

The promenade of the street: A spatio-temporal framework for design

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ABSTRACT: This paper begins with an outline of our on-going study of the spatial and temporal structure of streets in Urbino, Italy. As part of an architectural study abroad program, twelve credit hours of coursework—including urban theory, analytical drawing, and a research studio—are brought together to focus on an archaeological study of *place*. From this foundation, the paper presents the method and findings of the urban analysis, and the process that has shaped a deeper and more complex understanding of the *identity of place* and its *genetic code*. The inquiry began with the integration of high definition video cameras and their digital environments for the purpose of examining movement and the spatial passage of the street. The indefinite figure and vague boundaries of the street, as well as its visual and mnemonic extensions, resist any clear grasp of the street as a distinct artifact. What we discovered, along with our student collaborators, was that the digital tools illuminated both elements and structure—describing a *matrix* that is at once an organizing armature of the street and a key to understanding its identity as an urban artifact. The results point to the possibility that this matrix and its specific attributes, when integrated into a design process, provides a means for forming conjectures, developing designs, and evaluating design proposals. The resulting architecture would have the qualities of a *place* and would be integrated respectfully into the surrounding fabric.

The street, and by extension the entire city, is perceived and understood through the experience of sequential movement that occurs over time and through space. Along the street the frame of reference constantly changes. Space and matter seem to deform as they are drawn from the center of the visual frame to its periphery. The complex figure of the street is formed from a web of boundaries and centers, from things appearing to separate or merge together, from distinctions that mark beginnings and endings, from sequences of space that expand, contract or merge, and from repeated patterns of elements. Beyond these, memory plays a vital role in situating experience within a larger fabric of connections and apparent folds. In spite of continual changing experience along the street, it retains its identity, and even unity. To pass through a street is to inhabit a *place* that has distinct character and structure. The organization—its tempo, rhythm, pattern, and spatial sequence—forms an intelligible matrix that is coincident with the visible concrete reality. Our initial analysis sought to map and measure the extent and definition of its envelope. What we found was that the attributes of the matrix formed categories: elemental patterns and repetitions, beginnings and endings, sequences of events and spaces, frames, folds, webs, centers and boundaries. These fundamental attributes offer insight into the nature and identity of place that reaches beyond traditional studies and definitions. This paper proposes that the matrix and digital-video processes can provide a framework for the design process itself—examining these within an undergraduate design studio.

KEYWORDS: Architecture, Street, Place, Urban Analysis, Design Education

INTRODUCTION

As an urban artifact, the street remains elusive. Its boundaries are often indistinct and are perceived in our traverse as elastic—capable of deforming relative to the position of our eyes. We only perceive parts of it at any one time: a particular grouping of elements, a pattern of openings in the wall, or sequence of spaces. Yet, it still maintains its identity as a distinct place. It is our position that the *promenade*—our traverse—shapes this *sense of place* and must necessarily be considered in any discussion of the street either as an artifact or a place. In writing these words, we are reminded of Henri Lefebvre's monumental work, *The Production of Space*, in particular, this statement: "Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered" (Lefebvre, 1991, 143).

The street is a set of elements and spaces that are held together and have been fashioned, in part, by their common use over time. Over time, they come to support, or at least complement, each other. In order to apprehend the street, we take measure of its breadth, length, and height as if it were any other urban artifact—recording and documenting in plan and section. Yet, the street seems to defy our traditional methods of analysis and measurement. We must turn towards other means—new digital video technologies and post-production software. Using the digital technologies, we can slow it down in time and take it apart frame by frame. It is our hypothesis that this focused analysis is applicable to the design process itself.

In the spring semesters of 2013 and 2014, we produced an analytical study of the structure and the identity of the streets within the historic fabric of Urbino, Italy as part of a study abroad program for students of the College of Architecture Construction and Planning at UTSA. Building upon the findings of these studies, we have developed the structure and content of our present architectural design studio in San Antonio (Spring, 2015). Our choice of digital video technology was based on our desire to find a means to explore the effects of movement through the space of the street—in Le Corbusier's terms, the *promenade architecturale*. Before we consider the effect and nature of the *promenade* and its temporal and spatial ramifications, we will consider the street as an artifact.

