material Testing

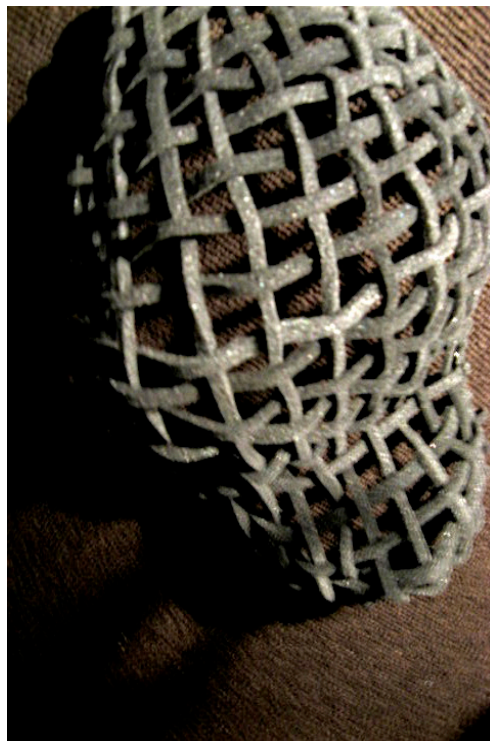


Fig.74

In an earlier experiment, the basket structure protruded from the corner balcony, and created a sense of rhythm, flow and repetition for people looking at the building from the outside; hence connecting the outside with the inside. However, in my final design I decided not to continue the basket structure to the exterior, as that would have needed a change to the façade of the building. As the Dilworth building is a heritage building, I decided to stop the basket by the balcony door and keep the original exterior layout.

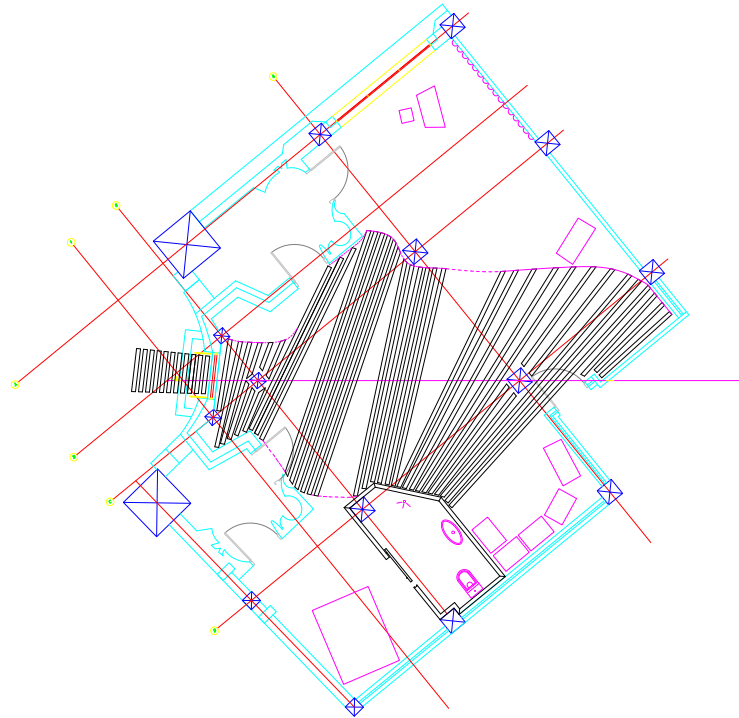


Fig.75



Fig.76

In this picture, Islamic calligraphic forms can be seen in the balconies, reshaping the existing walls. In this experiment, I wanted to see what happens if the Arabic letters are used to shape some of the walls and floors. However, this experiment was not successful. What I wanted was to use the calligraphy to form the space and structure the apartment, but here the letters have become more of a two-dimensional decorative feature, sitting on the space, not forming it.

COLOURS

Colours in calligraphy go beyond the physicality and create a union between soul, body and mind. In Islam, colour is usually seen from a metaphysical and spiritual point of view that allows the relationship of light and shadow to be recognised. Colour is one of the gifts that light brings us, “beauty, purity, brilliance, greatness, power and benefit” (Islamic Tradition, n.d.). In Islam, there are three levels of colour systems: three colours, four colours, and seven colours. The three colours reflect the three fundamental Islamic concepts of body, mind and soul and include white, black and sandalwood (the colours of earth) (Islamic Tradition, n.d.).

