

THE WHITE HOUSE

And other counter-narratives from the lockdown

by
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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.
This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required
final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.
I understand that my thesis may be made
electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The *White House* is my father's colonial-hybrid ancestral house (*bahay na bato*) in Baliuag, the Philippines. The *White House* tells a story of a dwelling imbricated within both national and nationless histories.

Contemporary emplacement demands movement, whether through migration, travel, or transcultural exchange. Identity, as positioned by the postcolonial writer Édouard Glissant, is linked fundamentally with change and contact with others, and yet the loss that these forms of movement demand begs the question of what—in the most ancestral depths of our being—still remains. Facing these depths, the idea of home offers a metaphor for grounding. This thesis assembles multiple fragmentary, and at times opaque, individual parts into a hybrid that offers a response to this question.

I position the site of the *White House* as a counterpoint to national official history and as the subject of multiple forms of exchange. My thesis tells a personal history seen through the alternating lenses of domestic space, public graffiti, and fine art. Through the representational forms of drawing, writing, and digital space—media that I offer in response to the physical house—the architecture and the histories it embodies take on new lives across time and geographic location. The topology of a palimpsest becomes the source of inspiration for a drawing series of the *White House*, extending the tradition of architectural drawing and culminating with a large-scale canvas panel mounted and installed for public view in Toronto, Canada. Methods of drawing, inscription, hachure, and erasure are used to document and reflect on the physical architecture of the *White House*. In the process, interactions between the palimpsest's layers begin to suggest a contemporary framework for thinking about urban history.

...

Through this thesis, I grieve the physical loss of a house from my memory, and its metaphysical loss in the face of emergent site-less hyperculture. Facing these losses, I freely confront the future holding aspects of deep cultural identity that might still resist change.

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Dedication

Beneath the veneer of academia, I dedicate my thesis as a love letter to a departing ancestral house, and the men, women, and children in my family who made it their home.

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The White House is built as a favour, a refuge, a repository. The objects within serve as ornament and as datum for the recollection of collective memory. They are a material assemblage of an archipelago: rattan, harvested from Southeast Asian jungle, the inlaid bone of provincial water buffalo, the shells of windowpane oysters in Capiz. The stair balustrades are the product of local industry; the shrines and statues of religious icons—moments reserved for adoration, remnants of the Spanish Catholic occupation.

Arguably the most successful US tank
action of the Philippine Campaign
of 1941-1942, and perhaps the largest
as well, occurred in the small town
of Baliuag on New Year's Eve, 31 December
1941.

Baliuag, in Pampanga Province (in Bulacan
today), was an important defensive pos-
ition along the last of the Japanese
lines shielding the withdrawal of
USAFPE troops in Bataan.

Baliuag was then "a town
of rambling houses and shops
scattered along Route 5
and the north bank of the
Angat River." Indeed, if the
enemy were to push south of
Baliuag they would have been
able to reach Plaridel, six miles
to the south, and then cut the
road leading from Manila
to the vital bridge at Calumpit,
cutting off any remaining
South Luzon Force elements
trying to make it to
Bataan.



Fig. 0.1 Rattan Chair from the White House series, Marker on paper, 2020

Introduction

This thesis is fundamentally a project of emplacement, and an account of how the project itself evolved within the thesis's timeframe. The thesis references the topologies of a counter-narrative and a palimpsest and, in parallel, the tensions that those metaphoric topologies invoke. Illustrated fragments recount a journey in multiple scales: the geographic (from Manila, to Toronto, to Venice, and the moment preceding a return to Manila), the chronological (from fall 2019 to spring 2022), and the anachronistic (by way of memories, dreams, plans, and ancestral stories). This journey begins and ends with a house in the Philippines, the *White House*. It describes discrete projects stemming from the house's history, contained within the years of isolation that the COVID-19 crisis necessitated. Rather than positioning the work as an 'alternative narrative,' which implies a relationship of center and periphery, my thesis acknowledges the existence of 'multiple narratives'—in the spirit, perhaps, of Édouard Glissant's dynamic conception of *globality*, as opposed to globalization.¹

I start with a passage written by the late bell hooks:

I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing.²



Fig. 0.2 Interior of the upstairs sala of the White House, Baliuag, 2020

My thesis does not propose a new building design, thus I have framed it as *theory*; yet I have found emplacement most profoundly through the *practice* of drawing, writing about, and disseminating built form. These acts are expressed through the following multimedia artefacts: a set of scanned drawings, a print magazine, a series of webpages, and a large-scale drawing. As in a palimpsest, the story of the *White House* bleeds through all of these artefacts. With the *White House* as a foothold, this thesis seeks continuity, teasing out the layers of identity that remain and refuse to be absorbed by the disruptions of migration, colonization, and transcultural exchange. This intuition comes in response to what South Korean-born German philosopher Byung-Chul Han describes as the emergent "hypercultural de-siting" that will have to "confront a fundamentalism of sites," "ancestral voices

1 Glissant describes globality in opposition to globalization; rather than a model that standardizes and dilutes, globality produces a difference from which new things can emerge. Édouard Glissant and Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Archipelago*. (Isolarii, 2021), 22.

2 bell hooks. *Theory as Liberatory Practice*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 59.

prophesying disaster,” and “the trauma of loss.”³ I wished to be an expert in Philippine architecture. At the same time, as a first-generation immigrant to Canada, I knew that there were limits to this expertise and its utility, and I wanted as much to locate the beauty within this nascent space of cross-cultural identity. And the part of that identity which, in my own case, is “Filipino”, has been eloquently described by the Filipina art historian Florina H. Capistrano-Baker as “not simply a matter of peeling away cultural layers, for the essence of Filipino-ness is imbricated in the intertwined layers of external stimuli as Asian, European, and American empires successively [or] simultaneously attempted to draw the archipelago into their rival spheres, creating cultural entanglements that have become intrinsic to Philippine visual culture.”⁴ Indeed, there is a particularly interesting irony in claiming the term “Filipino” as part of personal identity, since it was only during the spread of national consciousness in the late 1800s that there existed a population beginning to refer to itself as Filipino.⁵ Nevertheless, this term is my starting point.

The White House is a name I developed to refer to my father’s ancestral house in Baliuag, Philippines. At the onset, I was drawn to the image of the house as “one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind.”⁶ I started by framing the history of the *White House*, my family history, along the axis of a narrative and counter-narrative. By critiquing canonical architectural history

typically told through monuments and public buildings, I was able to build a provocation that prioritized the knowledge of the vernacular, of the colonized, and of the family whose day-to-day lives were entwined with the multigenerational home. I found the medium of story-telling useful at this stage of the research since, as Alberto Pérez-Gómez wrote, “the qualities of place were always enacted through myths: oral, ever-transforming stories that were deeply shared by the people and intertwined with the landscape.”⁷

The irony of a counter-narrative, I began to learn, is that it requires a primary narrative which becomes the basis of a critique. Though useful, I knew that this power analysis was not fundamentally what my thesis was about, nor was it a historical thesis about Philippine architecture designed to exist in isolation. And yet, in the particular example of the Philippines I have outlined, I was fated with the opportunity to study a culture that in its current form is impossible to separate from the impositions and influences of external sources—from the karaoke machines of Japanese origin, to the penchant for American sports, to the *bahay na bato* housing typology I had studied and whose literal foundations were rooted in the stones of colonial Spain. (The questions of authorship and origination will be discussed at length in the section of this thesis entitled, *Venice: Philippine Copycats*.) This inextricable sense of nationality is something I believe to be shared by many communities in our contemporary “hypercultural”

3 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2022), 10.

4 Florina H. Capistrano-Baker. “The Roberta and Richard Huber Colloquium, 2021.” NYU Institute of Fine Arts Events Archive. November 12, 2021. <https://ifa.nyu.edu/events/archive-2021.htm>

5 Benedict Anderson. “First Filipino.” *London Review of Books* 19, No. 20 (1997).

6 Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

7 Pérez-Gomez, Alberto. *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science*. (Boston: The MIT Press, 2016).

world, Filipino or not. Perhaps it is more useful to think about emplacement and architectural history as multiple counter-narratives, that co-exist and do not always follow a line of direct opposition.

