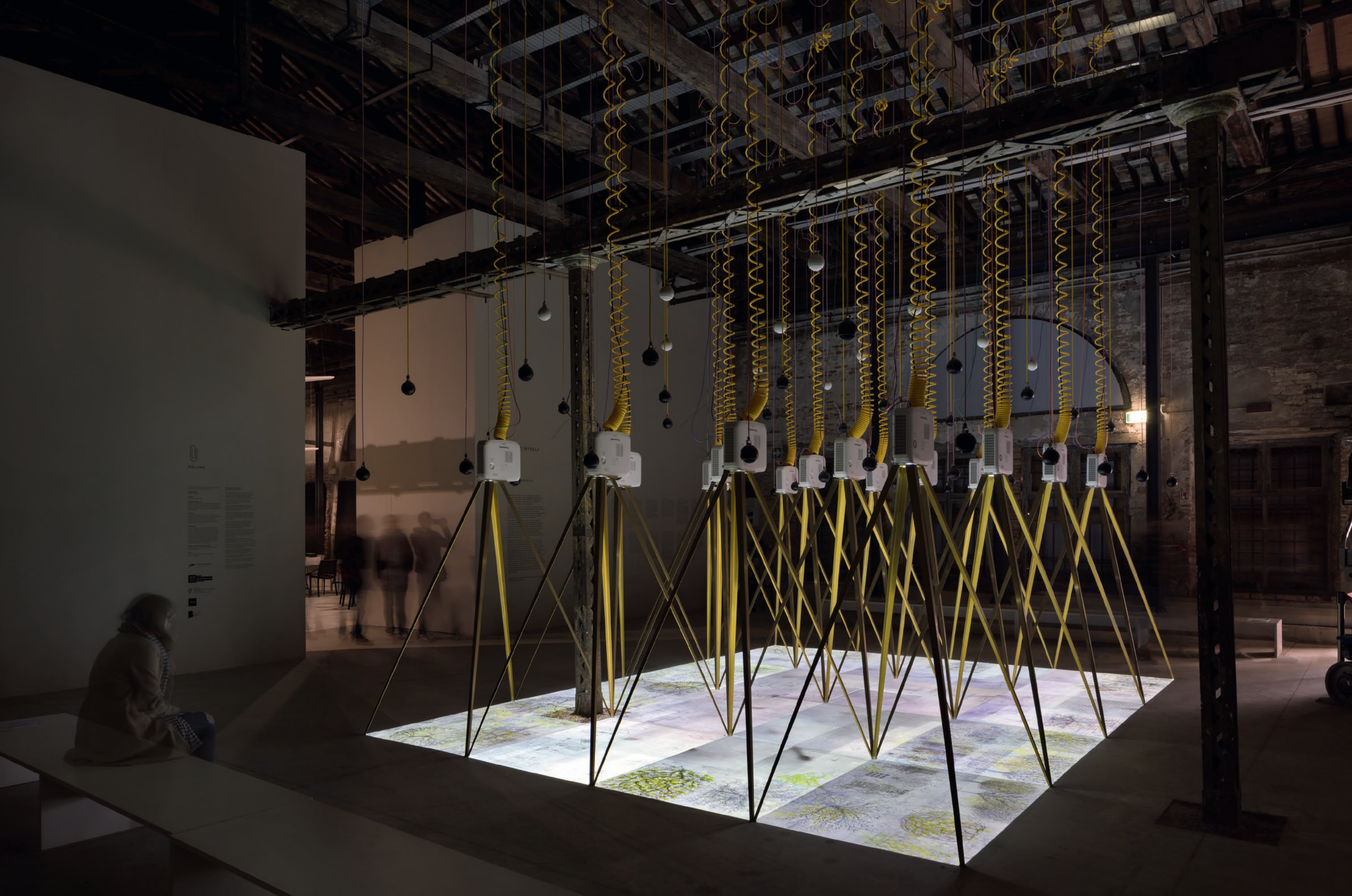


Yeoryia Manolopoulou
Níall McLaughlin

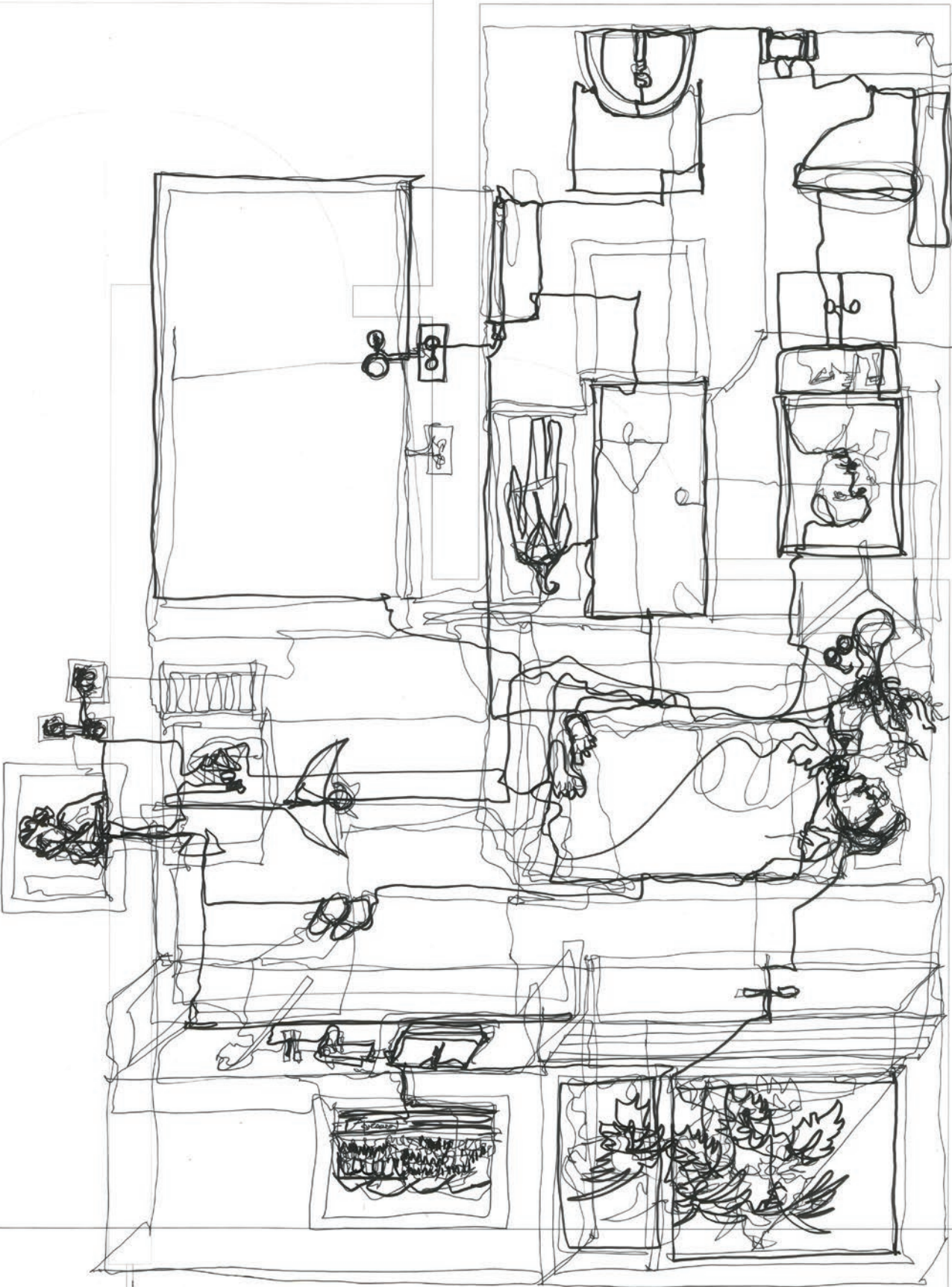
Losing Myself

Yeoryia Manolopoulou
Níall McLaughlin

Losing Myself:
Architecture and Dementia



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1 (previous) The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.

2 Single-line drawing of an inhabitant's bedroom by Michiko Sumi. One of the hundreds of drawings made and filmed for Losing Myself.

Project Details

Authors	Yeoryia Manolopoulou and Níall McLaughlin
Title	Losing Myself: Architecture and Dementia
Output Type	Architectural installation and website
Installation	The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia
Project Dates	2015, ongoing
Website	www.losingmyself.ie
Initiative	Ireland at Venice (by Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council)
Commissioner and Curator	Níall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou
Chief Curator of the 15th International Exhibition	Alejandro Aravena
Exhibition Dates	28 May to 27 November 2016
Architecture Team	Claire McMenamin (project architect), Benni Allan, Eimear Arthur, Joanna Karatzas at Níall McLaughlin Architects (NMLA)
Text	Eimear Arthur, Níall McLaughlin, Yeoryia Manolopoulou

Dialogue Participants	June Andrews (Director of Dementia Services, Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling); Sabina Brennan (Co-director, Neuro-Enhancement for Independent Lives Research Programme and Director, NEIL Memory Research Unit, Trinity College Dublin); Sebastian Crutch (Neuropsychologist, Dementia Research Centre, UCL); Kay Doherty, Desmond Donnelly, Aisling Guckian (The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre, Dublin); Sophie Handler (urban researcher, The University of Manchester and Age-friendly Manchester); Tim Ingold (Chair, Social Anthropology, University of Aberdeen); Kate Jeffery (cognitive and behavioural neuroscientist, Institute of Behavioural Neuroscience and Department of Psychology, UCL); Sandra Keogh (Person in Charge, The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre, Dublin); Lesley Palmer (chief architect, Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling); Helen Rochford-Brennan (Chair of the Irish Dementia Working Group and Vice-chair of the European Working Group of People with Dementia); Hugo Spiers (cognitive and behavioural neuroscientist, Spatial Cognition Research Group, UCL)
Drawing Team	Benni Allan, Sandra Coppin, Hannah Corlett, James Daykin, Bev Dockray, Anne Marie Galmstrup, Emma Guy, Lee Halligan, Katherine Hegab, Joanna Karatzas, Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Níall McLaughlin, Claire McMenamin, Ben Nicholls, Anne Schroell, Michiko Sumi, Simon Tonks
Digital Drawing	Katherine Hegab
Quadpod Production	Millimetre
Drawing Table Fabrication	Commissioned by You
Animation	Liam Davis (main project), Emir Tigrel (additional animation)
Composer	Kevin Pollard
Audiovisual Production and Installation	ArtAV

Project Support	Katie Burrell, Tamsin Hanke, Alicia Lafita, St John Walsh, Bryony Jones, Ruth Ryan, James Wickham, David Stronge, Know How Production
Graphic and Website Design	Objectif
Communications	Caro Communications
Total Funding	€336,645
Funding	€210,000 Culture Ireland; €70,0000 Arts Council of Ireland; €40,000 Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; €10,000 The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI); £6,000 The Bartlett Architecture Research Fund (ARF)
Thanks to	Alzheimer Society of Ireland; the clients and staff of The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre, Blackrock; Culture Ireland; Arts Council of Ireland; The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI); Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; The Bartlett, UCL; Neuro-Enhancement for Independent Lives at Trinity College Dublin; Dementia Research Centre, UCL; Jeffery Lab, UCL; Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling; National Gallery of Ireland; London Irish Centre; Online Reprographics; RTÉ Archives

3 Partial view of the installation of Losing Myself in the Arsenale, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.



Statement about the Research Content and Process

Description

This project examines, through an architectural lens, the experiences of people living with Alzheimer’s disease and associated challenges and opportunities affecting the design, maintenance and management of buildings and communities. It aims to encourage thought and debate around dementia design, critiquing current reductive design guidelines while proposing an original mode of drawing centred on human experience.

Questions

- 1. How does the human mind create an understanding of space?
- 2. What findings from neuroscience, art, anthropology, healthcare and policy can help architects design for people living with dementia and, more broadly, for all of us?
- 3. In what ways can we advance architectural representation to reflect these findings?
- 4. How can specialist design knowledge support all stages of building or redesign?
- 5. How can we build dementia-friendly cities from the outset?

Methodology

- 1. Dialogues: critical conversations across disciplines from health policy to neuropsychology and with people and carers affected by dementia in the UK and Ireland;

- 2. Stories: a collection of accounts by friends and relatives of people with Alzheimer’s disease;
- 3. Drawing: investigating a new method of architectural representation to describe space from the perspective of occupants, culminating into an immersive installation with informed and emotional content;
- 4. Collaboration: working closely with a collective of architects, graphic designers, installation and sound artists;
- 5. Communication: developing a website that effectively shares our research with non-specialist audiences.

Dissemination

The Irish Pavilion was one of the highlights of the 2016 Venice Biennale, which in six months attracted 260,000 visitors. It was globally reviewed in diverse publications like *The Lancet*, *WIRED*, *The Irish Times* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. Its website is a dementia-friendly repository of findings on open access. The authors have discussed their research in publications like *Arts and Dementia: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Mateus-Berr and Gruber 2020) and in public presentations for the Wellcome Collection, University of Quebec, Indian Institute of Management, RIAI, RIBA and the House of Lords Select Committee, among many institutions.

Project Highlights

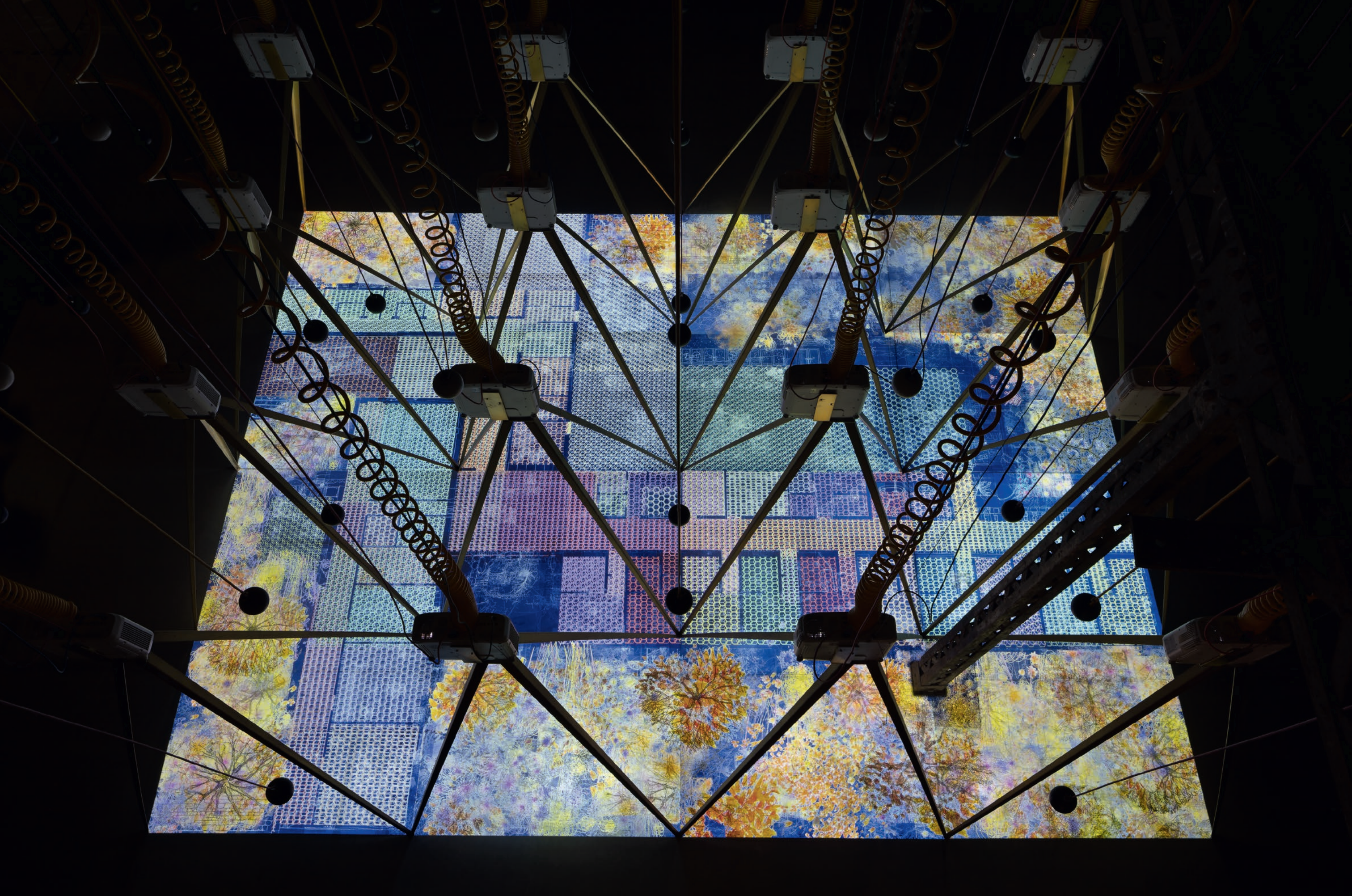
Losing Myself formed the sole representation of Ireland at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia in 2016, and was shortlisted for the RIBA President’s Awards for Research in the Design & Technical category in 2017. It is the first architecture project to examine dementia by bringing together perspectives from neuroscience, anthropology, health, art and design. It introduces and explores the neurobiological function of allocentric and egocentric spatial referencing in architectural drawing for the first time.

The authors have created an open-access report on dementia design recommendations, called ‘16 Lessons: What we have learned’, advocating for a holistic approach to creating and sustaining design-friendly buildings and communities for all, available at www.losingmyself.ie.

Statement of Inclusion of Earlier Work

Losing Myself started from revisiting The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre to examine it as a building in use six years after its completion. It is on this basis that this folio refers to it briefly.

4 (overleaf) The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.



Introduction

Losing Myself argues for an imaginative engagement with dementia on behalf of the architect. Focusing on the social function of architecture, architects increasingly try to work with others to design age- and dementia-friendly buildings and neighbourhoods that improve the lives of all. But to have lasting success, architects need, first of all, to better understand dementia.

While most literature produced on the subject for architects focuses on ‘best practice’ guidance, we seek to better understand and empathise with the lived experiences of people with Alzheimer’s disease. Our work pays particular attention to the frictions that exist between health and safety management on the one hand and the individual’s right to autonomy on the other.

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is a degenerative brain disease that erodes the ability to plan and to remember. As the condition progresses it affects navigation and the individual's sense of place, two spatial capacities that concern us because they are vital in the experience of architecture. We concentrate on the heart of this challenge: What spatial capacities do we have that we might lose because of dementia? How does the brain comprehend space? How is embodied cognition formed and linked to architecture?

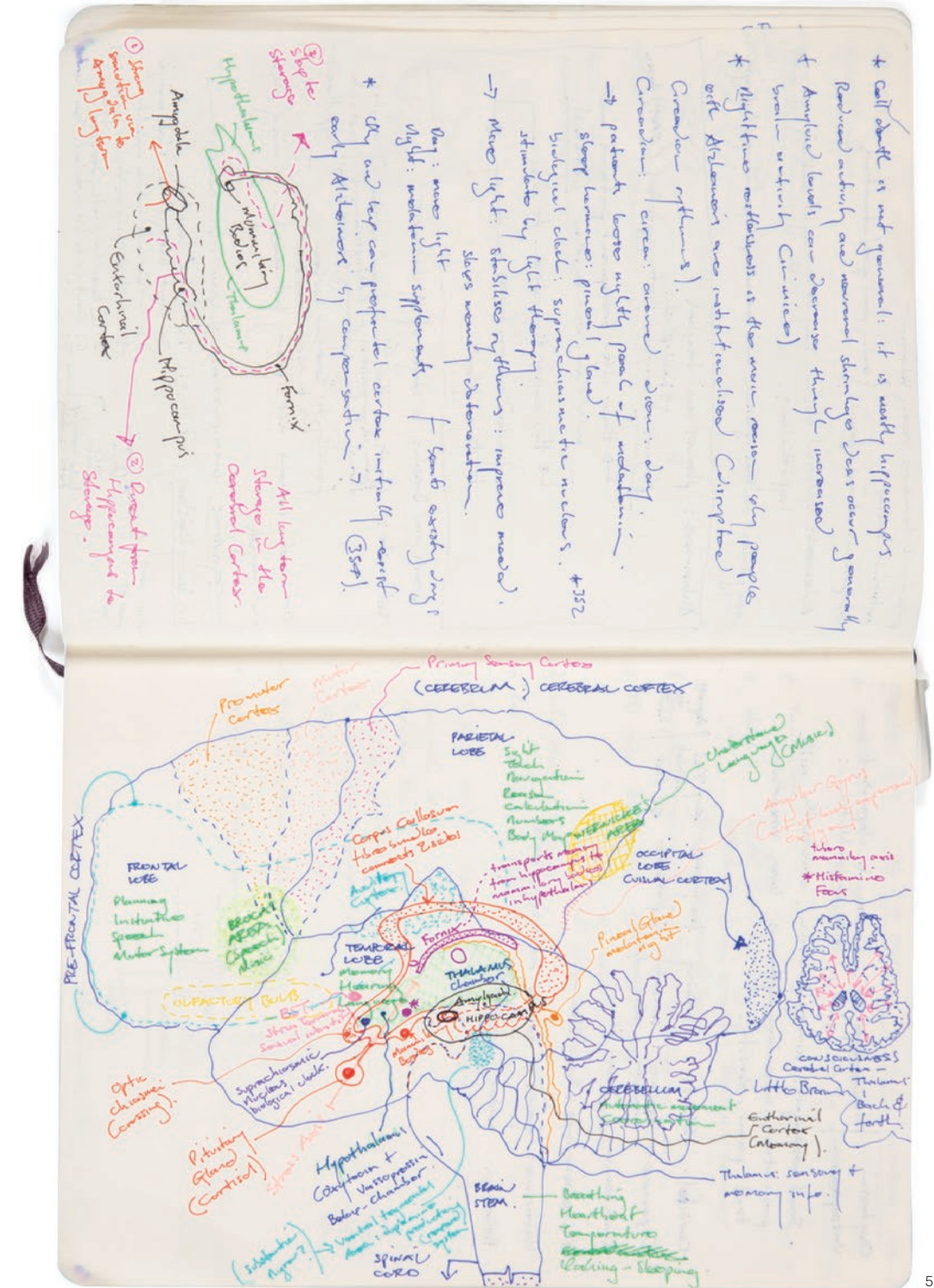
As architects, we simply do not know enough about dementia. Our project is a commitment to acquiring and effectively communicating new knowledge on the condition. By engaging with people who have direct experiences of dementia and with experts in the cognitive and behavioural sciences, we have gained a deeper understanding of dementia and spatial cognition more broadly.

By working as part of a collective with other architects, designers and artists, we have built a collaborative mode of practice and a drawing methodology informed by neuroscience and art that embodies the social reality of buildings. This mode of drawing and its presentation in an orchestrated assemblage acknowledges that dementia affects individuals differently and that we all perceive the world in different ways. Our decision to use many elements in a mixed-media installation, combining drawing, film and sound, was significant to the representation of the experience of dementia itself.

The work is a collaboration between McLaughlin and Manolopoulou who started working on this project in 2015 in response to the theme for the 15th International Architecture Exhibition. 'Reporting from the Front' asked architects to reflect on their own experiences while working to improve the lives of people 'under tough circumstances, facing pressing challenges' (La Biennale di Venezia 2016). Alzheimer's disease was chosen by the authors as a topical and significant challenge, given the pressing nature of the disease and its evolution: 'globally nearly 9.9 million people develop dementia each year; this figure translates into one new case every three seconds' (WHO 2017).

The research was made public through an immersive installation for the Irish Pavilion and extends in an online resource that compiles a detailed description of *Losing Myself* and the authors' ongoing investigations on the subject.

5 Study of the brain
by Níall McLaughlin, 2016.



Aims and Objectives

Our broadest aim is that this research will encourage thought and debate around design for dementia and ageing amongst architects, and across disciplines, expanding our capacity as built environment professionals to deal creatively and empathetically with these diseases. Beyond this, we hope that our research into spatial cognition will be significant for architectural thought because it will equip us with a deeper comprehension of how mind, body and environment interact as a whole, thus benefitting and making more inclusive the design of many types of building and urban projects. Specific objectives include:

- 1. To investigate how the mind acquires spatial knowledge and the implications of this for architecture;
- 2. To examine current research and practice on different forms of dementia and spatial cognition, produced by neuroscientists, health professionals, psychologists, anthropologists and artists, mainly based in the UK and Ireland;
- 3. To draw conclusions from specifically designed and lived-in environments, particularly through revisiting The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre in Dublin, designed by Niall McLaughlin Architects, and through studying how it is being used since its completion;
- 4. To critically reflect on the latest national and international health care and built environment policies that influence the design and management of buildings for people with dementia;

- 5. To learn from directly engaging with people living with dementia, their families, carers and friends, and to participate in relevant support groups;
- 6. To question architectural drawing conventions that represent buildings as sole-authored, fixed and total images and investigate new methods of representation that manifest the building as a collective and temporal reality;
- 7. To evaluate the home versus other models of professional care environment (day care, respite, long-term care, village care);
- 8. To understand how the urban realm can be designed and maintained to support and enhance the quality of life of an ageing population and people living with dementia;
- 9. To create the Irish Pavilion and a report of findings, responding to the theme of the 15th International Architecture Exhibition ‘Reporting from the Front’ set by Alejandro Aravena;
- 10. To commit to an extension of this project, beyond the limits of the Biennale, through the architects’ ongoing practice and research.

6 Exterior view of The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre, Dublin.

7 Interior view of The Orchard Alzheimer’s Respite Centre, Dublin.



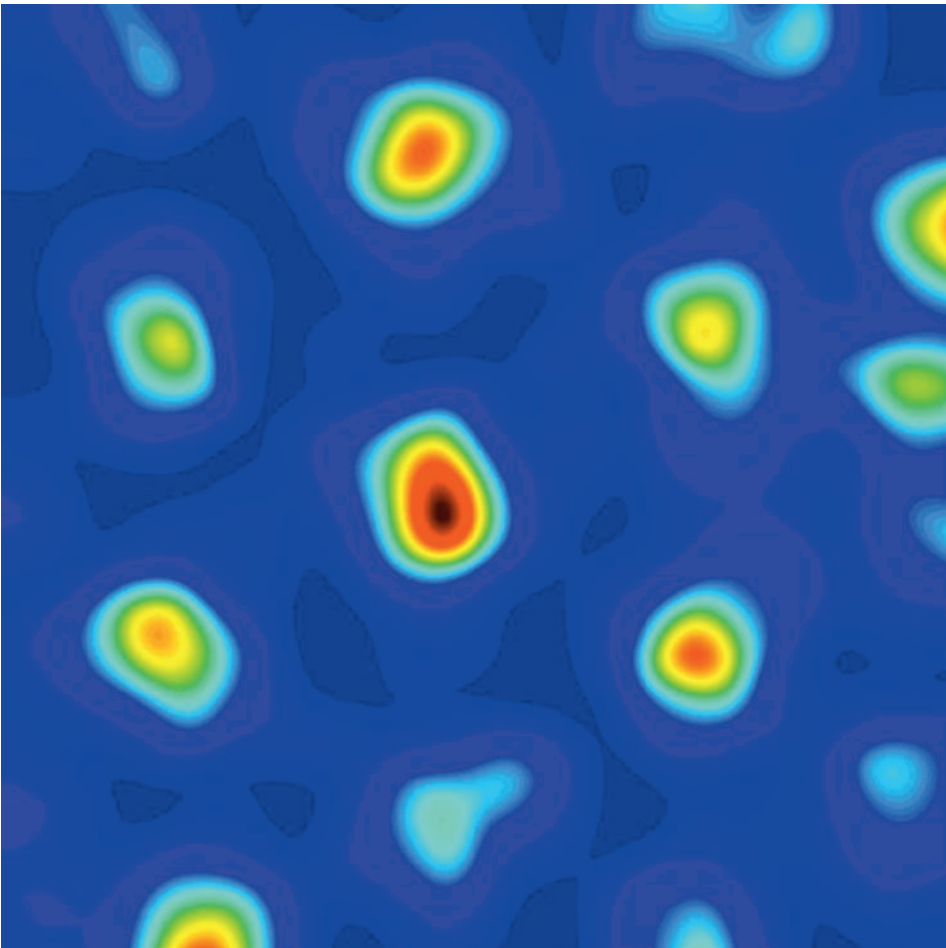
Questions

1. How does the human mind create an understanding of space?

Our hypothesis is that, if architects learn more about the cognitive processes at play in dementia, this knowledge may then be used to advance dementia design. Moreover, a more scientifically informed and nuanced understanding of how the brain comprehends space should prove invaluable to all aspects of architectural design.

There is a profound link between place and memory as evidenced by research on the hippocampal structure and function of the brain. Within the hippocampus, and its neighbouring structures, neurons exist that lay down memories in their connections while allowing us to map space and navigate it. This internal representation of space is essentially a ‘cognitive map’: we have ‘grid cells’ that create lasting matrices with the longitude and latitude of the spaces we experience; ‘place cells’ that highlight our position in these matrices, helping us to understand where we are; and ‘head-direction cells’ that work like compasses to signal the direction we are facing (Moser 2014).

Alzheimer’s disease is caused by the build-up of plaques and tangles disrupting synaptic connections in the brain. This has a disproportionate impact on the higher synthetic functions of human cognition, including but not limited to, the suite of faculties that deal with navigation in time. When neural activity in the regions around the hippocampus weakens, memory retention declines. Tragically, one of the things we can then forget is where we are. Becoming lost and having no sense of place is common in Alzheimer’s disease and is an immense challenge for architecture generally and in producing buildings for the care of these patients specifically.



8

8 Monitored activity of the hippocampal neurons, showing place cells and grid cells. Image from the Jeffery Lab, UCL.

2. What findings from neuroscience, anthropology, art and healthcare can help architects design for people living with dementia and, more broadly, for all of us?

It is important to note that there is not a single consensus on how places are perceived, on an individual and collective level, and that sometimes our experts did not agree on the conceptualisation of how memory works. In terms of understanding the specific challenges architects face in designing for people with dementia, the findings of Sebastian Crutch of the Dementia Research Centre, UCL, were helpful in elucidating both the difficulties of the task and the ways we might overcome these. Crutch noted that human experience is fundamentally personal and affected by ‘a huge number of distinct, and individually damageable, processes’ that transform over time (Crutch 2016). The difficulty for designing for dementia is precisely that the effects of the condition are so inherently individual and constantly changing. We put it to Crutch that designing a ‘daisy chain’ of spatial conditions can help people interlink situations in their minds in order to recall them as remembered experiences later on, a strategy that Crutch agreed seemed promising. The metaphor of a ‘daisy chain’ seemed suitable for describing an interconnected set of memorable scenes that allow people to thread together longer navigational sequences.

In addition to defining space through an understanding of personal history, we were interested in how a place can be comprehended communally. Here we found our engagement with social anthropologist Tim Ingold particularly insightful. In our dialogue with Ingold, we recalled geographer Doreen Massey’s social definition of space ‘as the simultaneity of stories so far’ (Massey 2005), that is, our way of situating ourselves in the world, and of remembering it, is greatly



9



10

9 William Utermohlen,
Self Portrait with Saw, 1997.

10 William Utermohlen,
Self Portrait - Head 1, 2000.

influenced by both personal and shared history. In this conception, mind, body and environment are a shared continuum: a complete system in which perception is the achievement of a whole organism rather than only the mind in a body or the body in an environment. This holistic or ecological view stands in contrast to the views of neuroscientists, and Ingold, for one, rejects their idea that the brain is ‘a central control system’. Ingold sees the brain as a part of a broader ‘circuit’ processed by human action: ‘one is continually creating and re-creating one’s knowledge through the process of going about in it [our knowledge], rather than having it stored away somewhere’ (Ingold 2016). What contributes to this process is the human capacity for story-making. Dementia, according to Ingold, disrupts and confuses a narrative. This was a notable remark that we took from this dialogue as we agreed with Ingold’s position on the significance of story-making.

The ecological view is significant to architecture because one of its main tasks is to nurture this interconnected reality between environment and embodied construction, but architects do not yet know how to capture it. The work of artists who live with dementia, however, shows us ways in which this might be represented. The paintings of the artist William Utermohlen, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and continued to paint as the condition took effect until his death, give us unique insights (Crutch 2001). As time progressed and Utermohlen’s cognitive abilities gradually declined, his self-portraits showed spaces that increasingly collided, fragmented and multiplied (9–12). ‘Profiles in Paint’, a more recent project conducted at the UCL Dementia Research Centre, asked artists with and without dementia to paint the exact same group of objects (13–6). It showed that the artists with dementia created profound distortions in their representations,

one of which was an inability to represent accurate relations between objects (Harrison 2017). We saw these paintings as works of art in their own right manifesting the artists’ world views rather than as mere diagnostic tools showing evidence of loss. We also took into account healthcare research that highlights the emotional benefits of the experience of music, dance and touch for people living with Alzheimer’s disease. Notably, key areas of the brain linked to musical memory are relatively unaffected by dementia.

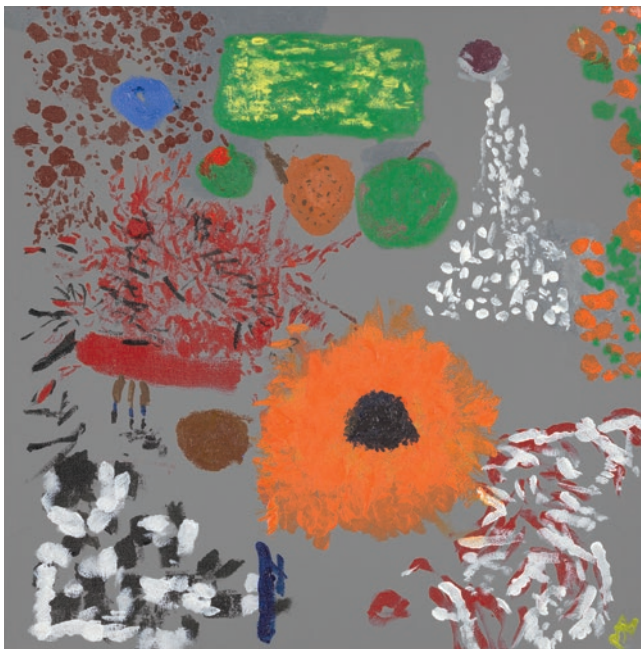
These dialogues and explorations persuaded us that a main aim of *Losing Myself* should be to redefine architectural representation based on such findings that centre on experience. Human experience is not picture-like.



11 William Utermohlen,
Blue Skies, 1995.



12 William Utermohlen,
Conversation Pieces - Snow, 1990.



13



14



15



16

13–6 Profiles in Paint, 2015. These paintings were made by people with posterior cortical atrophy and other rare forms of dementia. The project was a collaboration between artist Charlie Harrison and Professor Sebastian Crutch at UCL Dementia Research Centre, with research assistants Amelia Carton, Emilie Brotherhood and Chris Hardy.

3. In what ways can we advance architectural representation to reflect these findings?

A common limitation of the architectural plan is that it represents the building as a static and whole object, neutrally and equally demarcated, from the all-seeing and singular position of the architect. Questioning this position, we investigated a novel method of architectural representation originating from the multiple and overlapping perspectives of occupants.

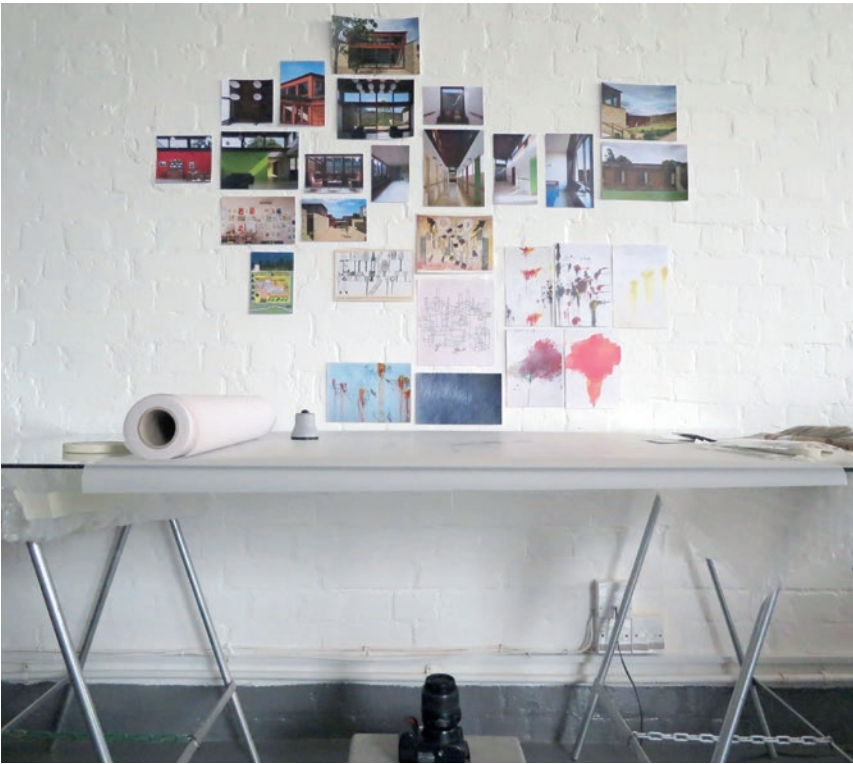
In discussion with Crutch, we identified the 'egocentric' and 'allocentric' functions occurring in the human brain (Crutch 2016) and realised that these had not been considered by architects before in the process of drawing. Allocentric spatial referencing in humans requires a sophisticated form of mental manipulation whereby the world is understood by assessing and imagining relationships between objects. It is characterised by an advanced ability to retain a mental image of the whole. In egocentric spatial referencing, however, the brain makes simpler self-to-object connections rather than the more complex and relational object-to-object correlations of allocentric functioning. Architects constantly ferry between plans and perspective drawings that can be loosely associated with aspects of allocentric and egocentric processing respectively, but it is unclear how these forms of drawing enable them to consider fully the degraded allocentric capacities of people with dementia when they design for them.

In our interdisciplinary dialogues, we came to realise that the problem for us, as architects, is that the architectural plan, as a primary tool of our discipline, is mainly allocentric: 'based on a totalizing map-like view, disconnected from the circumstantial self-dependent ways in which we live in the world' (Manolopoulou 2020). In response to this challenge, Losing Myself invents

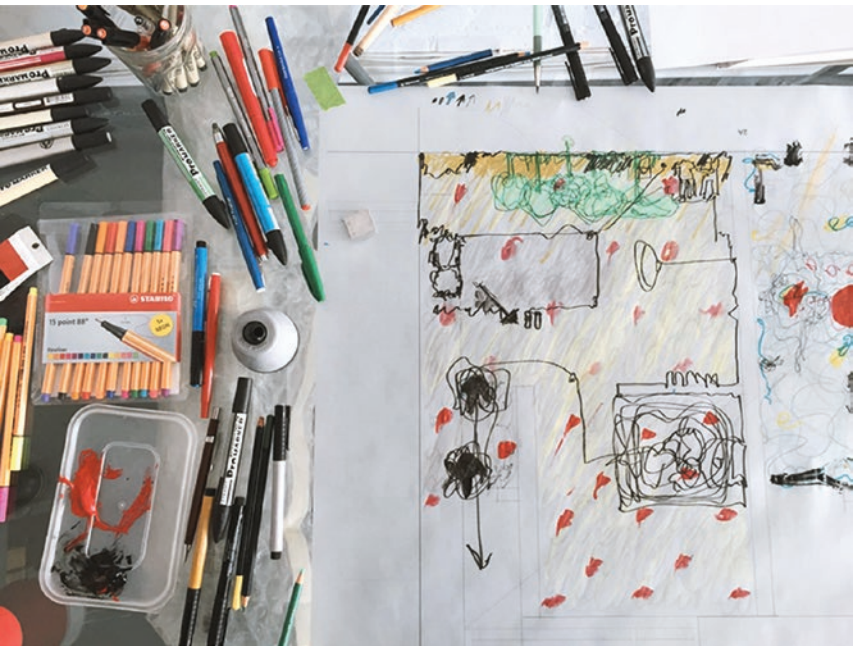
a method of drawing that combines and reveals allocentric and egocentric spatial referencing introducing this neurobiological concept in architectural drawing for the first time. Eventually, Losing Myself demonstrates that the architectural plan, although certainly allocentric, embodies a mode of spatial thinking that includes egocentric aspects.

17 The first set-up for drawing experimentation. A glass surface is set on trestle legs while a video camera is placed underneath the glass in order to capture the process of drawing on tracing paper.

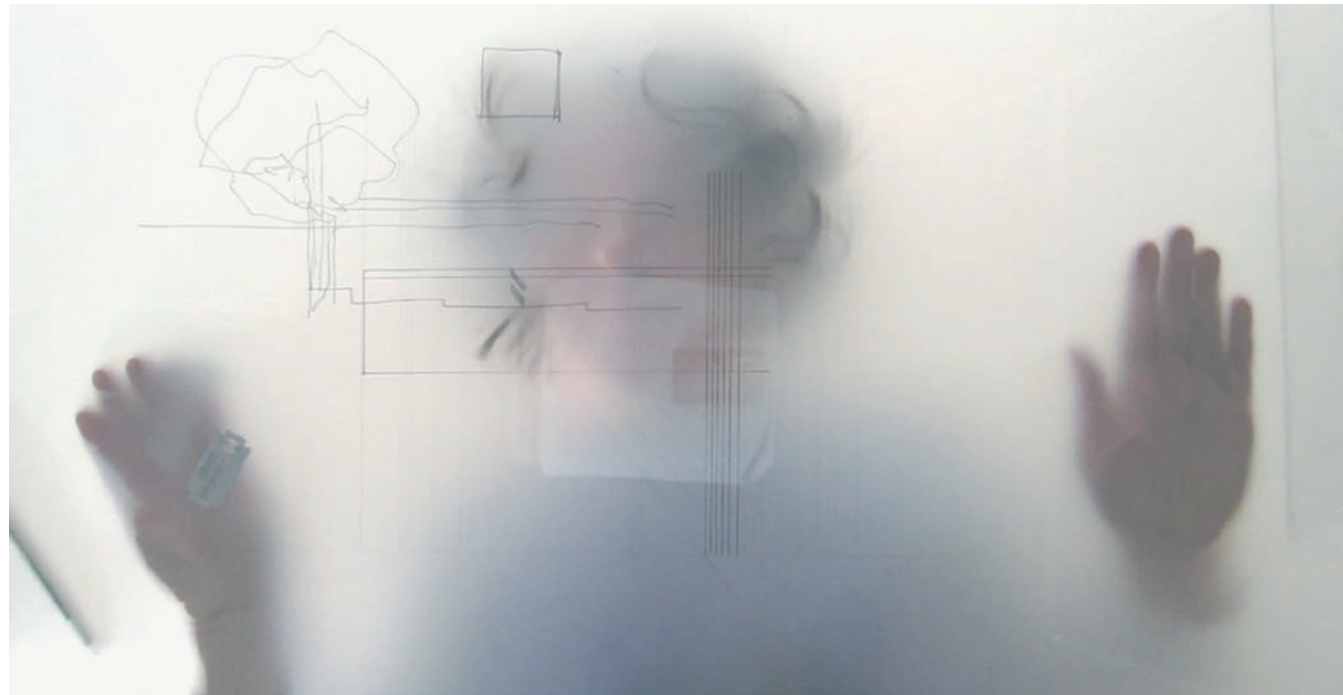
18 The first sketch that captured the idea of a single flowing line (seen in black) in an attempt to represent the inhabitant's mind 'wandering' to form spatial perceptions. Drawing by Yeoryia Manolopoulou.



17

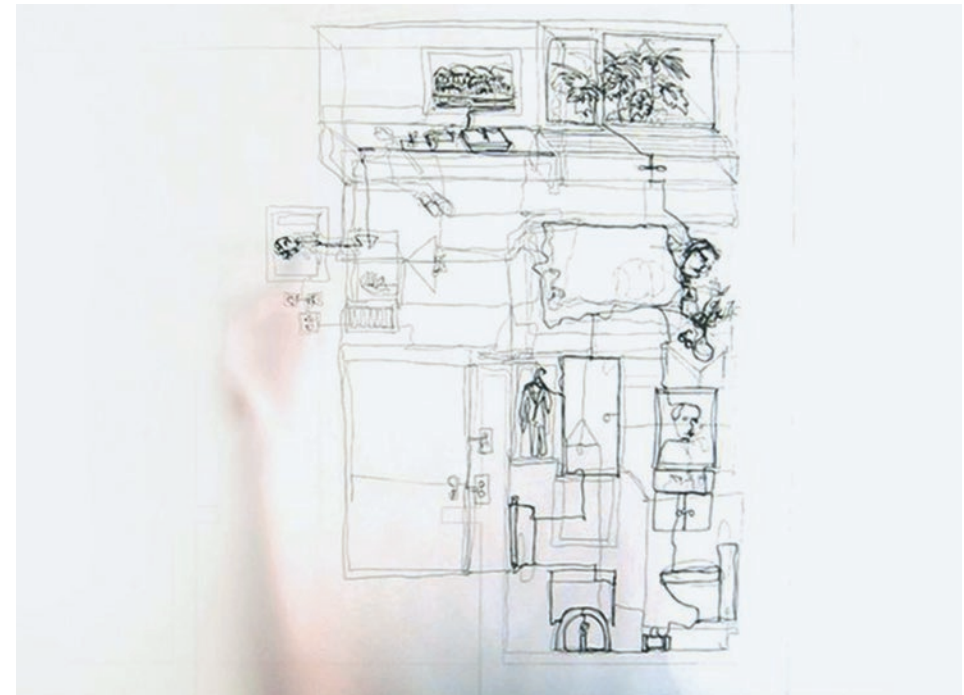


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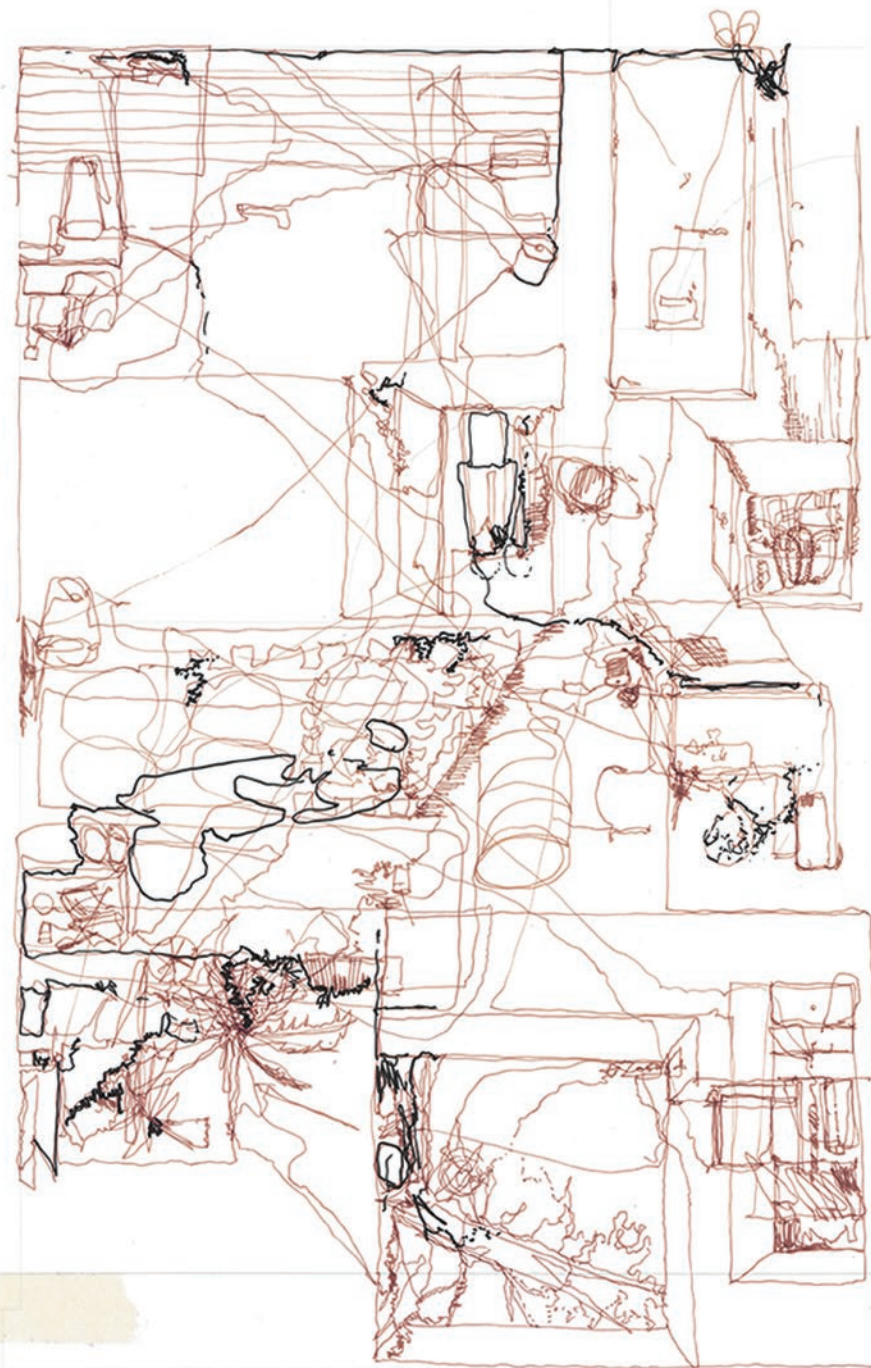
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19 Video still of an early drawing filmed from below the glass top. It captures both drafter and drawing 'inhabiting' the surface simultaneously. Drawing by Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

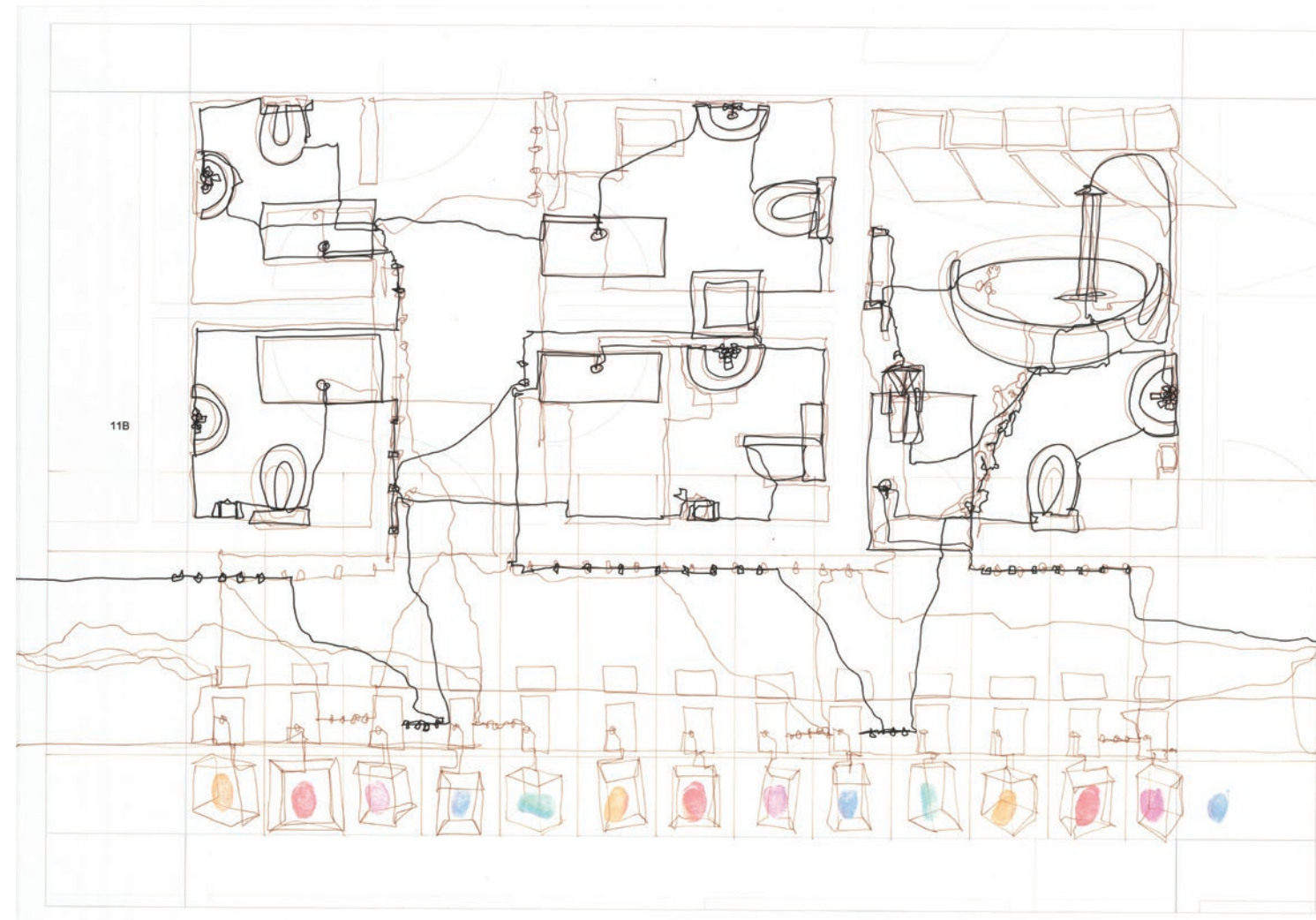


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20 Drawing from above, filming from below, one of the bedrooms from the perspective of its occupant. The method of the single flowing line is used to describe self-to-object visual connections in a continuum. The completed drawing can be seen on p. 4. Drawing by Michiko Sumi.



21



22

21 Drawing of a bedroom to describe another occupant's perspective. The process was performed and recorded multiple times by different drafters. Drawing by Emma Guy.

22 Drawing of one of the shared spaces in The Orchard Centre, focusing on the corridor and bathrooms. Drawing by Michiko Sumi.

4. How can specialist design knowledge support all stages of building or redesign?

Research on dementia design is relatively new, and as the body of knowledge on human cognition grows, inevitably older studies are quickly superseded. For example, whilst the benefits of abundant daylight with minimum confusion of glare and shadows are unquestionable, new research on improving navigation calls for replacing previous guidance on colour-coding interiors, as this has been found to be reductive. We now know that visual landmarks play an important role in guiding spatial navigation: they act as visual beacons, offer orientation and associative cues, and create reference frames for navigation (Chan et al. 2012). A spatial sequence of meaningful objects and vivid situations can act as a thread of navigational markers to prompt a person's memory and assist their movement more effectively and enjoyably. This evolving nature of design guidance suggests that it is more important for architects to seek to understand the cognitive processes and perceptual implications of dementia, and reflect on this when designing, than to draft and abide by a didactic list of reductive instructions.

Learning from existing dementia care facilities by examining how they are experienced in the everyday is also crucial. Losing Myself took as a starting point The Orchard Centre, a model respite facility designed by McLaughlin, completed in 2009. The Orchard Centre was a test case for future developments for the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, 'both in its successes and its failures' (McLaughlin 2013). Conceived as a walled garden building, it was designed to create a sense of ease and freedom amongst the occupants who could safely wander within a network of linked rooms, courtyards and pathways. Routes were created through gardens and social spaces

to avoid corridors and cul-de-sacs; clerestory windows were designed to provide abundant natural light.