In my design project, I will be mostly using the three colours system. For instance, the basket structure will be in sandalwood colour, the walls and flooring will be in white. The shadows created in the space by the basket-shaped design, the existing structure, the furniture and bodies represents the colour black. Thus, the basket structure stands out and has a beautiful contrast with the surrounding walls and floor. According to Robert Grosseteste, the colour of sandalwood can give an earthy feel to the space, while the walls and flooring are in the “descendant and passive” white, which allows the other colours to flow (Islamic Tradition, n.d.). The yellowish green to golden brown of the sandalwood, hard and aromatic, will be squeezed in the pure and unspoiled whiteness of the space (Islamic Tradition, n.d.).

In Islamic art, the selection of colours symbolises a certain state of knowledge and has been used in various art forms, such as mosaics, miniatures, carpets and calligraphy. The ground ink used in Islamic calligraphy is often coloured. It is notable that Hassan Massoudy’s calligraphy uses the four colour system (red, yellow, green and blue) and also the seven colour system (a combination of the three and four colour systems). I want the overall colours in this apartment to be neutral, therefore to allow Massoudy’s works to shine vibrantly in the space.

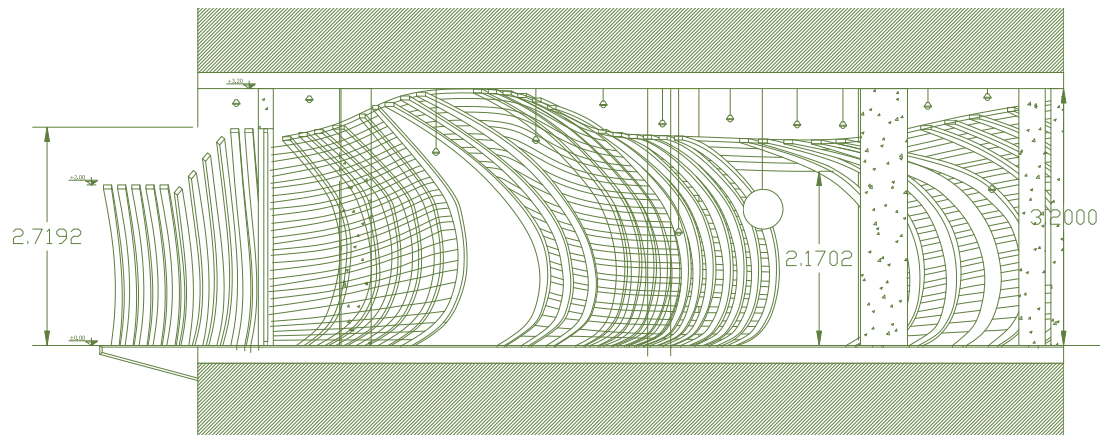


Fig.77

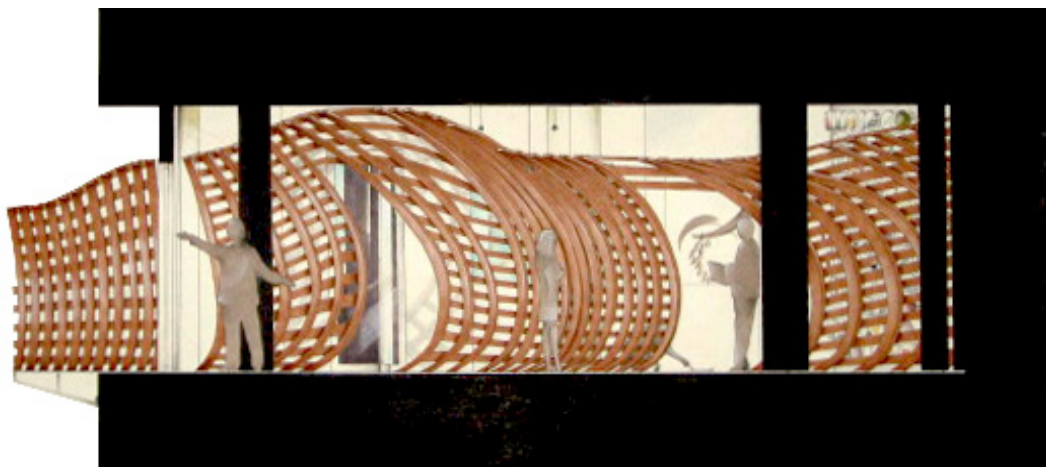


Fig.78

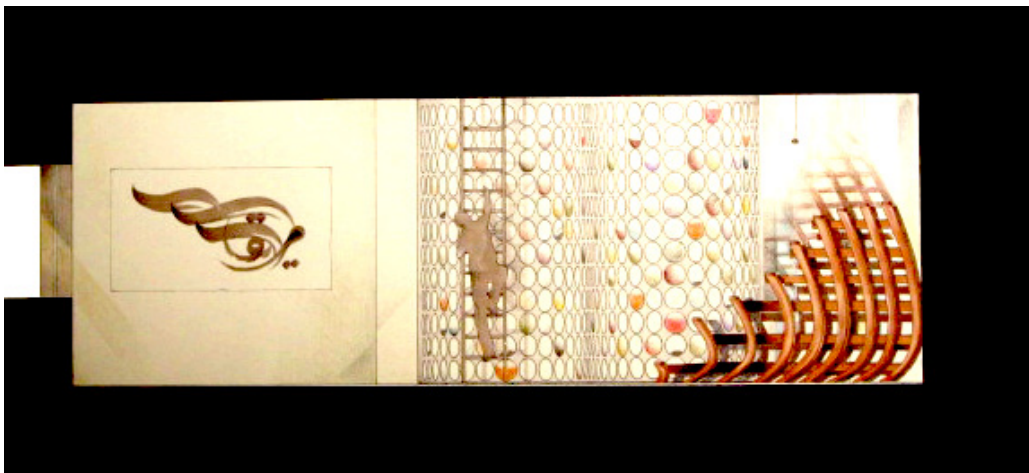


Fig.79-80

These sections cut through the apartment, showing the curviness, rhythm and repetition of the basket. It illustrates how communication and interaction is possible between the inside and outside of the basket, due to the spaces between the weaves.

