ON SEMPERIAN SURFACES: INTERWEAVINGS BETWEEN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY CURTAIN WALL AND HARRIS TWEED, A STUDY MEDIATED BY PHOTOGRAPHY

DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgment has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

PETA CARLIN
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ABSTRACT

Recalling the nineteenth century German architect and champion of the crafts Gottfried Semper’s claim that textiles are the true antecedents to the wall, *On Semperian Surfaces* is an interdisciplinary investigation that explores the relationship between the hand-crafted, geographically specific and culturally grounded fabric of Harris Tweed, hand-woven by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides to this day, and the phenomenon of the mass-mediaised surface of the curtain glass wall that patterns our cities across the world. Premised upon interpretation, this research speculates on how allegiances between surfaces might contribute to our understanding of and creation of place, the hyphantic potential of the photograph put to work in its making. § Appropriating the productive art of weaving, *On Semperian Surfaces* stitches together a series of diptychs from disparate disciplines, architectural and textile, their conjoining founded upon association. The research departs from a series of photographs, *Urban Fabric: Greige*, portraits of Melbourne’s mid-twentieth century corporate architectural façades, which exposed the latent image of Harris Tweed amidst the buildings’ faces. Operating from the intimate to the architectural, shuttling betwixt body and building, between the rural and the metropolitan, from the hand-crafted to the mass-reproduced, the overarching approach is founded upon analogy, its binding establishing contexts enabling surfaces to appear. § Analogy was a favoured mode of transition for the German scholar and writer Walter Benjamin, and it is through the lens of his writings that this research is largely read, city a subject of his focus, the language of photography a feature of his texts. A constellation of other writers is gathered with the Scrivener, art, architecture and textile historians, philosophers, including poets and novelists too, whose own works and threads of thought enrich the conceptual patterning while lending colour to the prose. § Composed of two parts, *On Semperian Surfaces* presents a series of art works and texts, each poetically conceived, with the first section containing the
images and artist statements, coupled by an essay which locates the work amidst a milieu of inspirations and associations, images lured to and emitted from *Urban Fabric: Greige*. Works include those by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Mel Bochner, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Andreas Gursky, Ann Hamilton, Thomas Ruff, Allan Sekula, Simon Starling, and Anton Vidokle, to name but a few, and which, in a sense, interweave to provide an occasional and improvised score to which this text is set. §

The second section is a response to the images in the *Urban Fabric* suite and their installation. Understood as image-texts, these writings do not seek to describe the work *per se*, but are presented as another form of transcription, elaborating on the relationships between some of the images that proliferated in the wake of *Urban Fabric: Greige*. In a series of essays dialogues thus ensue, each text elucidating different aspects, and tied on, the one after the other, like webs of tweed, and pulled through the loom. § As a result of this coursing, it is suggested that *On Semperian Surfaces* tenders a new-found surface vocabulary for the reading of the city, one that seeks to challenge the banality of the office tower whose façades were once decried as “anonymous,” while activating the unforeseen potential of Harris Tweed, the metaphoricity of the photograph brought to light in its construction.
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BIOGRAPHY

Peta Carlin is a Melbourne-based visual artist and designer whose work explores architectural themes and concepts through the practices of image-making and collaborative exchange. She graduated from architecture, prior to undertaking an honours degree and a Masters degree in fine art imaging, and is a sessional tutor in architectural design, design research, and communications at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne. Peta is the recipient of a British Council Design Researcher Award (2009) and the Lomo Australia Award for Most Innovative Use of Photomedia (2007), and her work is held in the Corbett and Yueji Lyon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art and the State Library of Victoria.
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In Gaelic, it is said that there is no word for home, only going homewards, but at last, this leg of the journey is drawing to its end. Like most travels of long duration, it has been beset by various detours and delays, trials and tribulations, and on occasion, moments of despair. But I have been blessed too along the way by those who supported and guided me, sharing with me something of themselves so this journey could be undertaken, a path discerned, a way through enabled, illuminated by their generosity. And to these people I wish to express my sincere thanks. § To my family, Marlene, Paul; Matthew, Ellen and Liam; Rowena; Jerome, Suzana, Nicholas and Oliver; Chantelle, Marmalade and Frankie; and to Lovely Lorenda and The Cousins too (especially Cassandra, Nick, Gus, Louis and Barnaby), for their love and support. § To my friends, Fiona Gunn and Greg Doolan, Elif Kendir, Letó Tsolakis, Noë Harsel, Merridy Justice, Paul Knight and Peter Cattanach, Dianna Rosica, Alison Bell, Carmel Cianta, John Milne, and Rinnie, also for their love and support. § To my supervisors, Professor Mark Burry and Professor Jeff Malpas for their guidance and support. To Mark for accommodating this interdisciplinary research at SIAL, and for providing an ethical and supportive environment in which to undertake it; and to Jeff, who I was privileged to meet through Mark, for his thunderclap pronouncement regarding “the surface,” such lucent acuity along with his subsequent encouragement proving to be transformational. § To my Graduate Research Conference Panel Members: Andrew Brennan, Ashley Schafer, Cameron Tonkinwise, Harriet Edquist, John Frazer, Judith Brine, Juliette Peers, Kevin Murray, Laurene Vaughan, Nicolas Ray, Patrick Snelling, Suzette Worden, and Tom Barker, for engaging with the work-in-progress and their advice. § To the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University for a scholarship in support of this

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Tapadh Leibh,

Suas leis a’ Ghàidhlig agus leis a’ Chlò Mhör!
EPIGRAPHS

WARPs

On Opening

Urban Fabric

Dialogues Transmissions

Silent Witnesses

WEFT

Appearing Weaving

Wall Face

Word Image
Surface | Pattern


Place | Dressing


Ritual | Repetition


Text | Memory


On | Closing


Books | Ephemera

WARP
ON
OPENING
I SIT BEFORE A MOOR OF TWEED: A NARROW GORGE AND FADING FOLDS.

TWO ENDS MUST BE FINISHED NOW I SEE NEITHER, ONLY MY FATHOM’S REACH OF ARMS.

THOUGH I SEEM TO CHOOSE THIS TASK THERE IS A TYRANNY IN THE NEEDED EVENESS OF THE WEAVE.

IAN STEPHEN
WEAVERS [...] ALONG WITH SCHOLARS AND WRITERS [...] HAD MUCH IN COMMON.

W. G. SEBALD
In his wanderings through his home-town of Berlin, Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) was once to recall the landscape of a far-off distant place, travelled to years before, recounting in his city’s chronicling that: “the dunes of the Baltic landscape have appeared to me like a fata morgana here on Chauseestraße, supported only by the yellow, sandy colours of the station building and the boundless horizon opening in my imagination beyond its walls.” § So too in my journeying through the streets of my own city Melbourne were the combination of hue and tone, the colours and patternings of its mid-twentieth century façades to echo of travels long past, a voyage that still lingers, to the western isles of Scotland. For it was there that I took up the camera for the first time in earnest, astounded by the beauty of the landscape, its vastness and its variegated colouring, reminiscent of tartans and checks of curious and prior to then, seemingly inharmonious admixtures, bathed in an almost mystical light, an ethereal light that contrasted so sharply with the harshness of the Australian sun that I had known (FIGS. 1-2). § So moved, it was through photography that I sought to capture all this, to hold it, to prevent it from escaping my memory, to stop the colours from fading over the passage of time, photography operating, in a way, as a kind of mordant. § In journeying, it is said that: “[t]here is even in the very experience of the voyage something more marvellous than in the memory; for memory joins only those things that resemble each other. On the contrary, travel makes neighbours of places without any likeness. It links sites that belong to different planes of existence.” § Through movement, between the past and the present, between here and there, we come to know the world, our journeying, it is said, enabling us to grasp it in its complexity, its cohesion built up out of fragmentary experiences, no longer kaleidoscopic, but through our very passage, ordered and composed. The body unified in its movement, its kinaesthetic synthesis operating at rest as in play, is reflected in its movement between destinations, finding itself in place, animate only in relation (FIGS. 3-4). Between the metropolis of Melbourne and the largely rural Hebridean Isles, the differences are pronounced, but despite such variances, associations were disclosed, distances and
differences breached by the mediation of colour, their surfaces in correspondence\(^9\) (FIGS. 5-6). § For the nineteenth century German architect and champion of the crafts, Gottfried Semper (1803-1879),\(^10\) architecture, and by extension cities, are “held in place and in play [...] by the work of colour,”\(^11\) his writings on architecture’s four elements\(^12\) drawing inspiration from ancient civilisations, and titled in one of its editions, \textit{On Polychromy}.\(^13\) Colour, according to Semper, provided “the artist with a new way to throw the surface into relief [...] bring[ing] the eye back again to the natural way of seeing,”\(^14\) a view which conceived of colour and form as one, further acknowledging the implicit and necessary interaction of the arts, of dialogues tacit or otherwise conveyed.\(^15\) For Semper, we are told, did not distinguish between the fine arts and the crafts, between \textit{Kunst} and \textit{Kunstgewerbe}, no distinction was to be discerned “between the laws which govern[ed] the work of art and those of a product of the crafts”;\(^16\) all man-made artefacts regardless of scale were understood as ornaments, symbolically signifying “analogue relations with the cosmos.”\(^17\) The principles “which govern[ed] the conception of [...] work[s] of art,”\(^18\) we are told, were to be premised upon the productive arts,\(^19\) with primacy given to textiles\(^20\) and the practice of weaving. § Affiliations between architecture and textiles are long held,\(^21\) the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus (c. 460 - c. 370 B.C.), it is said, comparing architecture and weaving with the building of nests by birds and webs by spiders,\(^22\) with the Augustan architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (c. 80–70 - c. 15 B.C.) later claiming that walls were once originally woven\(^23\) (FIGS. 7-8). Semper was to extend the metaphor, in essence between body and building further, his interest in polychromy lending itself to textiles, culminating in the vestiary arts, or \textit{Bekleidung},\(^24\) as he was to term it, conceived of as an all-encompassing fabric, an attire skilfully woven. § “Our culture,” it is said, “rests on Greek foundations, and weaving is as much a part of our conceptual scheme today as it was in the time of Homer,”\(^25\) the nature of fabrication inherent in the weave evident not only in the bonds and sense of cohesion that are basic to the establishment of societies,\(^26\) but of their cultures too, “culture occur[ing]
I:8

[only] in and through the formation of places,“27 reflected in the design and construction of its various fabrics, and realised through their very surfacing. § On Semperian Surfaces takes weaving as its motif, as both its metaphor and model,28 logic and imagination necessarily entwined29 in the stitching together of diptychs from disparate disciplines, architectural and textile, their conjoining founded upon association (FIGS. 9-10). The research departs from a series of photographs, Urban Fabric: Greige,30 portraits of Melbourne’s mid-twentieth century corporate architectural façades, which exposed the latent image of Harris Tweed amidst the buildings’ faces. Operating from the intimate to the architectural, the research interweaves between the hand-crafted, geographically specific and culturally grounded fabric of Harris Tweed, and the global phenomenon of the mass-mediaised surface of the curtain glass wall. Arising out of the taking of images and the reading of them, this research speculates on how allegiances between surfaces might contribute to our understanding and creation of place, the hyphantic potential of the photograph put to work in its making. § Image-based,31 this study is largely read through the lens of Walter Benjamin’s scribing, and originally departed from his ‘Work of Art’32 essay, written in the midst of his larger unfinished project the Passagen-Werk or Arcades Project,33 while also drawing from his ‘Little History of Photography’,34 and ‘News About Flowers’,35 amongst others.36 For the writings of Benjamin, as it has often been commented, are “inextricably bound up with [...] images,”37 his texts ascribing “an incomparably greater significance to pictoriality than is usual in philosophy; [...] speak[ing] at length in, and even more out of, images;”38 with a particular “recourse to the language of photography,”39 “the wonder of appearance”40 always central to his concerns (FIGS. 11-12). The invocation of images in his texts relied upon an engagement with the world, with readings of it, often across the grain, the tactility of experience thus exposed. Such perusals plunged the depths of surface-appearances, and were, by and large, deemed a matter of necessity.41 § A constellation of other writers is gathered with the Scrivener, art, architecture and textile historians,
philosophers, including poets and novelists too, whose own works and threads of thought enrich the conceptual patterning while lending colour to the prose (FIGS. 13-14). § § § But perhaps before proceeding any further, how Harris Tweed, the curtain wall and photography have come to be understood in the shaping of this research should be defined, along with the central themes of surface, place and weaving. § Semper was to extol the dyeing skills of the Celts, this skill also revealed in “the art of pattern drawing originally practiced on their own skins,”42 a natural precursor to the development of the “multi-coloured check patterns that form the national dress of Scotland”43 (FIGS. 15-16). Existing long before it became designated as Harris,44 this Hebridean form of the twill weave,45 a living heritage, continues in this tradition to this day. The “big cloth,” or clò mhòr as Islanders refer to Harris Tweed, is defined by a British Act of Parliament as a fabric that is made of pure virgin Scottish wool, dyed, spun and finished in the Outer Hebrides and hand-woven by weavers at their homes on these Islands,46 located off the north-west coast of Scotland47 (FIGS. 17-18). The activities of Catherine Herbert, Lady Dunmore (1814-1886), widow of the sixth Earl of Dunmore,48 were to establish Harris Tweed; she was, in a sense, the first to commercialise it,49 commissioning webs of the Murray tartan in 1846,50 while also contributing to its future through philanthropic investments in the people and their crafts51 (FIGS. 19-20). § Distinguishing between the solid and load-bearing masonry wall, Mauer, and the enclosing surface supported by a frame, Wand,52 Semper was to discern the fabrication of the weave in the light-framed structure’s walls.53 § His writings were first translated into English by the architect John Wellborn Root, a partner of Daniel Burnham, their Reliance Building (1890-1895), having some claim, it is said, as the first curtain walled building, as we understand it today,54 its formulation referencing “Semper’s insistence on the conceptual priority of [the] textile art[s]”55 (FIGS. 21-22). Once understood in military terms, as a partition hung and tautened between two bastions or towers, from which the pending onslaught of enemies could be espied and surveyed, the curtain wall in
its fortification of the enclosure, is now consumed by and adorns the tower itself, a doubtless redoubt, the figure an exemplar of Modernism and its purported all-over ornamentation, a move to abstraction conceivably epitomised by the grid (FIGS. 23-24). § In the façades selected for Urban Fabric: Greige, the curtain wall is understood in general terms, and does not strictly correspond to those early examples, such as Skidmore Owings and Merrill’s Lever House (1951-1952) designed by Gordon Bunschaft, or Harrison and Ambramovitz’s United Nations Building (1947-1952), or indeed our own ICI House (1955-1958) by Bates Smart McCutcheon (FIGS. 25-26), but rather engages with descendants of those constructions wrought in glass, concrete and steel. § Pursued through the taking of photographs, this research extends the moment of their taking, protracting the sense of wonder that caused them to be thus framed, the engagement of photography in this project largely conceptual, facilitating explorations of an idea, a certain correspondence between architecture and textiles, and their surface manifestations. If a photographic genre were to be ascribed to these images, it would be that of portrait photography, since these images are, indeed, of façades (FIGS. 27-28). § Recalling Aby Warburg’s (1866-1929) proposition that “the extremes of pure and applied art should be studied, as documents of expression, on an entirely equal footing,” photography operates as the medium of equivalence, the common denominator in the equation, with both surfaces, the architectural and the textile, inscribed onto a light-fixing substrate, rendered no longer material, but rather substituted as photographic. The sensoria of their surfaces, the concrete, glass and steel of the façade and the matted polychromatic web of the tweed are both reduced to the optical domain, trapped amidst the vitrine of emulsion or similarly, numerically ciphered behind the flat screen of digital print, for, “[o]nly in an image,” it is said, “are we confronted with the surface and the aggregate state of things.” § Like a skin or a membrane, the photograph can also conceivably be “considered [as] a barrier or an interpolation between two forms rather than a form in its own right.” And indeed, in the
nineteenth century, the photograph was said to have operated as a “kind of a
hyphen” bridging between art and science, and later when accepted as an art form
in the mid-twentieth century, was seen to contest Modernism’s formalist drive and
self-referential predisposition, undermining the supposed isolation of the different
art and design practices, the textile arts, we might recall, once denoted by the term
hyphantics (FIGS. 29-30). § The concept of the surface was to form the
foundations of Semper’s architectural speculations, predicated on his theory of
dressing. Symbolic of planarity, the surface was to take form in floors, ceilings and
walls, their articulation dependent on orientation, conveying a sense of directionality
and movement, harmonising in their quest for unity (FIGS. 31-32). For: § “Covers are
only the subservient, preparatory elements for a whole whose centre of reference is not the
envelope or the cover, nor any outstanding part on its surface, but the thing that is deemed
unified by the envelope or cover.” § Understood as a veiling, his discussion of the
shrouding of structural elements, and of architecture in general, was essentially to
“overturn [...] the tectonic basis of nearly two thousand years of architectural
theory.” § Place or perhaps more precisely a “sense of place” is conceived of as a
unifying and unitary structure, and is “offer[ed] only in terms of a multiplicity of
reflections,” and recalls Semper’s conception of the surface, when he states:
“everything closed, protected, enclosed, enveloped, and covered presents itself as unified, as a
collective; whereas everything bound reveals itself as articulated, as a plurality,” unified
through its very binding (FIGS. 33-34). Place, as such, is understood as the foundation
of being, and is conceived of as more than simple location, as here or there, but is
rather envisioned and experienced only in relation as boundless and binding. §
“[W]eaving,” we are told, “is primarily a process of structural organisation,” a
generative act, emerging out of the orthogonal interlacing of threads, one known as
the warp, the other the weft, “the interrelation of the two,” capable of enacting a
“subtle play [...] supporting, impeding or modifying” the very appearance of the
strands composed in the making. The resultant web can be read as a structure,
surface or pattern, or often a combination of these, operating variously as system, symbol and image, for the concept like a fabric is pliable and is given shape via deft manipulations. Engaged with throughout, the idea of weaving is sometimes employed literally and at other times metaphorically, and on occasion, the metaphor of weaving is literalised, a phenomenon which conveys the very fecundity inherent in the concept or term. A few words about the approach to this research must now necessarily ensue, since it does not contain what is traditionally referred to as a methodology, this convention disregarded and with good reason too. The modern doctorate, as it stands, is based on the natural sciences, the outcomes of which are required to be measurable and repeatable and hence verifiable; in terms of the humanities, or more precisely art practice, however, the application of this inveterate approach seems inappropriate and ill-conceived, contravening the very nature of creativity founded, as it is, largely upon the medial nature of play. The scientific standard is further limited in its drive for objectivity, giving little credence to what the artist brings to the task at hand, their very imbuing of the research through their engagement in the understanding, and moreover seeks to isolate the work “from the “contingency” of the chance conditions in which it appears,” the consequences of such isolation, it is said, “result[ing] [in] an abstraction that reduces the actual being of the work.” What follows, instead, in lieu of a methodology, is a discussion of the setting, the backdrop against which this research surfaces, and in taking shape, finds itself, drawing the very place both in and of its making into its presentation. For like a play, the drama exists only in performance, music, only in its resounding, and so it is then with the cloth, only in its weaving does cloth appear (FIGS. 35-36). “[P]lace,” we are told, “is both presupposed and produced in the course of creation,” the overarching approach to this research, is then, as a consequence, founded upon poïēsis. In ancient times, poïēsis or making was understood as the creation of something out of nothing, the providence of divinity. Agency was, however, lent to the mortal task at hand through assemblage and imitation, not the
production of copies, a mere mirroring, but rather a fashioning in the manner of.\textsuperscript{88} While today we recognise poetry in \textit{poësis},\textsuperscript{89} traditionally it was not limited to the crafting of words,\textsuperscript{90} but encompassed all manner of creation, “the arts and crafts, all the skills of manufacture,” each form having “its [own] technē, its way of proceeding, its accumulated experience and know-how.”\textsuperscript{91} § Aside from its developing knowledge-base, its craft becoming increasingly honed, for Benjamin, photography’s unrealised potential resided in its capacity to generate associations,\textsuperscript{92} with photographers conceived of as metaphysicians, “descendent[s] of augurs and haruspices,”\textsuperscript{93} those whose knowledge of the world was based on analogy,\textsuperscript{94} a form of metaphor,\textsuperscript{95} deciphering latent signatures manifest on the surface of things\textsuperscript{96} (FIGS. 37-38). “[R]ead[ing] what was never written,”\textsuperscript{97} meaning and sense were woven between correlates however near or far,\textsuperscript{98} this method underpinning the foundations of Western epistemology, a system of knowledge and erudition in operation until the end of the sixteenth century\textsuperscript{99} (FIGS. 39-40). In the early decades of the twentieth century, photography was said to reveal “an entire [and] unsuspected horde of analogies,”\textsuperscript{100} bringing the doctrine of universal correspondences again to light,\textsuperscript{101} a doctrine that despite its decline under the sway of Enlightenment reasoning, endured in the work of artists and poets.\textsuperscript{102} § The poet or artist in general, with art thus understood, was said to have embodied “the object and the subject, the world external to the artist and the artist himself.”\textsuperscript{103} The artist accordingly was regarded as being at centre of all analogies, the personification of the heavens above and the earth below, his body, “always the possible half of a universal atlas”\textsuperscript{104} (FIGS. 41-42). It was a world in which “the topical co-exist[ed] with the eternal, the natural with the supernatural and the moral with the metaphysical,”\textsuperscript{105} these correspondences “the data of remembrance – not historical data, but of prehistory,”\textsuperscript{106} in which the unitary nature of the world, by chance, was re-encountered.\textsuperscript{107} § In light of this sense of cohesiveness, of oneness, then, it would be unreasonable to expect that a methodology could be applied to the research and understood as separate and
distinct from it. Weaving in its operation as metaphor and model exists as a
discursive and intuitive means of “rediscovery,”¹⁰⁸ rather than as a logical pre-
described and finished cloth with key features of its design already figured that must
necessarily be followed and embroidered. Moreover, it is only in the weaving, from
the selection of lines of thought and transmission of images, carded together and
spun that form the warp and weft of the fabric, and their combination in the very
working through, that meaning and context emerge, their fibres intermeshed and
entwined, the surface of the cloth animate, meaning and context elucidating each
other in the weaving.¹⁰⁹ If a measure of sorts is indeed to be applied, it would be in
the discernment of the tightness of the weave, an index of the very interconnectivity
of context and meaning,¹¹⁰ such a meter in accord with the counsel of an ancient
poet who once wisely advised: “[w]eave closely, make good cloth, with many woof-
threads in a short length o’ warp”¹¹¹ (FIGS. 43-44). § Proceeding from “the perception
of particulars,”¹¹² this research contains a series of analogies generated from readings
of photographs of curtain walls and swatches of Harris Tweed, and is presented in
number in order that the richness of this association might indeed itself be
grasped.¹¹³ “According to Plato, analogia is what binds the universe, the kosmos,
together and enables the corporeal world of appearance to appear,”¹¹⁴ analogy the
very means, we are told, “through which speculative reason” or thinking can take
form and manifest.¹¹⁵ Analogy or proportion as it was known in its Latin form,
however, was never a static form of liaison nor fixed, but was always understood as
“relationships in motion,”¹¹⁶ in which fluid connections, animate in potential,
abounded. § § § Composed of two parts, On Semperian Surfaces presents a series of
art works and texts, each, poetically conceived, with the first section containing
images of the art works and artist statements, coupled by an essay which locates the
Urban Fabric suite amidst a milieu of inspirations and associations, which, in a sense,
interweave to provide the score to which this text is set. § The second section is a
response to the Urban Fabric images and their installation. Understood as image-
texts, these writings do not seek to describe the work per se, but are presented as another form of ekphrasis, a transcription of the proliferation of images that arose in their wake, stilled now and subject to interpretation: artworks and texts to be understood as gifts, the one to the other. § Wool-work or calanas, as the Hebrideans would refer to it, includes [...] arts, which are divided in two according to whether they separate or combine: carding separates, spinning combines; and, significantly weaving does both, given that the shuttle first separates warp and weft, and later combines them into a fabric. It separates better to combine (FIGS. 45-46). § This research adopts a similar approach, separating themes out from the work, displacing them, aligning them anew and together through juxtaposition, weaving then between them in the writing. The nature of juxtaposition is significant, the placement of one image beside the other, enabling correspondences to appear, a result of adjacency and proximity. Opposite and fragmentary, two images are thus brought “nearer in such a way that both of them,” are “bounded in time as in extent, forming a totality and a continuity,” each nonetheless maintaining their originality, foregoing only their perceived limitedness and exclusivity, their relations further elaborated on in the writing. In a series of essays dialogues thus ensue, each text elucidating different aspects, and tied on, the one after the other, like webs of tweed, and pulled through the loom. § Like a pteron, a colonnade of webs traversed, the relational contexture between the curtain wall, Harris Tweed and photography shifts in the progression from one essay to the next, the research understood as a series of webs in the weaving, manifesting as “action and artefact, process and product, becoming and being” (FIGS. 47-48). Devoid of a methodology thought proper to a dissertation, the research’s questioning and conclusions are nonetheless revealed in its very construction, demonstrating the necessity of weaving in the pursuit of an understanding of the world and a place to create within and of it. For it has been said that “like a poem, no way of life is given so transparently that it unambiguously declares its meaning. There can be no definitive statement of that meaning; it must
be established, ever anew and precariously in interpretation, transforming it, regardless of means, weaving all the same. In reading, we are told, a relationship is woven between the author and the reader, interlacing between them like the warp and the weft, establishing a shared fabric that enshrouds them (FIGS. 49-50), the reading done, the cloth unravelling, its threads only to be later recollected and drawn up again in the design and reading in of different patterns, as a weaver does in setting up the loom.

2 All figures are located in the essay entitled ‘Silent | Witnesses’. It should be noted that the footnotes in the version submitted for examination were rather more expansive. This version is stripped in attempting to accord with RMIT University’s decree which states that footnotes should not be more than fifty words long.


7 See Malpas, Place and Experience, p. 166.


9 For an historical discussion of relationships between Australia and Scotland in terms of Australia’s white settlement, see Don Watson, Caledonia Australis: Scottish Highlanders on the Frontier of Australia (Sydney: Collins, 1984). It should perhaps also be noted that in 2006, Victoria, the state of which Melbourne is the capital, and Scotland signed a Sister State agreement.


