Acknowledgments:
I would like to give thanks to my parents for their encourage-
ment, unconditional support and love. Also to my great
editors, Penelope McGill and Anne Fildley, to all of the
McGill family, Penny, my partner Edwin, Chris and Kinuko
for their loving support. And lastly to my supervisors,
Rosalea Moncettla and Sue-Anne Ware.

Declaration:
I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been
made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not
been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for
any other academic award; the content of the thesis 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.

Ritsuko Katsumoto
May 31 2009
Void Scapes - the creative process of generating space where one can retreat and contemplate

CONTENTS
INTRODUCTION:
1.1 Research objectives
1.2 What is Void Scapes? Conceptual Framework of Research
1.3 Visual Key Elements of Void Scapes
1.4 Layers of Void Scapes
1.5 Design Site: Park Street. The intention of design study

ENVIRONMENT:
2.0 ENVIRONMENT: Exteriority of Void Scapes and Context.
2.1 Visual Contrast
   Historical Landscapes of Contemplation and Environment
   Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation and Environment
2.3 Design Studies: Existing Condition of Park Street, Melbourne
2.4 Design Studies: Creating Exteriority : Rendered Images
   Rendered Images Design 1.0
   Rendered Images Design 2.0
2.5 Conclusion of Chapter 2

AESTHETICS:
3.0 AESTHETICS: interiority of Void Scapes
3.1 Active Absent Space: Intentional Empty Space between objects
3.2 Minimal Materiality
3.3 Horizontally Designed Space
   Historical Landscapes of Contemplation and Aesthetics
   Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation and Aesthetics
3.4 Design Studies, Park Street
3.5 Conclusion of Chapter 3

EMBODIMENT WITH SPACE:
4.0 EMBODIMENT WITH SPACE: Awareness of time and distance
4.1 Spatial Sequences: Dimension of Time: Perception
4.2 Bodily Movement: Dimension of Distance
   Historical Landscapes of Contemplation and Embodiment of Space
   Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation and Embodiment of Space
4.3 Design Studies: Park Street: Render1
4.4 Conclusion of Chapter 4

RESEARCH CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Research Title: Void Scapes

1.1 Research objectives: Intention

Void Scapes is a creative visual and experimental design project that investigates the idea of secluded landscape of contemplation within the urban or suburban environment. This research explores the visual nature of the relationship between the space of contemplation and its surrounding context. The final aim of the research is to create a space of withdrawal which utilises and interacts with the visual elements of its surrounds.

So why is space of seclusion so important? For centuries most cultures have embraced the idea of a place where one may withdraw from the demands of normal life to reflect or simply find temporary respite. In "Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation", UC Berkeley lecture Marc Treib notes that historically contemplation has accompanied withdrawal from the web of normal life. 1 I found it was generally conceded that contemporary everyday life can be demanding and stressful, the pressures often seemingly relentless. I also found that urban or suburban environments can be poor, both visually and aurally. Marc Treib makes the following comment on this type of environment: “It would be difficult for many people to think profoundly within the aural and visual distraction of such a milieu.” 2 His insight is a reminder of how we are constantly bombarded by information that can be confusing or unsettling. The universality of this experience made me realise there could be a genuine need for the creation of public spaces that provide a retreat and some relief from these everyday demands.

In relation to this creative design project, I should point out here that my background is in Architecture and Fine Art. As a visual art student, I worked with materials intuitively and physically, developing a strong connection with their character and texture and how these influence the visual elements of light, shadow and perception. In terms of my research, this fine art background encouraged me to analyse how space and form are influenced by their character and texture and how these influence the visual elements of light, shadow and perception. In this connection, the relationship between the space of contemplation and its surrounding context is crucial. I see this relationship very much in terms of a continuous journey towards the heart of site. It is like a piece of music, which builds and intensifies or gets louder in a final phrase or passage.

I also found this research to be less concerned with “how to design contemplative landscape” in terms of strategies and methodologies, and more about a conceptual and personal creative journey, exploring the visual elements of contemplative landscape.

Whilst this paper investigates the visual aspects of contemplative space, it does not concern itself with contemplative components that are specific in any religious or symbolic sense – that is, religious icons that might introduce values of spiritual or psychological complexity.

The Research questions are as follow:

1. What are the identifiable visual features of a secluded landscape of contemplation?
2. How can contemplative landscape as a medium for withdrawal be realised?

---

2 Ibid.
1.2 What is Void Scapes?

Conceptual Framework of Research

Void Scapes is not about designing landscape where people feel obliged to contemplate, but rather about creating a space in an urban or suburban environment where people feel they can withdraw from the demands of everyday life to reflect. Time and distance are essential components in this context, where the experience of space is not merely static but a changing condition which is constantly remaking itself. This progressive experience should culminate in a heightened sense of entry to the site. It builds to an accent, then there is quietness and resolution at the end.

However, as John Beardsley observes in “Filling a void” from “Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation”, there is no recipe for creating contemplative space. Accordingly, my Void Scapes project and research is less concerned with inventing design formulae and technical designs and more to do with the design process itself.

Indeed, an analysis of various historical examples revealed particular, possible visual features in landscape of contemplation, which I have developed in these three visual key features or elements of Void Scapes.

1. Environment
2. Aesthetics
3. Embodiment of Space

1.3 Visual Key Elements:

Void Scapes consists of these three Key Elements.

1 ENVIRONMENT

This examines the relationship between the site and its surrounding context. As a spatial quality, this is visually deliberate and discrete - enclosing and sheltering the Interiority from the outer world. The distinguishing characteristics maybe be described as:

Discreteness: the sheltering of inner space from outer space. This sheltering aspect and increased density surrounding the site also adds to a heightened sense of entry and anticipation as one moves from the outer to the inner world.

Deliberateness: Inner space and outer space intentionally contrast visually with each other.

2 AESTHETICS

This lies at the heart of Void Scapes and concerns visual components and composition of the Interiority. Visual characteristics are:

Active Absent Space: Intentional empty space between objects
Horizontal objects in space
Minimal materiality and density

3 EMBODIMENT OF SPACE

Embodiment of space connects Environment and Aesthetics.

This concept describes the withdrawal process as a progression through time and distance - the key relationship that connects the context and the heart of the site. It communicates the concept of space of contemplation in terms of duration and explores how the viewer can gradually engage by travelling through time and distance.

Time of Perception: There are specific spatial sequences in Void Scapes. (The viewer’s experience of spatial sequences involves time and distance.)

Time of Bodily Movements: focuses mainly on the progress and duration of repetitive bodily movements (e.g. walking).

1.4 Key Elements of Layers in Void Scapes

Landscape of contemplation, characteristically moves between two layers. These layers provide visual connection between the context and the site.

These two layers are visually distinctive and have different functions. For instance, the Exteriority layer relates to the visual aspects of Environment, whereas the layer of Interiority exhibits visual aspects of Aesthetics. Embodiment of Space deals with the connective process, linking the two layers of Exteriority and Interiority.

To be more precise, Exteriority refers to the surrounding environment, where I consider the threshold to be located. Typically, examples of contemplative landscape environments are confined to urban or suburban areas. The destination is the Interiority, the heart of the landscape. For instance, a journey can start from an urban space with tall buildings, gradually arriving at the heart of the site.

The edge of the Exteriority directly surrounds and shelters the Interiority. I suggest this functions to both to enclose and isolate the Interiority with a perimeter of tall objects.

This sequence of layers illustrates how time and distance play a part in my research. Obviously, duration is implied as the visitor proceeds through these spatial layers.
1.5 Design Sites: The intention

Now I move on to the design studies to demonstrate these key elements. Throughout my research, I came to regard these design studies very much as a personal creative journey because I learnt so much through the process and analysis of design. However, my proposals are not necessarily a definitive design solution.

The sites I have chosen for this studies are near my previous residence, Park Street, North Carlton. I used to commute, walking to Park Street every day; it is only 30 minutes’ walk from the CBD. One important reason for choosing Park Street for the design sites was that it is located at the edge of the inner city. According to examples of historical contemplative landscapes such as Saiho-ji, the edge of the inner city often provides the most suitable site where one may withdraw from a more hectic urban or suburban situation. In fact, most Japanese contemplative gardens, such as Ryoan-ji and Saiho-ji, are located on the edge of Kyoto city. In addition, Woodland Cemetery is located on the edge of Stockholm, Sweden.