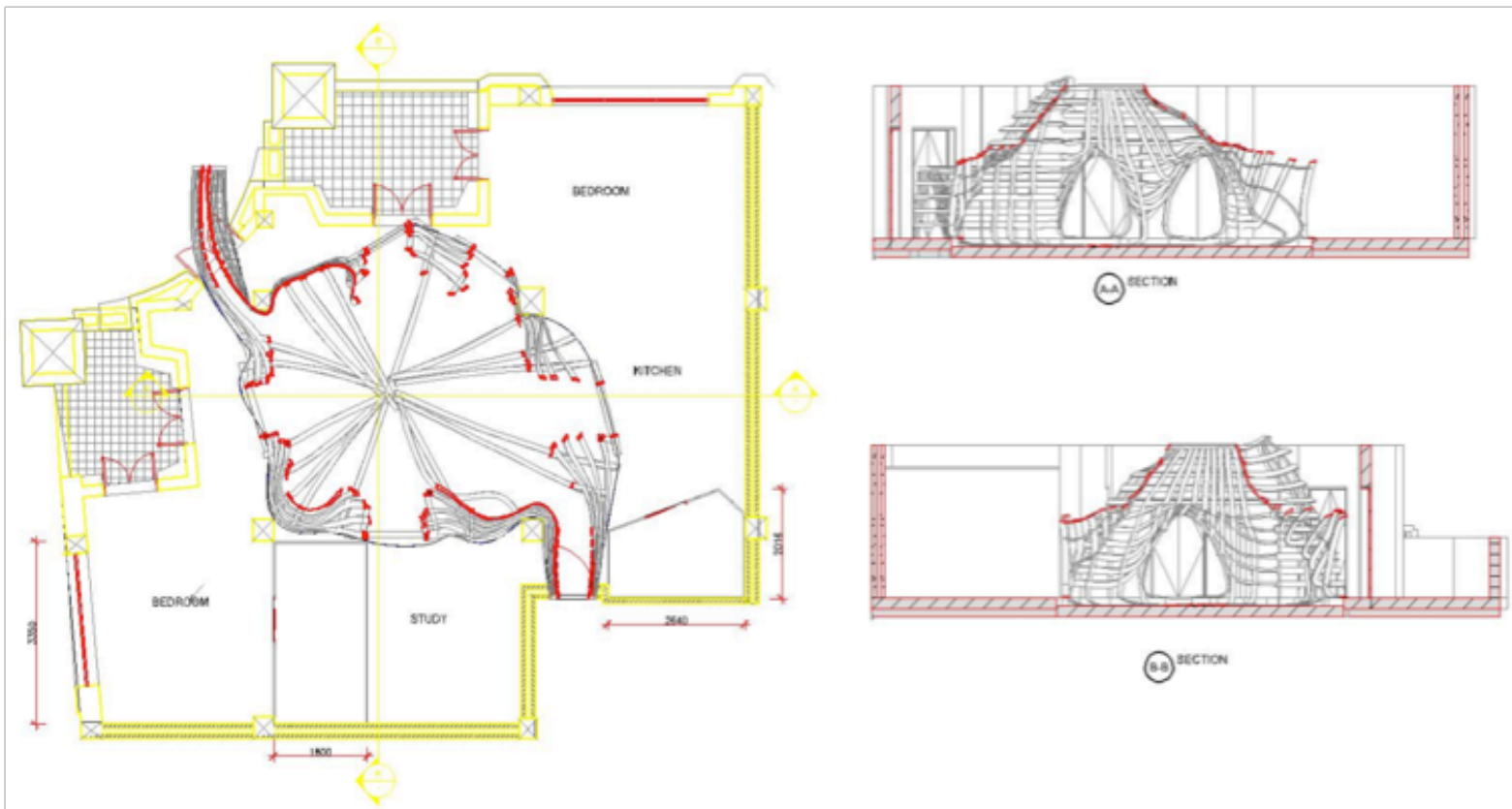


Fig.81
Floor Plan and Sections

Fig.82
Final Model of the Apartment