We revisited this building seven years after it was built to understand how it is used and the changes that might have had happened in it over time. Through our visits and conversations with carers and families of the people being cared for in the centre, we realised disparities between the architects' intentions and the building as a lived reality.

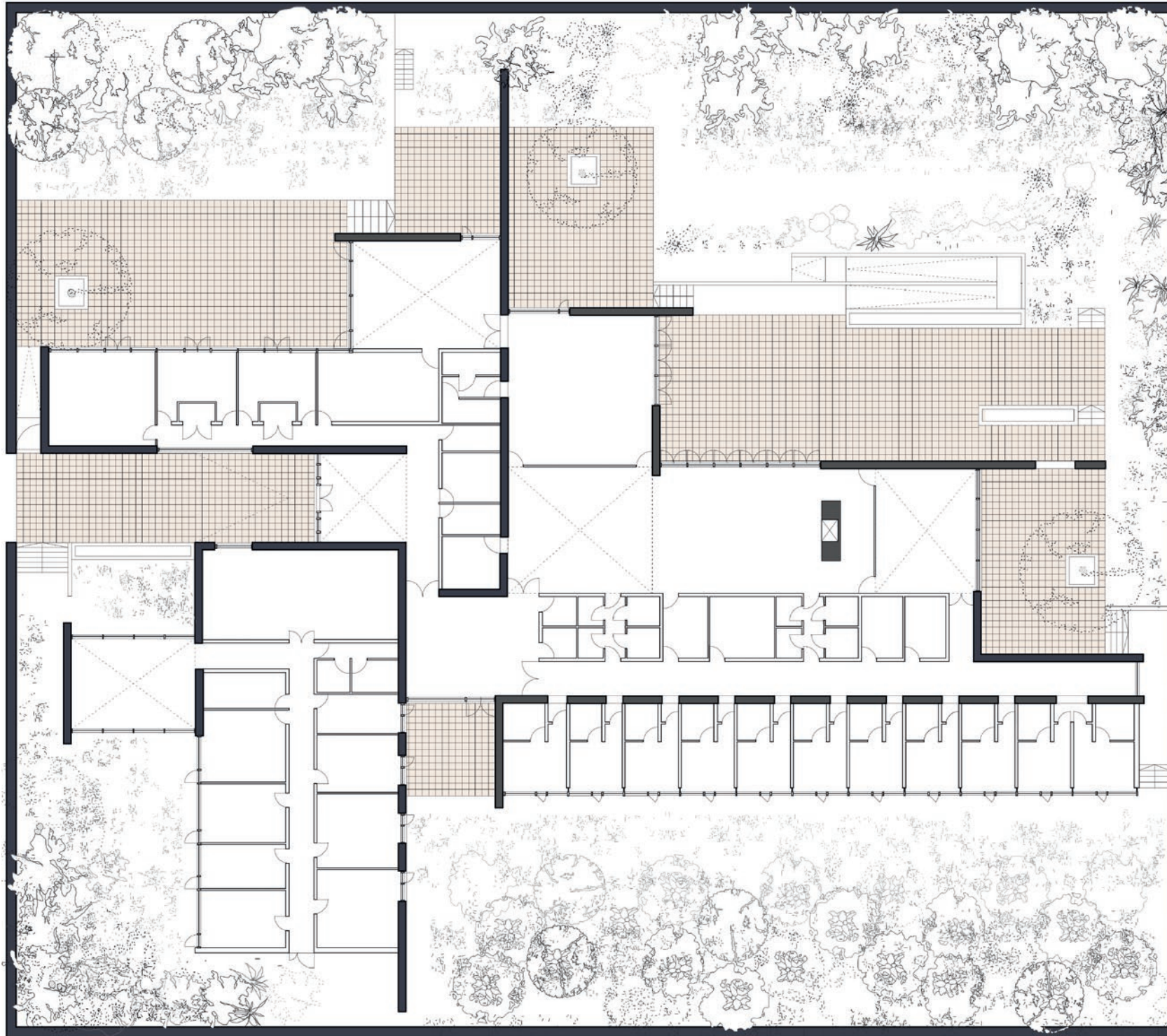
Our research shows that in dementia care settings tensions frequently emerge between the management of health, hygiene and safety, intended to protect the individual, and the building's own affordances that enable greater degrees of freedom and personalisation to users. A continuous and empathetic relationship between architect and client at all stages of the building, before and during occupation, is essential and can help users – from managers and carers to patients – to overcome such difficulties. This is important for all projects but particularly acute for dementia care facilities that care for occupants with unique environmental sensitivities and need to adapt themselves as research on dementia evolves.

5. How can we build dementia-friendly cities from the outset?

Cities and landscapes should be designed or adapted with a full understanding of the spatial difficulties that people with dementia face in their lives. Given that research has repeatedly shown that the home environment is best for ageing and living with dementia, the entire cityscape should be designed to allow people to continue to stay at home and in their communities for as long as possible. We need to provide engaging and accessible connections between the home, the neighbourhood and the broader city.

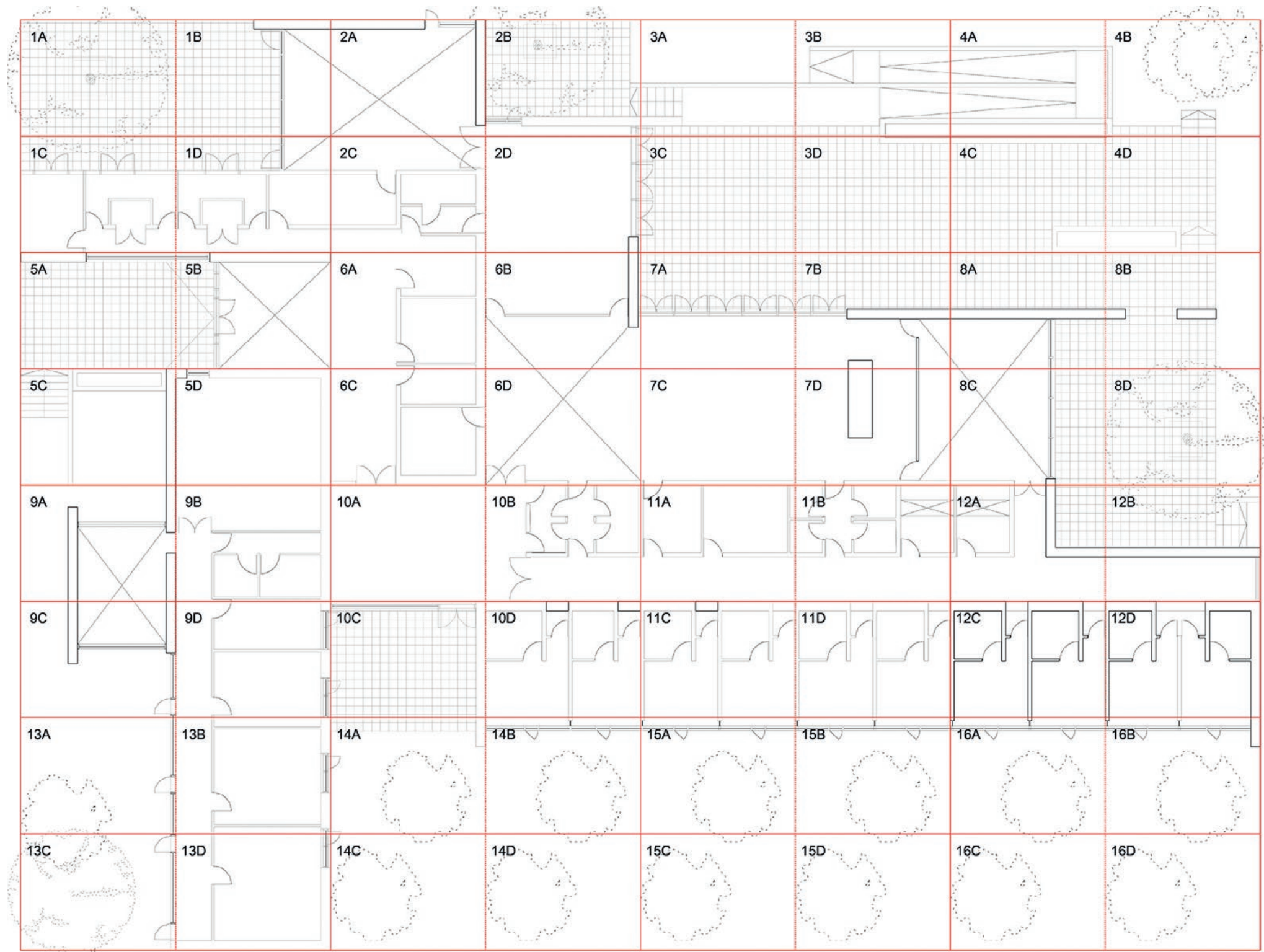
Taken as a whole, all public buildings and the urban realm in its totality need to be conceived as dementia-friendly from the outset. Design clarity, signage, accessibility and the reduction of physical barriers as well as minimising noise and air pollution are crucial. Landmarks can play a meaningful role in easing navigation and green spaces can enhance the wellbeing of all dwellers.

Beyond the physical attributes of the urban environment, attention must be paid to cultural change through cultivating a compassionate and informed community. Broadening a strong awareness of the condition amongst the public can contribute positively to forming and maintaining inclusive and age-friendly communities.



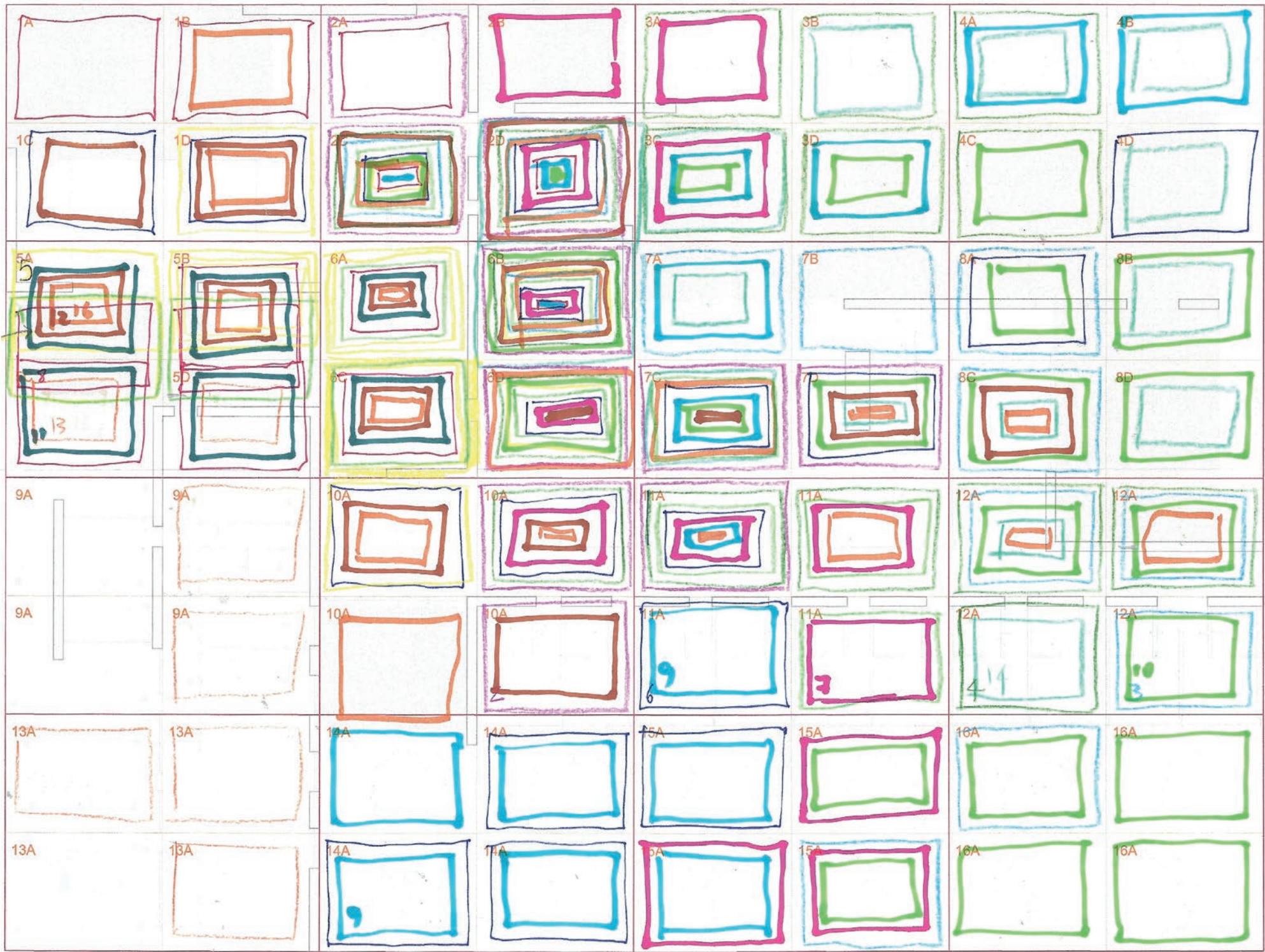
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23 The Orchard Alzheimer's Respite Centre, architectural plan by Niall McLaughlin Architects.



24

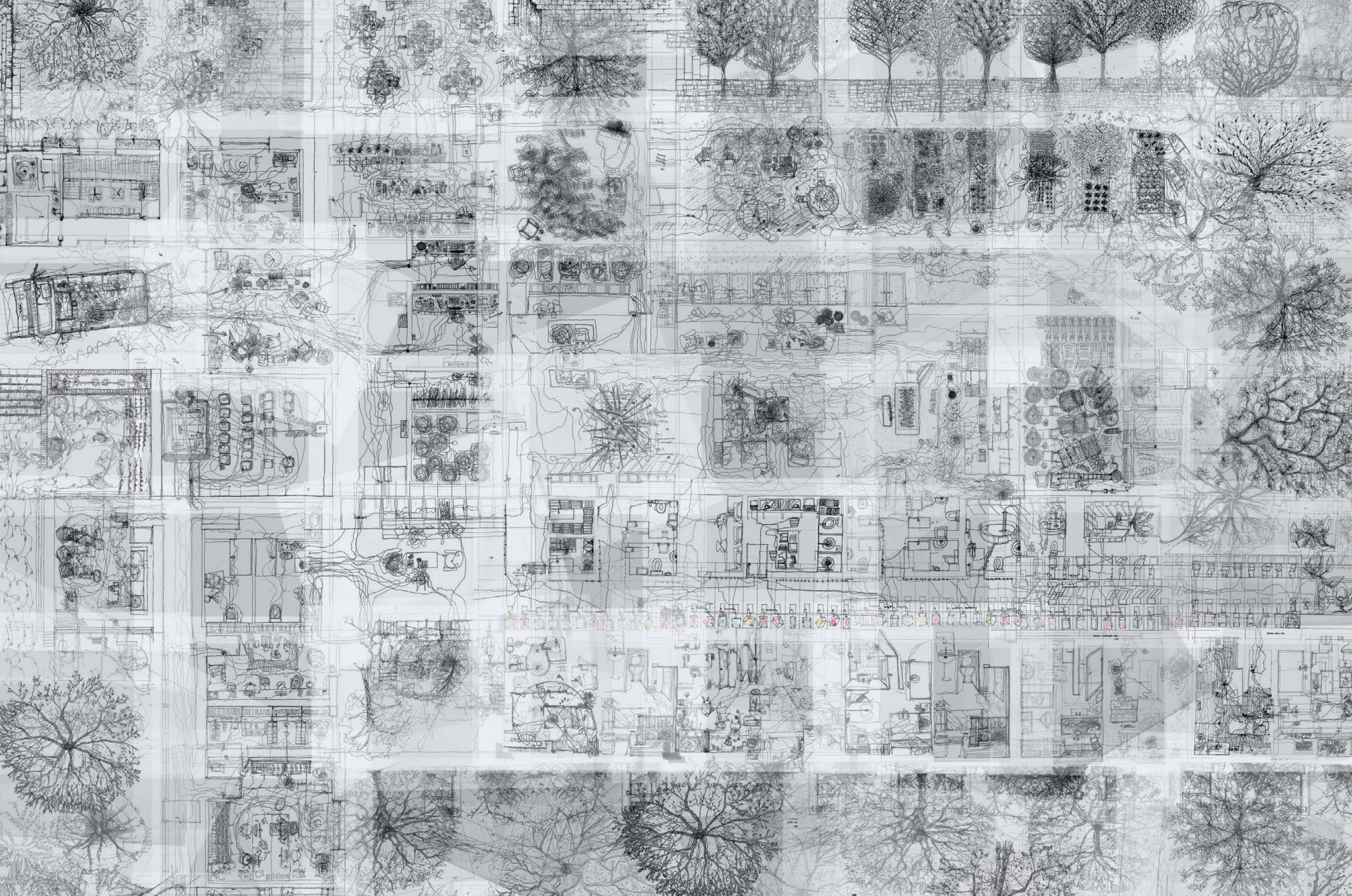
24 Adjusting the plan of The Orchard Centre, after revisiting it in 2016, in order to make the base for redrawing the building from the imagined perspectives of 16 inhabitants.



25

25 Structuring the plan of The Orchard Centre according to its patterns of inhabitation. Different colour frame sequences stand for representations of the experiences of different inhabitants as they would move from place to place in the building. Overlapped frames indicate areas of social interaction where occupants meet. Score by Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

26 (overleaf) Still view of the new animated plan of the building, composed of hundreds of filmed drawings, stitched together to make an animated composite of allocentric and egocentric line structures.



Context

This research is based on drawing, scholarly study and dialogues with people who have first-hand experiences of dementia or expert knowledge in relevant areas in neuroscience, public health, art and anthropology. The following section reproduces 11 extracts from our ‘16 Lessons’ (Manolopoulou and McLaughlin 2016) – with slight modification and the addition of external sources – to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the context we have engaged with:

–1–

All architects need to understand dementia

The tragedy of dementia is that the brain is hidden: we cannot see the physical degeneration caused by the condition. This lack of visible physical symptoms may allow an individual to hide a diagnosis from friends and family for a long period of time, or prevent support networks from forming around them.

Chair of the Irish Dementia Working Group and vice-chair of the European Working Group of People, Helen Rochford-Brennan, has dementia. She finds that people often misunderstand what that means. When she books airport services to assist with her navigational difficulties, she is invariably presented with a wheelchair despite her lack of physical disability. ‘It’s my brain that’s slow, not my feet,’ she tells us (Rochford-Brennan 2016).

–2–

Home truth

The best place for someone with dementia is at home. Allowing people to stay at home and in their communities reduces the risk of loneliness and isolation and gives a sense of belonging. Support at home can be enhanced by engagement with day-care centres, which provide daily stimulation and socialisation and give carers much-needed respite.

Some adjustments may be required to allow people to stay at home, but we should remember the very intimate level at which we are bound into our houses. Our understanding of our homes extends past what we see to a precise physical familiarity, assisted by proprioceptive memory (Britannica 2015), which allows us to move around without knocking anything over. This is deeply inscribed in the mind.

–3–

Risk and autonomy

There is a tension between the need to keep people safe and the need to preserve their quality of life. We are preoccupied with health and safety, the reduction of risk and controlled institutional environments that can eventually devastate the individual. For example, Lesley Palmer, chief architect at the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling, challenges the notion of the balcony as a risky building element for older people: ‘We’re depriving everybody of daylight, for fear of someone jumping’ (Palmer 2016).

Jacqui Carson, the manager of an assisted living centre says: ‘People [should] still get to make poor choices for themselves if they choose’ (Gawande 2014). When we remove opportunities for exploration and decision-making, we dehumanise people. It is easy to identify the physical damage of a broken arm, but it is difficult to quantify the mental damage inflicted by the loss of autonomy due to excessively restrictive policies.

My personal daisy chain

Each person with dementia is unique. For this reason, the care environment and assistance for people with dementia should draw a lot on a person’s biography. As Tom Kitwood argues, the prime task of dementia care is ‘to maintain personhood in the face of failing of mental powers’ (Kitwood 1997).

‘Best practice’ guidance and management policies that restrict personalisation can lead to an institutional, clinical and uninviting environment. It is common for dementia care facilities to prohibit users from decorating their rooms for fear of theft of or damage to their possessions by others. But provision for personal object placement in the building is vital for the individual’s emotional wellbeing, their sense of personhood and ease of navigation.

Sometimes I need help

Andreas Kruse argues that care for people with dementia should have three components – professional care, care within the family and care from the community – all guided by ‘the principle of shared responsibility’ (Kruse 2014).

Helen carries a card that says: ‘I have dementia. I like to be independent, but sometimes I need help.’ We can all provide this help. In smaller towns, neighbours may assist neighbours with dementia by noticing if they have wandered far from home or by responding sensibly to agitated behaviour. In cities, if the person behind the till in the supermarket or the ticket inspector on the bus could be trained to recognise signs of confusion and to react accordingly, the individual with dementia could be empowered to continue to participate as an active member of society.

We need connections

Isolation is endemic among people with dementia. This is an important emotional issue but also a significant risk factor for health. Helen laments: ‘The general public do not see us... we want to be part of normal society’ (Rochford-Brennan 2016).

Care environments should proactively engage with volunteers, neighbours and people of all ages in their local communities. For example, there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that interaction with babies and children enriches the lives of people with dementia – a hypothesis supported by a number of studies into intergenerational engagement. Sabina Brennan, director of the Memory Research Unit of the Neuro-Enhancement for Independent Lives Research Programme at Trinity College, says: ‘We should care for our older adults in the same places that we care for our young children’ (Brennan 2016). Successful models for this exist in Japan and Holland.

In a care centre we visited in Tufnell Park, London, the sitting room and activity room were empty but there was a large crowd gathered around a small window at the end of a corridor. It was the one place from which you could see teenagers who had crept out at the back of the school for a cigarette and some flirting.

Liberty is limited

Atul Gawande outlines the changes that have occurred to the contemporary family unit and the effect that this has had on care for older people (Gawande 2014). Previously, ‘the elderly were not left to cope with the infirmities of old age on their own. It was understood that parents would just keep living in their home, assisted by one or more of the children they’d raised.’ Global economic prosperity now rewards those young people who are prepared to ‘follow their own path – to seek out jobs wherever they might be’.

Describing what he calls the ‘veneration of independence’, Gawande shows that both children and parents seek out this separation after the intense period of child-rearing. This principle of independence works in a fashion until the final period of high dependency, when people are often obliged to commit themselves to institutionalised environments. For Gawande, modernisation does not demote older people; it demotes the whole family in favour of individual liberty and control, including the liberty to be less beholden to other generations.

Embrace technology

Assistive technologies can promote independence, autonomy and confidence for a person with dementia and limit their exposure to risk. Movement and energy-consumption sensors within the house or wearable location devices are very common and allow a degree of independence to be retained. Crucially, tools like these may reassure and empower carers. As June Andrews says: ‘I don’t put him in a home in case he gets lost, because I know I’ll always be able to find him’ (Andrews 2016).

Simple design interventions can prolong independence

Design for neurological impairment should be as integral to architecture as design for mobility. Helen explains the challenges posed by public buildings with ‘bathrooms tucked away at the back’ for someone who experiences navigational difficulties.

In her own house, she has made simple changes to enable her to continue to enjoy cooking. Instead of storing items throughout her kitchen, where she might misplace them, she has a unit containing all the basics she needs to cook that she moves around the kitchen with her. We should accept that people with dementia are likely to be older adults and so should provide bathing facilities and furniture that reflect this. Good design empowers people to care for themselves for as long as possible.

Minimise visual and physical barriers

Routes should be composed to allow people to move through a building independently without getting lost. Where possible, the number of doors should be reduced. Clear visual connections between spaces facilitate passive surveillance, and the removal of physical barriers, such as locked gates, reduces the potential for frustration.

‘Wandering’ is a characteristic behaviour of many forms of dementia. Instead of trying to prevent wandering, we must strive to create an environment in which it is safe to wander. Spatial sequences and visual links should be logical. For example, if I wake up in the middle of the night, it is likely to be because I need to go to the toilet. If I can see the toilet from my bed, this acts both as a visual memory prompt and a navigational tool. If I can see where I want to go, I can work out how to get there.

Live with purpose

Care and respite buildings for people with dementia must accommodate and facilitate meaningful activity, fulfilment and creativity: for example, through singing, painting, dancing, gardening or cooking. In Hammond Care facilities in Australia, people spend time cooking; if the care staff believe there is a food hygiene issue, they simply serve a different meal (Andrews 2016).

Gawande stresses the value of giving older people a living thing to care for. When we came to meet the community of the respite centre in Dublin, the staff had persuaded everybody there that they had a role as volunteer carers. Therefore, everyone was part of an active caring community with no passive recipients. A life with meaning can continue following a diagnosis of dementia, and architecture should support this.

Methodology

1. Dialogues

The value of consultation and collaboration in dementia care design is critical. We travelled in the UK and Ireland to carry out conversations with a wide range of thinkers and practitioners across disciplines – from health policy to neuropsychology – and with people affected by dementia directly. Our Dialogues were recorded and published as podcasts on our website, shared on open access. These recordings are accompanied by abstracts, written by Eimear Arthur, which contextualise the content of our discussions for non-specialised audiences.



27

27 The list of podcasts uploaded on www.losingmyself.ie.

2. Stories

A collection of real-life accounts by friends and relatives of people living with Alzheimer’s disease gave us a more intimate lens to ordinary personal stories. This ongoing collection is presented as a series of short texts on the Losing Myself website. We hope that it provides an engaging description of the uniqueness that characterises the emotional lives of individuals and families who are affected by the condition.



28

28 An extract from our collection of stories uploaded on www.losingmyself.ie.

3. Drawing

A dedicated drawing room with relevant books on our research and visual references facilitated the design process. Four bespoke glass-topped drawing boards were made, each one holding a video camera below it in a fixed position. This is where we invited other architects to draw with us (29–30). We asked them to join us in a process of drawing that imagines the potential experiences of people living and working in The Orchard Centre while reflecting on personal biography and encounters of similar buildings (31). We offered a single recommendation: to draw freely by hand, as much as possible in a continuous line. The cameras underneath the glass tops would record these lines as they would flow on tracing paper.

In our project, the line stood for the occupant's threads of consciousness, their physical and mental movement in the building rather than what they saw pictorially. Each of the 16 drafters would take a trace, mentally locate themselves in a particular part of the building and draw for a maximum of 29 minutes (until the video camera would automatically stop recording). James Daykin recalls:

By the time I entered the room, other drawers had made many tests and finished, recorded drawings were in production: the methodology was being refined. Yet there were still many questions and a kind of energetic tension in imagining the outcome. This manifested itself in the room as a kind of organised uncertainty: we know the process, but not fully where we'll arrive. These conditions were perhaps just part of how we might try to understand [a person with dementia's] condition. The not-knowing and the unlearning of established process. With a carpet of used tracing paper lining the floor, shoeless I walked the room and explored the work (Daykin 2016).

29 The drawing room with four bespokely made drawing desks in the foreground. Four small video cameras are set within the lower part of the wooden frames, placed at the same angle as their corresponding glass tops.

30 The drawing room with four drafters drawing while the cameras below film the process. Relevant research images and in-progress drawings and scores gradually filled the walls of our working environment.

31 Michiko Sumi drawing a bedroom in the company of family photographs.

32 Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Niall McLaughlin, Michiko Sumi and Simon Tonks drawing together a gathering in the breakfast room.

33 View of the collaborative drawing process. Hands and lines move across the page as protagonists, enacting bodies and minds in the breakfast room.

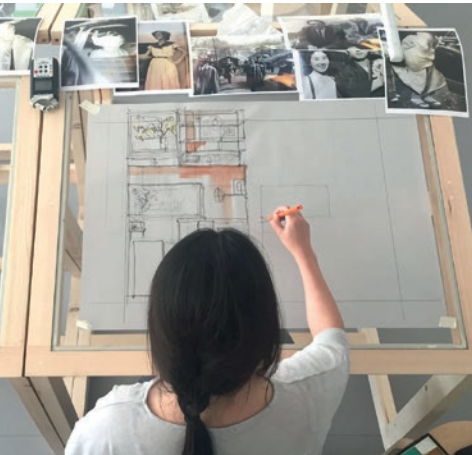
34 Social drawing of the breakfast room, completed and scanned. Drawing by Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Niall McLaughlin, Michiko Sumi and Simon Tonks.



29



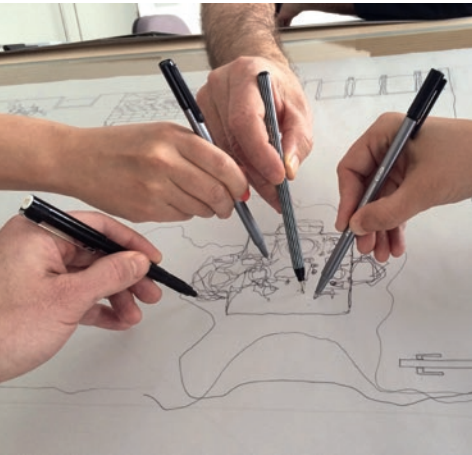
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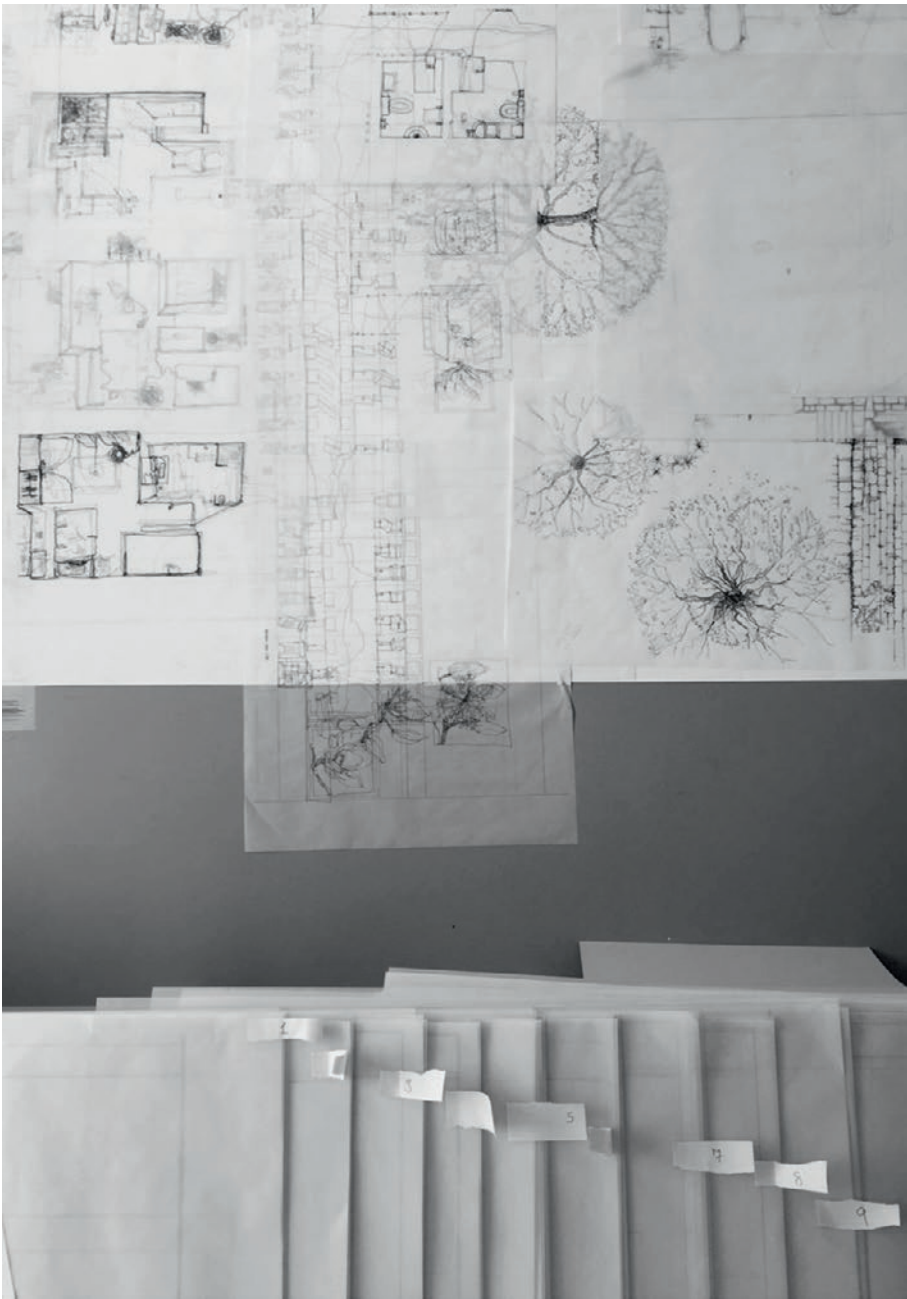
35

We drew in fragments to manifest egocentric circumstance and the inherent uncertainty in a person's ability to project or remember fully and consistently the experience of the total building at once. Unlike the architect, who is trained to abstract away from subjective experience in order to construct relatively unified and whole architectural representations, we knew that our occupants could not use allocentric processing to the same extent to hold the totality of the building in their minds. This led us to create fluid ways of drawing that used a mixture of allocentric and egocentric processes. To describe the multiple and overlapping experiences of common rooms in The Orchard Centre, we decided to also draw collaboratively: up to five drafters would draw on the same sheet simultaneously to perform and represent through their flowing lines moving bodies and thinking minds dancing, eating or gardening together **(32-4)**.

We created architectural scores that worked as scripts to determine the temporal and spatial interrelations between individual and social drawings **(24-5, 40-1)**. Through assembling, overlapping and sequencing films of drawings, we wanted to create the sense of the building as being a lived experience.

35 Supper with the architects we invited to draw with us.

36 Clear sheets of tracing paper ready for drawing, each one with pre-marked place and time to indicate where and when the drafters would imagine to be when drawing. Already drawn sheets are arranged on the floor.

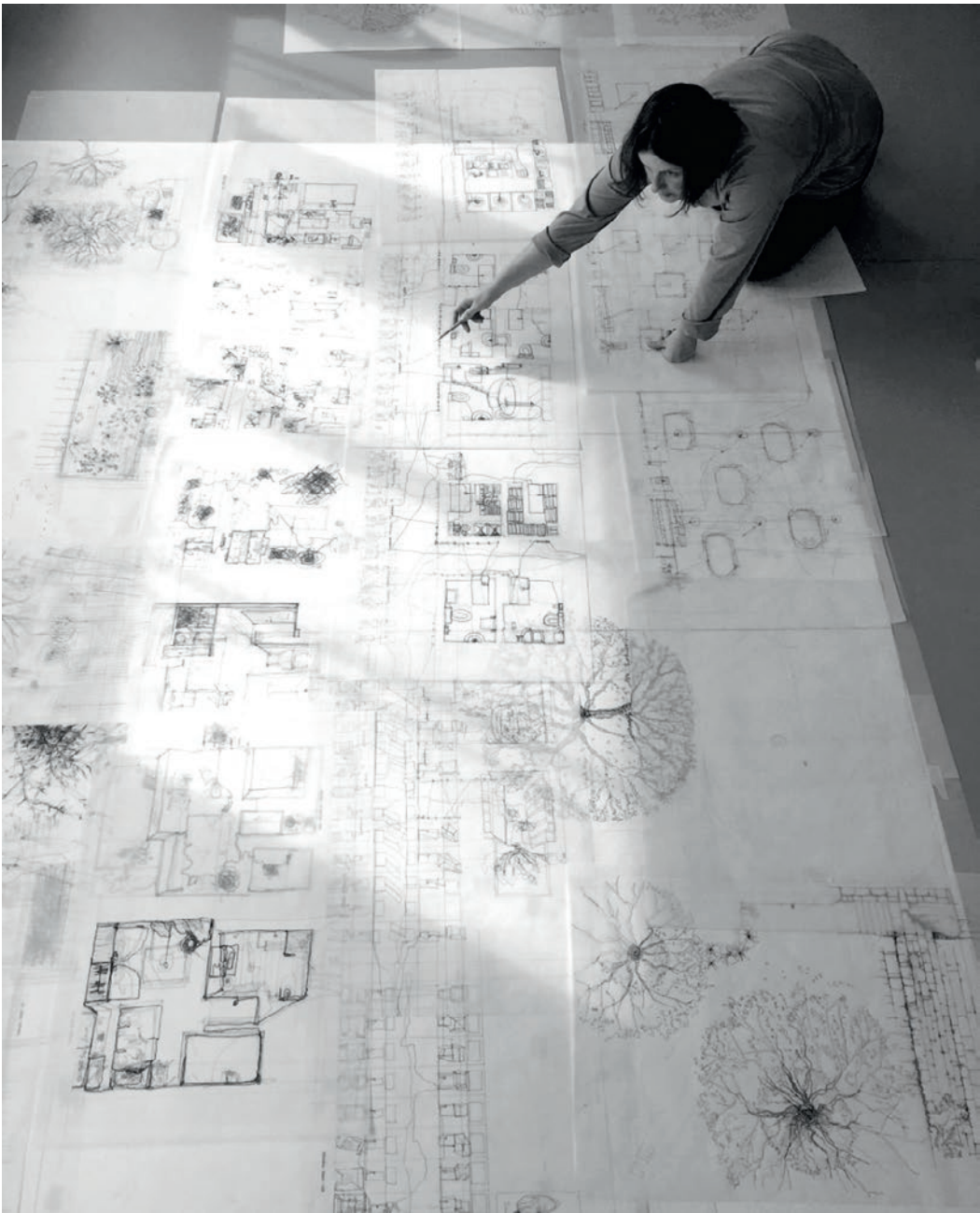


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37 Lee Halligan drawing trees on the floor of the drawing room.



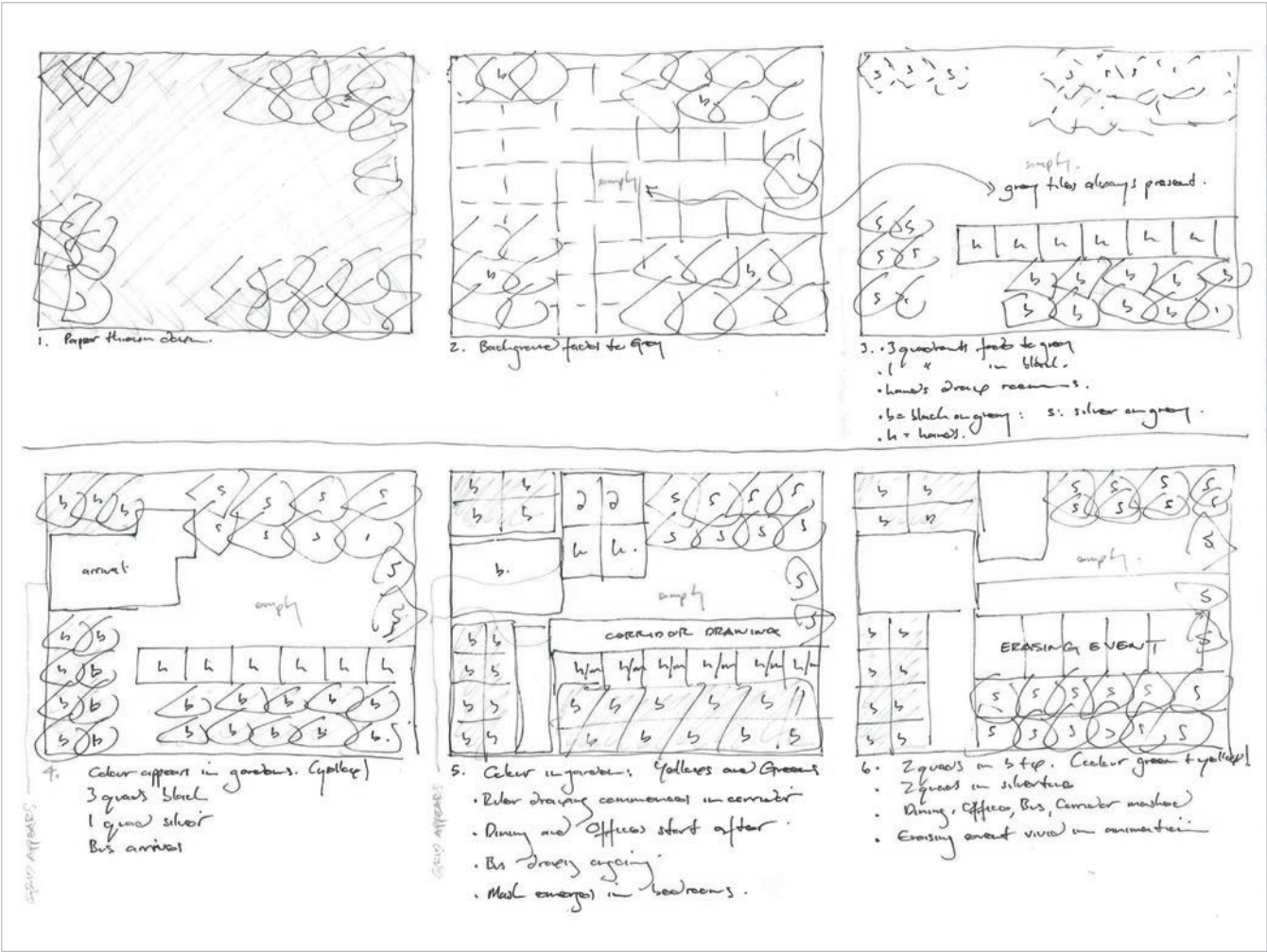
38

38 View of several finished drawings laid on the floor.



39

39 Social drawings of the cooking area and flower beds overlapping with individual drawings of trees and bedrooms. The 'milky' translucent quality of the trace was maintained in the digital projection of the assembled drawing.



40

40 A storyboard for composing the filmic sequence of redrawing the entire building based on daily and seasonal cycles. Drawing by Níall McLaughlin.



41

41 Exploring the temporal and spatial relations of different drawing processes on printed screenshots.



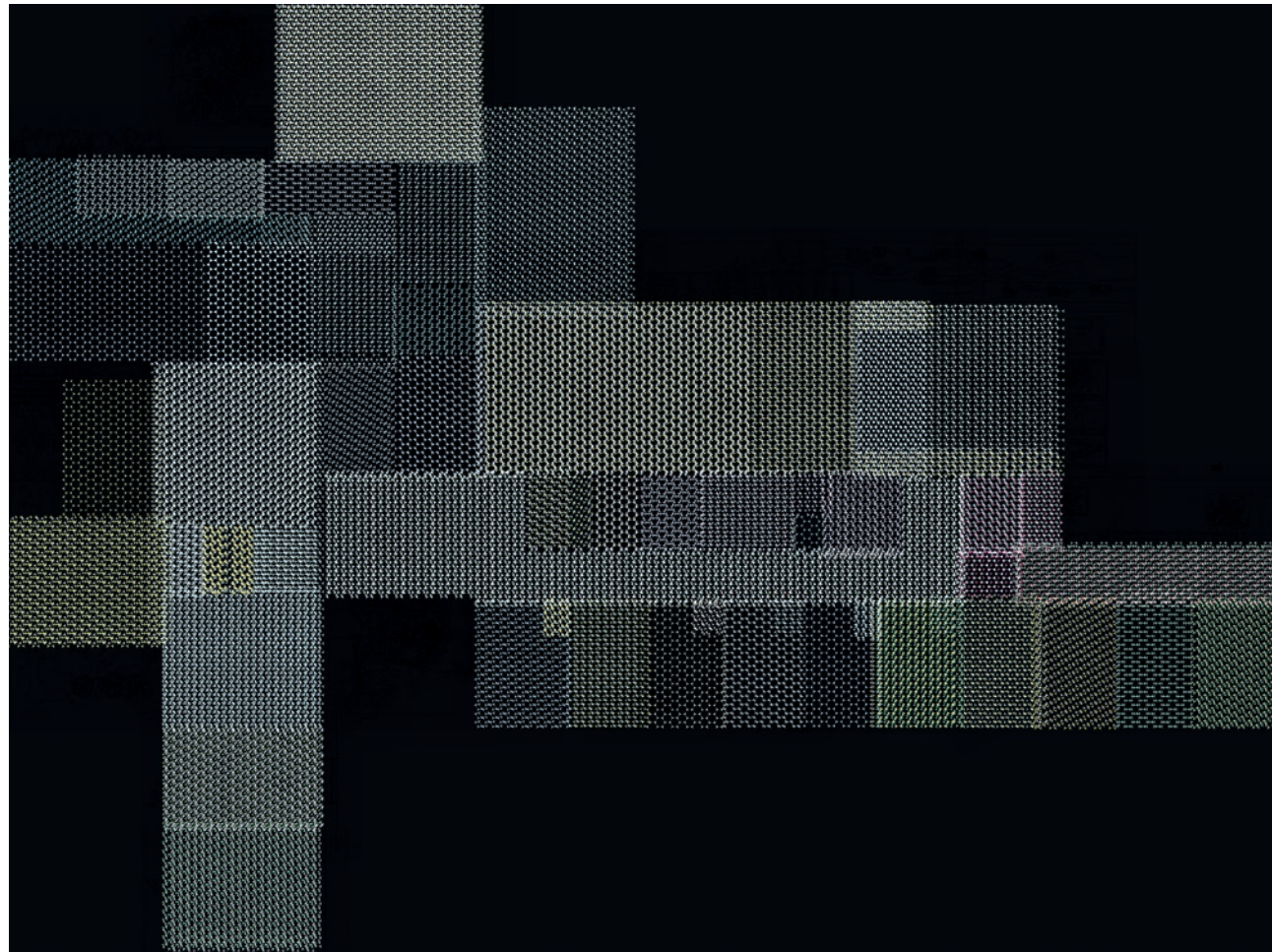
42

42 Digital drawing in progress. The new drawing composition involved the interconnection of hundreds of individually produced scanned and filmed hand drawings.



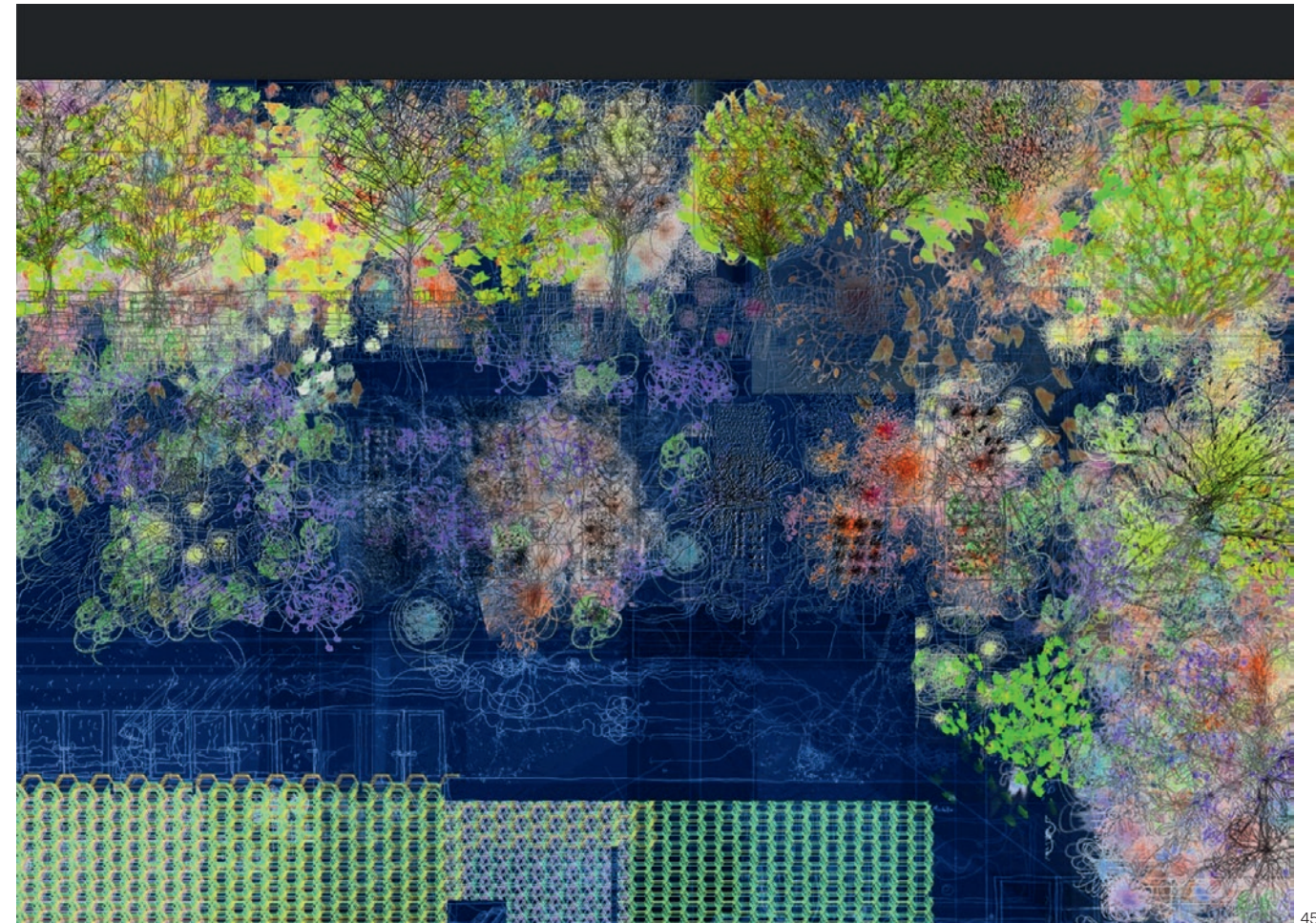
43

43 Test for layering multiple drawings digitally while maintaining their definition as individual sheets.



44

44 To indicate the activation of neurons in the brain when occupants would enter different rooms of the building (see pp. 18–9), digital mats of colourful hexagonal grid cells were introduced in the drawing.



45

45 Digital drawing in progress, showing a detail of the blossoming gardens at night.

4. Collaboration

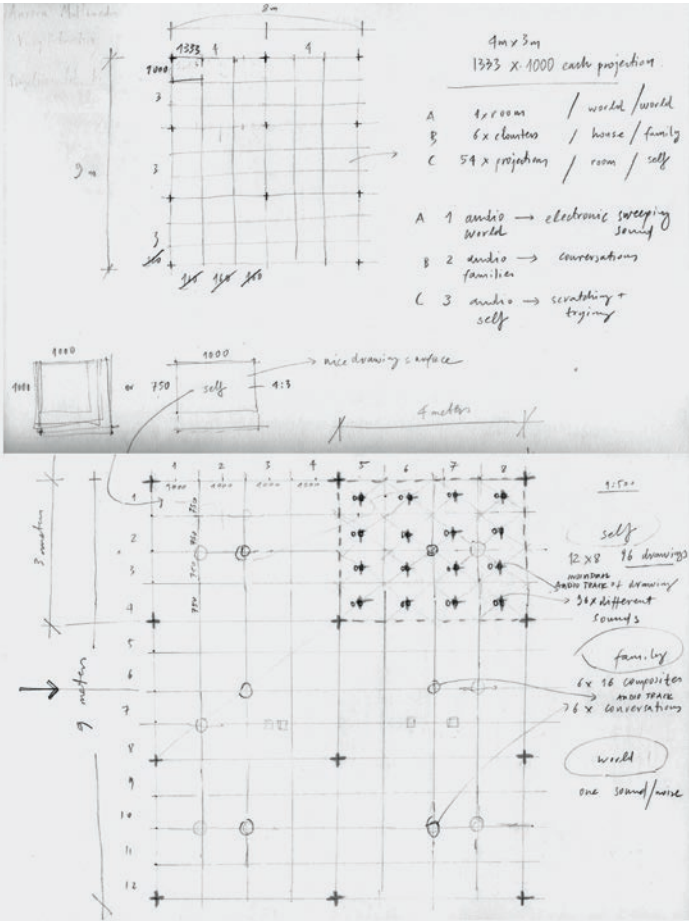
The project is essentially a design and research collaboration between two architects who further invited 14 other architects to draw with them while working closely with a larger team of architecture practitioners, graphic designers, specialist installation artists and a composer.

While each participant had creative autonomy in their own individual task, Manolopoulou and McLaughlin saw the role of the architect in this project as one of determining and making visible the interdependent relationships between outputs. This led them to create innovative architectural scripts (46-7) for the purpose of describing the performative and pluralistic nature of inhabiting buildings. They defined the sequencing of drawings, films and sonic compositions, and specified their spatial distribution and interaction in an assemblage.

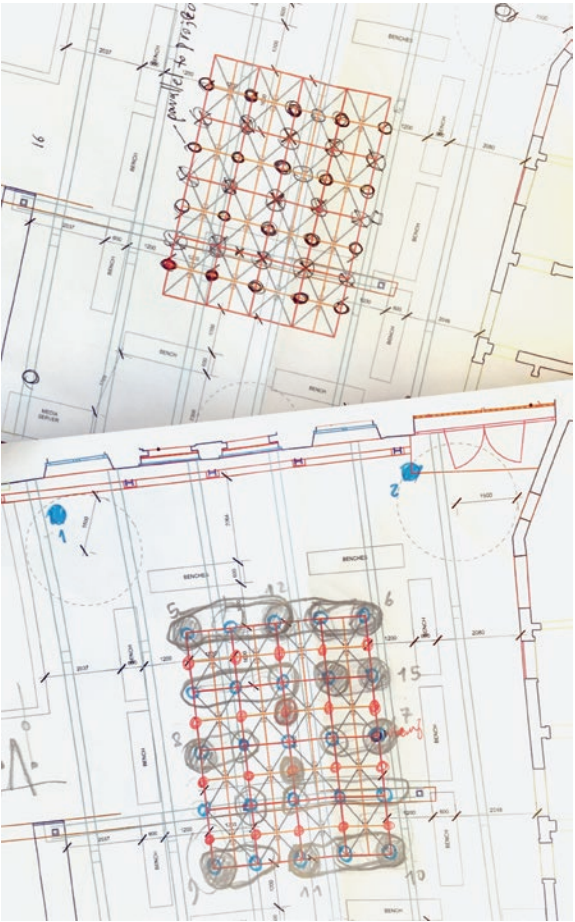
46 Sketches defining relations between the physical, visual and audial elements of the installation. Drawing by Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

47 Draft scores for the distribution of sound amongst the 64 speakers, developed in collaboration with composer Kevin Pollard.

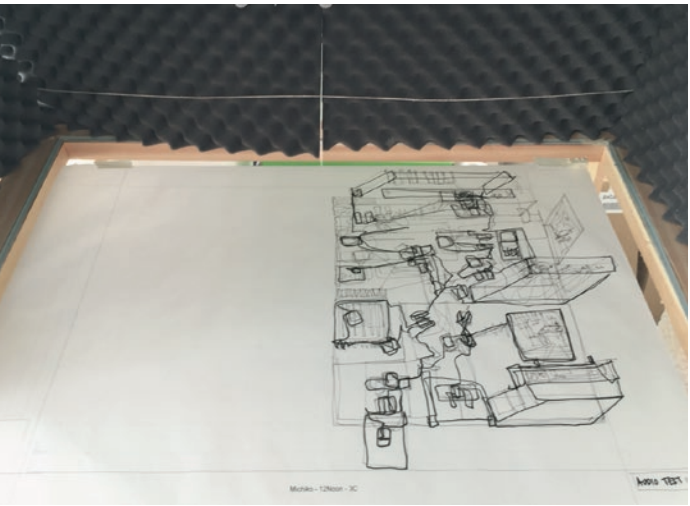
48 One of the drawing desks prepared for recording sounds of drawing and erasing.