Yet another factor to consider is that the parks and trails of Park Street have not fulfilled the council requirements. For example, according to the master plan proposal to the City of Yarra (Study by ACLA consultant) one of the key issues of this site is a need for a linked system of small parks to large parks, like Royal Princes Park. It also stipulates improved access and mobility, improvement to kerb crossings at appropriate grades and with TGSIs(Tactile Ground Surface Indicators) in order to adhere to current Australian Standards.

Finally, the design sites are ideal for establishing a physical movement program, as walking and bicycle trails feature already in Park Street. This would fulfil the condition of Embodiment of Space, which entails duration of physical movement. The repetitive physical movement of cycling or walking is important because it relates to time, distance and perception.

Another important reason for my choice of these sites is that it demonstrates how dimensions of time and distance can feature in contemplative landscapes, the substance of my research question. As the design sites are located at the edge of the inner city, they obviously introduce notions of time and distance in the gradual journey from the built-up CBD of Melbourne to the heart of the sites in Park Street (as indicated in the aerial view on left).

1. ACLA Consultants, "Final Master Plan", November 2006
2.0 ENVIRONMENT: Exteriority of Void Scapes and context

The Environment segment of a Void Scape refers to the surrounding area and how it visually influences the Interiority of contemplative landscape architecture. Usually the process of withdrawal and seclusion as an evolving experience implies that the urban or suburban space is included as an integral part of the design. Time and distance are essential ingredients.

In comparing a number of case studies of this kind of landscape, I found that they shared distinct and common visual characteristics. These may be classified as:
1. Discreteness: the separation of the outer world from the inner world. Here, the Exteriority (Environment) is the space that shelters, isolates and encloses the Interiority of the contemplative space.
2. Visual contrast: this is provided by the Interiority of Void Scapes.
3. Threshold: this refers to the Environment, that part of a Void Scape where the journey begins.

The Environment consists of three visual compositions:
1. Verticality/height
2. Density – greater than that of the Interiority
3. Dark/shadowed space (produced by vertical, tall objects).

The Environment embraces the concepts of time and distance through motion as it forms the surrounding environment and threshold of the journey to the destination.

2.1 Discreteness

Mark Treib, from the University of Berkeley, writes “Historically, contemplation has accompanied withdrawal from the web of normal life, whether to institutions such as monasteries, or to landscapes perceptually reduced to aid the process.” An analysis of historical contemplative landscapes such as Ryoan-ji highlights this aspect of withdrawal. I refer to this concept as “discreteness” in my research. It is the quality that isolates the Interiority from the outer world by enclosing it (in extended space) with vertical objects. For example, the surrounding forests isolate the dry garden of Ryoan-ji, as the forest vegetation acts as a visual tool to create discreteness, isolating and protecting the Interiority of the Void Scapes.

The isolation of a site may be achieved in various ways. Studies of historical contemplative spaces reveal that visual tools, in the form of vertical objects sheltering the Interiority, might be plaster walls, tall vegetation or buildings. For example, in both the historical Japanese Buddhist contemplative garden of Saiho-ji and the Woodland Cemetery in Sweden, the threshold begins in urban space (buildings and residential areas) with a gradual transition to vegetation (and a plaster wall in the case of Saiho-ji), which completely surrounds the Interiority.

So discreteness is crucial as visual tool, enhancing the sense of withdrawal from routine, everyday life.

2.2 Visual Contrast

Contrast is also interconnected with discreteness and this sense of withdrawal as these examples show.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXTERIORITY</th>
<th>INTERIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Vertical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>High Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Shadowed space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filled with Light</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Saiho-ji, located on the edge of the inner city of Kyoto, the surrounding context is a suburban landscape of residential buildings interspersed with vegetation. The Saiho-ji garden itself is sheltered from the outer world by dense vegetation in the Exteriority.

**Saiho-ji: Enclosed and shadowed space**
As shown in the figure and ground study, vegetation is particularly dominant in this case.
Saiho-ji: Enclosed and shadowed space
The section below illustrates the different stages of the journey into this historical contemplative garden. After leaving the environs of Kyoto, one enters the Japanese temple gates and takes a long walking path through a forest. It is noticeable how the tall vegetation casts shadows on the walking path before it reaches a teahouse, ponds and meditation stones.

I discovered that time and distance contribute to the experience of the garden, with the shadowed walking path leading all the way from the city of Kyoto into the forest of Saiho-ji. Here the vegetation signifies and generates a sense of withdrawal from the urban sites of Kyoto by isolating and defining the space, as well as providing a visual contrast with the inner dry garden.
Example 2 landscape of contemplation with Environment: Ryoan-ji

Ryoan-ji is an historical "Karesansui" (Japanese dry garden) and is similarly situated on the outskirts of Kyoto. A former lecturer of Princeton University, Gunter Nitschke suggests this garden was designed to induce contemplation for Zen monks. The context here is the suburban landscape and vegetation that surround Ryoan-ji. I will focus on the vegetation in this section since vegetation dominates the visual Exteriority in Ryoan-ji.

As the intricate Japanese dry garden is located at the edge of the property, visitors must walk through a tall forest in order to visit it. The foreground study illustrates the verticality of the Japanese temple forests, which are sited to protect or enfold the delicate dry garden within dark green foliage. This creates a sense of leaving the routine world behind, a realigning of perspective.

To conclude, Ryoan-ji temple is located at the edge of the city with the dry garden positioned at the very end of the temple property. It clear to me that the experience of time and distance is intrinsic to its design.

Example 3 landscape of contemplation with Environment Woodland Cemetery

In "Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation" Heinrich Hermann and Marc Treib note that the Woodland Cemetery in Sweden exhibits the visual quality inherent in landscapes of contemplation. The Woodland Cemetery is an excellent example. It demonstrates the marked visual transition accompanying withdrawal from a more hectic environment, with the forest separating and enclosing the cemetery from the outer world.


Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation

The materiality of contemporary examples may vary, but they operate on a similar principle to the historical gardens.

Example 4 landscape of contemplation with Environment
Canadian Embassy

I chose this dry garden as an example of a contemporary contemplative garden because it was designed by a Japanese Buddhist monk, who specialised in contemplative Buddhist gardens.

From this aerial site plan of the Canadian Embassy, it can be seen that the garden is located in the middle of the CBD in Tokyo. This location means that visitors have to walk beneath skyscrapers in order to reach this second-floor terrace garden inside the Embassy. In this context, the business district with its skyscrapers and the adjacent park with its vegetation provide the surrounding vertical objects and create shadows.

Because the space itself is sheltered inside the building, the building façade functions as the edge of the Environment or its Exteriority. This garden still conveys a sense of isolation — the dimensions of time and distance are introduced in the route to the dry garden through the streets of the inner city.

Example 5 landscape of contemplation with Environment
Meditation Space by Tadao Ando

Renowned Japanese architect Tadao Ando’s “Meditative Space” is situated in the UNESCO property in Paris, France. The aerial photos on the left show its location in the inner urban, built-up space of Paris. It can be seen how the buildings (which shadow the street-scapes) as well as the street vegetation function to shelter the Meditation Space property itself. In this way, they form the edge of the Exteriority.

Even though this garden is quite different from the historical contemplative examples I have discussed, time and distance may play a role in the experience of withdrawal as a visitor moves towards the space.

As with the earlier studies, I found there were two distinct visual components of Exteriority. The first component was the built-up surrounds of the city, contrasting with the Interiority in terms of height, density and shadow. The second was the immediate vegetation and the building of the Meditation Space itself, the edge of the Exteriority. Both function to isolate and shelter the interior Meditation Space and provide a phased withdrawal from the outer world.
Example 6 landscape of contemplation with Environment
Roden’s Crater, Arizona, USA

Roden’s Crater is a large-scale art project designed by American artist, James Turrell. The cavernous crater was constructed in an inactive volcano in the middle of the Desert of Northern Arizona in the U.S.