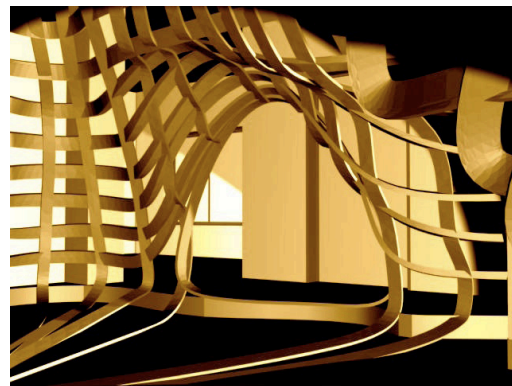
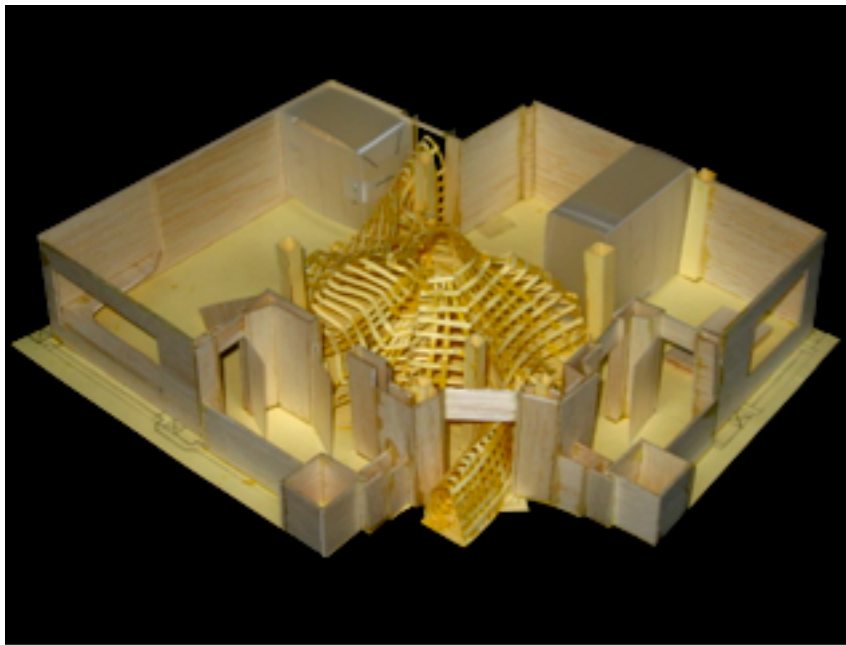
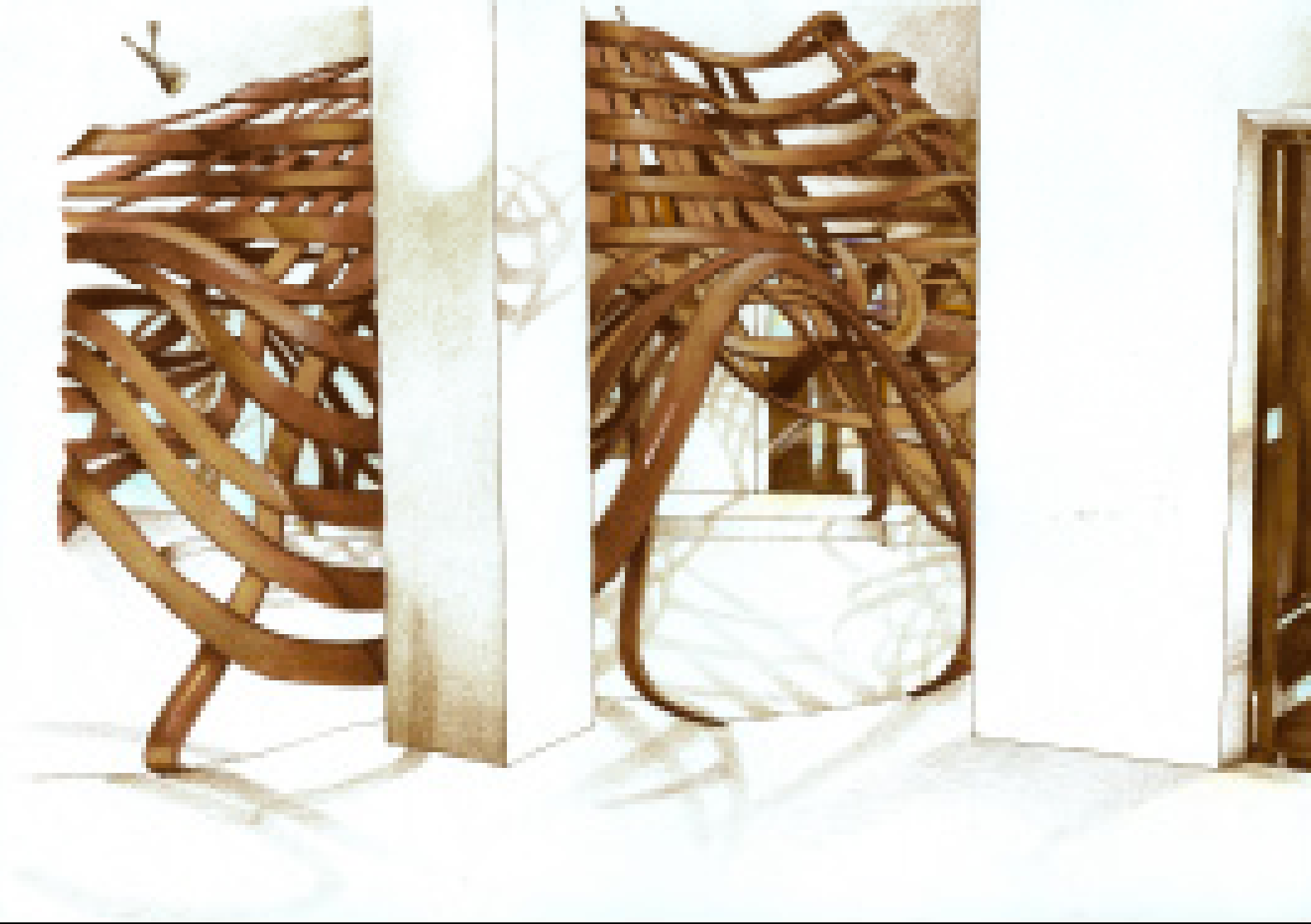