13 See van Zanten, Architectural Polychromy, p. 60.


18 Rykwert, ‘Gottfried Semper and the Conception of Style’, p. 71.


20 See Mallgrave, Gottfried Semper, p. 291.


38 For a discussion on how the concept of “urban fabric” or “tissu urbain” is understood in architectural and urban design terms, see Pierre Merlin and Françoise Choyx, Dictionnaire de l’Urbanisme et de L’Aménagement (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), pp. 666817. My thanks to Joseph Blykert for alerting me to this text.


36 As the research drew to its conclusion, allegiances with material culture came into focus, and while of significant interest, it lay outside the scope of the study as it was framed, my training being not in textiles, but rather in architecture and fine art imaging.


The title Earl of Dunmore, a Scottish Peerage Title, was created in 1686 for Lord Charles Murray, second son of John Murray, 1st Marquess of Atholl. The current Earl of Dunmore now resides in Tasmania. My thanks to John B. Scott, a second cousin to the Earl for alerting me to this fact. John B. Scott, Email Correspondence with the Author (21 June 2010).

Bill Lawson, ‘Harris Tweed’, Public Lecture (Tarbert, Isle of Harris: Harris Hotel, 03 July 2008).

The Harris Tweed Authority website gives 1846 as the date of the commissioning, but it would seem that the exact date is difficult to determine, occurring sometime between 1839 and 1846. See *The Harris Tweed Authority*, http://www.harristweed.org/about-us/index.php. Accessed 03 June 2012; Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, pp. 28-43, and Thompson, *Harris Tweed*, p. 58.


With reference to Rosemarie Haag Bletter, see Rykwert, ‘Gottfried Semper and the Conception of Style’, p. 81. Here the Chicago School in general, rather than the Reliance Building specifically is referred to.


‘Lever House’ was designed for Lever Brothers, heirs of Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925), proprietor of the Isles of Lewis (1917-1923) and Harris (1919-1925) who played a key role in the transformation of Island life, and Harris Tweed. See Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, p. 84-95.


Architectural photography, while of interest, falls outside the scope of this research.


I.20

72 Mallgrave, Gottfried Semper, pp. 299-300.


75 See Malpas, Place and Experience, p. 170.

76 Albers, ‘The Pliable Plane’, p. 36.

77 The right angle composition distinguishes weaving from all other textile techniques. See Albers, ‘On Weaving’, pp. 29-30.

78 Albers, ‘On Weaving’, p. 29.


80 For a further discussion on the significance of play see, for example, Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1955).


85 For a discussion of the relation of work to weaving and the effecting of “something actual before us,” see ‘Translators’ Preface’. In Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. xv.


87 For a discussion of on this knowledge system refer, for example, to Foucault, The Order of Things, pp. 17-77.


94 See a discussion of this knowledge system refer, for example, to Foucault, The Order of Things, pp. 17-77.


97 See Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 49.


99 Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 22.

100 ‘Editor’s Introduction’. In Baudelaire, The Painter of Modern Life, p. xiii.

See Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’, p. 182.

With reference to the writings of Max Black, see Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, p. 240.


With reference to the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), see Arendt, The Life of the Mind, p. 103.


See Macarthur, ‘The Image As an Architectural Material’, p. 693, n. 22.

See Thompson, Harris Tweed, p. 158.


See Poulet, Proustian Space, p. 80.


URBAN
FABRIC
ONE’S GAZE OPERATED IN THE WORLD WHERE IT FOUND ITS PLACE LIKE A PIECE OF THAT WORLD.

JEAN-PIERRE VERNANT
THE SENSE OF A PLACE IS THUS GIVEN NEITHER IN ANYTHING MADE PRESENT WITHIN IT NOR IN SOME SIMPLE SELF-PRESENTING OF THE PLACE AS SUCH, BUT IS RATHER A SENSE, AND A REALITY, SECRETED IN THE MOVEMENTS, THE RHYTHMS, THE TANGLED [...] CONNECTIONS OF ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP ITS VERY FABRIC.

JEFF MALPAS
URBAN FABRIC: GREIGE (2007)

IT IS SAID THAT “IF IMAGES ARE INDEED EFFLORESCENT PHENOMENA, THEN THE PLACE IN WHICH THEY APPEAR MUST BE CAPABLE OF REFLECTING OR “REVERBERATING” WITH THEM.”¹ IN A GALLERY WITHIN THE CITY, IN A ROOM CONTAINED WITHIN, A MICROCOSM OF THAT CITY IS PRESENTED AND PORTRAYED, IMAGES OF ITS CURTAIN WALLS ADORNING THE ENCLOSURE, ARRAYED LIKE TAPESTRIES IN AN ANCIENT BANQUET HALL. BOUND BY A FRIEZE STATING “THERE IS NO KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT COMMUNITY,” A NUMBER OF THE CITY’S ARTISTS, ARCHITECTS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE GATHER TO WORK IN THE SPACE FOR A WHILE, THEIR PERFORMANCES CALLING TO MIND THAT THE AGORA OR MARKETPLACE WAS NOT ONLY THE PLACE TO DISPLAY ARTEFACTS, BUT TO SHOWCASE THEIR VERY MAKING, AS WELL AS TO POLITICATE, A PLACE IN WHICH GOODS WERE CRAFTED AND WORDS WERE TRADED, A SITE OF MEANINGFUL EXCHANGE.

ARTIST: PETA CARLIN
GRAPHIC DESIGN: SPIKE HIBBERD
PARTICIPANTS: BKK ARCHITECTS, JULIETTE PEERS AND HER TEXTILE CLASS, MATERIAL BY PRODUCT, MICHAEL MCKENZIE, MICHAELA WEBB AND MEMBERS OF ROUND, MICHELLE HAMER, PAUL KNIGHT, PAUL MINIFIE, ROBERT SIMEONI ARCHITECTS, SARA LINDSAY, SARA THORN, SPIKE HIBBERD, STEVEN SWAIN, STUART HARRISON, TIM GRESHAM, AND THE SCOTTISH GAELIC CHOIR OF VICTORIA.

Peta Carlin
Urban Fabric Group, 2007
View of installation
West Space, Melbourne, 2007
Peta Carlin
*Urban Fabric: Greige*, 2007
Cowen House
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin
Urban Fabrics: Greige, 2007
Equitable House
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin

Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
Royal Insurance Group Building
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin
Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
Commonwealth Bank of Australia
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin  
Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007  
Wales Corner  
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6  
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin
Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
ACI Building
digital print on Belgian linen, edition of 6
152 x 96 cm
Peta Carlin & Spike Hibberd
Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
Calendar of Participation
digital print on cotton rag
Dimensions variable

CONCEPT: PETA CARLIN
EMBROIDERY: URSULA HILL.
STENOGRAPHY: LEANNE MULLINS, MARGARET McGOLDRICK, AND SHARYNNE DURBIDGE
DOCUMENTATION: DANNY COLOMBO
Peta Carlin
Urban Fabric: Oura Lusaidh, 2008-2010
Detail: Spread
Embroidery: Ursula Hill; Stenography: Leanne Mulhern, Margaret McGoldrick, and Sharynne Durbridge
Calico, cotton and thread, 300 x 275 x 24mm

ARTIST: PETA CARLIN
Peta Carlin
Urban Fabric Swatch, 2009
Detail
Boxed & bound photographic images
Printed on cotton rag, 420 x 247 x 24mm
TRANS
MISSIONS
I NEVER REALISED HOW MANY FACES THERE ARE. THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE, BUT STILL MORE FACES, FOR EVERYONE HAS SEVERAL.

RAINERMARIARILKE
EACH THING HAS ITS OWN MEASURE.

PINDAR
The anonymous face, extracted from a crowd, it is said, does not constitute a portrait.¹ There is no context from which to read it, no features, attitudes or bodily carriage, a series of comportments from which to interpret, or any environment, sense of place, or community in which to locate it, in order to determine its singularity or story. For, “[t]he individual necessarily implies a relation to a greater being, it calls for, it demands ... a backdrop of continuity against which its discontinuity stands out.”² Such an approach is not so much a means of calculable measure but is rather the result of a certain curiosity, an attempt to discern any trace of character that “has the incalculability of life about it,”³ lending dimensionality, a roundness to what can otherwise be construed as merely undifferentiated and flat. §

The images that compose Urban Fabric were not produced in isolation, but were also accompanied by other works, some which motivated their existence, pre-dating them, others that introduced themselves along the way, and others that drift in, still, upon their wake. Gathered here and discussed then, are the works of other artists, companions of sorts, which were entered into dialogue with, and have guided the project, and propelled it along trajectories, many of which were unanticipated at the outset. §

Understood, in a sense, as metropolitan portraits, removed from their streetscapes and surrounds, Urban Fabric: Greige registers as a suite of images of Melbourne’s mid-twentieth century corporate buildings. With their surfaces variously articulated with patterns differentiated by the rhythms and repetitions of their mullions, spandrels and columns, further distinguished by their materiality, texture, colour and tone, the very facture of their surfaces seemingly replete, their façades are veiled in a curtain walling, draped with a patterning of windows(FIG. 51).§ The window, we are told, encapsulates the history of architecture ⁴ and operates as an emblem of photography itself,⁵ the English founder of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), describing the photographic image as a medium of speculation, designating it as a “Philosophical Window.”⁶ These images of fenestrated
façades, like Talbot’s photogenic drawing of his own window, The Oriel Window: Lacock Abbey, seen from the inside, (c. Summer, 1835)(FIG. 52), are shot from within the urban interior, the street. Revealed as framed and latticed openings, the ground glass mirrors the fenestration of the façades, establishing a mesh through which we are able to weave in the forging of connections, between the curtain wall and Harris Tweed, between Melbourne and the Outer Hebrides, between the rural and the metropolitan, Talbot’s own photograph, on close inspection, unconsciously capturing a landscape.\textsuperscript{7}§Urban Fabric exists as an extension of my earlier project Corners (2000), photographs of a number of other Melbourne buildings of the same type and period, their apicescentred and framed, viewed from across the intersections of the city’s urban grid\textsuperscript{8}(FIG. 53). It was in these images that the textile nature of mid-twentieth century corporate architecture first revealed itself, particularly in the concertina’d catalogue to the exhibition, wherein the one image was placed beside the other in a sequence calling to mind, on the one hand, a scarf, on the other, an architectural mega-structure.\textsuperscript{§}Like Corners, Urban Fabric pays homage to the Bechers, Bernd (1931-2007) and Hilla (1934-), and their lexicon of industrial architecture, surveys of the vestiges of industry that powered progress giving rise to modernity and its consequent capitulations, those modes of production outmoded, rendered increasingly obsolete in the successive aftermaths of technological advancements.\textsuperscript{9}(FIG. 54) For these constructions which both powered and captured “the atmosphere of [the] whole epoch,”\textsuperscript{10} were not immune to, or excused from this end as progress advanced unstymied. An urgency thus prevailed over the Bechers’ practice, the dismantling of these edifices accelerating in the wake of energy crises and the diminishing of natural reserves.\textsuperscript{§} The mid-twentieth century corporate office building is now witnessing a similar fate, demolished, or refitted and clad, the flexibility of the floor plates accommodating other typologies including apartments, corporations still flourishing, nonetheless, their structures enclosed, now, however, in newer, sleeker veneers.
While the Bechers’ œuvre is often seen to reference the work of the NeueSachlichkeit photographers and their systematic and scientifically-inspired approaches, evidenced in the work of Karl Blossfeldt (1865-1932), Albert Renger-Patzsch (1897-1966) (FIG. 55), and August Sander (1876-1964) (FIG. 56), it was also to engage with the industrial iconography popular during the 1920s and 1930s, epitomised by anonymous and seemingly non-architectural constructions, lauded by Le Corbusier (FIG. 57), yet without recourse to the romanticisation or demonisation of manufacturing and its means. In their series, Anonymous Sculptures, they showed: “objects predominantly instrumental in character whose shapes are the results of calculation and whose processes of development are optically evident. They are generally buildings whose anonymity is accepted to be the style. Their peculiarities originate not in spite of, but because of the lack of design” (FIG. 58). The mid-twentieth century office building was also the result of considerable computation, the towering structure instrumental in other ways, and was also deemed to be “anonymous,” the subtleties of its surface features, often the result of a ratiocinated scheme largely premised upon syllogistic fallacies, rather than the result of a developed design in accord with other means. In their documentation of unsung engineering triumphs, the Bechers’ undertaking came to be termed as “industrial archaeology,” “recognising the monuments of industrialisation] as ruins even before they ha[d] crumbled,” their photographic surveying continuing a tradition that emerged with the conception of photography; the photo-recording of monuments and ruins, the famed Missions Héliographiques (1851) (FIG. 59), an enterprise which conceivably prompted Riegl’s claim that: “the development of modern techniques of reproduction promises that in the near future (especially since the invention of colour photography and facsimile reproduction) new and perfect means of compensating for age value, can continue without interfering with the original.” This assertion was also to be realised in Albrecht Meydenbauer’s (1834-1921) Archive of
Historical Monuments (Denkmälerarchiv, 1881), “which comprised 10,310 plates of 837 monuments in 185 different locations.” This photogrammetric venture\textsuperscript{21} sought to create a series of measured photographic blueprints of sorts, should these buildings be destroyed, photography deemed to be more valuable than writing, verily\textsuperscript{22} (FIG. 60). § For “[t]hroughout history,” he observed, “architectural monuments have spoken an authentic and comprehensible language when compared to written messages which only the strictest interpretation can struggle to purge of exaggeration, alteration, and misunderstanding, they always speak the truth. ... When both contradict each other, it is always the building that will have the upper hand that will, at a minimum, expose the imperfection of the written message.”\textsuperscript{23} § Unlike Meydenbauer, the Bechers’ collations did not measure the structures in focus, but scaled them all the same, “reducing [them] to retainable proportions”\textsuperscript{24} the buildings conforming to and confined by the lens, their framing in accord with film plate. Each structure with the exception of their preliminary documentation, was photographed from the middle of the building so that a near elevational view was captured, all traits of perspective, as much as practicable, were diminished, in as much as the lighting was controlled, the structures shot under the diffuse and low-contrast light of a clouded or overcast day mitigating the play of shadows, lending the buildings a sense of eternal presentness, an almost mythological and timeless bearing (FIG. 61). § A similar methodology was adopted for Urban Fabric, each building was shot front-on using a view camera to minimise distortion, but these façades were not photographed in the light of day, but rather in the early morning just as the sun was rising, so that the light was diffuse, six floors captured, or enough so to be readily manipulated digitally, though it was not an unchanging and ageless quality that was sought, but rather a shift in materiality, effected by the lens. § The Bechers’ work eschewed the practices of history and social anthropology,\textsuperscript{25} and was founded instead in an interest in these buildings themselves, taking a certain wonder in them, a visual delight, these man-made assemblages, each in a suite resembling, a
reassembly of constituent parts (FIG. 62), regardless, performing the same function, recalling “the interest in invisible structures or patterns, that characterised the modernist realism of the 1920s (and sometimes imparted a mystical inflection),” qualities somehow still prevalent in their work, despite its alignment with the “new penchant for serial and sequential devices,” which emerged in the 1960s.§ Urban Fabric was underpinned by a certain fascination with patterning, all the permutations and combinations possible in the façades’ compositions, despite the seemingly simple and limited structure of the grid, such patterning a feature of both Harris Tweed and the curtain glass wall, with other matrices more covert in nature emerging during the course of the research, the result of the images’ readings. § The Bechers’ typological ordering of their photographs also recalls the gridded template of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand’s (1760-1834) architectural studies (FIGS. 63-64), buildings stripped of ornament, “products of mechanical designs,” formations ideally composed in response to function, seemingly “bereft of any aesthetic intention”; industrial architecture, engineering a natural legacy. Their engagement with seriality however was not so much the result of Conceptual Art practices, but rather a response to the sheer amount of images amassed, nineteenth century taxonomic structures adopted and accommodating the material rendering it comparative. § As they were to note: “Our idea of showing the material has much more to do with the 19th century, with the encyclopaedic approach used in botany or zoology, where plants of the same variety or animals of the same species are compared with one another on the individual pages of the lexicon. It became more and more clear to us that there are definite varieties, species and subspecies of the structures we were photographing. That is, in effect, an old-fashioned approach. Later it was also used in Conceptual art, logically enough.” § Walls were thus tabulated as were the pages of books, composed of double-page spreads, with images placed, the one beside the other, lending themselves to analyses between constructions classified under the same typology: gas tanks, mine shaft heads, industrial façades, and so on, specimens
festined recto and verso, details and their differences, as a consequence, capable of being discerned and read. § While Urban Fabric also adorned walls and was presented as a series of images bound, a scientific structure did not determine its presentation, this instead, being premised upon the conceptual potential of the installation, seeking to enact shifts between the dressing of the building and the clothing of the body, while at the same time generating a space of appearance, through which a multiplicity of actions and reflections upon them might through their surfacing bring a sense of place to the fore. § The majority of the Bechers’ œuvre focuses on morphological variances between edifices which house the same function, their Fachwerkhäuser29 or framework house series varies however from this focus and is of particular interest. To pause at a spread in the book of the same name, plates eight and nine, for example, WildenerStraße 11, Salchendorf (1961) and Rendsdorfstraße 5, Salchendorf (1959) respectively (FIGS.65-66), is to ponder not so much the form or the silhouette of vernacular gabled-ended houses, but their design, the variation in configuration of the beams and infill, their patterns, the rhythms and repetitions, the inflections and accents that compose the very façades and their surface renderings. These surfaces, highlighted by the contrast of the end zones of tonality, are pronounced, the near blackness and the near whiteness of their patterning acquiring a two-dimensional graphic quality when read against the even-handed neutrality of the background. § Despite the low-contrast of the curtain wall images in Urban Fabric, graphic characteristics persist, as variances across their textures figures, discrepancies and deviations all occurring within the limits of the grid, the weave of spandrels and glazing interlaced with columns and bays displaying an infinite potential in the composition of their exterior facing, floor to floor heights the only standard spacing. § While Urban Fabric: Greige exists as a testament to the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher seeking to contribute to its lineage, it also engages with themes evident and suffused through the work of other artists. § The typology of the mid-twentieth
century architecture that defines *Urban Fabric* finds, for example, correlations in the work of Andreas Gursky (1955- ), a student of the Bechers and their Düsseldorf School. His *Montparnasse, Paris* (1993) (FIG. 67) is a case in particular, with its seemingly endless expanse of façade terminated by the image’s edge, revealing variation through inhabitation and seamless surface manipulations. His distant station point, is also worthy of note, prognostic of his ongoing pre-occupation with the constituent masses, a certain optical equivalence between the contemporary picture element, (in its abbreviated form – the pixel) with the individual, registering.

§ The edging of the images in *Urban Fabric: Greige*, however, does not conform to the limits typical to the photograph, but points to fabric treatments, and the use of pinking shears to cut the fabric from a larger swathe preventing the edges from fraying (FIG. 68), so to speak, such edge decorations finding correspondences in architecture, as Semper was to observe: § “More pleasing than such jagged and pointed elements, and even more ancient, are edge decorations with toothed circular segments. They, too have analogies in architecture, especially in cornices used as battlements. They are usually cut with shears to prevent the[] unravelling [...] of unhemmed textile edges.”

§ The binding of the images as an artist’s book in *Urban Fabric: Swatch* (2009), takes the textile theme another step further, presenting the images in the form of a tailor’s swatch, appropriating its measures on the labels (designer, pattern, horizontal repeat, vertical repeat, width), the width however, pertaining to an architectural rather than a textile scale. §Anton Vidokle (1965- ) and Christian Manzutto’s *Salto del Agua* (2003) (FIG. 69), focuses on the gridded mid-twentieth century façade, a station building in Mexico City, painting its front face and manipulating it filmically, ascribing not only a near pixellated patterning to the surface, but also a scoring it, treating the “surface as sign.” The building itself, they propose, existing “virtually as logo,” commenting on “the corporate co-option of minimalist iconography via various techniques of abstraction, decontextualisation and resignification, *Urban Fabric* engaging with
these themes, the media chosen and the messages conveyed, though, altogether
different, focusing on the crafted surface, a woven one symbolic of architecture’s
origins. §Vidokle’s practice, however, also engages with craft, his Untitled (2000) (FIG.
70) an ottoman or stool, clad in a gridded weave produced by locals during a
residency in a rural region of Colombia, this traditional practice using however, not
the wool and natural fibres of yesteryear but instead appropriating and recycling
plastic strips stripped from shipping packaging, re woven to effect, the stool
upholstered in a bright almost Bauhaus-like check. § The grid has long been a
subject of fascination, all variation and combination, and perhaps first came into
focus during my architectural studies, surfacing in the work of Ivan Leonidov (1902-
1959), Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943) (FIG. 71), Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931) to
name only a few. Its structure further revealed in the work of Sol LeWitt (1928-
2007) (FIG. 72) and his series of Incomplete and Open Cubes (1974), with an introduction
to its manifestations in art provided by Rosalind Krauss’ (1941- ) landmark essay,
‘Grids’ and Samuel Beckett’s (1906-1989) stone-sucking Malloy, and his
contemplations on permutations and combinations. In reflecting on my work over
the years, it would seem that perhaps, in designing elevations, as well as plans and
sections of buildings, all at a reduced scale, it was textiles that were drawn rather than
architectural edifices. § In its exploration of the relationship between architecture and
textiles Urban Fabric recalls the work of Simon Starling (1967-) and his engagements
with textiles and modernity evidenced in his Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, Djungel
(2002) (FIG. 73), an installation that takes as its starting point, the architect Josef
Frank’s (1885-1967) Aralia (c. 1928) (FIG. 74) textile design, narrating and displaying
its means of production, as part of its siting. § Theatrically curtaining off the space of
the gallery and dividing it, the fabric effectively operates as an iconostasis, a screen
separating an area deemed sacred from one that is in response profane. Starling over-
scales Frank’s pattern, draping his allotment of repeating floral motifs across the
room, its profile establishing a proscenium in a way, the veiling cloth once passed through, revealing a space for textile production and the necessary equipment, woodblocks, ink and a fabric printer, along with a tree which was felled, a West Indian cedar, presumably, a representation of, if not indeed, the very material for the blocks themselves. This installation operated as an homage to the act of making, in which “craft processes [were] juxtaposed with [those of] the mass-produced,” Starling admitting to the use of new technologies, the transfer of his drawings based on Frank’s to a laser cutter, for example, but irrespective of means, his presentation is indicative of performance. Moving across and between mediums Starling also engages with photographic practices, rephotographing the work of Man Ray. In Man Ray’s (1890-1976) *Photographs 1920-1934*, a photograph of a geological form, *Geological Fold* (c. 1930) (Fig. 75), is placed in adjacency with an image of houses in ruin, and certain material and spatial correlations are exposed betwixt the stone in situ and its formative qualities in the construction of the wall, spaces of habitation located in between, further commenting on the passage of time, of wearing and erosion, even of man-made destruction in the shaping of the environment. Starling’s *Inventar-Nr.8573 (Man Ray) 4mm-400mm* (2006) (Fig. 76), operates as a surface exploration, a series of increasing close-ups of this image, its subject matter seemingly defying a sense of discernible scale, like the photographs of crystals by *NeueSachlichkeit* photographers (Fig. 77). Ascending stairs, however, are revealed amongst the shadows at the lower left-hand corner, lending a context to the image, which would only otherwise be read as contextless and abstracted. This work recalls Michelangelo Antonioni’s (1912-2007) *Blow-Up* (1966) (Fig. 78), a film in which the protagonist, a photographer, searches for a clue to a crime amidst the surface of his prints, the increasing magnifications revealing no clue, only the very materiality of the image, silver fragments dispersed amongst the gelatine glaze of its surface’s finish. Similarly in Starling’s case, the light-fixed petrification of stone portrayed by Man
Ray, gives way to the constituents of the photograph’s surface, countless and minute metal fragments in suspended animation exposed. §Urban Fabric also operates as a series of close-ups, but stops short, choosing instead to reveal another materiality, that of threads and fibres, of the weave(Fig. 79). The flecks of silver amidst the varnish in Starling’s investigation, recall the speckles of colour that erupt across the surface upon close inspection of Harris Tweed, the image’s “dematerialisation,”41 revealing the potential for other re-materialisations.§The weave is also apparent in another of the Bechers’ students, Thomas Ruff and his Jpeg series, exemplified by his Jpeg msh01, (2004) (FIG. 80) though the weave’s structure here is more aligned with Jacquard or tapestry in the squareness of the pixel/stitch. These pixelated images sourced from the internet offer a critique on contemporary transmission and reception of images, and expose their weave through the enlargement of the web’s low resolution presentation, recalling the computer’s origins in the loom,42 the stitch, it would seem an artefact of transmission as evidenced in photo-telegraphed image of the Hindenburg Zeppelin in 1936 (FIG. 81). §Lynn Cazabon’s (1964-) labour-intensive photo-textiles are also recalled, her Plaid series (1997-2001) (FIG. 82), a sequence of webs constructed from super-eight film strips, its frames individually hand coloured and toned, capturing images of the artist’s own body which are interlaced with found footage and printed. Here different media are used to capture and fix images in a series of surface interplays operating between traditional, interdisciplinary, and contemporary modes of image-making. This body of work registers with remarkable brilliance the polychromacity and texture of a Hebridean check and a sense of life therein, the surfaces crafted, the experience of their making and viewing enriched by plays between scales and proximities.43 For, photographs lend another dimension to perception, to reading; they § “fiddle with the scale of the world, [they] get reduced, blown up, cropped, retouched, doctored, tricked out. They age, plagued by the usual ills of paper objects; they disappear; they become valuable, and get bought and sold; they are reproduced.
Photographs, which package the world, seem to invite packaging. They are stuck in albums, framed and set on tables, tacked on walls, projected as slides. Newspapers and magazines feature them; cops alphabetise them; museums exhibit them; publishers compile them.

A certain fascination with the articulation of the surface evident in Urban Fabric is reminiscent of the work of Agnes Martin (1912-2004). Her paintings, the foggy, almost woolly density of her canvases, reminiscent of landscapes suspended in her washes and exposed in her titles, The Beach, Desert, Leaf in the Wind, Milk River, Night Sea, Orange Grove, White Stone, Falling Blue, appear seemingly encultured, caught in a net and enmeshed by the superimposition of the grid (FIG. 83). While the grid can conceivably be seen to chart, to make measurable the terrain, Martin’s canvases are without any orientation point, sense of scale or context from which to read the mapping of the expanse. For as she notes her work “is not really about nature. It is not what is seen. It is what is known forever in the mind,” conceivably a sense of connectedness, the very weave of it all. Aligning her work with ancient “Coptic, Egyptian, Greek and Chinese” traditions, the graphic quality of her work dissolves, like Harris Tweed, amidst the landscape, as a distance back from the work is paced, revealing a certain atmospheric quality, further distancing solidifying her paintings, rendering them opaque.