Premise: The street as an urban artifact

The street as an artifact is difficult to grasp. A building, unlike a street, often resembles an object that can be picked up and turned over. Rotating it or passing it back and forth between our hands, we examine it. Its identity is understood through its figure and is seemingly definite, fixed, and static. In fact, it seems to exist outside of any context. Yet, any architectural artifact has much in common with a work of sculpture that we must consider from many angles as we move around or through it. There is no privileged side or façade to the street even as there is none to the sculpture of Henry Moore or the mobiles of Alexander Calder, for example. We cannot imagine gaining much insight from either plans or sections of these sculptural works. Even as we perceive a building, we assemble its identity as a composite image whose pieces are grasped as belonging to a definite whole. Within the city, we find our selves considering a church: we walk around the piazza on the outside, or through the nave on the interior, perhaps passing from a side aisle to a small chapel. Each analytical drawing measures it, takes it apart, queries it, and reassembles it. The plan and the section present its structure and continuity and allow us to identify it. The street, often devoid of any apparent rational order, resists this sort of analysis. Many streets do not have such a clear unity. Their identity appears to be linked to their temporal extension—grasped only in our traverse—or their place within the larger urban fabric.

The street is not made up of elevations or even sections as the use of orthographic drawings suggest. Indeed, these representations impose what is an incomplete measure. We approach each building in our *promenade* obliquely—there are no elevations. It is in the narrowness of the street and in the clarity of its edges that we find a clue to its identity. In the proximity of each of the walls—to the left and to the right along the *promenade*—we perceive changes in the street's volume, structure, and character. It may also be useful to consider the *promenade* as a succession of implied or literal frames: bringing depth of space and the element of time into our experience. The edges of the street—primarily its walls and overhangs—serve as bounding edges to a frames that captures a portion of something beyond—whether the next event along the *promenade* or a distant prospect.¹

Le Corbusier's *promenade architecturale*

The city is understood as we move through it:

Inside: we enter, we walk around, we look at things while walking around and the forms take on meaning, they expand, they combine with one another. Outside: we approach, we see, we discover. We receive a series of sensory shocks, one after the other, varying in emotion [...] We walk, we turn, we never stop moving or turning towards things. Note the tools we use to perceive architecture... the architectural sensation we experience stems from hundreds of different perceptions. It is the 'promenade', the movements we make that act as the motor for architectural events (Pauly, 2008, 29).

It is while walking from one place to another that we see how both street and city are organized, how their elements are distributed, positioned, and oriented. We work out an understanding of each place that is inseparable from the organization, material conditions, and arrangement of their artifacts and spaces. Along our path, groupings of elements, sequences of spaces, webs of connections, mnemonic folds and analogies are fashioned. The *promenade* carries us through space and time and is inextricable from the street or the city itself.

Since 1936, when the term was introduced by Le Corbusier *promenade architecturale* has remained within the jurisdiction of individual buildings (Pauly, 2008, 29). Our experience of the city and its streets is like a montage. In place, things are brought together sequentially and mnemonically forming meaningful wholes, shaped by our movement. The *promenade*, or traverse of the street, presents the sequential spaces as a continuum—as expanding and contracting space populated by things that are distributed over time—rather than as a “string of pearls”. Between any two events or elements within this set, another can be found. What we discover is that the street is comprised of sets of nested, overlapping architectural events at different scales; however, these cannot be understood outside of the larger context of the city and our experiential framework.

Literary review

While many other designers and theoreticians have investigated the street and its relationship to the urban fabric, few have directly addressed the street as an urban artifact, and even fewer have studied the street as both a spatial and temporal structure. The street has been the subject of study as a framework for social

structure as in Bernard Rudofsky's *Streets for People: A Primer for Americans* (1982). Allen Jacobs's comparative study of *Great Streets* has suggested the possibility of generating taxonomic categories of streets based on their plans and sections. Saverio Muratori's study of urban typomorphology and his notion of the city, as an organism, has led, in part, to Aldo Rossi's study of the city. *Street Design* (2013) by John Massengale and Victor Dover is in part a New Urbanist design primer. While these readings, and others too numerous to mention here, offer insight into many of the questions surrounding the street's structure and identity, they fall short of addressing the street relative to space, time, and experience.

In her book, *Le Corbusier and the Architectural Promenade*, Flora Samuels explores complex spatial narratives as they are related to the observer's path. The organization and the elements that compose Le Corbusier's buildings may be understood through an analysis of the sequential architectural events that take place along the *promenade*. Things are positioned within a spatial and temporal register that is informed by a distinct narrative.² An individual architectural event cannot be isolated but is, rather, bound to the unity of the whole. In much the same way, Piero della Francesca's enigmatic *Flagellation* (1455) depicts two distinct events, separated in time, taking place within the same constructed perspective. To interpret this painting, we must unite the disparate figures and their gestures, the architectural elements and spaces, and the evident temporal displacement within the singular geometric armature.