46



47



48

Ultimately, their drawing and sound installation in Venice contained elements of neurobiological research alongside content that was specific to the Alzheimer's Centre in Dublin. The Irish Pavilion incorporated 16 synchronized projectors, held by specifically designed quadpods, projecting a composite animated drawing spreading across a floor area of 6.2 × 4.6 m. The projection was a performative redrawing of the plan of The Orchard Centre, containing multiple stories of human occupation: all nested in the same building, all forming together a new and pluralistic representation of the building.

Activities occurring in a day and night cycle were combined with an annual seasonal cycle, and both were collapsed into a short timeframe of 16 minutes. A soundscape of 64 speakers, installed as a matrix on three different heights above the projection (62–4), played interior, regional and global sounds reflecting our research on the local, geographical and cultural context of the building.

The result was an immersive multimedia installation that sets the architect's intentions for the building in the context of its inhabited reality, revealing vivid and empathetic representations of the potential wanderings of its users, internalised and reimagined by 16 architects. It demonstrated an original method of collaborative architectural representation that challenges the conventions of the sole-authored architectural plan attempting to lessen the gap between architect and occupant.



49

49 Every projector was held by individual 'quadpods'. Each 1.92-m-high stand had four legs. View of a prototype stand under construction by Millimetre.

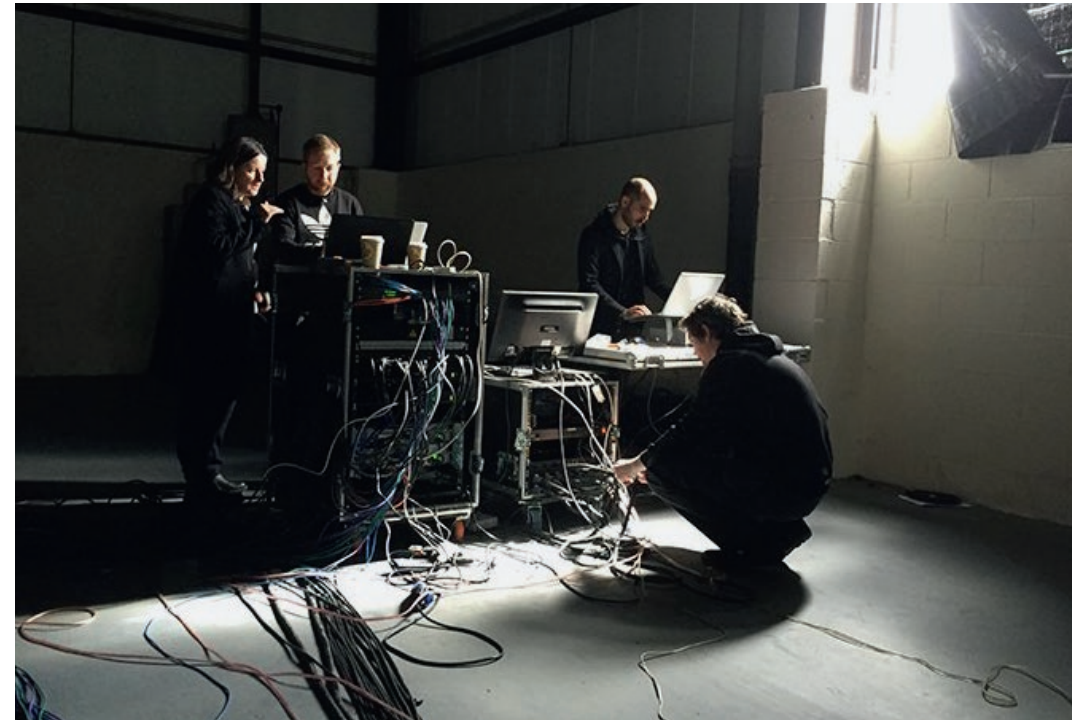


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50 The quadpods built from laser-cut brass.



51



52

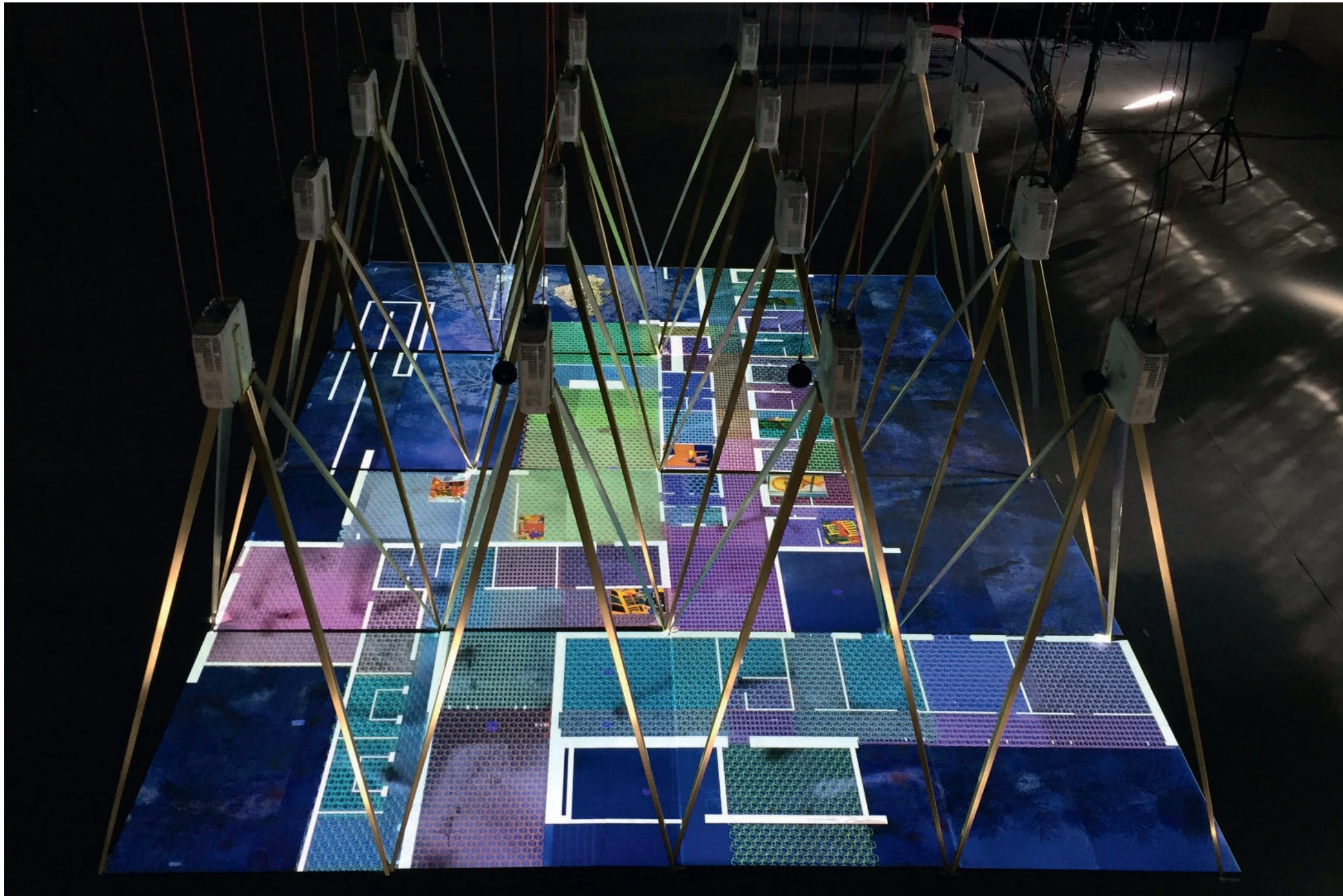


53

51 To test the physical and audiovisual aspects of the work, a full-scale mock-up of the entire installation was necessary. It was prepared by ArtAV in a 12,000 ft² unit in Teesside, where Nick Joyce's team reproduced the wooden roof trusses of the Arsenale with aluminium beams, to a height of 5 m, from which all complicated cabling and speakers were suspended.

52 Working with ArtAV and composer Kevin Pollard while testing the server and audiovisual system of the installation.

53 Inspecting the mock-up installation in full operation.



54 View of the mock-up installation in full operation, April 2016.

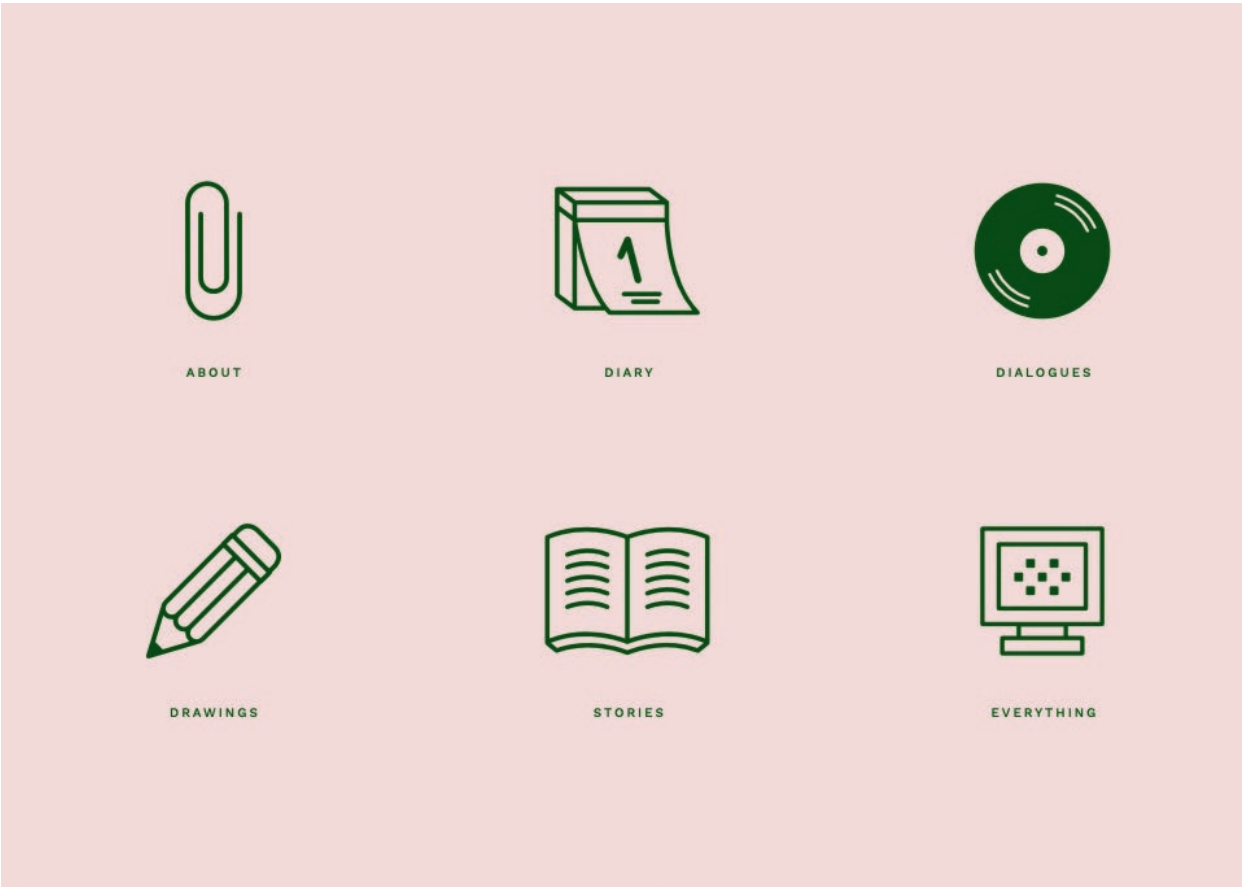
5. Sharing

With the support of graphic designers Objectif, we developed a website to effectively share our design and research findings on a publicly accessible platform. The design of the website involved attending a workshop with a group of people with Posterior Cortical Atrophy (a form of dementia) at University College London with whom we had the opportunity to test a graphic language and a navigation system that would be inherently dementia-friendly.

The website compiles the different forms of our investigation, including a diary of the research process, the podcasts of our conversations, a collection of real-life stories, and a step-by-step guide to our drawing methodology. It shares publicly an informative report on architecture and dementia highlighting a set of ‘lessons’ that we consider significant for design. This lasting open-access record has been essential to ensuring that architects, designers, medical scientists, policy makers and care providers will benefit from a useful resource when designing for the future. Since its launch on 1 April 2016, the website has been accessed more than 15,000 times (as of 24 November 2020, 9,596 users had engaged with 183,739 page views).



55

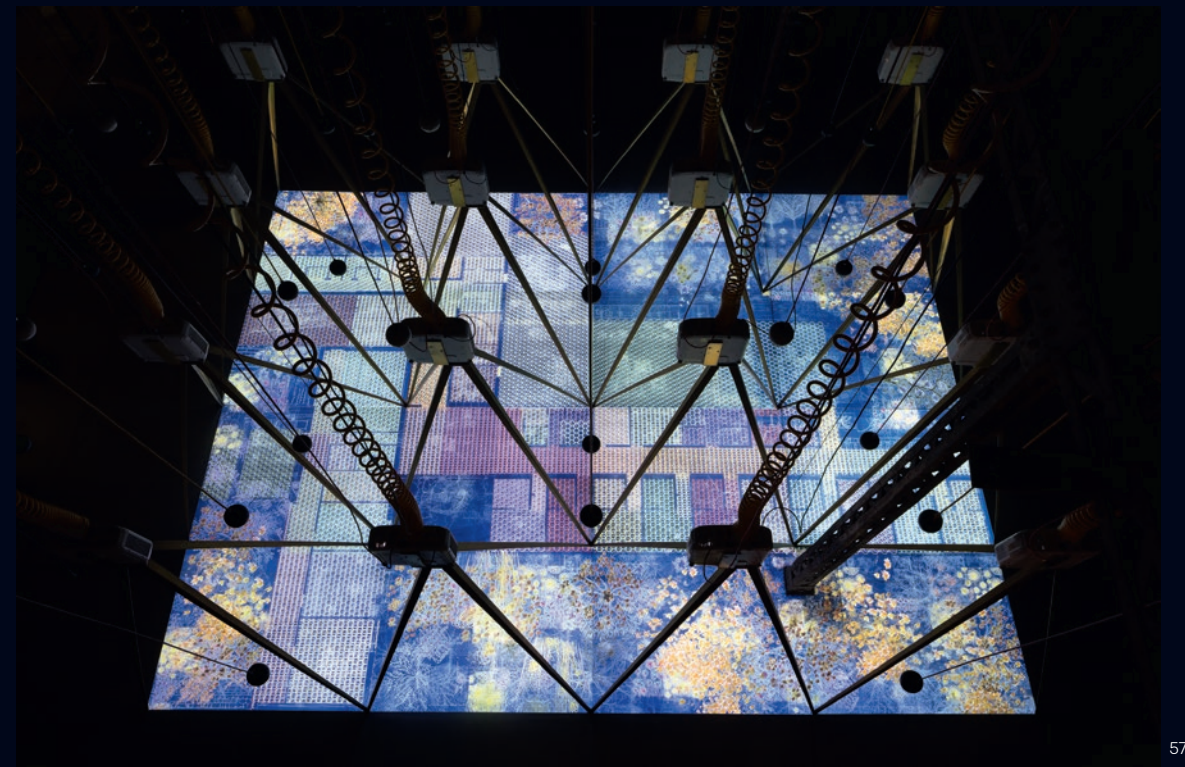
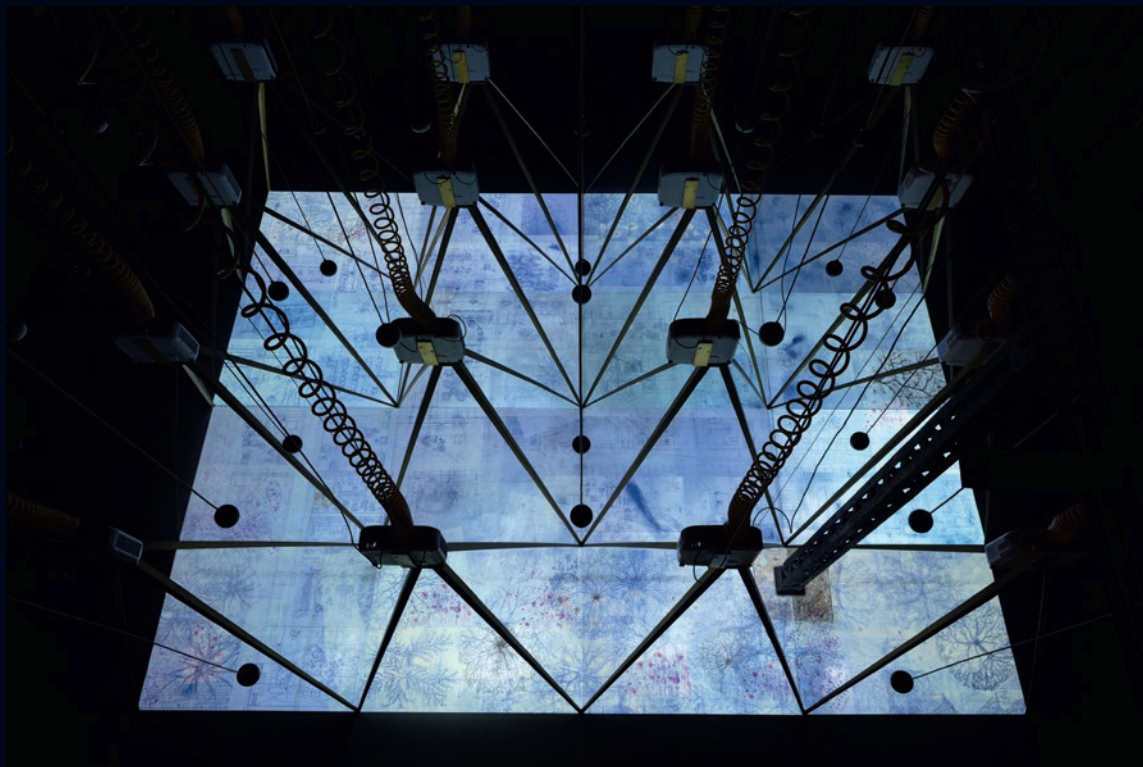
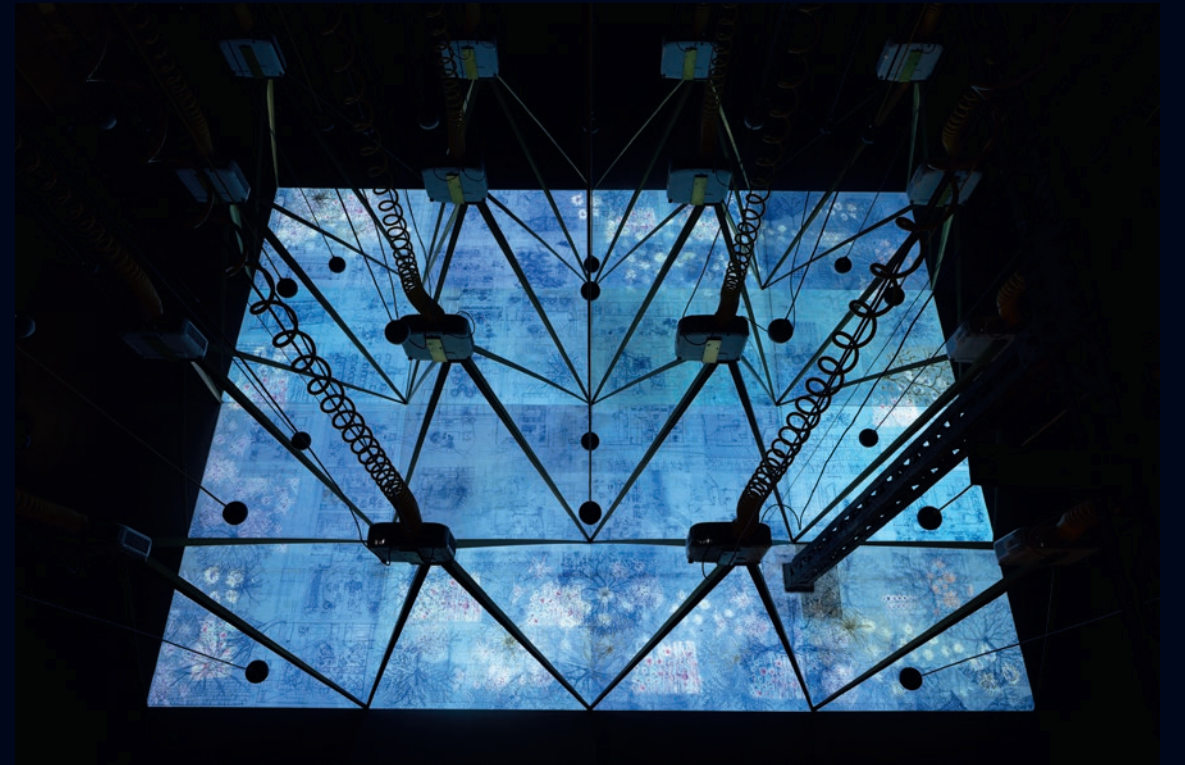
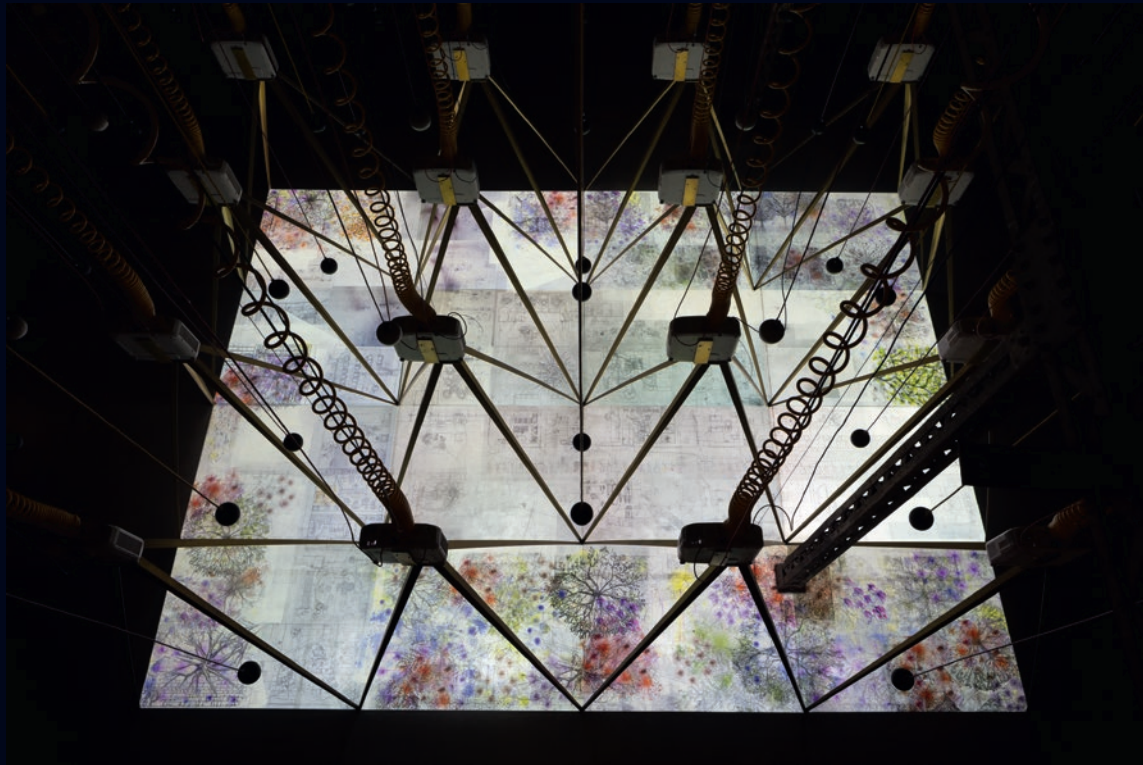


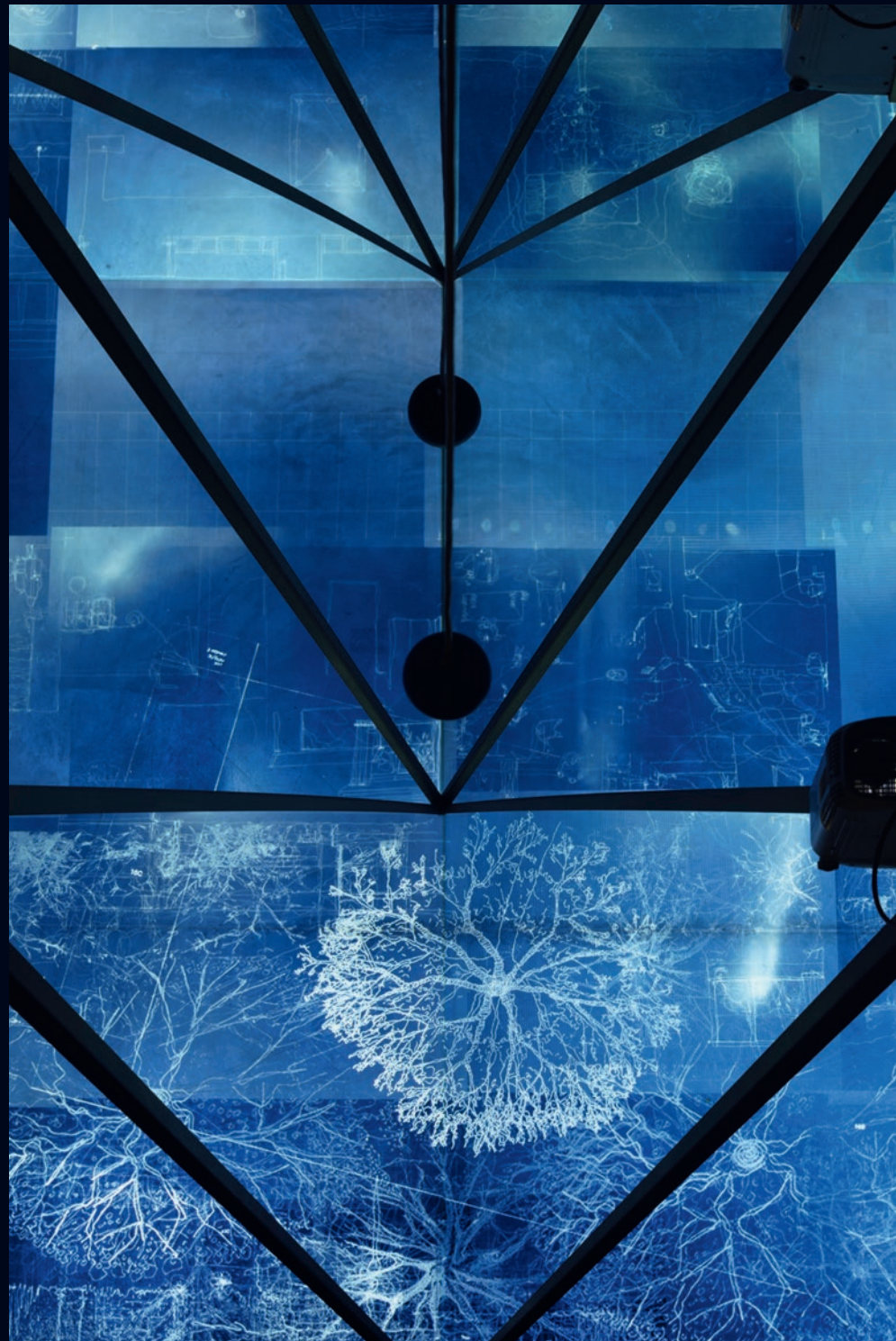
56

55 Exploration of a dementia-friendly graphic language by Objectif. These pictograms were presented at a UCL Dementia Research Centre Support Group event where people living with Posterior Cortical Atrophy and their carers gave us and our graphic designers direct feedback.

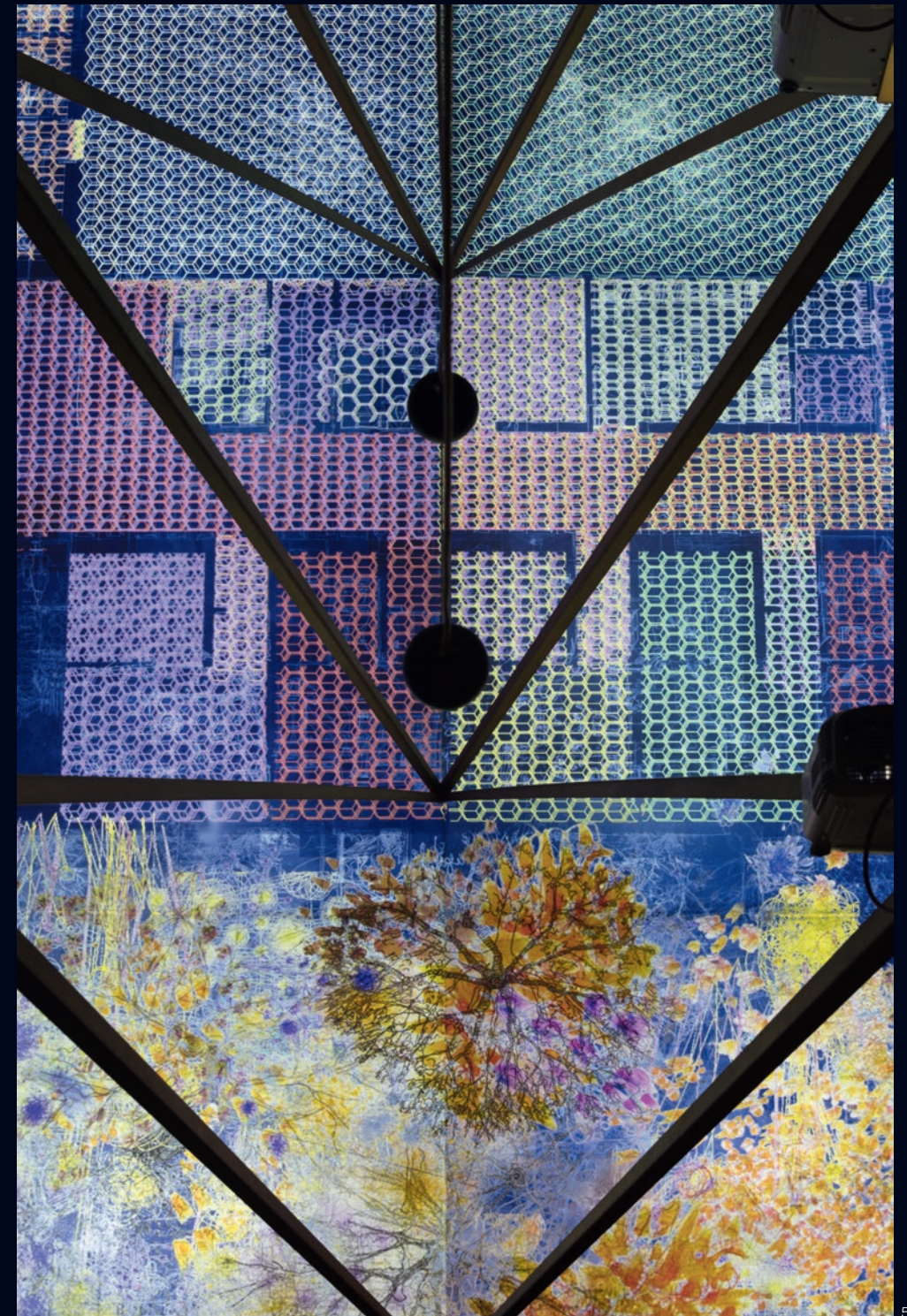
56 Losing Myself website, opening page. Designed by Objectif.

57–9 (overleaf) The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016. Sequential views of the drawing projection in the Arsenale exhibition space.

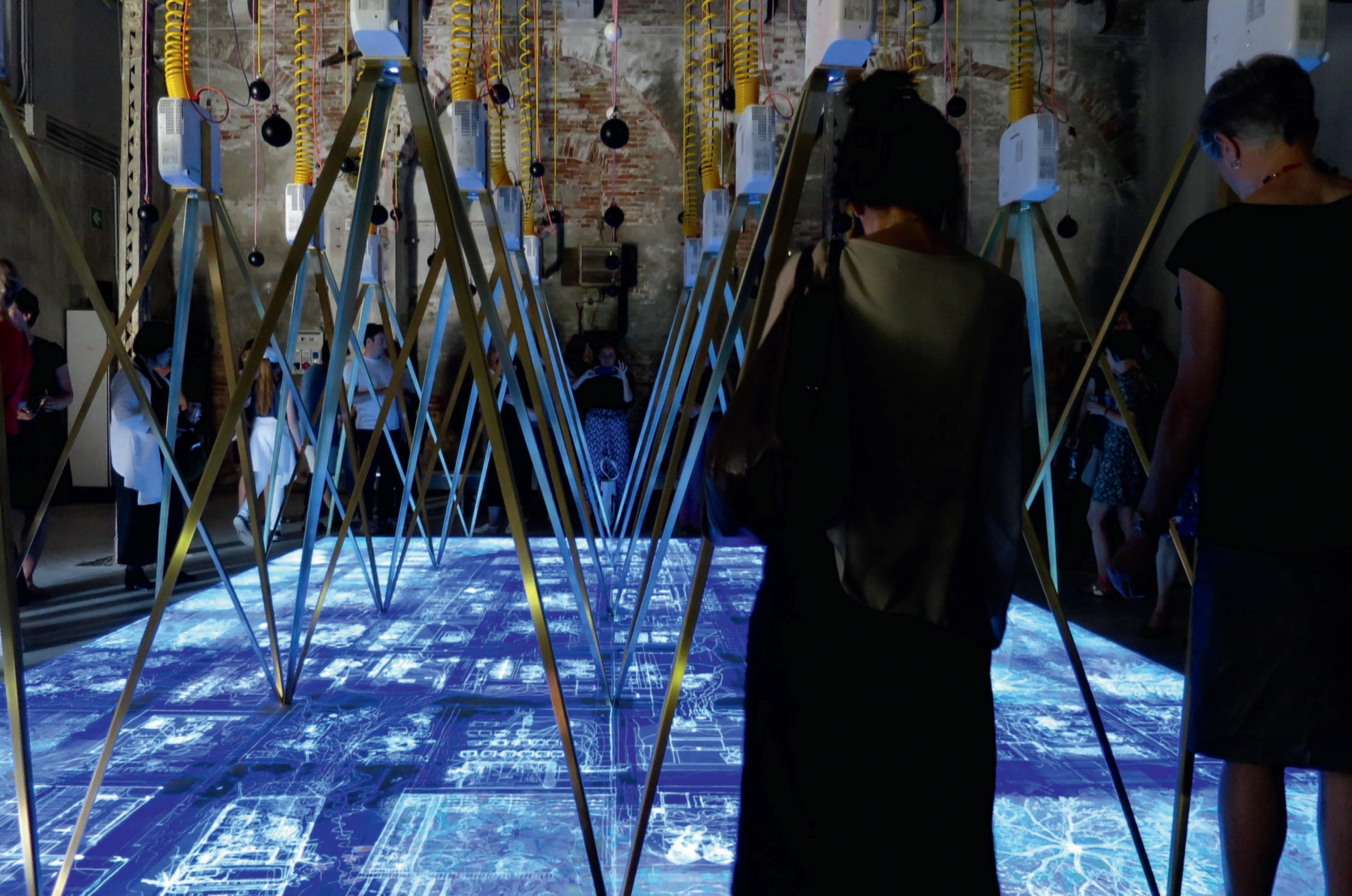




58



59





Dissemination

Installation

The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, May to November 2016

Website and Media

- *Losing Myself*. [Viewed 7 December 2020]. www.losingmyself.ie
- *Losing Myself* (2016). Directed by Yeoryia Manolopoulou and Níall McLaughlin. [Viewed 7 December 2020]. <https://vimeo.com/322313926>

Presentations by Manolopoulou

- Gesture/Pause/Proximity, funded by Arts Council England and the Wellcome Collection, London (2020)
- Architectural Association of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin (2018)
- Cyprus Association of Architects, Nicosia (2018)
- Portsmouth School of Architecture: Research by Design Symposium (2018)
- University of the West of England: Annual Design Research Symposium, Bristol (2018)
- Roma Tre University: Speculative Architectural Materialisms, Rome (2018)
- Wellcome Collection Reading Room: Living with Buildings, London (2018)
- Keynote Speaker: University of Lincoln, Research and Architecture (2017)
- Keynote Speaker: University of Quebec, International Design Week, Montreal (2017)
- The Royal Danish Academy, School of Architecture, Copenhagen (2016)

Presentations by McLaughlin

- Architecture Foundation, 100 Day Studio: Drawing Together, London (2020)
- Walmer Yard, London (2019)
- Royal Academy, London (2018)
- Keynote Speaker: AJ100, London (2018)
- Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (2018)
- Round Table with Kate Jeffery, UCL, London (2018)
- AIA Colorado Practice and Design Conference, Denver (2017)
- Munich University of Applied Sciences (2017)
- Bank University Open Lecture, London (2017)
- Société Française des Architectes, Paris (2017)
- Keynote Speaker: Ozetecture, Diversity and Community Conference, Melbourne (2017)
- Winner’s Presentation, Charles Jencks Award Ceremony, RIBA, London (2016)
- University of Reading (2016)
- World Architecture Festival: Designing for the Consequences of Ageing, Singapore (2015)
- RIAI Annual Conference: Strength, Utility, Grace, Dublin (2015)
- RIBA Symposium: Designing for Age, London (2014)
- House of Lords: Housing & Care for Older People, London (2014)
- Bournemouth University Dementia Institute (2014)

Joined Lectures

- Wellcome Collection, London (2017)
- UCL Bartlett Research Exchange: Health, Wellbeing and the Built Environment, London (2017)
- UCL Dementia Research Centre Support Group: Invited talk and workshop, London (2016)

Other Contributions

- Manolopoulou and McLaughlin have discussed this research in articles and chapters for publishers like De Gruyter, *Architectural Design* and the RIBA (please see pp. 94–166);
- McLaughlin’s practice has dedicated more than a decade exploring this subject and creating buildings and research guides related to dementia. The research described in this folio has partly informed the practice’s intergenerational approach for Univ North, a new University College Oxford project that represents the largest addition to the College in over three centuries, and is an inclusive environment to be shared across the full age spectrum (amongst nursery children, students, elderly residents and people with dementia);
- Drawings from *Losing Myself* were featured in McLaughlin’s participation in the exhibition, symposium and publication *Opening Lines: Sketchbooks of Ten Modern Architects*, associated with Drawing Matter’s collection, curated by Tina di Carlo, Olivia Horsfall Turner and Niall Hobhouse, and organised by the Tchoban Foundation, Museum for Architectural Drawing, Berlin (2018);
- The authors contributed to the report ‘Bartlett Research Exchange: Health and Wellbeing in the Built Environment’, UCL, London (2017);
- Manolopoulou was a named collaborator in the successful bid for the £1 million funded residency ‘Created out of Mind’

at The Hub at Wellcome Collection, a two-year exploration of dementia by a large interdisciplinary team led by PI Sebastian Crutch. After completing our drawings for *Losing Myself*, our bespoke drawing desks were relocated to The Hub for further research through drawing by the ‘Created Out of Mind’ team, London, 2016 to 2018.

60 (before previous)

The installation *Losing Myself* in the Arsenale, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.

61 (previous) Detail of the first ‘falling’ sheets on the floor of the Arsenale as they marked the start and end of the 16-minute cycle of the drawing performance. *Losing Myself*, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.

Project Highlights

Losing Myself was the sole representation of Ireland at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition in 2016. The Irish Pavilion was one of the highlights of the Venice Biennale, which attracted 260,000 visitors in six months. It was globally reviewed in diverse publications like *The Lancet*, *WIRED*, *The Irish Times* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

This is the first architecture project to examine dementia by bringing together research views from neuroscience, anthropology, health, art and design. It also introduces and explores the neurobiological perspective of allocentric and egocentric spatial referencing in architectural drawing for the first time. The work was shortlisted for the RIBA President’s Awards for Research in the Design & Technical category in 2017.

The authors have created a set of dementia design recommendations, called ‘16 Lessons’, advocating for a holistic approach to creating and sustaining design-friendly buildings and communities for all, available at www.losingmyself.ie

The impact of McLaughlin’s long-term research about architecture and dementia can be gauged by his lectures on the subject to institutions like the House of Lords and the RIBA and by his buildings and masterplans with intergenerational programmes such as his recent project Univ North, the largest modern addition to University College Oxford.

Since 2015, Manolopoulou has extended the research into an exploration of the role of open scores in collaborative architectural design (Montreal 2017, UCL Press 2020) and has contributed to the interdisciplinary handbook *Arts and Dementia: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Mateus-Berr and Gruber 2020).

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62

62 Partial view of the drawing projection photographed from above. Losing Myself, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.

63 The Irish Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.



Appendix



64

64 Detail view of the final installation of cables, speakers, quadpods and projectors in the Arsenale. The black and white

speakers played different categories of sound. Losing Myself, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2016.

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Published Work
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Manolopoulou, Y. (2021). 'Performing the Architectural Plan'. *Arts & Dementia: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

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Yeoryia Manolopoulou

is an architect and design researcher. Her work is based on critical and experimental modes of design from two parallel positions: as Professor of Architecture and Experimental Practice at the Bartlett School of Architecture and as a practicing architect, founder and co-director of the award-winning studio AY Architects. Her projects include buildings, temporary installations, proposals for public spaces, critical artefacts, exhibitions and writings. She authored *Architectures of Chance* (Routledge 2013), founded the online publication series *Bartlett Design Research Folios*, and co-authored and curated the Irish Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Biennale. In 2014 she was nominated for the Emerging Woman Architect of the Year Award.

Abstract

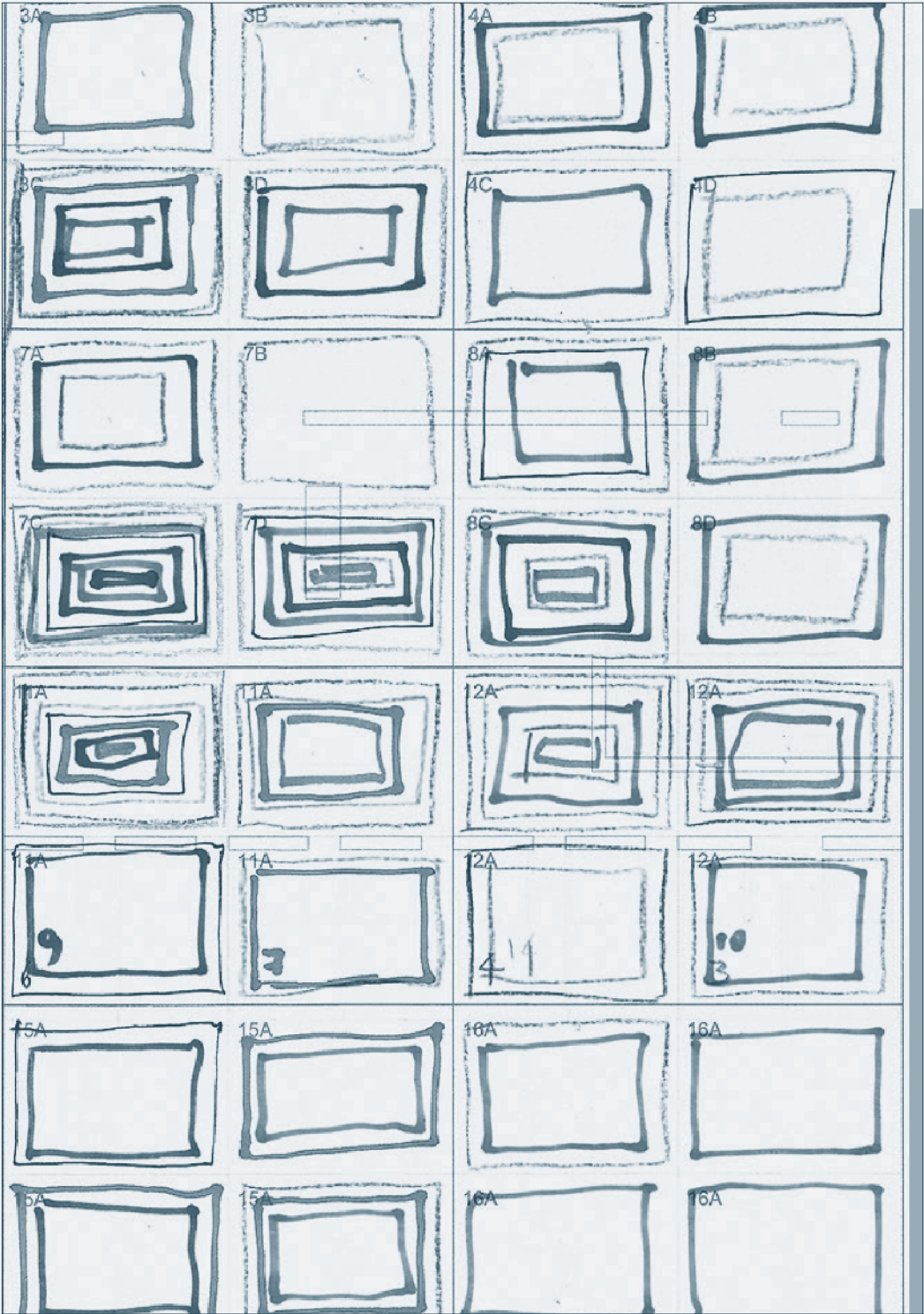
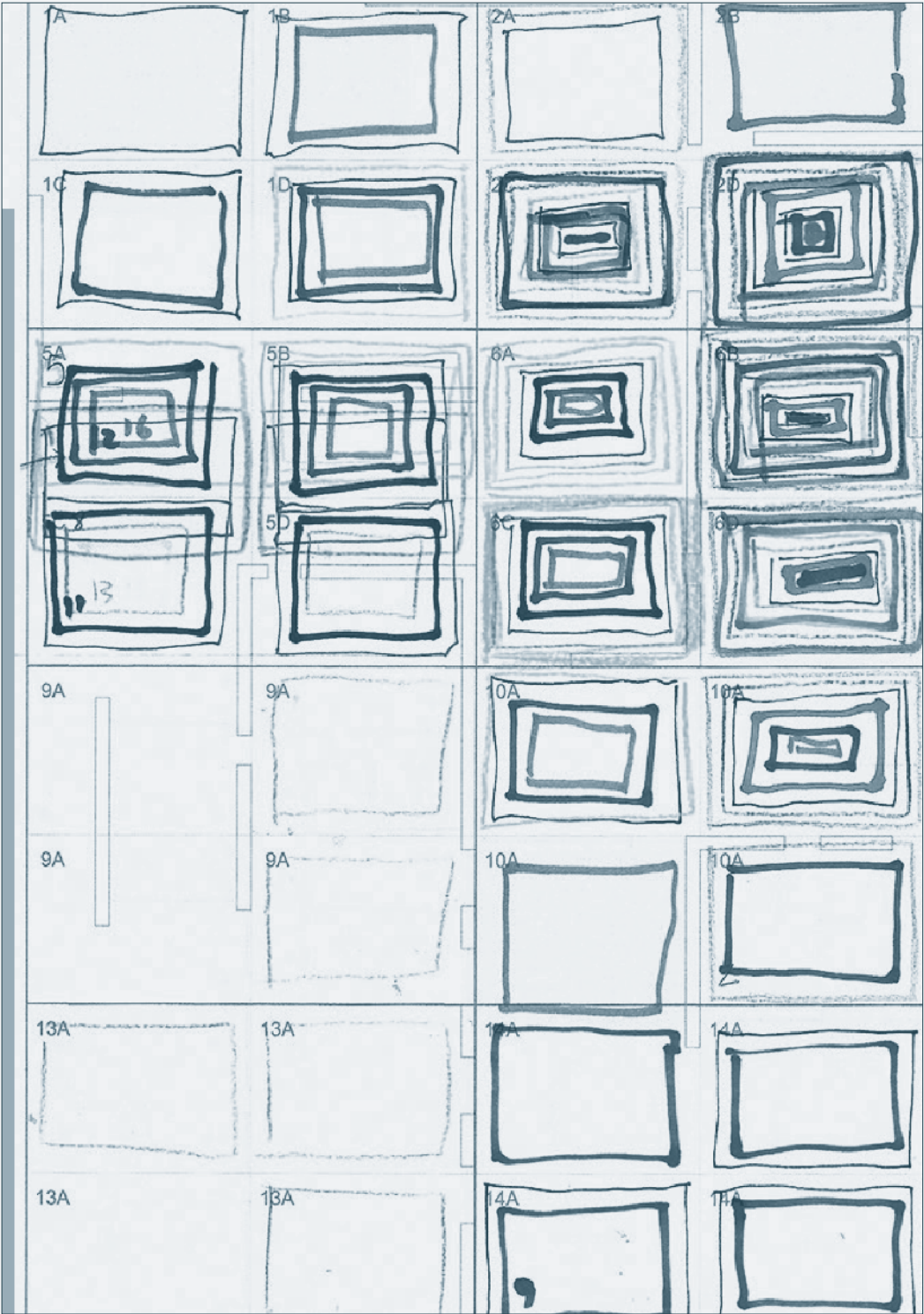
Elaborating on experiments in spatial cognition and representation from the *Losing Myself* project, this chapter highlights the confines of the architectural plan as a drawing medium that privileges an allocentric conception of space, one that is progressively lost to those living with dementia. The chapter describes an alternative, performative mode of drawing that animates the architectural plan and incorporates egocentric representation, a more direct, person-centered conception of space that is retained for longer as we age.

Architects had not considered the egocentric and allocentric functions of spatial reference that occur in the human brain before. Allocentric spatial referencing requires a sophisticated form of mental manipulation whereby the world is understood by assessing and imagining multiple spatial relationships between objects and is dependent on the ability to retain a mental image of the whole. In egocentric spatial referencing, the brain makes simpler connections, however only between the viewer's position and the observed objects. Studies of aging show a greater preservation of egocentric functions in the brain and a marked decline in the more complex allocentric processes, alongside a weakening of the ability to switch between the two. A loss of allocentric abilities is common to all forms of Alzheimer's disease.

In *Losing Myself*, a collaborative investigation of dementia and architecture, Yeoryia Manolopoulou and Níall McLaughlin developed a kind of performance drawing that synthesizes both allocentric and egocentric representation. This novel drawing method fosters a deeper understanding of how architecture is experienced, and how we might approach its design. 'Performing' the architectural plan simultaneously creates temporal and empathetic connections between the space of building as experienced in time by different occupants and the space of drawing produced by multiple authors.

Keywords

Performance Drawing, Allocentric and Egocentric Representation, Architecture, Spatial Cognition



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The Passage of Time

Atul Gawande's seminal book, *Being Mortal*, on the modern experience of aging and dying, begins with the words of the warrior Karna in *Mahābhārata*: 'I see it now – this world is swiftly passing' (Gawande 2014). 'This evocative phrase powerfully describes the passage of time and the fleeting nature of experience. How can our practices of spatial representation capture this fluid condition to better inform the ways in which we approach architectural design? How can we begin to find a mode of drawing that incorporates transience, subjectivity and the complex neurobiological and emotional processes that differ in each individual? Central to this challenge is to question the capacity of drawing to describe, or not, the overlapping and temporal shifts of spatial perception and interaction.

This chapter returns to the research of *Losing Myself*, a project I co-developed with Níall McLaughlin between 2015 and 2016, exploring dementia, spatial cognition, drawing and architecture. Our work formed the Irish Pavilion for the 15th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale and an associated website that documented related research processes and findings. *Losing Myself* examined how the ability to situate oneself in and navigate through space – two human capacities that are central to the experience of architecture – become significantly impaired by Alzheimer's. The project took the Orchard Centre, a respite facility completed in 2009 by Níall McLaughlin Architects for the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, as a starting point. The Orchard Centre was to be a test case for future developments, both in its successes and its failures. Conceived as a garden building, it was designed to create a sense of ease, freedom and wonder amongst the occupants and to minimize the potential for confusion. We revisited the building seven years after it was built to understand how it was used and might have changed through occupation. In parallel, we spoke with people with personal experiences of dementia as well as experts in medicine, health policy, neuroscience,

anthropology and psychology. Based on our observations and interdisciplinary research, our intention was to understand and redraw the Orchard Centre from the diverse perspectives of the individuals who experience the building, rather than from the single viewpoint of the architect who designed it.

Egocentric and Allocentric Representation

There are many ways of understanding spatial cognition, but one useful neurobiological concept, particularly for the purposes of discussing aging and dementia, is the distinction between egocentric and allocentric representation (Ekstrom et al. 2014). The first suggests a way of perceiving the world that is centered on the perspective of the individual. My body, in its exact position, is the point from which I construct a spatial understanding of the world in front of me. Using visual landmarks, I navigate a place by moving from one point to the next. This self-to-object method of comprehending and representing our surroundings develops first in children and is a facility that we retain into old age. Allocentric representation, on the other hand, relies on a more complex set of cognitive processes that enable the viewer to recognize relational coordinates between objects. Within an allocentric frame of reference, the viewer comprehends the world synthetically by assessing object-to-object relationships without having to physically shift their body to different locations. A part of a building would be understood with respect to its other parts.

These two modes of spatial referencing interact in the human mind to situate the body in space. Crucially, these mechanisms of spatial cognition are severely compromised by Alzheimer's disease, which attacks the physical tissue of the brain, progressively degrading its synaptic connections and eroding the individual's ability to plan, navigate and remember. As neuropsychologist Sebastian Crutch explains, a loss of allocentric understanding is common to all forms of Alzheimer's disease. This is because dementia attacks the matrix of

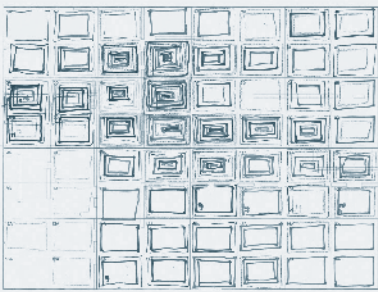


Figure 1. The score for redrawing the plan according to its patterns of inhabitation. Different frame sequences represent representations of the experiences of different inhabitants as they would move from room to room. Overlapping frames indicate areas of social interaction.
© Yevryia Manolopoulou

cell connections in the brain, often eroding the learned, more manifold cognitive processes first. The allocentric model of representation is more complex than the egocentric, which is why it tends to deteriorate first (Crutch 2016).

The problem for architects, then, is that our primary methods of conceiving and representing space through the architectural plan are mainly allocentric: they are based on a totalizing, map-like view, disconnected from the circumstantial self-dependent ways in which we live in the world. As architects, we develop our skills through drawing plans, carefully considering object-to-object relationships between rooms, walls and other physical features. If our occupant's dementia is causing their allocentric abilities to fade, a further degree of separation between representation and experience, and between design and occupation, is introduced.