At different removes what is both experienced and exposed is a “differential series: wall/mist; weave/cloud; [...], form/formless,” oscillations that animate and convey complexity and interconnectedness, recalling Riegl’s psychology of perception, and the shifts between optical and tactile experience in his categorisation of antique art into three phases, the result of changes in proximity.

Mel Bochner’s (1940- ) challenging of the sanctity of the pristine and planar photographic surface was another significant point of departure. His superficial handling and manipulating of the gridded photographic surface is evidenced in his work of the late 1960’s, including Surface / Dis-Tension (1968) (FIG. 84), ColourCrumple (1967) (FIG. 85), and Surface Deformation / Crumple (1967). Here the
surface is not merely regarded, but is handled and forcefully so: bent, folded, crushed and crumpled, its documentation conveying a materiality no longer flat and unmarked, but malleable, marred and transformed, taking on the form of a damaged print or a discarded document, with allusions to drapery and cloth. Textile allegiances of the photograph were hence revealed in the green and black, or orange and black lattices of *Surface Deformations* (Green and Orange), (1967/2001), their folding recalling a pair of tartan trews ([FIG. 86](#)). Photographs, it could be said, are always a means of mediation and of translation. Brassai’s (1899-1984) photographs of graffiti ([FIG. 87](#)), undertaken over several decades and published in an eponymous folio in 1946, are of particular relevance, in this light, not only because of the focus on inscriptions etched into Parisian walls, but further because of the transcribing of these images into tapestries, a series of works commissioned by the Atelier Yvette Cauquil-Prince. The cartoons were composed from various photographs taken over the years ([FIG. 88](#)), the colours of the threads used directly referencing and reflecting those of the walls. Of this work he was to comment: “I thought deeply about our every-day wall, […] about its texture so imbued with humanity, about its magic and its poetry. … The very ruggedness of the common wall surely has some affinity with the irregular weaving/stitching of the medieval era – with its restricted range of tones and colouration. I had only to draw from that well-stocked herbarium which I have made for myself during the last 30 years from … the walls of Paris.” He was then to observe, “I returned to the wall what I took from it.” Urban Fabric similarly seeks to facilitate a symbolic exchange, a reinvestment in architecture’s textile origins, but also seeks to bring to the fore the legacy of an ancient textile through the future translation of these images into Harris Tweed. Urban Fabric: OirainLuiadh ([FIG. 89](#)) also explores the concept of translation and bears certain correspondences with Allan Sekula’s (1951-) engagement with a minority language, that of the Galician people, in the Celtic Northwest of Spain, which appears in his ‘Fragments for an Opera’, a work written to accompany the
photographic series, Black Tide / Marea Negra (2002-03) (FIG. 90). This work was commissioned by the Spanish newspaper, La Vanguardia, in response to a catastrophic oil spill off the coast of Muxia, the work to be performed on the thirtieth anniversary, imprinting the memory of the disaster onto the future, initiating the potential of a participatory performance, ritualising to an extent, a reminder of the horror. A sense of ritual, of performance, was a feature of the Urban Fabric: Greige installation. Not only were some of Melbourne’s artists, craftspeople, architects and designers invited to use the space during the course of the exhibition (FIGS. 91-92), but the Scottish-Gaelic Choir came and performed waulking and other traditional songs, giving a demonstration of waulking as part of its showing (FIGS. 93-94), the performance opening up to the very place in which Harris Tweed first came into view. The work of Ann Hamilton (1956- ) has become increasingly relevant over the course of this study, in particular her engagement with textiles and text. In Awaken (2000) (FIG. 95), a blanket was embroidered with a poem by Susan Stewart, so named, the embroidery reduced to a kind of felt-work, with its fibres - the words enmeshed, this cursive script also adorning and featured in other works, including crease | fold | furrow | part (1999) for the Institute for Electronic Arts, the texture hirsute and Rorschach-like. In Awaken, in particular, “[t]he words [were] written out in one continuous line wherein the line of one letter intersects or touches the adjacent letter, [...] collaps[ing] the space that gives the letter their forms and legibility,” the script literally interlacing. Urban Fabric: Orain Luidhe also engaged with text and the concept of oral traditions, pertaining in particular to that of the Gaelic language and also to shorthand, a script composed of phonemes deployed until the advent of the computer in the corporate workplace. Here translations of waulking songs in Gaelic were translated to English, then transcribed in shorthand, the text then embroidered, taking the form of a stenographer’s pad (FIG. 96). Hamilton’s appeals (2003) installed
at the Istanbul Biennale (2003), is another work of note, and was composed of a series of five curtains which mechanically opened and closed, along with thirty-two speakers and a recorded voice, engaging with the theme of the surface and its covering and disclosure (FIGS. 97-98), these drapes in their movement, concealing and revealing down, at irregular intervals, access to a passageway. The theme of concealing and revealing, which emerged during the course of the research, is especially evident in the work of Christo (1935- ) and Jeanne-Claude (1935-2009). While their œuvre conceivably departs from Man Ray’s (1890-1976) L’Enigma d’Isidore Ducasse (1920), it also calls to mind the film critic and theorist André Bazin’s (1918-1958) proposition, that the plastic arts’ genesis arose from the mummification of corpses, in order “to keep up appearances in the face of the reality of death.” In effect, the pairs’ wrapping of all manner of things, but of buildings in particular, generates a “partial transformation, “obsuring their identity,” disarticulating an object’s surface detailing, its cloaking in fabric and binding in cord bringing the form to the fore, the blank cloth also expressing its own structure and delineation, pleats and folds articulating its very surfacing, a temporary monument of sorts emerging that “resembles neither sculpture nor architecture.” Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s projects exist as temporary installations and are performative, with buildings, such as the Wrapped Reichstag (1995) (FIGS. 99-100), subject to an act of dressing, a commemorative act, adorned for only a short period of time (17 June – 07 July), the building only again to be denuded, the surrounding environs, the experience of the locale also subject to and in part reflecting this make-over. The corporate office tower was once described as boxes wrapped in a gridded garb, the surface of the photograph rendered malleable by Bochner, conceivably a tower stripped bare of its grid, the blank canvases of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, concealing the commonplace surface, through momentary monumentalisation, their photographing like the Bechers perpetuating the effect, in a series of surface interactions, of their layering.
and laying bare. §In the overall design of this research the photo-essay has served, to some extent, as a latent model which has developed over time, this project composed of a series of spreads, the layouts, so to speak, revealing "the seduction of the diptych, [of] dual images duelling, exposing the way [...] two images [...] act upon and transform one another" in the viewing. The sequencing of these spreads, the one after the other, reiterates the approach, a fascination with variety and inventiveness evident, with themes repeated as the image-texts are perused, calling to mind the publications of Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), Franz Roh (1890-1965) and Jan Tschichold (1902-1974), Aenne Biermann (1898-1933), and their ilk. For to ponder a double page spread is to be struck at first by the mere juxtaposition of images, by their dissimilarity, but with the passing of time, when one does not simply flick, stopping instead to actively peruse the pages, a growing sense of correspondence, a series of them emerges, demonstrated in, for example, Biermann’s *Photographs*. In this essay, one of the spreads contains a portrait, *The Dancer Hilde Engle*, on the left-hand side, on the right, an image of an agate, a polished stone is placed (*FIGS. 101-102*), two images seemingly disconnected, through emplacement are now rendered adjacent. In the movement in between them, a face emerges in the stone, mirroring to some extent the likeness of the dancer, two eyes rimmed, encircled by a face, framed by a parasol, ring enclosing ring, as conveyed in the stone. As Moholy-Nagy was once to claim: § “the emphasis [is] on integration through a conscious search for relationships – artistic, scientific, technical as well as social … the flashlike act of connecting elements not obviously belonging together. Their constructive relationships, unnoticed before, produce the new result. If the same methodology were used generally in all fields we would have the key to our age – seeing everything in relationship.” §In these dialogues and transmissions, relationships between my own work and the work of others is conveyed, as correlations between the curtain glass wall and Harris Tweed are made, a forum opened up to discourse and exchange
facilitated, indeed, mediated by the photograph. The photograph, and new media in general, we are told, have the capacity to reveal innovative ways of engaging with traditional practices, of activating them, "through new modes of engagement between users or new forms of collective activity,"\(^{68}\) while further granting access and leeway into places and cultures, seemingly isolated and different from our own,\(^{69}\) and herein lies the value of the photograph: it enables us to weave.

7 See Batchen, ‘Desiring Production’, p. 7.
8 For a further discussion of Corners, refer to Petra Carlin, Arresting the Developing Surface: Photographic Transformations and Representations of Architecture, Masters Thesis (Melbourne: RMIT University, 2005).
15 Martin’s discussion of the curtain wall building departs, in part, from the Deleuzian concept of the “society of control.” See Martin, The Organizational Complex, p. 5.
16 The architect Jose Luis Sert (1902-1983) termed the proliferation of the curtain wall thus, and is quoted in Leatherbarrow and Mostafavi, Surface Architecture, p. 203.
18 Walter Benjamin quoted in Tiedemann ‘Dialectics at a Standstill’, p. 941. Here the term “bourgeoisie” used by Benjamin has been replaced with “industrialisation.”
25 This is the subtitle of Lange’s essay. See Lange, ‘Bernd and Hilla Becher’, pp. 23-35.
31 Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 125.


SILENT
WITNESSES
ONE PONDERS WHETHER TO VIEW THE IMAGES OR READ THE WRITING AND WONDERS WHEREIN THE DIFFERENCE MIGHT LIE.

CAROL JACOBS
IMAGES – MY GREAT, MY PRIMITIVE PASSION.

WALTER BENJAMIN
7. Constantin Uhde, Lattengewust eines Kirgizeszules, 1902
8. Constantin Uhde, Gewebe und Architektur, 1902
9. Thomas Young, Two-Slit Diffraction Pattern, 1803
10. Constantin Uhde, Trimings: Transitions from Textiles to Architecture, 1902
13. Thomas Ruff, Star Series: Stern05t2807m70, 1990

14. Walter Benjamin, Layout Sketch for the Essay on Karl Kraus, 1930

15. Theodor de Bry, Young Pictish Woman, 1590

16. R. R. McIan, Buchanan Tartan from The Clans of the Scottish Highlands, 1845

17. Weaver Donald John MacKay at his Loom, Luskentyre, 2006

18. Thomas Brumby Johnston and James A. Robertson, Map of the Clans of Scotland, 1889
19. Catherine Herbert, Countess of Dunmore

20. Murray Tartan


22. Dutch Twill Weave


24. Jonathan Olley, British Army Watchtowers, Northern Ireland, 1999


27. Florence Henri, Untitled Self-Portrait, 1938

28. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Facade Study Models, Lake Shore Drive Apartments, c.1946

29. Erwin Blumenfeld, Wet Silk, 1937

30. Étienne Léopold Trouvelot, Electric Effluvia on the Surface and Circumference of a Coin, c. 1888
32. Christo & Jeanne-Claude, Running Fence, Project for Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1976
34. Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger, I Know Where I’m Going, 1945
35. Candida Hofer, Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos Lisboa V, 2005
36. Candida Hofer, Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos Lisboa VI, 2005
37. Frederick Sommer, Anatomy of a Chicken, 1939
38. Walker Evans, Signs, New York, 1928-1930
39. Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O’Keefe- Hands, 1919
40. Alfred Stieglitz, Equivalent, 1930
41. Maya Deren, Witch’s Cradle, 1943
42. Ralph Gibson, Girl and Hammock, 1972
43. Harris Tweed being inspected for quality, c. 1960

44. Checking for Damaged Manufactured Tweed. Dumfing. Edward Gardiner’s Tweed Mill Selkirk, 1948


46. Werner Kissling, Woman Weaving, from Eriskay: Poem of Remote Lives, 1934

47. Marion Campbell Hanging Harris Tweed Out to Dry, n.d.

49. Harry Callahan, Eleanor, Aix-en-Provence, France, 1958

50. Aenne Biermann, Portrait with Champs-Elysees, 1929

52. William Henry Fox Talbot, The Oriel Window, South Gallery, Lacock Abbey, c. 1835


53. Peta Carlin, 'Untitled, SEC Building', From Corner, 2000

54. Bernd and Hilla Becher, Cooling Towers, 1972
55. Albert Renger-Petitsch, Zeche Bonifacius, Witterschaft, 1947-1948

56. August Sander, Country Girls, Westerwald, 1925

57. Le Corbusier, Towards a New Architecture, 1923, (1927 English translation)

58. Bernd and Hilla Becher, From Anonymous Sculptures, 1970

59. Gustave Le Gray, Cloister at Moissac, 1851. (Missions Heliographiques)

60. Albrecht Meydenbauer, Morkasure, 1890


64. Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, Ensemble d’Édifices résultant de diverses combinaisons horizontales et verticales, 1802-1835


66. Bernd & Hilla Becher, Rensdorfstraße 5, Salzshutdorfr, 1959
62. Andreas Gursky, Montparnasse, Paris, 1993

68. Urban Fabric Pinking Shear Mask, 2007


70. Antoine Vidokle, Untitled, 2000

71. Giuseppe Terragni, Plan of the Danteum, 1938

72. Sol LeWitt, Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes, 1974
73. Simon Starling, Blue, Red, Green, Yellow Djang, 2002
74. Josef Frank, Avala, c. 1928

75. Man Ray, Geological Fold, c. 1930
76. Simon Starling, Inventar-Nr.5373 (Man Ray) 4mm-400mm, 2006

77. Albert Renger-Patzsch, Quartz, c. 1923
78. Michelangelo Antonioni, Blau Lp, 1966
80. Thomas Ruff, *Jpeg msh01*, 2004

81. Phototelegraphed image of the Hindenberg Zeppelin, 1936

82. Lynn Calabon, *Plaid (History of a Sexuality)*, 1997-2002


84. Mel Bochner, *Surface Dis/Tension*, 1968
85. Mel Bochner, *Colour Crease*, 1967

86. Tartan trews

87. Brassaï, *Graffiti, (Graffiti de la série VII: La Montj)*, c. 1940


90. Allan Sekula, *Black Tide / Marea Negra*, 2002-03
91. Textile Artist Sara Lindsay at Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
93. The Scottish-Gaelic Choir of Victoria performing a Waulking at Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
94. The Scottish-Gaelic Choir of Victoria performing Traditional Songs at Urban Fabric: Greige, 2007
95. Ann Hamilton, Awakening, 2000
96. Peta Carlin, Urban Fabric: Osian Lliadf, 'One Day as I was Travelling', 2010


100. Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Wrapped Reichstag, 1995


102. Aenne Biermann, Age of Fasci, before 1930
103. Francis Bacon, *Triptych Inspired by The Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1981


105. Félix Nadar in Conversation with Michel-Eugène Chevreul, 1886


107. Early Twentieth Century Harris Tweed Pattern Book

108. Harris Tweed, *Two by Two Weave*
109. Harris Tweed, Herringbone Weave

110. Harris Tweed, Diamond Weave

111. Curtain Wall Patterning
Architectural Review, 1957

112. Diderot, Weaving from

113. Piet Mondrian, New York City, 1942

114. Theo van Doesburg, Café Aubette, Strasbourg, c. 1929
115. Theo van Doesburg, Café Aubette, Strasbourg, Colour Scheme for Ceiling and End Walls of Ballroom, 1927

116. Le Corbusier, Bogota, 1950

117. Wearing the Feilidh Mhor, the Great Plaid

118. Charioteer of Delphi, c. 470 B.C.

119. John or Gerard Van der Gucht, Belted Plaid, 1743

121. Bernard Rudofsky, Seven Veils of the Male Stomach Pit, 1947
122. Masaccio, St. Jerome & St. John the Baptist, 1428
123. Giotto di Bondoni, Renunciation of the Father, c. 1295
124. Giorgio di Chirico, Mystery and Melancholy of the Street, 1914
WEFT
APPEARING
WEAVING
THERE IS NO [INDEPENDENT] MODE OF EXISTENCE. EVERY ENTITY IS ONLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF THE WAY IN WHICH IT IS INTERWOVEN WITH THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE.

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD
IT IS THE WOVEN CLOTH, OR PERHAPS ITS VERY WEAVING, THAT MAKES EARTH, WITH ALL ITS VARIEGATED, SCINTILLATING PATTERNS, APPEAR.

INDRA KAGIS MCEWEN
In pre-classical Greece, it is said, démiouergoi, craftsmen, defined a certain citizenry composed of those such as heralds, doctors, and magistrates as well as craftsmen as we understand the term today. Existing as a social order they worked in the service of the public, enabling the city, the polis, to emerge; its surface the consequence of the interweaving of their activity in its continual remaking, a ceaseless Penelopean enterprise. Through the craftsmanship of these people’s activities, the gods were able to appear, their “coming-to-light” not so much the result of mastery, artisanal or otherwise, but rather that its pursuit provided the place in which divinity was allowed to manifest. § For up until the fourth century B.C., the ancient Greeks did not understand or worship divinity in the manner that monotheistic faiths operate today. Their religion, so to speak, was not founded upon the veneration of a singular omnipresent and all-powerful being, rather multiple “forms of worship” prevailed in a society whose very existence and experience of life recognised the confluence of spiritual dimensions, the ebb and flow of the sacred, its shifting and varying forms in the midst of the everyday. The sacred, as such, was seen to suffuse “the routines and places of daily life,” so much so that the “appearance [of the gods] conceivably graced every meaningful occasion.” For each god was associated with a realm, with the mountains and the streams in nature, the threshold and hearth of domestic life, and the roads and intersections that delineated the public ambit. Moreover, each god was a world unto itself, embodying not a unique virtue but rather, each was replete with a manifold of qualities; their dominion not set, their presence instead permeating existence, both shaping and illuminating it, vibrant in its totality. Through private rituals and public festivities, the gods were celebrated, sharing briefly with mortals a certain splendour through their coming together in communion. § In general, a god was said to become apparent when events or objects, either natural or man-made, or certainly, even a person generated and inspired provocations of wonder and awe. Experienced as an intensity, a manifest power, the force of the apparition, its bes-stilling presence, was such that it was seen to be more than human. Its qualities
endured beyond the lifetime of its maker, or its participants and audiences; so much so that it could always be reassembled and configured, the circumstances re-enacted, only to be experienced again. § Daidalon was the term used to describe an object that possessed such phenomenal qualities, the expression acknowledging the activities of the first mythical architect Daedalus, designer of the labyrinth at Knossos, amongst numerous other creations.\textsuperscript{11} Daidalon was often translated in the writings of Homer as “cunningly crafted” and “curiously wrought,”\textsuperscript{12} and in the later texts of Hesiod, the term became increasingly bound with textiles,\textsuperscript{13} the craft evident in their tight, harmonious weaves, the pattern not latterly applied but woven; intrinsic to the very luminosity of their surfaces.\textsuperscript{14} For the word most often used to describe daidala was \textit{poikilon}, and while it has sometimes been translated as “embroidered,” the lambent patternation of textiles or daidala, in general, was not applied to an existing surface, but was rather native to it, essential in its coming to be.\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Poikilon} is indicative not only of the richness and diversity of design,\textsuperscript{16} but also pertains to “anything variegated, complex or shifting.”\textsuperscript{17} As such, all daidala were referred to as “a wonder to behold,” \textit{thauma idesthai}, each encompassing in their well-crafted dimensions animate yet impalpable divinity which glimmered on their surfaces. Woven or otherwise shaped, such artefacts were described as polychrome\textsuperscript{18} because of the use of a variety of materials,\textsuperscript{19} and indeed, so well crafted were their seamless and harmonious joints,\textsuperscript{20} that they were considered to be woven.\textsuperscript{21} § In ancient Greek, the crafting of the web, the term for the plying of the loom was \textit{hyphainein}; weaving hence meant literally, “to bring to light,” and consequently, to make visible. It was not a matter of mere conspicuousness, but rather of coming to be. It is perhaps then not surprising then that the word for surface, \textit{epiphaneia} bares testament to not only to “appearance” but also corresponds to the very activity that made it possible.\textsuperscript{22} As such, the craft of weaving was considered to be foundational, both literally and metaphorically, and was further exalted by Athena’s dominion\textsuperscript{23} over both her city and this craft.\textsuperscript{24} Aside from the weaving of cloth, it operated as the model and
metaphor for political order, in as much as it was seen to underpin the striation of the settlement grids, the orthogonal warp and weft of their streets and roads; and was further witnessed in the accompaniment of loom and hearth in the establishment of the home; and more publically, in the consecration of civic life, apparent in the περίον, the colonnade that circumscribed the temples, representative of the symbolic linking together of looms in the formation of community. Ritual processions, itineraries, marked out by the shuttling back and forth from city centre to sanctuaries located on the outskirts, only to return again, created a web that defined the terrain, otherwise known as χώρα, one of the archaic Greek terms along with τόπος, for place. § The domain of the outermost sanctuaries, χώρα, was “a place of mediation between [man] and the gods who were together attached to this particular territory,” a threshold girdling the realm, a signature of human presence and of the very πόλις. Derived from the dance floor, χώρος designed by Daedalus, χώρα was an enclosed space, the site of revelry and festivity, the wellspring from which chorus and choreography naturally arise. χώρα too denotes enclosure, derived, as some have said, from the very linking together of hands, and by extension, χρός, the vital body (as opposed to σῶμα understood as the corpse) and hence skin, and in addition, χρώμα, colour. Enclosure, colour and skin suggest that χώρα was invested in the surface manifestations of place, united through their binding. § Understood as a matrix, “the Receptacle” and “nurse of all becoming” and change, χώρα as a beholding vessel, we are told, “is not that “out of which” [ἐκ ἕκαστος] things are made; it is that “in which” [ἐν ἕκαστος] qualities appear, as fleeting images are seen in a mirror.” χώρα, too, was also imbued with a sense of cultivation, related, as it is, to gardens, orchards and farm yards apparent in the Latin, hortus. It was a fostered domain, of lifecycles ordered by the seasons, of tending and human investment, and it was the realm in which the δήμιοι operated together, collectively, enabling it to appear. § Harris Tweed is inextricably bound with place, beyond its parliamentary edict; a fabric embedded in tradition, a tradition that
remains “thoroughly alive,” and as the years have shown, changeable. Produced by weavers, for centuries at their homes, their crofts striating the landscape, the one beside the other, like the warp threads that traverse the loom, the Islanders’ activities weave their communities patterning them together, once finding fullest expression in the festivities associated with the waulking of the cloth, and ceilidhs or visits, now performed on occasion at Mòds. With the exception perhaps of Stornoway, these rural communities do not constitute a city or town per se, but are necessarily bound through their interactivities that invariably revolve around the tweed, for it is the clo mhor that continues to perpetuate the Scottish-Gaelic language and culture. § The tweed itself exists as a blend of colours; from afar, its surface reminiscent of the spongy peaty moors of Barvas that extend across the Isle of Lewis, the yarn (not dyed but rather composed of different colours carded together and spun), already incandescent prior to its further combination in the weave. The woven surface upon closer inspection reveals those fragments of individual colours that compose the mix; softly Pollock-esque and intermittently pronounced in composition. The polychromatic surface of the tightly woven weave possesses a vapoury density, the tangle of fibres ignited by eruptions of individual colour, illuminated by the mellow light, its lack of contrast revealing the intensity of the colour in its saturated depth. To the hand, the surface is almost coarse and somewhat hirsute, the cloth’s density, reassuring of warmth, reiterated by the occasional wafting of its scent; uncertain, but distinctly rural. § “The archaic world,” we are told, “was a world that appeared through the things people made,” the relationship between craft and community necessarily indissoluble in its making. The appearing surface of a woven cloth, as such, was akin to the polis, and like the cloth "of all the traces of material culture, one of the most perishable - ha[sl] to be mended or made to appear.” Cloth and polis, it could be said, are always under construction, and are inextricably bound with weaving. § At the turn of the twentieth century, however, the interweaving, the collective pursuit that enabled the Greek polis to appear was seemingly no longer in
operation, for the polis, it is said, was not so much the physical city-state, but operated through a form of "organised remembrance,"\textsuperscript{50} premised upon exchange, "rising out of acting together, the "sharing of words and deeds,\textsuperscript{51} the unique value of each man acknowledged in participation. In the modern city, by comparison, man had been reduced to a mere variant, largely indistinguishable, one among the many, a constituent of the masses. In the thriving metropolis labour had replaced work; labour sempiternal and unceasing, repetitive without variation, work ascribing to a different rhythm altogether, its product finite, yet enduring until eroded by wear.\textsuperscript{52}