I selected this case study on the basis of Marc Treib’s argument for the inclusion of Roden’s Crater as an example of landscape of contemplation. He writes that “certain art works support transforming perception into contemplation, and here the work of James Turrell is particularly relevant.”

The transforming of perception starts within the cavernous underground. The first sequence is a designed walkway through a long, dark, underground space (see photo 02). I found this first sequence to be like other examples; I see this long, enclosed underground walkway as the edge of Exteriority because it isolates and contrasts with the Interiority.


walking dark
underground tunnel

Photo 2 Light piercing the darkness
After analysing the contexts of these various case studies, I wanted to find out how certain features such as light, shadow and height of the surroundings in Park Street influence the design study sites.

2.3 Design Studies: Park Street, Melbourne: Vertical features in the journey from the urban environment to Park Street

I found Park Street that there are four kinds of distinct vertical objects. The first are the CBD skyscrapers; the second are the tall business buildings and residential buildings; the third group is the street vegetation of Park Street and the final group is the vegetation directly bordering the Park Street site. These four stages of vertical objects comprise the site's Environment. Even though the CBD environment may not be within Park Street's immediate vicinity, it provides a visually contrasting context and may also be included as part of the journey to Park Street. Most people commute to the CBD from residential areas, so the transition from CBD urban environment to the edge of the urban space may be seen as part of a continuous, integrated experience. These phases of visual contrast culminate in the Park Street vegetation that shelters the potential Interiority of the site I am considering.

The immediate Environment of the potential Interiority is the surrounding urban residential and business area of Carlton. Park Street lies between the main local shopping centres of Lygon Street, Nicholson Street, and St George’s Road, which consist of business, retail, restaurant buildings and residential houses from about 5 to 20 metres high. These main streets are serviced by public transport — primarily tram and bus networks. In addition, linear bicycle or walking trails are embedded in this part of Park Street, connecting the more built-up locations with open park areas.

Time and distance involved in traveling the route from the dense urban site to the edge of the city are factors that contribute towards this contemplative landscape. Both the urban setting and direct context are combined and embedded in Environment.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARK STREET AND CITY OF MELBOURNE AND GENERAL EDGE OF EXTERIORITY IN PARK STREET

CONTEXT: MELBOURNE CBD

INTERIORITY (DESIGN 1.0)

INTERIORITY (DESIGN 2.0)

EDGE OF EXTERIORITY

EDGE OF EXTERIORITY

ROYAL PARK

CARLTON CEMETERY

MELBOURNE MUSEUM

CARLTON GARDENS

MELBOURNE CBD
Figure ground studies with tree canopy:

As there is a significant amount of vegetation already in Park Street, I analysed the existing Park Street space with figure and ground studies that include tree canopies. Here the planting appears to be located quite randomly. In these studies I also show how these canopies create shadows that influence perception, so the illustrations also map the density of these canopied areas.

From this drawing I worked out how and where the existing density of tree canopies and buildings could suggest a possible site for the design of a landscape of contemplation. The capacity to create a sheltered and isolated space is crucial to the sense of withdrawal from the routine world.
**Verticality Study**

The verticality study analyses the overall site and context according to height. The intensity of colour (red) indicates the degree of height – intensity increasing with height (reddest for heights above 3 metres).

My intention was to work with the existing conditions of Park Street, retaining trees where possible. This study helped with siting the Interiority space as well as demonstrating how the height and density of vegetation affect light and influence perception.
Vegetation Palette

As my research is essentially conceptual, it does not incorporate technical details. However, I would like to illustrate a general idea of vegetation because density and height are significant as they relate to visual contrasts, materiality and perceptions. For example, the edge of the site should be comprised of taller vegetation and the Interiority of the site should include low-lying plants to create contrast.

Basically, the vegetation is divided into three categories. The first type consists of tall trees. The second type has more density to enclose the space. These two types are designed to create the Environment of the Void Scapes – to shelter the site. The third type consists of low-lying vegetation to harmonise with the Interiority of the site. These plants are more colourful. This is to add visual contrast and highlight the Interiority of the Void Scapes.

Sclerophyll types of trees will be used to increase density because of their shape. Examples are Weeping Willow (Salix babylonica) and Sapree-wood (Widdringtonia cupressoides), which tend to have large, dense tree canopies that create broad shadows.

### VEGETATION PALETTE

#### INTERIORITY
Low height, colourful vegetation

- **Osteospermum jucundum** (Osteospermum)
- **Geranium himalayense** (Gravelye)
- **Nymphaea** (Black Princess)
- **Cerastium biebersteinii** (Snow in Summer)

#### EXTERIORITY
High density, taller trees: sclerophyll type creating shade

- **Banksia marginata**
- **Lophostemon confertus** (Brush Box)
- **Brachychiton acerifolius** (Ornamental Weeping Willow)
- **Callitris preissii** (Rottnest Island pine)
- **Cinnamomum camphora** (Camphor Laurel)
- **Banksia marginata**
- **Lophostemon confertus** (Brush Box)
- **Brachychiton acerifolius** (Ornamental Weeping Willow)
- **Callitris preissii** (Rottnest Island pine)
- **Cinnamomum camphora** (Camphor Laurel)

#### Existing trees
Possibly to be increased
(As a council requests)

- **Acacia implexa**
- **Angophora hispida** “Dwarf Apple”
- **Eucalyptus leucoxyl** “Eucy dwarf”
Focused areas on the edge of Designs 1.0 and 2.0.

The areas directly surrounding the Interiority of the design site I refer to as the edge of Exteriority. This immediate edge of the site is usually characterised by increased vegetation.
Design Details: Design 1.0 and 2.0
Since the scale of Park Street is quite extensive, the site designs have been divided into two detailed studies. Design 1.0 and Design 2.0 show the secluded space of contemplation.

The existing context, condition and visual composition (such as population and height of vegetation) contribute to the visual contrast and lighting of the space. I chose the Design 1.0 site because it shows the vertical character of the context, which is already densely populated with business buildings and vegetation along Royal Parade, a main arterial road with a high volume of traffic. There are also areas of open space that suggest a possible site for the Interiority or the focal space to be sheltered by the Exteriority. Already existing visual contrasts create the first key element, Environment.

The proposed Design 2.0 site is situated between Nicholson Street and Rae Street. Nicholson Street is also a fairly busy main street with many shops, business buildings, and car and tram traffic. These surrounds form part of the general outer vertical context. The existing vegetation, mainly Weeping Willows (Salix babylonica), on the bike trail between Nicholson Street and Rae Street also creates density and shadow in the space. This same vegetation might be helpful in creating the Exteriority for the site.
Proposed Design Development: Proposal for Interiority and Exteriority

Rather than creating concrete walls or using buildings as visual tools to shelter the design sites, I used the existing tall vegetation as the foundation. It seemed natural to supplement this vegetation to provide more visual contrast between the Exteriority and the interior space.

The proposed layer of the Interiority is based on available open space. From the figure and ground study it can be seen where the space is presently less occupied.

One positive outcome of this design development is the enhancement of the site with deliberate visual contrasts and variations in light, shadow, colour and density.
Existing Site Condition: Design 1.0

Design 1.0 is located at the west end of Park Street, adjacent to a main street, Royal Parade, and the residential area. The site plan and section show the site and surrounding context.

This plan shows the dominant vegetation that creates the edge around the potential Interiority. This consists mainly of Eucalyptus trees, which add verticality to the space but tend to lack density.

The problem with this site is that it seems to be just random bush in a grass field. The current visual composition is so arbitrary, it does not provide any spatial connection with the viewer.

The drawings on the next page show the existing section of Design 2.0.
EXISTING SITE CONDITION: DESIGN 1.0 SECTION

SECTION1

SECTION2

DETAIL SECTION2A

SECTION3

DETAIL SECTION3A

SECTION4

DETAIL SECTION6

existing building

tree
grass

concrete pavement

house

dry pond
Existing Site Condition: Design2.0 : Plan
I saw this site as another potential design space because of its openness and the potential to create the Interiority. However, it is quite neglected with strips of dried grass and random vegetation.
This site plan and section take in Park Street, the design site and the edge of the site. Vertical objects at the edge of Park Street include business buildings and trees which are also on Nicholson Street and St George’s Road. Between these roads the vegetation seems to be typically Sclerophyll types of trees, such as Weeping Willows. (Existing condition year 2006)
There are two main problems with this site. My first concern is its relationship to the broader context, the lack of spatial continuity between the urban space and the edge of urban space. My second concern is that there seems to be no connection or overall concept between the immediate surrounds and the patch of grass.
Design Studies: Redesigning the Edge of Design 1.0 and Design 2.0 Park Street: Enclosed and Shadowed Space

I see the edges of these sites as not fragmented, but part of a continuous journey or development.