Fig.83
Perspective- Inside the Basket



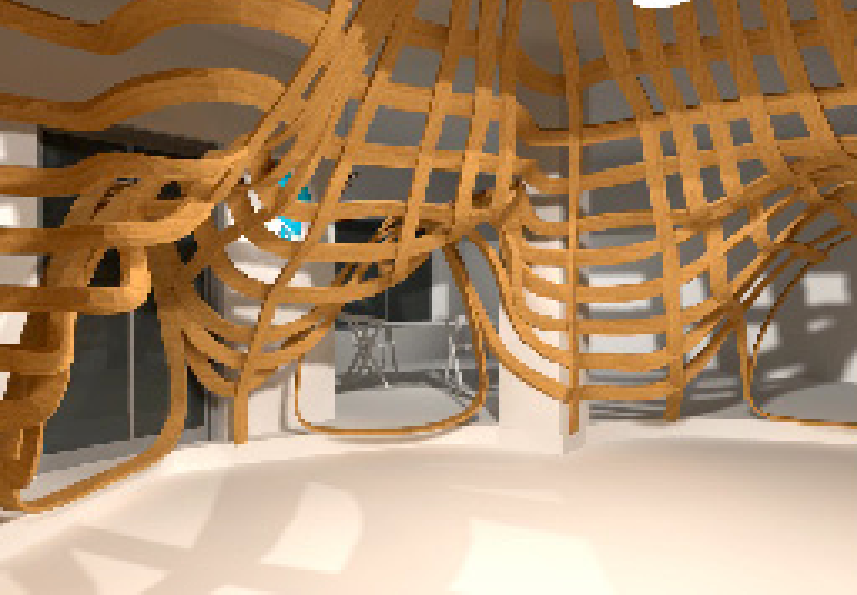


Fig.85

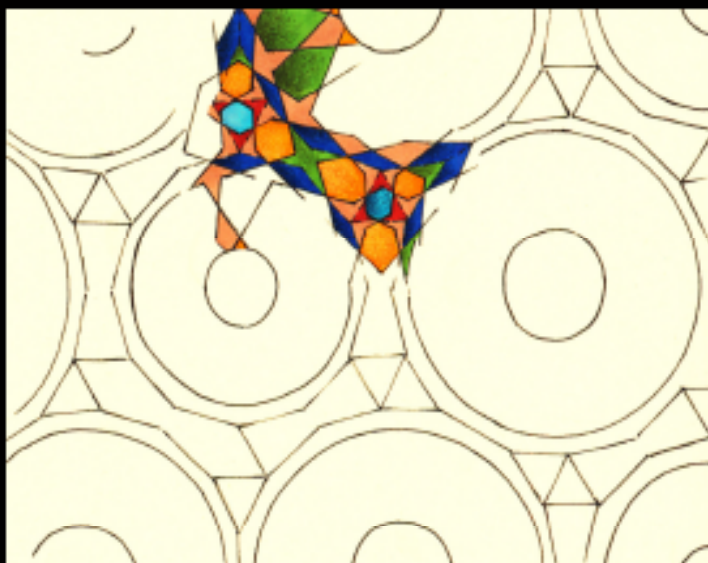


Fig.86

FINAL EXHIBITION

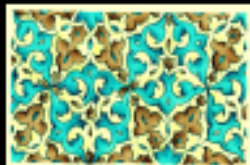


Fig.87



CORE THEMES IN ISLAND CULTURE

1. Symbolism
2. Color (Pareu)
3. Textured (Pareu, Kapa)
4. Architecture (the layout of houses or natural forms)



Maori Concepts of Circles, Squares, Triangles, Cubes, and Spheres



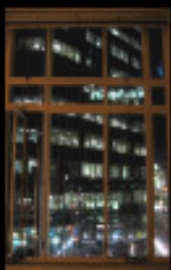
AUCKLAND CENTRAL,
New Zealand



DEVELOPMENT
Corner of the City & the City



DEVELOPMENT
Corner of the City & the City

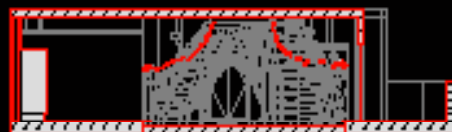
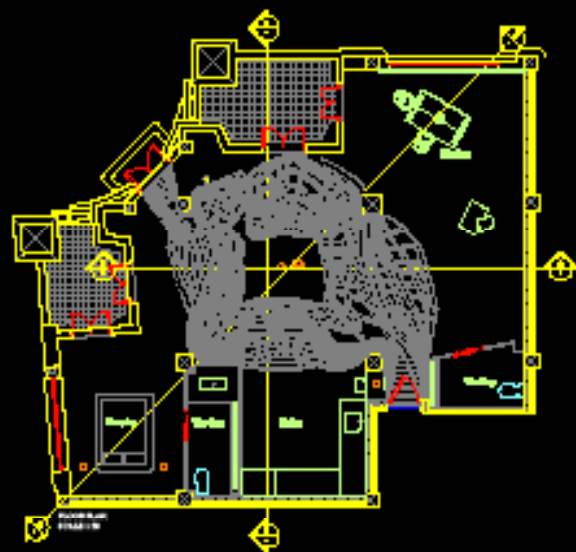


DEWOLFE BUILDING
22-24 Queen Street, Auckland (New Zealand)