The public place in the ancient world, the agora, was distinguished not only by discussion and debate, but also, we are told, by conspicuous production, the displaying \textit{and} crafting of wares admired and exchanged,\textsuperscript{53} the modern city, conversely, replete with its arcades and avenues artificially illuminated, showcasing conspicuous consumption, production hidden, fuelling, nonetheless, another kind of spectacle, expenditure taking form in commodity fetishism. § This schism between labour and work was to find a dissenting voice, however, in direct reference to weaving, Engels critical of the alienation of the labourer from his work as evidenced in the mechanised textile mills of Leeds and Manchester,\textsuperscript{54} mills that replaced the hand-crafting of textiles, such wholesale "progress," by and large, stymied and denied in the Outer Hebrides.\textsuperscript{55} Prescient of the rift between the fine arts and the crafts this divide was perhaps first witnessed as a spectacle in the Great Exhibition (1851),\textsuperscript{56} a "cross-section of cultural science,"\textsuperscript{57} housed in the iron and glass construction of the Crystal Palace,\textsuperscript{58} works installed under the banners of raw materials, machinery, and manufactures; Harris Tweed figuring under the rubric of manufactures\textsuperscript{59} with photography featuring, too new to be yet classified,\textsuperscript{60} regardless, cloth and print were housed in a prototype of the curtain glass wall.\textsuperscript{61} Here, the relationship once focused on the maker and his artefact was transformed, and was now directed toward a new kind of rapport concentrated instead on the relationship between spectator and object,\textsuperscript{62} making no longer experienced or part of the visual domain. § By the
century’s end the rift between the arts and crafts had become categorically entrenched; and in the early years of the twentieth century Sachlichkeit, or objectivity, became the catch-cry of a Zeitgeist increasingly invested in a profusion of “the new”: “the “New Man,” the “New Architecture,” the “New Typography,” and the “New Photography,” mechansisation taking command, facilitated by advances in technological reproducibility. Style was promoted as a generalised phenomenon, with ever-newer modes increasingly accommodating a mass ideal, spurning the outdated, the previously most recent abhorred and deemed to be obsolescent. The diversity of attires and wares fashioned, in accordance, cycled at increasingly accelerated speeds, commodities accessible in number, modes readily adopted as the perceived value of the crafted artefact and its associated customs diminished. “But, of what we call handicraft - which because of its utilitarian purpose appeals to a diversity of men - we request a more general and more typical articulation [...] which make it possible for handicraft to be incorporated into the life systems of a great many different individuals. It is the greatest mistake to think that, because it always functions as the adornment of an individual, it must also be an individual work of art. Quite the contrary: because it is to serve the individual, it may not itself be of an individual nature - as little as the piece of furniture on which we sit, or the eating utensil which we manipulate, may not be individual works of art. The work of art cannot, in principle, be incorporated into another life - it is a self-sufficient world. [...] The essence of stylisation is precisely this dilution of individual poignancy, this generalisation beyond the uniqueness of personality. Surfaces in general thus proliferated, though rendered wan and grey, a lifeless facing preferred to the luminance native to the handcrafted artefact, traditional investment no longer preferred, the value inherent to it no longer esteemed. Innovations in production methods and techniques were streamlined, with greater efficiencies and systematisations facilitating their distribution, usurping ritual and time-honoured means of manufacture and exchange. The curtain wall was a prime exemplar of the modern age, its components prefabricated en masse, with its assemblage process
delineated however disdainful of any lineage. Detached from tradition and its domain, the wall was no longer associated with a situatedness or place, as a sense of placelessness and disenchantment prevailed. Composed of concrete, glass, and steel, a mere “veneer for the corporate activities of ‘enlightened’ capitalism.” these surfaces issued forth, the International Style donned as corporate attire in cities across the world, largely indistinguishable and ignorant of their site specificity. While several companies were housed in buildings clad in the very “materials representative of the industry to which the corporation belonged” the gridded format of the garb, nonetheless, possessed an unceasingly variable repertoire of patterns, not unlike that of the Hebridean Tweed, symbolic textile origins renounced however, in the face of functionalist ratiocination and expedience, so perceived. “Variety within standardisation,” was the norm with components prefabricated and mass-reproduced, a frank formula readily replicated with sections available off the rack; what was once tailored and suited to measure now subjected to Taylorising principles. § Understood as a model for society designed by human relations engineers, the curtain walled building was said to speak increasingly of “an inescapable collective destiny,” individuality subject to “pseudo-personalisation,”

internal differentiation, systematised, introjected and absorbed, the grid operating as a device at a range of scales which: § "gather[ed] together heterogeneous components, standardised production formats, the open-ended "deep space” of the fluorescent-lit, air-conditioned office, mass-produced monoliths and plazas, the flux of the city and of the workplace-into a single, organised complex." § The curtain wall thus projected a reductive and singular image, an identity incorporated, “collaps[ing] near and far, inside and outside onto its surfaces,” these surfaces decried and disclaimed as “façades of anonymity.” As a mass-mediaised surface, the curtain wall assumed the form a screen, a surface “to be watched in passing rather than looked at […] channell[ing] flows, patterns of patterns,” not of meaning, but of data, objective and abstracted. Metaphoric relations were thus occluded, though the punch card of the
Jacquard Loom was appropriated and engaged,\textsuperscript{87} weaving calculations in a world careering toward digitalisation, recalling Semper’s claim, that: § “In general it can be assumed that those patterns that pass through the loom most easily are also those that unfurl and unfold most attractively – but in our day everything passes through the loom easily, and thus this test of style no longer holds true.”\textsuperscript{88} § By the turn of the twentieth century, in the recognition of patterns, modern man’s capacity to discern “the magical correspondences and analogies that were familiar to ancient peoples,”\textsuperscript{89} had waned, however, despite such limitations, the search for pattern endured, photography, along with the cinematic arts seen to revolutionise vision.\textsuperscript{90} While a certain loss was invariably experienced as a result of reproductive means, new modes of media and communication complicit, these technologies, nonetheless, possessed the potential to reinvest in the very presence of things, giving them form, bringing them nearer, rather than distracting us from their value and significance.\textsuperscript{91} For in arresting “the patterned interplay of light,”\textsuperscript{92} the split-second opening of the camera’s aperture was to precisely capture the object of its focus, acutely delineating it, the power of the lens enlarging and decontextualising its features, exposing its traits at a speed not typically registered, at a scale not normally seen, revealing aspects hitherto concealed, “bringing (optically) something entirely new into the world,”\textsuperscript{93} expanding our knowledge of what is seemingly routine and mundane. § “By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, [it] extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; [and] it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action.”\textsuperscript{94} § Through the manipulations of the camera, its concertina’d bellows aligning façade with lens and film, portraits of Melbourne’s mid-twentieth century corporate faces were magnified and viewed from a seemingly disembodied standpoint, the dermis of the architectural façade transformed into a textile landscape, reflecting the colours of the place of its making, a topography seemingly alien and distant from the one in which it was momentarily uncovered and shown. §
Place, it is said, is hidden, and “[a]ny and every place retains its own obscurity, its own hiddenness”;\(^9^5\) it is by nature apocryphal, in the earliest sense of the word,\(^9^6\) clandestine and mysterious, the camera recalling the Receptacle of old, capable of “capturing fleeting and secret images,”\(^9^7\) enantiomorphic and concealed,\(^9^8\) nestled within the folds, cached away in pockets, like memories enveloped, an aperture opening up to these worlds, once infinitesimal, unobserved or unseen, “strata of material, the alluvia of the recent past”\(^9^9\) brought to light and laid bare, topos\(^1^0^0\) exposed, capable of being deciphered in the superficial sheen of its prints. For through photography, it is said, “a world of particular secret affinities” is exposed, “a world in which things enter into “the most contradictory communication,””\(^1^0^1\) extending beyond their commonplace parameters and limits, a spatial tension, indeed, a distension, necessary for such mirroring to occur.\(^1^0^2\) § For, long ago, we are told, that “[w]hatever will exist will have to be in itself something with extension (augmen), whether large or small, so long as it exists,”\(^1^0^3\) the camera expanding the range, the concept of extension deriving from the ancient Greek, diastēma. Dia, it is said, means through, stēma drawing from stēmon, the archaic Greek word for thread,\(^1^0^4\) suggesting a passing through, over and under, indeed, in between, the lens given the task of making discoveries,\(^1^0^5\) enabling us to forge connections, initiating patterns in the weaving. § In the façades of Melbourne’s mid-twentieth century curtain walls, the latent image of Harris Tweed was exposed, bringing to light relationships between the handcrafted and the machine-made, drawing a living history and a history premised on progress alone closer, as passages between the Outer Hebrides and Melbourne were paved, a gridded fabric, one malleable, warm and enshrouding, the other cold, hard, and rigid, a negligible screen, similarly attiring both body and wall, surfaces appearing in correspondence, a consequence of the weave. For within new means of production, we are told, lie analogous images, images in which the new and old are entwined, “every epoch seeing in its images the epoch which is to succeed it,” in which the future appears bound with the past,
such interactions productive, giving rise to new ideals, which leave their traces in a
thousand configurations of life, from permanent buildings to ephemeral fashions,\textsuperscript{106}
in the seemingly outmoded,\textsuperscript{107} in curtain walls and Harris Tweed, physiognomic
thinking, premised on the task of teasing out vestiges and residues,\textsuperscript{108} threads
lingering with which to weave. § While modernity, we are told, means ““now, just
now, recently”, designat[ing] not [only] that which is new, but that which is present,
current [and] contemporary”\textsuperscript{109} with the one who speaks, it was also to be
experienced in “fragments borne forward from the past [as] shards of a vanished
whole,”\textsuperscript{110} in the eternal drawn from the transitory;\textsuperscript{111} the modern artefact, itself,
interlaced with this very possibility.\textsuperscript{112} For despite its proclaimed renunciation of
history, modernity was an epoch in which “the energies which [were] at work”\textsuperscript{113} in it
reverberated,\textsuperscript{114} resounding between surfaces opening up to a place enclosed,
“bring[ing] it close[r] to antiquity,”\textsuperscript{115} unleashing potential, an immanence as yet
unseen, “the will to connect […] becom[ing] a shaping of things,”\textsuperscript{116} the role of the
camera, upon reflection, critical in amplifying the exchange. § For “certain twilights
and certain places,” it is said, “all want to tell us something.”\textsuperscript{117}


The concept of epiphany, it would seem, is implicit here.


The Shield of Achilles crafted by Hephaestus and Anaximander’s ψῆφος, the tablet displaying the map of the world, were produced using the technique of toreutics, an ancient form of making that relied on the crafting of disparate materials in the construction of an artefact. So well crafted, they were considered to be woven. See McEwen, Socrates’ Ancestor, p. 28 and p. 63; and van Zanten, Architectural Polychromy, pp. 19-20.

See McEwen, Socrates’ Ancestor, p. 53.

McEwen, Socrates’ Ancestor, pp. 53-54.

See McEwen, Socrates’ Ancestor, p. 54.


As Jacobs notes: “‘Johnt-shirts’ are a recurrent image in Benjamin’s work,” and is encapsulated by the term Weibbild. See Jacobs, ‘Walter Benjamin: Topographically Speaking’, p. 508, n. 16.


For a discussion of the three distinct realms in which sanctuaries were located, see de Polignac, *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*, pp. 21-22.

McEwen, Socrates’ Ancestor, p. 63.

Herbert Molderings, 'The Modernist Cause: New Vision and New Objectivity 1919-1945'. In
See Rykwert, 'Gottfried Semper and the Concept of Style', p. 80.

On its demounting, the architect Charles Burton proposed a 'Design for converting the Crystal Palace into
Photography did not properly feature at a Great Exhibition until 1855. See Walter Benjamin, 'Paris: A plaid from St Kilda and a web from the Isle of Lewis dated 1768 illustrating the development of the craft
The interior of the Crystal Palace was designed by Owen Jones (1809-1874), its colour scheme derived from Semper quoted in Mallgrave, 'Introduction', p. 130.


Part of the allure of Harris Tweed was the aroma of the peat fire, which until the early twentieth century at least, permeated the very fibres of its web, so much so, that imitators developed a "synthetic essence which exactly copies the smell of peat smoke" which at additional cost could be imbued into its off-shore forgeries.

Semper was involved in the design of the exhibitions for Turkey, Canada, Sweden and Denmark, and also reviewed the event, his text 'Science, Industry and Art', serving both as a critique of the objects displayed as well as his own reformative pedagogical beliefs. See Gottfried Semper, 'Science, Industry and Art: Proposals for the Development of a National Taste in Art at the Closing of the London Industrial Exhibition'. In The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 130-167.

Semper quoted in Mallgrave, 'Introduction', Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 15.

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Semper quoted in Mallgrave, 'Introduction', Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 15.


Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 102.

Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 105.


Curtain walls were available as an off-the-shelf system in 1956. See Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 99.

See Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 103.


Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Television and the Patterns of Mass-Culture’, quoted in Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 120.

See Martin, ‘Atrocities’, p. 70.


Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, p. 6.

See Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, pp. 159-160.


An enantiomorph is “a form which is related to another as an object is related to its image in a mirror, a mirror-image,” the term most often used in optics and crystallography. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61555. Accessed 24 May 2012.

Tiedemann, ‘Dialectics at a Standstill’, p. 933.

One of the meanings associated with topos, the other archaic Greek term for place, is that it is something hidden. “In medicine, it signifies the diseased points of the body as well as its secret places.” Rykwert, ‘Topo-philia and -phobia’, p. 12.

Tiedemann, ‘Dialectics at a Standstill’, p. 934.

Lucretius, *De rerum natura* quoted in Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 84.

Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 84.


See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. xii.


WALL
FACE
THERE IS AN OUTSIDE AND AN INSIDE, AND MYSELF IN THE MIDDLE, THIS IS PERHAPS WHAT I AM, THE THING THAT DIVIDES THE WORLD IN TWO, ON ONE SIDE THE OUTSIDE, ON THE OTHER THE INSIDE, I CAN BE THIN LIKE A BLADE, I AM NEITHER ON ONE SIDE NOR ON THE OTHER, I AM IN THE MIDDLE, I AM THE WALL, I HAVE TWO FACES AND NO DEPTH.

SAMUEL BECKETT
THE WALL IS MUTE. BUT THE DOOR SPEAKS.

GEORG SIMMEL
In ancient Greece, we are told, a married woman was rendered conspicuous by a veil drawn across her face, distinguishing her from slaves who walked around more freely though bare-faced. This shrouding operated as a symbol and outward sign of social standing, defining the woman as wife as it concealed her, a screen from the untoward gaze and unwelcomed advances of strangers. Similarly revetted were cities, curtained by fortified walls, this facing differentiating all that lay beyond from that enclosed within, shielding them from the perceived and ever-immanent onslaught of enemies.

In the interplay between concealment and disclosure, by a turn of phrase, so to speak, an image of a woman’s head-binding, krēdeμnon, is revealed in the curtain wall, costing by wall and veil conveying both possession and purity, their limitation and containment qualities capable of inspiring “wonder and fear.” Once synonymous with the law in defining limitations and establishing boundaries, the wall enabled the formation of political communities and the establishment of the public realm, further providing for the conditions of family life, in order that it be sheltered and sheathed. The nature of government, and by analogy the wall, we are told, “is the principle ... by which it is made to act ... the human passions which set it in motion,” in establishing a certain rapport.

Communicative and communitarian, the theatre was “a place to view [and] to behold;” it was the realm in which the polis and its citizens were re-presented to themselves, a spectacle wherein the relationship between the audience and dramatic action functioned as a reproduction of the extant community and its political will in operation, reconsolidating them through participation in performance. Tragedy performed in Athens before the fifth century B.C., it is said, occurred on an orkhēstra, a dance floor, located in the public meeting place, the agora, temporary wooden structures effecting a theatrical space, thereafter finding a sense of permanence on the southern face of the Acropolis. The presentation of Greek tragedy, we are told, always took place before a door, entrances and exits, central to the unfurling of the narrative. Passage from one realm to the next, from outside to within, from an exterior to an interior world, and vice versa was hence enabled, entry
and egress “dramatis[ing] a coming-to-order,” the threshold a realm of transformation and catharsis. Distinct from the edge or boundary, the threshold is a means of access, a zone which one cannot inhabit nor remain, a site awash with movement, vacillation and change, “of approach or withdrawal, anticipation or remembrance, [of a] coming-to-be or passing-away.” § Setting the scene, the city’s dramatic structuring, enacted by the embrasure of its walls, provided the arena in which the activities of daily life were performed. A consequence of gathering and enclosing, motifs expressed both literally and figuratively in the textile arts, the wall “makes visible the enclosed space,” and “[e]stablishes [...] boundaries within which cultural order can take place.” The permeation of these walls through doors and gates was hence subject to a sense of theatricality, of unmediated decoration and display, the buildings contained within, on a more diminutive scale, playing a role, operating as background, contributing, nonetheless, to civic pride and sense of ceremony during the course of festivities. § For Semper, the festival, a spectacle and theatrical event, provided the pre-architectural impetus for monumental architecture, its civic role celebratory as a “place of consensus.” The physical construct of openings, of doors and windows, however, barely features in his writings and are only discussed in brief with particular reference to their framing. The frame, we are told, enabled doors and windows to be understood as eurhythmic enclosures, “very similar to picture frames, except that the framed content is the person who enters or looks out,” for without a frame no image, nor its scale, could be determined. Eurhythmy, as such, was understood as contributing to the lyrical make-up of a surface, enclosures which embraced “laws of repetition, with cadence and caesuras, with elevations and depressions from which, when interlinked, the closed figure emerge[d],” a form clothed in a fabric orchestrated for the eyes. § The Renaissance architect and polymath, Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), however, was to place some emphasis on openings, some for light and ventilation, others for entry and exist, as well as “those through which water and smoke may pass in or out, such as wells, drains, the
mOUTHS, AS IT WERE, OF FIREPLACES, OVEN DOORS AND VENTS,"27 referring to them as *apertio*.28 Distinct from “aperture,” more common in architectural parlance, *apertio*, it is said, is associated with baptism, *apertionis mysterium*, a rite of passage, not only from wretchedness into Christendom, but one in which the senses of smell and hearing are said to be initiated and released,29 enabling life and its sensations to be fully experienced, the transformation of an individual into a fully sentient being enabled, a promise of the afterlife as well as recollection revealed.30 § Alberti, too, we are told, was also given some credence in the formulation of the façade,31 the concept however absent from his treatise, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. This digest, nonetheless, was to make regular use of the term *facies*, this Latin term containing within it the memory of the face,32 however, “the entire aspect of a building [was] envisaged as much in plan as in elevation, never only the front plane."33 *Facies*, it is said, is related to the word for making *faciendo*, while also corresponding to *factura*, or the make-up of something,34 *fabrica* also a correlate denoting both the artefact and the place of its making. Facture similarly derived is associated with the quality of the execution of a surface, with emphasis on painting, the expression alluding to the concept of features.35 § Doors and windows were central to the composition of the façade,36 and were likened to the orifices and openings of the face, the door to the mouth, the lips opening and shutting in order to express or receive, with the eyes likened to windows allowing light in while providing views outward, these features also enabling access to the innermost depths of the soul.37 For: § “Doors permit passage to the inside, vitalising the building with living bodies, windows light interiors and enable views. Likewise, the mouth accepts things from without, above all the breath of life that animates the soul, eyes see the pictures of the world, brightening the mind with sensible reality.”38 § Passage was hence enable, doors and windows facilitating participation in the ebb and flow of life, hinges well oiled,39 their opening and closing perforating their divide, demonstrating “how separating and connecting are only two faces of one and the same action.”40 § Fronting the enclosure, the façade as distinct and separate
component of a building did not become entrenched as a concept in architectural theory, it is said, until the late Renaissance, “loosen[ing] itself from the built fabric [...] it fronts.”⁴¹ becoming “clothing or dress for the building’s body,”⁴² it’s character thus relayed, “oscillat[ing] between display and dissimulation,”⁴³ a prelude to modernity. The concept of costume, we are told, was to precede what we understand today as expression and was said to cloak a man, with particular reference to the face,⁴⁴ the brow featuring prominently in its formulation.⁴⁵ § “The costumi, then, expose our soul and the thoughts which, although in themselves they cannot be expressed in any material [substance], leave traces that easily enable us, as Petrarch says, “to read the heart from the forehead.””⁴⁶ § This dressing enabled a direct discernment of character, its constancy bearing the marks of fleeting emotions, man’s moral fibre and along with his passions rendered legible, featuring on his countenance. § During the course of the Renaissance, the theory of expression, we are told, was to undergo a shift, gestures and movement no longer critical to the reading of the body, the emphasis focusing increasingly on the face,⁴⁷ its surface bearing the “outward signs of inner character,”⁴⁸ a movement later reflected in architectural theory, the building no long conceived merely as a body in plan, its façade envisaged, so to speak.⁴⁹ § “As a means for distinguishing the stigmata of vice from the shining marks of virtue,”⁵⁰ physiognomy, the study of the face, we are told, derives from the compounding of the Greek phusis or nature and gnomos, interpretation or law⁵¹ and came to be understood, it is said, as the “the art of judging someone by his physical appearance,”⁵² the face representative of “one’s entire countenance,”⁵³ encapsulating in toto “one’s movements, [...] passions, and mores.”⁵⁴ Known since antiquity, its formulation was attributed to Aristotle⁵⁵ and “provided the basis for a scientific psychology and physiology as well as a diagnostic technique for medical practice”⁵⁶ its association with astrology during the course of the Middle Ages allying it with the practices of divination.⁵⁷ In the sixteenth century Aristotelian themes were further elaborated upon,⁵⁸ with medieval and Renaissance treatises cogently systematised,⁵⁹
the publication of *De Humana Physiognomia* in 1586 by Giambattista della Porta (1535-1615) exerting considerable influence, reprinted on numerous occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,\(^6\) thereafter “shift[ing] the course of physiognomy from divinatory uses to the study of passions and expressions.”\(^6\) § In France during the course of the eighteenth century, *architecture parlante*, literally “speaking architecture,” was to engage with theories of physiognomics, architecture conceived of as capable of expressing emotions, correspondences between the contours of a face and the profile of a building thus conferred, with the entire volume of a building later envisaged as an indication of character.\(^6\) Knowledge of line forms and an understanding of standard expressions were said to enable the architect to compose edifices evocative of emotion, a building skilfully enacted capable of resonating with its audience,\(^6\) architecture’s language understood, then, as symbolic.\(^6\) Thought to be socially reformative the external envelope of a building, like that of a mask and its role in dramatic performance, hence communicated its functions literally, the sum of its “surfaces and profiles a comprehensive site of representation.”\(^6\) The concept of character, it is said, has always been integral to architectural theory from its inception existing well in advance of the Enlightenment\("psychologisation" of the individual.\(^6\) § “From Vitruvius’ analogy between the orders and human “types” through the Renaissance interest in the relationship between the cosmological and the biological, character finally became fully anthropomorphic and sexualised in the classical age."\(^6\) § With the Cartesian edict,\(^6\) however, body and mind were severed and architecture’s miscellaneous costumings were increasingly decried, its rich symbolic patois becoming progressively attenuated. The experiencing of the world and its measures was no longer founded upon an “order resonant with the body’s own,”\(^6\) but instead accorded with the rational and the objective, “philosophy and cosmology”\(^6\) eschewed in favour of the self-referential logic of mathematics.\(^7\) Architecture, as such, was no longer conceived of as an art, its elements becoming censored and standardised as innumerable schematic designs.
proliferated, their compositions the result of permutation and combination, premised on a methodological framework enacted by the grid, a system tabulated and devised by the “revolutionary architect” Jean-Louis-Nicolas Durand (1760-1834). Efficiency and functionalism were henceforth upheld as veritable measures and means. By the turn of the twentieth century such economies had become entrenched, and deceit and duplicity were to be discerned in the very concept of façadism: “For those who are only capable of visualising the surface of architecture – the façade, so to speak – all remains façade. This term has become the figurative expression for the veiling of makeshifts and doubtful moral characteristics, in respect of individuals, firms, and political parties. The expression ‘façade’ has already been adopted [...] in the sense of disguise, a mask, intended to conceal personality, as if to say, the wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

§ A new face then was said to be revealed, “or, rather, scarcely a face but [one] “transparent and faceless,” the curtain wall emblematic of this new guise. Indeed, with the advent of modernity, the façade, and the threshold as a consequence, were deemed to have disappeared, the “analytical grid of “character” applied but unable to discern any trace of countenance, confronted instead by its dearth. “The maximum of formal structurality [was] matched by the maximum absence of images,” the grid, once conceivably registering as a fenestra locutaria, literally a speaking window or grille through which the outside world was engaged was no longer rendered parlante, but mute, incapable of conveying meaningful expression, of participating in productive exchange. For “[v]oice,” it is said, “assumes mouth, eye, and finally face, a chain that is manifest in [...] the name, prosopon poien, to confer a mask or a face.” § While the photograph was seen to “efface the contours of [an] object’s “history,” in taking on a face, openings, then again, might be exposed, issuing forth, susurrations from the past resounding, dream-like and eidetic, the vestiges of these latent callings inscribed upon its surface. For: “It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis. Details of structure, cellular tissue, with which technology and medicine are
normally concerned – all this, in its origins, more native to the camera than the atmospheric
landscape or the soulful portrait; photography revealing in this material physiognomic aspects,
image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things."§ The camera, as such, was not
amenable to scientific discovery alone, memory and reverie were to be unearthed
from the patina’d depths of its prints, passions once repressed and concealed,
revealed through association. For the reading of photographs like the interpretation
of the face seeks to recognise constancy, traits particular to it, analyses requiring a
process of abstraction freezing the event or animated face, transforming “constant
flux into a state of immutability,”§ judgements and comparisons possible only “after
the soul’s emotions and passions have cooled.”§ For: § “When we say that a face is
similar to another, that means that certain features of the second face appear to us in the first,
without the first ceasing to be what it was. ... For, everything is in it: face, everything has the
degree of physical presence, that enables, as in a face, the search for the apparition of traits.”§
§ In portraits of Melbournian mid-twentieth century curtain walls, amidst their
various features openings were disclosed, the camera, its Medusan gaze intervening,§ its prints porous, glabrous and skin-like assuming the form of a mask.§ In “turning
away from [their] iconic environment,”§ however, in order to address us, these prints
are said to be apostrophied, and in an about face, turning again,§ calling out to,
gesturing unexpectedly to plaids of Harris Tweed, the façades echoing with waulking
songs, a barely perceptible screed. Taking place, correspondences thus occur in the
“crossing of gazes,”§ facade and cloth both in dialogue through the ground-glass
lattice of the camera. In this convoluted performance commonplace surfaces are
brought to light, such illumination akin to the flash of magnesium flare, however
seared, neither cloth nor wall is changed, rather it is in the encountering,
participation in the midst, that a certain truth is revealed.§ For true experience, we
are told, is invested in a gaze returned,§ our experiencing of the world, as a
consequence, changed. § Quotidian experience,§ as such, is interrupted and
overturned as the long durée is exposed, in the confrontation between what is
seemingly run of the mill and familiar with its radical otherness. In the wake of their photographic sundering, curtain wall and Harris Tweed are thus yoked together cheek by jowl, similarities becoming manifest, their features brought nearer and rendered recognisable, legible in the liminal interval in between, opening up to the fullness of time, the now-time in which the eternal erupts, interpellating the present, an instant prolonged where a sense of place prevails. § The ultimate fullness of time, of due measure, proportionate and opportune, was once designated as kairos by an ancient poet, such qualities attributed to the classical in art, those distinguished by endurance. Imbued with a sense of place, kairos in archaic Greece was understood as a target or mark, the place in which a weapon could most easily penetrate the body, the temple, prior to any association with temporality, distinguished, as it was, from linear time or chronos. Over time, it came to be understood not so much as a mark which was aimed at, but even more so, we are told, as “a penetrable opening, an aperture, or passage[way],” a threshold exposed, enabling connections to be made. Integral to the ancient practice of weaving, kairos too, was the momentary parting of the warp threads, the creation of a shed, so that the shuttle could be shot through, facilitating the very weaving. Like the lifting of the heddles of the loom, the camera’s aperture enables passage, chaireoun achme, the present punctuated, past and future aligned, the photograph’s hyphantic potential realised, a consequence of its coursing the in-between. § Whatsoever comes to be, it is said, must “come to be in a certain place,” a place interlaced with a “moving image of eternity.” In an opening, through it, whether bounded by proscenium, “lashless eye of Zeiss” or loom, place emerges in the intermittent spectacle of this curious weave, space intertwined with time, “the timeless that happens in time,” and in this place all façades dissolve as the image of our own face is confronted, at “the still point,” that “brief, decisive moment which marks a turning,” a rite of passage through which our being is exposed, brought to light as part of a shared fabric, enabling a return, a return once and again “to the world in which we always
already belong.” And it is only “because one has been there and back that the desire to return there seizes us, one impossible to satisfy in the moment although it remains so vital to life.”