The journey to the Void Scape begins in Melbourne’s CBD and gradually approaches the Carlton area, the edge of the design location. Since the edges of Design 1.0 and 2.0 currently consist only of random vegetation and grass strips, they would clearly need to be redesigned. This would involve both creating a sheltered and secluded contemplation space and building up the visual conditions for the Environment.

To shelter the heart of the design space, I propose to add significant vegetation. This would not only establish spatial continuity with the rest of the Park Street location and its vegetation, but would create a heightened sense of entry to the site with more dense, tall and overhanging vegetation in the edge area. This would create a wall-like effect as well as sheltering the Interiority.

The diagram below illustrates my proposal for the redesigned edge of the design sites with additional vegetation. The green area indicates the most vertical and densely populated areas that directly surround the design sites.

Footnote:
2.4 Design Studies: Creating Exteriority: Rendered images

These rendered images are intended to convey Environment, Aesthetics and Embodiment of Space by illustrating spatial sequences in transition from the Exterior environment to the Interiority of the design sites. These are the main elements of my research. The renderings below focus in particular on the visual aspects of the Environment with its shadowed and enclosed spaces over an extended area.

The rendered images below are selected from the exhibition for my examination. These transparent images show the changing sequence at the edge of the Exteriority. The still images illustrate the Interiority of the Park Street design sites.
Reder Images of Design 1.0

The image is designed to illustrate the Environment and the edge of the Exteriority of the site.

The dark and shadowed space demonstrates the visual contrast of the enclosed space sheltering the Interiority of the Park Street design site. To create this effect, I added more vegetation with denser, higher canopies along the walking paths to heighten the visual contrast as the visitor moves from the surrounding darker space to a space filled with light.
Redesigning the edge of Design 2.0

The Design 2.0 rendered images are also intended to represent the first element, the Environment, and illustrate the ambient darkness and enclosed nature of the extended space. The effect is intensified by the addition of more tree canopies and vegetation along the walking/bicycle path. These not only shelter the heart of the design site, but allow visitors to experience a sense of withdrawal from the outer world, a sense of restfulness.

To achieve this, I have supplemented the existing vegetation with the same type of plants, such as Weeping Willows and other high-density vegetation. I found it more effective to use species with a dense tree canopy rather than simply using tall trees. For this reason I have added Weeping Willows rather than more Eucalyptus trees to the site.
Conclusion of Chapter 2
In this chapter, an analysis of case studies suggested how urban space may be considered as one of the visual design elements in the Environment of a Void Scape.

However, I found it hard to pinpoint where the exact boundaries of Exteriority lie. For instance, the edge of Exteriority may vary according to the site; it may be comprised of vegetation or it may be some kind of building façade that shelters the Interiority, particularly in central urban contexts.

In the highly built-up context of the inner city, a space of contemplation often needs to be located indoors or semi-outdoors. This is because it is not easy to provide shelter from the complex and dominant influences of the inner city. Strong, protective objects, such as walls of buildings, are required to insulate the Interiority from the outside elements.

Although the context of every case study might be different, I found a common successful visual tool in the Environment. Certain identifiable features are present in the surroundings that necessarily form part of the design as a whole. By definition, a landscape of contemplation implies a shift of experience or awareness away from routine pressures, some kind of transition from a more stressful to a more restful or reflective state.

Although there may be some residual confusion as to why urban or suburban environment has been included as part of the design (my research question focuses on withdrawal from the urban or suburban condition), I feel I have addressed this in showing how the process of withdrawal is central as a process, part of an experiential, spatial and chronological continuum. The time (and differing space) taken to move from the urban or suburban condition not only provides for visual contrast, but prepares one for entering the heart of the space.
AESTHETICS
3.0 AESTHETICS: Interiority of Void Scapes: visual characteristics

Aesthetics focuses on the visual condition at the heart of a site, its Interiority. Interiority is inward, contained space secluded from the outer world by the Exteriority. However, the Exteriority and Interiority are codependent, visually responding to each other, mainly through contrast.

The aim of Aesthetics here is to help create a landscape of contemplation as an escape from visually “poor” urban or suburban environments through specific visual tools. These urban environments are often characterised by visual distractions or unpleasant stimuli. As a result, visual contrast is vital as well as instrumental to the design, creating as little visual distraction as possible in the Interiority, as opposed to the more stimulating outer environment.

There is accumulating evidence to support this - i.e. that a radically simplified environment might be successful in creating contemplative space. An analysis of a number of case studies shows what characteristics contribute towards such a radically simplified environment; these are the main ingredients that create harmony and continuity within the internal space. In this context, the concept of Aesthetics may be regarded as the art of visual simplicity (also of aural simplicity where possible).

To realise this simplified environment of Aesthetics, I found that the internal space should include three visual characteristics: “Active Absent space”, “Minimal Materiality” and “Horizontality”.

3.1 Active Absent Space

Active absent space is an important visual tool for creating a radically simplified environment because it reduces visual over-stimulation. However, the “absent space” is just not empty, open space. It is an area deliberately designed as part of a continuum. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki writes of this importance of absent space, alluding to it in a Japanese spatial term, “Ma” or “active absence”, “the natural distance between two or more things existing in continuity”. Extending this idea, Nitschke describes “Ma”, as “place making, where form/non form is imaginatively created or perceived in immediate experience. It is a created space (active absence) between two objects; there is continuity as a whole space.”

I would describe Active Absent Space as not merely vacant or fragmented space, but as a space created to convey spatial continuity with objects within and around it.


Ryoan-ji's active absent space in dry garden :
3.2 Minimal Materiality

Minimal materiality implies reduced density and limits the forms of objects used to create spatial effect – a sense of continuity within the active absent space at the heart of site to with a radically simplified environment.

For example, in the perspective photo of Ryoan-ji, the site seems to have a harmonious spatial quality that unifies the “empty” space with the objects because the dry garden is distinctively minimal in materiality- perfectly raked white sand, moss, and rocks, old plaster walls surrounding the garden.

John Beardsley emphasises the necessity for this radically simplified space as an aid to concentration in a space of contemplation: “…dry stone gardens are another means of focusing attention on phenomenal experience. As radically simplified environments, they are places of the staging or the appreciation of events: the sound of wind through bamboo; the change in quantities of light, the projection of shadows on raked gravel; the melting of snow, the scattering of leaves.”¹ From case studies, I also came to appreciate how landscape with radically simplified or minimal materials can have a particularly restful effect both visually and aurally, especially if we live in an over-stimulated urban space.

I also realised how the visual tool of minimal materiality offers spatial continuity with active absence through horizontality. In other words, this visual tool does not function alone; all the aesthetic visual tools work together.

3.3 Horizontally Designed Space

The horizontally designed space of Void Scapes is concerned with proportion, the space containing only low-lying and elongated objects. This preserves the visual continuity with “empty” space in the Interiority, the focal site of contemplation. The presence of only low objects between the clear spaces means that transitions are subtle and visual harmony is maintained without radical interruption to the Interiority. Also, this horizontally designed space (with low and elongated proportions) contrasts visually with the surrounding environment, where as the outer envelope of the space is generally vertical in design in order to shield the Interiority.

To summarise, the visual tool of horizontally designed space ensures visual unity in terms of Aesthetics. The simplified, unified interior space of contemplation (Interiority) also contrasts markedly with the outer world and offers a retreat from an over-stimulating outer environment.

Proportional Horizontality in Ryoan-ji

The horizontally designed space of Ryoan-ji invites visitors to sit and contemplate at leisure. In my opinion this is due to the harmonious visual quality of the space. Rocks on the perfectly raked sand are positioned in a particular manner and composition, their horizontal proportions in harmony with the dry garden. The proportional ratio of the rock to the garden space is about 1:10 (rock height: garden length), so there are only slight gradations in the relationship between empty spaces and the objects. This horizontality ensures visual continuity throughout the whole garden. The height of the surrounding walls, only two metres high, also extends this sense of horizontality within the space.