In *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi presents his now well-known theory of urban artifacts, collective memory, and typology. In categorizing the street as an artifact, he seems to suggest that urban space has a definite identity and influence on urban morphology (Rossi, 1984). He states that, "When we consider the spatial aspect of primary elements and their role independent of their function, we realize how closely they are identified with their presence in the city. They possess a value 'in themselves,' but also a value dependent on their place within the city" (Rossi, 1984, 87). The proposition that the street is not only an armature for growth, but also a generator of the city's form is important to understand. Yet, this idea that the street is an urban artifact is not significantly developed in Rossi's book.

In considering Giancarlo de Carlo's operational strategy of *reading the territory*, John McKean writes "deciphering the signs inscribed in the territory makes the place, its buildings or its land, comprehensible to the mind and the senses" (McKean, 2004, 49). It is important to distinguish between *place* and its *genetic code*. Place is an amalgamation of factors and conditions, including social, economic, political, and other cultural forces in union with the land and the elements that together compose the constructed environment. There seems to be something fixed or stable within the nature of a place such that it retains its identity even as it changes over time. De Carlo considered this stable element to be found in its *genetic code*—a site-specific "dialogue" between interventions and the environment. De Carlo's consideration of the *genetic code* is similar in many ways to Norberg-Schulz's use of the term *genius loci*, or governing spirit of a place. Norberg-Schulz, writing from a phenomenological position, offered what amounts to a list of qualities of place that served as the core for our study. As an initial armature for our study, we developed an expanded list of the attributes of the genetic code drawing from Norberg-Schulz's work.³

Although his seminal work, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, is a specific study of the interwoven fabric of language and landscape of the Cibecue Apache, it offers deep insight into place-making in general. Place itself is grasped as a constellation of elements that are bound into a single narrative web. To remove one of these elements is to change our sense of the place. Place is encountered as a simultaneity of physical and mnemonic attributes that are structured in space and in time (Basso, 1996).

Cullen focused his landmark book, *The Concise Townscape*, on the "spatial aspect" of the city's primary elements. Essentially, he introduced the notion of *serial vision* through a series of static perspectival frames that were set in reference to the city's primary elements as positioned in plan. The city's streets, open spaces, and piazzas served as an organizational structure: a datum along which views were positioned and framed (Cullen, 2009). Informed by the technology of its time, the photograph's still frame, *serial vision* recognized the presence of movement in space but was not, in itself, spatial (Cullen 2009). In *The Italian Townscape*, Ivor De Wolfe based his observations of the Italian urban fabric on Cullen's Townscape principles—*serial vision* in particular. These provided a schematic for the study of spatial patterns that relate the organization of the city as measured in plan with sequential perspectival frames (De Wolfe, 1963).

The study: instruments, methodology, and context

Our two-year analysis of sixteen selected streets in Urbino initially followed a conventional method. Measured drawings were prepared and we took account of the material palette. The character of the street—its sequential spaces and the effect of the street as a frame—was studied through sketching. The camera (still photography) was first introduced as a means of gathering images: documenting elements, materials, and spatial conditions along the street.

The video camera, like all instruments, is a filter that at once clarifies and distorts the field of study. We found that, to the extent that it screened out the situational "background noise"—that excess of visual information that surrounds us—the camera brought parts of the street into sharper focus. Learning to see through the video camera and its digital environment involved experimentation with its possibilities and

limitations. The eye was extended, tilted, or displaced. Time was slowed down, or sped up. Jigs were employed throughout the filming in order to reposition the eye or stabilize the frame. The camera became, in effect, an extension of vision, and eventually, the tools and processes involved formed a mode of thinking about the street. Throughout the process, the camera silenced the normal common sense process of recognition whereby things are recognized rather than actually seen. The camera's frame transformed the object perceived by differentiating it from its field. This allowed greater awareness and clarity. The framed object, replete with its newly perceived qualities of changing light and shadow, position, juxtapositions, and overlaps stood out. Behind the lens, we became acutely aware of the things before our eyes: separating and differentiating, or else drawing together and merging.