2 See Wright, ‘A Note on the Word KPHAEMNON’, p. 49.

3 With reference to the city of Troy, and Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, see Lucinda Buck Alwa, ‘Veil and Citadel in Homer’, International Journal of Humanities, Vol. 6, No. 9 (2008), p. 135. On this basis, we could say that the origin of the concept of the curtain wall is to be found in ancient Greek epic poetry.


6 See Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 63-64.

7 See Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, De L’Esprit des lois, quoted in Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 190-191, n. 17. In calling for a theoretical history of the surface to be written, Andrew Benjamin conceivably echoes Montesquieu’s concerns when he states: “that such a form of production will give rise to a conception of the surface […] which will have an effect rather than simply being the consequence of the process of its creation.” Benjamin, ‘Surface Effects’, p. 3.

8 Mallgrave, ‘Introduction’. In Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 50.


10 See Longo, ‘The Theatre of the Polis’, p. 16, n. 7


13 See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [O2a,1].


15 See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 494, [O2a,1].


17 See Hvattum, Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism, p. 71.

18 Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, quoted in Hvattum, Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism, p. 71.

19 Hvattum, Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism, p. 71.


22 See Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 249.


24 Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 86.

25 See Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 86.

26 See Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, p. 86.


See Rykwert, *The Dancing Column*, p. 36.

See Rykwert, *The Dancing Column*, p. 36.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25. Bédard further notes that with the publication of De Humana Physiognomonia, this systematisation of earlier treatises also signalled their demise.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25.


For a discussion of architecture’s symbolic language with reference to Viol de Saint-Maix, see Vidler, *The Writing of the Walls*, pp. 139-164


“Cogito ergo sum – I think therefore I am,” coined by René Descartes in 1637.


See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 50.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 50.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 50.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 50.


See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 223.

Simmel, *Bridge and Door*, p. 54.


See Bédard, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade*, p. 4.

Bédard, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade*, p. 32.


See Barasch, ‘Character and Physiognomy’, p. 429.


See Bédard, *The Measure of Expression*, p. 54, n. 25.


See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25.


See Bédard, ‘The Building’s Face and the Herculean Paradigm’, p. 11.


See Rykwert, *The Dancing Column*, p. 36.

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See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 54, n. 25.


See Burroughs, *The Building’s Face and the Herculean Paradigm*, p. 10.


See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 223.

See Burroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade*, p. 32.

See Bédard, ‘The Measure of Expression’, p. 47.


For a discussion of architecture’s symbolic language with reference to Viol de Saint-Maix, see Vidler, *The Writing of the Walls*, pp. 139-164


See Burroughs, *The Building’s Face and the Herculean Paradigm*, p. 10.
With reference to Benjamin and Henri Focillon, see Tiedemann, ‘Dialectics at a Standstill’, p. 945.

See Hesiod,

See Benjamin,

See T. S. Eliot, ‘The Metaphysical Poets’. In

For a discussion of the nature of experience in Benjamin’s work, see David S. Ferris,

See Walter Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’, quoted in Schwartz,


See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [N3,1].


With reference to Benjamin and Henri Focillon, see Tiedemann, ‘Dialectics at a Standstill’, p. 945.

See Rickett, ‘Invention in the Wild’, p. 73.


Rickett, ‘Invention in the Wild’, p. 73.

See Rickett, ‘Invention in the Wild’, p. 73.

Barthes’ concept of punctum is seemingly implicit in the concept of kairos, related as it is, to the concept of piercing. See Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida, trans. Geoff Dyer (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 27

Plato, Timaeus, quoted in Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 32.

Plato, Timaeus, quoted in Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 32. Emphasis in Casey.


Here the dissolution of the fourth wall which characterises theatrical performances is alluded to, the audience recognising itself in the presentation occurring on stage. As Gadamer observes: “[i]t is not really the absence of a fourth wall that turns the play into a show. Rather, openness toward the spectator is part of the closedness of the play. The audience only completes what the play as such is.” Gadamer, Truth and Method, 2nd ed. rev., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 109.


WORD
WITH THIS YOU HAVE MADE THE WORLD. AND IT IS LARGE AND LIKE A WORD THAT IS STILL RIPENING IN SILENCE.

RAINER MARIA RILKE
IMMERSE YOURSELF IN SUCH A PICTURE LONG ENOUGH AND YOU WILL REALISE TO WHAT EXTENT OPPOSES TOUCH.

WALTER BENJAMIN
In days long past, it is said, no one could refuse the invitation to a waulking, a task requiring considerable skill, the work performed voluntarily by women, numbering ten or so (FIG. 104). The waulking, as such, was an occasion for “the exercise of all possible hospitality,” with feasts prepared and attention to dress paid, the visit of the tailor and of the waulking women two occasions in which those not native to the family were admitted into the domestic realm, an old proverb observing that cheeks reddened in the presence of these guests. A festal affair, the waulking, as such, was an occasion for “the exercise of all possible hospitality,” with victuals prepared and attention to dress paid, the visit of the tailor and of the waulking women two occasions in which those not native to the family were admitted into the domestic realm, an old proverb observing that cheeks reddened in the presence of these guests. § In one telling, when the waulking was done, the ceremony was not yet complete, with two women then standing, rolling the cloth from opposite ends, meeting in the middle, wherein four fell upon the bolt, beating it in time to tune, flattening out the creases. One standing would then cry, “The rhymes, the rhymes!” The others responding, “three rhymes, four rhymes, five and a half rhymes,” the vestiges of a forgotten rite. Unrolled then tightly rewound again, the women would all rise and stand in reverence, the lead-singer placing her hand on the bale, intoning an ancient blessing, an easy mixture of folkloric and Christian traditions: § “Let not the Evil Eye afflict, let not be mangled / The man about whom thou goest, for ever. § When he goes into battle or combat / The Protection of the Lord be with him.” § Only then, we are told, could the cloth be said to be finished and fulled. While the one to wear the cloth was not always known, goodwill and benevolence were regardless bestowed upon him revested in the tweed. § By 1887, however, it was commented that the waulking even then was “one of the institutions of the past,” and by the early twentieth century the practice had almost entirely waned. While always the very fabric of the Isles, in modern times Harris Tweed’s circulation beyond its shores obliged the establishment of “the Orb,” a mark and mercantile means, verifying its craft and authenticity, affording the cloth a
protection of its own, subject, as it was, in the late 1800’s to proliferate forgery. With the formation of the Harris Tweed Association in 1909, and the subsequent registration of a trademark the following year, the fabric was to bear an imprint on its obverse from that time onward, occurring almost every metre. The label on the inner breast pocket of a sports coat, its most common vestiary form, was also encoded with a numerical cipher, this notation enabling the tweed to be traced back to its weaver, with enquiries to this day still forthcoming, despite the passing years, so that something of the cloth’s story might be told, or in addition, the pattern rewoven again. Acts of goodwill and hospitality are one story, those of commodification an altogether different tale, Harris Tweed, embodying a strange mix of both, the former sense of gestening recalling “guest-friendship” or xenia which operated in ancient Greece. Premised upon the exchange of gifts, this economy, so to speak, was understood as inextricable from the formation of a social fabric incessant in its weaving, the elements of which were manifest in non-economic transactions including “kinship, marriage, hospitality, artistic patronage and ritual friendship,” establishing customs in which a common sense of reciprocation and personal indebtedness prevailed, the concept of profit, an anathema to its functioning, though gifts were sometimes weighed. One such custom was the symbolon, “a token of remembrance,” from which our word symbol derives, a gesture of camaraderie shared, a bone split, halves held by both host and guest, the word xenos, signifying the visitor and receiver, as well as “stranger,” “outsider,” “alien,” emblematic of bonds forged upon the rhythms of reciprocity, the accommodation of these meanings within a single term conveying the unitary nature of the relationship. A keepsake, the symbolon was the mutual embodiment of identity and obligation, and should a descendent of the guest or host happen to cross the threshold years later, the one or the other visiting again, “the two pieces could be fitted together […] to form a whole in an act of recognition,” replenishing the friendship. The significance of the symbolon, like a web of Harris Tweed, is that “the history of the giver [is carried] into the life of the receiver and continues […] there,” giving it a form of currency, a presence,
replete with a sense of relay and return, the possibility of renewal, still lingering. § The bone that was severed in the creation of a symbolon, we are told, was usually the knuckle, a joint, like a hinge, facilitating the movement of the hand, its gestures of pointing, of opening and closing, of beckoning and dismissing, releasing and grasping; harmonious joints, it is said, the miraculous means through which life is capable of being reproduced, well-crafted and manufactured. For “[t]he hand is there,” it is said, “making its presence known in the joining of the limbs, in the energetic calligraphy of a face, [and] in the profile of a walled city blue in the atmosphere.” § A “species of symbol,” metaphor is one of three types of words, ordinary and strange its other variants once designated by an ancient philosopher. § “Strange words simply puzzle us; / ordinary words convey what we already know; / it is from metaphor that we can get hold of something new and fresh.” § Metaphor functions by means of transference, giving “names to nameless things,” those “kindred or similar in appearance,” altering in our minds their relation, performing a “semantic shift,” enabling a change in proximity, bringing two seemingly unrelated things into alignment, revealing their filiation. Epiphora enables this “appearance of a nearness,” affecting emanation and release, this movement toward intimacy fuelled by imagination, the dynamic, “living power and prime agent of all human perception,” novelty occurring through the establishment of correspondences. § Fragmentary and incomplete, seemingly unrelated and ill-disposed, an image of a curtain wall is juxtaposed with a swatch of Harris Tweed, their incongruities exposed, as new associations are made, such imaginings recognising shared allegiances despite discrepancies and other deviations. To the hand, the surface of the fabric is malleable, slightly matted and dense, its fibres seemingly impossible to entirely tame, the visibility of the alt or grain of the cloth largely diminished as the result of its finishing, the cloth regardless still exuding a vitality and warmth; the surface of the facade, by comparison, is cold, hard and unyielding, composed of concrete, glass and steel, the one dressing a body, the other cladding a building, the differences in scale and sensation considerable. Performative,
however, metaphor, as a “fabricated image,”

dresses both building and cloth alike, attiring them anew, “as new clothes envelop a man,”

the building costumed, the cloth inhabited en masse, each transformed and rendered sensuous, capable of becoming an artefacts,

artefacts emergent with the foundations of community, symbolic of their binding.

§ Metaphor’s significance, it is said, lies in its embodiment of both a routine and a new meaning, a “literal sense and a novel sense, the ordinary, descriptive reference and a novel reference,”

movements in between defamiliarising what is seemingly commonplace to us. A metamorphosis of our everyday experience, as such, occurs, creating an: “unusual [image] of a familiar object, an [image] different from those that we are accustomed to see, unusual and yet true to nature, and for that reason doubly impressive to us because it startles us, makes us emerge from our habits and at the same time brings us back to ourselves by recalling to us an earlier impression.”

§ For within the meaning that metaphor conveys is a strangeness which embodies all manner of proximity, of “distance and nearness, indifference and involvement,”

conveying a form of objectivity devoid of “passivity and detachment.” Always understood in relation, strangeness establishes a rapport between heterogeneous things, those proverbial and those less familiar to us, compelling them into a union.

Two things, as such, are extracted from the world in order to differentiate them, and are as a result brought nearer and related to each other; but this relationship is also subject to a distancing, this selection equally not unique to these two elements alone, but applicable to all things perceived as different, hence what is far is conceivably near, the unity of nearness and remoteness wavering.

For “we experience as connected,” it is said, “only what we have previously isolated in some way.”

§ Reconfigured and rejoined, metaphors as a "split reference" mark a return, they “are the means by which the oneness of the world is [recognised and] poetically brought about,” lending dimensionality to seeing, enriching the fullness of experience, for “to see,” we are told, “is to forget the name of the thing one sees,”

only so that new names can be ascribed, the world re-envisioned and made anew again.

§ In the early years of the twentieth century however, the medium of photography was
seen to be endemic of a sense of disconnectedness and remove, “[t]he blizzard of photographs,” it is said, “betray[ing] an indifference to what [...] things mean.” Subject to a “rapid crowding of changing images,” man experienced “sharp discontinuit[ies] in the grasp of a single glance,” synthesis seemingly unachievable in the face of an “unexpectedness of onrushing impressions,” this torrent emblematic of metropolitan life and new means of reproduction. The photograph’s source, its connection to its subject or event and their situatedness, the relationship “between memory and experience,” and the very possibility of knowledge was thus undermined, the consequence of its reproducibility. Images, as such, took on reductive form, mere information enervating but without story, one image seemingly indistinguishable from the other, mass-reproduced, their dissemination and dispersal, anonymous, without trace, man’s capacity to discern blunted and blase’, contemplation prohibited, or so it would seem, by immensity in number and pace. “[T]he passionate inclination of [the] masses,” the compulsion “to bring things spatially and humanly “closer,”” in the form of a photograph, a reproduced image, was, by and large, to expose an inherent aporia, the revelation of events mediated, their transit, however, curtailed. The fixity of points of reference, as such, was no longer assured; the relational nature of nearness and farness, of palpable proximity, was rendered indeterminable, the horizon blurred, if not erased. § Notes and coins, surfaces printed and impressed circulated similarly, all values reduced to diminished tokens of quantity, arbitrary determinants, the means and measure of the money exchange. § “Money, with all its colourlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; irreparably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, the specific value, and their incompatibility. All things float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money. All things lie on the same level and differ from one another only in the size of the area which they cover.” § Objects once admired and passed on from hand to hand, thus lost their status “taking on commodity form,” reduced to surface value and stripped of their iridescence, their craft and the time of their making abstracted and reduced to two dimensions, not a web skilfully executed,
nor a vase well-formed, all qualities reduced to pecuniary worth, people no longer connecting in the ritual of exchange, the circulation of goods coursing without rhyme, under the premise of mere accumulation. Nominally assigned a single value an object, like its photograph when substituted as its proxy, was denied its inherent richness and multiplicity, rendering the artefact as fixed and immutable, seemingly as is,62 "arrested in the approximate,"63 such a limited point of view thwarting the potential of its abundant prospects and presentations, impeding any passage,64 its significance as a material with which to make variegated patterns renounced. § But if the image is perceived not as singular, but rather as constituent of a radiant multiplicity, it possesses the potential for the presencing of the very multiplicity inherent in the artefact.65 For the image like the photograph is never singular, "tiny sparks of contingency,"66 lie within, possibilities for connecting immanent, capable of drawing things closer. Through the photograph, it has been observed, "we encounter something new and strange,"67 an evocation of the photograph’s metaphoric potential, “image-worlds”68 erupting, uncanny experiences unexpectedly emerging amidst the ordinary and everyday.69 By means of the lens, changes in aperture and depth of field, the camera exposes a range of proximities hitherto concealed, optical rather than physical, bringing things nearer, “producing new, as yet unfamiliar relationships.”70 § “With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject.”71 § Reduced dimensions operating at the other end of the spectrum also facilitated novel techniques, diminution enabling “a degree of mastery over works of art,”72 which could not otherwise be achieved, recontextualisations possible, art works and objects in general, now malleable in positioning, application, and scale. § “[W]ithout image,”73 the curtain wall is understood as representative of a “language of absence,”74 its metrical scansion devoid of poetry, reduced to economic and functionalist imperatives, columns and spandrels all tallying. But through manipulations of photographs, exacted by scalar shifts and equivalence in frame,
coupled with their composition side by side, semblances are conveyed. Through the
patternation of the tweed’s weave composed of warp and weft, and the arrangement of
the walls’ spandrels and mullions similarly interlocking, the metaphoric potential of
these surfaces is revealed, as textile adherences are brought to light through the play of
photography. Amplified Harris Tweed thus takes on architectural proportions, the
curtain wall, by turn, diminished, becoming cloth for the enshrouding of the body,
associations proliferating, in light of a different nature made accessible through the
camera, rather than the naked eye.⁷⁵ § Eliciting a shock, memory is the site of such
“indelible images,”⁷⁶ their traces an awakening to the past suddenly illuminated and
contemporaneous. “The trace,” we are told, “is the appearance of a nearness, however
far removed the thing that left it behind may be. [...] In the trace, we gain possession of
the thing,”⁷⁷ amidst the distraction of quotidian existence.⁷⁸ Like the ancient precursor
to the photograph, the Epicurian *eidolon*, what is grasped however is not the object
itself, but rather “imprints of the objects of [that] vision,”⁷⁹ residues, remnants
bequeathed by the experience, threads lingering, yet markedly different from the thing
itself. Images in this light are conceived of as indexes or “incomplete testimon[ies] to
[...] past performance[s],”⁸⁰ as well as “invitation[s] to movements yet to come,”⁸¹ our
part, our participation with them necessarily required. For the trace exists as an
inscription, needing an extant surface onto which it can leave its mark, a backdrop
dissimilar to it so that its distinctiveness can be discerned, “the photograph [...] always
related to something other than itself, [s]ealing the traces of the past within its space-
crossed image,”⁸² movements across space and time, between now and then, far and
near, entwined. In this tarrying, traces leave tracks, they are the vestiges of movements
once performed, “pulling, dragging, or drawing,”⁸³ but “[b]eing past, being no more, is
[nonetheless] passionately at work in things,”⁸⁴ the task not simply to return, but rather
to continue, following on, establishing new courses and connections in the journeying.
§ “[A]s an intermediary between two places,”⁸⁵ the photograph as a medium “entail[s]
both separation and connection, or rather, connection across a certain separation.”⁸⁶
Like the shuttle coursing across the loom, it enacts a “separation that nonetheless binds, joins, not directly, but by means of a movement, a transmission, a transformation,” image-worlds prospering amidst the exchange. § Place, it is said, emerges in every photograph from which image-worlds emanate, the photograph bearing not only the hallmark of a past moment but also of its life yet to come. It appears not as a single image, but only in the coming together of multiple exposures, “intersection[s] of places [...] intruding, [...] revealing a place that holds itself in semi-transparency, fragmentary in its illumination, the totality of its visibility animate though somewhat concealed. And “[i]t is always we ourselves,” it is said, who “stand at the centre of these rare images,” moved by our own placedness together with the place of our being revealed, immured between the streets of the metropolis and white sands, moors and mountainsides of the Hebridean Isles, clothed in layers between the clo mhor and curtain wall, poised between photographic plates, traces and transferences enabling us to weave meaning, giving form to the immaterial and immemorial, enabling them to be “sensually perceived,” the result of a poetic thinking, a thinking that is “still veiled.”


“Eibheal air gnumaid mna-thuraidh is tailean,” which in English translates as: “There are red cheeks before the tailor and the fulling women.” Campbell, ‘The Waulking Described’, pp. 7-8.


It should be noted that not all waulkings were finished with a blessing. See Miss Annie Johnston quoted in Thompson, Harris Tweed, p. 52.


For a discussion on "the Orb," see Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, pp. 57-67. Thompson notes that "the Orb" was derived from the Dunmore coat of arms in recognition of Lady Dunmore’s activities, see p. 104. However, this has proven not to be the case, my thanks to John B. Scott, second cousin of the current Earl of Dunmore for alerting me to this fact, and providing me with a copy of the Dunmore coat of arms. John B. Scott, Email Correspondence with the Author, 19 June 2010.

By the late 1870’s Scottish tweed, which included those other than Hebridean, was said to have been the most widely copied British textile of its time. See Anderson, ‘Spinning the Ephemeral with the Sublime’, p. 289.

See Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, pp. 63-64.

See ‘Trouble Looms’, *This is Scotland* (Glasgow: BBC 4, 08 September, 2009).


Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 22.

Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 22.


Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 18.

Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 75.


Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 75.


II.52
See Aristotle, Poetics, referred to in Carson, Eros the Bittersweet, p. 73.

Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [M16a, 4].


See Carson, Eros the Bittersweet, p. 73.

Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 75. Emphasis in Bachelard.


Carson, Eros the Bittersweet, p. 73. Emphasis added.


See Simmel, ‘Bridge and Door’, pp. 52-56.

With reference to the Russian Formalist, Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), see Carson, Eros the Bittersweet, p. 73.


See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [N1,8].


Cadava, Words of Light, p. xxvii.


Carson, Economy of the Unlost, p. 19.


See Malpas, ‘Heidegger in Benjamin’s City’, p. 492.

See Malpas, ‘Heidegger in Benjamin’s City’, p. 492.


See Malpas, ‘Heidegger in Benjamin’s City’, p. 495.


Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art’, p. 236. For a further discussion of the close-up, see, for example, Dawn Ades and Simon Barker, Close-Up: Proximity and Defamiliarisation in Art, Film and Photography (Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, 2008).


77 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, quoted in Malpas, ‘Heidegger in Benjamin’s City’, p. 492.
82 Cadava, Words of Light, p. 63.
84 Benjamin, ‘First Sketches’. In The Arcades Project, [Dº, 4].
88 Weber, ‘Impart-ability’, p. 34.
89 See Jennings, ‘Photography’, p. 264.
92 See Malpas, ‘Repetitions’, p. 3.
94 See Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, quoted in Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 289.
PATTERN
THE WORLD WAS STRIPPED OF ITS SURFACE, OF ITS SKIN, AND THE SKIN WAS SPREAD FLAT ON THE FLATNESS OF THE PICTURE PLANE.

CLEMENT GREENBERG
LIFE IS TO BE RECREATED SO THAT IT WILL OF NECESSITY EXPRESS ITSELF AS A PATTERN.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
An ancient myth of origin tells us that a cloth was once woven, its surface depicting the earth with its continents and seas, and was then deployed in conquest, its ensnaring and enshrouding, enabling the world to appear, \(^1\) no longer formless and emergent, \(^2\) it took shape and was distinguished from the chaos and darkness that preceded it. Transformational, this vestment wedded the heights with the depths, while simultaneously dividing all that lay above from that which lay below, \(^3\) a horizon hence established, a certain planarity necessary for its reading. § A seam and distant border joining once separated planes, \(^4\) the horizon enables the unity and flow of life to be experienced, not as a fixed and rigid boundary, but as something that moves with us, calling us to advance. \(^5\) Marking the limits of the range of vision, the horizon locates all that falls into view, visible from a particular perspective, establishing a certain stand point. \(^6\) Place, it is said, in one of its formulations, is understood as flat, plateia, suggestive of an open space, a broad way, \(^7\) necessarily delimited within a field of vision, fleeting or otherwise fixed, severed from the unity of nature, \(^8\) partial to a larger fabric, even so. § In ancient Greece, the siting of a mound, a platform slightly raised, was concomitant with the construction of the hearth, \(^9\) the moral element of architecture, \(^10\) fire sacred to the community, its gathering a premise for the polis. During the course of the Renaissance, the stage was similarly set, a platform prescribed, encounters thereon justified and occurring on equal footing, rectitude, dignity and convenience thus conveyed. \(^11\) “City dwellers,” we are told, could then “stand and stay together, in “rows criss-crossing rows,””\(^12\) recalling the dance floor’s role as a primordial architectural archetype, \(^13\) the citizens’ movement, their choreography, so to speak, along with their “physical and cultural uprightness, […]

sustain[ing] civil concord.”\(^14\) So close, so familiar, however, is the ground, the horizontal plane on which we stand, that our eyes rarely rest upon it to ponder. \(^15\) This has not always been the case though, in the nineteenth century the woven surface of the carpet was very much in focus.\(^16\) § Semper writing then conceived “the absolute concept of a horizontal surface in terms of a smooth carpet spread out on
the floor,” a plane differentiated from its surrounds, mats and rugs establishing the terrain, hung upright, guarding against the inclemency of the weather, setting apart one’s property, partitioning the spaces within and containing them. On a grander scale, carpets once contributed to the festival spirit, laid out to mark the dromos, the course which a pageant would follow, a carpet thus unfurled, recalling a surface once designated for deities alone, the pegmata, perpendicular to it, a figural backdrop displayed (FIGS. 31-32). § Flatness was tantamount to the design of the carpet’s surface, its delineation, whether drawn from nature or otherwise, was to display no shading or any other indication of depth liable to challenge the seamless figure-ground relationship; its design, in accordance, capable of being composed of simple shapes, a geometry amenable to the loom. “Naturalistic subjects,” and their rendering as such, were said to “violate decorative principles” lying in contradiction to the very planarity of the surface. For “surface ornamentation arises from the basic idea of the surface as such and accordingly reaffirms it.” The design of a carpet, in keeping with this tenet, was subject to an “all-over” treatment,” the movement between the edge of the carpet and its centre to be captured and conveyed in a “concentric or radial arrangement, or a mixture of the two,” its polychrome patterning in agreement with the principles of “regular distribution” or “subordination and hierarchy,” the former despite luxuriousness generating monotony, the latter through variation in intensification, highlighting dominant elements, a “unity in diversity” created through the combination of contesting forces artfully woven. Edging and borders were symbolic of the frame, mediating between ideal centre and perimeter, “enclos[ing] and encirc[ling] the carpet” when completed, further delineating its limits, its beginning or its end in encountering the room. The finishing of a carpet, its fringes, were deemed significant, “extend[ing] beyond the fabric [...] twisted together and knotted to prevent unravelling,” a device established through which the horizon is recalled. § Reoriented and alternatively composed, “hanging carpets,” colourful and woven, were said to be “the true walls,
the visible boundaries of space,” place constructed and enclosed, the movement captured in the design, no longer radial or “all-over,” but “up and down,” serving further to emphasise the vertical orientation, this turning from a prone to an upright position conceivably hinged. While upright surfaces, rigid and load-bearing, and those that were hung were by and large similar, their termination was to be expressed differently, the rigid form countering gravity, its upper border embellished at its head, the draping fabric in agreement, ornamented at its lower end. § The basis of all representations of the cosmos, the carpet, we are told, was to play a central role in the history of art. § “Yet it is both logical and appropriate that paintings were associated with true embroidered carpets in such a way that each could, to a certain extent, be identified with the other. And why should parts of the pegmata – namely, the frames stretched with canvas – not also have been called tabulae, or even, in Greek, pinakes, as these expressions, at least in their later, improper usage, refer only to the formal concept of a surface suited to painting or sculpture and no longer to the material. In modern languages the words Schilderei, Tafel, toile, quadre, frain, and tablet are abstractions; no thought at all is given to the three-dimensional object but only to the image presented – the paint on the framed surface. The concept of Täfelung is not only similar to what ancient writers meant by the words tabula, pinax, abacus, and crusta but also very close to the more general art-technical expressions picture and graphe. And it has grown closer to the aesthetic concept of painting than modern surface decoration has, to the extent that ancient paint was part of wall decoration and its style was and remained panel painting. § While tableau was understood as a painting, in architecture it was also to refer to “elevations, doorways, windows and casements,” surfaces replete with openings, in which two aspects of the same word are contained, bounded by the concept of the frame. For, without a frame, it is said, nothing can be woven, the loom establishing a spatial limit from which the surface and its decorative designs can emerge. § Michel-Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889), Director of Dyes at the Gobelins Tapestry Works was concerned with the design of hanging carpets, tapestries, the nature of colour central to his
investigations (FIGS. 105-106). His treatise, The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours and their Application to the Arts (1839) was published the year the invention of photography was announced and according to one report, the self-same year in which Harris Tweed was originally commissioned. The result of an extensive series of experiments which he was exhorted to formulate, the outcomes of his research were to exert considerable influence upon painting, as well as the mechanical or industrial arts, the design of the interior of the Crystal Palace an early exemplar of its application. His fundamental premise, founded upon the interaction of colours when juxtaposed, was encapsulated thus: “I beg the reader never forget when it is asserted of the phenomena of simultaneous contrast, that one colour is placed beside another receives such modifications from it, that this manner of speaking does not mean that the two colours, or rather the two material objects that present them to us have a mutual action, either physical or chemical; it is really only applied to the modification that takes place before us when we perceive the simultaneous impression of these two colours.”