PROPOSED WORKS

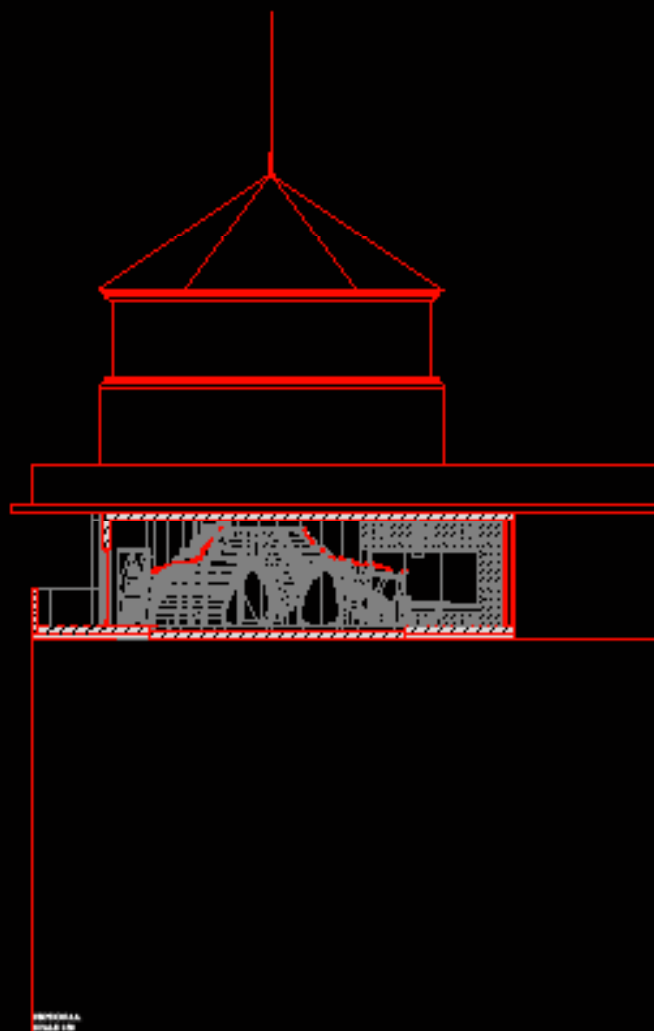




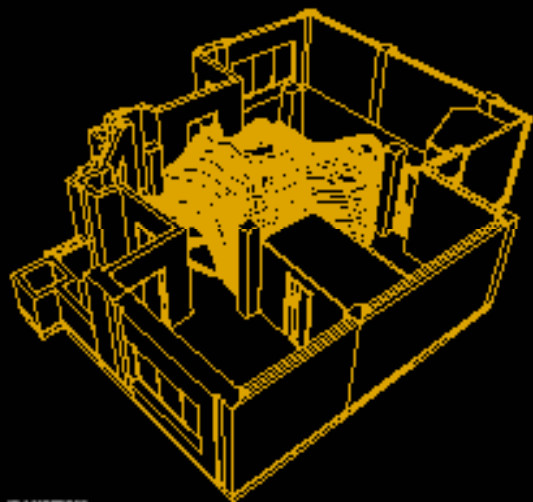
STAGE



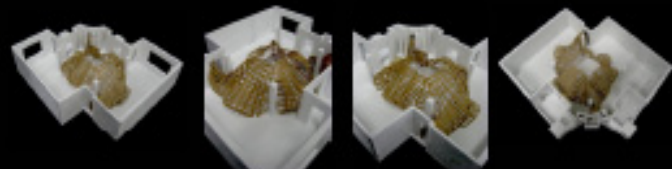
STAGE



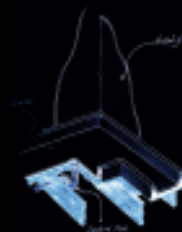
STAGE

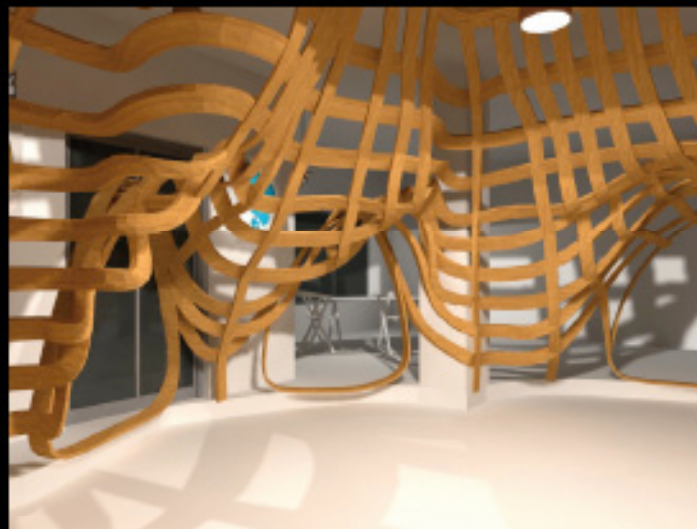


3D MODELING



LEO WATER TREATMENT CELLING
The structure
and LEO system correspond to 400 water charge