In architecture, we tend to draw and imagine buildings from privileged or non-existing viewpoints; we often represent versions of spaces that no inhabitant can ever experience. We use perspective projection to compose viewer-centered images and parallel projection to construct more object-centered representations. A perspective drawing implies a fixed spectator and projects objects onto the picture plane in such a way that

they appear to have spatial depth. This representation achieves a pictorial realism that we grasp intuitively. Parallel projection, on the other hand, lacks the correspondence between spectator and scene. In an axonometric drawing, for instance, objects appear 'floating' in an endless abstract space that has no direction or depth. Choosing one or the other way of drawing signals whether we are interested in a self-to-object pictorial conception of space that emphasizes subjectivity or an object-to-object notion of space that builds spatial interconnections. The first alludes to an egocentric representation; the second assumes an ambiguity about the viewer's position and thus an allocentric representation. Each type of drawing is useful in its own way, but the distinction made between the two falls short of acknowledging that human spatial cognition tends to involve a combination of the two forms of representation rather than purely the one or the other.

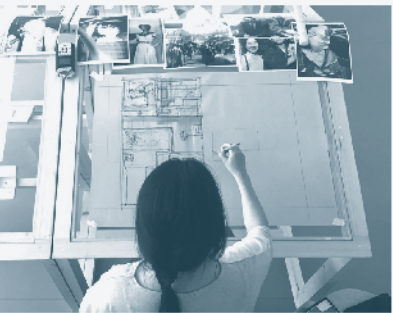
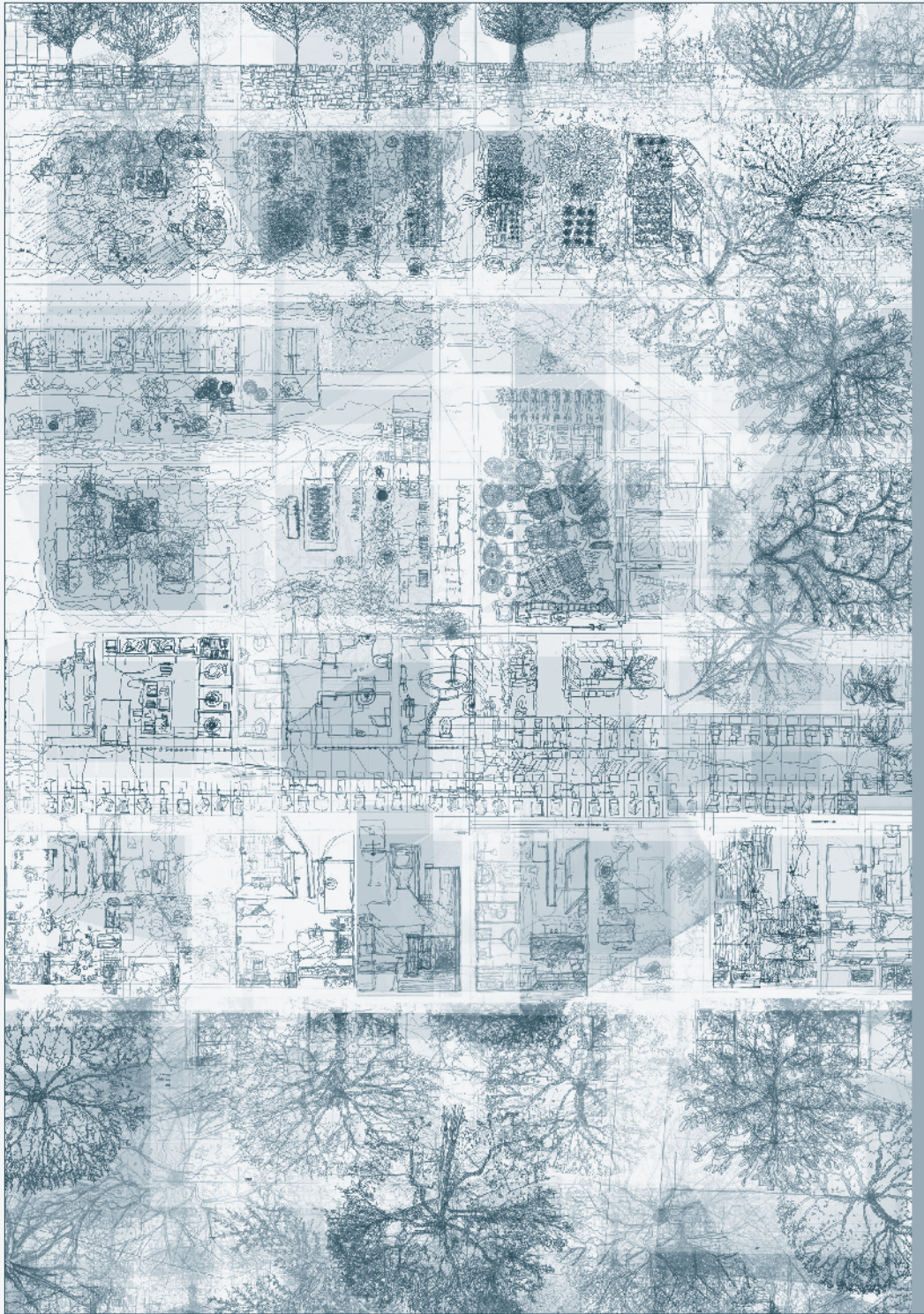
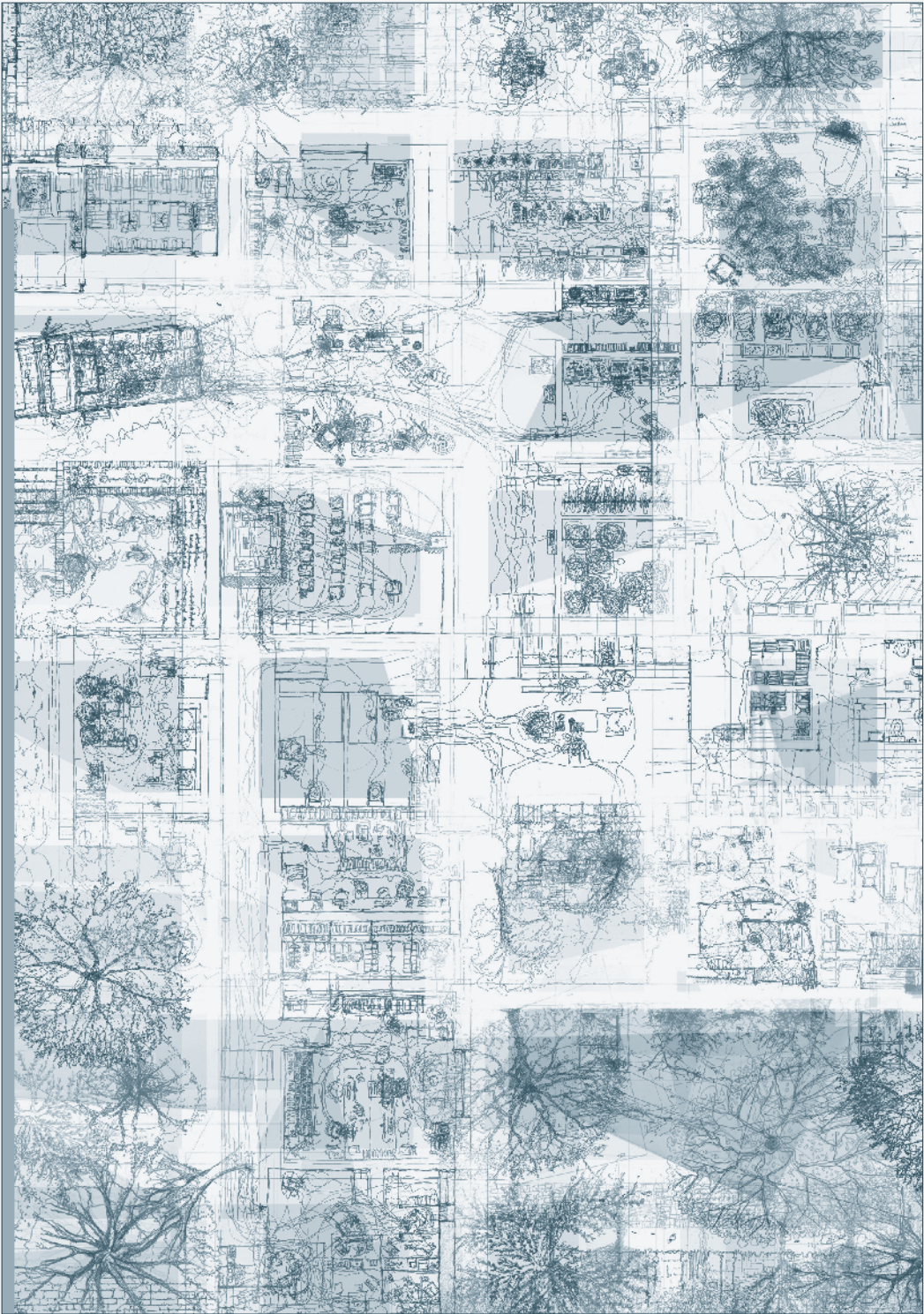


Figure 2. A drafter drawing a bedroom in the company of family photographs. Her drawing action is recorded by a video camera installed below the glass-top desk.
© Níall McLaughlin



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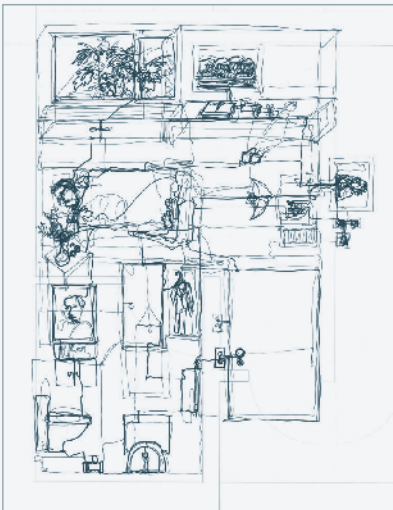


Figure 3. Drawing through a continuous single line while imagining the wanderings of a person's mind, starting from the person lying on the bed and extending out into the world of their room.
© Scan of completed drawing by Michiko Sumi

The Drawing Room

While the plan's allocentric nature shows the building as a complete and stable object, can we challenge this by also incorporating partial and temporal representations with egocentric characteristics? In *Losing Myself*, we experimented with drawing performatively and socially to bridge this gap: to synthesize both allocentric and egocentric representation. We created a dedicated drawing room in which sixteen architects were called to redraw the Orchard Centre open-endedly, reflecting on how the building might be experienced temporally and socially rather than how it looks as a fixed object.

The longest wall of our drawing room was filled with copies from personal photo albums, brought in by the drafters, and prints from our research: drawings and photographs of the Orchard Centre, images of synapses strangely similar to tree branches, garden paintings, and self-portraits



Figure 4. Four drafters drawing together while performing a social situation in the breakfast room.
© Drawing by Yevryia Manolopoulou, Niall McLaughlin, Michiko Sumi and Simon Tunks

of the artist William Utermohlen produced after he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's (Crutch et al. 2001). Four bespoke glass-topped drawing boards were made, holding video cameras below them in a fixed position. Drawings were typically made on tracing paper carefully positioned on the glass with the camera running below to capture the drawing process. Hundreds of tracing sheets with faintly drawn parts of the floor plan were pre-organized in a pile, along with reference coordinates that would determine their location on the overall plan. A drafter would take a trace, mentally locate themselves in a particular part of the building, and draw for a maximum of 29 minutes, almost always in a continuous line, until the camera would automatically stop recording.

James Daykin, one of our drafters, recalls:
By the time I entered the room, other drawers had made many tests and finished, recorded drawings were in production: the methodology was being refined. Yet there were still many questions and a kind of

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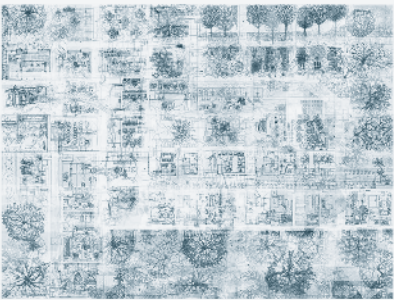


Figure 5. A single still of the new performed plan of the entire building. Hundreds of filmed drawings are stitched together to make an animated composite of allocentric and egocentric line structures.
© Yevryia Manolopoulou and Niall McLaughlin

energetic tension in imagining the outcome. This manifested itself in the room as a kind of organized uncertainty; we know the process, but not fully where we'll arrive. These conditions were perhaps just part of how we might try to understand [a person living with dementia's] condition. The not-knowing and the unlearning of established process. With a carpet of used tracing paper lining the floor, shoeless I walked the room and explored the work (Daykin 2016).

Each drafter would draw while imagining the experiences of an inhabitant of the Orchard Centre. Exactly where and when they would imagine being while drawing was determined by a drawing score that delineated how sixteen occupants would potentially move through the building, daily and seasonally: Morning / Spring 6am–12pm; Afternoon / Summer 12pm–6pm; Evening / Autumn 6pm–12am; and Night / Winter 12am–6am (Manolopoulou and McLaughlin 2016a).

In the score, each drafter (and corresponding inhabitant) is signified with a color frame that shows their sequential locations in the building and, accordingly, the redrawing of its plan. For example, a drafter would draw on a sheet how they would wake up in their bedroom, then on another sheet how they would visit the bathroom

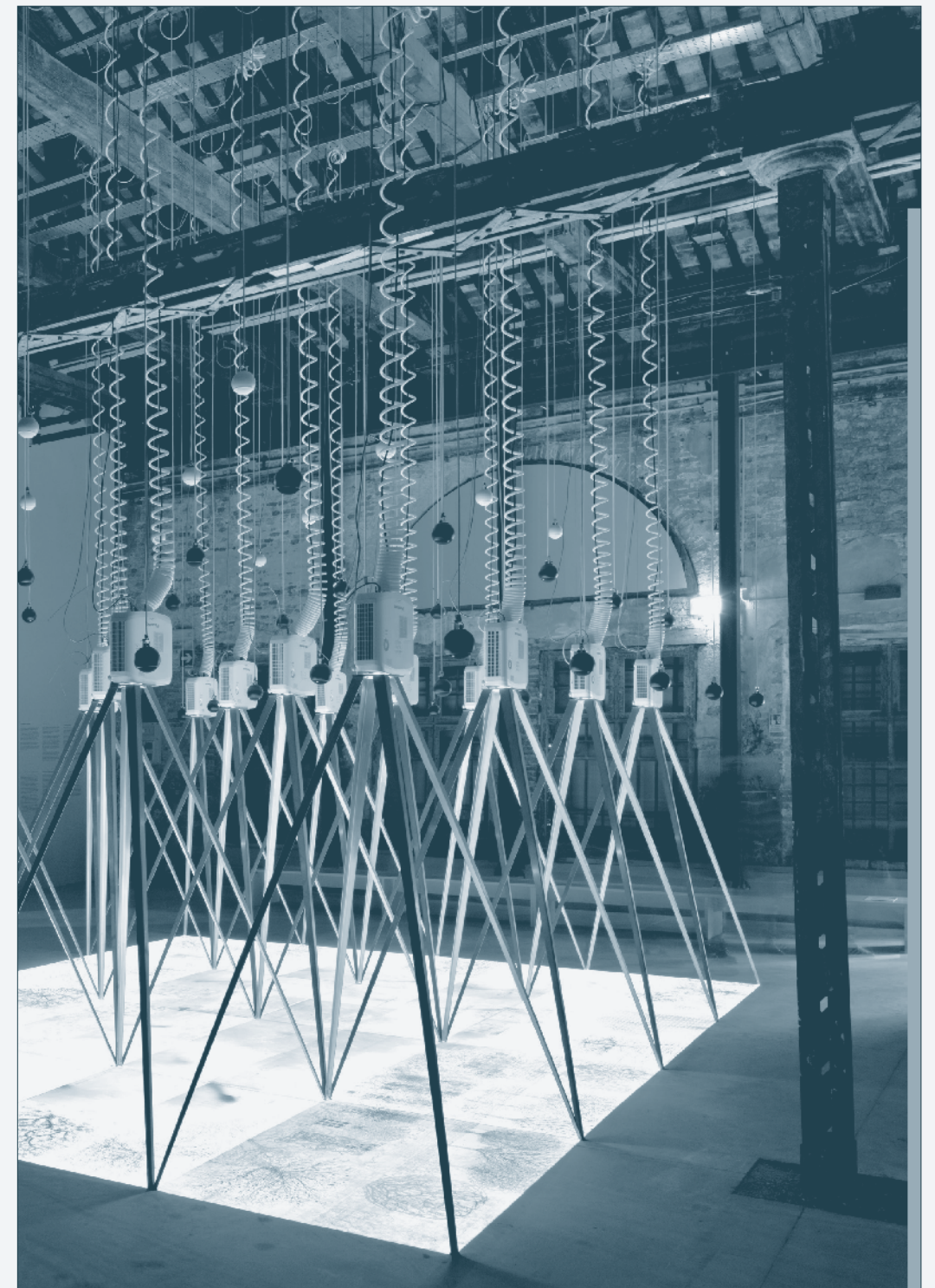
or breakfast room, then on another one how they would work in the garden, and so on. Each drafter would draw in fragments of the plan because, unlike the architect, they could not use allocentric processing to hold the totality of the building in their minds.

Lines of Inhabitation

The video cameras recorded each drawing as it was made: how each drafter would take hand, pen and line across the sheet of tracing paper to describe mainly egocentric wanderings. Their lines were unbroken and largely non-pictorial: they stood for the occupants' threads of consciousness, their physical and mental navigation in the building rather than what they saw perspectively. During free, continuous, hand drawing—taking a 'line on a walk' (Klee 1925: 16) in Paul Klee's words—we travel in time and enter a state of altered experience that is both actual and representational, mixing events, hesitations and errors of the now with remembered or planned actions.

The resulting drawings vividly conveyed inhabitation among blossoming gardens, which were drawn separately to describe the seasons. Sole authored drawings referred to single occupancy: for instance, a drafter would draw alone to represent someone resting in their private bedroom. Sometimes drafters would 'revisit' rooms first drawn by someone else, adding extra density to the occupation of the plan. Going back into another person's drawing was like entering someone else's room after they had just left. Social drawings, produced by many hands and pens drawing on the same sheet simultaneously, were also developed to describe the public areas of the building. They reached a crescendo in representing the music room with the piano being played with multiple pens in hand by one drafter while four further drafters were drawing as if they were dancing to an Irish tune. In all cases drawings were video recorded as actions rather than as static artefacts.

After weeks of drafting, hundreds of layers of drawn sheets accumulated on the floor of our



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drawing room. Following our score, we carefully positioned each one next to and on top of the other in order to show the building's social inhabitation spatially and temporally. In a mirrored activity, hundreds of video recordings were digitally edited, assembled and montaged to match our score and the spatiotemporal arrangement we had made on the floor. The final composite film showed the entire building redrawn and animated from the perspectives of its sixteen imaginary occupants.

Later, we digitally overlaid hexagonal color matrices across parts of the animated plan to represent the occupants' internal mapping mechanisms – which have been shown to use specialized place cells and grid cells within the brain to signal their location in the building (Moser 2014). Although the representation of fixed walls and other physical boundaries of the building were largely absent from the individual hand drawings, in the assembled overall drawing the density of the lines of inhabitation revealed a ghost image of the floor plan, correctly reminding us that egocentric and allocentric representations are, in fact, intertwined.

Sixteen Minutes

The *Losing Myself* installation for the 2016 Venice Biennale incorporated sixteen synchronized projectors, displaying a composite moving drawing across a floor area of 6.2m x 4.6m to represent a redrawn plan of the Orchard Centre (70.3m x 62.4m). A matrix of 64 speakers hanging on three levels in between the projectors played local, regional and global sounds to complement the drawing projection. Familiar snippets of Irish life across an annual cycle were layered upon the daily soundscape of the building and the actual present time sounds of the drawing process itself. One year and one day were collapsed into a sixteen-minute performance of light and sound. The result was a totally immersive and phantasmagorical multimedia installation that contrasted the architect's intentions for a building with vivid and empathetic representations of potential subsequent experiences. (Manolopoulou and McLaughlin 2016b)

Losing Myself highlights the limitations of the architectural plan as a static, sole-authored, allocentric medium, enhancing it with egocentric, dynamic details of the complexity and confusions of human experience. A combination of allocentric and egocentric drawing in architecture will not answer fully difficult questions about how we should design with dementia in mind, but it can help us better understand the workings of the human mind that are vital to our experience of architecture. We are far from representing reliably how we remember, imagine and navigate space but by drawing both egocentrically and allocentrically, alone and with others for extended periods of time, we come closer to making architectural practice a performative form of inhabitation in its own right.

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Yeoryia Manolopoulou

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What insights about dementia and people living with dementia have you gained during your work?

- As architects, we do not know enough about dementia and spatial cognition. We need to learn from engaging with people who have direct experiences of dementia and from working with experts outside our field, particularly neuroscientists and psychologists.
- The arts play an immensely vital role in the lives of people living with dementia as they do, more broadly, in the well-being and stimulation of our society as a whole. The best place for someone with dementia is at home, yet environments within and around the home should foster connections and community. It is important, for instance, that different generations are encouraged to interact and that, when possible, children and older adults live and are cared for in proximity.
- We need to build sustainable, environmentally friendly and age-friendly buildings and cities from the outset – with natural light and air, visual coherence, signage and accessibility, and a reduction in noise and pollution among many other things. ‘Daisy-chains’ of situations can act as vivid physical markers that can prompt memory, assist navigation and give a sense of place.
- Excessively restrictive design policies focused on health and safety, ease of care and the reduction of risk can devastate the individual because they tend to constrain personalization, exploration and decision making. Architects and users should continue to collaborate while the buildings are occupied to address design issues that may arise as a result of this tension between keeping people safe and preserving their quality of life, and their right to autonomy.

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What are your biggest ideas for the future as our society ages?

- I would like to see our culture shift from valuing objects to valuing experiences, including reinstating or recreating a stronger sense of intergenerational community specific to places. Architecture and the arts can play a vital role in this.
- I hope that emerging technologies will help future generations to cultivate human creativity and collaboration by enabling, rather than limiting, tactile and embodied creative processes.
- It will be exciting to see a new type of collaborative practice that will actively combine anthropologists used in a broader sense, with neuroscientists, psychologists, poets, artists and architects working closely together from the very start of design projects.

In the context of an aging society, what would you most like architects to strive for in the future?

Mind, body and environment are a shared continuum. Architects need to develop imaginative designs that will nurture this interconnected reality beautifully. They also need to better understand that our way of placing ourselves in the world is influenced by our personal histories. Central to their task is designing with empathy and compassion, paying attention to the emotional content of architecture and the aesthetic experience buildings possess, besides their merely technical and utilitarian aspects.

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Exhibitions

Venice Viewpoints

The British and Irish contributions to the 2016 Biennale are shaped by the desire for social impact, suggest curators Shumi Bose and Yeoryia Manolopoulou

Venice Architecture Biennale
28 May - 27 November 2016

Irish Pavilion: Losing Myself
Yeoryia Manolopoulou

The 'report' that Niall McLaughlin and I have co-curated for the Venice Biennale is a reflection on the lessons learnt through designing buildings for people with dementia. Visitors enter our space at the end of the Arsenale through a gap in the partition walls. The room is darkened, in contrast with the brightness of a projection on the floor, a 4.8 by 6.4-metre animated drawing of Niall McLaughlin Architects' Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin.

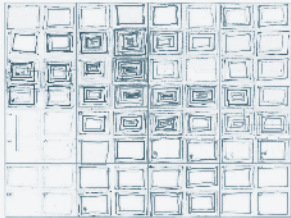
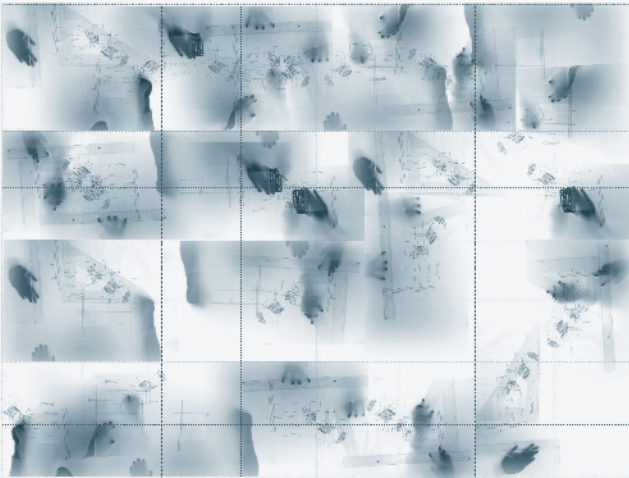
The drawing is dynamic, with multiple projected hands merging and overlapping as they create fragments of a plan. These hands represent multiple individuals inhabiting a series of rooms at the Centre. The projection labours towards the clarity of a completed plan but falls short of achieving it. Suspended loudspeakers create a soundscape, in which the noise of the act of drawing itself is layered with the sound of murmured conversations, rain and the sea, a kettle boiling, children playing — and the bells of the Angelus.

The installation attempts to communicate and interpret some of the changes to spatial perception caused by dementia, informed by conversations with a broad range of people — neuroscientists, psychologists, health workers, philosophers — about the brain and the role of design in dementia care. These conversations are recorded on a website, www.losingmyself.ie.

We are interested in the social function of architecture: how it can improve the lives of people with dementia. Beyond this, we hope that our research into the impact of the condition on spatial cognition will equip us with a deeper understanding of how all of our minds interpret space. This research has also highlighted the shortcomings of the traditional architectural plan: an inhabitant may never experience the building from the architect's fixed, allocentric vantage point. This disconnect is particularly apparent if the inhabitant has lost the ability to use memory and projection to see beyond their immediate situation and create a stable model of their environment. Our animation attempts to address this by working to develop a technique for drawing buildings from the perspective of inhabitation.

The process was collaborative, enlisting the skills of an animator, a composer, AV experts, graphic designers and many drafters, with whom we planned, tested and adapted our drawing technique. At times, we needed to design tools of production, such as glass tables for recording the drawing process.

In that process we have had to accept a level of unpredictability and uncertainty regarding the finished product — itself a consequence of attempting to represent a cognitive state which remains only partially understood, using a medium that we are developing through iteration and experiment. *▲*



Above, left
Sketch and projection still from the 'Losing Myself', a collaboration between Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou that forms the Irish contribution to the 2016 Venice Biennale. The installation — a time-based projected drawing — is part of an ongoing research project creating a "mosaic of information aimed not only at architects, but at anyone working in the field of dementia and individuals who deal with the condition day-to-day" explain the curators.

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Manolopoulou, Y. and McLaughlin, N. (2017). 'Losing Myself: Spatial Perception and Architectural Design'. *RIBA President's Awards for Research 2017: Book of Abstracts*.



Book of Abstracts

RIBA 
Architecture.com



Research should be a core function of architecture in practice with architects building on their research skills established at university.

Foreword

In their second year since their restructure, the RIBA President's Awards for Research continues to attract engaging research from around the world, debating important and timely issues. This year's submissions again come from across the globe with applicants ranging from established academics and practitioners to recent graduates and those still pursuing their education.

Collated here, as a record of submission and with the hope of encouraging further debate and collaboration, are the abstracts of the engaging and innovative research from the architectural community around the world. I am pleased to see that architects in practice continue to share their research with us, providing us with an insight into their work and collaborations with other architects and build environment professionals, as well as with universities. And it is exciting to read the range of research conducted in universities from Australia, to Brazil and the USA as well as those from the United Kingdom.

Ben Derbyshire,
RIBA President 2017-19

The RIBA Strategy 2016-2020 highlights the organisation's commitment to supporting collaboration, research and innovation across the architectural landscape. I believe that research should be a core function of architecture in practice with architects building on their research skills established at university, and look forward to building on those ambitions and supporting these Awards, and research more broadly, during the tenure of my Presidency.

My thanks go to all those who submitted and in particular to our esteemed colleagues in practice and academia who made up this year's judging panel, giving their time freely to read all of the work submitted this year. Without their service, experience of research in academia and practice, and across all four of the categories, the President's Awards for Research could not continue.

Design and Technical

Submissions were invited under either or both headings of Design and Technical. Research was to concern an investigation addressing the influence or impact of design, form and/or technology on the use, quality and/or performance of a space or building/s. Topics could be holistic or focus on a specific element, addressing, but not limited to:

- Materials, detailing and/or construction methods
- Design quality and/or project management
- Computational Design and BIM
- Spatial integration
- Sustainability, low carbon solutions and/or 'systems' performance

President's Awards for Research 2017 | Book of Abstracts



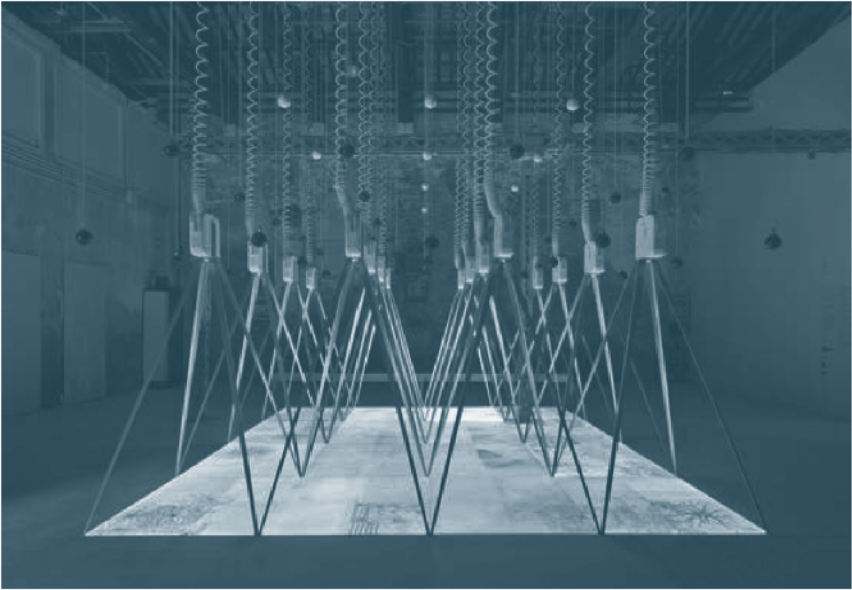
RIBA Research Awards 2017
SHORTLISTED

Losing Myself: Spatial Perception and Architectural Design

Eimear Arthur & Niall McLaughlin , Niall McLaughlin Architects, UK
Yeoryia Manolopoulou, AY Architects

With 'Houses of Memory' – architectural mnemonics – the Ancient Romans recognised the link between an individual's spatial perception and their ability to organise and call upon memories, thoughts and experiences. For the architect, the nature of this relationship is of critical importance: if an ability to understand space can improve memory; how does impaired memory affect spatial cognition? Why, and how, are these connected; and how can architects better design spaces for people whose understanding of space is in decline? This research seeks to accumulate, interpret and disseminate information about the changes to spatial perception caused by dementia, and the implications for architectural design. A variety of written sources have been consulted, but the primary form of research has been a series of interviews with a variety of experts on the subject, particularly those who may not regularly engage in dialogue with architects – neuroscientists, psychologists, health

workers, philosophers, anthropologists, people with dementia and their families. To maximise the potential for engagement throughout at beyond the field of architecture, these conversations were recorded and uploaded to a website. The research finds a critical neurological link between memory and spatial perception, though many of the brain structures and functions behind this link are yet to be fully understood. There are lessons for architects in how we should conceptualise, design and represent space. Many of the foundational principles of good design generally – logical sequence of spaces, the provision of daylight, thorough consultation with the client – are critical to successful design for dementia. The findings highlight the importance of designing all public spaces with cognitive impairment in mind; the value of consultation and collaboration with disciplines outside of architecture; and the need to prioritise not just safety, but an engaged, enjoyable life for those in the latter stages of dementia.

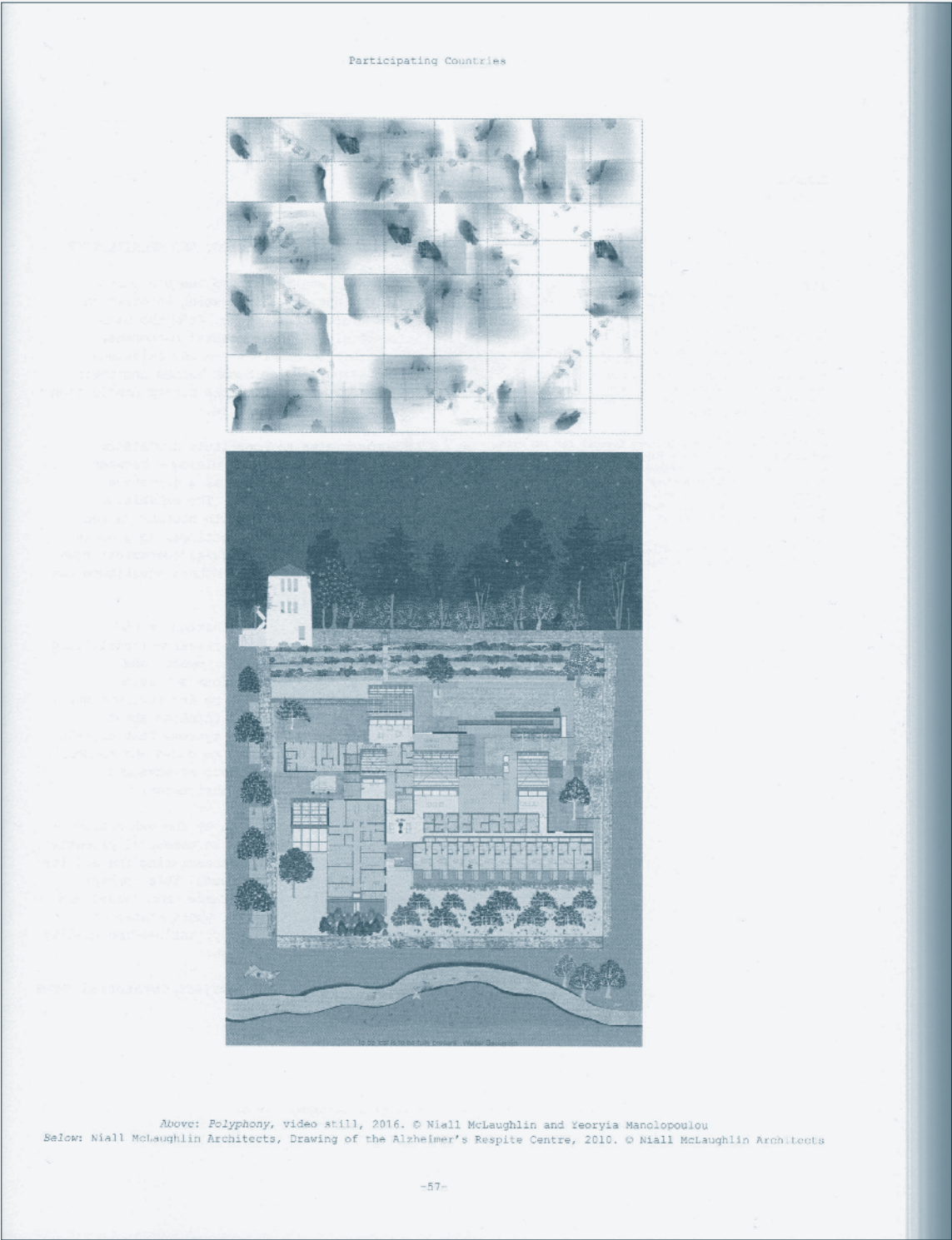
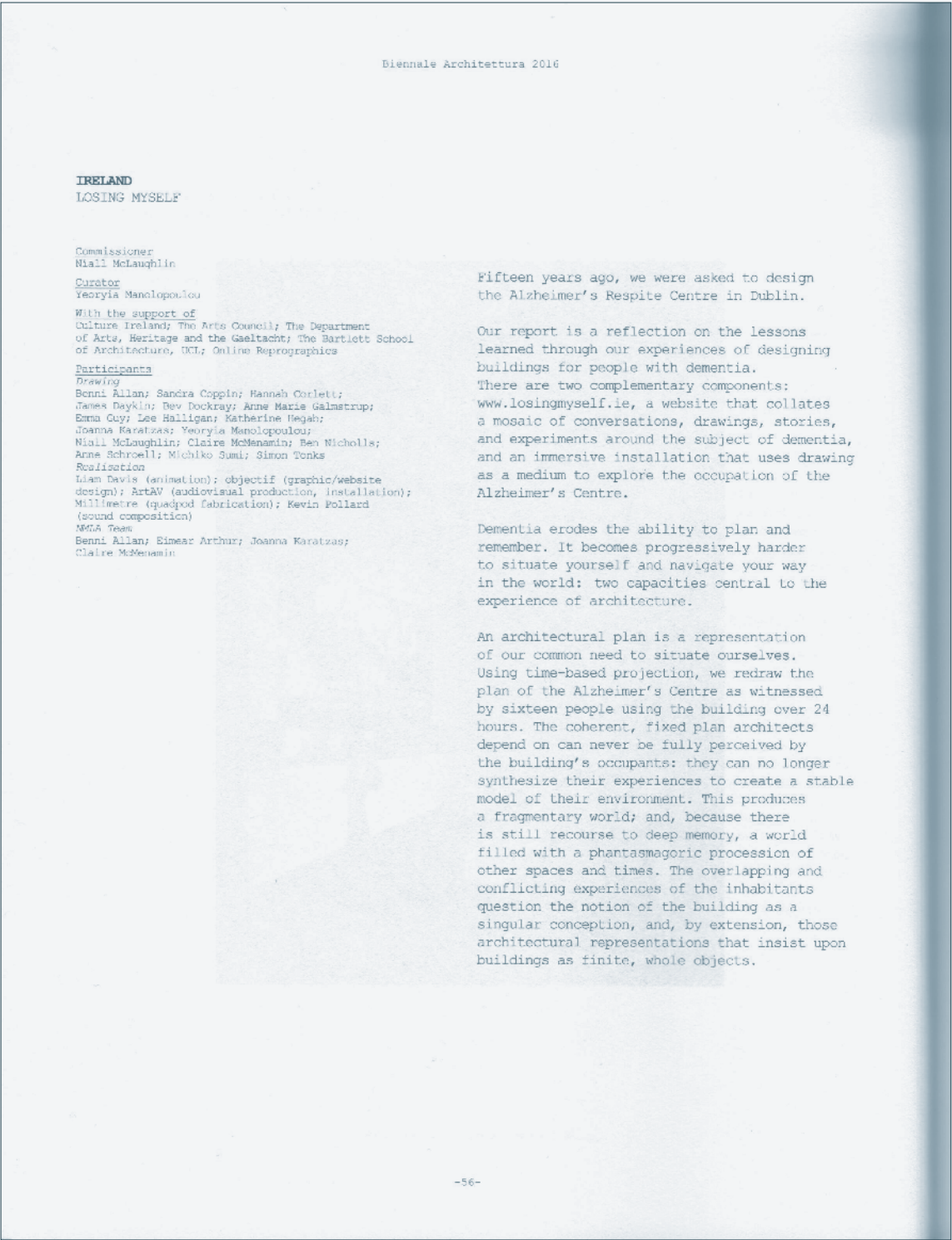


Losing Myself
at La Biennale
Architettura 2016
© Nick Kanne

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Manolopoulou, Y.
and McLaughlin, N.
(2016). 'Ireland:
Losing Myself'.
*Biennale
Architettura 2016:
Reporting from the
Front.*





Manolopoulou, Y. and McLaughlin, N. (2016). 'Losing Myself'. La Biennale di Venezia, 15th International Architecture Exhibition. Press release.

Pavilion of Ireland

At the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia

LOSING MYSELF

Losing Myself is a collaboration between Níall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

Alzheimer's Disease is a form of dementia, one of a range of conditions that progressively degrades the synaptic connections within our brains. It brings about a loss of those faculties that allow us to orientate ourselves and to remember.

Our report is a reflection on the lessons learnt through designing and revisiting buildings for people with dementia. It has two complementary components: a website that collates a mosaic of conversations, drawings, stories and experiments around the subject of dementia; and an immersive installation at the Biennale Architettura 2016 that uses drawing as a medium to explore the occupation of a building we designed for people with dementia.

www.losingmyself.ie documents the lessons we learn as we speak to a broad range of people about dementia. This website presents a series of interdisciplinary conversations with experts across a range of fields – neuroscientists, psychologists, health workers, philosophers and anthropologists – as well as people with dementia and their families. It allows us to collate stories of personal interactions with dementia, and is of interest to architects, scientists and those dealing with dementia day to day. The site is also a record of the process of developing our central Venice installation: drawing and making in collaboration with others. The design of the website itself incorporates creative advice from people with dementia.

The installation at the Arsenale imagines the Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin, Ireland as experienced by its occupants: people with dementia and their carers. Dementia erodes the ability to remember where you have come from and to plan where you would like to go. It becomes progressively harder to situate yourself and to navigate your way in the world: two capacities central to the experience of architecture.

The plan of any building is an architectural representation of the human need to be situated within an environment that provides orientation. Using time-based projection, we redraw the experience of this plan as collectively witnessed by sixteen people using the building over the course of one day. The coherent, fixed plan an architect depends upon can never be fully brought into being by the building's occupants: they cannot use memory and projection to see beyond their immediate situation and can no longer synthesise their experiences to create a stable model of their environment. This produces a fragmentary world; and, because there is still recourse to deep memory, a world that is filled with a phantasmagoric and unbidden procession of other spaces and times. The overlapping, perhaps conflicting, experiences of the inhabitants question the notion of the building as a singular conception, and by extension, those architectural representations that insist upon buildings as finite and whole objects.

Ireland at Venice is an initiative of the Culture Ireland Division of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in partnership with the Arts Council.

Supported by Culture Ireland, the Arts Council; the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland and The Bartlett School of Architecture at UCL.

For press enquiries, contact:
Marta Bogna-Drew marta@carocommunications.com
Bobby Jewell bobby@carocommunications.com



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An Roinn Éalaithe, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



The Bartlett
Faculty of the Built Environment



UCL

Manolopoulou, Y. and McLaughlin, N. (2016). 'Losing Myself: Inside the Irish Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Biennale'. *ArchDaily*.

Please refer to Appendix Contents on p. 90 for a link to the full article.

ArchDaily > Architecture News > **Losing Myself: Inside the Irish Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Biennale**

Losing Myself: Inside the Irish Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Biennale



Presented by: 



Written by Níall McLaughlin & Yeoryia Manolopoulou June 17, 2016

As part of ArchDaily's coverage of the 2016 Venice Biennale, we are presenting a series of articles written by the curators of the exhibitions and installations on show.

Our report is a reflection on the lessons learnt through designing and revisiting buildings for people with dementia. Visitors enter our space at the end of the Arsenale through a gap in the partition walls.

McLaughlin, N.
(2020). 'Losing
Myself: Designing
for People with
Dementia'.
*Neuroarchitecture:
Designing with the
Mind in Mind*
(Architectural
Design).

Niall McLaughlin

Losing Myself

Designing for People with Dementia

50



Architect and
Professor of
Architectural Practice
at the Bartlett School
of Architecture,
University College
London, Niall
McLaughlin describes
his research into
dementia and
Alzheimer's disease.
He explains the
thinking behind his
practice's design for
an Alzheimer's Respite
Centre in Dublin,
and his subsequent
collaboration with
fellow Bartlett
Professor of
Architecture and
Experimental
Practice Yeoryia
Manolopoulou in
the creation of an
installation about
these themes at the
Venice Architecture
Biennale.

Niall McLaughlin and
Yeoryia Manolopoulou,
Losing Myself,
Venice Architecture Biennale,
2016

The drawing was created from 1,200 sheets
of tracing paper, which were then digitally
scanned. Each sheet contains a filmed
outline of a hand that draws. It describes
only those things that can be perceived by
someone with dementia in a particular room
at a particular time. The drawing hand is a
stand-in for the perceiving mind, assembling
a world from fragments of sensory evidence.

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Alzheimer's disease is a progressive condition that erodes the ability of neurons in the brain to transmit signals to each other through synaptic connections. This is caused by an accumulation of proteins known as plaques and tangles. It has no single pathology, but its progress erodes higher synthetic cognitive functions first, before degrading established memories, language and eventually the basic process of bodily regulation. It progresses at different rates in each individual, and it is not curable. Each manifestation varies, but there is a common pattern to the progress of symptoms that was of interest to us. People lose their ability to navigate, remember and to situate themselves in a coherent setting.

In 1999, Niall McLaughlin Architects was invited to design a respite centre in Dublin, for people with dementia. It was an unusual commission, because this kind of work is often given to architectural practices that claim specialism in the subject. In this case, our client, the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, set us a challenge. They would teach us what they knew about dementia, and we would teach them what we knew about buildings. Together we would make the first specialist centre in the country. In their words, this case-study building could serve as an example in both its successes and its failures. This would inform future centres they hoped to build. We were encouraged to undertake as much research as we could and to use it to educate the client. It was an exceptional brief and it started a train of thinking that continued through two decades.

It took 10 years to raise funds and complete the building. During that time, we read everything we could about dementia and collated all of the available guidelines. We spent as much time as possible in the existing centre, an old converted primary school, talking to people with dementia and to caregivers, and watching the daily round of activities. When someone has dementia, it is not always possible to ask direct questions and expect equivalent answers. We tried a more open conversation in which a topic would be discussed informally and people could participate. I might say: 'I like this room here, it's not like my living room at home.' Then someone would start to talk about their own home. Often, 'home' would be somewhere else and long ago. For people with dementia, the twin anchors of time and place often slip. This was enlightening for us, and not confusing when we got used to it. We learnt about their deeply remembered experiences. If we can listen carefully to our clients and understand their world, then we can make new worlds for them. With dementia, this is especially difficult, as people are reporting back from a cognitive state that we can hardly begin to imagine.

Damage to Spatial Perception

To understand the basic processes that underlie our perceptions of navigation and situation, we spoke to neuroscientists and neuropsychologists at University College London. We met Kate Jeffery and Hugo Spiers who both explore the functions of dedicated cells that are implicated in navigation. We spoke to Sebastian Crutch, who works with posterior cortical atrophy, a form of dementia that degrades visual perception.

Our sense of our own situation in time and space has its origin in sensory information that enters the cranium,



Niall McLaughlin,
Regions of the Brain,
London,
2015

This felt-tip pen sketch from Mr. Magelin's notebook is an attempt to hold together the anatomy of the brain and to understand how different regions are used for various aspects of perception and cognition.



The picture the hippocampus, and associated functions in the entorhinal cortex and the retrosplenial cortex, as a nexus of incoming and outgoing streams. While they receive and place data from the outside, they also appear to send sets of integrated perceptions to the outer cortices of the brain where they are laid down as long-term memories. This seems to be the place where our sense of space and our conception of past and future are held together under the aegis of episodic memory.

These beautiful processes at the centre of our perception hold time and space together, showing that they are inextricably linked. We cannot remember without having a scene to place our memories into. The faculty of storing information in time and knowing our location in space is the same thing. We might call it the sense of being situated. Everything we think we are flows out from this source. It is here that dementia does its worst work. The pathology of the disease begins with and progresses from the sites of these higher synthetic functions, working towards the outer cortices where our older memories reside. I can't say what it is like to have dementia, but I imagine it is like finding that all the birds of your world begin to slip apart and won't make sense in relation to each other. The centre can no longer hold them together and so they drift as unfathomable fragments.

The Architectural Plan

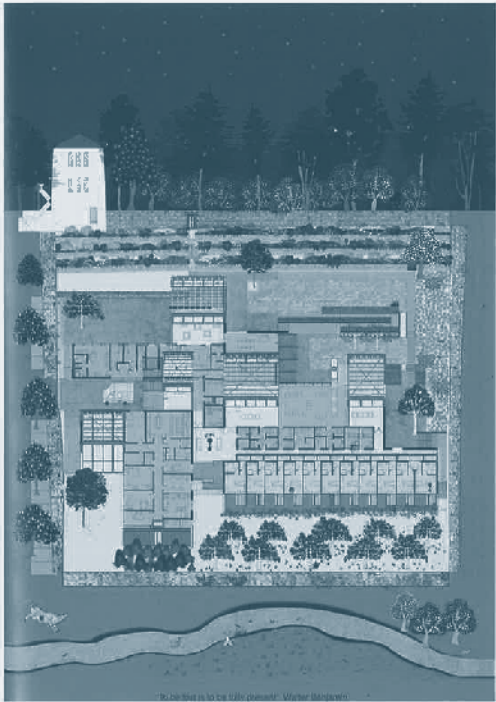
As part of our research we collected a suite of drawings and paintings by Paul Klee. These seemed to represent the dilemma of the individual negotiating space, using memory and projection to navigate. It made us think that the ability to conceive of space and to situate yourself within it is learnt from earliest childhood. A newborn may not know that she is not her mother; she must first become aware of her independent body with its own boundaries, and then the space that opens up between her body and that of her mother. This is a place of intimacy. As this child moves out to negotiate the room, the house and the family, she is socialised. At the same time, she acquires a spatial understanding of the world that extends out beyond her. Little by little she becomes aware of the somatic space of her own bounded form. She learns about her capacity for action, and how that can be measured against the openness that she is beginning to explore. This openness is not innocent or empty. It is thick with social and psychological meanings; of taboos, permissions and desires. We think the acquisition of our own spatial sense is equivalent to the learning of language. It is not simply that it describes the world, but that the world can only be understood through it. It is the medium of experience and therefore the cornerstone of the self. If, in later life, dementia causes the gradual deterioration of our ability to navigate and remember, it must also erode our concept of who we are in our deepest identity.

We thought about the experience of dementia as a continuous present tense. You are unable to remember where you have been and therefore cannot project where you might go. We wondered what it might be like to experience the world as an ongoing, unfolding, held between empty expanses on each side. The sense of the past moving into the future must dissolve. The intuition of sequence, of one event or place following another, would collapse. Some architectural plans seem to address this predicament. The memory of Luis Barragán's house in Mexico City (Casa Luis Barragán, 1948) allowed us to think of passing through a succession of rooms, each one linked to a different garden until, eventually, you return to the room you first came from. So too

Hiatt McLaughlin Architects,
Alzheimer's Respite Centre, Dublin,
2009

Miniature drawing showing the new building set
within the walls of an old kitchen garden. The spaces
between the building and the old walls create a
sequence of new outside courts and gardens.

Plan of the building showing a sequence of rooms
opening out into different gardens, each associated
with times of day and a variety of smells, textures
and colours. The drawing is overlaid by dotted lines
indicating centrifugal and centripetal wandering loops.



Rudolf Schindler's Kings Road House (Schindler-Chace House, West Hollywood, Los Angeles, 1921) and Mies van der Rohe's unbuilt Brick Country House (1924). They allow that same apprehension of moving through an unfolding progression of spaces. Dementia is often characterised by continuous wandering and open searching. We conceived of a plan where you might ramble away from the lively central social spaces to other rooms, looking out onto different gardens, but your journey would eventually bring you back to the space where you started out. This was the basis of the building that we designed. It was set in an old stone-walled garden. Within it, we placed a timber building that created a suite of smaller gardens, each receiving light at different times of day. Every garden had a room looking on to it and you could meander through these rooms in an open circuit.

The Building in Use
The building was completed in 2009. In the decade that it took to build it, the client changed from a voluntary group to a professional cohort, managed by the regional health authority. The change in approach was evident. The building was managed more formally with a much clearer designation between staff and clients. The glamorous little room at the centre of the plan, designed as a hairdressing salon, was converted into a nurses' station. The contemplative prayer room, looking into a secluded court, was shut off and re-designated as a staff training room. The gardens were progressively closed off to avoid accidents. With fewer volunteers, the staff were less able to monitor the space, and doors were locked to prevent wandering. When I revisited the building, I sensed that the ethos had changed subtly from spiritual welfare to physical safety. I brought my plans and observations to Lesley Palmer, Chief Architect at the Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling. She thought that what we had designed could have worked well, but needed a certain style of management, where individual autonomy is valued differently in relation to risk.



The building is made from a
collection of timber lanterns set
within old garden walls, creating
a sequence of courts, archways
and levels all linked together.

My reflection on this experience is that a building does not have agency in its own right. Instead, the role of this building is to frame the activities of those people who are being cared for and for those involved in caring. The difference between cared-for and caring seemed less obvious with the voluntary group as our client. The roles were more rigid in the professional cohort and were clearly divided into passive and active roles. If the nature of the caring community changes and the building remains the same, a disjunction emerges. This gap then enlarges as the managers of the building perceive that it is not serving their immediate goals. They make small alterations, and each change enhances the disjunction and fixes it into the building.

The building is still, at its heart, a daisy chain of high bright rooms looking onto gardens. The environment seems to have a positive impact on anxiety, orientation, and well-being. On my last visit I had a touching conversation with a woman who was wandering around following the walls of a room. I asked where she was going and she said she was looking for the stairs. Since there are no stairs, I asked why that was. 'All my things are upstairs,' she replied. In the uncertain world of dementia, our carefully conceived building was already haunted by other places, charged with their own intense and personal meanings.

The Plan Revisited

In collaboration with the architect Yeoryia Manolopoulou, we made a drawing of the building for the Irish Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale. *Losing Myself* represented the plan of the building as it might be experienced by different people with dementia. A typical plan shows a horizontal cut through all of the building all at once: each room is simultaneously visible. With dementia, this conception of the building becomes impossible. You might only be able to apprehend fragments of the whole, based upon immediate perception.

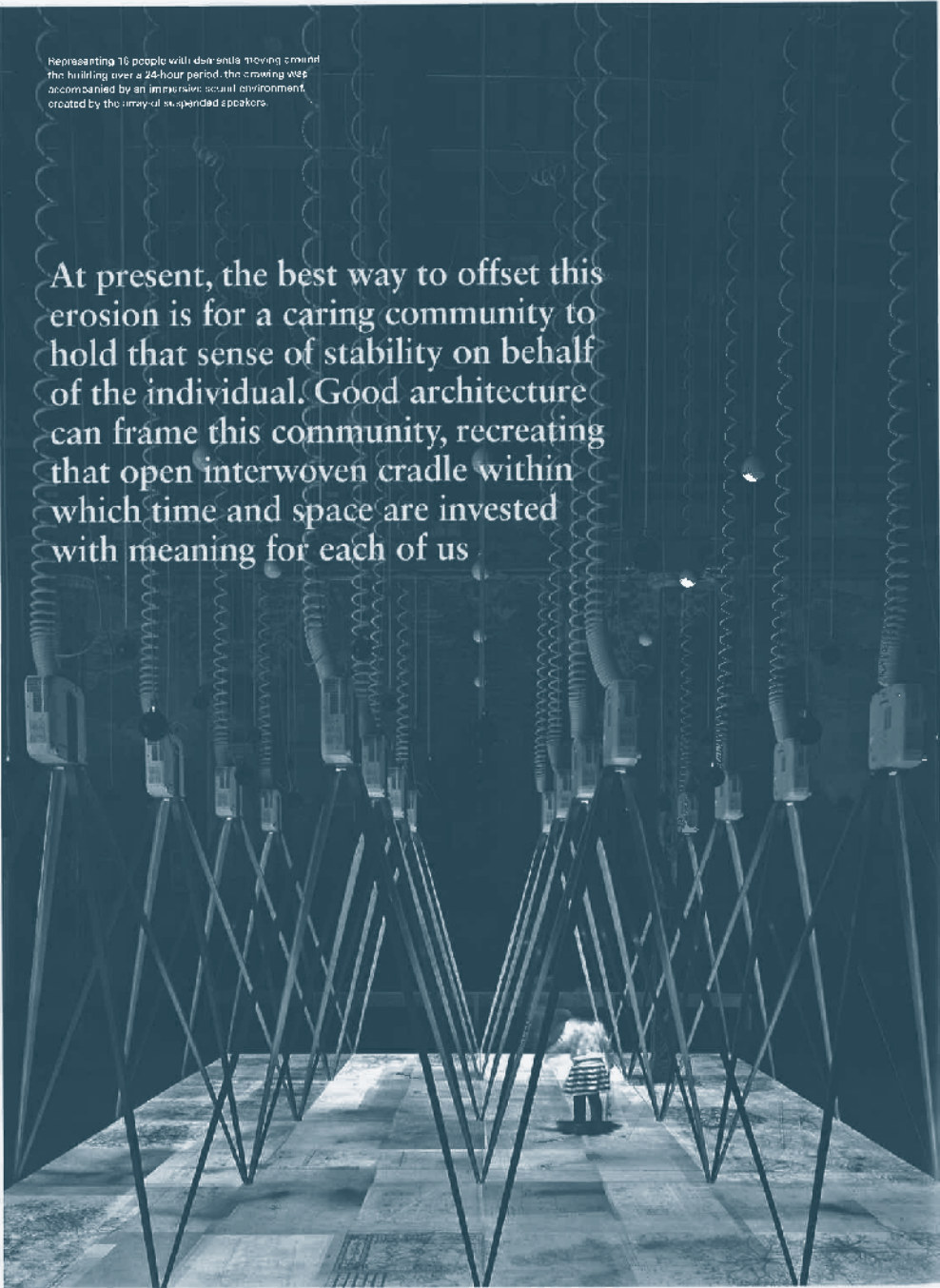
Shall McLaughlin and
Yeoryia Manolopoulou,
Losing Myself,
Venice Architecture Biennale,
2016

Losing Myself is a redrawing of the plan of the Aldermer Respite Centre in Dublin, from the perspective of people with dementia. It is projected onto the floor of an old factory building in Venice's Arsenal by an array of projectors resting on brass legs. All of the data was streamed down cables from the ceiling. The circuitry and the suspended speakers.