The weavers of the Hebridean Isles know this principle well, knowledge innate, handed down, and drawn from the crucible of experience, colours combined, patterns devised, the tried and true result of experiment. Columns of warp threads colour varying are crossed with spandrels of weft also diverse, in the weaving a test-screen of sorts emerging.

From the early twentieth century pattern books were arranged gridded with samples of Harris Tweed (FIG. 107), all variation and combination, subtlety and contrast apparent in the patternings, page upon page, gridded with fabric samples and their codes. Four weaves, in general, predominate, one in which the warp and weft are of the same colour; the “two-by-two” weave (FIG. 108), in which “two threads of one colour are followed by two threads in a different colour in the warp,” the “herringbone” weave (FIG. 109), in which one colour in the warp is contrasted with another in the weft; the loom set up to accommodate a variation on the “herringbone,” the “diamond” or “Bird’s Eye” pattern (FIG. 110); though others such as tartans and variable checks are often worked, the skill of the weaver, inventiveness,
evidenced in the web.\textsuperscript{49} § A survey of curtain walls similarly composed was published in a special issue of \textit{Architectural Review} entitled 'Machine Made America' (1957),\textsuperscript{50} the façades within categorised and catalogued according to their surface articulation (FIG. 111), the emphasis on appearance.\textsuperscript{51} This review too was founded upon a fascination with pattern, with the facture of the surface featuring, its means of classification premised upon the interplay between structure and skin. Four types were registered, reminiscent of weaves: “sheath” walls, in which no structural elements were indicated on the exterior skin; “grid” walls, in which horizontal and vertical framing elements were expressed with equal weighting; “mullion” walls, with the emphasis on vertical elements stressed; and “spandrel” walls, in which horizontal elements predominated.\textsuperscript{52} § Presented as a series of diagrammatic surfaces, all dimensionality was mitigated, displaying a “fetish for flatness,”\textsuperscript{53} the superficial interaction between the profiles of mullions and columns amidst the sheathing catalogued, the variance in their projection merely indexed in the fall of the barest of shadows, in the unavoidably perspectival rendering of the camera.\textsuperscript{54} Like a series of portraits, the purpose of the photographic survey sought to emphasise traits, conveying rhythms and their modulations in the articulation of built surfaces. Colour did not feature, though materiality was engaged with, the focus by and large on the structure of the weave, the surface effect of warp and weft, and its enveloping of a range of typologies, a homogenising vernacular.\textsuperscript{55} § Weaving, it has been observed, “consists of the interlacing at right angles by one series of filaments or threads, known as the weft ... of another series, known as the warp, both being in the same plane,”\textsuperscript{56} (FIG. 112), the grid a natural consequence of its making. Emblematic of modernity, the grid in modern art, with particular reference to painting (FIG. 113), was said to be “autonomous and autotelic,”\textsuperscript{57} an end in itself, self-referential, its formalist drive enlarging and reframing the very structure of its substrate. Conceivably cut from a larger fabric or alternatively introjecting its very framing onto itself,\textsuperscript{58} a patterned surface emerged, its referent obscured, colour liminally applied, adorning the canvas as
it concealed it. § “For the grid follows the canvas surface, doubles it. It is a representation of the surface, mapped, it is true, onto the same surface it represents, but even so, the grid remains a figure, picturing various aspects of the “originary” object: through its mesh it creates an image of the woven infrastructure of the canvas; through its network of coordinates it organises a metaphor for the plane geometry of the field; through its repetition it configures the spread of lateral continuity. The grid thus does not reveal the surface, laying it bare at last; rather it veils it through a repetition.”

§ A “valorisation of flatness,” the gridded surface, as such, was conceived of as the apotheosis of ornament’s erasure, or conversely as the very transformation of works of art into ornament absolute, the surface becoming “the basis of composition, […] the human eye awakening to the spectacle of form, line, and colour,” the whole grammar of design engaged. Stretched and tautened, the repeat of the motif was not limited to the surface of the canvas alone, for the work of art was merely one surface among the many. § Unfolding the adjacent surfaces of an interior, flattening them out on the same plane (FIG. 114), De Stijl artists and architects developed the surface (FIG. 115), “new design” as it was termed, embracing the potential of the surface’s make-up. Primary colours, red, blue and yellow, perceived as objective, were perpendicularly applied, the surface then enfolded, the spatial consequences of its enveloping divulged through its surface emanations. Fluctuating between cartographic and orthographic modes, the hierarchy between painting and architecture was thus allayed, the gridded surface becoming vitalised, enlivened and lived, the wall dematerialising, via the placement of “man within the painting,” rather than “in front of it.” For ultimately, it was thought, that it is “only the […] surface which defines architecture, since man does not live within the construction, but within an atmosphere that has been established by the […] surface,” scenes of daily life performed in and amidst a series of changing tableaux vivants. § Between the late 1930’s and 1950’s, a move towards a “synthesis between painting and architecture” was foregrounded, the mural playing a central role, its polychrome patterning dematerialising the structure and solidity of the wall, while at
the same time, subverting the nature of decoration, understood, then, as recidivist.69

For the skin, as the laminar surface of the mural might be conceived, was not merely
da painterly envelope,” but rather a “quivering [surface] under the thrust of internal
reliefs which [sought] to come up into space and revel in the light, [...] the evidence of
a mass convulsed”70 by secreted movements, to its very depths.71 § Traversing between
canvas, mural and polychrome wall, the architect and painter Le Corbusier (1887-
1965) drew from the writings of Semper appropriating them for l’esprit nouveau,
polychromy presented as a feature necessary for modern life. Colour in its conquest
of the wall, differing in hue between them, was seen to reallocate their partitioning,
the ordering of their positioning affecting the plan in as much as the elevation,
multicoloured murals exploding the wall instead, its fragments of colour dispersed,72
the rendering of the detail of the mural and the scale of polychrome architecture
conceivably a matter of degree. In his encounters with tapestry, however, this
distinction between the colourful wall and the mural, so often made, was overturned,
the focus no longer on the play between surfaces but concentrated within one73 (FIG.
116), the multicoloured weave of the tapestry synoptic, “join[ing] the polychrome
scheme in making space “palpitate,” becoming “integral to the architecture” it might
merely decorate.”74 § Separable and transportable, portable domestic furnishings, we
are told, were the antecedents to the monumental building,75 a transference conveyed
in the French terms for furniture and building, meuble (literally movable), immeuble
(literally immovable), respectively.76 While the mural was seen to mobilise the wall,
the wall regardless remaining fixed in place, the mobility of tapestry displaced the
need for a permanent frame,77 its surface itinerant and liberated, in establishing its
own limits. The mobility of the surface was thus extolled, the tapestry, or
‘Muralnomad’ as Le Corbusier would refer to it, accommodating the increasingly
nomadic character of modern life. § “Our nomad moves because his family increases in
number, or, on the contrary, because his children have married. Tapestry gives him the
opportunity to possess a ‘mural’, that is, a large painting of architectural potential. He unrolls
the tapestry and spreads it on the wall such that it touches the ground. Is he moving? He will roll up his mural, tuck it under his arm and go down the stairs to install it in his [new] shelter. Modern man was thus seen to journey with his hanging carpets and wares, “wrapping himself in colour,” such trekking enfolded recalling the feilidh mhor (FIG. 117), the ancient garb of the Hebrideans and that of their Highland confrères. In correspondence, co-ordinating with the landscape, this large wrap, a belted plaid, was first spread out on the ground, a belt placed beneath it, the swathe of cloth then pleated along its length, its wearer lying atop it arranging its folds, securing the belt about his waist in advance of standing. Erect a pleated skirt was thence arrayed, the mantle above the belt variously arranged, shrouding the upper body or otherwise draped “allow[ing] the arms complete freedom of movement,” during the course of activities. At day’s end the belt was released, one’s diurnal attire becoming a nocturnal sheath, a blanketing safeguard from the elements. § “Place,” it is said, “is thought to be some surface and like a vessel and surround[er];” and in one of its manifestations, chōra is translated as a room. Its aspects, though seemingly diminutive, are experienced through roaming, chōrein, understood in this sense, meaning “to go.” The Greeks, we are told, on leaving their homeland to colonise and settle, were farewelled with the famous phrase: “[w]herever you go, you will be a polis,” no longer enclosed by their city, wrapped within its walls, they nonetheless “moved “in context,” as it were, within a nexus of kinships and social patterns for which the physical fabric of [the polis] was a metaphor.” As such, it was not so much a sense of being “anchored in a specific place, but also [of] having a life within it,” activity inextricable from being so. § Establishing a sense of place, man, it is said, projects himself onto the wall, the floor capturing his shadow in the casting, a small room sometimes appended in the form of a camera, its interior containing facets of light inscribed and captured in the journeying. In confronting a “well-written room,” composed of carpets whether literally or conceptually arrayed, the import of one’s of surroundings, regardless, must be grasped instinctively, moved by the detail
of the patterning and engaged.\textsuperscript{91} For § “In looking at a carpet, by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another: so in life the seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe.”\textsuperscript{92}


4 See Rylevren, 'Gottfried Semper and the Conception of Style', p. 125.


7 See Malpas, *Place and Experience*, p. 22.


9 See, for example, Joseph Masheck, 'The Carpet Paradigm: Critical Prolegomena to a Theory of Flatness', *Arts Magazine*, No. 51 (1976), pp. 82-109.


11 With reference to Alberti, see Leatherbarrow, 'Levelling the Land', p. 122.

12 Leatherbarrow, 'Levelling the Land', p. 122.

13 See Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, p. 34.

14 Leatherbarrow, 'Levelling the Land', p. 122.


30 It should be noted that the production of tapestries is distinct from woven cloth, such as Harris Tweed, one of the main differences being that the weft does not travel from edge to edge in one pass. For a further discussion, see ‘Tapestry’. In *Oxford Art Online*, http://www.oxfordartonline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/art/T083308. Accessed 30 December 2011.


Robin Evans, ‘The Developed Surface: An Enquiry into the Brief Life of an Eighteenth-Century Drawing

It is said that the De Stijl artists took their name from Semper’s

Sigfried Giedion, See Taylor, Mark C. Taylor,


It is said that the De Stijl artists took their name from Semper’s Der Stil, or Style, as it is referred to in English. See Masheck, ‘The Carpet Paradigm’, p. 99.


71 See Focillon, The Life of Forms in Art, p. 25.
73 See Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, p. 252.
74 See Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, p. 252.
75 See Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, pp. 623-624.
77 See Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, p. 253.
79 Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, p. 251.
81 For a further discussion of the feilidh mhor, see H. F. McClintock, Old Highland Dress and Tartans (Dundalk: W. Tempest Dundalgal Press, 1949), pp. 18-35.
82 Aristotle, Physics, quoted in Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 53.
83 See Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 83.
84 Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 198.
87 See Benjamin, Place, Communality and Judgement, p. 99.
PLACE
DRESSING
BEINGS SURROUND THEMSELVES WITH THE PLACES WHERE THEY FIND THEMSELVES, THE WAY ONE WRAPS ONESELF UP IN A GARMENT.

GEORGES POULET
EVERYTHING THAT ‘ADORNS’ MAN CAN BE ORDERED ALONG A SCALE IN TERMS OF ITS CLOSENESS TO THE PHYSICAL BODY. THE ‘CLOSEST’ ADORNMENT IS TYPICAL OF NATURE PEOPLES: TATTOOING. THE OPPOSITE EXTREME IS REPRESENTED BY METAL AND STONE ADORNMENTS, WHICH ARE ENTIRELY UNINDIVIDUAL AND CAN BE PUT ON EVERYBODY.

GEORG SIMMEL
An ancient scribe tells us that the Attic chiton (χιτών) was originally designed by Aeschylus (c. 525-456 B.C.) as a linen or woollen costume to be worn on the stage. This swathe of cloth elegantly draped, was later to be adopted by priests and torch-bearers finding itself as an ornament to festivities, thereafter being worn by the populace at large;¹ the prefacing figure, (chi), reminiscent of a rudimentary signature and a designation of place, the mark of a destination, an address inscribed on a map. Such drapery too, it is said, formed the mainstay of Highland wear (FIGS. 118-119), the feilidh mhor or large wrap,² hitched higher and belted to the body, the tweed’s malleable form providing protection from the elements, whilst also operating as a minimal shelter, shrouding the body as a make-shift domicile in the midst of the landscape; the big cloth, Harris Tweed, and the large wrap, one in the same cloth and familiarly interchangeable.³ § In the waulking song ‘This Morning I Have Risen Early’, there is a line, “[a]nd in my tartan plaid I fold her,”⁴ that speaks not only of the tender intimacies of courtship but perhaps even more profoundly, of Harris Tweed’s authenticity and its inextricable connectedness to place and to the people who inhabit its Isles. The fabric’s very situatedness is constitutive of its unique existence, further embodied in its rich history,⁵ the customs of which are held fast in oral form, though captured not readily enough through more contemporary means, the tradition regardless, continuing to be passed on, and is to this day, very much lived. § Traditionally, before the introduction of commercial dyes and the milled carding and spinning of the wool, fleeces were sourced from the Blackface and the Cheviot sheep⁶ that wandered the Islands’ machair and mountainsides, the fibres further coloured by that land, the tweed’s variegated web infused by plants indigenous to it; the mixture of specimens and mordents, recipes closely guarded, passing from one generation to the next, from mother to daughter.⁷ § In the Hebrides, the ling heather or fraoch, we are told, bequeathed a deep green, stone parmelia or crotal lending red, cudbear, corcar bestowing purple, woad, glas-lus or guirmean instilling blue and an intense yellow received from dyer’s rocket or las-
bhuidhe mòr, to name only a handful; the flora staining the wool, the dying undertaken in a large cast iron vat prepared over a fire, amidst the elements, in the open. The different coloured wools were then carded together and spun, additional combinations in hue and tone ensured in the weaving of warp and weft, the scent of the weaver’s peat fire further imbuing it; the web itself an iridescent and shifting landscape, sensorial and concinnous, incanted over during the waulking, its surface redolent with histories and local lore. The lovers in the midst of the terrain, enfolded in the feilidh mhòr, camouflaged and flattened, indistinguishable and blending with it, were one with the land as they were with each other, the cloth, the large wrap, lending visibility through its fine craftsmanship, but drawn from the land, re-immersed in it, now unified. The visible surface, epiphanie, we might recall, is “coming-to-light,” the bearer of “prominence and impressiveness,” qualities conferred upon it by the skilfulness of its weave, its association with conspicuousness of little consequence. In ancient Greece, kosmos in its Homeric form, was generally understood as a “rhythm or an order [...] rediscovered with each new tracing of the figure,” as is the case with Harris Tweed, with its endless permutations of patternation and colouration, but the term kosmēse, was also to signify arranging, ordering and adorning. Manifest in the acts of building and making; the crafted surface, its very appearing, was an acknowledgement of existence. So when a woman adorned herself, kosmēse, wrapping her skin, chrōs (skin or colour) in yet another skin, she lent body, “bring[ing] living surface-body so clothed to light; [...] mak[ing] it appear.” Our word “cosmetics,” takes its leave from such enhancement (FIG. 120), and recalls Baudelaire’s advocation, that: “[m]aquillage has no need to hide itself or to shrink from being suspected; on the contrary, let it display itself, at least if it does so with frankness and honesty.” As “a continuous coloured surface, a fabric,” adornment was not simply understood as mere appliqué, a discerningly piecemeal embellishment, but rather as an enveloping, a swathing or draping, a dressing binding, yet abounding in its entirety; the adorned memorialising adornment.
Greek architecture was so conceived, “the art form and decoration [...] profoundly and intimately bound and influenced by [the] principle of surface dressing, [so much so] that it [was] impossible to consider them separately,” a conception which was to inform both architecture and vestiary arts from that time onward. According to Vitruvius, the woven cloth facilitated not only the covering and protecting of the body, but also enabled a certain adornment so that the fabric might enhance the body’s honour, enabling visibility and allowing the wearer to assume one’s place in the world. The Latin term *honestas*, we are told, did not only confer honour, but was also a bestowal of reputation, character, respectability, virtue, integrity, dignity: rightful Roman qualities, and hence necessarily public. For Ruskin, adornment was conceived of as a form of ornament attendant to an existing structure, with architecture being proposed as “an art that “adorns the edifice raised by man for whatsoever use,” such embellishment understood as separate, lying in contradistinction to the very surface to which it was applied. Semper, however, conceived of adornment as a cosmic imperative, experienced as “a manifestation of the universal world order within the phenomenal world.” Premised upon his theory of formal beauty, and its principle axes of symmetry, proportionality, such embellishment was co-extensive with his concept of dressing, conceivable as an all-encompassing ensemble; a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a “synthesis of the arts.” In adornment, as in dressing, “[c]entripetal and centrifugal tendencies [were understood as] fused,” individual elements orchestrated through their very participation. A legacy of his long-held interest in textiles, Semper’s preoccupation with the woven cloth, it has been suggested, marks the culmination of his interests in polychromy, “light and colour [...] treated as one [...] heightened by the juxtaposition of fragments of pure hues,” reminiscent of the Luminists’ portrayal of the landscape and their concern with atmospherics. For Semper, such “chromo-luminarism” conceivably registered as a vestige of the ancient technique of toreutics, the weaving together of a diversity of stuffs, manifest now as colour, “the subtlest and most incorporeal dressing.”
symbolic, indexical homage to the crafted, iridescent surface.  

Painted and applied, colour was understood as “fluid, the medium of all changes,” binding disparate elements of a building together and further to their environment and surrounds, the play of light epitomising Divinity. § The interplay between the liminal materiality of colour with the varying intensity of light was to find its apotheosis in his theory of dressing or Bekleidung as he was to term it, a principle which enabled him to “posit a unitary origin for all the arts,” its “motives borrowed from the realm of costume and finery,” though evident earlier in his conception of the architectural enclosure. For “delight in colour,” it is said, “is fundamental to our being, residing in our instinct for play and adornment.” § Bekleidung, we are told, is derived from the German kleiden, and is generally understood as “to clothe” or “to dress,” finding its origins in Kleit or cloth, which upon further derivation, is revealed in the mixture applied to the cloth, Klei, a clay or loam, in order that it be fulled and waulked, the preparation and finishing of the cloth undertaken between loom and body, and by extension, the workmanship enacted upon stone between quarry and wall, enabling both cloth and stone to become wearable and hence, inhabitable. § For Semper, speech, the spoken word, further supported his concept of dressing; words were not simply “linguistic symbols applied to building at a later stage but clear indications of the textile origin[s]” of architecture. Homonymous word-plays in German, his native tongue, were said to have revealed associations, analogies that informed the symbolic and unitary origins of the formal language of the arts as a whole. Correspondences between Wand and Gewand, wall and garment, associations between Zaun, a hedge or fence; and Saum, hem or fillet, further exemplified in the double meaning of Decke as both ceiling and cover, manifested as the “prearchitectural conditions” of “dwelling [which were to] assume monumental form.” § His founding of structural-symbolic ornamental motifs on the technical arts sought to expose, it is said, “universal principles that always retained a certain stylistic necessity,” revealed, for example, in the correspondence between the triglyphs of the Doric temple and the fringed and
decorative borders of fabrics, both seams of sorts, one, however, not informing the other, but rather, both the result of necessity, the virtuous termination and resolution of an edge condition. In these shifts between media and modes, a transfiguration occurs, movements reverberating between body and building, between the intimate and the architectural, regardless of scale, dressing. For: § “In principle what the human body is to its coverings (cloth, cosmetic paint, or jewellery), load-bearing materials are to finishing materials. The analogy rests on equivalent “experiences” of sheltering, modesty and decoration. In neither case was nakedness evident, not for stone nor flesh; in both cases there was something unseen and supporting, and something visible and supported.” Semper’s concept of dressing draws, it is said, from an understanding of the festive nature of the theatre, “the haze of carnival candles [being] the true atmosphere of art,” replete with its religious nuances, which were given form, not only in the “stone dramas by Phidias,” but also on the festival stage, its joyous and temporary bedecking informing his conception of monumental architecture, the anchoring of ritual in place and its rendering as tangible. § “The festival apparatus – the improvised scaffold with all its splendour and frills that specifically marks the occasion for celebrating, enhances, decorates, and adorns the glorification of the feast, and is hung with tapestries, dressed with festoons and garlands, and decorated with fluttering bands and trophies – is the motive for the permanent monument, which is intended to proclaim to future generations the solemn act or event celebrated.” For Semper, “dressing and the mask [were] as old as human civilisation,” the “masking of reality” recalling the role of the mask in ancient Greece, those worn by the gods in particular, which served “to express tensions between contrary terms,” manifest in the contest between that which is supported and that which is covered, a veiling, a veritable “dissimulating fabric” inextricably woven into the “fabrication of architecture.” For the structure beneath the textile surface or mask operates as nothing more than a prop, it is “merely a supporting player, playing the role of support, supporting precisely because it does not play.” The outer surface is necessarily performative and is rendered so
only in and through its dressing, differentiating itself from its fixed and voiceless scaffold, such “adornment implicit [in] the dialectics of concealment and illumination.” § Semper’s interest in the performing arts, however, was not limited to theatre alone, but was also informed by dance and music; those “cosmic arts” inspired by Mnemosyne and her sorory, mimesis, the “forming of images” as opposed to mere copies, it is said, “deriving from the star-dance of the heavens.”