ALP
The First Layer of the
Foster and Thomas
Alphabet



IL ABC TEATRE







Fig.99



Fig.100

CONCLUSION

The influence of Rumi's description of ecstasy has been explored in this thesis. Ecstasy as he described, is a transformation in the abstract perception of the time and space, and an ecstatic space is the paradox of weightlessness and heaviness, fluidity and solidity. This space has oriented to the mystical journey of our spiritual ascent through body and mind, the vehicle of such an experience being the Dance of Soma and Psyche. Sema dance and the ecstatic feeling it produces could result in social and personal well-being and vitality. Some of the qualities in Sema dance such as ecstasy, spinning, harmony, rhythm and also the folding and unfolding layers visible in their costumes have inspired me in the creation of a series of experiments. As well as looking at Sema dance, the analysis of how the human body was used to shape Islamic architecture and calligraphy has been inspirational in my design.

Body gestures in rituals like Namaz formed the space of mosques, like calligraphy and dance these gestures create a sense of ecstasy. Ecstatic architecture mixes forms, dynamic movements, crossing shapes, and light and shadow explosions resulting in a space that becomes surreal, a world of confusion and timelessness as Rumi described.

The design of my final project, a redesign of an apartment in the Dilworth building, is a result of these experiments. The basket-shaped structure is the main feature in the redesign of the apartment. The repetition and interweaving of vertical and horizontal letters of some Arabic (Islamic) letters was the inspiration in designing this basket structure. The rhythm, repetition, and movement in the nature

of this structure can create an ecstatic space. The created space is not only an instrument to separate different areas of the apartment but also a tool to create an ecstatic space that can be useful for Hassan Massoudy to work and reside.



Fig.101

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- Fig 56. Shaghayegh Ganajali, (July, 2009). *The existing layout of the apartment* (cardboard model). New Zealand.
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Fig 58. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (July, 2009). *The existing layout of the apartment* (card board model). New Zealand.

Fig 59. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (December, 2009). *The basket structure* (coarboard model). New Zealand.

Fig 60. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2009). *Columns* (paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 61. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). *The basket structure* (Autodesk 3ds Max). New Zealand.

Fig 62. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). *The basket* (cardboard and paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 63. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2009). *Initial experiment* (paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 64. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2009). *Initial experiments* (paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 65. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (January, 2010). *Rhythm* (cardboard and paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 66. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2010). *Inside the apartment, light coming from north-facing windows creating shadows on the floor* (still image). New Zealand.

Fig 67. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2010). *Viewing the mirroring building* (still image). New Zealand.

Fig 68. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (August, 2010). *Planning* (hand-drawn). New Zealand.

Fig 69. Whirling dervishes [image] (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2010, from <http://www.propertyturkeyforsale.com/whirling-dervishes-t-389.html>

Fig 70. Islamic forms, courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London [image] (2009). Retrieved August 2, 2010, from http://www.patterninislamicart.com/drawingsdiagramsanalyses/?book_id=9&iid=4370

Fig 71. Masjid-I-Jami, Isfahan in Iran [image] (n.d.). retrieved August 2, 2010, from <http://www.patterninislamicart.com/archive/?browse=region&val=iran&iid=780>

Fig 72. Frosted glass vision [image] (2008). Retrieved September 12, 2010, from <http://blog.mellenthin.de/archives/2008/07/>

Fig 73. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2010). *Clay basket* (model). New Zealand.

Fig 74. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (June, 2010). *Foam basket* (model). New Zealand.

Fig 75. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2009). *Floor plan* (AutoCAD). New Zealand.

Fig 76. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (December, 2009). *Floor plan* (hand-drawn). New Zealand.

Fig 77. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (October, 2009). *Section* (AutoCAD). New Zealand.

Fig 78. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (January, 2010). *Section through the apartment* (hand-drawn). New Zealand.

Fig 79 & 80. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (January, 2010). *Section through the apartment* (hand-drawn). New Zealand.

Fig 81. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). *Floor plan and sections* (AutoCAD). New Zealand.

Fig 82. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (August, 2010). *Final model of the apartment* (cardboard and paper model). New Zealand.

Fig 83. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). Perspective (Autodesk 3ds Max). New Zealand.

Fig 84. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). Perspective (hand-drawn). New Zealand.

Fig 85 & 86. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (September, 2010). Perspective (Autodesk 3ds Max). New Zealand.

Fig 87-100. Shaghayegh Ganjali, (November, 2010). Final exhibition. New Zealand.

Fig 101. Towards god, Iran-mosque [image] (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2009, from <http://muslimworker.com/2009/04/50-beautiful-mosque-pics-from-inside/>