In this case study, I found proportional horizontality to be the visual tool that created a unified, serene space.

Ryoan-ji’s dry garden acknowledges the importance of absent space, which in fact comprises the visual centre of the dry garden. There is a continuous relationship between “empty” space and objects, “empty” carrying the sense of a clearing and the absence of extraneous items. Here, it refers to the perfectly raked sand between the rocks, a visual continuity that might encourage contemplation. “It is to induce viewers to experience ‘nothingness,’ of the void, emptiness, impartial awareness, selflessness (as his personal insight).”2 “Absent space” here does not literally mean the absence of objects, but rather unhindered space – or intentional emptiness. John Beardsley describes this intentional emptiness as a space awaiting occupation by various phenomena.3

As a design tool, “active absence” anticipates the experience of the viewer within its composition. This vital component also seems to contain the idea of duration, as it cannot be appreciated instantly but must be experienced over an interval of time. It has meaning. This interval of time also connects with a visitor’s experience of withdrawal from pressures of time.

Example 1 : Landscape of contemplation with Aesthetics: Ryoan-ji

Although there are numerous interpretations of what Ryoan-ji’s dry garden might symbolise, I have avoided this kind of analysis. Gunter Nitschke notes that “Ryoan-ji’s dry garden was designed particularly for monks to practice meditation.” Moreover, Nitschke emphasises that Ryoan-ji does not indulge in symbolism. “I see it as an abstract composition of ‘natural’ objects in space, which is intended to induce meditation. It belongs to the art of void.”1

2 Ibid.
As a contemplative case study drawn from the Western world, the Woodland Cemetery also depicts the importance of “empty” space in landscape design. Heinrich Hermann describes the “Central Clearing” of the Woodland Cemetery as “the art of creating empty space in landscape as it intrigues inner silences”.

The Central Clearing is located at the heart of the Woodland Cemetery, which suggests that the “empty” space is a deliberate and significant part of the design, consistent with its relationship with the rest of the landscape, such as the forests and chapels. The large Central Clearing’s absent space has such a powerful effect that one experiences a sensation of openness expanding to the sky.

Hermann writes, “The clearing’s scale renders human beings small, without dwarfing them, but paradoxically also makes them feel welcome and at home. Instinctively one senses it to be a space of re-pose that should be occupied not physically but in one’s mind. Without having yet actually seen a single grave, one recognizes this void as the symbolic heart of the cemetery.”

The Interiority of the Woodland Cemetery draws on this Aesthetic of active absence, where “empty” space, visual continuity and duration of time all combine to create a sense of disengagement from external demands and the pace of everyday life.

---

2 Ibid., p. 51.
Example 3: Landscape of contemplation with Aesthetics
Meditation Space, UNESCO

This meditation space is a contemporary contemplative space designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando.

However, the space is not intended to convey any kind of meaning, only to invite the visitor to withdraw from the outer world and experience solitude. Perfectly controlled concrete textures, light and shadow are the main components of this space. Apparently, Ando intended to convey “nothingness” in this design process. My understanding is that he conveys this quality of “nothingness” through the use of the simplest materials to emphasise the quality of deliberate, absent space.

I found that paradoxically, Ando’s “nothingness” could have a powerful effect. It seems that he intended to create an effect similar to that of Ryoan-ji. The space is so minimal and radically simplified, the only visual element that focuses the attention of the visitor is the natural play of light over a period of time: how light appears on the empty concrete wall and floor seems to express the art of the emptiness and stillness in this austere space.

Example 4: Landscape of contemplation with Aesthetics
Canadian Embassy in Tokyo

The site for this case study is located in the middle of the Tokyo urban environment. However, it offers a retreat where visitors can escape from the pressures of hectic stimuli and city activity. Like Ryoan-ji, this contemporary dry garden focuses on "empty" space with discreetly placed, minimal objects. The space is radically simplified with minimal materials: It seems to be unified with minimal colours and forms, such as sculpted rocks and pebbles on the concrete flooring.

Proportional Horizontality
Although this interior dry garden (the balcony space on the second floor) is small and less than three metres high, it achieves the effect of expansiveness. The design of the space with low, sculpted rocks, adds to the sense of visual harmony and spatial continuity. The pond on the balcony accentuates this quality of horizontally — the body of water seems like the horizon.

I found the horizontal nature of this landscape is deliberately enhanced with the use of elongated rocks and objects, which complement the empty space between. Not only does this unify the space, but it transforms the viewer’s perception to make the space look larger.

I also found that this elevated space, half-sheltered by the building façade, works well as an extended, horizontally designed area. As soon as I entered, I felt that the space opened up with a view of city and sky. I consider this view of sky to be one of the vital materials in this whole design.

From personal experience, I also found this garden to be a restful place, largely because it contrasts so markedly with the stimulating, congested urban surroundings.

Photo One from Area 1 illustrates the horizontal proportion of the rocks in relation to the length and width of the whole garden. Photo Two conveys the impression of the horizon, which is created by the transparency of water and extended concrete flooring.
Example 5: Landscape of contemplation with Aesthetics Inside of Roden's Crater

Photo 01 illustrates the view inside Roden's Crater. This interior space is isolated and surrounded by the walking path. I feel this project conveys minimal materiality in dynamic way with the sky fundamentally creating the Interiority. In other words, the main components of Interiority are the “view of the sky” and light. White walls provide the absent space to accommodate and accentuate these main materials.

I discovered how the simplest natural elements, such as sky, can create such a dramatic visual effect.
3.4 Design Studies, Park Street: Interiority of Void Scapes
The existing visual conditions, such as density and materiality of the space, influenced my selection of this site, especially as I found there were very few suitable locations for the creation of Void Scapes. In Design 1.0, it can be seen that the space is quite large and already surrounded by vegetation.

Design 1: Proposed Design Plan of Interiority
In Design 1.0, the central area containing the body of water forms the Interiority of the site. Guided by the three visual components of active absent space, minimal materiality, and horizontality, I first selected some basic materials for the design.

My first choice was water because of its flatness and transparency. A body of water can transform perception through reflection and has the effect of creating space through its visual extension. I see this body of water as one of the essential materials in creating active empty space on this site, the pond being the most central feature of the Interiority. I have also selected other materials such as exposed concrete pavement and low vegetation to extend this sense of continuity.

Most of these components are designed to create horizontality in the space, with subtle shifts in level between the walking path, the ground, the pond and low-lying vegetation. To illustrate this, the ground level in this space is gradually elevated by only 300mm to 500mm (see drawings on next page).
Proposed Section
The proposed section drawings show both the materiality and horizontality of the space.

The first section illustrates the edge of the Exteriority, where it shelters the Interiority.

The second section shows the threshold area of the Interiority. The third section reveals the middle area of the Interiority where the ground level pond helps to accentuate the horizontality of the space.
SECTION 4
Section 4 shows the intricate part distance and time play in a landscape of contemplation.

This section shows the end or edge of the Interiority and illustrate the differing heights of the various plantings. The view from the Interiority towards the edge of the Exteriority shows how a visitor would see the taller vegetation as sheltering the Interiority. Hydrophytic plants are part of the Interiority; the vegetation behind it forms part of the Exteriority.

Importantly, these section drawings convey how time and distance play a role in the design. This is related to the visual conditions of the space — the transformation from the vertically oriented, densely populated Exteriority to the horizontally oriented, minimal space of the Interiority.

The pond and concrete pavement designs are shown in the detailed drawings.

DESIGN 1.0 : DETAIL DESIGN : Hydrophyte Plant Details:

The vegetation chosen corresponds with the radically simplified horizontality of the space. Also, as light plays such a key role in the Interiority, I propose planting brighter-coloured vegetation.

This section details hydrophytic plants as the horizontal component of the vegetation. They are an obvious choice as they live in water, and enhance the horizontal proportion of the pond area. I have also used colour to create highlights and contrast with the shadowed Exteriority.
Seating Area Detail Section
These seating areas are designed to encourage the visitor to sit and unwind by the water. It is important for visitors to be able to get physically close to a water feature, so they can experience stillness, also a sense of expanded horizons offered by a stretch of water with its transparency and reflections.