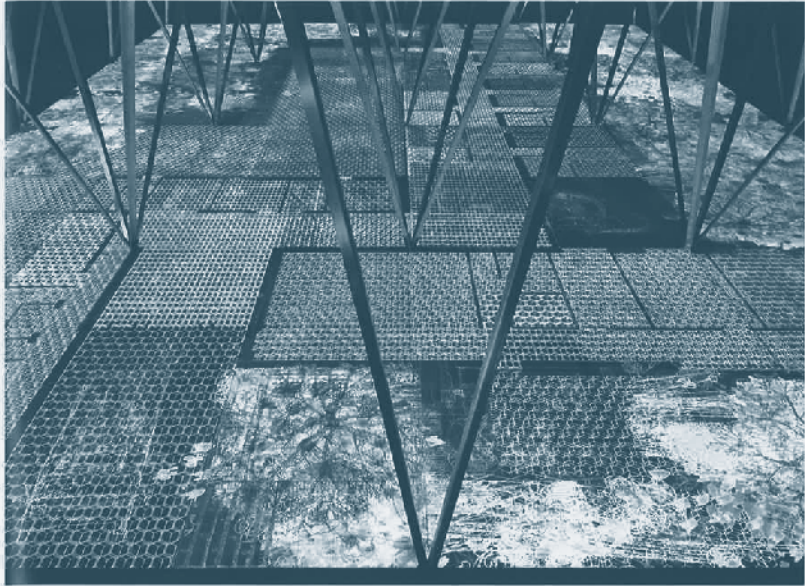
Losing Myself represented the plan of the building as it might be experienced by different people with dementia. A typical plan shows a horizontal cut through all of the building all at once: each room is simultaneously visible





Representing 16 people with dementia moving around the building over a 24-hour period, the drawing was accompanied by an immersive sound environment, created by the array of suspended speakers.

At present, the best way to offset this erosion is for a caring community to hold that sense of stability on behalf of the individual. Good architecture can frame this community, recreating that open interwoven cradle within which time and space are invested with meaning for each of us



above: The drawing overlays multiple layers of perception, including the changes in the day and the seasons, individual fragments of perception and the deep activity of mind cells and places in the brain.



Detail of the floor projection.

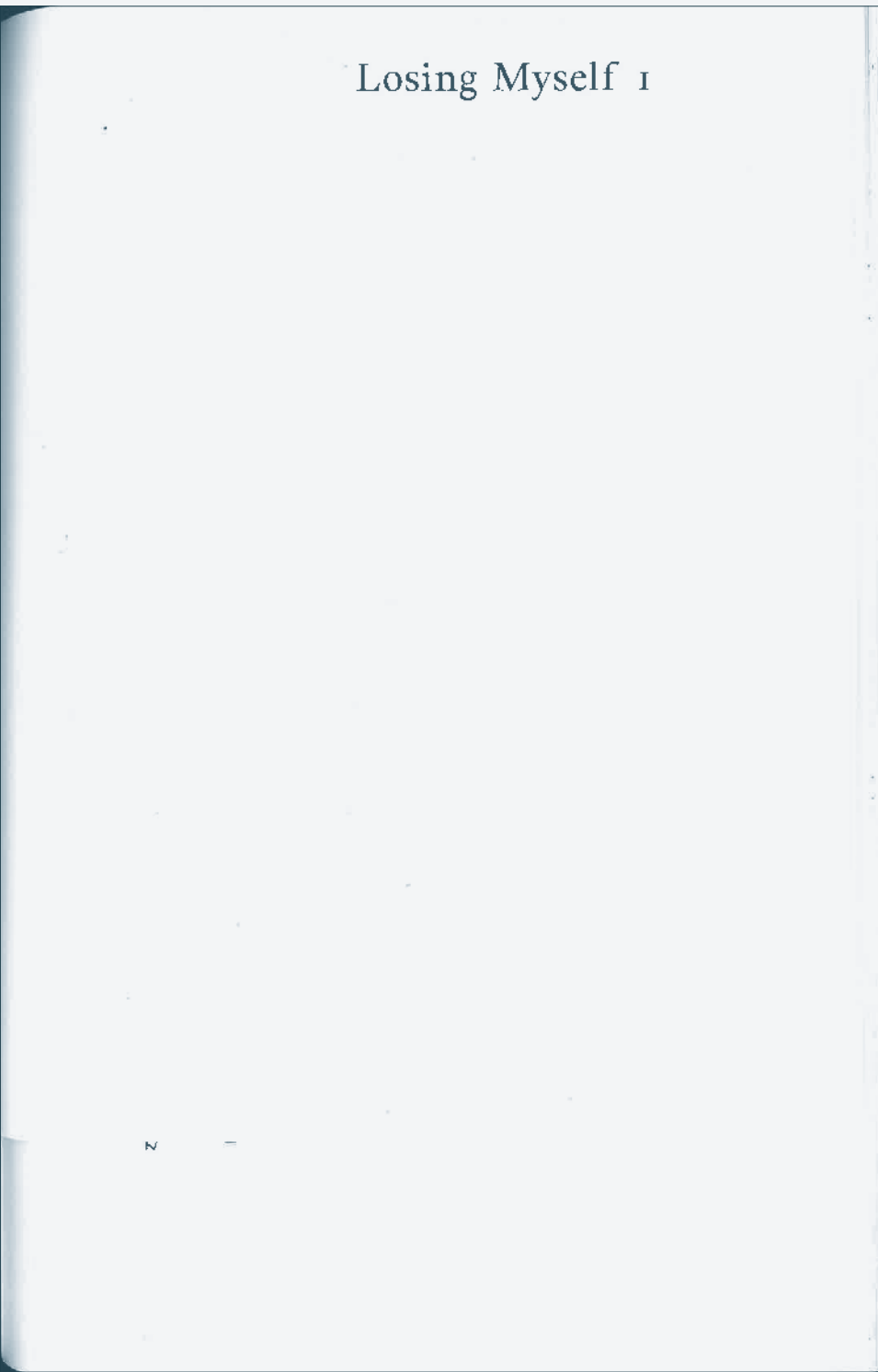
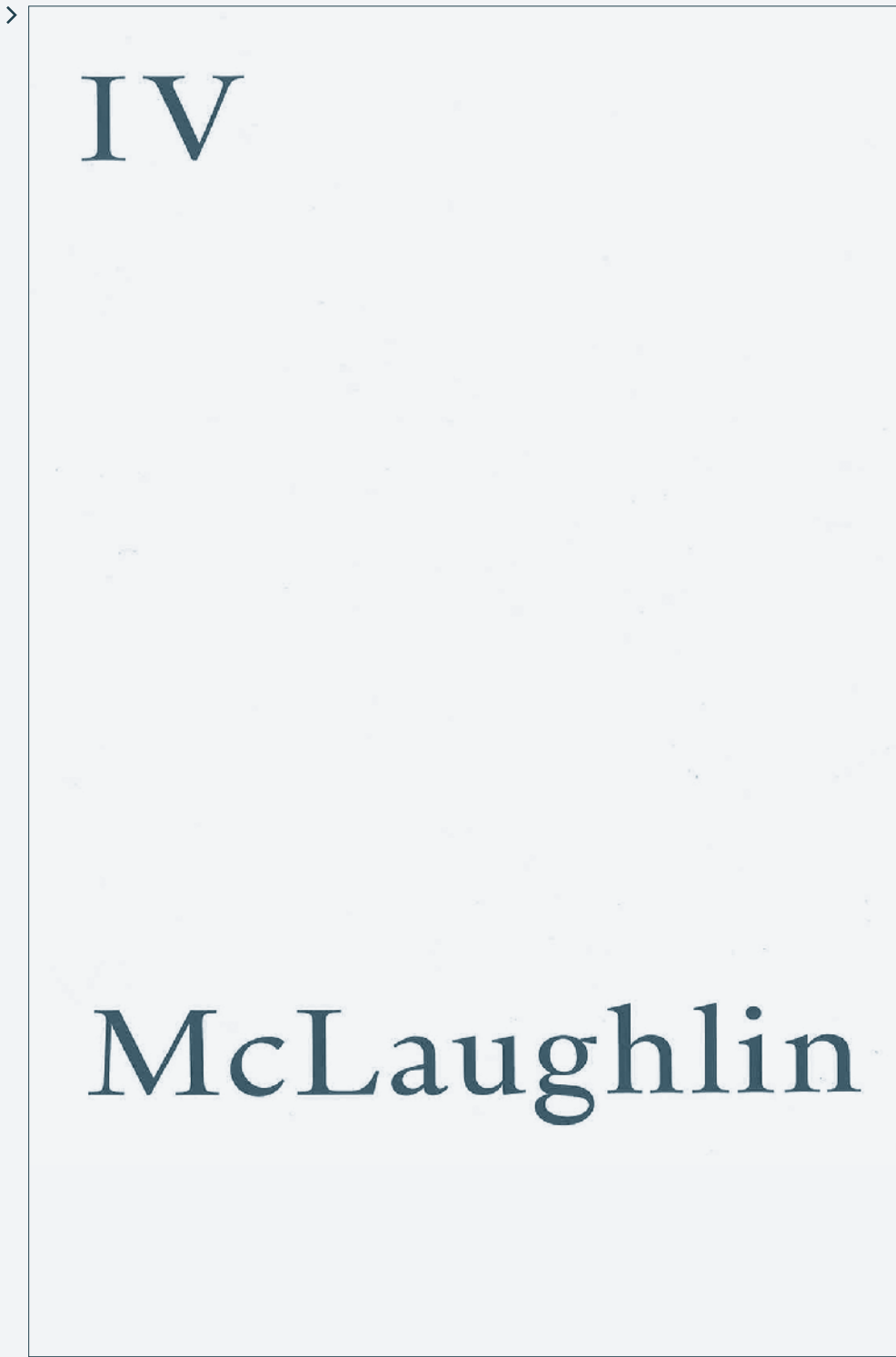
The drawing was assembled by overlaying the imagined experiences of 16 people who use the centre – each one was represented by one of a team of 16 draughtspersons. They worked together to make a new plan in which they only drew what would be apparent to someone with dementia at any particular time. That perception changes as they move around the building through a 24-hour cycle. It contrasted the comprehensive, allocentric properties of a typical plan with the fragmented and necessarily egocentric perceptions of individuals who are moving through the spaces, but unable to hold the pieces together.

The process of making this drawing allowed us to reflect on what we had learned about dementia and about buildings over the 17 year period since the building was commissioned. Our apprehension that we inhabit luminous places, that hold their identity within the flow of time and the extension of space, is created by showers of charges cascading through clusters of neurons in the darkened interior of the cranium.

With dementia, biochemical changes to the connections within these clusters erode the comprehension of a stable self, situated in a coherent place. At present, the best way to offset this erosion is for a caring community to hold that sense of stability on behalf of the individual. Good architecture can frame this community, recreating that open interwoven cradle within which time and space are invested with meaning for each of us. ◊

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McLaughlin, N.
(2018). 'Losing
Myself'. *Opening
Lines IV*:
Niall McLaughlin.



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g Around 1999 I was asked by the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland to design a new respite centre for them. It was a very unusual commissioning of a building in that most commissioning would be done through a health trust, who are very conservative in their procurement – you would have had to have done three just like it before. But the Alzheimer's Society is a voluntary organisation and they interviewed architects. I said that I had never done one, but they liked the conversation that we had. In the end the CEO said something really nice which was, 'Well, we will teach you all about dementia and you can teach us all about architecture.' The other thing he said in the brief that was very nice, was that this was the first new building they were going to build in Ireland. He said 'In the end, we will have our building and we will have our mistakes. Then the next architect who is going to build something else in the country we can take to see the building: we can tell him what our mistakes were and he can build a better one.'

Over the last 15 or 20 years, Ireland has been the most rapidly secularising country in the world. It has gone from a deeply religious society to a typical Western liberal society very quickly, and there is a huge amount of change that has happened. One of the changes that occurred is a sort of professionalisation of organisations like this. So what you had here was a secular, voluntary organisation hand-in-hand with a religious order of nuns running it. It was based on custom and practice, their own experience and knowledge. In the period of time that we designed the building and built it, it went from being voluntary to state-run, from being run by the Society to the HSE, which is the Health and Safety Executive that was government funded, run by professionals. They use volunteers, but they have a very marginal role, and the sisters are declining and have disappeared. So it moved between two very different ways of thinking about how a community might help people in distress: from a kind of Western, centralised, bureaucratic, professionalised, medicalised one, on one hand, to this much more ground-up and community-based organisation on the other. The other thing, it eventually took over ten years to design and build, partly because they had a funding problem.

The building is a walled garden; there are brick walls which are now covered in planting, and a series of courtyards and high-ceilinged spaces with clerestory light to give you a very even level of light, which is important for dementia. Strong shadows are very disturbing for some people with dementia because they can't process them. Often you will see someone with dementia will stop in front of a shadow on the ground. What you want is a very high level of light, because older people especially need vitamin D for bone growth; they need to be in the light, but the light can also be dangerous and cause glare. Corridors of glare and reflection and strong shadow and extreme strong shadows can be disturbing. I mean dementia isn't a single thing, so you can't say that all people will be affected by it, but good practice is to not have reflective surfaces, to have a very high level of light, and for it to be even light. What was good was that they had been in what we call a National School, an old state primary school that they were using, with very high ceilings with clerestory light, and they said, 'Well, this is great, we want more of this.'

Shelley's closer kitchen - 17.1.1. 17.1.1.

So we gave them that, as a kind of model.

First, I am going to talk about the building project very quickly, because there isn't a lot of information about it. Then I will talk about the Venice project. We had six sites to look at for the Alzheimer's Centre and we did a feasibility study for each one. We eventually ended up with one, which in many ways is not very satisfactory for people with dementia because it is an eighteenth-century walled garden. It is **great in the sense that it corrals people** so that they don't wander off, but it is **very poor in terms of their engagement with the city**. This isn't residential care, it is respite care, so in a sense that is probably OK, but it was a strange site to have for people with dementia.

We thought about the enclosure of the existing garden, which is listed, as a kind of perimeter. Then we would make gardens against that perimeter, each of which would have a different orientation and which would belong to different times of the day. When you are in the building there is a sociable centre, and if you walk away from that you are walking towards different gardens which are about different planting and different light. The idea of the Roman garden with different styles and different plantings associated with different times of the day was the sort of core idea of the project.

Here are the bedrooms; you wake up here looking into the orchard. Here are the main living rooms during the day; you go out onto a terrace, and here is a garden. At breakfast time you are here. So you move around. And these funny coloured lines are people with dementia, once again, not all, but most, have this very strong desire to wander. And the perfect thing is for them to be in the sociable centre – making eye contact, connecting with each other, their minds being kept active and socialising. There is also a strong centrifugal desire to move off, and this plan was designed in such a way that by moving off, you move back. So whichever route you take will always bring you back to the social centre. There is an inner route, a middle route and outer routes, so you can go off into the gardens, but the gardens will always bring you back. You can go off around different rooms and passageways, but they will always bring you back to here. So it is a way of balancing the centripetal and centrifugal aspects. Architecturally, there's the ghost of Mies's Country House, of Schindler's Kings Road House, and experientially there is a strong ghost of Barragán's own house, which I visited once with Yeoryia. I don't know if you have been there, but you go through a little door in the wall and you find yourself in a little space. Then you go in, and you go from room to room, and each time you go into a new room, it looks onto a new bit of garden. You feel as though you are wandering endlessly in this world. Then suddenly you walk into this room and you have this strange sense of familiarity, and you realise you've been in that room once before but you have just come back from a different angle. It is lovely, there is a lovely sense of coming back on yourself. So that was the kind of aspiration. This was our sort of wandering route, talked about in a single drawing.

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Something had happened by the time the building was finished. As I say, it took ten years to get the funding. When we moved into it, the people who were running it had nothing to do with us. They were professionally paid, hired, care workers. We had very strong ideas about what the furniture should be like, and so on – and the managers didn't want to know. They were taking it over and they didn't need to speak to us anymore. It was like they pulled up the drawbridge. I think for me, personally, it was extremely upsetting. This furniture we designed is good for older people; you can see the arms on the chair, they can help themselves up. The tall back on the chair stops that thing, which you often see in homes for old people, where your head falls back. We actually brought these chairs in, there are very few of them. But that is the sense of the impersonal in the building: you see these chairs here that the staff put in; I don't know what on earth they were thinking. Why would you do that?

They were a secular organisation, but most of the people who were there with dementia were old and Irish, and would therefore be very religious. We thought it would be nice to have a room that we called the quiet room, where they could have a priest come and say Mass every day, which they would like. We were asked to make it a bit like the Carmelite chapel we had designed that looked out into a garden. We designed it with this semi-mature magnolia tree and planting. But it went through an extraordinary sequence of changes. First of all, the new managers decided that they didn't have space for a quiet room and they turned it into an education room for the staff. Then they realised they weren't allowed to have a staff education room in an institutional building because of the Nursing Home Act, so then they turned it into a storeroom. Then they decided to take down the tree because somebody had an idea they would put a pond out there. So they put the pond out there and then realised it was a health-and-safety issue. When Yeoryia and I went back to visit it six or seven years after it had been built we found this bleak sort of courtyard. I would have expected that the tree would have grown and the planting would have come up and it would have been this kind of serene space. But in fact there was a sort of tumbleweed blowing through here, pampas grass, and a big stack of wheelchairs, abandoned wheelchairs in the middle of the space. We felt really depressed coming back.

This photograph is really what we wanted it to be like. This is a house I designed in South London for the same woman for whom I did The Shack. So all the other photographs that I show of the bare Alzheimer's Centre should have been like this. The woman who took over the garden at the Alzheimer's Centre didn't want to talk to us; she wanted to cut down all the trees in the orchard because she thought people with dementia would trip over them, trip over the fruit that had fallen. I said, 'Can we sell the fruit?' She said, 'Who do you think is going to sell the fruit? There's a proper market every weekend.' The whole thing was this sort of managing to stop you from having accidents rather than managing for people to have a spiritually fulfilling end to their lives. It was quite depressing. This building and the Alzheimer's Centre were conceived in exactly the same way, but one was loved by somebody and the

Shedding's closer to the house than the 17th floor

God

other wasn't, and that's the difference. It was a February day and I said to Yeoryia, 'I know it was cold up there, but I feel cold to my bones.'

Afterwards we made this drawing. Its history is interesting; it was done with Abigail and Joanna, who work with me in the office – and it was just after that period when the Alzheimer's building had been finished and when we realised we were excluded from the process of how it would be managed and furnished. I was feeling very depressed by it and I'd read this nice piece by Aldo Rossi about his Modena Cemetery drawings which he called 'drawings after the project'. I love this phrase. I'd been to the *Garden and Cosmos* exhibition at the British Museum to see these Jodhpur drawings and I really loved them. And I needed to do a kind of redemptive act, to redraw the building as it was meant to be, as I had imagined it, to try and rescue it from what it was becoming. So we made this drawing. You can see the walls of the walled garden – it is technically a planometric – and we are sampling from – that is Franz March there – that is the lost magnolia tree and these are sampled from Grant Wood. This is the old convent building on the corner of the site. It is a sloped site. This is the orchard with the fruit still lying on the ground and no one tripping over it and so on. You can see the sense of a kind of endless world. I thought there was a good connection because the Marwar garden, the idea of garden and cosmos, is that the whole cosmos can be held in a garden. And for people whose world has shrunk so much and who live in this continuous present, it seemed to me that philosophically and thematically it was a precise case to make a comparison between those two ideas. So that is how that came about. It is a digital drawing, obviously, and it was only ever printed or made manifest as a tiny little enamel print on metal. I've always loved planometrics – I went to this exhibition and made this drawing – and then I think what happened is that for many years you get this interchange of what we are doing in the office and what the students are doing, so a number of students were making drawings which were a bit like this.

I want to talk through this because the Bartlett asked me to take part in this wonderful seminar called Spatial Thinking in which neuroscientists, psychologists and artists were all thinking about space. I did this thing on dementia and I went through these drawings, mostly by Paul Klee, to talk about the progress of the disease and the relationship between dementia, navigation and the perception of space. I started calling it *Losing Myself* and I did it for that seminar just to talk about some notion of what space is. I think that Klee is always drawing this predicament of the body in space, and the mind trying to navigate space. This presentation was made for scientists – and it's funny, the scientists really didn't understand this – they wanted a diagram! But I was saying that when a child is born it thinks it is its mother; there is no sense of a separate body. So what happens when that sense of separation comes about? What is the space that is negotiated between the child and its mother? Is that space merely dimension? In what sense could you conceive of it? I was saying that that space must come with a whole raft of desires and taboos and permissions, so it's already profoundly

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contaminated – I mean positively contaminated – in terms of what the child will become. As they move on to negotiate their way through the world, the sense of a space opening out – the opening out of that space and your ability to understand the dimensions of your own body – is indeed itself spatialised. For me to understand the composite three-dimensional object, for me to make my way around the room, feeling a table, I am moving out into the world. But that is coming with everything else. In a sense, the way in which we acquire language and other things must be similar; the way we acquire the world and this negotiation of space are profoundly interfolded. The sense of the way in which we move to and through and between things is in the way we navigate; the world becomes an extension out.

I was trying to say that space is not merely dimension, it's the realm of possible actions; it's our brain's capacity to teach us to understand the realm of possible actions – not just the actions we can make but the actions which we can imagine making. I was trying to think about that *a priori* quality of the mind that is space, and then space as a learned and lived thing. From the kind of high point of your life, what happens when dementia starts? I mean, even before dementia starts, I am beginning to lose my peripheral vision. I am not able to move around as easily as I could before. In due course it will become harder and harder for me to see, to hear and to experience space. My capacity to hold all of that space actively in my mind diminishes. So I begin to shore it up with memories and sketchbooks and photographs and my family. There is a whole infrastructure around me that allows me to hold that spatial – I used to say the word *model*, but the psychologists didn't like it – that spatial idea or entity intact, that thing which is my spatial continent, the idea that there are mementos and things we hold that allow us to extend out.

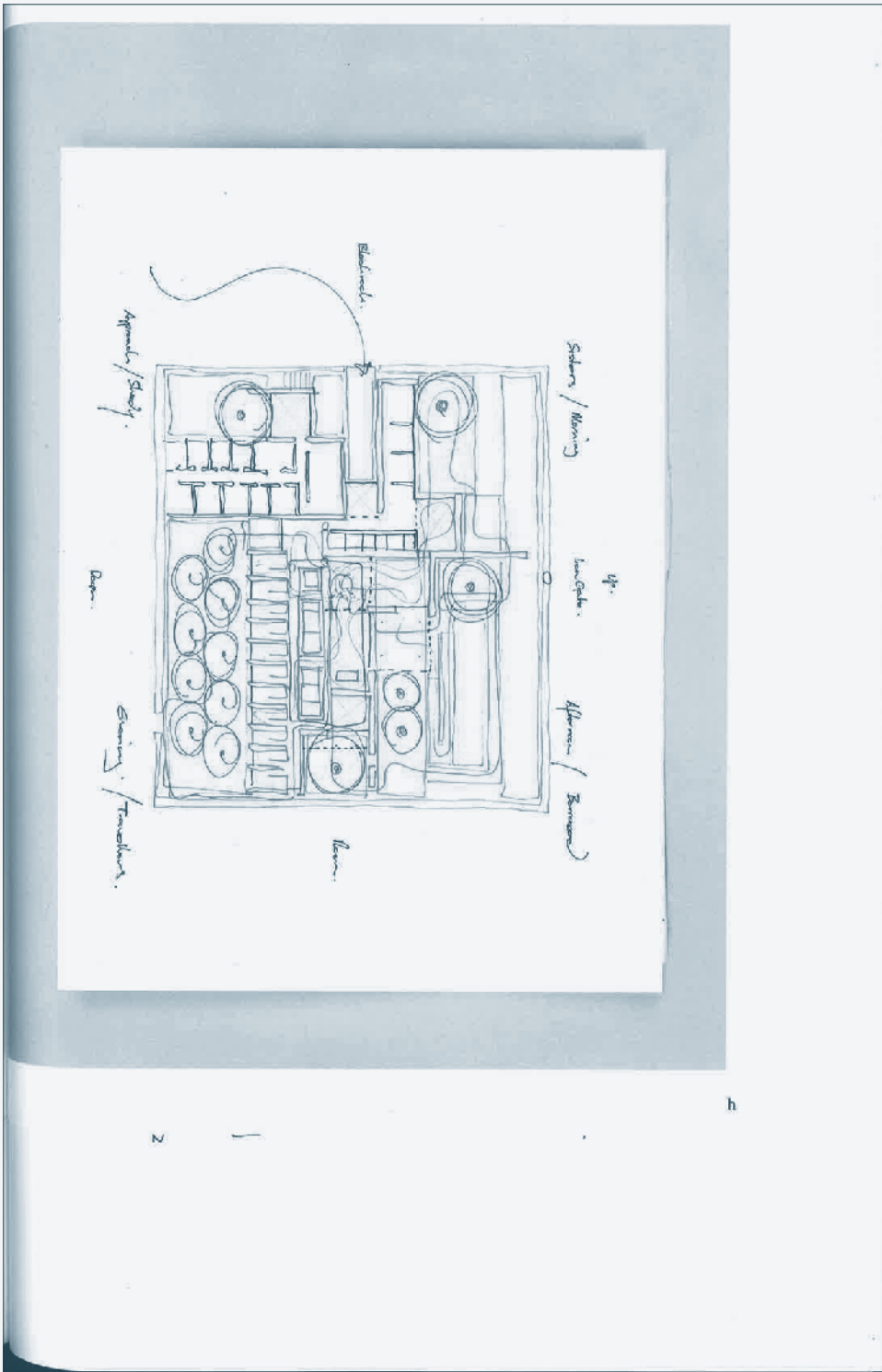
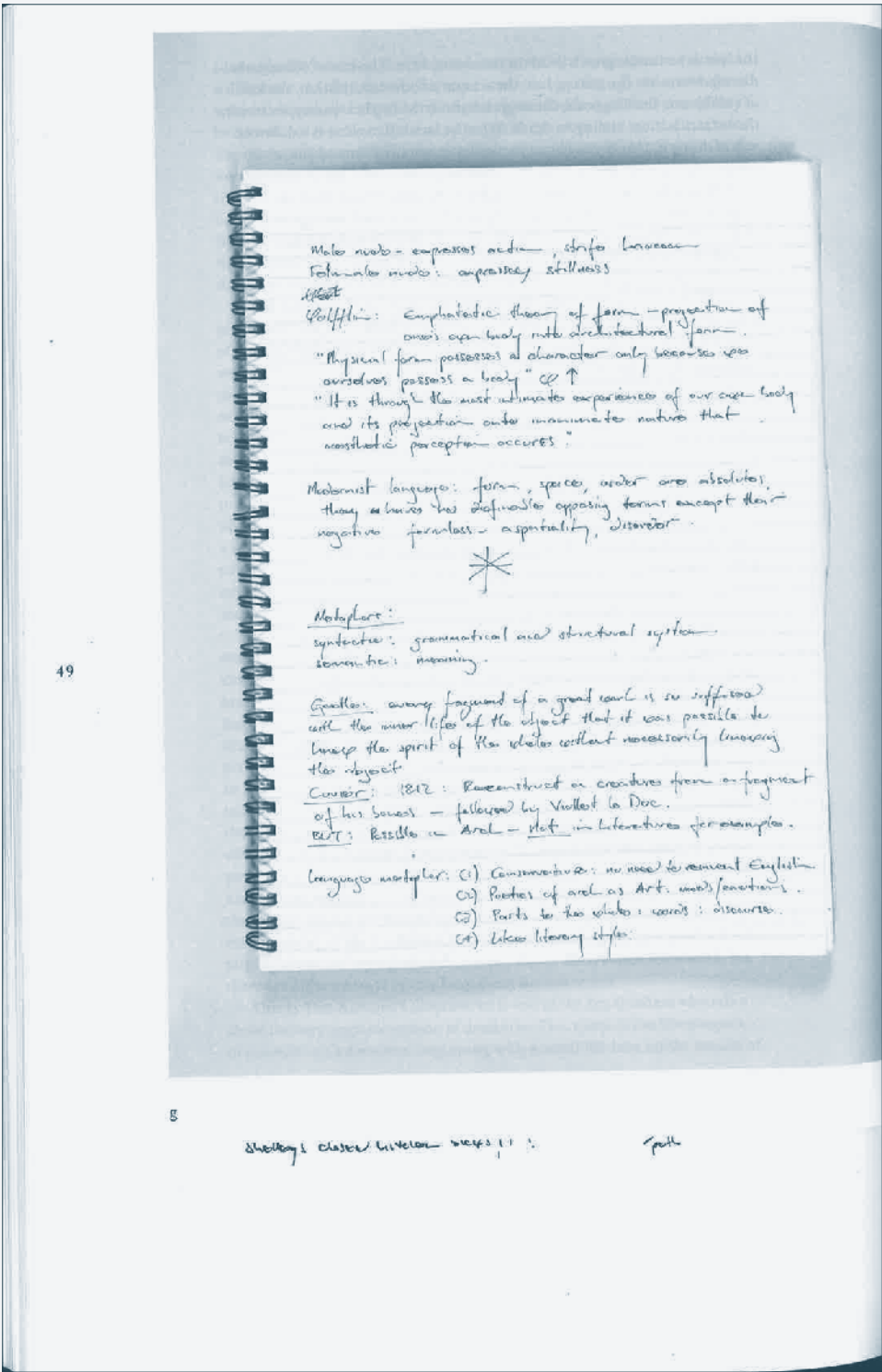
Then there is the sense in which older people with dementia, that the world which they occupy, is one in which the relationships between them and things are diminishing bit by bit and breaking down; their ability to navigate and to remember is lessening. I often ask 'Why are you able to sit here and feel comfortable?' Because you remember how you got here and therefore you can plan how to get away from here; it allows you to situate yourself. But if you were simply sitting here looking at a man of a certain age talking to you in a room, and you had forgotten what was behind you, there would be that sense of disorientation and being moved into this fragile continuous present, the sense in which these things are just being wiped out continuously by the condition. In a certain pathology the condition is pretty relentless. It affects people in different ways, but eventually it always ends in the same way – as a sort of destruction of your world and the capacity to be in the world. With the extinguishing of your ability to hold your own spatial self comes the extinguishing of the fundamental aspects of your body. So that is what I was talking about and trying to understand – that it always ends with death, but there are different ways of thinking about it.

This is Tim Kitwood's diagram; he is one of the key thinkers who talks about the very negative version of dementia. This spiral is the life prospect of someone with dementia, beginning with normal life here on the outside of

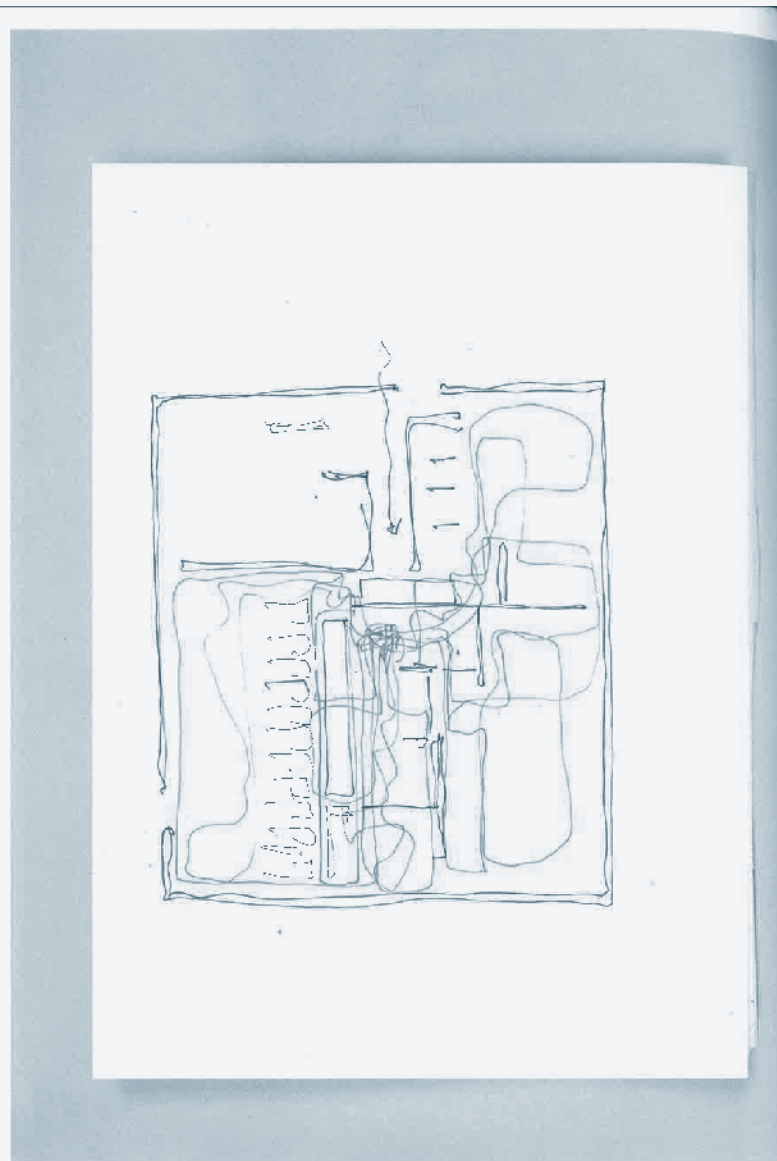
Shelley's class/ lecture text 11 8. 10th

the spiral, and ending with death in the centre, here. The loss of efficacy, the disempowerment, the getting lost, the accusation, the invalidation, the loss of confidence, the diagnosis, the stigmatisation, the further disempowerment, the infantilisation, ending in death. What he says is that there is a different way of doing it, that if you have a particular community around you, a community that holds you in place – it always ends there – but this provides a very different trajectory. He is a sociologist, he makes these kind of diagrams. But I find them quite moving as a way of understanding the role of a caring community, and in relation to people with dementia. There is a sense that you are being held, being cherished, by someone else, that your personhood is being maintained by other people around you, that there is a community of people who stand in for the things you are losing and hold them for you, that that allows you to have a different kind of depth. The idea of what we were calling a spiritually meaningful death was very important in relation to this project.

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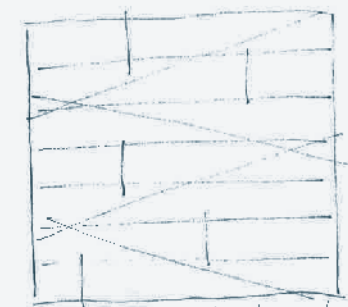
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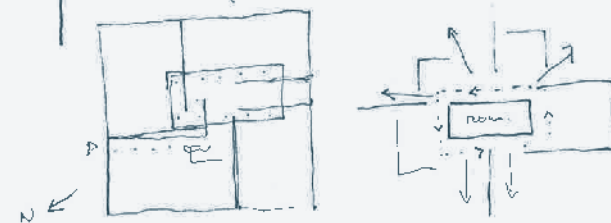
Shelley's classical building - sketch 1.1.1.

path

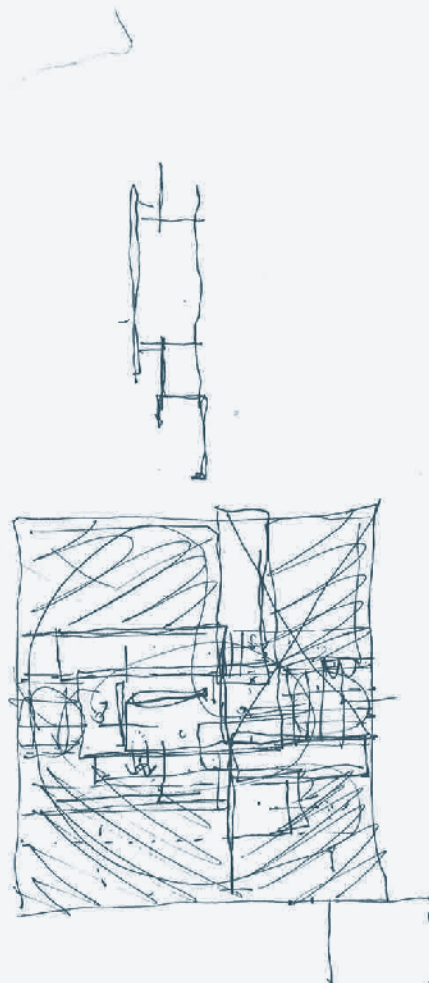
Sketch
Rising through

- Atkinson: ramps through a layered system, terminal
- orthogonal structures - diagonal spatial repetition
- Atkinson moving towards lit garden?
- journey up a hill
- ? arrival destination - intervals?
- "figuralist" / Stair - Jacobs L. - Angles.

The 'pulpit' of the villa stair: the first thing seen is the end of the route - returning to the lower bay.

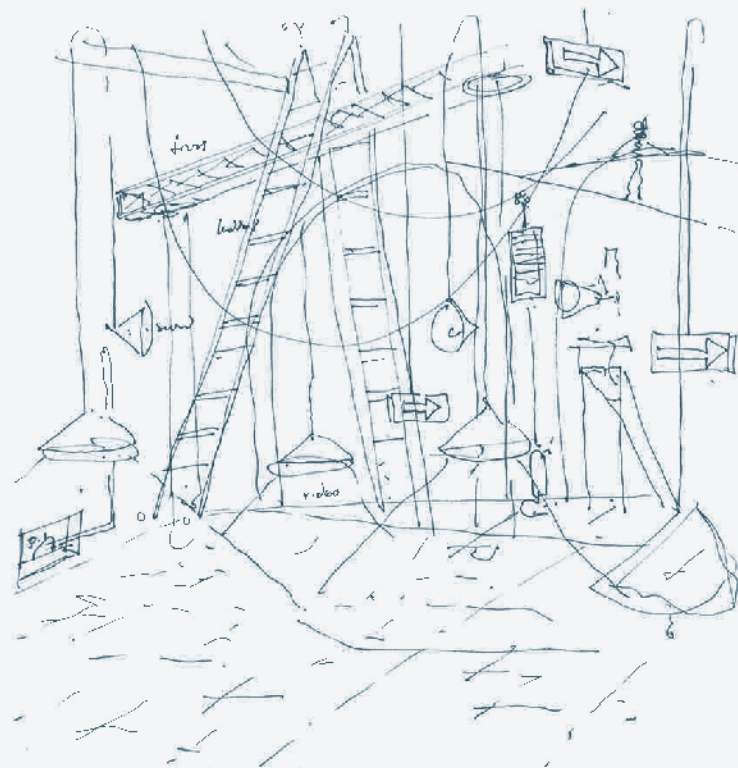


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BRIDGE.

- ① It should be a structure, not lose a structure.
- ② It should visibly overcome structural limits - that means structural system should be limited.
- ③ The behaviour should be the bridge not forced to it.
- ④ It should innovate with a material - I think the glass has mileage - very thin! Rethink glass & light. - very dark brick bridge.
- ⑤ Restress - pref Jo Curren.
- ⑥ Geology / Seabed, increased material history of site.
- ⑦ All bridges: I see areas made up of steel cables / trusses - why not use mixture of ancient structural principle with other modern materials.
- ⑧ We should design its reflectance.



concrete floor as fishing drawing.
 Make a 1:10 model of the space in the office
 walls around the edge.
 Everything becomes implicated in the space
 Spatialised sound thickest

Losing Myself 2

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Yevryia and I did a pitch to be in the Venice Biennale and we were invited to do the Irish Pavilion. We said that we wanted to go back to the Alzheimer's Centre and see it in all its successes and failures, to try and use that to extend the conversation about dementia, what dementia is. There are two aspects to it: one of them is the website and the other is the installation.

The website presents a series of paintings that were done by people with dementia. UCL held these workshops on dementia, and to some extent these were used diagnostically. We were saying, well, every one of these paintings is an artefact, a piece of art, somebody representing their world at that time; that their primary function is not as a diagnostic thing but as a manifestation of somebody's world. We had lots of these conversations, some of them with experts. They are 45-minute conversations and this one woman talked really clearly about her attempt to walk through the city and she described what she is thinking, the strategy she uses. She is an amazing woman because she tries to be very independent. We thought these conversations were very good for architects dealing with projects on dementia, to really understand the nature of what we are dealing with. What we found is that when you mention dementia somebody will tell you a story of someone they know with dementia; it is a very common thing – more so than almost anything else I can think of. So we made up a whole section of the website where the stories could be told. In this case it was a guy from New Zealand whose grandmother grew up in Birmingham. When she had dementia she kept saying, 'Oh, I wish I could see Dee, I wish I could see Dee.' Dee was her old friend from Birmingham. So eventually, with all sorts of trials and tribulations they said, 'All right, we are going to take you back to Birmingham from New Zealand to see Dee.' She got lost in the Hong Kong airport, which was a disaster, and the whole thing was really traumatic. They got her back, sat her in front of Dee and she said, 'Oh, I wish I could see Dee, I wish I could see Dee.' So those are the sort of stories we were telling. We spoke to anthropologists, philosophers, neuroscientists, psychologists, and there is a whole stack of these interviews on the website, so you can see it from a very technical point of view, from an architectural point of view, from a personal point of view.

One of the most extraordinary things we discovered in this process was with white rats running around in a box. There is a little sensor planted in their brain. Every time these particular dedicated cells in the hippocampus fire, the sensor fires. Then the frequency of firing is mapped onto the box. It shows you that as they come into this world, or into this space, their brains lay out an approximately hexagonal grid. It is very, very precise – it is at 7 degrees to the long axis of the room – and every time they cross a node point on that grid, a cell fires. They are called grid cells. But, for example, the seat you are sitting in now has got place cells. So, you have a place cell that is associated with that seat. If you came back to this room and it had been turned into apartments in 20 years' time, and you were sitting in the sitting room or the kitchen, that exact same place cell would fire.

One of these neuroscientists, John O'Keefe, won the Nobel Prize because it is a major discovery that the brain actually has place cells or grid cells. If

you go back to Kant and this idea of the innate capacities of the mind, you understand that space is a thing that is comprehended in the mind. Here these scientists were saying, 'We've now found' – it is like finding the site of consciousness – 'things that are neurons that fire and tell you where you are in space.' We spoke to the anthropologists, they really didn't like this. They were saying that is not how we understand space. Tim Ingold, who was saying that space was the accumulation of all our stories, describes being in space and navigating space like playing a Bach cello sonata. It is like you are running down a line and you only know what to do next when you get to that point. He's got a completely different idea, and they are both highly insistent. So this is what these conversations on the website are about.

Going to the Biennale and making these sketches of what these spaces might be like, these were the various sketches we made looking at the idea of how we might inhabit the space. We wanted to make a drawing that would respond to the neuroscientists, who talk a lot about egocentric and allocentric models. The egocentric model is the world seen from my perspective; the allocentric model is explained, for example, when all of you look at me you can make a pretty good assessment of what I look like and what you look like from my point of view. If I am looking at you now, I've got a reasonable assessment of what you are seeing. But if I have dementia my ability to make those allocentric representations diminishes. So if I ask you how you got into the building, that is a good allocentric representation because you can take yourself back out into the corridor and into the lift and then back out onto Camden High Street and into the tube, if you like. So you are seeing the world from many centres at the same time. That is an extraordinary capacity that the brain has which diminishes with dementia.

We thought an architectural plan is an amazing allocentric representation because it allows you to see all of the building at once. We then thought, well, it gives you a very privileged view of the building, in the sense that it allows you to hold it all in your mind at one time. I suppose if you design a building through that, you are designing the whole thing as an aesthetic proposition in which all the bits are intended to be in some form of harmony with each other through the plan. But how would somebody with dementia experience that plan of the building, if they can't hold that allocentric representation in their mind? Now I am not saying the plan itself, but your allocentric representation of, say, this building is not unlike a plan. Most people who don't draw plans still have allocentric representations of buildings in their mind. These allow them to place themselves in the building vis-à-vis other bits of the building. What happens when that collapses, so that the room that you just left is not necessarily one you can remember and therefore the room that you are supposed to go into isn't one you can predict? What does that do to change, or ask about, the function of the plan of a building for people with dementia?

The conceit of the drawing, really, is that the moving pencil is the apprehending mind, and as it apprehends, the pencil you might usually draw with will leave its residue behind, but in this instance it might disappear in

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some places. The drawing isn't a finished artefact, it is only something you can see in time, and therefore it becomes a time-bound entity.

I think this project is very much about the limits of drawing. When is it that the plan fails? Or that the drawing fails? We realised it had to be an animated description. That's what we were trying to do.

These are the first experiments we did. We built these desks that we put into the room next door. They were manufactured for the sake of the project. They've got glass tops and cameras underneath. We set up the drawing studio on the basis of that. What we liked about this was the idea of the ghost of the hand on this white glass table. This is a razor blade here that we used to scratch off tracing paper. The drawing that you see here is not really what the thing is. It is the movement of the hand and the pen across it, a ghost of that movement. Then this is one of Yeoryia's sketches; you can just see the plan of the Alzheimer's Centre here and trying to think about dividing it up into a whole series of drawings, and the notion that they are time-bound drawings. I think we got 64 squares and 16 time capsules and so you get 1,024 drawings that then make a spatial representation of the building through a 24-hour cycle. Then we thought we could impose on that – if you could do the 24-hour cycle then you could also do the year – look at the gardens go through a year while the building goes through a day.

I love this one of Yeoryia's drawings, it is lovely; it's an initial scoring so it reads more like a musical score than an architectural drawing, but that's still the walled garden and then each one of those is a number of a page. Each colour is a time snap so there are 16 time snaps, and we are saying what places in the building would be capable of having attention shown to them in any time snap during the day. It is like scoring the space of the building over a period of time.

The idea here is that the drawing starts to become collective, collaborative. Each colour is a different person drawing. We realised it couldn't be the two of us, or one of us, drawing; we needed more people, to be closer to the experience of the building – a community of people co-occupying and a community of people enacting this through drawing.

We wanted to work with people with dementia, but the Alzheimer's Society wouldn't allow us to do that. One of the curious things about this is that it was meant to be a collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society, but when we went to collaborate, at that moment, there was this new organisation which was very resistant to collaboration. I think they thought they were going to be criticised. We asked if we could work with people in the centre and they said no, for human rights reasons. So we had to find a way which I think actually is stronger. I think the architect's job is to imagine how other people live in the world. We don't need them to make a drawing for us because we should be able to make that architectural representation for ourselves. We made a decision – we have been teaching together for some 20-odd years – and we would go back over our cohorts and ask 16 ex-students to work with us, and ask each one of them to be a person in the building and to take on the

role of one of the 16 users of the building and they would draw that person's day. Sometimes you will see a drawing of somebody waking up in a room by themselves and sometimes there are ten of them in a room together. We then had to think about how to draw that.

This is Michiko, one of our ex-students, who works with us. She would come in, we would talk about it and describe the general process and then we would start putting drawings on the wall. Her grandfather had dementia, so here he is in a photograph, and she laid out all this information about him. This drawing: here he is waking up in his room in the morning. One of the 16 rooms in the building is occupied by him, and she is drawing. Really we were working out how to do it, so that was an important drawing for us because Michiko was really good at drawing the line and knowing how the line functioned. At various stages in the processes you would have lots of different hands making different drawings and this is sort of an idea of what the plan of the building would be like. There doesn't need to be just one person. This is two people in a room, interacting with each other, and they are both drawing at the same time.

Social spaces of the building were drawn by three or four people. Single bedrooms would be drawn by one person. This is the activity room and they are about to start dancing. The furniture has to be moved first of all. We have a lovely photograph of Claire, who is Irish, trying to teach Michiko, who is Japanese, how to dance to 'The Walls of Limerick'. So then this is them gardening, making a gardening drawing together.

Then we started laying these drawings out on a huge floor with the sheets of tracing paper so there are thousands of these drawings. We were really using the iPhone a lot then to make drawings and to overlay them; taking photographs and then using that to build up some digital, physical, drawing. A huge amount of work was done on this huge carpet on the floor. That is the dining room. It became more elaborate – bigger and bigger molecules. That is the dining room drawing: six hands. This is Claire and Michiko on the drawing floor. The drawing floor became this kind of carpet that we inhabited for about a month and we were really working out how to do it as we went along, because at that stage it wasn't really clear how we would convert it into anything.

There was this question, do we step on the drawings or do we not? Do we inhabit the drawings or not?

This is the one you saw being made with the piano, and the song being played. This is the huge archive of drawings that we built up and then we were laying them and overlaying them to try and get some sense of the garden. This is an iPhone photograph, we were getting a lot of ideas from this, we are throwing sheets of tracing paper onto each other and getting this kind of layered sense of reality, and then we were beginning to colour it to try and get the seasons into it.

We started working with a sound artist who was going to make a soundtrack for the whole day; you heard 'The Walls of Limerick' out there,

or all sorts of sounds coming into it. We had someone who was digitally creating a grid-cell map of the whole site, so that is the kind of allocentric grid cells being laid down on the site, which we were using as a kind of leitmotif for inhabitation. When someone moves into a space, the grid cells become active in that space. Then we were putting in other layers of the seasons. We were working with an animation guy, who was great because he was helping to make all these links. These are our students working on them: Lee, who is drawing trees and trying to think about how the garden comes into being. These are the bedrooms here. This is a row of bedrooms, so we are thinking about how you can and cannot see the garden through different rooms. It became our kind of work space for about six weeks. Here we are looking at the seasons and bringing seasonal change into it. These are iPhone photographs, we wanted to get the delicacy of the drawings and the layers and the seasons changing.

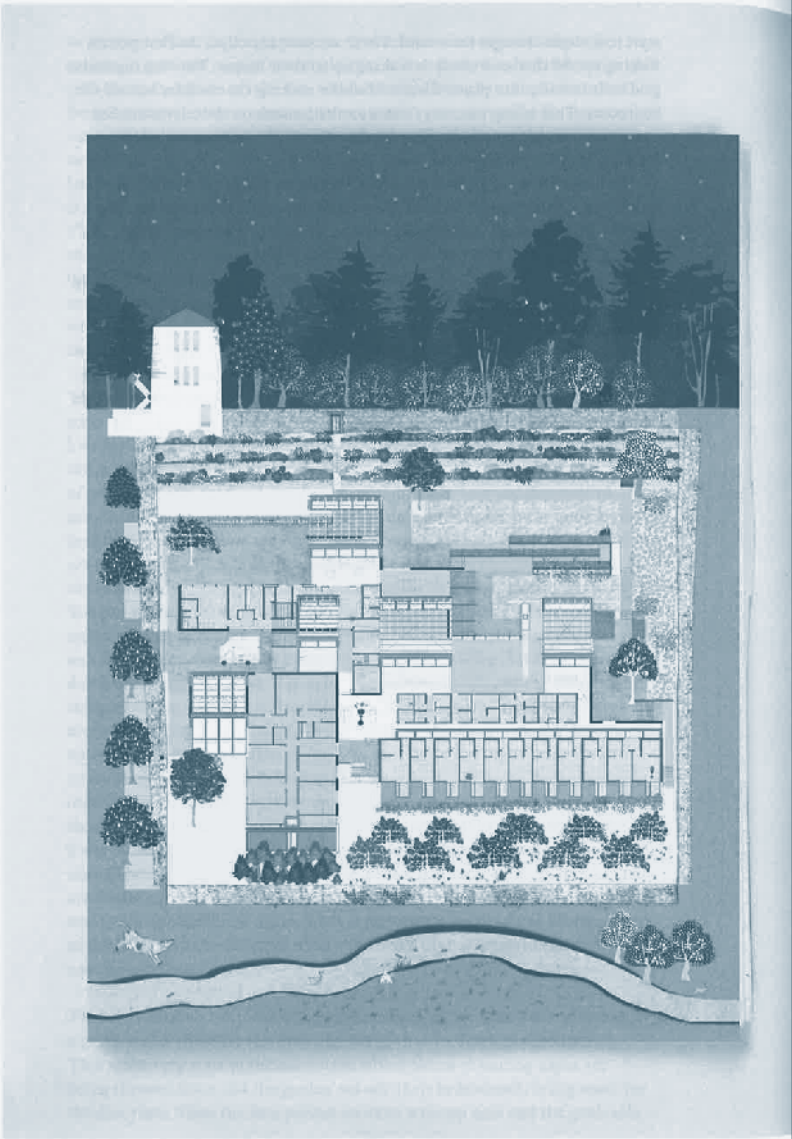
These are the grid cells of all the different drawings, so that is kind of a fixed scene we made trying to bring all the layers together. That's it at night time. I will take you through it quickly, so you get an overall sense. You can see the grid cells at night-time become more apparent. Then we had this system of projectors and data and speakers that we brought into the Biennale to project it onto the floor. That is the whole data set – a massively complex data problem. The projectors are all hanging down. These are speakers. Then these are the tripods which hold the projectors. It is the ordinary, concrete floor of the industrial building that is going to have the drawing projected onto it. You can just see the start of the projection there. And then this is the drawn aspect of the projection. This is it in its full bloom at night with the grid cells and all of them changing in different rooms. You can see that then – projected down onto the floor of the Biennale. The moving hands you can see in these images here, in springtime, late morning, the rooms are full of activities everywhere. That is sort of this lovely moment when you have the Angelus at six o'clock and everything stops for a second, and then night comes in with a rain shower. Then these are images of the way in which the drawings come together in the projection. The whole thing is about throwing down these sheets, so we end up digitally throwing down these sheets of tracing paper as a way of bringing the world into being. This is looking down from the top of one of the evening-time sections of the drawing. That is deep night when they are dreaming. That is the very deepest sleep when the world starts to erase itself, to make itself new again. That is just a little detail of one of the corners of the floor with the different hand-drawn and digital layers of the drawing coming together.