I then became preoccupied with the topology of a palimpsest, and the matrix of relations associated with this topology. The metaphor of a palimpsest was useful in thinking about the complex exchange of stylistic and cultural influences in the Philippines and the Philippine diaspora, and it was furthermore inspiring for the various drawing explorations that would eventually comprise this thesis. As I built a literature review that traced the history of architectural representation, I thought about a palimpsest's layers, about building layers up, scraping them away; the interaction of layers between one another; what might be hidden beneath, and hidden elsewhere. I began to see new lines of travel in my thinking about my *White House* within analogous "unofficial" lived histories—in the graffiti-covered walls of central Toronto during lockdown, the hidden spatial ecosystem of Venice during a Biennale, and the immigrant and female artists exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The image and the idea of the dwelling moved through these places with repetitious force; these new contexts became the conditions for my artefacts to materialize. Holding on to the *White House* as a metaphor for the most ancestral, core parts of my being, I wished to observe what would be filtered out and what would stubbornly remain, as the story took on new forms for various audiences.

In compiling the writing and drawings that follow, I asked myself: is this a thesis, or is it just a slice in time? That is to say, that perhaps this thesis itself is a

work in progress, or just the first chapter of something larger—as this research has ultimately changed the course of my professional life. It has produced a story and set of images that have allied me with communities ranging from the size of my own immediate family, to Filipino-Canadians who relate to the sentiments and memories of a fading ancestral house, to strangers who feel inspired by a story and a drawing series. Their dissemination and exchange across disciplines has allowed me to see how architectural design and fine art might bridge across to one another in fulfilling and intentional ways. And as I reflect on the first and last sections of the thesis, which were launched in my present home of Toronto, I've also painted a better picture for myself of the art and design community with whom I share this city. The ways in which its programmers and curators are working together to articulate Canadian cultural heritage has been integral to my practice moving forward.

And so, I will recount the joy of synchronicity that has come from the mourning and celebration of an ancestral house. Perhaps this thesis, sited temporally in the unprecedented period following the outbreak of COVID-19—hindered and strengthened by reliance on digital tools of communication—forced to the vast interiorities of domesticity and identity as a result of the outer world closing itself to me—is itself a counter-narrative to a graduate thesis.



Fig. 0.3 Universal House/Particular House, Installation daytime view, 2022

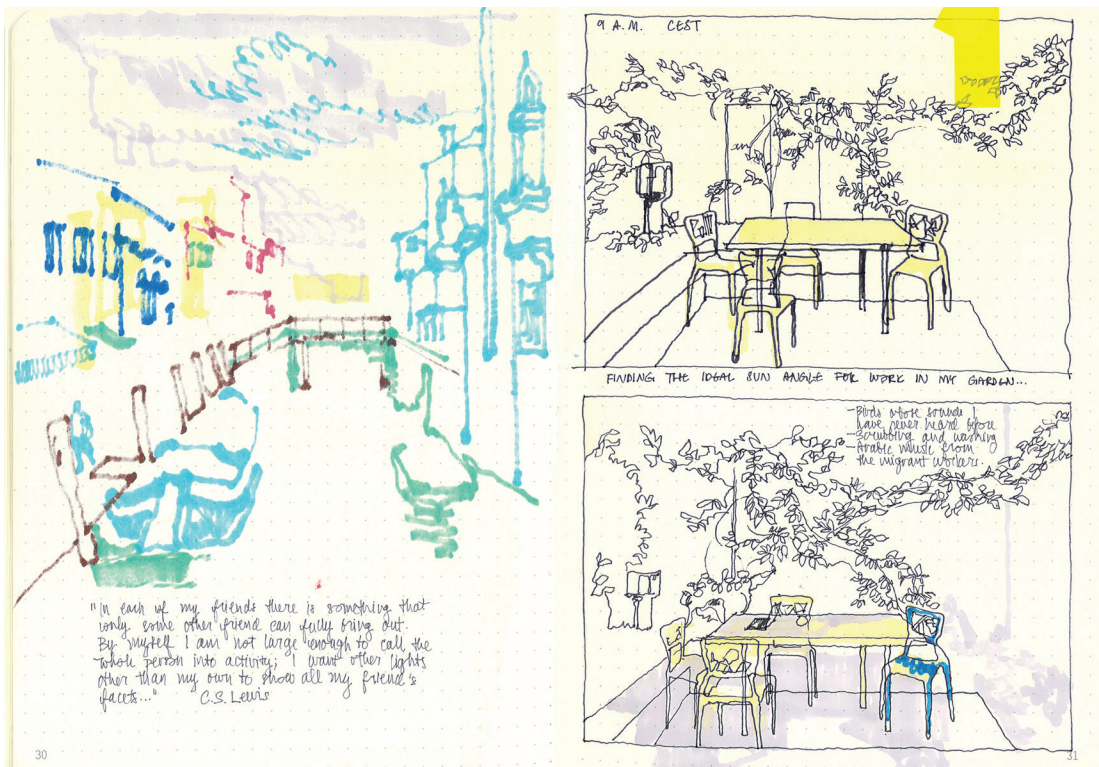
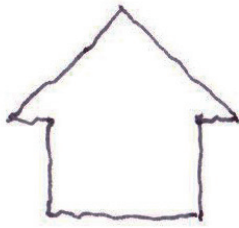