This area has been designed with minimal materiality and has a sense of being protected within the contrasting envelope of the Exteriority.
Beardsley writes, “One of the elements to create successful contemplative space is radically simplified environment; it is the subtraction of stimuli that concentrates attention on residual elements.”

This was the reason I chose so few materials. I wanted it to be a place where visitors can pay attention to simple things such as small movements on the surface of the water, or just enjoy the feeling of the wind.

Concrete and water form the basis of my design; the simple concrete pavements complement the materiality of the water. The transparency of the body of water provides the visual quality of active absent space and it is also an ideal medium for creating extended horizontal space. It conveys the visual expansiveness of reflected sky and its texture of transparency forms an almost seamless relationship with the extended concrete pavements.

In this space, Nature itself is one of the most significant materials. This design allows for its expression, invites the visitor to experience a connection with Nature that is so often lacking in our hectic routines and a built-up environment. This is my aim - to design a place where one may withdraw and reflect.

Design 2.0 is smaller in area. Its Interiority is located within the perimeter of Nicholson Street and Rae Street. I found that this site was quite challenging to design because it is only a narrow space.

My purpose is to reflect the visual quality of Aesthetics within a smaller Interiority. I also intended that it should be somewhere the visitor might come for short periods, a restful interlude — perhaps on the way back from work to reflect at the end of the day. It is also readily accessible from Nicholson Street.

At the edge of the site (the edge of the Exteriorty), I have focused on blocking out the view of the main street, Nicholson Street. Here, the surroundings of the central space are also designed to create shadows, contrasting with the accent on light in the Interiority.

For the materiality I have used mainly low-level vegetation, water, small pebbles, and sand. The body of water and the grass function as the active absent space and contrast with the Exteriorty.

The body of water is divided by a low retaining wall to maintain continuity of space. The water surface and surrounding pavement are almost at the same level to preserve this sense of continuity and to emphasise the horizontality of the space.

Other minimal design materials I have used are Australian Red Sand succulents that are adaptable within the Australian context.
Sections One and Two show the edge of the Exteriority, which shelters the Interiority.

Section Three reveals a gradual shift from the edge of the Exteriority to the threshold area of the Interiority.

Two ponds at ground level make up the Interiority: a tree growing in the edge of the pond is deliberately placed, so that viewers can enjoy its reflection in the water.
Section four is located in the middle of the Interiority. The body of water is extended and most of the vegetation consists of grass to maintain the element of horizontality.

Section five shows where the Interiority ends. As it forms the Interiority, the ground level pond has been designed as “empty space”. As this section demonstrates, visitors will see taller vegetation in the background as the edge of the Exteriority, which shelters the Interiority from Nicholson Street.
The first render depicts how a visitor would enter the threshold of the Interiority. Two Weeping Willows block the view of the Interiority.

The second render shows the centre of the Interiority. It consists of low objects such as water, pavements and vegetation to emphasise the unified horizontality and minimality of space.

The last render illustrates the edge of the Interiority area. Along with the pond and low-lying vegetation, visitors can also see the Nicholson Street area, which is the edge of the Exteriority.

In this design, my aim was also to focus awareness on the simplicity of Nature that surrounds us, just as in Ryoan-ji. In this design, where the body of water occupies quite a large area, the visitor can become aware of the stillness, movement or reflection in the water. Light and shadow are also essential features.

RENDERED IMAGES:
INTERIORITY OF DESIGN 2.0
These rendered drawings are intended to illustrate the visual Aesthetics lying at the heart of the landscape of contemplation.
Chapter 3 Conclusion

The emphasis of this chapter is on Aesthetics as it relates to the Interiority. The intention of the design is to draw visitors into a place where they might be able to contemplate. Because the Interiority is the heart of the space, the aesthetic and visual composition of its design is of central importance. This chapter of research revealed to me how the three visual tools of Aesthetics that I have outlined are essential in unifying the space, creating continuity and visual harmony.

I discovered that if the heart of the Interiority is not carefully prepared and thought out, the creative process might be mistaken for the simple designing of an “open space”. I found it quite difficult, even though it requires very few materials, to create the desired “aesthetic”. However, once I discovered possible visual tools for creating spatial continuity within the Interiority, it seemed much easier to design.

Through this exploration of Aesthetic as a visual instrumental idea, I became increasingly conscious of this process as a personal creative journey. I also came to realise that no one approach to “aesthetics” could be described as definitive.
EMBODIMENT OF SPACE
4.0 Embodiment of Space

This chapter, Embodiment of Space, explores the second research question - how can a landscape of contemplation as a vehicle for withdrawal be realized in a practical sense?

Beardsley in “Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation” notes that design that encourages contemplation seems to be heightened through an awareness of time and distance: the time of bodily movement and perception; the historically measurable.¹

As I explored this idea, I too came to appreciate how important time and distance can be to this process of withdrawal. Various examples of this kind of landscape reveal the nature of this connection between the awareness of both time and distance with bodily movement and perceptions. In both Saiho-ji and Ryoan-ji, spatial chronology combined with continuous movement (strolling) and evolving perceptions, is preconceived within the design. From the threshold area (the inner city of Kyoto and the stroll garden), the experience of walking repeatedly on shadowed stepping-stones to an open area has a powerful influence upon the individual’s perception. The passing of time is necessary to these phases of withdrawal from a more active, demanding space to one of comparative stillness. It is part of the structure of the design.

A similar example in a western case study may be found in Woodland Cemetery, where the progression of physical movements and perceptual change through time and distance are also embedded as elements of the design. Long walks are a necessary and integral part of the landscape design leading to the centre of the cemetery. Once again, a shift in experience from the outer to the inner world is represented in the physical journey.

From these examples, I became increasingly aware of how intrinsic time and distance are to landscape of contemplation and the experience of withdrawal. As a result, this connection between time, distance, bodily movements and perception became central to my research. I refer to this connection as Embodiment of Space. It forms part of the relationship between the Environment and the Aesthetics of the Interiority, where tall, dense objects create darkened space and contrast with the lighter inner space inhabited with only low-lying objects. Light is deliberately used as a medium to create perceptual change.

So it seems that the spatial sequences of Void Scapes may be divided into two distinct sequences:

Sequence One: Journey through “vertically oriented” space:
Exteriority 1: This phase is a journey through shadowed space, which may be enclosed over an extended area (for example, the space between tall buildings). This forms part of the progression from the outer context towards the site of contemplation - physical movement through space and time.

Sequence Two: Journey into “horizontally oriented” space:
This phase describes the arrival at a space filled with light, a less occupied space consisting of objects of horizontal, minimal materiality. This sequence should contrast visually with Sequence One. (Exteriority and Interiority characteristically contrast with each other for maximum effect.)

4.1 Spatial Sequences: Dimension of Time: Perception

Here I wish to further explore this connection between perceptual change and spatial sequences. An examination of historical landscapes of contemplation shows how transitions from darker to lighter space, such as in Saiho-ji, promote perceptual change. These transitions in light create such a range of visual variations and contrasts and may also extend or even liberate one’s sense of time and space. This can be seen in typical visual sequences between the Environment and the Aesthetics of the Interiority, where tall, dense objects create darkened space and contrast with the lighter inner space inhabited with only low-lying objects. Light is deliberately used as a medium to create perceptual change.

To conclude, these observations demonstrate how the process of withdrawal involves repetitive physical movement. It is self-evident that physical motion must accompany the transition of the viewer between the context and the destination. The important thing is how this affects the viewer’s perception as focus shifts from a more public to a more private experience.


Environment: Exteriority

Embodiment of Space: Time and Distance

Aesthetics: Interiority

Although it is not a suburban outdoor location, Roden’s Crater probably demonstrates the concept of perceptual change through spatial sequences in the clearest way.\(^1\)

Turrell believes that Roden’s Crater is about viewers’ perceptions and interactions with the space and the ever-changing nature of light.\(^2\) Furthermore, Marc Treib explains how particular spatial sequences are linked with perceptual transformation and duration of time in the interior installations of Roden’s Crater: “Immediate perceptions change over time, continually evolving until a sort of mature state of revelation emerges. Entering these rooms from the exterior, the eyes see only complete darkness. As the minutes pass, at times agonizingly slowly, the iris dilates and the eyes begin to discern differences in light patterns and eventually distinguish form.”\(^3\) The period of time walking through the dark tunnel is necessary to this effect, accentuating the brightness of the sky. So it seems this synthesis of time, spatial sequences and light is capable of bringing about profound changes in perception.