There is a little section which shows the eclipse of the film. I will give you a quick sense: these are the drawings being thrown down in the morning. This is the very start of the animation where pieces of tracing paper are being thrown down and the garden outside their bedrooms is being made for the first time. Then the first person starts to wake up here and the grid cells

start to activate. You get the sound. These are just tiny clips, the first person waking up. So then everybody is waking up in their rooms. This ticking is the grid cells coming into place. This is Michiko making the corridor outside the bedrooms. That is commentary from a football match on the television. See – autumn is coming, or dusk. That is when the whole drawing is present, just for a minute. The rain comes in the early evening.

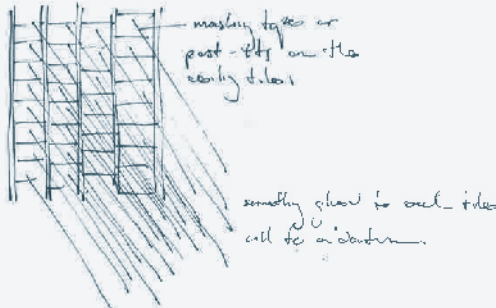
We had something like 64 speakers. We had local sounds. It could be that on the top right corner you would hear a different sound from the left. There were the global sounds and then the very local sounds, including sounds of making the drawing and scratching.

What you are seeing here are just time snatches; obviously the whole thing is completely smooth with the changes. This is bedtime. Then that is deep night. And it ends up doing this kind of erasing. The sound composer did a beautiful thing, he got the piano player playing 'The Lass of Aughrim' and he just started taking notes out. So every time it is repeated, just bit by bit by bit, it is amazing – you can hear it in the background. That's deep night, and then finally you are back to dawn again.

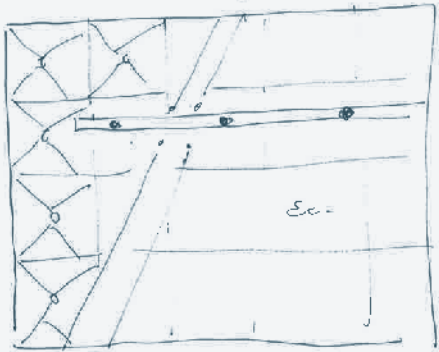


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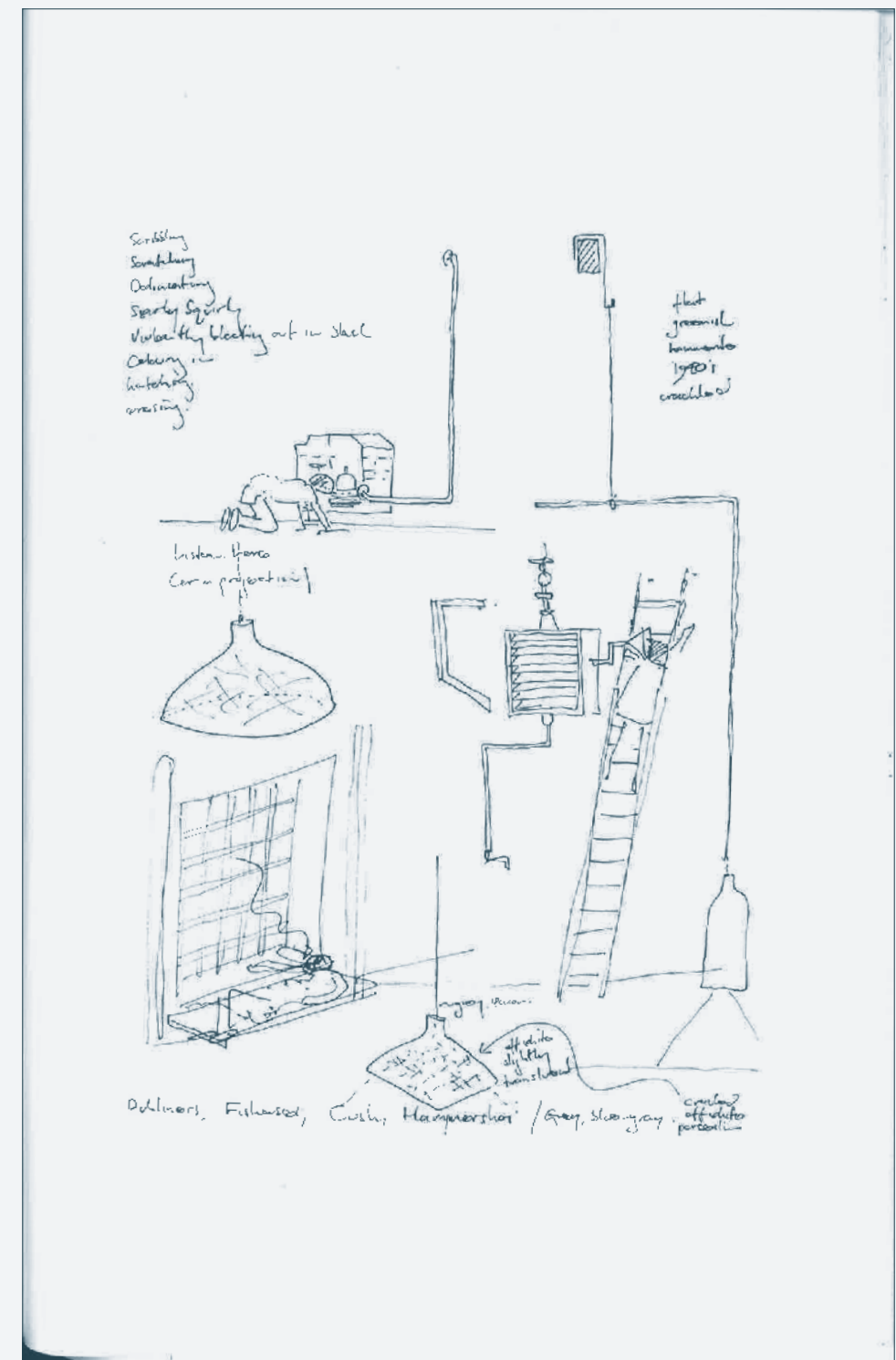
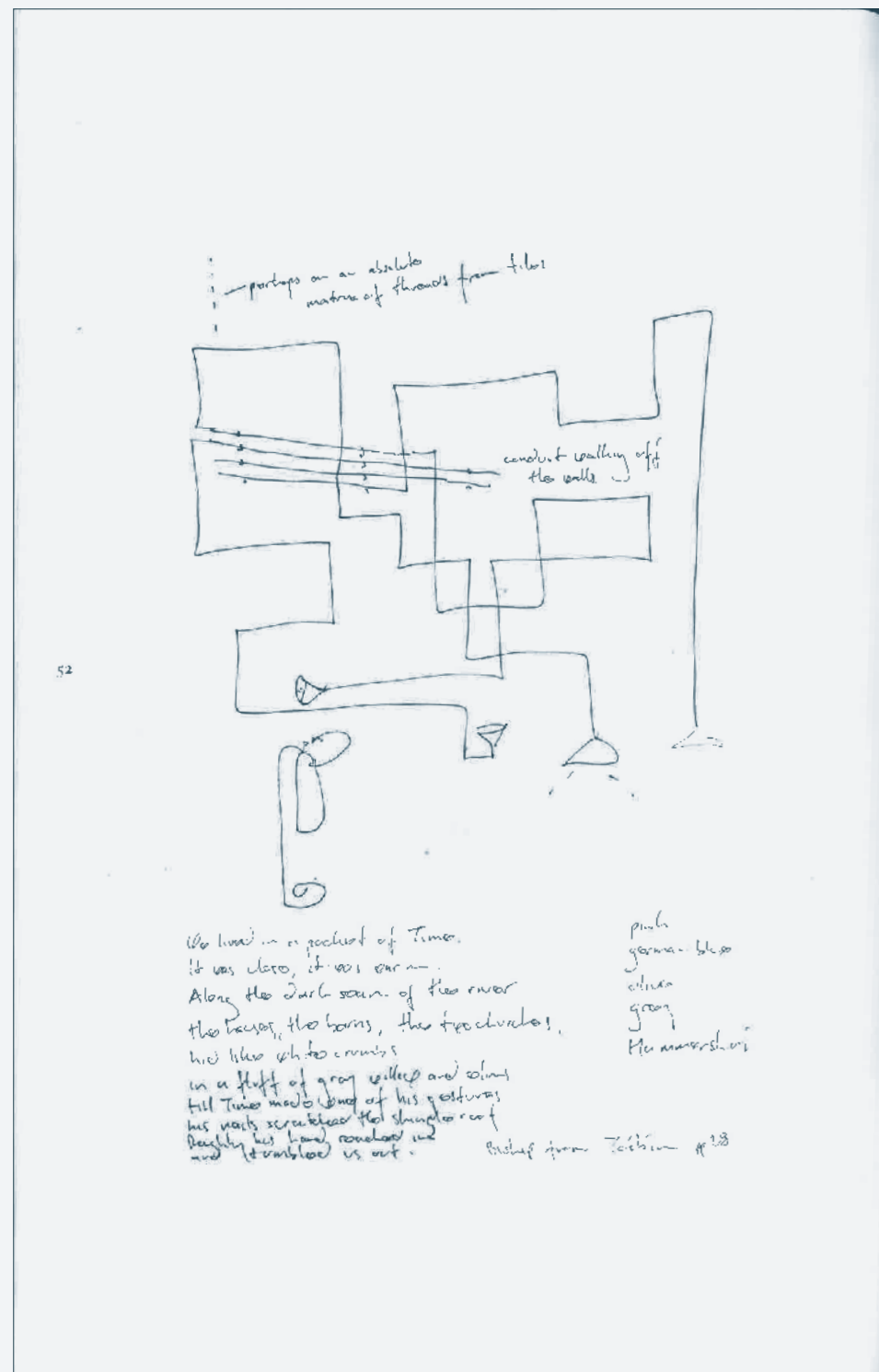


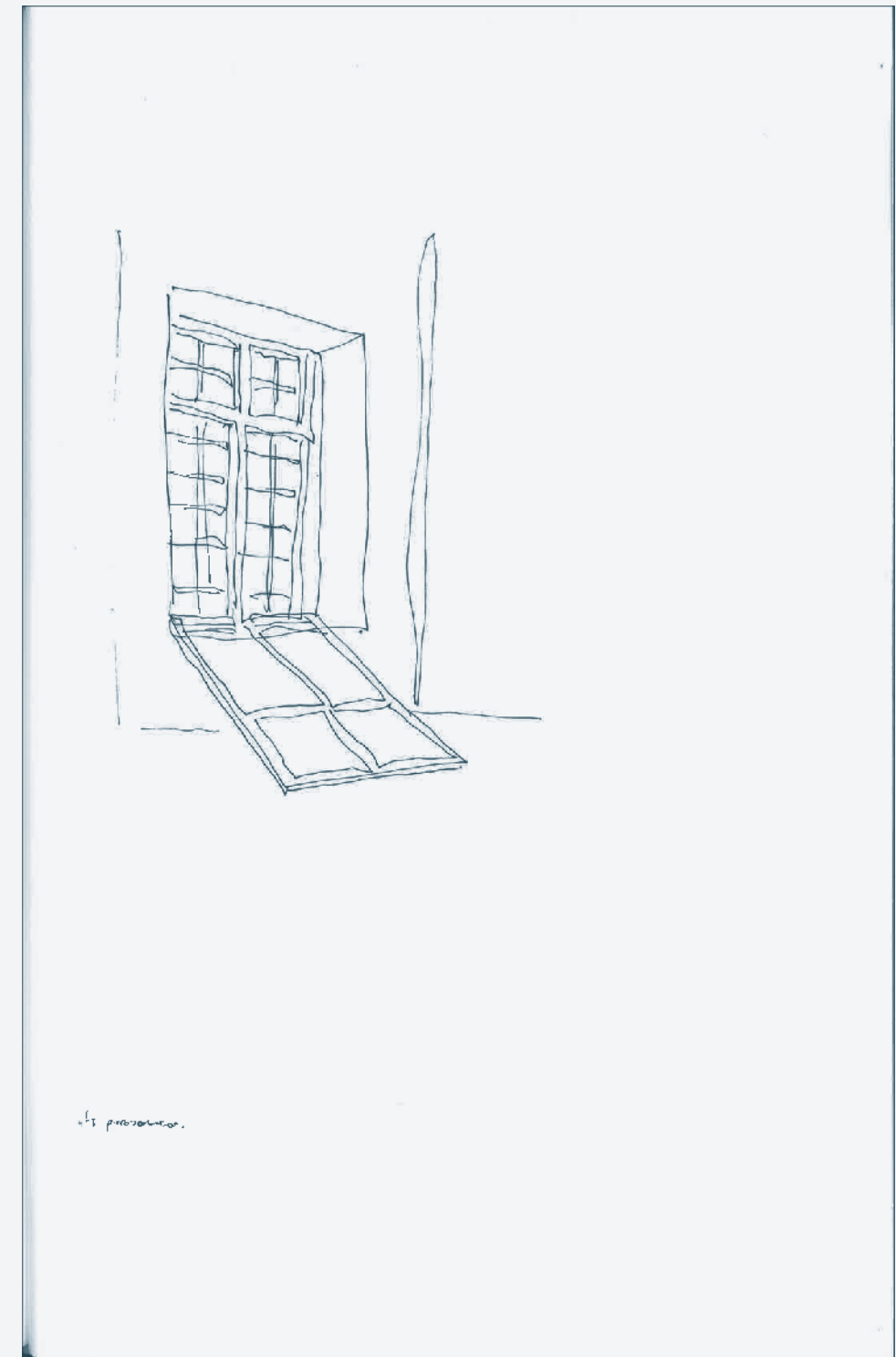
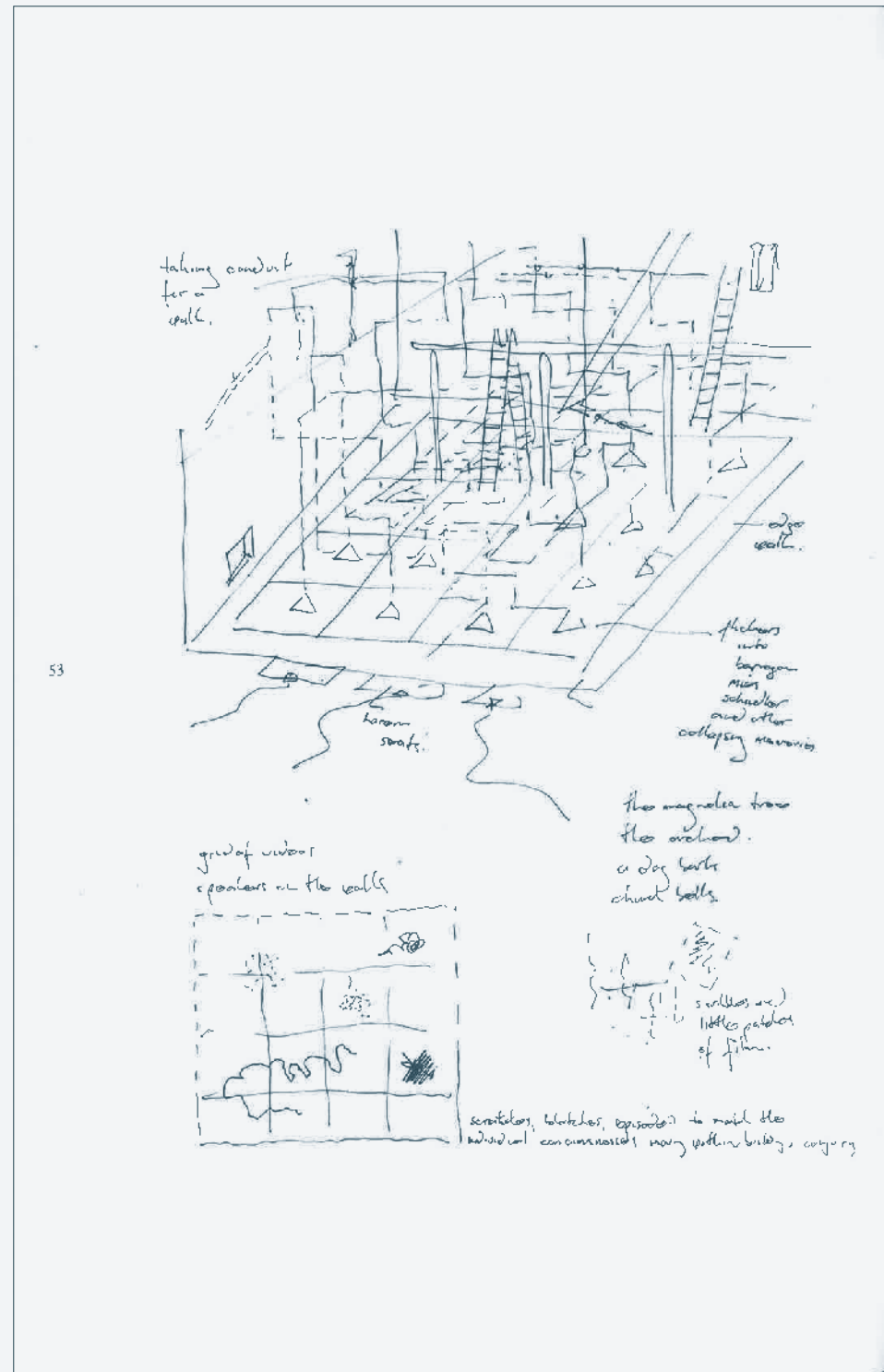
The concrete floor and the early tile!
1000 mm projectors, signs, sunlight
Help to fill the spaces
A row of something - the floor or drawing



Notes
has been
fishing
drawing!

See =

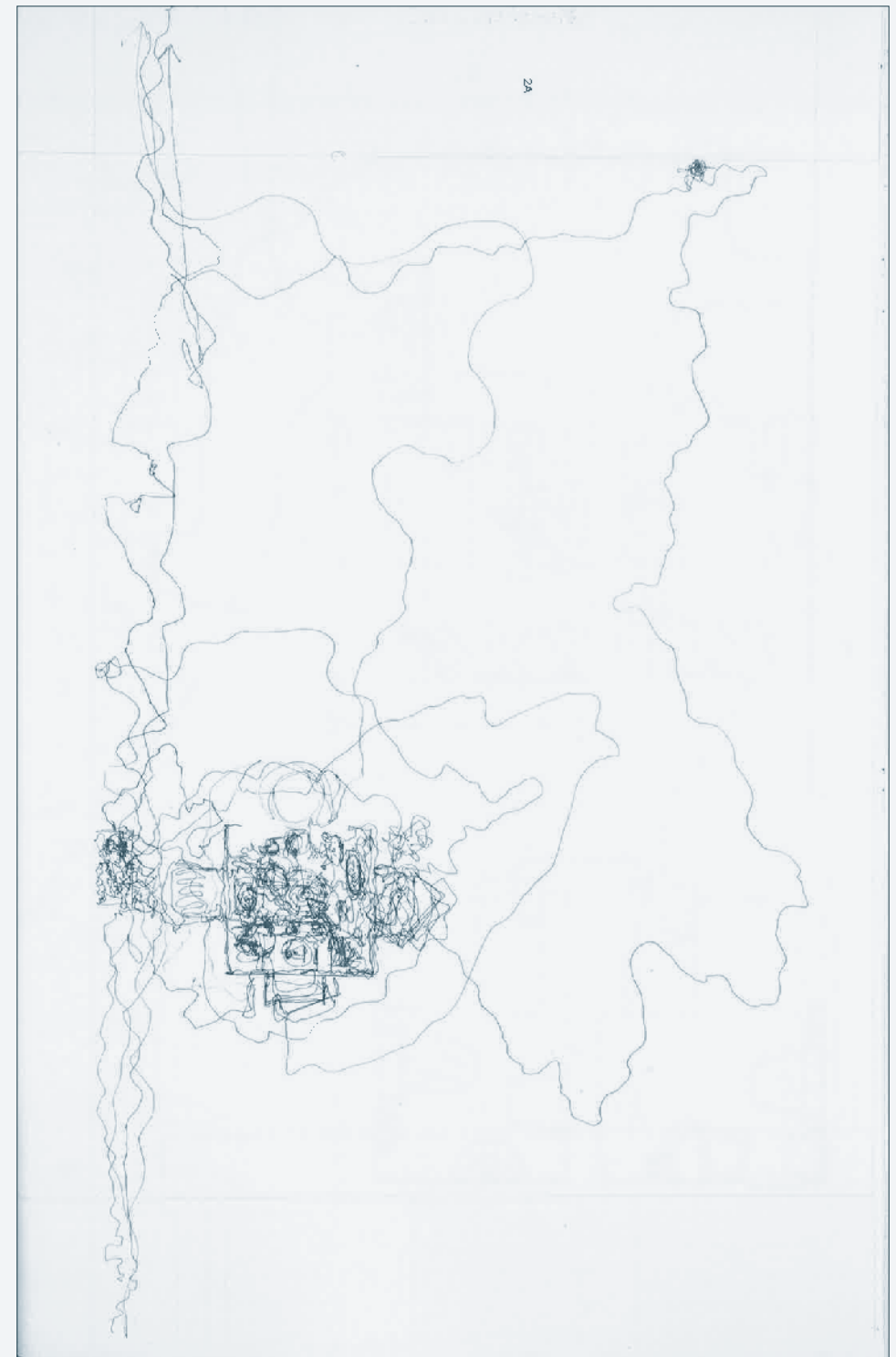
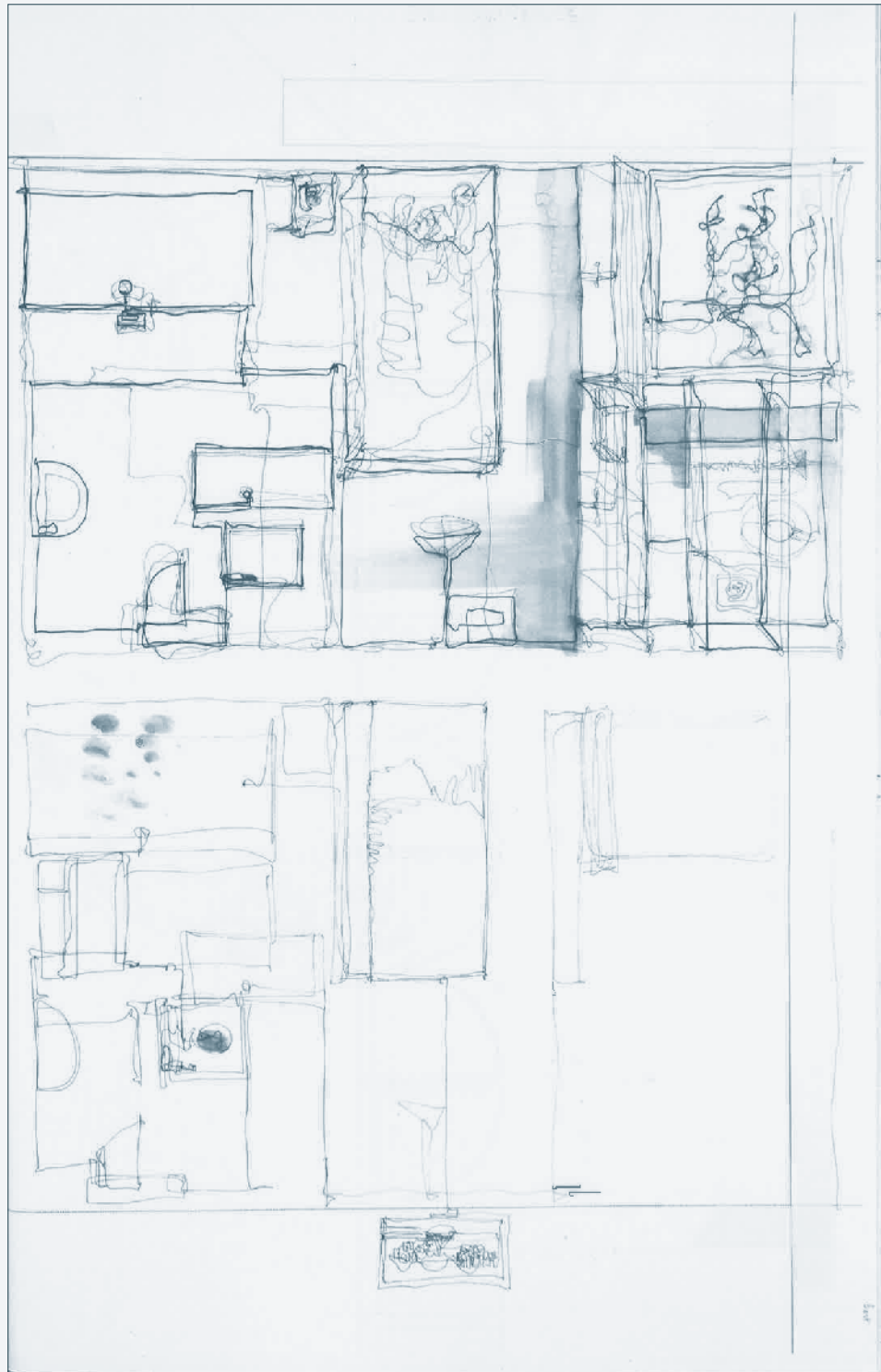


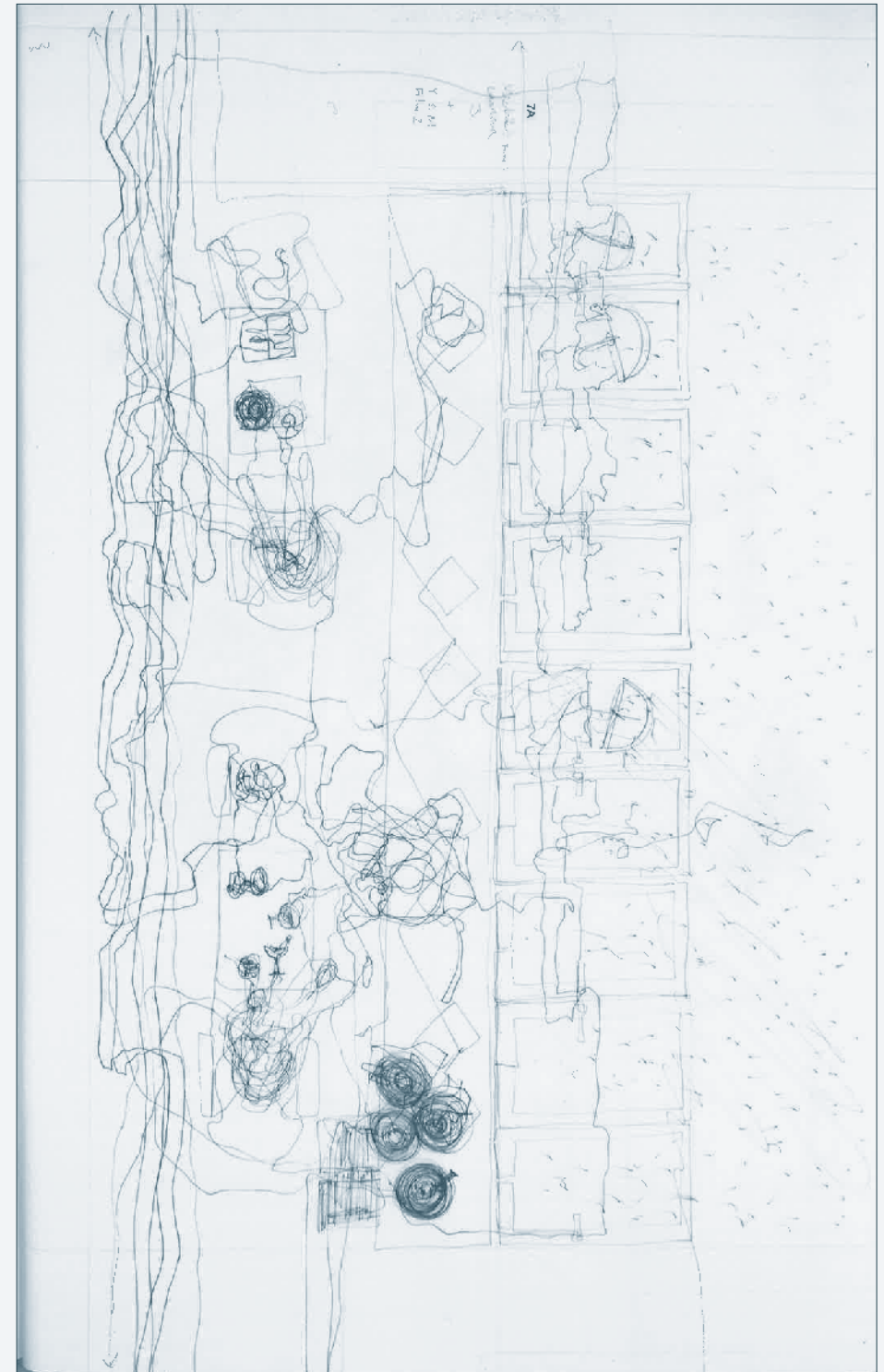
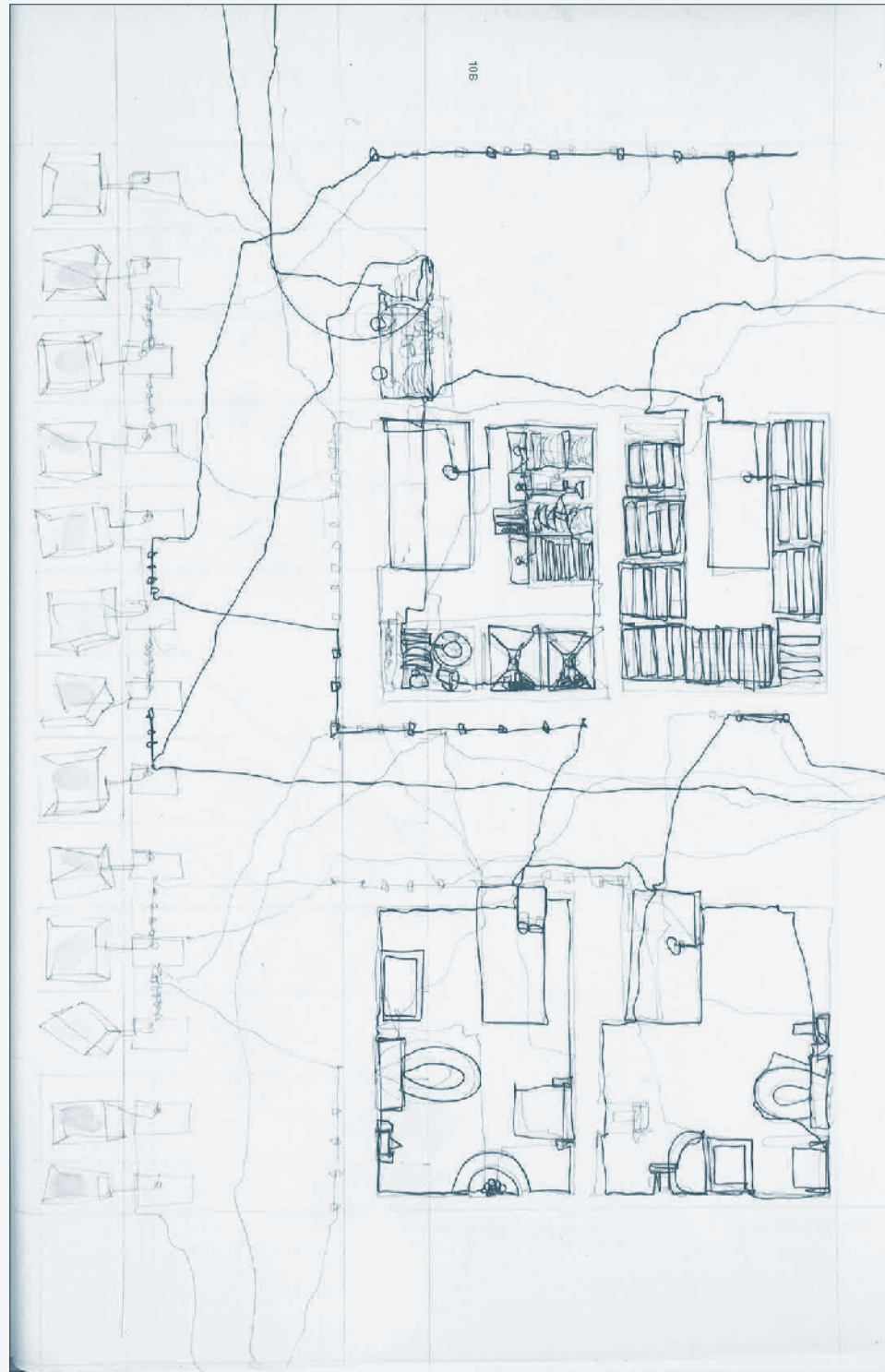


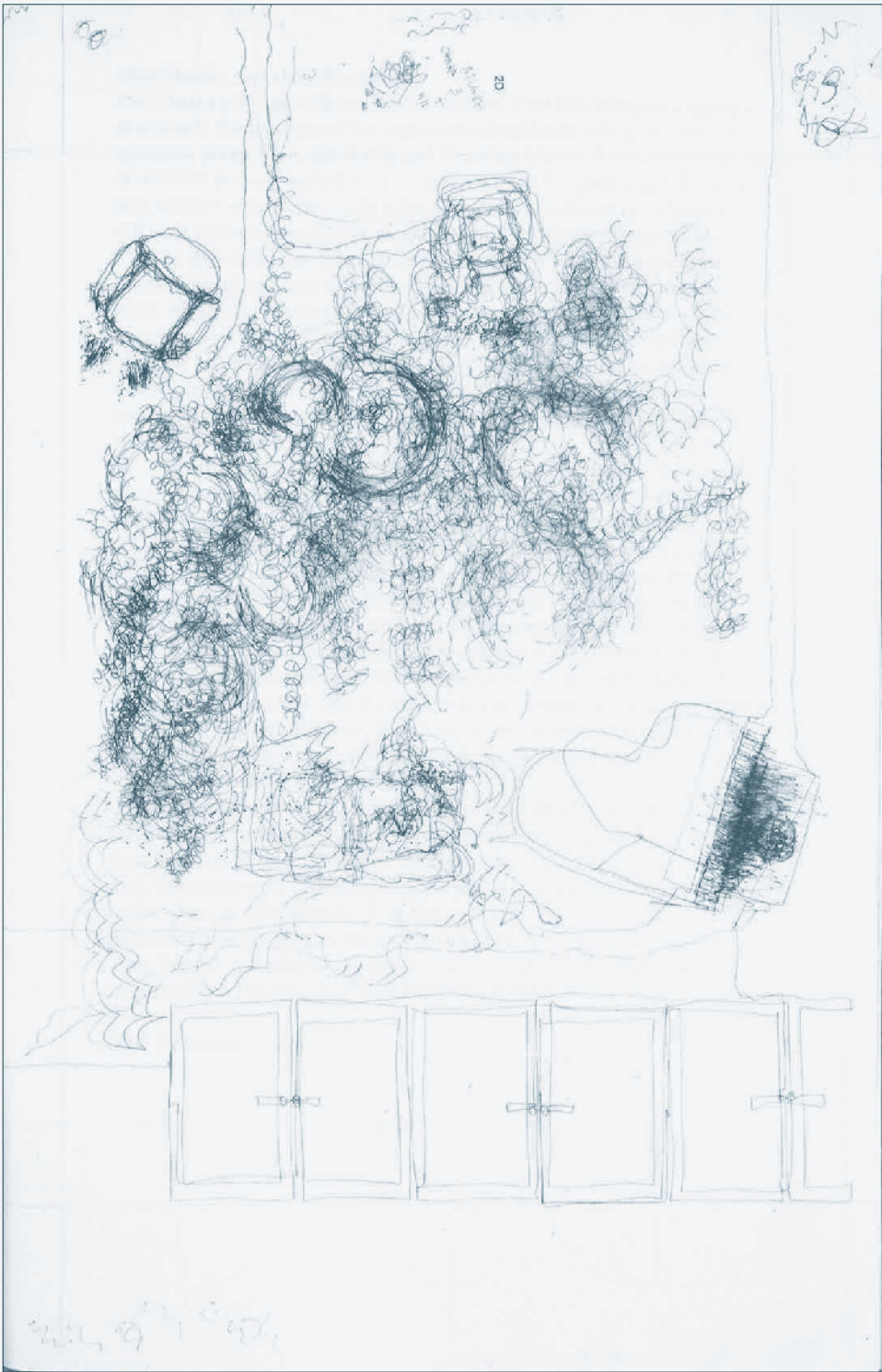
Visions: footnotes:

- looking thru old leaf.
- Whitman: multi. notes
- The last of Anglin.
- See. Some - just - for calls
- Anglin.
- Conversation: sea of the north
- Marguerite: mother: narrow gate: first pencil
- Wheelchair
- Unbroken: present, history.
- Unbroken: diagram.
- Down Breakers.
- Gonzalez: Risk
- Gonzalez: Purpose
- Gonzalez
- Folio: Juan. Hejeh
- Ula.
- Ula.
- Ula.
- Bronze by Gale.
- Schmarz.
- Schmarz
- Hilbert's room

- Vischer
- Vischer.
- Block: cells - good calls
- Block: cells
- Vicker: cells.
- Plagues and Tangles
- Progress of diseases
- Hippocampus: longy due spiritual memory
- Dates up to the top
- Part: circling
- Lady for the stairs
- Butler's letters.
- Fireplaces - plastic fireplaces
- TV: no. 1.
- Floor: L.C. Building notes: 10/2.
- Denny: no.
- Miles
- Schindler
- Locked gates
- Daylight & motion: something
see earlier notes
- Mich. Lee's door
- Local schoolchildren
- Nail bar / hand-dresser
- Front door: H+S.
- Ambulance
- Garden Pavilion: initial use
- Reiser: plants
- About: borders.
- Parts of Linen.
- Restaurant: feeding
- Blocked door to garden
- House
- Sander
- Sander
- Sander
- Travellers.
- Drawing: sound
- Bill: see the top in the room: next door
- Day: Cere. and Reap. for
- Schindler
- Schindler
- 6 steps of Atz - see some notes
earlier
- Location: 10/2/10.
- Hearing: Suter
- Paul: Lasso
- Schindler: 10/2/10







McLaughlin, N. (2016). 'Losing Myself'. Arts Council Ireland.

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Losing Myself

Niall McLaughlin | 21 September

In the Autumn of 2015, Yeoryia Manolopoulou and I were selected by the Arts Council and Culture Ireland as Co-Commissioners/Curators of Ireland's entry to the Venice Biennale 2016. We were inspired by the brief for the Biennale – Reporting from the Front – and welcomed the opportunity to reflect on our own experience as architects working to 'improve the quality of life [of the people we design for] while working on the margins, under tough circumstances, facing pressing challenges'.

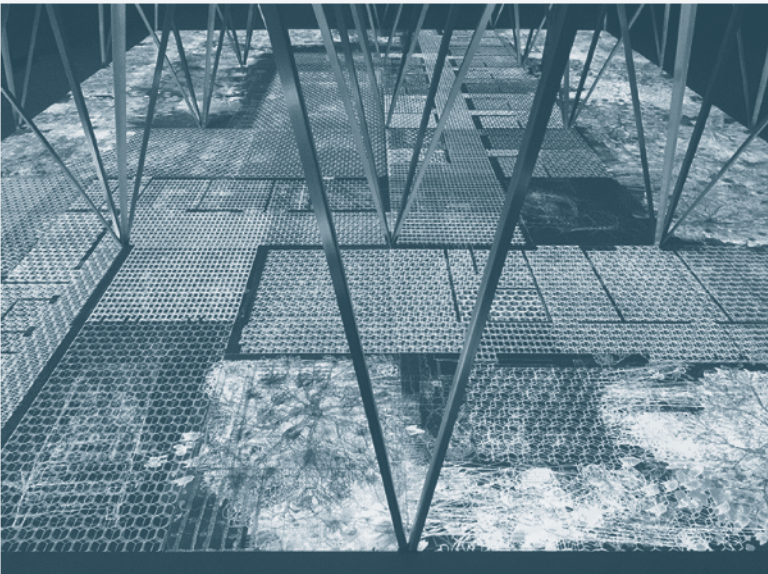
As architects, we continually strive to identify and understand the needs, aspirations and capacities of our clients. A successful design accommodates and interprets these within a seemingly simple solution. The difficulty for the architect in designing for dementia is that it can be difficult to conceive of the world as experienced by the people who will inhabit the building.

Losing Myself – The Irish Entry to La Biennale di Venezia 2016. Copyright Riccardo Tosetto.

From 1999–2014, Niall McLaughlin Architects worked with dementia sufferers and those who care for them. We wanted to understand how architecture could work to improve the quality of their lives; to connect them to the world and to create a situation of ease in the community. We collaborated extensively with the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland as they struggled to conceptualise, commission, construct and inhabit their first new building: the Alzheimer's Centre in Dublin. The building was to be a test case for future developments, both in its successes and its failures.

The Biennale offered a chance to revisit this particular building, and to continue to seek answers to questions that we had asked ourselves time and again: questions about memory and place, perception and space, projection and the passage of time. We recommenced conversations we had been having with neuroscientists at University College London, and spoke to experts at Trinity College Dublin and the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling. We met with philosophers and psychologists. We asked people who work at the Alzheimer's Centre and families of people who use the building what they thought of it, what they thought worked and what didn't. We recorded this research on a website, www.losingmyself.ie.

Using what we had learned, Yeoryia and I sought to create an immersive installation in the Arsenale in Venice that could in some way represent the reality of spatial experience for a person with dementia. When an architect draws a plan, it describes all of the parts of the building at once: a vantage point that is never experienced by the occupant. We wanted to create drawings from the perspective of inhabitation. Through a projected animation, we have overlaid drawings that describe the experiences of multiple occupants at once, and over time. The medium allows us to depict the 'continuous present tense' that seems to characterise a condition which erodes the individual's ability to project and remember. The drawing on the floor is accompanied by a soundscape built of layers from the present and the past. Aspects of this soundscape reflect and describe the activity of the moving drawing. However, familiar sounds from the past are also introduced, creating a sense of comfort with an undercurrent of confusion.



Losing Myself – The Irish Entry to La Biennale di Venezia 2016. Copyright Niall McLaughlin Architects and Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

In the last year, I have come close to answering some of the questions I have had about the brain, how we understand space, and how this understanding is changed by dementia. As is often the case, however, the process has raised as many questions as it has answered. I look forward to continuing to seek answers through our research, and when a version of the installation tours Ireland in 2017.



Critical Articles / Reviews

Braidwood, E.
(2017). 'News
Feature: Are
Architects Doing
Enough to Tackle
Dementia?'.
Architects' Journal.



News feature: Are architects doing enough to tackle dementia?

27 April, 2017 By Ella Braidwood



Dementia is one of the biggest problems facing the country's ageing population, yet very few practices are skilled up on how design can benefit sufferers, reports *Ella Braidwood*

DESIGN TIPS • DUTCH APPROACH

Last week scientists revealed that the drug Trazodone, formerly used to treat depression, could help slow down the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The drug is not a cure, however, and won't be available for several years given the length of clinical trials. By 2025, it is predicted that more than a million people in the UK will have dementia – soaring to two million by 2051. Already today, one in six people over 80, and 40,000 people under 65, are suffering from dementia. Could changes in design of the built environment help dementia sufferers now? Are architects doing enough to consider their needs?

Níall McLaughlin, one of the few architects to have thoroughly researched and tackled these issues, thinks both architects and clients need to do much more.

'It's extraordinary that environmental care for people with dementia [is not] considered an absolutely frontline subject for people commissioning architects,' he says. 'But there aren't that many good architects working in this area.'

Last year his practice – in collaboration with AY Architects' Yeoryia Manolopoulou – addressed this issue at the Venice Biennale. Their 'Losing Myself' exhibition for the Irish pavilion set out to communicate the different ways people with dementia perceive space.

Pulling together the show, and his experiences of talking to people with dementia, changed McLaughlin's way of thinking – 'not just about ageing,' he says, 'but about what I am and what we are'.

But he adds: 'I see very few interesting buildings designed for people with dementia'.

Dementia remains one of the biggest problems facing our ageing population, causing more disability in later life than cancer, heart disease or strokes and costing the UK an estimated £26 billion a year.

The best thing to do is to enable people with dementia to engage with architects

Support and treatment for sufferers – including well-designed environments – can help them lead fulfilled lives. Last month, the Alzheimer's Society launched a Dementia Friendly Housing Charter, aimed at embedding best practice with professionals in the sector including architects.

Although the society's programme partnership project manager Emma Bould says the response has been 'positive', she is urging the industry to engage more.

'For real change to happen we need industry bodies like the RIBA and the Design Council to work with specialist organisations to ensure dementia and age is protected as a consideration in the early design stage for all architecture projects,' she says.

'They need to embed this in training for qualifying architects to ensure that accessibility and inclusion for people with dementia and older people is a requirement.'

RIBA president Jane Duncan asserts that the institute is 'committed to championing the importance of inclusivity and age-friendly design'.



Gna meadow view, specialist dementia residential care centre 01

Glancy Nicholls' Meadow View Specialist Residential Care Centre, Derbyshire

zoom inzoom out

She adds that the challenge of designing for everyone in society 'requires architects to be aware of the specific needs of people with dementia', and points to practical advice provided by the RIBA, including its *Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook*.

And it does appear the institute is increasing its support for dementia-friendly design.

Last month a regional judging panel shortlisted a dementia care centre in Derbyshire by Glancy Nicholls Architects for an RIBA East Midlands Awards.

And in July, the RIBA awarded £8,000 to a research project entitled Designing for Dementia: The International Architectural Challenges and Responses, by Bill Halsall and Robert MacDonald.

The research project, being worked on with PhD student Davide Landi, will compare schemes in different countries, including The Hogeweyk, a village in the Netherlands specifically designed for people with dementia.

MacDonald, reader in architecture at Liverpool John Moores University, believes a key starting point for any architect working in the sector is to speak to people with dementia and include their experiences in designs.

'The best thing to do is to enable people with dementia to engage with architects,' he says. 'A very fruitful dialogue is brought about that modifies the nature of what you're designing.'

Architects may not be aware what can cause distress to dementia sufferers – a black doormat can be perceived as an impassable black hole

MacDonald, who also wants architecture students to be taught about dementia, says there are several design features of which architects may not be aware that can cause distress to dementia sufferers – for example, a black doormat in the entrance to a doorway can be perceived as an impassable black hole.

Clare Cameron, a director within a specialist housing group at PRP, which has designed dementia-friendly buildings for more than 25 years, says open plans are key to providing visual accessibility for people with dementia, something that needs to be included in the early design stages.

'People talk about visual cues such as colour and artwork and objects – they are all important – but these are things you can do to the building once it's finished,' she says. 'You have to get all those other more fundamental things right, for example the layout of the building, access to gardens and outdoor space within a secure environment.'

She adds that it is also important to include views out of the building 'so people know where they are in a building, what time of day it is, what the weather is doing'.



Alzheimersrespitecentre02(c)nickkane

Alzheimer's Respite Centre, Dublin, by Niall McLaughlin Architects

zoom inzoom out

Beatrice Fraenkel, chair of the Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and former chair of the ARB, says dementia-friendly design can reduce the number of 'incredibly damaging' accidents such as 'trips and falls', and create places that allow 'the ability for recovery to take place quicker'. This could potentially lead to substantial savings in the NHS.

However, Lesley Palmer, chief architect at leading research charity Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), part of the University of Stirling, says the interest seen by her centre has been predominantly from clients such as NHS trusts, private nursing care providers, local authorities and housing associations, rather than from architects.

‘From our review of the interest in our centre, architects accounted for the lowest uptake in our design, training or publication services,’ she says.

John Nordon, design director at developer PegasusLife, which delivers dementia-friendly retirement homes, agrees that it is clients that are driving the growing awareness of the issue.

‘They are the people who have the vision and foresight to create these sorts of buildings,’ he says.

‘They know they need to design for their potential customer, so they are the ones setting the brief.’

Some architects, including Richard Murphy, argue that restrictive, tick-box procurement rules act as a barrier to socially conscious and talented architects wanting to work in the sector.

Eight years ago, Murphy’s practice designed two hospitals in Fife for people with dementia, but it has not completed a similar scheme since.

‘People will go and look at the dementia buildings we have built – and think that they are fantastic – but they don’t offer us another one,’ he says. ‘It’s sickening. All the experience that exists in our office is being wasted. It’s part of a general level of frustration.’



C. stratheden hospital 1
Richard Murphy Architects’ dementia and mental health unit at Fife Stratheden Hospital

McLaughlin, too, says he has not been asked to do much work in dementia-friendly design since the practice’s 2009 Alzheimer’s Respite Centre in Dublin. ‘It feels as though we have a lot of stored up expertise that’s not been put to use,’ he says.

For McLaughlin, architects have a duty to make their designs more inclusive and some of the moves (*see box*) are easy to achieve.

‘It’s incumbent upon you to exercise some kind of open empathy towards the people you’re designing for and to try to understand the world through their experiences,’ he says.


‘Of course dementia is terrible, but you are dealing with people who have had extraordinary lives and it can be very moving.’

He concludes: ‘You can create moments of great beauty.’

Top tips for dementia-friendly design

- Use an open-plan layout that is easy to understand, orientated around a garden.
- Minimise the amount of long, artificially lit internal corridors.
- Make sure there is natural daylight and views from the building.
- Ensure there is easy access to secure gardens.
- Use ‘landmarks’, such as plants or artwork, to help people navigate their way around.
- Clearly mark all glass doors; glass may not be seen by people with dementia.
- Use clear and attractive signage in a bold face with good contrast between the text and the background.
- Ensure that toilets are designed so that someone with dementia is able get assistance without causing embarrassment.
- Use contrasting colours – white or magnolia do not help with way-finding. Toilet seats that are of a contrasting colour to the walls and rest of the toilet are easier to see if someone has visual problems.
- Do not use sparkly materials, stripes, dark patches or mats on floors – and avoid any variation in flooring.
- Mark the edge of each step on any stairs.
- Create a homely, familiar environment; this increases the sense of security and comfort. Try to create a safe environment without it being institutional.
- Don’t use swirly patterns on floors or walls; for dementia sufferers they can appear to be moving.

Brennan, M. (2016). > 'Architecture Exhibition Entry Aims to Show how Planned Space Can Help People with Dementia'. *Irish Examiner*.



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Architecture exhibition entry aims to show how planned space can help people with dementia

The Irish entry to the Architecture Biennale aims to show how planned space can help people with dementia, writes Marjorie Brennan



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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016 - 01:00 AM

MARJORIE BRENNAN

THE ease with which we navigate our way around our homes, communities and workplaces is something most of us take for granted. However, for people with dementia and Alzheimer's, the environment in which they live is crucial to their wellbeing.

This subject is tackled in Ireland's entry to the International Architecture Biennale in Venice, presented by the London-based Irish architect Niall McLaughlin, and curated by Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

The installation is inspired by McLaughlin's work on a respite centre in Blackrock, Dublin, commissioned by the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland and completed in 2008.

"Often architecture biennales are fairly self-congratulatory events where architects show glowing pictures of their best projects," says McLaughlin. "But this time Alejandro Aravena [artistic director] wanted architects to report back on experiences they had and tell other architects what they could learn.

"We felt we should report back on what we've learned about dementia and how it impacts on the built environment but also on our homes and our cities; and to some extent what it tells us about ourselves."

VENICE DISPLAY

The installation, titled 'Losing Myself', is an initiative of Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council, and is exhibited in a large 17th century warehouse, once used by the Venetian navy.

"In this very dark space, we put in an illuminated installation which projects a huge drawing onto the floor. The drawing is effectively a plan of the respite centre in Dublin," explains McLaughlin.

"When architects draw plans, they see all of the building at once; so they can look at every room in a single sweep and the whole building is present in front of them. But that's the exact opposite to how a person with dementia would experience a building because their ability to use a recent memory and projections to construct a continuous reality is severely depleted.



Yeoryia Manolopoulou and Niall McLaughlin work on Losing Myself.

"We wanted to draw a plan, not as an architect would do, but try and draw it as though it was witnessed by the people who have dementia. They can only ever experience very small parts of the building at the same time and those are falling away from them quite quickly. So, the building rather than becoming a single coherent architectural object becomes a piece of torn fragments and episodes that can only be held together."

McLaughlin's passion for the subject is palpable, and it is obvious he has gained a comprehensive understanding of dementia and Alzheimer's beyond architecture.

"We spent a lot of time talking to people with dementia, as well as doctors, carers, neuroscientists, and psychologists to try to understand something of the world that people with dementia will inhabit. I had a rule in my office that you couldn't work on the project unless you had spent a full day minimum in a respite centre because you had to actually witness what it is to be there.

"I remember one day I was sitting with a woman — often people with dementia will lose their inhibitions — and she put her arms around me and I sat with her for about three hours just talking to her about her life. Those things you carry with you forever. The things that people would disclose to

you about themselves, to some extent because they are often not as guarded, it's an extraordinary kind of privilege to be allowed access to that world. We have tried to carry that in some way and embody it in the buildings we have made."

McLaughlin says that ideally, people with dementia would not be corralled into specialist homes and facilities.

"As much as possible, you would be thinking about designing buildings so that as people age and develop dementia, they can survive and thrive in their own homes. You have an embodied memory of your house that is deeply ingrained, not just in your brain but in your muscles. The familiarity of that is an extraordinary support to people with dementia and when you remove it, it causes great disorientation. So, it is about keeping people at home as much as possible but also beginning to think about our cities and communities as places where people with dementia could thrive. Dementia is a problem for a community, not for a person."

Professor Sabina Brennan, co-director of the Neuro-Enhancement for Independent Lives (NEIL) Research Programme at Trinity College Dublin, was one of the experts McLaughlin consulted in his research. She feels strongly that society as a whole needs to reconsider its approach to people affected by dementia.

"We have to stop making people with Alzheimer's and dementia the 'other'. Their brains are different but at the end of the day it's you or I with a disease. We need to ask how we have come to a place where we think the best environment is where we put all the people with the same disease together in an artificial place, usually one which reflects the needs of the medical staff or the organisation, or in the better representations, copy or mimic what a home environment would be," she says.



BOX YOU LIVE IN

Brennan believes that how and where we live as we get older can be a matter of life or death. "If you become older or more frail or struggle to navigate society, the box you live in can become your coffin because you can't get out of it. There should be a central space in the community where everyone can congregate and replicate that sense of living around a campfire — where people can be together, and there can be mutual aid, space for reciprocity; healthy with disabled, young with old. Economies of scale mean the cost of building and other basic needs can be shared. An environment and

architecture designed to suit the needs of the aged will benefit all of us. Niall's project is amazing because it's about architecture starting a conversation and forcing people to question the direction in which they are going."


As part of the 'Losing Myself' project, McLaughlin and his team came up with 16 lessons, which can be found on the website which accompanies the project. "One thing we wanted to say to all architects is that dementia is not just an issue for specialised environments. If you are designing a theatre, concert hall, train station or supermarket, you are obliged under the building regulations to allow people in wheelchairs to have full access. But the same things don't apply to the thinking you might put into design for dementia. All architects should know more about dementia and should be designing buildings with that in mind," he says.