In ancient Greece, choros, earthbound, was understood not only as the dance floor or the dance place, but the very dance itself, place appearing with the dance, those sets of steps and turns figured and repeated, place dissolving when the dance was completed, tethered in memory, nonetheless. § The German words for wall and for garment, Wand and Gewand respectively, find their origins in Wenden, “to turn,” or “to wind,” a surface enclosing, well-crafted, appearing. In the Hebrides, the cloth was waulked in a sunrise direction, turning round the table, as the cloth had previously been wound around its beam in the weaving, the cloth then tailored encircling the body as the walls enclosed the room in which the dressing took place (FIG. 121), the wearer’s journeying through the city, mirroring, more or less, the ancients’ cycling movements about the polos, symbolic of the polis and the very appearance of the place. § The word itself, “polis,” it is said, is suggestive of a ring-wall, its Latin derivation urbs, containing within it the figure of a circle, derived, as it was from the same root as orbis, from which we get orbit, Artemis of Ephesus, goddess of nature circletted with a mural of the polis. Our word “town” comes to us through German and originated in the word Zaun, a surrounding hedge or fence, which also, as we have seen, bares comparison to Saun, or hem. Semper posited “the surrounding wall,” (Einfassungsmauer) as the “first element of antique architecture” as well as the “primordial seed” (Urkeim); germane to the dwelling, the wall unfurling further to encompass both temple and city, drawing closer, conceivably clothing the body. § The curtain wall, as we are aware, takes its name from its enclosing and fortification of ancient citadels. Office towers, now thus
attired form a sentinel and silent chorus, lining the streets of the city further enshrouding us as a backdrop, dilated revealing a landscape, refocusing and contracted, disclosing a room, stopping down further architecture’s textile foundations illuminated. The city’s architecture, we are told, can be “appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception - or rather, by touch and sight,” though the other senses necessarily come into play. Engagement with built form cannot simply be grasped in its entirety through studied contemplation alone, habitual use too informs our understanding of it, and to a large extent even how we view it, its familiarity rendering it both preponderant and peripheral, its features registering only intermittently, in a distracted, non-concerted manner. For: § “Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts all these use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance.” § The mind, it has been suggested, is composed of two layers, like the double-face of a wall, or a costume well-lined, with an inner receptive surface, and an outer protective shield, and the concept of habit can be likewise conceived, as a surface, separating the inner life from that which lies beyond. Habit, it is said, springs from the Latin habitus, a noun conveying activity, which is derived from habere, to have or to hold, and is understood as the possession of interior qualities, a mode of being, the cultivation of mental and moral traits, which result in a constitution that confers a “power of use and enjoyment.” But habit, similarly derived, also extends to exterior features and outward appearance; to modes of apparel, to fashion and dressing, but also through in-habitation to the place of abode, an ad-dress. “To dwell,” we are told, is “a transitive verb – as in the notion of “indwelt space”: herewith an indication of the frenetic topicality concealed in habitual behaviour. It has to do with fashioning a shell for ourselves.” § Habit, too, takes on a performative role, through use and usage, customarily repeated, to the point where such action is performed unconsciously, eliciting a “mechanical” reaction, an automatic response,
the result of repetition. In our coursing through the city, on our daily journeys, liminal layers are acquired through our re-experiencing of the streets and the architecture that defines them, threads are slowly woven through quotidian re-enactment, until a garment is gradually borne, lined with memories of other places, impressed upon us by the flurry of images, unconsciously clothing our existence. Inhabiting the city, we become increasingly attired in place, already enclothed ourselves. For: § “When the scope of surface tactilism is extended, clothes, architecture, interior design, cosmetics, and the moving image appear as conterminous spaces of inhabitation. As the mutable skin of a social body, they are all part of a shared interactive experience. In defining our way of living space, they tailor our own contours. They shape our passage as moving surfaces in space and mark the traces we make along the way, for “to live is to leave traces.”"76 § “Erase the traces!”77 however, was an insistent refrain that echoed throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, a period heady with Modernist zeal which sought to dissociate itself from precedence, to disencumber itself of the weight of history, progress seemingly taking one form in the office building which emerged as a new type, a “house of work, of organisation, of clarity, of economy,”78 a reductive construction unadorned and ossified, largely colourless and indifferent, “by nature, skeletal.”79 New materials, concrete, iron and glass were lauded, “Scheerbart with his glass and the Bauhaus with its steel [...] opened up the way; [...] creat[ing] spaces in which it [was] difficult to leave traces,”80 resistance internalised, offered only by the plushness of upholstery and its textiles.81 A furtive and fugitive existence was proposed, life, its vitality diminished and depreciated, devoid of existential vestiges. Uncovered and exposed, “[r]educed to skin and bones,”82 the office building was inexorably rendered as “a jejune thing,”83 divested and revealed as inconspicuous, lack-lustred, another one among the many. And while the comportment its surfaces was acknowledged,84 the metaphoric potential of the weave was ignored, by and large, it was read, if at all, as “speculative cubage wrapped in exterior wallpaper,”85 an indiscriminate and undistinguished substitute for the woven tapestries, the grid
repeating, *ad infinitum*, self-reflexive, a *mise en abyme*, a “naked and determined materialism,” its formalist drive eschewing or ignorant of its textile origins, a mass-reproduced surface, “detache[d] from the domain of tradition.” § It is said that “[i]f the place enriches the being who is found there, the being confers on the place where it is found something of its own individuality.” Or perhaps to put it another way, we are coloured by place, dyed in the wool so to speak, but so too do we cast upon it our own hues and enliv en it, as we (the very threads of our being) interweave in between the one and the other, between here and there enclosed in place, moving in between and in certain lights, igniting. For colour that imbues the woven cloth, like place, is by nature reflexive, “encompass[ing] that on which it reflects – [...] but never fully illuminat[ing] that which it encompasses.” Place and colour are both inextricably linked and revealed in the shifting, animate and dynamic nature of the surface, whether woven, painted, knitted or built, chiasmatic in their tidal unfurlings and enfoldings, from the intimate to the architectural, place and cloth dressing, binding the body to its environment, to the landscapes and its surrounds, to the city and the buildings which compose it, establishing contexts immediately apparent, while spanning across divides, latent memories concealed within the folds, revealed and complemented in their afterimages.
See Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, p. 296. Semper was to note that the Hellenic *chiton* was linen and the Dorian, woolen. See Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, p. 197.


Here, perhaps, it is worth noting that "celt" originally meant "raiment, covering." See Frances Tolmie, *One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Llanerch Publishers, 1997), p. 148, n.*

‘*S Moch An Dia A Rinne Mi Éirigh*’ otherwise known as ‘This Morning I Have Risen Early’ in Campbell (ed.), *Hebridean Folksongs*, pp. 134-135.


For a discussion of all other aspects of *calanas* or wool-work, refer to the chapter ‘The Old Ways’, pp. 31-56, and with reference to Semper’s conceptions of dyeing, see Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, pp. 198 and 232-236.

The italicised words are the Gaelic names of the plants. See Thompson, *Harris Tweed*, pp. 32-39, and for a further discussion of dyeing refer to, Jean Fraser, *Traditional Scottish Dyes* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1995), and Vogler, *A Harris Way of Life*, pp. 18-24.

‘When they lie amongst the hadder [heather] the bright colour of their plaids shall not betray them …’ A 1582 account of Harris Tweed cited in Thompson, *Harris Tweed*, p. 21.


McEwen, *Socrates’ Ancestor*, p. 43.

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McEwen, *Socrates’ Ancestor*, p. 44. Here Bruce Nauman’s *Art MakeUp* comes to mind, wherein the artist applies consecutive layers of make-up (white, pink, green, and black) to his face and torso, literally making himself up and films himself in the making. See Bruce Nauman, *Art MakeUp* (1967-68) (New York: Electronic Arts Intermix, n.d.).

Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, p. 34.


See Benjamin, ‘Surface Effects’, p. 16.

Semper, from ‘Concerning the Formal Principles of Ornaments’, p. 91.


For a discussion of the thickness of the surface, see Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, p. 269.


Rykwert, ‘Gottfried Semper and the Conception of Style’, p. 78.

Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, p. 293.

See Mallgrave, ‘Introduction’. In Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture*, p. 24. For background on and sources of inspiration for Semper’s concept of *Bekleidung*, see, for example, Caroline A. van Eck,
Erase the traces!” is the refrain in the first poem of Bertolt Brecht’s (1898-1956) *Bruno,* refer to the Oxford English Dictionary for an elucidation of the complexities contained within the term. Benjamin, Henri Lefebvre, Semper discusses the establishment of the home in terms of the division of space, the woven surface. Sigmund Freud, ‘A Note on the Mystic Writing-Pad’. In Charles Merewether (ed.), *Elements of Architecture.* In Charles Merewether (ed.), *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel.* See Walter Benjamin, ‘One-Way Street’, quoted in Anthony Vidler, *Dead End Street: Walter Benjamin’s Lesebuch für Städtebewohner or ‘Reader for City-Dwellers*, quoted in Walter Benjamin, ‘Experience and Poverty’. In Selected Writings.

Frampton, however, suggests that Ward and Goward are derived from the term *Winden,* “to embroider.” While embroidering is textile in origin, given Semper’s interest in the enclosing nature of the wall and his appreciation of the nature of the surface, Spelman’s proposition seems all the more likely. See Spelman, *Gottfried Semper and the Profound Surface of Architecture,* pp. 202-203.

With reference to Heidegger, Parmenides, see Malpas, ‘Heidegger in Benjamin’s City’, p. 494.

See Arendt, *The Human Condition,* p. 64, n. 64.


With reference to a lecture by Semper in 1848 or 1849, see Mallgrave, ‘Introduction’. In Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture,* p. 23.


Semper discusses the establishment of the home in terms of the division of space, the woven surface separating the inner life from that which lies beyond the confines of the domicile. See Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses,* p. 11.


Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* [14, 5].


“Erase the traces!” is the refrain in the first poem of Bertolt Brecht’s (1898-1956) *Lesebuch für Städtebewohner or ‘Reader for City-Dwellers*, quoted in Walter Benjamin, ‘Experience and Poverty’. In Selected Writings:

60 Benjamin, 'Experience and Poverty', p. 734.
61 See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [I3,1], and [I5,2].
62 Rykwert, The Dancing Column, p. 382.
63 Rykwert, The Dancing Column, p. 382.
64 The curtain wall was categorised according to its surface condition, which alluded to its weave, in the 1957 'Machine Made America' special issue of Architectural Review. See Reinhold Martin, 'Atrocities. Or, Curtain Wall as Mass Medium', Perspecta, No. 32 (2001), p. 67.
65 Peter Blake, 'Slaughter on 6th Avenue', quoted in Martin, 'Atrocities', p. 68.
68 Poulet, Proustian Space, p. 28.
RITUAL
REPETITION
EVERY PROFOUND EXPERIENCE
LONGS TO BE INSATIABLE, LONGS FOR RETURN AND REPLETION
UNTIL THE END OF TIME, AND FOR THE REINSTATMENT OF AN
ORIGINAL CONDITION FROM WHICH IT SPRANG.

WALTER BENJAMIN
FOR THEM THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE IN LIFE; THEY HAVE NO DANCING, NO HELICON, NO MUSE.

ANONYMOUS
Until the early twentieth century in the Outer Hebrides, “labour and song went hand in hand; labour gave rise to song and song lightened the labour;”¹ strain giving way through immersion in the rhythm, the burden of the task at hand mitigated, its measure not in hours, but in tune.² The milking of cows, the striking of oars against the sea, the harvesting of crops, the crooning of children, and the waulking of the cloth, each form had its own repertoire,³ varying from island to island and even in their breadth, from one end to the other,⁴ each task, regardless, following the direction of habit, deiseil, the coursing of the sun.⁵ Through the waulking song in particular, a great oral tradition was perpetuated, as histories long past were given presence⁶ and were coupled with more prosaic and ribald verse, speculating on, indeed, if not celebrating life contemporary to its singers, wherein the name of the one or the other and that of their purported lover was cited in song. § Steeped in ritual the waulking was a festal affair, Thursday, the day of Columba, it is said, being the most auspicious day to undertake the task.⁷ While no definitive account or classic form of waulking, as such, exists, typical to all performances was the structure wherein one woman sang the verse, the rest participating, joining in at the chorus, allowing the lead singer to draw breath in the refrain, surging forward again renewed then in song. Several bars before the singing began, thumping heralded the tune, the preliminary beating of the table establishing a “pure rhythm […] almost hypnotic in its insistence and excitement, accumulating in its intensity to the point when […] it positively demands a song to go with it;”⁸ the tempo somatically engrained, its pulsations given form, and choreographed in the fulling of the cloth. § “The course of the web along the board describes a series of zigzags, each woman’s movements forming the letter V, of which she herself is the base, and each point being marked by the loud thud of the cloth upon the board, always in four time. At one she receives the cloth from her neighbour on the right, leaning forward and throwing it down at arm’s length; at two she draws herself upright and brings it down again immediately in front of her, twisting as she does so; at three she passes it, again at arm’s length to her neighbour on the left; and at four, once more upright, she brings her hands again in front of her, still beating
§ The movement of the body, the criss-crossing of the arms in the waulking mirrors the herringbone weave, patterns echoing across and between different modes, figures repeating, the practices of weaving also emulated in dance, the Hebridean Weaving Lilt a playful performance of its preparations and processes. As a means of commemoration, waulking, dancing and the like were collective practices and participatory, participation and imitation chiasmatically entwined, their definition founded upon interaction, an exchange mutually derived. The originary medium of imitation, we are told was the body, with language and dance its means, the “gestures of body and lips” vital in giving form to the immemorial through semblance and play, both “interfolded” and proper to the realm of art and traditional aesthetics. In ancient times, such performances were understood not as superficial impressions or meagre impersonations, but rather conveyed: § “the expression of feelings and the manifestation of experiences through movement, musical harmonies, and the rhythms of speech – an acknowledgement, through the body’s presence, of its intermediate location between Being and Becoming.” § “All true ritual, we are told, is “sung, danced and played,” the word for “play” in German, Spiel, originally meaning “dance.” With its steps and becks embodying and perpetuating cultural patterns through representation as a communal affair, the nature of an individual’s sentiments are said to be of lesser import, though “[n]either the expressive function of dance nor the emotional outlet it gives to each [...] is denied,” one and all captivated by, and indeed, at one with its impetus. For the movement itself is momentous, the weaving motion of the body, the to-ing and fro-ing a fundamental feature of play, participants losing all sense of self, freed from “the burden of taking initiative,” caught up in the activity, buoyed by a “spontaneous tendency to repetition,” the momentum a compulsive drive toward regeneration. § Ritual, feast and game are bound by this rhythm, the mood permeating each and synchronic. But it is of another time that we speak, a lapsed time and labile, falling outside of the bounds of quotidian temporality, occurring in a place marked out through performance and so differentiated, place being hallowed in
this way. In the performance of rites ordinary life, it is said, comes to a standstill and “is gleamed through,” a liminal domain emerging and established in an “atemporal instant of primordial plenitude,” experienced as a “symbolic return,” a return founded upon perdurance. For “[a]s long as it survives,” ritual, we are told, “retains its hold over the imaginations and the ways of thinking of the people who witness or practise it. […] The rite is ‘truly’ understood [only and so] long as it is practised.”

Through the intervention of ritual what returns moves toward us facilitating an encounter, an active exchange with a history that is thoroughly alive and ever-changeable, mutable and capable of being reshaped through interpretation. “Thus,” in this manner, “a potent yesterday,” we are told, “perpetually renews itself.” An event premised upon mediation, ritual, it is said, is the “reactualisation” of an act of cosmic creation, a cosmogonic feat repeated, but this repetition is never “the simple continuance of the self-identical,” synonymous with lifelessness and death, but is rather an engagement with a tradition replete with potential, “modification and innovation” inherent to it. “Repetition and recollection,” it has been suggested, are one and the same movement, driven, however, toward opposite ends, “for what is recollected has been, [and] is repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward,” ritual, the weaving betwixt and between the past and the future and taking place in the “the present of the commemorative act.”

Indeed: “what is repeated is a process of becoming, a movement of differentiation and dispersion - and what is differentiated and dispersed is nothing other than time itself. There can be no passing moment that is not already both the past and the future: the moment must be simultaneously past, present, and future in order for it to pass at all. This is why this eternal repetition does not mean "the return of the same" but rather the return of what is never simply itself. What returns is the movement through which something other is inscribed within the same which, now no longer the same, names what is always other than itself. If the eternal return therefore comes as the eternal repetition of alterity, we could say, somewhat elliptically, that this eternal return is the return of returning itself. It is the desire for things to return.”

§ For Semper, architecture subscribed
to this cycling and was understood as the “translation of ritual into tangible form,” reified and “enshrined in monuments” anchored to the soil, establishing a “physical presence,” the levity of music and dance embodied. In play and through it, architecture, along with the other arts, were to realise their primordial motive, not through imitation of the extant world but rather by falling in step with its rhythms manifesting in all manner of compositions: a building, a wreath; a scroll; or a dance, all legitimately created, concordant with its laws. § “Surrounded by a world full of wonder and forces whose laws we may divine, may wish to understand but will never decipher, that touch us only in a few fragmentary harmonies and suspend our souls in a continuous state of unresolved tension, we conjure up in play the perfection that is lacking. We make for ourselves a tiny world in which the cosmic law is evident within the strictest limits, yet complete in itself and perfect in this respect. In such play we satisfy our cosmogonic instinct.” § In accordance with this impulse, architecture as a tradition, as such, was to find its origins not in the plastic arts nor in the disciplines of science, but rather in the performing arts, once referred to as cosmic, “their laws of spatial harmony,” said to be generative and “immanently form giving.” Architecture’s practices therein were to rest “on two analogies: of the building as a body, and of the design as a re-enactment of some primitive – or [...] archetypal action.” Tradition understood in this light, it is said, operates as a form of transmission rather than as the sanctioning of mere conservation, the past grasped at in order to learn from it, not so that it might be simply replicated, but only insofar as it might be transformed, re-ordered and fashioned again. § In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, however, new means of technological reproducibility were to disengage the work of art “from its [...] dependence on ritual,” and as a consequence its embeddedness and use in place, stripped of its authenticity through reproduction, all ties seemingly severed with tradition, the body no longer regarded as a meaningful locus. “Soul, eye and hand [were thus] disjoint[ed],” the worker transformed into the labourer and deskill[ed], no longer wielding the tool but instead exercised by it, latched to the machine, his movements ordained by its “uniform and unceasing motion,”
“dislocating rhythm to which he must react, [...] each act [...] an exact repetition of the last,”
53 devoid of any alternative extemporisation or improvisation. The labouring life, as such, was inescapably subject to the “homogenous time of manufacture,”
54 unlike the product of work, of which it said, “there exists no “natural” rhythm,”
55 being born instead of necessity, a matter of mindfulness and ministration. § The abundance of objects produced by machines at an ever-quickening rates, changed the character of the artefact, the artefact, “entirely determined by the categories of means and end,” the processes and procedures engaged with in its making “com[ing] to an end in it” and being the very “means to produce this end.”
56 Fashioned by artisans or craftsmen it was premised on a model, a paradigm, which operated as both its measure and was accordingly measured by it,
57 an overarching image, a blueprint of sorts,
58 guiding the fabrication process. This image, it is said, “not only precedes” the work, but endures beyond the finished product, “surviv[ing] intact,” present to the infinite possibilities of its fabrication.
59 The potentiality of multiplication intrinsic to the artefact, as such, corresponds with a variable rhythm, one which drives a pattern of movement, each manifestation, we are told, a “precious product,” the result “of a long chain of causes similar to one another.”
60 Such multiplication stands in marked distinction, however, from the deadening repetition innate to labour, answering, as it does, to the “ever-recurrent needs of consumption”
61 and the proclivities of fashion penchantted by the masses.
62 The commodity in usurping the artefact, once-coveted and admired, however, was to “lack the worldly permanence of a piece of work,” free enterprise diminishing the “difference between use and consumption, between the relative durability of use objects, [in] the swift coming and going of consumer goods.”
63 § Works of art
64 were similarly subject to this change, having always been reproducible,
65 this potential lying dormant and always inherent to the art-work itself, for “[m]anmade artefacts,” it is said, “could always be imitated by men.”
66 In the early years of the twentieth century, however, the internal movement native to the art-work, the work already at work within it
67 accelerated with alacritous speed, the sheer intensity and prodigiousness of
replication compounding. The photographic apparatus and its processes were emblematic of the transformation, new techniques of production progressively shaping and controlling the very make-up of the art-work, and by extension, our way of living.68 “For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction,” we are told, “photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions,”69 its powers by and large transferred by the “touch of a finger,”70 the focus now concentrated on the relationship between lens and eye,71 the surface of the print seemingly no longer handled in the manner of the painted surface, “touch[ed] and retouch[ed]”72 by the brush, an extension of the arm, mind, and eyes. § Eschewing history and any sense of provenance, the significance of the artwork as a consequence, was revolutionised, its value determined by the sheer spectacle of exhibition and pecuniary worth alone.73 While it was said that “the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility,”74 the potential for imitation was capable of manifesting, however, only when an “indifference to history”75 was to wane, opening up to and acknowledging the very possibility of transmission. For “what is lost in the withering of semblance”76 of works of art as a result of the repetition of “relationships that already exist,”77 we are told, is “gain[ed] in the scope [or room] for play [Spiel-Raum],”78 the promise of which can never be entirely exhausted,79 by enabling media used for reproductive objectives to “create new relationships,”80 in being put to productive ends. § Tradition, we might recall, is only realised through its transmission, with “[t]he phenomenon of translation,” it is said, “provid[ing] a model for the real nature of”81 it. For translation is the very play of languages, in poetry’s reinscription we are told that “a poet’s meaning, progresses from words to words, metamorphosed from one language into another,”82 but this sense of relocation can never be absolute, for what reaches the new domain is “that element in a translation which goes beyond transmittal of subject matter.”83 Movement is nonetheless implicit within the concept, the origins of translation once pertaining to the passage from life to death, and so to redemption too,84 its processes integral and essential to becoming and change.85 Imbued with a
sense of physicality, translation, it is said, conveys “a change of condition or site,” founded upon a relationship that suggests a “geography of action,” modifications and adjustments occurring across a domain, a difference established, “the sense of the physical or geographical separateness [...] still implicit and potent” all the same. Through translation, a sense of transfer, of handling is embedded and retained, for like tradition, something is handed on or down, in the conveyance of “something [meaningful] from one person, [place], or condition,” to the next, and so on, thereafter, establishing a chain of exchanges, a lineage emerging and binding. § In giving form to the expression of tradition, in its continual translation realised through semblance and play, the presence of the hand is there, it is said, “making its presence known,” for “the hand touches the world itself, feels it, lays hold of it,” its dexterous manipulations enabling knowledge to be multiplied, the apprehension of the world by touch a remedy, providing a means through which the recovery of experience is disclosed and capable again of being conveyed. For, “[s]alvation,” we are told, “includes [a] firm, [yet] apparently brut grip,” grasping, taking hold of what lies before us. § The essence of the hand, however, can never be determined by its capacity to grasp, its significance lying in the fact that “[e]very motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element.” Indeed, “every contact [...] raises the question of an answer [and] the skin is asked to reply,” thinking and feeling, the very work of the hand, in alignment with psyche and eye. The hands together, we are told, are “instruments of both poetry and industry,” their contact and conduct “placing us “in the midst of the world,” indeed, in and amongst things. For “in taking a few shreds of the world,” another world is thus able to be fashioned and contrived, matter and material remoulded and reshaped, brought forth and in doing so bringing forth the place in which they are divined. § In a shed in the Outer Hebrides lie photographs of Melbourne’s curtain walls, once images in their architects’ minds, translated into drawings, and translated again, reified in built form, only to be later inscribed onto a
light-fixing substrate, waiting to be translated into Harris Tweed, their surfaces traced over, grids drawn up to scale for the making. Ossified and skeletal the stripped and naked language of the curtain wall, it has been suggested, can conceivably only be redeemed when its language is transposed to another,\textsuperscript{103} its glazing glossed over and given a sense of redress, for "the language of the translation," we are told, is akin to dressing, an envelopment enshrouding "its content like a royal robe," a re-covering replete "with ample folds,"\textsuperscript{104} the interior of a camera once said to be similarly arrayed in a form of riddle.\textsuperscript{105} § The fundamental purpose of translation, like remediation, "the representation of one medium by another,"\textsuperscript{106} we are told, lies in the expression of the "reciprocal relationships between languages," for, "languages are not strangers to one another, but are, […] interrelated in what they want to express."\textsuperscript{107} But it is not enough to simply utter, write, or inscribe, nor to produce or to make by any other means, for we must poetically dwell,\textsuperscript{108} fashioning a shell\textsuperscript{109} composed of language,\textsuperscript{110} a text, whether woven of words, wool or stone, laden with impressions which bear the very marks of our being, and are given form in the weaving, in traversing "the expanse of the leeway between earth and sky,"\textsuperscript{111} for "only then," it is said, "can we build."\textsuperscript{112}
The Gaelic scholar, Reverend Kenneth MacLeod discussing the practice of waulking, quoted in Thompson, *Harris Tweed*, p. 171.

See Thompson, *Harris Tweed*, p. 171.

See Frances Telfnie, *One Hundred and Five Songs of Occupation from the Western Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Llanerch Publishers, 1997).


Hvattum, *Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism*, p. 66.

For a discussion of the liminal nature of ritual see Casey, *Remembering*, pp. 238-239.


Cadava, *'Sternphotographie*', pp. 15-16.


Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, p. 27.
58 See Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 104.
64 Arendt notes with interest that “the nouns “work,” oeuvre, [and] Werk, show an increasing tendency to be used for works of art.” Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 81, n. 5.
72 Shiff, ‘Handling Shocks’, p. 93. Photographs, of course, since shortly after photography’s inception, have been retouched and manipulated, but the mark of the hand is often imperceptible.
78 Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art’ (2nd Version), p. 48, n. 23. SpielRaum can literally be translated as the room for dance or play, the play or dance room.
86 Sontag, ‘Being Translated’, p. 15.
87 Sontag, ‘Being Translated’, p. 15.
89 Sontag, ‘Being Translated’, p. 15.

See Focillon, 'In Praise of Hands', p. 68.


Here Leslie quotes and translates Benjamin, see Leslie, 'Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft', p. 6. Also refer to Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [N9a,3].


Focillon, 'In Praise of Hands', p. 70.

With reference to Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, see Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 236.

See Focillon, 'In Praise of Hands', pp. 69.


See Gadamer, 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', p. 49.

Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', p. 75.

With reference to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, New Essays on Human Understanding, see Anthony Vidler, 'Skin and Bones: Folded Forms from Leibniz to Lynn'. In Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), p. 221.


Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', p. 72.

See Martin Heidegger, '...Poetically Man Dwells...', referred to in Malpas, Heidegger's Topology, p. 257.

See Benjamin, The Arcades Project, [I4,4].

As Heidegger notes: '[l]anguage is the precinct [templum], i.e., the house of being.' Martin Heidegger, 'Why Poets!', quoted in Malpas, Heidegger's Topology, p. 264.


TEXT
MEMORY
SHADOW SOLAR INK
HANDWRITING OF MY LIGHT.