Spatial Sequences and Bodily Movements in Roden’s Crater

The following section drawings exhibit the spatial sequences of Roden’s Crater. These sequences start from underground in dark and enclosed space. The duration of the first sequence is deliberately prolonged in order to create the desired perceptual change. The sequence illustrated in section one shows a person walking through the cavernous, artificial, dark tunnel. The next sequence is the phase where the iris dilates and the eye begins to see light. Finally, the sequence shifts abruptly to the space filled with light. This illuminated space is the eye of the crater and is located in its central space.

Clearly, bodily movements are embedded in the program as it is necessary to walk through dark space for some time for the eyes get used to seeing in the darkness.

But perhaps the most beautiful thing about Roden’s Crater is how perceptual change is conveyed in such an extreme way; I found this extreme contrast in light between the dark tunnel space and the highly lit room with the view of the sky to be exceptionally striking and distinctive. This space is clearly created with only one intention. Turrell executes his concept without compromise, utilizing perceptual change in space through the medium of time and distance in the long cavernous walk. Treib’s observation on the “mature state of revelation” that may result from this process is also relevant to my research – after all, this is what landscape of contemplation is about. The visual tool of perceptual change with light also relates to how a space of contemplation exploits dimensions of time and distance.
Spatial Sequences in Saiho-ji
Visually, this historical garden is divided into two areas. The first is the lower pond garden area, which is a stroll/wet garden covered with moss and interspersed with ponds. The second is the upper area, an open dry garden space. The first sequence of the strolling path is surrounded by walls and Japanese trees. In the following sequence, the path moves into the dry garden area, which is also called “the mind journey area”; this is a horizontally oriented space, less populated with vegetation. Mark Treib in “The Garden of Kyoto” describes this upper dry garden as a space consisting of low-lying “contemplative stones” that are conducive to a contemplative state of mind.1

Bodily Movement in Saiho-ji
As shown in the site plan, the lower garden is also part of the stroll journey. Saiho-ji is designed with a long walk from the gate to the teahouse, the narrow, shady footpath with stepping-stones leading to the final destination of the contemplation rocks. Marc Treib in “Contemporary Contemplative Landscape” notes that this journey of walking on stepping-stones is part of the contemplative experience.1

Time and distance are clearly instrumental to this extended program of physical movement within this space of contemplation. The prolonged and repetitive activity of walking on stepping-stones in shadowed, leafy space, may re-focus awareness and prepares the senses for the arrival at the heart of the space of contemplation.

Example 2: landscape of contemplation with Embodiment of Space: Saiho-ji

The first four sections all deal with the initial spatial sequences. The first section conveys the sensation of walking through city space and the rest of the three sections represent the walking journey from the threshold of Saiho-ji - the lower garden. Here the pathway is enclosed with trees, dense foliage and covered with moss. This section also gives some idea of the interval of time taken to reach the second sequences.

The second spatial sequences are conveyed in the final section, which show the upper area, consisting of a dry garden surrounded by low vegetation.
Detail Section and perspectives
These two drawings, one detail section and one perspective section, illustrate more closely the use of light in this space. The first section shows the volume of the area enclosed by dense foliage; it also shows how heavy tree canopies along the walking path affect the perception of the viewer through the darkness, density and verticality of the vegetation.
In the second sequence, the perspective drawing shows the dry garden area, where the space consists of horizontal components - contemplation rocks and "empty" space.

To sum up this case study, it is clear the drawings of the first three sections cover a substantial distance and period of time for the visitor. The first sequence includes the walk through city of Kyoto, with the area of vegetation and upper garden area as the second sequences. This gradual transition from city to the sheltered inner space reveals how perception changes over time and distance with bodily movements; they are a key ingredient in connecting the context with the landscape of contemplation.
Spatial sequences and bodily movements in Ryoan-ji

The first section shows spatial sequence one - the walking path visitors must take through the shadowed region of forest in order to reach the dry garden. The next section shows sequence two, the inner dry garden. Both figure and ground studies demonstrate how the vertically oriented space of the forest culminates in the translation to horizontal space in the inner garden; the black and tree canopy figures represent the vertical objects. The white coloured area indicates horizontal space.

The fact that the dry garden has been designed as the last program in the temple grounds as a whole, suggests the designer created Ryoan-ji with certain deliberate spatial sequences in mind. It is necessary to walk through the forest area from the threshold area to get to the dry garden. Naturally, emerging from the shadows of the forest after a period of time influences the vision of the visitor, accentuating the clear space of the dry garden with its minimal materials. From my observation, the expectation of perceptual change together with the program of bodily movements are clearly embedded in the overall structure. After all, it was purposely designed as a place where visiting Zen Monks could retreat from everyday life through restful walks and contemplating.
Example 4: landscape of contemplation with Embodiment of Space
Woodland Cemetery
Spatial sequences and Bodily movements

I would like to illustrate how this cemetery also conveys particular sequences and bodily movements. In “On the Transcendent in landscapes of contemplation,” Heinrich Hermann states that specific sequences can orient visitors physically but can also cause a profound inner orientation—such as inner silence.1

The spatial sequences of Woodland’s form a gradual transition from suburban environment to a heavily forested area that finally opens up into a cleared space filled with light.

Looking at the site plan, the first sequence begins with the strolling path, linking the edge of the urban environment with the forest. The site plan also illustrates the Walking Paths through the forest, illustrating how the prolonged stroll is embedded in its spatial orientation. The path begins in the darkness of the forest before passing into the light, ambient interior space of the cemetery.

In the second sequence, visitors enter the main area, termed the “heaven of silence.”

---

Section One/ Spatial Sequence One
This illustrates the strolling path enclosed by a large amount of vegetation, creating deep shadows.

These section drawings (below) imply that the sequences of Woodland are deliberately designed to promote intense perceptual change over time.

Section Two/ Spatial Sequence Two
This spatial sequence shows the path leading subsequently to an open space, “Central Clearing”. It also shows the view looking towards the Central Clearing from the threshold, revealing it as an extended open space with view of cross and landform.

One automatically associates the program of Woodland with Saiho-ji and Ryoan-ji, which share common spatial sequences. In each case, the program has been laid out with a long stroll path through trees, leading to a cleared space in the second sequence. I consider these shared sequences as the visual tool of Embodiment of Space, which realizes the concept of the withdrawal process in the landscape of contemplation.

In conclusion, as a feature of the Woodlands program, the stroll and the spatial sequences involving perceptual change provide a similar experience to that of Saiho-ji, preparing the visitor to retreat from hectic everyday life and experience contemplative moments in the cemetery.
This relationship between spatial sequences and perception is also demonstrated in the Canadian Embassy’s dry garden, where the urban environment forms part of specific spatial sequence that creates perceptual change with light. This case study illustrates the spatial sequences in the transition from urban space to the semi-outdoor balcony space.

**Sequence One: Environment:**
The first sequence originates in the built-up urban environment: walking through the business district, one notices how the buildings darken the route. However, I consider the facade of the Canadian Embassy building as the edge of the Exeriority as it shelters the dry garden.

**Sequence Two: dry garden:**
The second sequence is shown in the perspective drawing of the dry garden. This is not a typical outdoor space, but has the illusion of being very open because of the visual contrast between the balcony space and the Environment. This effect is created through the design of the “empty” space with objects of minimal materiality and horizontal proportion.

In general, it can be seen how the visual components of this contemporary dry garden differ from those of historical gardens. In the first sequence, instead of strolling through vegetation, visitors must take a route through tall buildings. However, these visual components may promote similar perceptual changes over time as the visitor progresses through shadowed spatial sequences towards the heart of the site. (Again, this is related to Embodiment of Space.)
Experimental Case Study: Melbourne Museum

Spatial sequences and Bodily movements

I refer this case study as “experimental” because it is taken from my own personal experience. This skating experience was before I began my research. I recall my first time skating as a contemplative experience and decided to analyze the experience visually. I found myself asking what visual elements might induce contemplation?