Irish audiences will have the chance to experience the 'Losing Myself' exhibition when it is adapted for an Arts Council supported national tour next year. As for McLaughlin, he says the experience has been hugely rewarding but he would like to utilise his expertise in the area more.

"We have built up a huge fund of knowledge and experience that we would love to find a way of using. We are sorry that we have only ever built one of these buildings; we'd like to build more. They are often procured in a very institutional kind of way that doesn't really admit for the design that we do and I think that's a pity. We'd love to have another crack at one but that hasn't happened yet."

- September is World Alzheimer's Awareness Month; www.losingmyself.ie; the International Architecture Biennale runs until November 27

Culture Ireland (2016). 'Ireland's Exhibition at Venice Biennale 2016 – "Losing Myself"'. *Culture Ireland*.






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Ireland's Exhibition at Venice Biennale 2016 – 'Losing Myself'





Launch of "Losing Myself" website

In advance of the launch of the Ireland's exhibition at the 2016 Venice Biennale, the accompanying website www.losingmyself.ie, which documents the research and design of the exhibition, is now online. The exhibition in Venice will imagine the Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin, as experienced by its occupants: people with dementia and their carers.

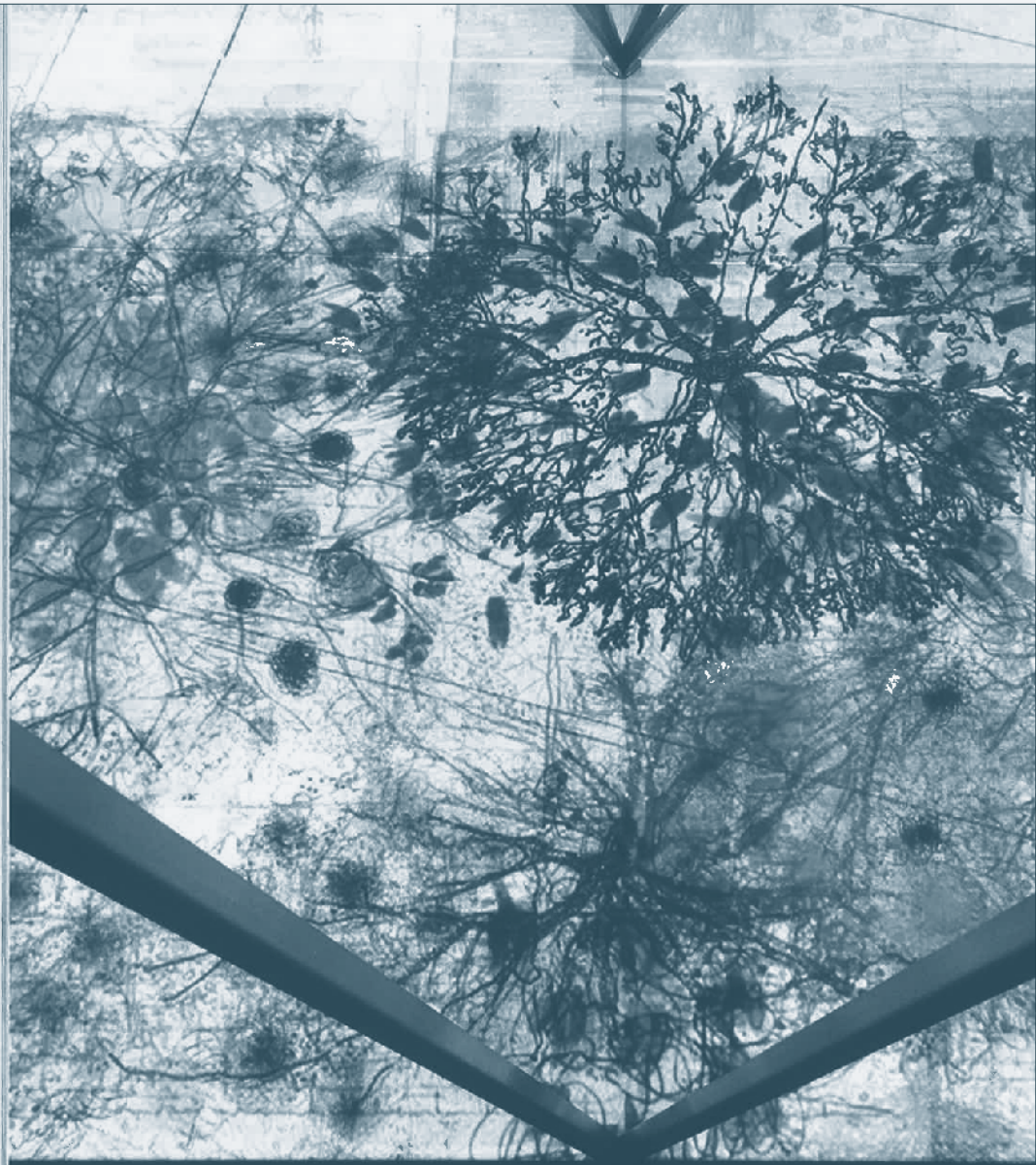
This website records the experiences of a broad range of people – neuroscientists, psychologists, health workers, philosophers and anthropologists – as well as people with dementia and their families. The design of the website incorporates creative advice from people with dementia and will inform both visitors to the exhibition and act as a tool for those who wish to research the subject further.

Losing Myself is produced collaboratively by Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou

Ireland at Venice is an initiative of Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council.

Posted: 26.04.16

Duggan, M. (2016). 'Losing Myself: Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou's Exploration of Dementia in Drawings Enlightens and Enthrals'. *Architects' Journal*.



Losing myself

Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou's exploration of dementia in drawings enlightens and enthrals, writes *Mary Duggan*

Do we fear being alone? Solitude is usually a choice; a state in which one can choose to reflect, to read, to bathe, to drink a cup of tea, to make the cup of tea; to enjoy a space we are in that is designed to our liking; that is 'familiar, tidy or mossy, fresh or 'foggy'. Alone or in company, our understanding of that space, our state of being is very clear. We can close our eyes and still walk a room; we follow patterns of activity set by the spaces we become adjusted to. That room can also be curated to allow us and our friends to inhabit it predictably and safely. This is a given feature of our lives.

But what about being lost? Occasionally we get lost in our physical surroundings; lost in a shopping centre; lost in the woods. Occasionally we get lost emotionally and lose the ability to find routes through our lives or to think straight and decipher problems. What we have probably all experienced is a state of confusion that brings angst and fear. Imagine this as a permanent or progressive state, and one that is terminal. It is a frightening thought, being out of control and unable to recall.

As architects, we hold a particular set of skills which are enhanced through observing, orientating, drawing, research and architectural practice. These skills are our own, we are independent in our particular interests. We are alone in our intellectual interpretations, both stylistically, and emotionally.

In conventional practice, these skills are wholly necessary to create architectural drawings; drawings that may then be interpreted by others to construct buildings; buildings that will then be occupied by people in various states of being.

The buildings contain us, keep us warm, ensure our work surfaces are illuminated, and keep us safe. They keep us safe because we understand what it is to be safe through familiarity. But dementia is a condition that slowly degrades these familiar conditions of orientation, sense of place, sense of safety, and often but not always involves a loss of memory. It can be a slow or fast process whereby the sufferer becomes disorientated or lost in conditions that were once familiar. But that is not to say: well that's it then. Are there ways in which familiarity and safe environments can be reconstructed unconventionally to suit new thought patterns prevalent in the condition?

In Niall McLaughlin and Yooriya Manolopoulou's research for their installation in the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale they have attempted to tackle the fears associated with dementia.

This is a project based on technical knowledge. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou understand the science and have consulted neuroscientists and anthropologists. McLaughlin shows me a very detailed sketch he has drawn. It looks like a landscape. It is a diagram of the brain, and he describes what happens biologically as the disease takes over the mind.



Left Niall McLaughlin and Yooriya Manolopoulou's installation at the Venice Biennale. Above: 'no drawing' process. Below McLaughlin and the team engaging in social drawing.

'As architects, we hold a particular set of skills'

The two came upon neurological research showing that the way we construct and compose an understanding of space is completely different to the way architects configure space. McLaughlin explains that neuroscientists interpret our experience of space in a non-linear form, as a series of fragmented episodes or memories coexisting in time and space – a fourth dimension.

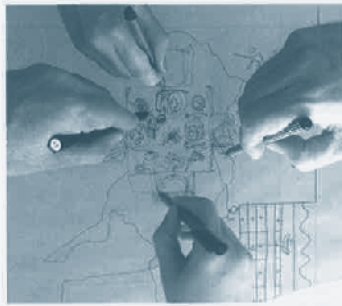
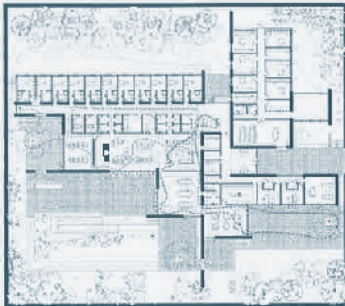
What are these episodes? In the short term they are a slowly layered memorised depiction of a room or a spatial sequence. In the long term it is the space of your first memory, your first kiss, the room where a relative died. Is the physical backdrop an important part of the memory? Or is it the artefacts within the room that led to the habitual behaviour engraved in the mind never to be forgotten or so easily re-enacted?

The research for this architectural project sets out to ask questions about designing a space for sufferers of dementia, but also to consider other ways of constructing space from a new position, without the tools we are used to deploying. As Manolopoulou describes, 'from the perimeter and then inwards, the artefacts come last, and the activities that construct the life within the room'. She draws a sketch, impatiently creating a loose frame, then diving into the detail, 'What's in there? A brain. Activity. We should be thinking in the reverse order,' she says.

The project is not an architectural proposal, it is a drawing, a conversation about user's experience. The large-scale drawing projected on to the floor at the Arsenal is very loosely based on a building for Alzheimer sufferers designed by Niall

McLaughlin Architects, but the point is not to critique it, but use it as a soft framework to form a social drawing; to study ideas of disorientation. For an architect the thought of these skills deteriorating raises questions about how rigid we are, how we churn ideas, what questions we are asking. How important is the plan logic, the framework for the building? If a building is a series of layers, of fragments, of disorder, what does that look like? And how could one recreate and record the process?

A number of collaborators are chosen to generate a drawing together and separately. The individuals are asked to draw alone in their own room defined within the drawing framework, to get into character. You are in your bedroom, you wake up, what do you do? Very few rules are given. They do not draw walls. Some fixtures exist – a sideboard for



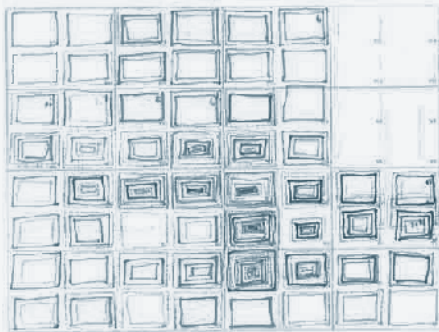
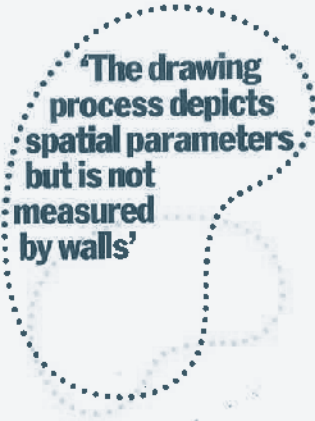
Above left: 'no drawing' process. Below: McLaughlin's drawing depicting the brain. Opposite Sketch by Yooriya Manolopoulou.



'There is another language expressed and unified through the drawing'

example – but only to prompt responses. They are asked to draw their movements and thoughts, instructed to keep the pen on the paper, the point being to place these individuals alone in a room without interacting. The drawings are recorded from underneath. The footage is mesmerising. The pace of the pen modulates between slow and fast activities, from walking sleepily, swaggering across a room, to pausing at family photographs. The group comes together in the dining room. They enter together, peruse the menu, sit down and eat and drink, all in pen squiggles. In part defining movement, part artefact, others scratch out in frustration. They are confused. In the common room there is dancing, big round shapes, a jig.

Overall the drawing traces the activities and interactions, the private, the social,



the party. The drawing is dense in ink in the social spaces and light in the bedrooms. Respectfully the authors are unnamed. That's not the point. Manolopoulou is keen to describe the project as a collaboration; a live conversation which includes dialogue and drawing pens with equal emphasis.

So, what did McLaughlin and Manolopoulou expect to discover from this drawing? 'Why should it necessarily take us anywhere?' they ask. 'It is a study, a means to understand life, and human interactions. It is not contextualised. We should not be desperate for answers, but enjoy the process, the moments.'

Manolopoulou references one particular person they looked at while researching the subject, the artist William Utermohlen, who continued to paint for five years after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia. Those works document his deterioration; the loss of motor skills as well as the stripping down of his self-perception, his consciousness and his identity.

Utermohlen's earlier work depicts conversations between characters. Manolopoulou talks about a piece entitled *Snow* (1990-1991) depicting a warm house with a snow-covered exterior. The content of the piece has many parallels with the social

drawing created for the Biennale. There are five characters in the room, two cats and photographs on the wall. The interior is colourful, alive, full of conversation, full of artefacts; outside is minimally painted, silent and lonely. The perspective in the painting is distorted so the eye does not circumnavigate a space, but rather reads it as a collage constructing stories which flow from one to the other. The man on the sofa is contemplative, the characters at the table deep in conversation. This is a painting with one author, but with multiple stories to tell.

The social drawing has a number of authors. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou were interested in the fact that when multiple hands came together, the pace of the pen and the drawing style operated in synchronicity. While there is conversation during the work, there is another language expressed and unified through the drawing. This is the opposite to what one might think; the combined drawing takes the individuals' self-conscious away. Seen in animation, it is very intuitive and empathetic.

It may well be a single drawing, but it unites minds. As a whole, it does not adopt an individual style. Constrained by the limitations of the single line, there is space in the drawing to consider detail. There is

humanity, sharing, an understanding that to be in a room one may have a heightened experience, rich, illogical but nonetheless emotional. Or alone lost in a process, but nonetheless trying to muddle through. The drawing process depicts spatial parameters, but is not measured by walls or fixtures, rather by the extent of the line and the pace by which it is drawn. A corridor is respite. A toilet is respite. The animation drawing makes this conscious.

This huge body of research is presented in the Venice Arsenal as a collage. Manolopoulou is obsessed with the hand-drawn quality, the movement within the piece, and was initially worried that the inevitable reproduction or digital manifestation would not be the same. Her concern was that the reality would be stripped away making it appear artificial. It had to be a production or a series of films, to present the process.

In the Arsenal the drawing is taken to another level using 16 video projectors installed on a grid of 1.92m-high brass quadpods. They project an animated drawing on to the floor, measuring 4.8m x 6.4m – a total of 64 A1 drawing sheets, four per quadpod. The sheets are neither singular, nor fixed. The overall projection is an assemblage of 1,024 video recordings of drawings: 64 A1 rectangles (areas of the plan), captured as drawn distinctly by 16 separate individuals in 16 time windows.

Above the projection a matrix of 64 speakers hangs from the ceiling, arranged on three different heights, and playing local, regional and global sounds. This soundscape corresponds to the drawn activity below. The overall piece describes the life of the building occupants in a 16 minute loop, representing a 24-hour cycle.

The Biennale contains many works and presentations in the form of texts and exhibits; beautiful pieces displaying built form, often with a signature style. But most are non-sensual, numb, static over. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou's piece stands out as an interactive exhibit.

The research gathered by McLaughlin and Manolopoulou certainly gets under the skin of dementia, but in examining this medical condition, it has also opened a new way of thinking about the end user, by setting new limits, a new paradigm. Diagrams and pragmatic programmes of function, square footage and construction are cast aside for a staged interaction; a collaboration of minds that considers the emotional consequences. It is not artificial.

When asked quite specifically to summarise the exhibit, McLaughlin and Manolopoulou describe it as a drawing, and the drawing quite simply 'a way of being'. Perhaps this is a new paradigm; neurological, anthropological, theatrical – a counterpoint to the speed at which we now operate; our humanity positively reinstated into the wider debate about the relevance of architecture.

Escoda Augusti, B. (2016). 'Installations at This Year's Venice Architecture Biennale Strive for Societal Relevance'. *Frame*.

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Installations at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale strive for societal relevance

ItalyFrame 112

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Frame Magazine

Venice Biennale 2016

SEP 23, 2016

TEXT

Blanca Escoda Agustí



VENICE Any form of art is at its most powerful when fighting against societal injustices and thus actively looking for change. Under the theme Reporting from the Front, the Venice Architecture Biennale makes a discernible effort to move in such a direction. A visit to the event reveals many examples of denunciatory design, all part of an intriguing collage of topics.

Entrance halls at the event are constructed with the waste generated from last year's Art Biennale. A formidable 90 tonnes of leftovers – more than 11,000 m of metal and 10,000 sq-m of plasterboard – served as the raw materials for the lobby, which was designed by Chilean

architect Alejandro Aravena, curator of the 2016 biennale. Plasterboard walls bring lightness to a space in which huge shards of scrap metal hang from the ceiling. A threatening sky spiked with weighty materials imbues the surroundings with an inescapable, menacing quality.

Set in a room bathed in red light, Andes Shadow by Elton Léniz is a video installation highlighting outdoor activities designed for schools in the Andes Mountains. Defining the work are display screens propped on easels as if they were canvases, transforming the educational projects into art. The installation forges a clear link that connects nature, schools and the necessity for protection against urban violence.

Curated by TA Massociati as part of the Italian pavilion, a section entitled 'Meeting. 20 Examples of Outer City Living' features a photographic collection of projects by a number of the nation's architects. As part of the pavilion's broader theme (Taking Care. Designing for the Common Good), the images cover a range of issues, from health and housing to education and culture.

Awarded the Golden Lion for best national pavilion, Spain shows the response of architects Carlos Quintáns Eiras and Iñaki Carnicero to the economic crisis. The pair collected a series of photographs depicting constructions that were abandoned owing to a lack of economic resources. The images are suspended from the ceiling and framed by a structure that creates the illusion of corridors when viewed from certain angles. The architects speak of the intellectual acuity required during times of economic struggle and describe the images on display as visions of 'contemporary ruins'.

Losing Myself – an installation by Niall McLaughlin and Ycoryia Manolopoulou at the Irish pavilion – deals with the incomplete and broken spatial experiences that Alzheimer's patients live with on a daily basis. Sketches and digital imagery – visitors view a 16-minute loop generated by 16 projectors – contribute to a constantly evolving pastiche on the floor, while Kevin Pollard's sound design paints an aural picture of fragmentation and lost moments.

Peter Zumthor's piece, a scale model of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), includes a soundtrack by Walter de Maria and a textile installation by Christina Kim. Racks of clothing from Kim – the founder of Dosa, an LA-based eco-fashion line – represent how paintings at the LACMA relate to the greyness of the building itself. Architecture moves into second place as the colourful, brightly lit fabrics take centre stage. Even though the work doesn't shout 'protest' as loud as many others do – and despite the absence of explanatory information – Zumthor makes a coherent statement about the roles of museums, architecture and art in today's society.

From the ruins of buildings left in disrepair to the ruins of what is 'human' when our consciousness fades, concepts at the Venice Architecture Biennale strive for relevance by strengthening the ties that bind art and social change.



The Venice Architecture Biennale runs until 27 November 2016.






labiennale.org

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June 12, 2016 9:43pm EST

Veronica Asensio holds a curated display from the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, Bos Eindhoven, CC BY-NC

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Author



William Feuerman
Course Director (B Des Arch),
Senior Lecturer, School of
Architecture, University of
Technology Sydney

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A view of the installation 'Reporting from the Front', by Alejandro Aravena during the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, *ETW/Andrea Merola*

Aravena wrote when he was nominated as director:

There are several battles that need to be won and several frontiers that need to be expanded in order to improve the quality of the built environment and consequently people's quality of life.

This is what we would like people to come and see at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition: success stories worth being told and exemplary cases worth being shared.

At the main entry to the Arsenale, a large sign painted on the wall explains that “the introductory rooms of the Biennale Architettura 2016 were built with the 100 tons of waste material generated by the dismantling of the previous Biennale”.



The entry to the Arsenal. Author provided

The vast reception space of the Arsenale is filled with a curtain of standard metal studs hanging from above. It makes noticeable light patterns on the surfaces below, surrounded by walls made of stacked plasterboard. The plasterboard, piled at a range of depths, produces a changing surface with varied openings.

Arriving at the actual entry to the exhibition, one questions if the next curator will reuse the materials required for Aravena's exhibition?

What follows is a broad range of dislocated projects from around the globe which as Aravena describes in his curatorial statement,

will widen the range of issues to which architecture is expected to respond, adding explicitly to the cultural and artistic dimensions that already belong to our scope, those that are at the social, political, economic, and environmental end of the spectrum.

But beyond the visual propaganda that seems to be populating the 300 meter-long Arsenale (and beautiful and intelligent propaganda it is) one might question where the architecture resides. It appears that the curator has made an attempt to relinquish architecture (the building form) in order to visualise social and political issues.

Signage reading "Does permanence matter?" or "Is it possible to create a public space within a private commission?" further reduces architecture to slogans and one-liners.



Author provided

But of course within this mix, a range of stand-out projects begin to demonstrate that design can be socially active and play a significant role in the reshaping of the environment. For example, [Kunle Adewumi](#)'s Makoko Floating School, a prototype for a floating community in the rising waters of the Lagos Lagoon in Nigeria, was reconstructed and docked in Venice. The project uses only local materials such as reused plastic barrels for floating. It was the deserving recipient of the Silver Lion award.

[Rural Urban Framework](#), looking at the conflict between the nomadic nature of the past and the sedentary nature of the present, develops housing prototypes for those left out of the urbanisation process in Mongolia.

In the Giardini exhibition, which breathed a bit more life compared to that of the Arsenale, [Eyal Weizman](#)'s Forensic Architecture uses architectural design logic working from images, films and satellite footage to trace wrongdoings, such as a drone attack in an Afghan building made legible by video footage from a neighbouring building.



Eyal Weizman, Forensic Architecture. Author provided

Beyond Aravena's exhibitions in the Arsenale and Giardini, the individually curated national pavilions offer a wide range of insight into the current state of architecture. The intensity and variation can be overwhelming.

At one end of the spectrum are pavilions that are overloaded with information, such as the deconstructed German Pavilion, which has literally removed four of its walls so that it is always open. Inside, documents that demonstrate how cities and buildings have been transformed with the recent influx of refugees cover the walls from floor to ceiling.



Image from the Belgium Pavilion. Author provided

At the other end of the spectrum you have Australia's "The Pool", an immersive sensory experience where curators [Michelle Tabet](#), [Isabelle Toland](#) and [Amelia Holliday](#) have designed a swimming pool surrounded by seating so guests can sit back or even take a dip while listening to interviews about the pool and its influence on Australia's cultural identity.

Little written or visual information is provided in the pavilion but a take away leaflet expands on the relevance of the swimming pool, addressing issues such as:

a backdrop to the good times, the pool is also a deeply contested space in Australian history, a space that has highlighted racial discrimination and social disadvantage.



Australian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2016. Author provided

Other pavilions that should not be missed include the British pavilion and its show Home Economics, exploring new models for domestic life based on hours, days, months, years, and decades. The Russian pavilion exhibits the wild Urban Phenomenon, which examines the Exhibition of Attainments of the National Economy, a 1939 Soviet exhibition and park complex reincarnated as a public multi-format cultural and education space.

Belgium's Bravura Pavilion investigates,

what craftsmanship can mean during a period of economic scarcity as, according to the curatorial team, dealing with scarcity demands a high level of precision.

The Spanish Pavilion's show Unfinished was the winner of the Golden Lion, the top award at the Biennale. Spain presents a survey of photos and drawings of incomplete construction projects prompted by its 2008 economic crisis alongside 55 recent buildings that demonstrate innovative solutions or responses based on economic constraints.



The Spanish Pavilion show Unfinished won the Golden Lion. Author provided

But one of the most powerful and thoughtful installations came from Ireland with its project titled "Losing myself." Offering insight into the unimaginable – the experience of dementia – the project works directly with patients suffering from the disease. It explores alternative ways of redrawing a building collectively witnessed by sixteen people throughout one day, based on subjects that:

cannot use memory and projection to see beyond their immediate situation and can no longer synthesise their experiences to create a stable model of their environment.



Irish Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2016. Author provided

The results are beautiful representations of a very real and frightening experience but more importantly, returning to Alejandro Aravena's curatorial statement, this is a project that is an "exemplary case" where architecture made a difference.

Last stop on the Biennale circuit was the off-site Zaha Hadid retrospective at the Fondazione Berengo, an homage to the late architect who died in March at the age of 65. While the exhibition has a strong focus on the late architect's current projects, (which are really the brainchild of Zaha Hadid Architect's Director Patrik Schumacher) a large portion of the space displays some of Hadid's most influential works.

These include her large scale paintings in which architecture grows out of the surface of the canvas, as well as models in paper relief and 3-D printing, line drawings, photographs, and videos.





Zaha Hadid's perspective. Author provided

The work celebrates the role form plays in the production of space. Here, the architect, unlike many witnessed at the Arsenal and Giardini, truly manifests the role of both the public intellectual and a maker of space.

The dichotomy between social activism and Architecture with a capital "A" is blurred here. Certainly refreshing following days of sensory overload.

In 2000, I visited the Venice Architecture Biennale for the first time. It was 7th International Architecture Exhibition directed by formalist Massimiliano Fuksas, with a title "Less Aesthetics more Ethics". It also claimed to abandon previous Biennale structures, "no longer based on architecture as buildings."

Fast forward 16 years and we seem to be approaching a similar cycle. The big question is: has architecture made a substantial contribution over the past 16 years, or are we just experiencing a case of déjà vu? Is architecture more innovative today?

We cannot deny the amazing array of talent and work presented at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition but did I leave feeling that when it comes to solving the world's problems "architecture makes the difference", as Aravena puts it?" It would be almost impossible for any exhibition to live up to the expectations of its own publicity.

I leave the Venice Architecture Biennale thinking more about the world in its current state. The problems. The issues impacting our profession. I think that we can all learn a lot from the late, great Dame Zaha Hadid whose seminal work, along with her fearless attitude, challenged the state of architecture through design.

But I also leave inspired (and exhausted) by the amount of work I have been exposed to, and optimistic that we can continue to ask the same questions while challenging them through new paradigms.

Architecture Venice Architecture Biennale Venice Biennale Ideas vs Aesthetics

Finch, P. (2016). 'An Excellent Venice Biennale'. *Architects' Journal*.

AJ Architects' Journal

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An excellent Venice Biennale

This year's Biennale suggests that architecture is alive, well, and still has a social conscience, says *Paul Finch*

1 JUNE 2016 - BY PAUL FINCH

Most early visitors enjoyed this year's Venice Biennale, where Alejandro Aravena's theme 'Reporting from the front' prompted some striking work and ideas. His own curated pavilions in the Arsenale and the Giardini featured more work by regional architects and rather less by the big names; probably no bad thing.

The national pavilions were the usual mixture of excellent, OK and baffling, but there was more than enough good stuff to occupy the mind (and feet) for several days. This included exhibits by several British architects, suggesting we are still punching above our weight, as they say.

Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners' small room on housing and community was a model of how to gain maximum impact from the use of vivid wall colour, models shown at a sensible height, and simple messages in big type (design was by Ab Rogers). Alison Brooks' Palazzo Mora contribution was a reminder that social housing in the UK is not the dead duck it is sometimes assumed to be. Both these contributions suggested that mass housing is beginning to get a hold on the debate as to how we can accommodate incoming economic migrants, quite apart from the question of refugees.

No doubt that will involve more discussion about height, density, land and construction cost. These subjects were the basis for what I thought was the best national pavilion, Korea's. The FAR (floor area ratio) Game was the title for an exhibition which combined fascinating information, historical analysis, architectural invention and propositional outcomes. It is not easy to bring verve to the subject of Building Regulations and sectional exploration, but the Koreans managed it.

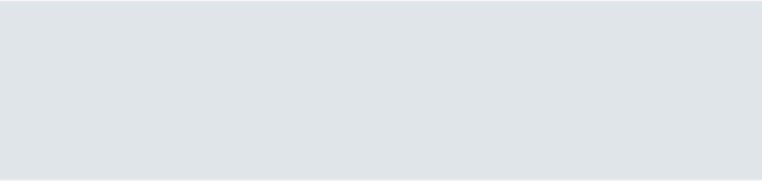
Spain won the prize for best national pavilion, for a show called Unfinished. Beautifully displayed, it provided a catalogue of buildings that had been affected by the recent economic crisis but had ended up being completed. Each building was shown in images which were entirely context-free, and which did not really explain why, or at what point, the concept of unfinished applied. Still, a great piece of work.

By contrast, the US pavilion was entirely about context: in this case Detroit, and various sites which become the subject for provocative speculations by a dozen architects. These included Greg Lynn, who had visitors gazing through virtual reality headsets at his model of a site where all the tall buildings had been given a 'haircut' before further groundscraper treatment.

‘I was surprised Ireland’s entry didn’t feature in the ‘best pavilions’ awards’

One of the excellent things about any Biennale is the range of subjects on offer. A good example was the intimate and haunting Irish pavilion by Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou, dealing with that increasing and apparently inevitable scourge, dementia. Difficult to do it justice in words, but it combined more than 1,000 hand drawings then used to provide simulations of how people with memory loss experienced/understood/part-remembered the architecture they occupied.

I was surprised it didn’t feature in the ‘best pavilions’ awards, since not only did it deal with the human condition, but it did so by exploiting the possibilities of exemplary exhibition design: a soundtrack that would have meaning for the people connecting memories, a striking arrangement of cameras projecting images onto a constantly moving floor surface, and simple, effective graphic messages.



Again in complete contrast, another Irish contribution (by Grafton Architects) suggested that the spirit of architects like Denys Lasdun is not just with us but is being effortlessly extended. The film of the practice’s new university building in Lima was a model of how the moving image can enhance understanding of the static object, in this case a superb amalgam of closed and open spaces and volumes, taking advantage of a climate analysed by the 19th-century scientist Alexander von Humboldt, whose striking explanatory drawings became part of the exhibit.

‘By contrast the British pavilion seemed a bit underwhelming’

History was also evoked in a memorable way in a pavilion marking a co-operative venture between the Biennale and the Victoria & Albert Museum. A World of Fragile Parts told the ongoing story of the copying of cultural artefacts, from sculptures and furniture to the Arch of Palmyra and outdated computer games. It was Henry Cole, founder of the V&A, who produced the 1867 international treaty on copying, signed by most of the crowned heads of Europe. He might have been surprised that it is now copies that outlast originals, the copy becoming intrinsic to our appreciation of the past.

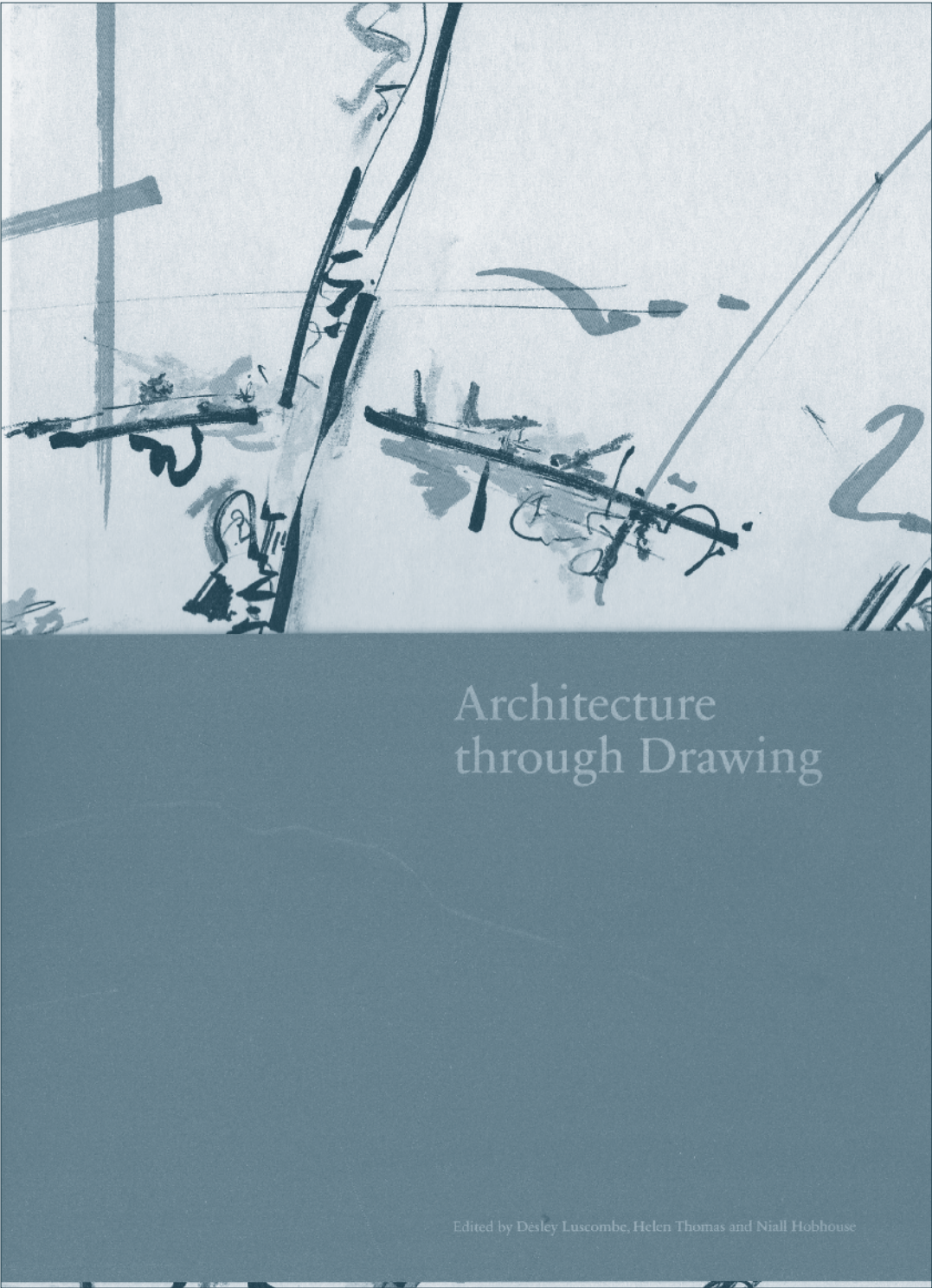
Other national pavilions worth the detour: Germany (holes knocked through to represent open borders); France (improving on the ordinary); and Japan (a hymn to models large and small). By contrast the British pavilion seemed a bit underwhelming, though the subject matter (housing, time, sharing) was interesting enough.

Overall an excellent experience, and one I would urge all tutors to visit with their students. These are architectural ideas at their most concentrated, not least Norman Foster’s droneport, facilitating the delivery of materials and medical supplies in areas lacking basic transport. Literally and metaphorically, the world is shrinking.



Forty, A. and Read, S. (2019). 'Epilogue: The Limits of Drawing'. *Architecture Through Drawing*. [Extract]

Please refer to the Appendix Contents on p. 91 for publication details.



and an ability to store, manage and share large amounts of complex data much more efficiently – enabling collaboration between architect, contractor and other professionals, who may well reside in different parts of the world – are often cited as key strengths of these new drawing-related technologies.

Within this digital drawing framework, the concept of failure also plays out in new ways. On one hand, in addition to projecting the future form of a building, architects and construction professionals can also incorporate and learn from analysis relating to different dimensions of its performance – assimilating information from the structure itself as it is being built, or from other previous buildings already in existence. Facilitating improved risk management, this 'immediate feedback on the technical implications of a given design strategy' has been argued by Bernstein to potentially raise the credibility and value of the architect in today's building industry.¹⁷ But at the same time, this promise and emphasis on foreseeing, reducing, even *preventing* failure, and its associated 'costs', is a loss that creates another kind of limitation of its own. In what ways might this commercial drawing tool be made to acknowledge the creative potential of failure, inaccuracy or imprecision within processes of design thinking and/or communicating?

The architect Lok-Kan Chau's observations about how today's BIM practitioners can learn from the 'precisely loose' drawings of Schinkel, which 'articulate ... more than exact geometry' are relevant here.¹⁸ And in Chau's own *Construction Manual for Lantau Commune* drawings of 2017, the architect inserts an additional stage of 'manual editing' into making his digital drawings, in order 'to discover flaws and errors in the original 3D model ... and to reflect and rethink every part of the proposition – as one would do in a hand drawing'.¹⁹ The repetition and detail of these finely rendered line drawings, which depict an ecology-education centre in Lantau, clearly signal that they have been rendered digitally. At the same time, they indicate a more ambiguous mode of production through their wavering individual line-vectors. Far from elevating the analogue over the digital, Chau instead combines and plays at the limits of these old and new technologies, inhabiting and dwelling in the space of digital manual editing. This allows for self-reflection on the process and outcome of computer-aided drawing.

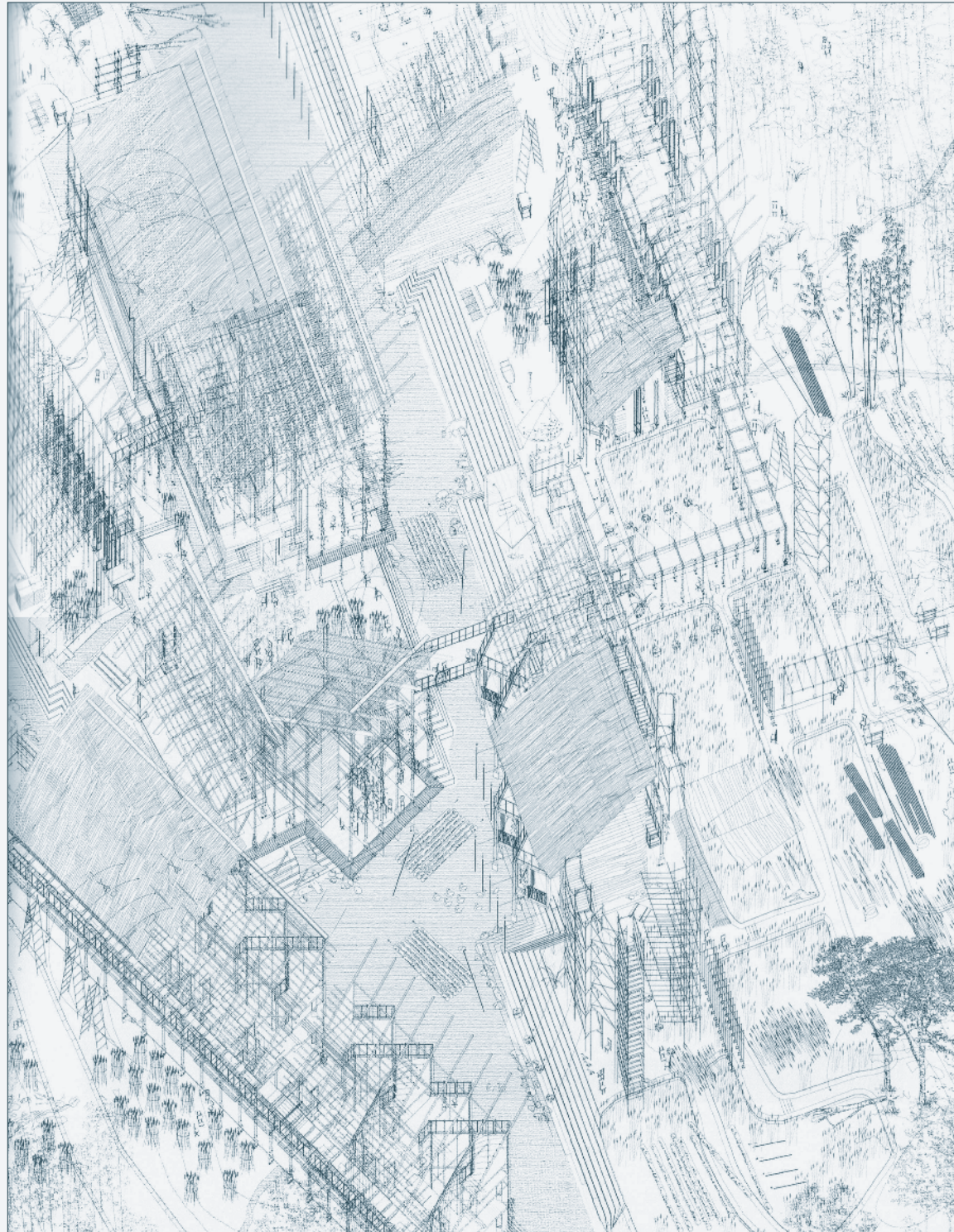
Lok-Kan Chau
Detail from *Construction manual for Lantau Commune* (2017)
Computer-generated drawing
595 × 595 mm (23 3/8 × 23 3/8 in)

Drawing Time

Ponis's working drawings, elaborated at successive site meetings, show the emergence of a building over time. This is unusual, for of all the properties that architectural drawings struggle to communicate, time has been the most elusive. As the architects Yeoryia Manolopoulou and Niall McLaughlin write, 'each drawing can only ever represent a fixed moment in time, from a fixed and individual point of view'.²⁰ Their installation *Losing Myself*, at the Irish Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, was intended to explore both these problems – the limitations of time, and the apparent single authorship of drawings – as well as a third problem: of how inhabitation might be drawn. We will concentrate here on the limitation of time, and leave the matters of authorship and of drawing's feebleness at representing inhabitation to another occasion.

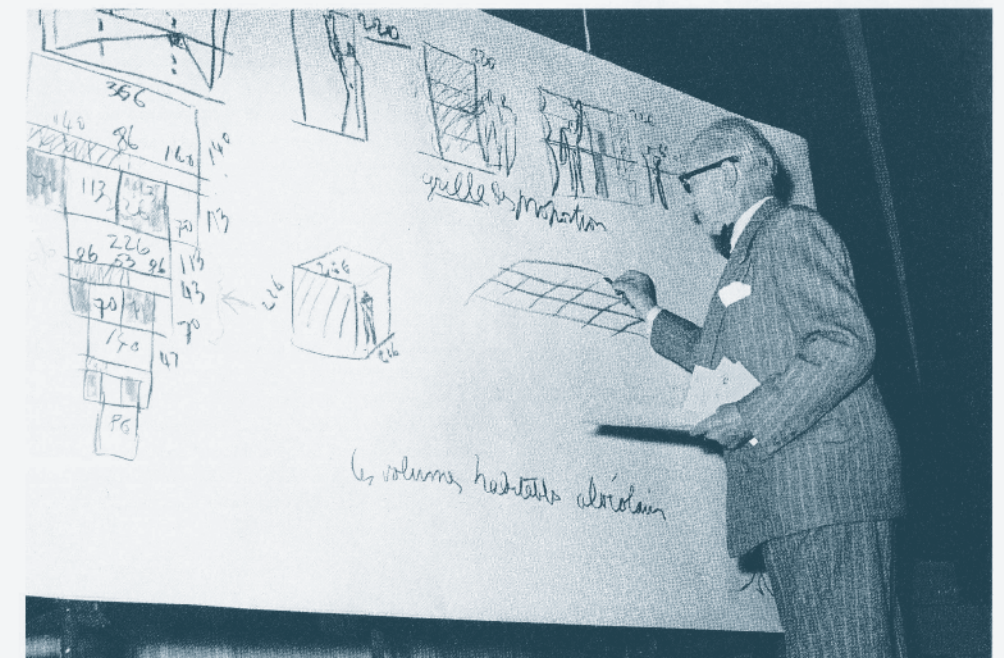
Drawings – and we are talking here of all kinds of drawing, not only those of architects – can be seen to represent time in two different ways. There is the time within which the drawing was made or there is a representation of time external to the work, in its reference to 'other aspects of human activity'.²¹ Of the former, all drawings show this to some extent, and a practised draughtsperson will be able to tell how long any particular drawing took to make – whether seconds, minutes, hours or days. Although duration of this kind has always been present in drawings, in the 1960s some artists started to give a great deal of attention to the time and work of making, to the extent that this became the content of their work. In what became known as Process Art, 'the existence of the artist in time is worth as much as the finished product', as one of its exponents, Robert Smithson, put it. Following this line of thought, 'the object gets to be less and less but exists as something clearer'.²² The medium of drawing was particularly well suited to making evident the existence of the artist in time, and during the 1960s and 1970s there were many experiments of this sort.²³ Apart, though, from in the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, these developments largely passed architecture by, and there was no particular interest in, nor attempt at, pushing architectural drawings towards representation of the duration of the work itself. A rare instance was *Untitled (Drawing for the Judson Memorial Poetry Reading)*, made around 1973 (see page 72–73), when Matta-Clark drew the history of architecture on a continuous roll of butcher paper for the duration of the poetry reading held in St Mark's Church in the East Village of New York: the drawing – and the history of architecture – is as long as the reading.

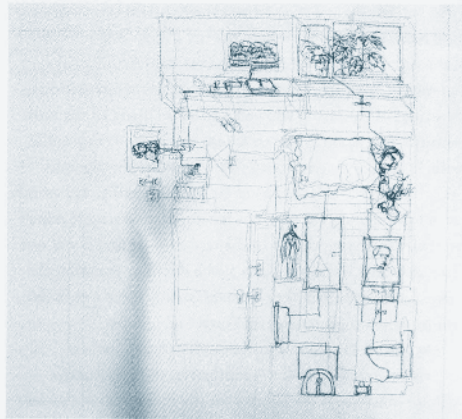
There is, though, one particular exception to architectural practice's general inability to address the time-based element of drawing, and that is the lecture drawing. Drawings produced



Right: Níall McLaughlin and Yoryia Manolopoulou
Still from *Losing Myself*, presented for the Irish Pavilion
at the 2016 Venice Biennale

Below: Le Corbusier lecturing at the Milan Triennale, 1951





by the speaker while they are speaking, as part of the performance itself, have a long tradition in architecture and have no real equivalent in other fields. Science lecturers may draw diagrams as they talk, but architects do something more: they are both practising and demonstrating their art. Tim Benton has shown how carefully Le Corbusier rehearsed his lecture drawings beforehand, coming to the lecture with sketches already prepared; in the performance itself, even though he had drawn the same drawings before in many previous lectures, it would seem that his ideas emerged as he drew, the drawings generating the thoughts. As one observer said:

On great sheets of white paper rolled out at the back of the stage, his skilful hand, using charcoal and coloured chalks, made concrete the idea which he was simultaneously explaining in words. We are present at a real sprouting [éclosion] of his thought: an extraordinary and very moving spectacle, into which one appears to be implicated in a personal way.²⁴

The fact that the drawn line is, in Roland Barthes's words, 'a visible action' has made it seem that drawings should be good at representing temporality.²⁵ If, as Deanna Petherbridge says, drawings 'write time', then it might be expected that they lend themselves to showing the passage of external time.²⁶ This has certainly been the ambition of some artists: Henri Michaux wanted 'to draw the consciousness of existing and the flow of time'.²⁷ Nonetheless, drawings are tied to moments: for a drawing to show a sequence of moments, or the passage of time, is more problematic. Alexander Cozens's cloud studies recorded

clouds at particular points of time, but their movement was beyond him. Various stratagems have been evolved to overcome this limitation of drawings, which, in the early 20th century – especially following the emergence of cinema – started to seem particularly constraining. Shifting viewpoint perspective in cubist art, strip cartoons and animation were all developed partly as ways to overcome drawing's perceived failure to represent time. Although these techniques were of momentous importance in art practice, their impact on architecture was marginal, and the norm continued to be the production of drawings that disregard time and remain suspended in an atemporal void.²⁸

Drawings to convey more than one temporality remain elusive in architecture, though there have been some notable successes. Piranesi's engravings of Roman monuments showed them not as they were in antiquity when originally built, nor entirely as they were in his own time as decayed ruins, but rather in an imagined time when their full magnificence is apparent. Yet alongside this imagined state, there were references both to their original condition, in reconstruction drawings, and to their current ruinous decay: part of the success of the etchings was their triangulation of three temporalities. In more recent times, architectural draughtsmen like Rodrigo Pérez de Arce and Alexander Brodsky have employed similar techniques to extend the temporality of the drawing. So, if drawing's tendency to be stuck in one moment of time has been a limitation of architectural drawing it has nonetheless given rise to much inventiveness.

One particular recent attempt to address the temporal limitations of architectural drawing was shown at the Irish pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2016. The Dublin Alzheimer's Respite Centre, completed in 2010, had been designed to allow residents to circulate freely within a variety of indoor and outdoor enclosed spaces. The project had been inspired by medical efforts to identify the particular forms of memory loss and confusion experienced by Alzheimer sufferers, focusing especially on their inability to form meaningful narratives for their actions, and the building had been designed to sustain a supportive narrative framework for the day-to-day life of the residents.

Revisiting the building six years later with Yeoryia Manolopoulou, the architect, Níall McLaughlin, was disappointed to find it not being used as had been intended.²⁹ The work shown at the Biennale arose from their frustration at the way conventional drawings fail to deal with anything other than normative experience, and was conceived as an alternative that might be closer to the lived understanding of the building. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou wanted to see if they could communicate and interpret some of the changes to spatial perception caused by dementia: as they explain, 'an inhabitant may never experience the building from the architect's complete

and fixed vantage point'. People living with dementia's loss of ability to see themselves within the particular space that they are in is one of the main causes of their disorientation, and the task was to find a way of drawing that might be closer to the actual experience of someone with dementia. The method adopted was to invite 16 people to each draw the imagined movements of a resident over a period of 24 hours, following the convention of never removing the pencil from the paper; the technique replicates the experience of the wandering occupant who lives in a 'continuous present' – you are only where the pencil is, you never have a 'picture' of the whole. 'The conceit of the drawing,' says McLaughlin, 'is that the moving pencil is the apprehending mind'.³⁰ The drawings were made on tracing paper placed on a glass table, and filmed from below, creating an animated drawing. The films of all 16 drawings were merged to make a single animation, which was then projected onto the floor at the Biennale. While not itself a drawing – rather, a film of a drawing – it was a means of combining multiple authors into a single work, and presenting in graphic form the residents' experience, albeit imagined, of the space over time. The result contained some unpredictability and uncertainty – '[p]erhaps', Manolopoulou and McLaughlin say, 'as a consequence of attempting to represent a cognitive state which is only partially understood, using a medium that we developed through iteration and experiment'.³¹

Drawing Decay

One particular aspect of architectural practice in which the difficulty of drawing time emerges is in the representation of decay. While the histories of art and architecture, especially since the late 18th century, are stiff with drawings of picturesque ruins where the passage of time is the implicit subject, drawing struggles when it tries to represent decay with any scientific precision. As long as draughtsmen were more concerned with the evocation of a mood, this was of no great concern. Attempts to regularise the drawing of ruins start with the *envois* sent back from Rome by French Prix de Rome scholars, who in their fourth year of residence had to make a drawn reconstruction of an antique building. From 1799, to rectify the confusion present in almost all previous representations of ancient buildings as to whether you were looking at the building in its present state or an imagined picture of its original state, or at something in between the two, the *pensionnaires* were required to prepare two sets of drawings – one, an exact record of the building in its current state, called the *relevé d'état actuel*; the other, the *restauration*, showing its

hypothetical original state.³² Over time, certain conventions were established for the *relevés*, mainly concerning how much of the accumulated evidence of the passage of time could be omitted but also governing the mode of representation, the extent of colouring allowed, and so on. Later in the 19th century, these drawings often adopted a quasi-photographic realism, but comparison with contemporary photographs shows that as records they were far from scientific. Apparently the *pensionnaires* grew to resent having to produce the *relevés* for their creative work was in the restorations, and it was not ultimately that important how much detail or precision the *relevés* contained since they were essentially there as a datum against which their restorations could be judged.

It was in Britain in the later 19th century – when restoration practice, under the influence of John Ruskin, William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), became increasingly concerned with preserving the marks of time on buildings – that accuracy really started to matter. Architects surveying old buildings had to find a way of reconciling what once was with what was now there, in a future state in which both would be evident. The conventions of drawing do not easily lend themselves to representing layers of time, yet this was necessary if evidence of past time was to be retained while at the same time ensuring the soundness, stability and watertightness of the structure.

Most architectural drawings, whether of buildings that have yet to be built or that have been built, show buildings at a single moment in time – usually, when they have just been completed. Changes over time have most often been shown by overlays or liftable flaps like those in Humphry Repton's Red Books, which showed watercolour views of his landscape designs, but even with these devices each individual drawing still only shows one moment of time – there is no single drawing that combines different temporalities within one composite image. This was the task that faced architects involved in restoration. A good example is provided by the survey sketches for the Old Post Office, a 14th-century yeoman's house at Tintagel in Cornwall, whose restoration was undertaken by Detmar Blow following its acquisition by the National Trust in 1903. A contemporary photograph shows just how decayed the house was – and for Blow, a SPAB adherent, it was important to retain as much of its tumbledown appearance as was consistent with keeping it standing. To achieve this result required very careful attention to the fabric of the building. Blow's sketchbook includes both perspectival views and a dimensioned plan. The former are impressionistic and show the age-character of the building, with notes on certain particular features, but much of the surface is unrecorded.

Jencks, C. (2016). 'An Evolving Sum of the Parts'. *The RIBA Journal*.

RIBA

The RIBA Journal

October 2016

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Left: Losing Myself, Alzheimer's Respite Centre, Dublin: a most subtle and appropriate design, reinterpreted for Venice Biennale.

The new work simultaneously changes all previous work, or the relations between them

Influence, 1973. He argued that competitive creativity is carried on by every generation of artists as a tumultuous dialogue with the past; the anxiety of followers who have to respect their tradition yet swerve from it and show independence, love their parents and kill them at the same time.

When I asked Niall McLaughlin how he related to the architects he liked – Mies, Louis Kahn and Rudolph Schwarz – he mentioned a different view, the one Bloom was trying to overthrow. His reference was TS Eliot's Tradition and the Individual Talent, 1919, the most cited view of tradition in literary modernism. Eliot argued that tradition requires the novel variation to be introduced, in order to keep the past alive and revalued. Furthermore, that the western tradition of literature constitutes a kind of 'ideal order', where the new work simultaneously changes all previous work, or the relations between them. This classical notion of the past alive in the present is expressed by Eliot in different ways: as the 'mind of Europe,' as if Homer and Virgil were alive today, and as a 'chemical reaction,' where the reactants are poetic expressions and emotions, but impersonal ones. The pressure of these reactions creates waves across time, hence the immortality of poets or those working in a very wide, continuous tradition.

Dublin architecture since the 1970s is a good example of the Eliotic tradition at work. There are the exemplary modern buildings that McLaughlin cites as his influences when he studied and worked there – for instance, the Trinity College Library of ABK. And then the influence of many superlative individuals such as Michael Scott (RIBA Gold Medallist), or O'Donnell & Tuomey (ditto), or Grafton Architects, or more recently Heneghan Peng. Many threads unite these

An evolving sum of the parts

Niall McLaughlin, winner of this year's Charles Jencks Award, draws confidently on all traditions to reshape and develop them into something new

Charles Jencks

Sometimes in architectural history a particular city sparks a shower of individual talents, a starburst of excellence. Good designers emerge to dominate a local scene, emboldened by a self-generating tradition of creative conflict. Rome in the 17th century during the Bernini-Borromini wars is one well-known example. Another is London in

the 1970s, when high-tech architects sparred with post modernists, both sides denying the labels while productively stealing from each other. Competitive clashes produce veritable starbursts, just as colliding galaxies are responsible for the great explosions of new stars onto the cosmic firmament.