The video capture and manipulation techniques provided a mode of thinking about the street in all of its nuances. The raw footage systematically captured the complete traverse of the street. Each pass of the camera along the traverse of the street was focused on different aspects of the experience: the urban ceiling where the buildings met the sky, the urban floor where earth and wall met, the boundaries and edges, the sequence of spaces, and the visual frames that extended the experience beyond its immediacy. In an editorial process, the raw footage was transformed into a base video. We had to consider how the secondary, often elliptical, sequences would fit into the base video—departing from its structure and then returning to it.

Various operations were used: splicing, various digital effects and the inclusion of an aural soundscape—generated in layers in conjunction with the spatial qualities or elements present in the video. The digital environment enabled a frame-by-frame comparison and the measurement of incremental time that moved both forward and backward. We noted elements and their frequency and location, as well as the periodic patterns and repetitions. Recurring elements or spaces gave the street a rhythm and, at times, brought a series of mnemonic “folds” to the experience. The city ceased to be a fixed object as we discovered the complex weave of spaces and elements within which the time of experience, historical time, and memory merged. It became a language through which the street was approached anew. The digital tools enabled us to reimagine the street in layers. We also noticed that the envelope or extent of the street was never as clear as it seemed at first. In other words, the street's identity was, upon closer examination, somewhat ambiguous. Its figure constantly deformed and its boundaries were multiple, overlapping, and at times contradictory. A single element, for instance, might belong to several distinct overlapping or nested places. Importantly, we uncovered what amounted to a web. The elements along each street formed constellations in accordance with their similarity or position: resemblance, number, sequence, structure, figure, frame, analogy, type, use, and material.

Primary finding: the matrix

As we trace a path in our *promenade*, our perception is on several levels simultaneously. The street seems present as a structure and as events and frames that are sequential or overlapping—held between a beginning and an ending. Its geometric form cannot be separated from the material and space of which it is composed. This dense tissue is grasped sequentially. If we consider the street as having a language—a vocabulary of elements and a grammar of rules or patterns—the matrix is analogous to its syntax. This spatial and temporal geometry makes sense of things gathered or connected by the street. The matrix is not merely an organization or the principle of that organization. It provides a structure for the constituent parts of what De Carlo calls the *genetic code*. We propose that the individual qualities of the street's matrix should be examined concurrently with its physical attributes. The temporal framework needs to be taken into account, as things are not independent from a *before and after*, *here and there*, or *this one and that one*. In the words of Anne Friedberg, “Architecture is experienced in a complex matrix of space” (Friedberg, 2006, 150). Movement is movement *into*, *out of*, *beyond*, *alongside*, *under*, *across*, *up*, *down*, and *through*. The street's matrix is not a coincidental or contingent property of the urban artifact but is inextricable from the street itself. The street, and perhaps all places, is a *formwork*. Even as a single building cannot be perceived in its entirety outside of its situation and context, the street cannot be grasped outside of its connections and relationships to the larger environment of both city and land. The street is slowly absorbed sequentially as a series of more or less distinct moments or events in time—each with its typical configuration: intersections, hinges, bends, turns, pauses, openings, expansions, restrictions, releases—that are woven together, forming a distinct whole. In this way, the street is a time line—a temporal datum that organizes our encounters with things—forming a mnemonic that makes connections to things unseen.

In reference to Le Corbusier's *promenade architectural*, Samuel states that, “The body of course plays a central role in all of this. It would act as the vital intermediary in any transaction of knowledge between building and brain that would take place on the promenade” (Samuel, 2010, 27). The body perceives the street by its resistance—slope, narrowness, the quality of light, the height of walls, adjacency, pattern, sequence, texture, etc. The difficult part is to find some way to measure these perceptions and to understand how their relationship forms the street's particular identity and unity. This is the purpose and question that directs our current design studio. The matrix provides the structure for their interaction and shapes our perception of the street as a distinct *place*, concurrently placing it within the larger fabric of the

city. Characteristics of the matrix can be grouped into material, spatial, and temporal categories that inform and overlap each other:

<i>physical</i>	Tone, Boundaries + Centers, Thresholds, Earth + Sky, Webs
<i>spatial</i>	Rhythm, Spatial types, Frames + Visual Axes, Volume
<i>temporal</i>	Linear, Elastic Perspective, Spatial Sequences, Non-linear (Events + Folds) and Cyclic

Physical characteristics

Tone, or “color”, can be defined as the prevailing effect of the palette of materials, elements, and spaces—their degree, scale, positions, orientation, construction, patterns, and repetitions. Taken together as a totality, these produce a particular *intonation*—an existing state of characteristics, tensions, and resolutions of elements along the street. Tone is determined to a large extent by the material qualities and measure of boundaries and elements, and the changing the quality of light.