These drawings are meant to convey the visual experience of skateboarding at the forefront of the Museum in Melbourne. I decided to follow up and use this space as a case study to analyze how swift bodily movements affect radical perceptual transformation over time and distance.

These renderings illustrate the spatial sequences and physical movements: skating from point A to point B. The sequence starts from the dark space under the lower roof and ends up in a space filled with light and, in this instance, a view of the sunset.

From this case study I learned how spatial volume and composition can transform perceptions within a concentrated period of time, particularly as these swift physical movements create such dynamic effects in perspective.
For example, in the “Perception Changes” drawings, it can be seen how light changes according to the proportions of the space under the roof and how radical changes in perception accompany the pace of this movement over distance and time.

From this case study, I discovered that the visual elements of Void Scapes actually accorded with my experience. Although this experience was before I discovered the visual tool of contemplative space, it conveys the same visual elements.

These drawings also illustrate how spatial volume, variation and composition can transform perceptions over time, particularly with momentum of this physical motion causing such dramatic shifts in perspective.
**Renderings of Design 1.0**

These renderings from Design 1.0 (Princes Park) also illustrate the relationship between spatial sequences and bodily movement.

The renders start with the threshold at the edge of Park Street, which is also the edge of the Exteriority. Here, the ambient space is enclosed and darkened by heavy vegetation, which also shelters and surrounds the Interiority, the heart of the sites.

The third render demonstrates the spatial/temporal progression as one approaches the Interiority. It shows how the volume of light increases as the visitor moves towards the Interiority. (I should say here that any symbolic account of this typical feature of landscapes of contemplation is well beyond the scope of this thesis.) This render also shows how these sequences require physical motion - walking, running or riding a bicycle on the trails.

I found this aspect of physical movement and spatial sequences was also relevant to the choice of a design site. In fact, it was already part of the design in the existing but rudimentary walking and cycling paths in Park Street site.

In all renders, the blurred images are intended to give the impression or sensation of movement. This is important to the extent that it shows how spatial sequences stimulate perceptual changes.
So, the concept of withdrawal as a shifting progression through time and distance is conveyed as the sequences move towards the Interiority of the site and the amount of light increases.

Here, renderings 4, 5, and 6 reveal the Interiority. The body of water constitutes the active empty space and the concrete pavements act as a walking path and provide space to sit close to the water.

**TIME OF PERCEPTION AT NIGHT: NIGHT-TIME LIGHT PROJECTION**

The aim of this nighttime light projection is to contribute to the atmosphere of contemplation through changing light over time.

For nighttime, blue light projections are designed on reinforced concrete, hidden below the rim of the concrete paving, to reflect blue light through the water. This enhances the second spatial sequence, infusing it with light. After strolling through areas of vegetation, evening visitors encounter blue light on the water, which also helps to illuminate the natural surroundings of the Interiority and emphasize the movement or reflections in the water.
4.4 Design Studies: Park Street: Spatial sequences and bodily movements illustrated in rendered images of Design 2.0

Naturally, certain questions arise to do with this progressive withdrawal process; what is happening, for example, as visitors make the journey from the context to the heart of the space of contemplation (e.g. from the CBD of Melbourne to the periphery of the CBD in Park Street, Carlton)? What possible visual elements might influence this process over distance and time?

In the case of this Park Street location, the concept of withdrawal may well involve a prolonged journey between Melbourne’s CBD and the site at the edge of city.

However, these rendered images focus on the graduated and densely planted spatial sequences in the approach to the Interiority from the edge of Park Street. They convey perceptual change and movement through the use of light.

To sum up, in the Park Street sites, spatial sequences and bodily movements are distinctly part of the design, especially as rudimentary cycling and walking and paths are already present.

The first two renders illustrate sequence one: the perspective (and possible sensations) of the individual walking along a shadowed path surrounded by vegetation. Here, there is a gradual shift from the dark space enclosed by background vegetation. Then, as the spatial sequences approach the Interiority, there is a sense of entry as the light increases and the central space comes into view.
These two images illustrate the space between the dense edge of the Exteriority and heart of the Interiority. And thickness of the edge is increased to contrast with and accentuate the sense of entry into the interior space, which is intended to be minimal in composition compared to the rest of the journey.

The last render exhibits the view from the Interiority towards the outer edge of the space. Vegetation almost encloses the view of busy Nicholson Street and serves to shelter the Interiority.

One of the main reasons I have presented this series of rendered images is to demonstrate how time and distance are inherent in the very concept of a space of contemplation. They also illustrate how time, distance and physical movement relate to the transitions in spatial sequence.
CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

I came to realise through the various case studies in this chapter how integral dimensions of time and distance are to the whole concept of a secluded, contemplative landscape.

Generally, these studies showed how this landscape design intentionally promotes the gradual disengagement of the individual in a process of withdrawal (however brief) from everyday pressures and demands to an area of comparative solitude. This is the nature of the journey towards the destination, where time, distance, space and perceptual change provide the apparatus of withdrawal. This progression expresses the relationship between the heart of the site and its context through the tool of Embodiment of Space.

To conclude, Embodiment of Space provides a response to the research question in showing how context forms part of the design. Clearly spatial sequences and bodily movement are crucial to the concept of withdrawal as a journey.
CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH

RESEARCH CONCLUSION
Since contemporary life can be hectic and demanding, we are inclined to disconnect our minds from our emotions. I believe it is necessary to create space where we can unwind from daily life and contemplate or simply relax. However, this can be quite challenging in a post-modern context, since most contemplative spaces are historical and traditional. In my research, I wanted to explore the possibility of providing a place for retreat and contemplation, but which was also accessible in the course of our daily lives. Here, I would like to emphasise that the space of contemplation is not a place where visitors should feel compelled to contemplate or to feel in a particular way, but rather a place that invites a more open experience.

Throughout my research, the main questions raised were:
1. What are the identifiable visual features of secluded landscape of contemplation?
2. How can contemplative landscape as a medium for withdrawal be realised?

In responses to these questions, I have presented what I consider to be the key visual elements: Environment, Aesthetics and Embodiment of Space. These three elements are strongly interconnected, responding to and visually echoing each other. For example, the contrasts between Environment and Aesthetic of the Interiority result in manifest perceptual changes. Embodiment of Space describes this interrelationship, the nature of this connection in terms of perceptual change, continuous motion through time and spatial sequences.

The continual transformation over time as the nature of landscape, is a crucial idea in the development and understanding of this research. In this connection, progression through time and space acts as a medium or catalyst for withdrawal.

This creative journey revealed to me that landscape architecture could not be fragmented and independent of its surroundings as part of a transforming and fluid experience. So, spatial continuity is essential, with the context significantly influencing the design site. The urban or suburban environment forms part of this spatial continuum, so I have included it in the Exteriory of Void Scapes.

Personally, my hope is that landscape architecture design can make a positive contribution to contemporary life, not just to our aesthetic and intellectual enrichment, but also to our physical and psychological well being in a culture that is increasingly hectic. After completing this research, I was left with a further question: in what other ways can aesthetic forms of landscape architecture improve our physical well-being?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Book and Articles:


Krinke, Rebbecca. Contemporary landscapes of contemplation, London : Routledge, 2005


Messervy, Julie, Contemplative Garden, Howell Press, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1990


Spellman, Catherine. Re-envisioning Landscape, Actar, Barcelona, Spain :2003


BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS

Gunnar Asplund, Woodland Cemetery, Stockholm, Sweden (1940)
Shunmyo, Masuno, Terrace Garden, Canadian Embassy, Tokyo (1991)
Ryoa-ji, Kyoto, Japan (1450-1499)
Saiho-ji, Kyoto, Japan (710-794)
Roden's Crater, Arizona, USA
Canadian Embassy, Tokyo, Japan (1991)

Books and Articles (continued)


"Chartres and Ryoan-ji: Aesthetic Connections and Affecting Presence" Cross Currents; Spring 1993; 43, 1 Academic Research Library