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
ENVIRONMENT AND SETTING STILL HAVE A GREAT INFLUENCE UPON ONE; THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THEM WHICH STAMPS ITSELF FIRMLY AND DEEPLY IN THE MEMORY, OR RATHER UPON THE WHOLE SOUL, AND WHICH IS THEREFORE NEVER FORGOTTEN.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD
The buildings of the ancient Greeks, we are told, like those of other ancient civilizations, were once brightly coloured, stuccoes tinted with mineral ochres, ground stones, and various dyes coated their revetments; their surfaces figuring now though, as a tabula rasa and like the mystic writing pad, bear traces not only of colour but of lettering, inscriptions too, integral to their role in the crafting of civic space, the concept of memory central to it. § In the sixth century B.C., the physical act of writing in ancient Greece was performed as a continuous flow, from left-to-right then right-to-left, and so on, being read also in this way. Its passage was likened to that of an ox ploughing a field, from whence it gets its name, boustrophédon. While meaning and sense were inscribed so too was another pattern, that of the figuring of the text, its skew acknowledging the change in course, evidenced in the slant of the inscription of alternate lines, bequeathing upon the script an aesthetic dimension, beyond the hand, a grain. This alt was to persist, even when this style of writing was replaced by the left-to-right standard some hundred years later, the inflection of the script now regular, the pattern instead accentuated by colour; black and red ink marking every other line. It has been said that the Greeks did not borrow this form of writing from any other culture, but perhaps, it might be suggested, its inspiration was closer to hand, drawing from the plying of the loom, that symbol of hearth and home. § In the Outer Hebrides, not the isolated weaver’s hut, but villages resounded not so long ago with the clicketty-clack of the looms. The shuttle passing over and under in the shed of the loom created by the lifting and lowering of the heddles enabled the weft to amount in a to-and-fro fashion, writing, so to speak, the surface of the cloth, the herringbone pattern, with the one colour in the warp and the other in the weft, viewed across the loom rather than from its seat, reminiscent of the pre-classical Greek text. § The web of cloth, the Harris Tweed, is conceivably doubly woven, if not more so, sometimes crooned over by the weaver, and not so long ago, incanted over in the waulking, its songs part of a great oral tradition, whose composer is long since forgotten, the singers’ roles recalling that of the ancient Greek
In the Hebrides there is no handbook of weaving, no series of instructions written down, no standard way prescribed in text of its making. Harris Tweed is steeped in oral tradition; children playing around the loom soon learned to wind bobbins, watching as their mother or father peddled the loom, assisting with other tasks as they grew, imbibing its laws, taking note of its patterns, though not in a studied way, but rather amidst the distraction of daily activities and the changing light, experienced in the shifting colours of land, sea and sky. The tweed is inextricably bound with the Gaelic language, the one re-enforcing the other, the cloth still somehow resonant with the resounding rhythms of the waulking, ancient narratives impressed upon it by the chevronned interweaving of hands in its finishing. For until eighteenth century, Gaelic was by and large not written, and when poems were thence collected and transcribed, it was the chorus of vocables of the air to which they were sung, that proved to be more powerful, acting as a mnemonic, orality and memory inextricably bound, performance and participation “keeping an entire body of collectively held lore alive.” Stories thus accompanied the hand at work, history and lore, spoken, sung and heard, accent betraying the place of one’s birth. For, “[o]nly the spoken word,” it is said, “is not sealed, folded, occult or undemocratic.” The transcribing of verses and poems, a movement from oral accounts and recitations to written speech, signalled, we are told, “a shift” from the aural realm to the domain of visual space, the relationship established between printing and writing, containing within it at its outset, nonetheless, the residues of orality. A surface or substrate was necessarily required, and on this basis the image, then, whether etched out in lettering or figured as any kind gained pre-eminence as memory’s agent, whether triggered by sight, touch, scent, taste or sound, for all amounted to image, the image memory’s “aides-mémoire” and means of mediation. The invention of writing along with the secularisation of memory, it is said, gave rise in the ancient world to mnemotechnology, the art of memory, or place system as it is sometimes
called, a method founded upon “two sets of images,” their layout instigating correlations between image and place, conceived of as an “elective affinity,” the images adherent, nonetheless, the one to the other, “taken to heart” and fixed in mind. The first set of images, a series of places, loci in Latin, or topoi in Greek, we are told, were serially arranged, providing the background, a structure reminiscent of a street; the second comprised of another set bound to them, images of words (memoriae verborum) or things (memoriae rerum) symbolising the points of a speech later to be recalled and declaimed, the deployment of these techniques famously portrayed in the tale of Simonides (c. 556-468 B.C.), he who once declared that “the word is a picture of things.” § This public intellectual, the first purported, a poet who was paid, was once commissioned to recite a lyric poem during the course of a feast in honour of a Thessalian prince. This paean was excessively devoted, or so his patron thought, to the praise of the godly brothers Kastor and Polydeuces, together strangely graced, so much so that he paid him only half his agreed fee, suggesting that its balance be paid by them. Answering a call to the door to address the Dioskouroi, or so it would later seem, he excused himself from the feast, arriving to find no one there, the roof of the banquet hall caving in on his absence. His fellow diners were crushed and killed, their bodies mangled and malformed, so much so that their identities were no longer discernable. Simonides remembering each guest and their seating, enabled the bodies of the deceased to be returned to their respective families for proper burial and mourning. As a result of this tragedy, we are told, he was credited with devising the “art of memory” or the art of recollection, as it might well be called, premised on the remembrance of images and their order, the distinction between places and the images associated with them also ascribed to him. Such recall, then, was understood to be not a passive act but active, premised upon rehearsal and retrieval. § Memoria as an art was further developed during the course of antiquity, with significant developments occurring subsequently in the first century B.C. and the following A.D., when its practices were referred to and coined
as "artificial." Rhetoric then, we are told, was the "fashioning [of] a good speech," reaching its apotheosis during the Middle Ages, when it was the soul that was furnished, while giving shape to civic life through the exercise of jurisprudence, later to assume an occult dimension during the course of the Renaissance, "its thrust diverted, definitively if not totally, from oral performance to [the practices of] writing" with the onset of the Age of Romanticism. Memory, moreover its art, we are told, was thus understood and deployed as a device for the "invention and retention of knowledge," the recounting of it, whether planned or at a whim, an integral facet of rhetoric, its "noblest" aspect, and, as some have said, the very basis of it. § During the Middle Ages, the superimposition of images, the one upon the other, was reliant on two models, memory as a book and as an architectural edifice, pages or mise-en-scènes composed, surfaces binding and bound (FIG. 122), "recollection occurring consciously [nonetheless] through association." Each archetype, it is said, was to draw from different texts, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* respectively, these two versions however, were said to be by no means "radically separate." § Since ancient times, memory has been conceived of as a surface, a wax tablet inscribed, or alternatively impressed upon with a seal, a mark incising and entombing a sign, place corresponding to the waxen block, the letters or glyphs to the images, these marks capable of being erased when no longer relevant or useful, but the tablet like place remaining fast and enduring. Indeed, it was said that, “memory ... is in a manner the twin sister of written speech [litteratura] and is completely similar [persimilis] to it, [though] in a dissimilar medium. For just as script consists of marks indicating letters and of the material on which those marks are imprinted, so the structure of memory, like a wax tablet, employs places [loci] and in these gathers together [collocat] images like letters.” § Quintilian's memory system, a legatee of the *tabula memoriae* tradition was premised upon the “act of reading,” with his prescriptions adhering to the page and nearly concomitant with the emergence of the codex, precursor to the book, competing with and soon to usurp antiquity’s scrolls of parchment and papyrus.
Stipulating that the same manuscript be used, the text was to be columniated and divided, with words or images placed in the margins of the page in order to prompt the memory in the reclamation and pronouncement of a “text’s content and meaning.” § Rhetoric, it has been suggested, however, owes its origins to architecture more so than to the book, “the image of a building, both in plan and volume,” said to be the very “place or topos of any discourse,” the thēsaurus or “storage room,” a “treasure-house of found things,” as it has been variously called, a vital image and edifying, one amongst many engaged by the learned mind, the formulation of such images encapsulating both the place and the ordered manner of a speech or knowledge’s archiving. § The Ad Herennium, written in the first century B.C. so called in honour of the “Roman citizen to whom it was dedicated,” provided “the main source of the tradition,” and was conceived of as an “inner writing,” indeed, it might be said, a design. For the construction of a mental edifice, its premise, whether real or imaginary, we are told, was to take the form of “a house, an inter-columnar space, a recess, an arch, or the like,” though which a series of interconnected architectural spaces was to be composed, these “places [...] designed to receive whatever memory object [was] to be housed by them.” Every route through the edifice was to be committed to memory and known by heart prior to the imposition of images, their depositing signalling “what is to be remembered along the way, so that upon return, a journey undertaken through it enabled the retrieval of the information so placed, its recovery easily facilitated. § This guide prepared for the student of rhetoric, it is said, was a highly regulated affair, conditions specified at length and in some detail for both images and places in order to achieve the desired effect: correspondences clinging and lastingly so in memory. § In brief, it is said, that the places or backgrounds, as they are otherwise called, must be “complete and conspicuous,” scenes within themselves, and largely vacated of human presence so as not to “distract[] from the memory figures placed within them.” These backdrops, further, “must [also] be varied, of medium size [and] well-li[t],” their
arrangement sequential and set, with their positioning occurring at regular intervals. Images, by comparison, were to be conceived of as “a figure, [a] mark, or [a] portrait,” corresponding to what one must remember, operating as agents, such pictures “simultaneously striking, emotionally moving, and active,” while always involving the placement of human figures. § Performative, the practice of memory, as such, was likened to “a mental journey” a venture undertaken “through [a] series of rooms or places, [each] containing [a] striking tableau,” conveying “incidents of particular violence, ugliness, or ridiculousness or, alternatively,” portraying events of significance, arresting in their “nobility or beauty.” These sorties, it could be said, were episodic, their plotting reminiscent of the dramatic structure of a play, composed of acts with scenes contained within, “each scene serv[ing] to recall a […] concept or word,” each act embodying a broader mood or theme. The settings, as such, were to take on a resemblance to a stage in both “the local and theatrical sense of the word,” their spectacular nature calling to mind the theatre’s ancient association with theoria, the theatre itself taking on a leading role during the course of the Renaissance. § The design of the background, it is said, was of special note in the place-system, whether a page or a wall, the grid a guiding principle, this “means for extension and subdivision” gaining prominence during the Middle Ages, when “memory [was] treated as though it were a flat area and divided linearly,” like an architectural drawing composed or the format of a page diagrammed and delineated, these surfaces reminiscent of raiments, landscapes and fabrics. For, “the flat, patterned backgrounds,” we are told, were: §“like tiles and shingles, or tapestries, or a field changing its colour and texture through the various seasons, [and] are located in relation to one another like small rooms (cellae) in a rectangular grid, pages (as it were) of the book of memory. The active images placed in these locations inhabit a shallow stage without much distance imagined between fore- and background.” In the twelfth century, it is said, this over-arching grid system was dimensionalised acquiring a more pronounced depth of field, the “images part of a larger structure,” placed within a church or cloister, the
revival of monumental art then coextensive with a renewed interest in the Herennian model. “A new relationship between architecture and images,” we are told, “emerged,” the sculptural programmes of Romanesque period and their transition to the Gothic, advancing and endorsing “a newly active [...] architectural setting,”75 developments in the arts of memory coincident with transformations in the concept of place, affecting, it is said, the nature of painting in Italy in the late thirteenth century.76 §For by the end of the thirteenth century, the monumental art of the Gothic period was supplanted by the fresco, “memoria and renovatioRomae” combining;27 the architecture durable, the images placed within them and lining their walls more ephemeral, these surfaces whitewashed and erased when the message was no longer serving, “the difference between stable memory loci and transient memory images”78 it is said, accordingly re-enacted. Prefigured in the duecento by pronounced links to antiquity in Rome, the deployment of the art of memory in religious practices continued to prevail, further influencing the nature of public images, patrons and painters participants in both realms, the mix of civic and Christian art demanding it. The array of narrative bands which came to adorn public and religious buildings in the trecento thus recalled a strange mix of “Roman and early Christian [painted] compositional schemes”79 and the tenets of Gothic monumental sculpture, their strapping revealing “a succession of rectangles and squares display[ing] discrete episodes, [...] or concepts,”80 within a larger edifice, their organisation conceivably varied, but always in accordance with the Herennian scheme. § These frames we are told, were open and receptive, each with a distinct scene encased within, housed in a Raumkasten, a “local box,”81 reminiscent of a conditorium,82 as some have called it, the setting adorned with figures, with architecture drawn from the contemporary urban environment, the architecture, however, repousséed,83 pushed back while pulling the eye in(FIGS. 123-124), these buildings not to scale nor in accord with a unified point of view, the relationship between foreground and background contracted, “the construction of place,” its
staging “catalys[ing] [a] new [kind of] pictorial” order, “a spacious place [...] represented within the pictorial field” though “not identical with it.” The story contained within these surrounds, we are told, was thus able to unfold not in accordance with a single point of view, the arrangement, nonetheless, enabling the viewer also enclosed to discern the figures contained therein, further distinguishing between the different places also bounded in a play between surfaces: the city, its architecture and its scenic renditions. § Spaciousness, it is said, is a condition of narrative, a feature of its structure, the interplay between depth and volume in memoria’s scenes enabling the story to take place, the nature of the epic tale, in distinction from the climactic linear plot, also composed in this manner, a series of “boxes within boxes created by thematic recurrences.” Memory, conceived of as a “nesting,” recalls this structure, happenings occurring long ago circumscribed by larger occasions, as places are similarly situated amidst broader domains, the “method of the loci,” memory’s art, similarly arrayed, appropriating this patterning. A sense of passage, of permeability, nonetheless, is necessary for the movement in between, “spacing” and “imaging” [...] the “media” of memory, such means amassing meaning only when emplaced. § “To portray a city,” one’s own city, to tell its story, it is said, “a native must have other deeper motives – motives of one who travels into the past instead of into the distance. A native’s book about his city will always be related to memoirs; the writer has not spent his childhood there in vain.” Such “superficial inducements” are, however, a call to venture not only into the distance but into the past as well, “for without [such] distance[s] there can be no description, except that of mere reportage.” § In wanderings through the streets of Melbourne, another landscape was disclosed, the consequences of a tarrying seemingly in step with “the footsteps of a hermetic tradition,” “an archaeology of memory,” unearthed, not from the trodden bitumen and bluestone, but dislodged from the very drapery replete and adorning its walls. § The camera, it is said, is a “metaphorical tomb,” a little box, a prosthetic room obscured and on occasion illuminated, the camera’s own
internal curtaining reflecting that of an urban interior, its lineillumining architecture’s textile origins and in doing so, bringing backgrounds to the fore, reverberations felt in these chequered “sites of encounter,” oscillating between curtain wall and Harris Tweed, the recordings of these appearances, a script of light, “encumber[ing] [the body] with innumerable negatives,” a lapse in time, a certain distancing, necessary for their development. For in these images, “[m]emory surfaces” as “traces of a mnemonics forgotten,” still legible when brought to light, revealing not transient figures familiar or otherwise, nor any other cipher, but rather the very places of the showing, screens revealed, scriniaexposed, their surfaces once again receptive through their photographic disinterment. §“[T]he city,” we are told, “is the artisan of […] "hidden […] interweavings,” weaving a fabric out of the threads of our existence, strands of memories composed, “remembrance […] the woof […] forgetting the weft,” epiphanies an unveiling, the perdurance of place disclosed. But it is only in the movement from place to place, it is said, that the fleeting gift of sentience is bestowed.

2 See Freud, 'A Note on the Mystic Writing-Pad', p. 22.


4 Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, p. 59.


6 This is an oft-recounted phenomenon, this story told to me on numerous occasions when speaking to people from the Scottish-Gaelic Society of Victoria who grew up in the Outer Hebrides, and by various people on my visits to the Isles of Harris and Lewis.

7 See Vogler, *A Harris Way of Life*, p. 31


11 See Campbell (ed.), *Hebridean Folksongs*, pp. 236-237

12 See Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 10

13 Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, pp. 8-10. 


23 Antoine, 'Memory, Places and Spatial Invention', p. 18.


25 See Freud, 'A Note on the Mystic Writing-Pad', p. 22.


29 This is an oft-recounted phenomenon, this story told to me on numerous occasions when speaking to people from the Scottish-Gaelic Society of Victoria who grew up in the Outer Hebrides, and by various people on my visits to the Isles of Harris and Lewis.

30 See Vogler, *A Harris Way of Life*, p. 31


32 Former C.E.O. of the Harris Tweed Authority, Ian Angus MacKenzie in a radio documentary stressed the interrelationship between Harris Tweed and the Gaelic language in, *The Battle of the Tweed*, pres. Lesley Campbell and prod. Peter McManus (Glasgow: BBC4, 06 February 2009).


34 See Campbell (ed.), *Hebridean Folksongs*, pp. 236-237

35 See Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 10

36 Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, pp. 8-10. 


46 Antoine, 'Memory, Places and Spatial Invention', p. 18.

44 See Ad Herennium, III, xix, 31, referred to in McEwen, ‘Housing Fame’, p. 15.
45 Cicero, Partitiones senatóriae, quoted in Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 16.
46 For a further discussion of the tabula memoriae tradition, see, for example, Carruthers, The Book of Memory, pp. 16-32.
47 See Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
49 With reference to the Ad Herennium, iii, xvi, 28, see Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 34.
50 See Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 33.
51 See Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
53 See Ad Herennium, III, xix, 32.
54 Ad Herennium, iii, xvi, 29.
56 See Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
58 See Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
59 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
60 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
61 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
62 See Ad Herennium, III, xvi, 30.
63 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
64 Ad Herennium, iii, xvi, 29.
65 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
66 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
67 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
68 See Ad Herennium, III, xviii, 31.
69 With reference to the Ad Herennium, see Antoine, ‘Memory, Places and Spatial Invention’, p. 18.
70 For a discussion of this relationship see, for example, Rodolphe Gasché, ‘Theatrum Theoreticum’. In The Honour of Thinking (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 188-208. For a discussion of theatres as models, see for example, Yates, The Art of Memory, pp. 135-174 and pp. 310-329.
71 Leatherbarrow, The Roots of Architectural Invention, p. 15.
72 See Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 129.
73 See Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 129.
81 Antoine appropriates the term Raumkästen, “local boxes” from the art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), but his application differs significantly. See Antoine, ‘Memory, Place and Spatial Invention’, p. 20, and p. 20 n. 5.
82 See Carruthers, The Book of Memory, p. 129.
84 Antoine, ‘Memory, Place and Spatial Invention’, p. 20.
85 Antoine, ‘Memory, Place and Spatial Invention’, p. 20.
86 See Antoine, ‘Memory, Place and Spatial Invention’, p. 21.
88 See Malpas, Place and Experience, pp. 101-106.
89 See Malpas, Place and Experience, p. 106.


As Leslie notes: "The German word for “in the earth” is *Erdinnern* which is very close to the word *erinnern*, to remember." Leslie, ‘Souvenirs and Forgetting’, p. 108, n. 5.


Haverkamp, ‘Ghost Machine or Embedded Intelligence’, p. 10.

Haverkamp, ‘The Scene of Memory’, p. 41.


ON
CLOSING
WHAT IS THE MATERIAL AND SUBJECT MATTER OF ALL ARTISTIC ENDEAVOUR? I BELIEVE IT IS MAN IN ALL HIS RELATIONS AND CONNECTIONS TO THE WORLD.

GOTTFRIED SEMPER
AT SUCH MOMENTS IT SEEMS TO ME I SEE WHY THESE IMAGES EXERT SUCH A POWERFUL FASCINATION OVER THE MIND; I SEEM TO DETECT THE UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THE UNWEARYING AND IRRATIONAL ZEAL THAT MAKES MAN GIVE A MEANING TO ALL APPEARANCES DEVOID OF IT, TO LOOK FOR PARALLELS EVERYWHERE, AND TO CREATE THEM WHERE THEY DO NOT Already EXIST. I SEE THE ORIGIN OF THE IRRESISTIBLE ATTRACTION OF METAPHOR AND ANALOGY, THE EXPLANATION OF OUR STRANGE AND PERMANENT NEED TO FIND SIMILARITIES IN THINGS. I CAN SCARCELY REFRAIN FROM SUSPECTING SOME ANCIENT, DIFFUSED MAGNETISM; A CALL FROM THE CENTRE OF THINGS; A DIM, ALMOST LOST MEMORY, OR PERHAPS A PRESENTIMENT [...] OF A UNIVERSAL SYNTAX.

ROGER CAILOIS
It is said, that “only in visibly impressing [a] path into the surface of the earth [are] places objectively connected,”¹ but this, of course, is not the only way of journeying. Like Walter Benjamin whose history of photography relied on travels across collections of images bound,² other excursions have here ensued, marking paths across photographs, descendents of those heliographs once paved in bitumen,³ from architecture to textile realms once unknown, to-ing and fro-ing across plates of captured light, charting traces in-between, further to be lured again to the very place, the situatedness of the cloth and its making, to witness the shuttle’s course across the loom, to hear again the chant of the waulking, to make friends, and to return with tweeds and more images, mediators and mementos of the experience: surface-appearings. § Walking, “to go about,” we are told, originates from waulking, the fulling and thickening of the cloth, the cloth having been cut from the loom, in need of finishing, so that it may be tailored and worn. To walk, it is said, refers to the Old English, wealcan, “to roll” or “to toss,” and the Old High German, waltan, “to full” or “to cudgel,” a lineage which suggests that “to walk” derives from “waulking,” and not the other way round.⁴ Waulking transforms the tweed cut from the loom into cloth that is wearable, and in walking the streets or alternatively the moors and mountainsides, or shorelines and coves, the body it is said, “bring[s] forth places,”⁵ lived places, experienced in and through their traversal, the body and its surrounds enlivened through motility. Experiences such as those revealed through the act of walking, are, it is said, “born of wisdom, and practical knowledge,”⁶ and in German experience is designated by the term Erfahrung, its foundation explicit in fahren, the word for travel.⁷ Benjamin once noted that an old German proverb stated that the traveller had stories to tell,⁸ and nowadays, such tales are often accompanied by photographs, an album of sorts to share and to show, containing a series of aspects, coinciding, and at times, overlapping, which seek to enrich the telling, lending a certain cohesiveness to the whole. And so for now, my story is told, but what are we to make of this journey and the accounts and images here relayed? § Perhaps, we
might surmise, it was only in the placing of photographs, an image of a curtain wall and a swatch of Harris Tweed, the one beside the other, that this story was able to come to light, images juxtaposed, their surfaces so arrayed in such a way as to allow each to “come into focus,” the one in the other, both behelden and held in exquisite tension, equipoised. These adjacencies were manipulated, the images handled, as much by the hands, if not more so by the eyes, their iridescent touch exposing seemingly happenstance connections, latent images lying in wait, covalencies developing over time. For in a web woven according to saccadic rhythms, reading between the images, across the grain and amidst the lines, other images appeared, “loosened and lure[d] [...] from their familiar context[s],” drawn nigh and similarly arranged, a concatenation of associations, image-worlds, materialising. § The photograph, we are told, is an “image that is always traversed by the “thesis of existence,”” and though sundered and sequestered from the different times and places of their taking, the arrangement of these images, nonetheless, exposed a unity and plurality at play, a fabric of sense emerging, the result of recontextualisations, new emplacements, and various coursings in between. The reading of images, we might recall, was once considered an endangered art and is still conceivably so, its demise foreshadowed in a prophecy which claimed that the illiteracy of the future would pertain to photography even more so than to writing. “Reading with understanding,” however, it is said, “is always a kind of reproduction, [a] performance, [an] interpretation,” and so in part here, an attempt has been made to give the reading of images some sense of redress, foregrounding this practice as a means of passage, a form of access. For in the taking of photographs, in their reading and the subsequent writings, thinking and weaving the while, what has been revealed as foremost, and has been disclosed and made known again and again, is the very interconnectedness of things, of their entwinement, presented in the intermittent manifestations of surfaces and the multitudinous patternations lying immanent amongst and between things. For, “the poet was right,” we are told, “when he
spoke of the “mysterious threads” which are broken by life. But the truth, even more, is that life is perpetually weaving fresh threads which link one individual and one event to another, and that these threads are crossed and recrossed, doubled and redoubled to thicken the web, so that between any slightest point of our past and all the others, a rich network of memories gives an almost infinite variety of communicating paths to choose from." § In the forays here undertaken, in the study of surfaces and their photographic mediation, what has emerged is conceivably that which appears and appears to have waned, only to fleetingly recur again, reflected in the relationship between the curtain wall and Harris Tweed, calling us to consider how we might come to view differently the surfaces of the city and their means of fabrication, while acknowledging the seemingly forgotten, or at least overlooked legacy of a time-honoured textile, Harris Tweed. In considering the embedded nature of Hebridean check counterpoised with the dispersed and disconnected qualities of the curtain wall, the nature of place and its surfacing has naturally arisen, a fabric spanning the in-between and partaken of, revealing the very enigma of place, of one’s often unspoken communication with another, and with others, a tacit network in operation disclosed, “each place, each name, holding [within] a secret history,” even so. § Facilitated by photography and the various passages it has forged, the significance of metaphor has also increasingly come to the fore, this trope “originating in the belief that the world is built up of correspondences.” And the task that lies before us, it would seem, is to be “[o]pen [to those] confidences […] being made every day,” to see them, engaging with them without any sense of “prejudice or restraint.” For, it is said that “there cannot be any architecture without metaphor,” nor anything else which is truly meaning-full besides, without a bridge availed, one which enables us “to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth, […] unseen” yet always abiding. § “[T]he very nature of appearance,” we are told, is “to reveal and to conceal,” and while this study’s questioning and rejoinders have been revealed in the working through, a number of other issues have, nonetheless, been purposely left aside, kept under wraps.
so to speak, that are worthy of consideration too. And these pertain largely to how this research might be applied: how architects, artists and designers might gain from this study and put it to use; how a return to the textile nature of the surface, architectural or conceivably otherwise, might reinvest their designs with a more meaningful and context-driven approach; how it might also activate the unforeseen potential of Harris Tweed; how the weavers’ knowledge of colour and pattern might be otherwise engaged with and brought into play; calling into question how else might the cloth be deployed, and how traditional forms of knowledge might be further validated and learned from, while also being supported, invested in and revitalised at the same time. § It has always been my intention following the installation of *Urban Fabric: Greige* to have these images of curtain walls translated into Harris Tweed, and to invite various Melbourne art, architecture, craft and design practitioners to engage with the surfaces of their city refashioning it anew, a community gathered in order to celebrate the role of the crafts in the design and fabrication of the metropolis while giving voice to the *clo mor* and its various traditions. And this quest continues, for it was once said, that “our capacity to preserve and maintain, the capacity that supports human culture, rests in turn upon the fact that we must always order anew what threatens to dissolve before us.”²³ Or perhaps to put it another way, we might say, that the task of finishing is never finished.²⁴
5 Casey, The Fate of Place, p. 236.
8 See Benjamin, ‘The Storyteller’, p. 84.
9 Carson, Economy of the Unlost, p. viii.
10 For a discussion of the nature of iridescence in relationship to being, see Malpas, Heidegger’s Topology, pp. 249-250.
12 With reference to Schaeffer, L’Image Précaire, see Lang, ‘The Photographer’s Hand’, p. 36.
15 For a discussion of the relationship between weaving and thinking, see Arendt, The Life of the Mind, p. 88.
20 Rykwert, The Dancing Column, p. 383.
22 With reference to Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, see Arendt, The Life of the Mind, p. 54, emphasis in Arendt.
24 See Leatherbarrow, The Roots of Architectural Invention, p. 221.
BOOKS
EPHEMERA
SO I HAVE ERECTED [A] DWELLING, WITH BOOKS AS THE BUILDING STONES, BEFORE YOU.

WALTER BENJAMIN
AND, LATER, THE GLASSED-IN SPOT FACING MY SEAT AT THE [LIBRARY]. CHARMED CIRCLE INVIOLATE, VIRGIN TERRAIN FOR THE SOLES OF FIGURES I CONJURED.

WALTER BENJAMIN
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