Along our *promenade*, as Le Corbusier reminds us, we pass from one event to another—constantly moving between *boundaries and centers*. If we consider an artifact as a sculptural work, we can understand the relative importance of its figure in shaping both our perception and its identity. Streets, as with other urban artifacts, have boundaries—material, spatial, and temporal. They tend to be porous and have distinct identifying characteristics: elements, openings, protrusions, fractures, configuration, location, dimension, proportion, orientation, and material-visceral properties. These architectural events serve as centers. Things take place and certain events “claim our attention” as we draw nearer.

Thresholds occur at that moment where things begin their presence. Necessarily, thresholds are components of boundaries: edges—places of beginnings and endings, insides and outsides. They mark one end of the street and the other. Like bookends, they hold and inform the identity of what is between. Thresholds are often defined by the presence of primary elements. They may also compose a particular view of the city or the landscape beyond. Upon close examination, their exact position and dimension is often vague or blurred. There is no single line of demarcation between *in* and *out*. Likewise, each threshold has a temporal dimension.

The earth and the sky are ever-present—defining the volume of the street. By earth, we mean the connection to land. For De Carlo, this response forms part of the logic between natural forms and cultural construction that is a primary aspect of the genetic code of place (McKean, 2004, x). The street is formed in concert with the resistance of the topography and the composition of the region’s geology. Each street extends upward to the sky. The sky, framed by walls and overhangs, is present as a clear figure that changes along the *promenade*.

Each street gathers, contains, and organizes a *web of things*—making a whole out of what would otherwise be disparate parts, forming figures and groupings. It is a vessel of sorts that provides structure for this network. As a spatial register, the street keeps account of its contents and shapes, our perception of them.

Spatial characteristics

There are two rhythms at play: that of our body as it traverses space and that of the street. The space of the street is both a field of action and the basis for that action (Lefebvre, 1991). Mediating between these orbits is the geometric matrix of the street. Our body, in engaging this active field, is located, oriented, and measured by the street. In turn, our movement becomes a datum by which we survey the street’s passage as it moves and deforms around us. “Architecture marks the passage of geometry from the architectural plane to that of the senses” (Samuel, 2010, 29). The pace of our movement is a counterpoint to that of the city.

We developed a limited family of *spatial types*, each of which was derived from studies in plan and section. Each type formed a category of spatial conditions that were distinguished from one another according to their configuration: “T” intersections, “Y” intersections, hinges, bends, pauses, openings, expansions, restrictions, and releases. Each street’s identity could be plotted out in their sequence of spatial types—corresponding to changes in plan and section. These sequences became a distinguishing mark of individual streets and indicated similarities and differences.

Each street is a series of *framed views and visual axes*. Each frame has a more or less identifiable figure that distinguishes it from the one before and the one that follows. A frame together and holds things—even if only momentarily as we pass. It collapses space and sets both near and far together. The distant vista defines a visual axis that extends the envelope of the street—expanding to encompass the distant view.

Space is contained as a *volume* by the street. Related directly to both plan and section, volumetric space describes the interior space of the street—its three-dimensional extension between one side and the other, between one end and the other, and between earth and sky. To traverse the street is to be within the street’s volume.

Temporal characteristics

The identity of the street is known only over time as seemingly disparate fragments are sutured together to form a meaningful whole. Events take place in time. But linear, or progressive time does not adequately measure our passage with its zigzag procession, its elliptical deviations, its mnemonic folds, its experiential variations, and its visual frames—each a reminder of some thing, place, or event that is now distant. There seem to be three types of time that are at play in the street: linear, non-linear, and cyclic.

Linear

Our footsteps move in *linear time*. In the present, we pass through a sequence of places: a datum from which *before* and *after* are perceived and measured. The rhythm of the street is also demarked by the patterns and repetitions and occurrence of singular or multiple architectural events.

In our *promenade*, *perspective is elastic*. Le Corbusier was intrigued by the experience of the Athenian Acropolis: “The whole thing, being out of square, provides richly varied vistas of a subtle kind; the different masses of the buildings, being asymmetrically arranged, create an intense rhythm. The whole composition is massive, elastic, living, terribly sharp and keen and dominating” (Samuel, 2010, 43). The term *elastic* describes the effect of spatially distributed elements relative to our moving eye. As we move through space, things change their countenance relative to each other.