In literature, this theory of creative conflict became dominant with the influential theory of Harold Bloom's famous Anxiety of

The RIBA Journal October 2016



Athletes' Village, London, shows strong enough belief in eclecticism to break out of the usual taboos.

characters. They are all engaged in social and urban architecture, to be expected in a classical city like Dublin, and they straddle the stylistic divides that competition forces on a global city. This is particularly ironic today, with Brexit, and the competitive race to the bottom for Dublin, the low-tax haven of capital, about to be challenged by London.

In any event, these architects (and McLaughlin, who has moved to London) constitute a recognisable Dublin School, with both the continuity and change that gives each architect the confidence to extend tradition in the way Eliot describes. It's a strange idea – we don't speak Homer's language – but a few architects today can still design in dialogue with the Gothic, or Borromini, as if having a creative conversation with the dead. And McLaughlin has certainly spoken to these eras and designers, with one of his superlative works: the Ripon College Chapel.

McLaughlin is the kind of architect's architect who gives the profession a good name. Staying within the confines of a particular style and tradition – broadly put somewhere between classicism and modernism – he is nonetheless not worried about changing both by hybridising them, nor frightened of being called post modern. In the time honoured manner of Mozart, he takes well known themes and tropes – the classical repertoire of the five platonic solids and their cognate

modes (ellipse, parabola, pointed arch and so on) – and plays new games with them. This free style classicism of vigour and light is the High Game as defined by Lutyens, but it is orchestrated much more lightly without becoming etiolated. His structural logic carried out with repetitive geometries creates a new kind of optical architecture. The Bishop Edward King Chapel has its primitive strength, delicacy and content – virtues not usually found together – and others reminiscent of James Stirling (another great influence on the Dublin School, as was Leon Krier).

This is not the place to analyse its great structural gymnastics, mixing Schwarz, Nervi and Gothic, nor to show how he turns the classical truss upside-down in a stunning move that, with all his amazing ellipses and ovals, Borromini never tried. I don't have the space to detail the Corbusian architectural promenade through the spaces, nor the subtle articulation up the facades that Alberti and the Renaissance palazzo advised. It's also minimalist Mies with the Op Art of Bridget Riley. So there – if that isn't enough influence-name-dropping it is enough to bear out McLaughlin's Eliotic Theory of tradition – always extend, always bend. Thinking of Bloom's counter theory, of creative conflict, I asked Niall who were his pet hates, which architects he really disliked, what general problems did he want to overcome? Long silence; no anxiety and competitive anguish here.

His Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin is one of the most subtle and appropriate designs for a sensitive building task I know. It stems from long careful research on the condition, and was reinterpreted for this year's Venice Biennale in his installation 'Losing Myself'.

In the time honoured manner of Mozart, he takes well known themes and tropes – the classical repertoire of the five platonic solids and their cognate modes – and plays new games with them



Primitive strength, delicacy and content: Bishop Edward King Chapel, Oxfordshire.

McLaughlin's planning and city design are equally based on particular and local research.

Materiality, geometry, light, metaphor, abstractions, ornament and elegance are the obvious qualities. Quotations and iconic expression are sometimes prominent – and unembarrassed, unlike much other apologetic work today. Direct and bold, McLaughlin will even use neo-grec horses as mass-produced panels for his Olympic Housing, and not be accused of pastiche. Obviously he has a strong enough belief in eclectic practice to overcome the usual taboos that straightjacket architects, and this may stem from the confidence of working within an elastic tradition. For self-assurance he does have, a quiet poise in solving the next move in the long game of architectural chess. Perhaps there are only a handful of other such architects today: Stirling was certainly one. In any case, if all periods of architecture are possibly alive today – or immortal as Eliot would have it – because of computation power, globalisation and a host of other forces, it seems to be an elasticised tradition. And one with reciprocal spring, or two-way force, is hard at work here – only awaiting some big commission for this young architect of 54 to show it to the world. ■

Niall McLaughlin's lecture on accepting the Charles Jencks Award is on 25 October at RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1. For tickets go to: architecture.com

Martin, C. (2016). 'Exhibition: Designing Buildings for People with Alzheimer's Disease'. *The Lancet*.

Exhibition

Designing buildings for people with Alzheimer's disease

The director of the 15th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice (Italy), Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena, is passionate about the role of architects in improving people's quality of life. Responding to Reporting from the Front, his nominated theme for the 2016 Biennale, London-based architects Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou tackle an important frontline neurological issue—the difficulties faced by people with Alzheimer's disease, whose ability to situate themselves and navigate within their living spaces is gradually eroded. In *Losing Myself*, their immersive installation within the Irish pavilion, they reflect on lessons they've learnt in designing and appraising buildings for people with dementia.

The paradox of architecture exhibitions is that curators are rarely able to show physical buildings. Instead they usually rely on text panels, architectural scale models, photographs, and drawings, including plans, elevations, and sections. *Losing Myself* exhibits wall-hung text panels recounting 16 learning points, which cite research interviews and published sources relating to the challenges in designing care facilities for people with dementia. Instead of illustrating these texts with static architectural models and drawings, McLaughlin and Manolopoulou's conceptual masterstroke is to superimpose a dynamic mosaic of continually evolving, overlapping imagery onto the floor plan of an Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin, Ireland, designed specifically for people living with Alzheimer's disease. "When architects draw plans, we allow ourselves the privilege of a total view of every space, seen all at once", they say. "In contrast, here we have tried to imagine the way in which people with dementia experience the building."

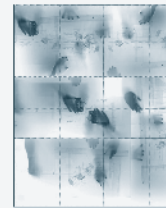
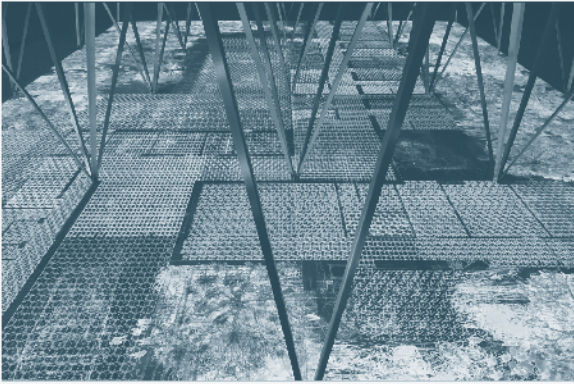
Time-based projections from 16 sources, suspended above the floor plan, create overlapping views of how 16 occupants experience the building during the course of one day, in a 16 min sequence. The respite occupants, whose world is essentially that which is apparent in their immediate situation, can never experience the building's coherent, fixed plan as drawn and realised by its architects. The sequence begins with a blank floor plan, which gradually fills up with drawn lines and patches of colour as, heralded by birdsong, its occupants wake and begin their daily routines. At bedtime the process reverses, ambient noises reduce and drawn lines and colours recede, evoking the fragmented neuronal world of people with Alzheimer's disease. The sequence has great poignancy and beauty.

McLaughlin and Manolopoulou's imaginative engagement with how people with dementia grapple with architecture includes many pertinent contributions from neurologists, psychologists, health workers, and patients with dementia and their families. A broad selection of

their comments is documented on the "lessons learnt" text panels. "It's my brain that's slow, not my feet", says Helen Rochford-Wood, who has early-onset dementia, on habitually being offered a wheelchair despite being physically able, instead of assistance with her navigational difficulties at airports; her comment appears under the lesson "All architects need to understand dementia". Under the lesson "home truth", Lesley Palmer, chief architect at the Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling, Scotland, asserts "you shouldn't have to leave your own home until your care needs are so acute that it's absolutely required". "People should still get to make poor choices for themselves, if they choose", counsels Jacqui Carson, manager of an assisted living centre in response to the lesson "risk and autonomy". Areas of buildings were previously colour-coded to aid navigation and memory, but it's now recognised that spatial links of interesting objects (so-called visual daisy-chains) provide more vivid prompts. Buildings themselves with distinctive identities could act as landmarks. "No matter where I go, I'm constantly looking for a sign", says patient Rochford-Wood.

The physical installation in Venice is complemented by the project's comprehensive website. It is effectively McLaughlin and Manolopoulou's research repository, documenting conversations, drawings, stories, and experiments related to dementia and how their powerful and moving installation was developed. It's also possible to access the full sequence of time-based slide projections and the accompanying soundtrack of daily chatter.

Colin Martin



Losing Myself
Irish Pavilion at the
15th International Architecture
Exhibition, Venice, Italy,
until Nov 27, 2016
For more information see
<http://www.losingmyself.ie>
For the video and soundtrack of
the installation projection see
<https://vimeo.com/169133065>
For the 16 lessons learnt see
[http://www.losingmyself.ie/
pages/16-lessons/](http://www.losingmyself.ie/pages/16-lessons/)

Rhodes, M. (2016). 'A Puzzling Projection Simulates What It's Like to Live with Dementia'. WIRED.

WIRED

A Puzzling Projection Simulates What It's Like to Live With Dementia

PLUM 1A

DUPLICATE

NATHAN RHODES

DESIGN

06.23.2016 10:00 AM

A Puzzling Projection Simulates What It's Like to Live With Dementia

The Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale disorients its visitors---a reminder that people with disabilities see buildings differently.



1/5

YEORYIA MANOLOPOULOU AND NIALL MCLAUGHLIN

Dementia2.jpg

"Losing Myself," is an installation in the Irish pavilion at this year's Venice Architectural Biennale.

IN A ROOM toward the back of the Venice Arsenale, videos project onto the floor of a pitch-dark room into a rectangle of light. The 16 films, each just 16 minutes long, all begin with hand-drawn architectural blueprints. But as the minutes unspool, the projections bloom into colorful, complex patterns. The effect is disorienting---exactly as its creators intended.

The installation, "Losing Myself," is the Irish pavilion at this year's Architectural Biennale. It's meant to be a visual metaphor for the way people with neurodegenerative diseases experience the built environment. As a disorder like Alzheimer's disease progresses, familiar places can grow increasingly foreign and confusing. The effect can be like living in a "continuous present tense," say architects Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou, who designed the installation; you can never quite remember what room you came from, or plan what room you'll go to next.

TRENDING NOW

The Adorable Robot That's Helping Deaf Children Communicate



The effect is especially poignant in the Arsenale, because the blueprints all depict the Alzheimer's Respite Center in Dublin---a building designed for people with Alzheimer's disease. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou invited 16 architects to draft blueprints of the center on tracing paper atop a glass-topped desk, while they filmed the sketches from beneath. "We encouraged the drafters to study the building, but to allow their drawings to be influenced by their own memories and preoccupations," McLaughlin says. "When you or I remember our experience, we rewrite the story, overlaid with other influences, thoughts and stimuli." These scattered influences gave rise to the tableau that's now playing on repeat in Venice, and that you can watch in full here:

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“Losing Myself” is part of a larger research project. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou are documenting six months’ worth of interviews with people with dementia, those people’s families, neuroscientists, psychologists, anthropologists, and policymakers who advocate for the aging population. The hope, Manolopoulou says, is that these insights will encourage architects to design spaces with fewer physical barriers and meaningful landmarks to create accessibility for people living with dementia. Those are vague design parameters, especially compared to an accessibility feature like a wheelchair ramp. But it’s a start for McLaughlin and Manolopoulou, who are adamant that architects consider the experiences of others – especially those who can’t always remember or process those experiences for themselves.

TOPICS ARCHITECTURE VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

Ryan, R. (2016). ‘Losing Myself – A Biennale with Social Intent’. *Architecture Ireland*.



> LOSING MYSELF - A BIENNALE WITH SOCIAL INTENT
BY RAYMUND RYAN

The Angelus rings out from deep inside the Artiglierie, the artillery section of the famous Arsenale. It’s followed, a little later, by what sounds like Joe Dolan. Is this a trick of the imagination, here in the heat of Venice, to overhear Mullingar’s Finest and “Make me an island... I’m yours”?

Coming through the interior of the Arsenale, walking the dark, seemingly endless hall of the Corderie, where curator Alejandro Aravena has organized one half of his main Biennale show, *Reporting from the Front*, and turning left into the Artiglierie, a similarly tenebrous if fragmented sequence of spaces, the eye is drawn to an illuminated floor in the far distance. It appears to shift, to move. This is *Losing Myself*, Ireland’s Pavilion for the 2016 Biennale, an immersive installation by Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou. For this year’s Biennale, McLaughlin and Manolopoulou revisit the Alzheimer’s Respite Centre designed and recently completed by Niall McLaughlin Architects on the edge of Blackrock Village. “Designed”, with its connotations of ego and styling, is a potentially misleading word. The Respite Centre was realised through intensive research, research that McLaughlin views as ongoing and that is now manifest in this carefully calibrated and delightful installation in Venice.

Sixteen architects, many ex-UCD or former students of McLaughlin, made 64 drawings each. Each participant draws a day in the life of one allocated patch of ground at the Blackrock Respite Centre. All sixteen sets of drawings are then projected from projectors propped on spidery quadropods, arranged 4 x 4, and powered by yellow cables that spiral up into the darkness. It’s an arresting array. Pop and technophilic, casting onto the floor

a pool of images in which trees, architectural boundaries, and the ghost-like hands of the drafting team come and go during the presentation’s sixteen-minute sequence.

Sound adds another dimension to this exploration of the minds, sensibilities and spatial cognition of those being cared for in Blackrock. Emitted from small globes evenly spaced between the yellow cables, and from speakers perched in the rafters, these noises come to life, like the drawings below, in the early morning, rising to something like a crescendo after midday. Many of the recordings represent memory snatches from an Ireland now several decades past. Hence Joe Dolan. And hence Michael O’Hehir: With Alzheimer’s, long-term memory can survive even when short-term memory has failed, and departed.

Alejandro Aravena is certainly having a year to remember. First the Pritzker Prize, bestowed in New York in April. Now the gift and challenge of directing the Venice Biennale in the wake of Sejima, Chipperfield, and Koolhaas. The Chilean’s appointment is undoubtedly political, a reorientation to the Southern Hemisphere and to a generation (he was born in 1967) quite distinct from mainline Starchitects. Aravena’s chosen theme, *Reporting from the Front*, suggests both Contemporary Survey – taking the pulse of world architecture – and Urgency. Architecture as action. Architecture on the barricades.

Unsurprisingly there are several Chileans: Cecilia Puga, Grupo Talca, Teresa Moller, Elton + Léniz, and Pezo von Ellrichshausen (recently in Dublin and the authors here of a charming pavilion of interlinked circular walls painted Wimbledon green). There are

projects from India, Bangladesh, China, Iran and Africa. Kunié Adeyemi (also recently in Dublin) has moored one of his A-frame Floating School vessels from Lagos at the far end of the Arsenale. A Koolhaas alum, the Nigerian was awarded the Silver Lion for outstanding project in *Reporting from the Front*.

Solano Benítez and Gabinete de Arquitectura from Asunción were awarded the Golden Lion for their soaring and ethereal vault made from crisscrossing ribs of brick. Paraguayan architecture is having its day in the sun, using ordinary materials in extraordinary ways. This is in part what one hopes for at a Biennale, to become acquainted with provocative ideas and new talent, especially when those ideas and talent beckon from some unexpected place.

Aravena’s selection of 85 or so participants for *Reporting from the Front* skews towards younger firms working in non-cosmopolitan environments. His list does include establishment figures, yet many of these (Rogers, Ando, Zumthor) risk being superfluous to the general thrust of the exhibition. One exception is Norman Foster prototyping, with ETH Zurich, vaulted structures to function as drone docking stations in rural Africa. Made from slim bricks of compressed earth, one module has been erected outside, a shady pavilion close to Adeyemi’s floating school.

Throughout the Biennale, politics reappears in surprising ways. Aravena avoids any temptation to lecture, although, conversely, *Reporting from the Front* might have benefitted from stronger curatorial design. Eyal Weizman (Goldsmith’s, London) presents numbing spatial analysis of the impact of



U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan while Manuel Herz (ETH, Zurich) pitches a white tent with artefacts to communicate a vast Sahrawi refugee city in Algeria. Both presentations signal the increasing importance of research institutions at this and other Biennales.

Spain won the Golden Lion for National Participation. Spain's presentation, *Unfinished*, will resonate with anyone familiar with Irish ghost estates. Planes of exposed steel studs occupy the central hall of the Spanish Pavilion, like industrial stage sets; they hold photographs of unfinished building projects across that country. In adjacent galleries, visitors encounter multiple projects that use minimal means to significant effect. Iberian skies can be gloriously blue!

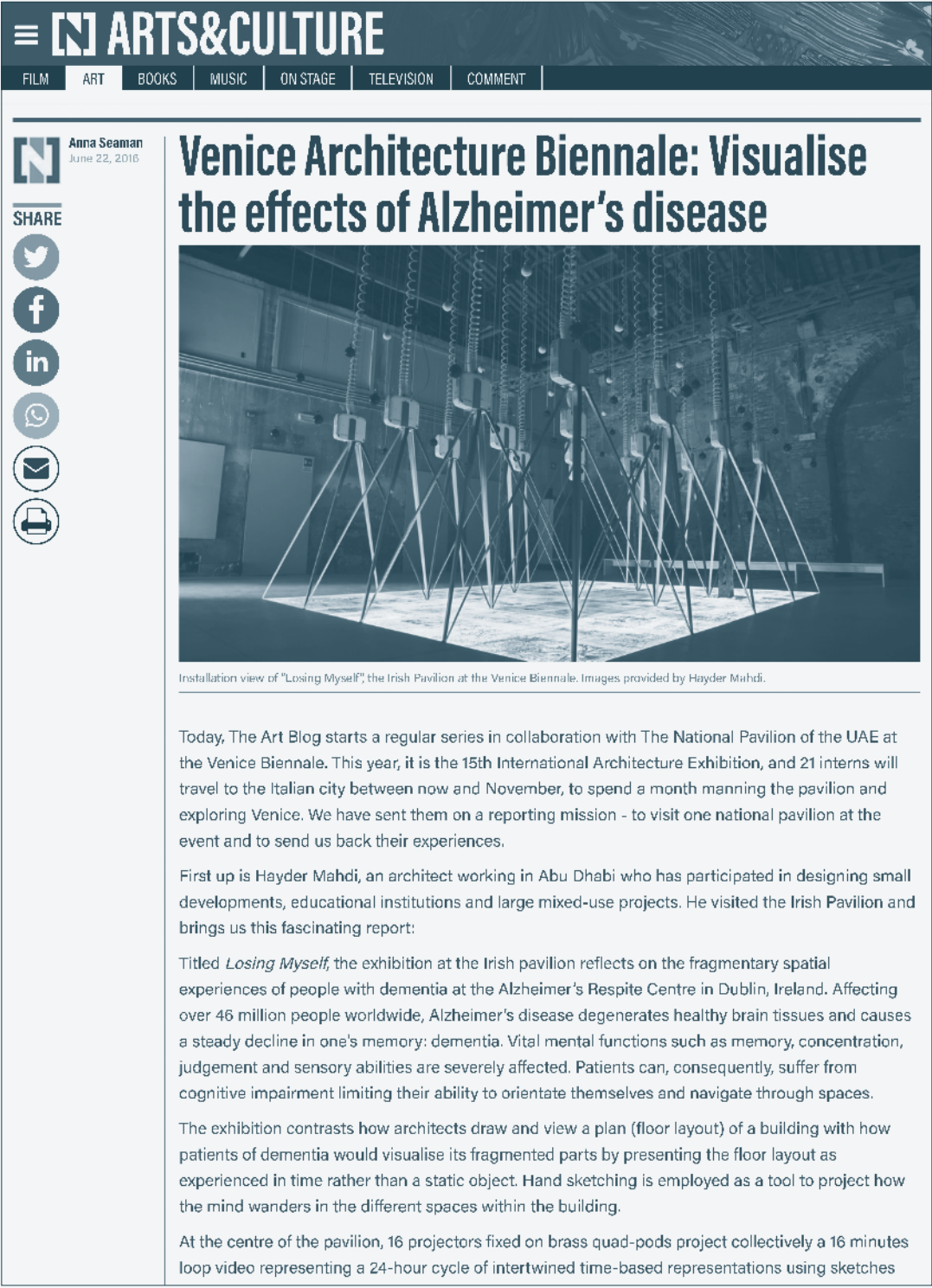
Several European countries tackle immigration. Poland takes on the plight of migrant labourers. Germany literally cuts holes in the walls of its stolid permanent pavilion, as if to invite refugees. One detects in these and other presentations something like distaste for the grandiose gesture, for formalism as the *ne plus ultra* of architectural culture.

Indeed, the concurrent focus in Aravena's Biennale on construction – manifest in installations by, amongst others, Wang Shu, Norman Foster, Gabinete de Arquitectura, Anna Heringer (a mud womb), and the Block Research Group from the ETH (a deliciously asymmetrical vault in the shadows of the Corderie) – is a corollary, in poetics of efficiency and sense of social purpose, to the overt politics of many national presentations.

How is Irish architecture situated in this challenging world? In Aravena's main show, Grafton Architects project a new film of UTEC in Lima, and add a brief, heartfelt text titled *The Physics of Culture*. McLaughlin and Manolopoulou also include text; indeed one half of *Losing Myself* is a website of that name, with lectures and interviews to live long after the exhibition closes in November. Till then, their projection of drawings will capture the imagination of Biennale visitors; and herald a new attention to healthcare thinking through messages transmitted, from the Dublin suburbs, to this vital 'Illuminated manuscript' deep in the Venice Arsenal.

1-2. *Losing Myself*, Irish Pavilion in the Arsenal by Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou. Copyright of Niall McLaughlin Architects and Yeoryia Manolopoulou
3. *Unfinished*, Spanish Pavilion, Golden Lion. Photo by Francesco Galli
4. *Breaking the siege*, Gabinete de Arquitectura, Golden Lion. Photo by Francesco Galli
5. *Vera pavilion*, Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Photo by Francesco Galli
6. *Floating School* by Kunle Adeyemi (NLÉ), Silver Lion. Photo by Jacopo Salvi

Seaman, A. (2016). 'Venice Architecture Biennale: Visualise the Effects of Alzheimer's Disease'. *The National*.



Venice Architecture Biennale: Visualise the effects of Alzheimer's disease



Installation view of "Losing Myself", the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Images provided by Hayder Mahdi.

Today, The Art Blog starts a regular series in collaboration with The National Pavilion of the UAE at the Venice Biennale. This year, it is the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, and 21 interns will travel to the Italian city between now and November, to spend a month manning the pavilion and exploring Venice. We have sent them on a reporting mission - to visit one national pavilion at the event and to send us back their experiences.

First up is Hayder Mahdi, an architect working in Abu Dhabi who has participated in designing small developments, educational institutions and large mixed-use projects. He visited the Irish Pavilion and brings us this fascinating report:

Titled *Losing Myself*, the exhibition at the Irish pavilion reflects on the fragmentary spatial experiences of people with dementia at the Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin, Ireland. Affecting over 46 million people worldwide, Alzheimer's disease degenerates healthy brain tissues and causes a steady decline in one's memory: dementia. Vital mental functions such as memory, concentration, judgement and sensory abilities are severely affected. Patients can, consequently, suffer from cognitive impairment limiting their ability to orientate themselves and navigate through spaces.

The exhibition contrasts how architects draw and view a plan (floor layout) of a building with how patients of dementia would visualise its fragmented parts by presenting the floor layout as experienced in time rather than a static object. Hand sketching is employed as a tool to project how the mind wanders in the different spaces within the building.

At the centre of the pavilion, 16 projectors fixed on brass quad-pods project collectively a 16 minutes loop video representing a 24-hour cycle of intertwined time-based representations using sketches

and digital overlays. Blurry hands representing 16 inhabitants of the building appear to draw distorted fragments of the floorplan as they cannot comprehend its totality. Colourful hexagonal grids are overlaid on the sketches representing the hexagonal neurons firing fields used in the brain when navigating or observing spaces. The multi-layered nature of the graphics allude a sense of spatial and emotional depth.

The rich visual experience is complemented by a notable sound environment. Keven Pollard, the sound designer, reflects on the fact that short memories fade much faster amongst people with dementia than older memories. Music and praying are perhaps the last things people remember as they are deeply embedded in their memories, dating back to their early childhood. Consequently, a great emphasis has been put on designing an immersive sound track. Snippets of Irish life blended with sound clips of the building, drawing noise and different soundtracks from Dublin are played from 64 suspended speakers. As visitors lean in over a specific part of the plan, a unique sound mix of casual daily conversation and activities that take place in that part of the building can be heard.

Without the use of a single wall, the Irish Pavilion provides an elegant and immersive spatial experience that is centred on the topic of cognitive impairment. Throughout my visit, I struggled to comprehend the overarching pattern or connect the different pieces of the plan together. Perhaps that is the exact subliminal message the exhibition wants to deliver. Hindered by memory loss and navigation difficulties, patients of Alzheimer's fail to amalgamate their spatial experiences to visualize the space they are situated within – an experience which even architects fall short of designing for.

* *Losing Myself* is researched, designed and produced collaboratively by Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou.

To follow Hayder on social media use the hashtag @hayder.mahdi and keep up with all the interns in Venice on Instagram on @veniceinterns or under the hashtags #uaeinvenice and #veniceinterns

Updated: June 22, 2016 04:00 AM

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The Straits Times (2016). 'Architecture Biennale in Venice: Singapore Pavilion Zooms in on Citizens.' *The Straits Times*.



HDB: Homes Of Singapore (above) by Keyakismos and Tamasisa Miyayuchi. PHOTO: DON WONG

<p>Not a building model in sight, nor a picture of the Singapore skyline.</p> <p>That was the thought that crossed Spanish architect Louiza Aberquero's mind as she entered the Singapore Pavilion at the prestigious 15th International Architecture Exhibition (Biennale Architettura 2016) in Venice last Saturday.</p> <p>Instead, she saw glowing rows of glass lanterns suspended from the ceiling. In them were illuminated photographs of the interiors of Housing Board (HDB) homes - living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens.</p>	
<p>At the base of each lantern, there was a tiny 3D model of the HDB block where these intimate spaces are found.</p> <p>Ms Aberquero, 39, says she has always known Singapore as a "perfectly planned cityscape" and this idiosyncractic showcase surprised her.</p>	
<p>Other must see pavilions</p> <p>GERMANY</p> <p>Theme: Making Heimat, Germany, Arrival Country</p> <p>One of the most controversial pavilions at the biennale, the German booth focuses on the country's response to the recent influx of immigrants who are looking for spaces to call home in urbanised cities.</p> <p>To represent the openness of Germany towards immigrants, 48 tons of bricks have been removed from the landmark-protected walls of its pavilion space in the Giardini gardens - making the pavilion literally and figuratively "open". There are indoor and outdoor seating and free Wi-Fi and power stations at the pavilion.</p> <p>On a deeper level, the presentation focuses on the important prerequisites of an Arrival City: affordable housing, access to work, small-scale commercial spaces, good access to public transit, networks of immigrants from the same culture as well as a tolerant attitude that extends to the acceptance of informal practices.</p> <p>IRELAND</p> <p>Theme: Losing Myself</p> <p>The Irish presentation features an immersive installation that explores the challenges of designing buildings for people who have Alzheimer's disease.</p> <p>How does one create orientation for people who are slowly losing their ability to orientate? The architects express this conundrum beautifully through a mixed medium display, featuring a frantic show of drawings, pictures and blueprints which are projected onto the ground.</p> <p>As the projections keep changing in an incoherent fashion, the audience is able to get a sense of life for dementia patients, as it gets progressively harder for them to navigate the world.</p>	

<p>JAPAN</p> <p>Theme: En: Art of Nexus</p> <p>Japan's clean and minimalist presentation explores how urban residences built in post-war Japan - designed to encourage nuclear families to live in residential spaces without discord - have led to acute social withdrawal and the lack of opportunities for relaxed interactions in public and open spaces.</p> <p>Through the lens of 21st-century architectural projects that encourage more open spaces and allow more interaction between people, the presentation expresses how design and architecture are catering to Japan's rising numbers of singles and self-sufficient individuals.</p> <p>By creating more spaces where people can gather, these new projects are helping the Japanese rediscover the value of co-existence and mutually supportive relationships outside of the traditional nuclear family.</p>	
<p>"Seeing a presentation that puts citizens in the forefront was not only unique and unexpected, but also very poignant," she adds.</p>	
<p>The organic and creative ways in which citizens shape their physical environment is a big part of the Singapore booth this year, which is titled Space To Imagine, Room For Everyone.</p> <p>"Co-creation" is the buzzword at the Singapore Pavilion this year - that is, Singaporeans working alongside the state in collaborative urban planning. So there is an emphasis on ground-up, grassroots activities instead of top-down government masterplans.</p> <p>That is why initiatives by civic groups such as Friends of the Rail Corridor, Goldhill Gardening Club and Participate in Design are exhibited in three segments - People And Their Homes, People Working The Land and People Engaging The City.</p> <p>Through physical artefacts, video interviews and pictures, the stories of these groups are represented, such as Ground-Up Initiative's low carbon footprint 5G village campus and Edible Garden City's urban food garden spaces.</p>	

At the opening ceremony, which was attended by Singapore President Tony Tan Keng Yam, Minister for Communications and Information Yaacob Ibrahim said: "The last 50 years have been, for lack of a better word, top down.

"But this is the era of co-creating solutions. We want Singaporeans to have a sense of ownership and the only way that can happen is if they feel they have a stake in the country."

The pavilion was commissioned by DesignSingapore Council and curated by a team from the National University of Singapore (NUS) Department of Architecture. They declined to reveal the cost.

The theme for the biennale this year was Reporting From The Front.

In response, Singapore's lead curator and associate professor at NUS Department of Architecture, Dr Wong Yunn Chi, decided to veer away from representing Singapore's prosperous external facade and, instead, focus on the people who are pushing for change from the ground up - often by championing new uses of land amid top-down urban planning.

The projects chosen all demonstrate "participatory design, which is softening Singapore's hardened edges", he tells The Straits Times.

He adds: "These projects might often fall through the cracks, but they are perfect examples of co-creation at work - where you can see entrepreneurial design happening between people of different races, ages and backgrounds."

Singapore's pavilion is among 64 national presentations at the biennale that highlighted a spectrum of moral and social issues.

Its fifth showing since 2004 comes hot on the heels of its designation as a Unesco Creative City of Design in December last year.

The 240 sq ft space at the Sale d'Armi building in the Arsenale region used to house the exhibition is also Singapore's for the next 20 years - ahead of the country signing a lease last year which allows for the space to be used for both art and architecture biennales in alternate years.

Besides the main event of the biennale, there are a number of satellite exhibitions.

One of them is the European Cultural Centre's Time - Space - Existence architecture exhibition, where Singaporean firms MKPL Architects, Woha, Wy-To and POD Structures are also presenting a selection of their work.

•The Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is open for public viewing till Nov 27. For details about opening hours and ticketing prices, go to www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/tickets/

People And Their Homes

This segment showcases the challenges and commonalities found in the heartland of Singapore's new towns, where 85 per cent of the population resides.

What: HDB: Homes Of Singapore by Keyakismos and Tomohisa Miyauchi Forming the centrepiece of the Singapore Pavilion, this presentation features intimate images of the interiors of HDB homes shot over three years by architect and senior lecturer Miyauchi of National University of Singapore's Department of Architecture.

The project, which is the brainchild of artist duo Eitaro Ogawa and Tamae Iwasaki of Keyakismos, together with Miyauchi, saw more than 240 images presented on 81 glass lanterns created by renowned Italian light fitting designers Viabizzuno. A 3D model of a HDB building is also represented within each lantern.

The fixtures - made and designed by Viabizzuno in partnership with the NUS'

Department of Architecture - are now part of the Viabizzuno catalogue and may be sold in the future.

What: 03-Flats by Lei Yuan Bin and Lillian Chee

The sophomore film essay by film-maker Lei and conceptualised by Chee, an assistant professor at NUS' Department of Architecture, follows the domestic lives of three women living alone in HDB estates. The movie explores themes of domesticity and identity and was screened at the pavilion.

People Engaging The City

This segment focuses on initiatives that are being introduced to create more responsive, accessible and creative public spaces within the confines of a meticulously planned city.

What: Rail Corridor Project by Friends of the Rail Corridor, Nature Society (Singapore), Singapore Heritage Society and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)

The Rail Corridor project headed by URA is responsible for coming up with plans for the 26km stretch of railway land that used to serve trains between Singapore and Malaysia in consultation with the interest groups listed above.

The exhibition features a video presentation with the various parties discussing their ideas as well as a 10m-long topographical model of the corridor, made by students from the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore.

What: Our Favourite Place by URA

This URA initiative aims to offer more opportunities for the community to be involved in enlivening public spaces to transform them into meaningful and accessible areas.

Some of these projects include pop-up installations, such as Chairs In Squares (movable chairs), Picnic In The Park (picnic tables and swings) and Play Space (3D play set) that were placed in areas such as Raffles Place, to encourage a more lively public atmosphere.

At the Singapore Pavilion, video footage and images showcase these events and the people behind them.

What: Empowering Design by Participate in Design (PID)

PID is a non-profit organisation that creates awareness of participatory design. The group helps neighbourhoods and public institutions in Singapore design creative spaces by engaging with the communities that reside in these spaces.

PID's work at the Singapore Pavilion is presented through a colourful wall of Post-it notes, each displaying hand-written notes or feedback given by participants during their engagement sessions.

People Working The Land

Projects in this segment feature a new wave of groups that are going back to working with the earth, despite Singapore being a land-scarce city state. Their efforts are showcased in pictures and video interviews.

What: Community In Bloom by Goldhill Gardening Club

Community In Bloom is a nationwide gardening movement started by the National Parks Board to encourage community farming in public and private housing estates as well as organisations such as schools, hospitals and welfare homes. The

exhibition at the Singapore Pavilion features an award-winning garden and vegetable farm on a 465 sq m plot of land, maintained by a group of 50 residents from the Moulmein Goldhill Neighbourhood Committee.

What: Urban Farming by Edible Garden City and Comcrop

Edible Garden City is behind the Grow Your Own Food movement in Singapore while Comcrop is a farming enterprise that employs innovative agriculture technology on rooftop spaces in the city. Both projects champion local produce and push forth initiatives that turn under-utilised metropolitan spaces into arable plots to grow produce.

What: Rootedness And Resilience by Ground-Up Initiative

Ground-Up Initiative is a non-profit group that in September 2014 secured a land area of 26,000 sq m in Khatib to build Kampung Kampus, a testbed for sustainability ideas. Kampung Kampus is being constructed with the help of volunteers and the exhibition showcases some of the handmade bricks that were made to build their eco-campus.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Straits Times on June 24, 2016, with the headline 'People in the spotlight'. Print Edition. Subscribe

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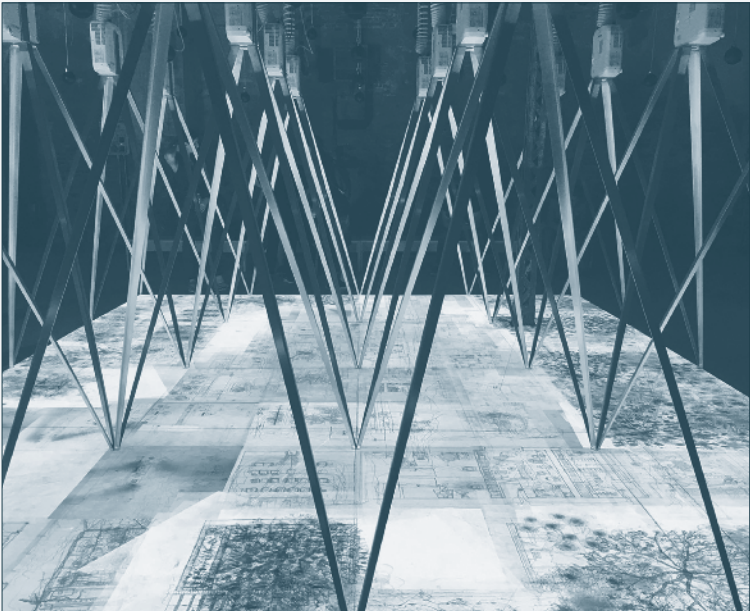
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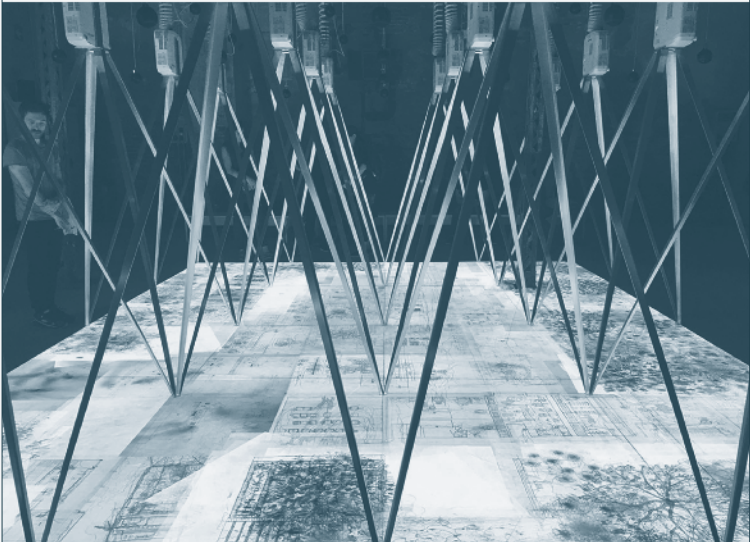
SINGAPOREANS

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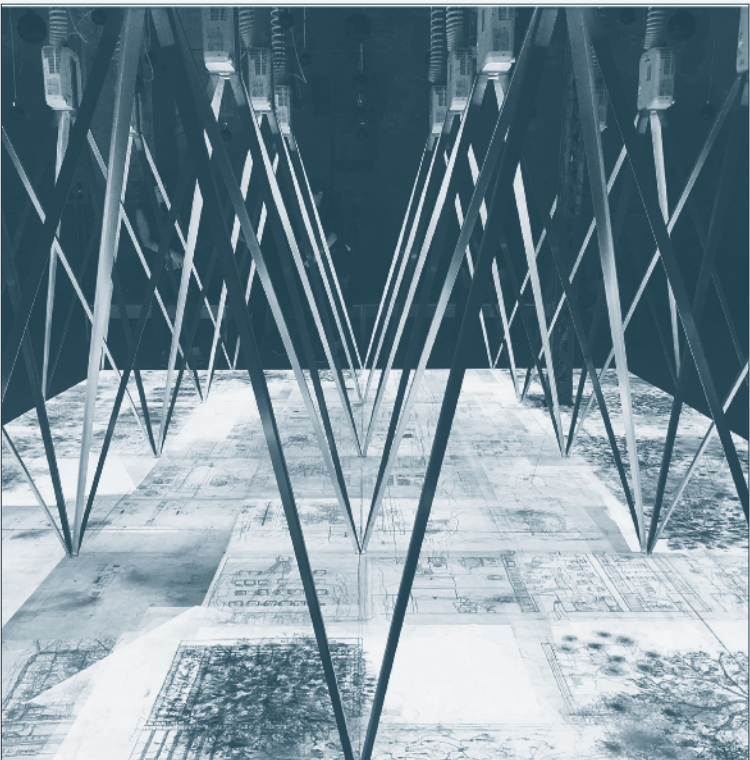




Ireland Pavilion's "Losing Myself" exhibition at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of Venice Biennale addresses to an important brain disease affecting over 46 million people worldwide. Curated by Yessie Manolopoulou and Niall McLaughlin, the queer god drawing machine creates some sort of mosaic of information to interact with sufferers of Dementia and his immersive installation tries to envisage a building architects designed for people with dementia through their own experiences.



The installation questions the notion of the building as a singular construction, and by extension, those architectural representations that insist upon buildings as finite and whole objects. The project is a reflection on the lessons learned through a decade of designing buildings for people with dementia.



Alzheimer's disease is a form of dementia, one of a range of conditions that progressively degrade the synaptic connections within our brains. The condition erodes the ability to plan and to remember. It becomes gradually harder to situate yourself and to navigate your way in the world. Two capacities central to the experience of architecture. The curators have worked for a decade, designing buildings for people with dementia.

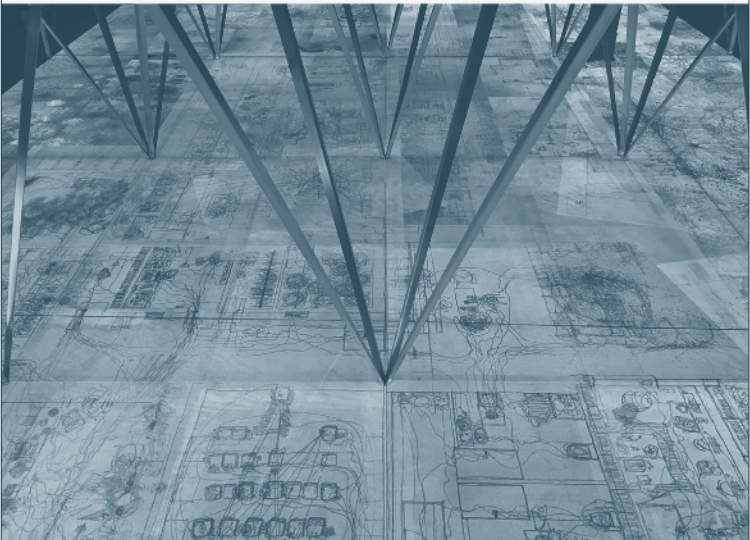




Image © WAC

The exhibition attempts to reflect on our own experience as architects working to 'improve the quality of life while working on the margins, under tough circumstances, facing pressing challenges'. The curators have chosen the medium of a time-based projected drawing to embody our ideas. The drawing reflects upon the way in which the human mind constructs interwoven representations of situation and memory whilst the pace Philip Barker calls 'the million-petaled flower' of being here.



Image © Lee Barker

"We are striving to expand our understanding and inform our practice, in the life of this project and in the future," says the curators of the exhibition. "The plan of any building is an architectural representation of the human need to be situated within an environment that provides orientation," they added.



Image © Lee Barker

Using time-based projection, the machine redraws the experience of this plan as collectively witnessed by sixteen people using the building over the course of one day. The coherent, fixed plan an architect depends upon can never be fully brought into being by the building's occupants: they cannot use memory and projection to see beyond their immediate situation and can no longer synthesise their experiences to create a stable model of their environment.

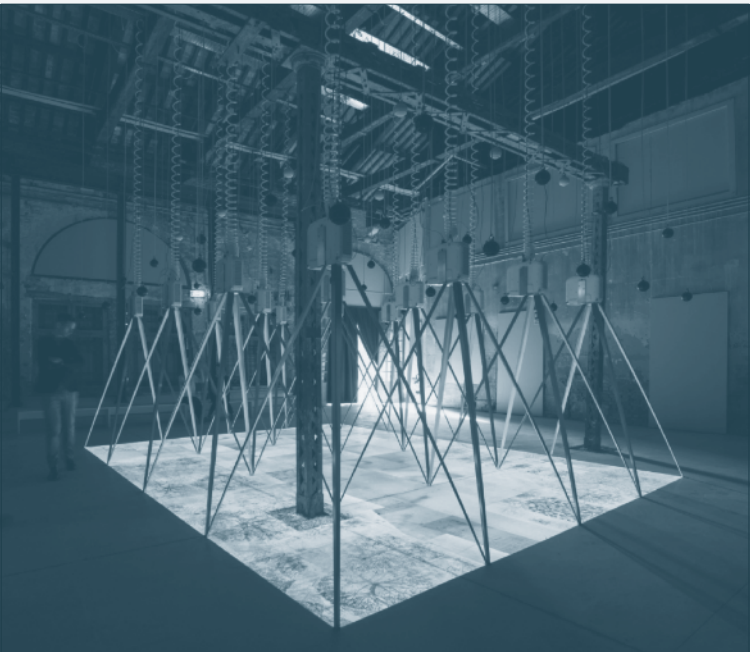


Image © Riccardo Iosetto

This produces a fragmentary world: and, because there is still recourse to deep memory, a world that is filled with a phantasmagoric and unhidden procession of other spaces and times. The overlapping, perhaps conflicting, experiences of the inhabitants question the notion of the building as a singular conception, and by extension, those architectural representations that insist upon buildings as 'finite' and 'whole' objects.

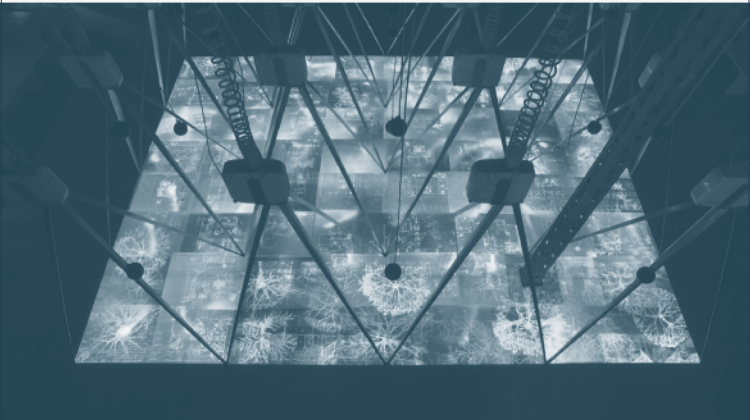


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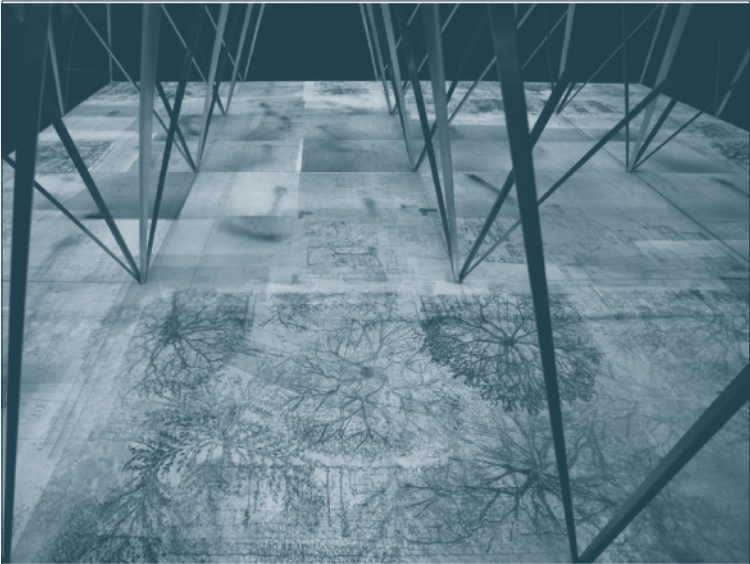
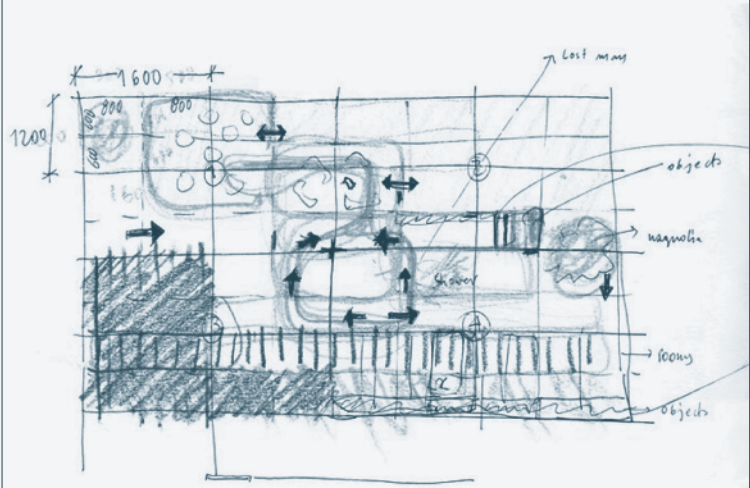


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Initial sketch. To facilitate this study, the cursors have redrawn the plan, subdividing it into rectangular areas of focus. The ratio of these exchanges of focus is set at 1:3, to mirror the aspect ratio of a fullscreen projection. Image courtesy of Losing Myself.

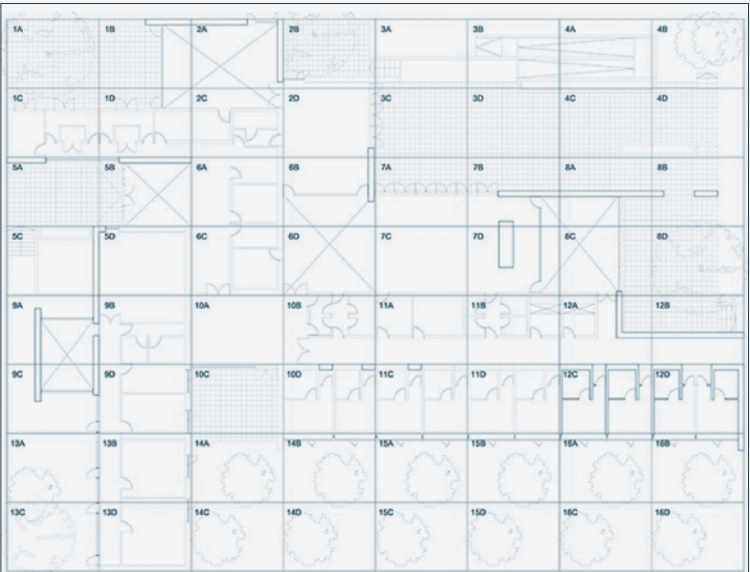
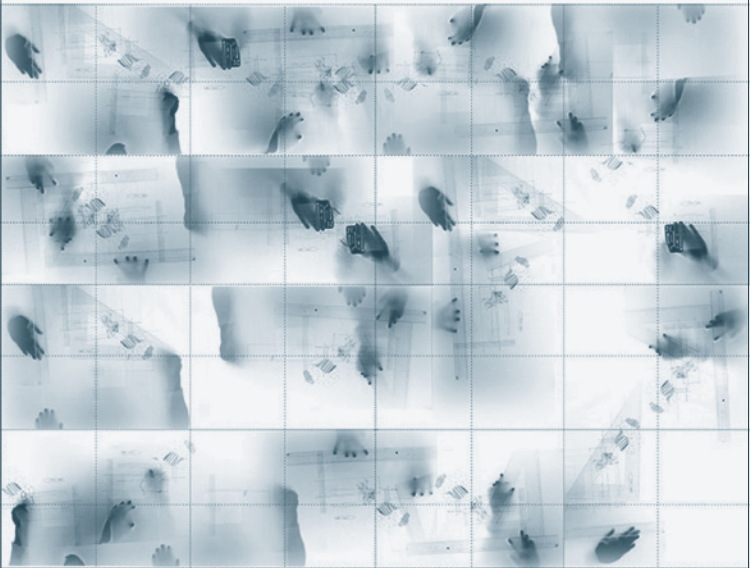
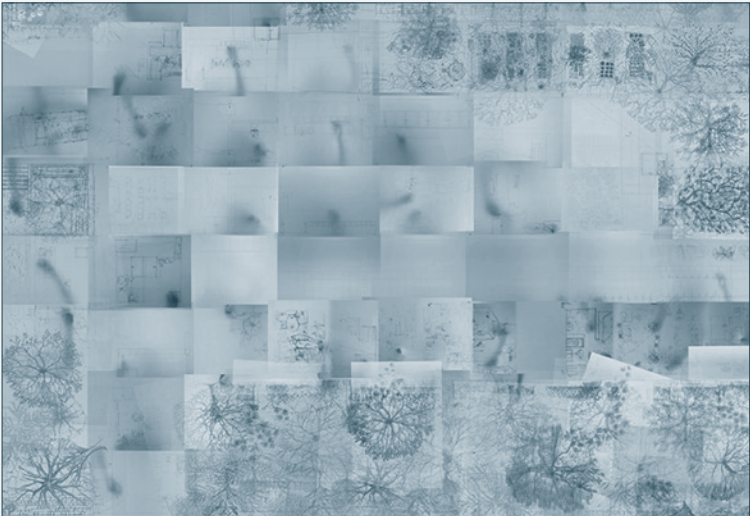


Image courtesy of Losing Myself



Protagonists: The dialling hands embody 15 inhabitants of 'The Orchard Centre' as they occupy parts of the building. The occupants draw fragments of the plan, because they cannot hold its totality in their minds. As the day passes, drawings accumulate and assemble a collective understanding of the building. Image courtesy of Losing Myself.



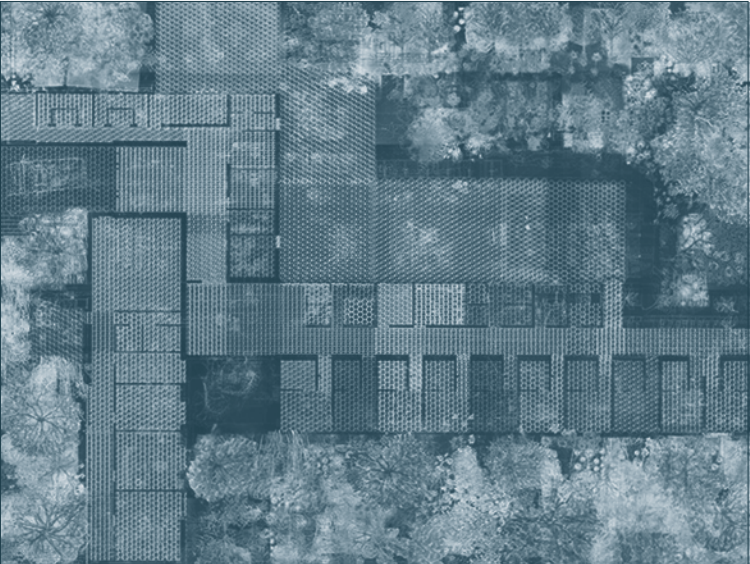
8am - 12pm Morning [Spring]

Despite clients wake and begin to rise. Some look towards the gardens. Night staff leave and day care staff arrive, followed soon afterwards by the staff of the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland headquarters. Breakfast is served and day-care clients begin to arrive by bus. People chat and the radio is turned on. The gardeners send the planting bins, watched by a group of occupants who have stepped out for a cigarette. A mesa is prepared in the kitchen. Image courtesy of Losing Myself.



12pm - 5pm Afternoon [Summer]

All meet up for lunch in the dining hall. Some occupants go back to their bedrooms, but many stay in the social areas. Some play pool, some meander from room to room, others run-rage through the bookshelves. The staff in the Alzheimer's Society offices are busy. It is someone's birthday so tea and cake is served in the dining room. There is dancing and singing, someone plays the piano. Day care clients begin to leave and staff in the kitchen prepare the next meal. Image courtesy of Losing Myself.



12am - 6am Night [Winter]

Most residents are asleep, though some rise at times to use the bathrooms. Staff supervise, speaking in whispers. Deep in the night, the call line in the offices rings, though generally the building is quiet. A client wakes and plays the piano softly. Sea waves hit the Blackrock shore. Image courtesy of Losing Myself.

> via Venice Architecture Biennale 2022 Losing Myself



Other Dissemination

Birkhäuser (2020).
*Katalog Frühjahr
2021: Architektur,
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