The spatial volume of the street, as a whole, is perceived in joined *spatial sequences* along the *promenade*. The whole of the street is grasped as a dynamic and changing structure consisting of definitive sequences marked out in space and time by architectural variations. Between, there appears a break or a shift in the spatial qualities: a bend, turn, intersection, widening, restriction, or extension—these are perceived experientially.

Non-linear

Repetitions of elements spaces, or references between places suggest a greater network of connections and folds between things. Events in time are joined. Each, by itself, may be indefinite, incomplete, or only a fragment of some larger, unseen whole or structure. At these moments, time appears to defy the linear measurement of its passage and, like space, seems to expand or contract, or fold upon itself.

An *event* is shaped by the combined effect of elements in space—forming distinct and recognizable patterns that together separate from the background and hold their own identity relative to things that happen. The street is a body of linked architectural events. Each has distinct physical and spatial centers and boundaries and temporal extent or duration. Events can be plotted like a choreographic or musical score.⁴

A *fold* is a collapse in the initial perception of distance and regularity in time. The past and the future are absorbed by the present. Memory is the vehicle for joining and connecting seemingly disparate things. It is as if things were nested, superimposed, or coincident, or existing at different scales simultaneously.

Cyclic time consists of daily, seasonal, or annual repetitions and patterns of events. It is the time of festivals, myths, and rituals, and serves as clock for daily events. Sunlight and seasons cycle slowly. Although we perceived cyclic time in our analysis, it remained distant, vague, and incalculable. We set it aside for the purpose of this project is to focus on the measurable.

Synthesis of the study: our hypothesis

Place has long been a difficult concept to pin down.⁵ Building on our analytical studies in Urbino, we believe that the physical, spatial, and temporal characteristics of the matrix can inform the generation and development of conjectures, the formation of provisional answers, and the testing the resulting solutions. This semester, we are teaching an architectural design studio in San Antonio, Texas whose purpose is to explore the potential of such a design process. San Antonio is obviously a different cultural context from Urbino. Their perception and use of urban space cannot be equated. Our aim is not to replicate the culturally specific attributes of the urban fabric or to consider the image or structure of Urbino’s streets as a source of architectural and spatial forms that could be incorporated into a new setting. We are interested in figuring out a process and methodology that utilizes the spatial and temporal structure of the street (its matrix) and the use of digital video technologies as a design tools. The site we have chosen is in an underdeveloped industrial area near the downtown.

The studio *is* our hypothesis. Rather than considering place-making from its current neo-traditionalist perspective where artifacts and organizational patterns are set into a new contexts, we are proposing that the existing qualities inherent in the *genetic code* of a particular site can be enhanced and developed through the use of the matrix as a means of representing and studying the site, and as a tool in forming and testing the design proposals. The design process becomes a continuation of the analytical process. Analysis reveals the existing matrix that is then systematically adapted as programmatic elements are introduced. Relationships between these elements or “architectural events”, as Le Corbusier would call them, are measured and framed by the *promenade*. The traverse of the street becomes an organizational and design

strategy. The proposed design will coherently link the existing buildings, topography, regional geology, climactic conditions, and cultural fabric of the site. The existing site has qualities of a *place* although these are not readily discerned, often contradictory, or ignored altogether in the progressive development of the site over time. We believe that the qualities and identity of *place* can be enhanced by the insertion of new programmatic elements that are woven into the existing fabric.

The program—generated in collaboration with the students—is a device akin to a choreographer’s score—relating events to place and time. Throughout the design process, each of the characteristics of the matrix will be considered both separately and in combination. Separately, they form distinct architectural events or sequences of events. Unified, they form the *promenade* and through the *promenade*, convey the qualities of *place*. The structure of the existing site, isomorphic with its narrative, will initially organize the new elements. In turn, these new architectural forms will reinforce, deepen, and extend the qualities of place. The new proposals are not placed *on* the site, but woven *into* it. In this sense, we experience not as objects, but as integral parts of a larger fabric. In much the same way, the streets in Urbino were perceived as identifiable wholes even though they were never seen in their entirety.

Design will be conducted in part by using a series of “overlays” grafted over an initial video of the “street”. These will involve sketches, and the use of both traditional drafting tools and digital programs. The digital frame of both camera and computer screen provides the means and the methodology for forming conjectures and testing proposals. In addition to orthographic studies, digital and actual models as well as drawing on successive perspectival printed images will be utilized. Within the expanding matrix, architectural propositions will form webs, folds, sequential spaces, etc. addressing those characteristics that are in need of enhancement in order to strengthen and deepen the sense of place. The final solutions will be carried back into the digital video framework. This will enable a side-by-side comparison with the initial videos the students had done in their analysis of the existing conditions. In one sense, architects perceive and measure the temporal experience of architecture once the work is built.

CONCLUSION

We will remain unsure of the results of the proposed design studio until the semester has concluded. The purpose is to step closer to a place-based architecture that is not an imposition of values, architectural conditions, or stylistic attributes, but that is grounded by the existing *genetic code* and informed by spatio-temporal nature of experience. We seek an architecture that defines, reveals, frames, and enhances, the qualities of *place*. The *promenade* provides a useful platform from which to describe the attributes, identity, and structure of not only the street as an urban “room” but also *place* itself. If this is the case, we reasoned, perhaps the same tools used to analyze the street could be used in the design process.

While our principal study was focused on the street, we propose that an increased awareness of the interwoven existing aspects of *place*, the *promenade* as a means of organizing the design, and the use of digital tools—providing a method of study—will result in designs that are not only appropriate for the places in which they are pursued, but may enhance the latent potentiality and character of *place*. An increased awareness of the temporal structure of the *promenade*—investigated with the aid of digital video will fundamentally change the design process. We caution against beginning the design process with any pre-conceived image, checklist of specific desirable architectural conditions, or stylistic agenda, and applying it to the particular site. *Place* exists in the complex weave of natural forces and conditions that are in dialog with the cultural interventions. *Place* is latent—our task as architects and designers is to draw it to the surface and make it a vital part of the present experience.

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¹ An early use of the *promenade architecturale* is found in the late writings of Karl Friedrich Schinkel where, in presenting images of his architectural designs, he attempted to communicate the corporality of architecture by placing it within the context of the street. Essentially, he was proposing a site-specific design response. By setting his work in oblique perspective, as seen from street, Schinkel redefined the urban context and the architectural project in terms of movement along the street and the position of the eye. No longer did the elevation alone convey the architectural design intentions. The building's functionality could not be separated from its place within the urban fabric relative to perception. For further information on Schinkel's understanding of the urban fabric relative to his architectural designs, see: Jean-François Lejeune, "Schinkel's Entwürfe zu städtischen Wohngebäuden: *Living All'Antica in the New Bourgeoise City*." *The Classicist* No. 9, (2011): 9. "Schinkel was perhaps the first architect to set aside the acontextual presentation of both public and private works as seen in the treatises of Andrea Palladio, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux or Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, and to systematically present architectural works in their real urban and legal context."

² "The promenade acts as an allegory of life and its possibilities." This allegory is illuminated by Le Corbusier in *Le Poem de L'Angle Droit*. Samuels, 58.

³ In defining the elements of architectural space, Norberg-Schulz initially structures his position around Lynch's *landmark, node, path, region, and edge* (Norberg-Schulz, 1974). In *Genius Loci*, Norberg-Schulz presents a more detailed discussion that is informed to a greater extent by his readings in phenomenology. While acknowledging Lynch, Norberg-Schulz embraces Heidegger's notion of concrete space and dwelling. Here, Norberg-Schulz defines the character of place in a body-centric reading that incorporates such terms as: *figure-ground, boundary-center, centralization, direction, rhythm, proximity, floor, wall, ceiling, and openings*. To this vague and partial list, he adds *space* as a system of relationships between things that are denoted by propositions. An expanded outline of the characteristics of place includes: inside and outside—degree of extension and degree of enclosure; connections to the larger city and to the landscape; center—defining elements and degree of centralization; boundaries—articulation / modulation; enclosure / type of pores / openings—floor, walls, ceiling, their continuity / unity and fractures / disruptions / breaks; elements—form, substance, dimension, number, proportion, location, position, orientation (Norberg-Schulz, 1984).

⁴ For a description and exploration of the score as a means of design development, see: Lawrence Halprin. *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment*. (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1969).

⁵ For a thorough study of the nature and qualities of place, see: Edward S. Casey. *Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. (Indianapolis, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1993).