Fig. 0.4 Sunlight in my garden, Venice notebook sketches, 2021

UNIVERSAL HOUSE / PARTICULAR HOUSE



The bahay kubo, a freestanding structure on stilts, is a garden staple that clings to the memory of the Philippines' first nipa huts. The folk song that gestures toward it, as its namesake, is a catalog of all the plants and vegetables that grow plentiful across the archipelago. The garden becomes a communal space, a stage for singing; the singing bridging the human and vegetable worlds as it calls out what's around: string beans, hyacinth beans, lima beans, peanuts and eggplants.



Fig. 1.1 Bahay Kubo, Marker on paper, 2020.

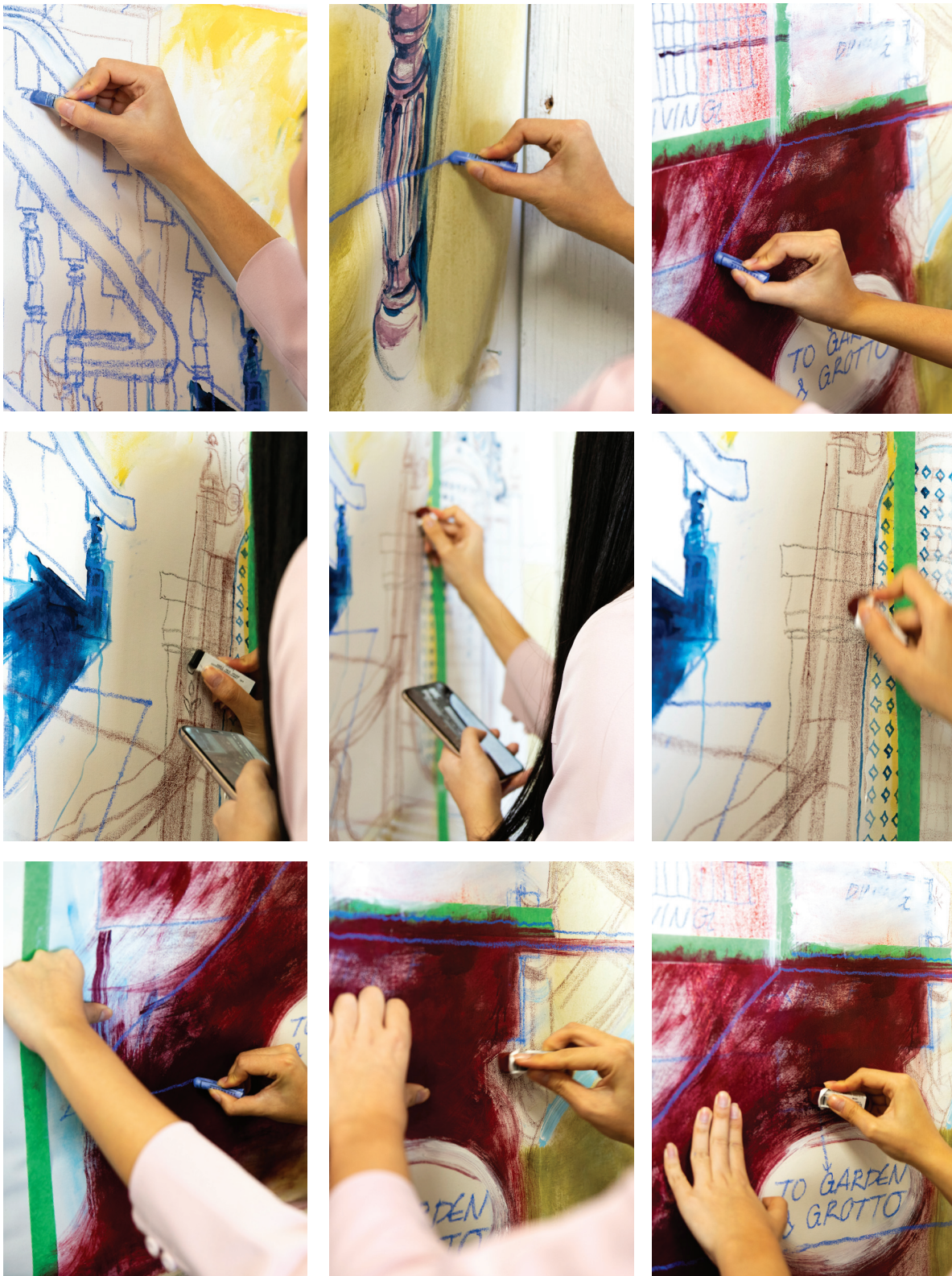


Fig. 1.2 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin, Montage of detail views of the artist's hand in the process of drawing. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)

On Drawing

Architectural representation as we know it assumes standards—operating in a geometrized, homogenous space that was construed as the “real” space of human action during the nineteenth century⁸—that are often taken for granted. The concepts of perspective that emerged in Europe in the early Renaissance retained implicit connections with classical optics, resulting in contradictions in the forms of hegemonic visual representation emerging at that time. These contradictions are outlined in detail by the architectural historian Alberto Pérez-Gómez in *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*. Pérez-Gómez describes the “story of perspective” as a *hinge* for architectural representation, examining a transforming relationship between practice and theory, and the making of images and the making of buildings. In the book’s prelude, he writes:

Representing architectural space as the time of an event, the disclosure of order between birth and death, in the unpredictable temporality of human life itself, projection is literally the hyphen between idea and experience that is the place of culture, the Platonic *khôra*.⁹

Nearly thirty years later, and briefly leaving the concept of architectural representation for the concept of “hy-

perculture” introduced on page 3, I cite Byung-Chul Han as writing:

Our present age is characterized by the collapse of horizons. Contexts that provide meaning and identity are disappearing, and the symptomatic results are fragmentation, a kind of pointilism, and pluralization. This also applies to the way we experience time. There is no longer the sort of fulfilling time that is due to a beautiful structure of past, present and future, that is, to a story, to narrative suspense. Time becomes naked, that is, devoid of narration. A point-like time, or event time, emerges. Because it is poor in horizons, this kind of time is not able to carry much meaning.¹⁰

What, then, would it mean to generate a drawing that captures horizonless, fragmented, pluralized space, stripped of narrative time? I engage with architectural representation not only to interrogate perceptions of place and built form, but to meditate on a cultural collapse of horizons.

In *Translations from Drawing to Building*, Robin Evans writes that architectural drawings play a generative role, and that their increasing consumability is due to their being “less concerned with their relation to what they represent than with their own constitution.”¹¹ The drawings themselves become the repositories of effects and the focus of attention, while the transmutation that occurs between drawing and building remains to a large extent an enigma. This enigma can be considered a depar-

8 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier. *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 5.

9 Ibid. 6.

10 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley. 2022), 50.

11 Robin Evans. *Translations from Drawing to Building*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 160.



Fig. 1.3 Connections by Bianca Weeko Martin for University of Waterloo Magazine Fall 2021, Marker and gouache on paper.

ture from the role of a traditional architectural drawing which, at 1:1, directly represented an artefact of construction, neither generative nor suggestive—but productive.

A term that might provide further insight is *disegno*. *Disegno*, from the Italian word for drawing or design, carries a complex meaning in art which involves both the ability to make the drawing and the intellectual capacity to invent the design.¹² However, as the architect Marco Frescari points out in *Eleven Exercises in the Art of the Architectural Drawing*, in Italian vernacular, the use of the word *disegno* did not originate in painting and sculpture, but in ground measuring and in construction sites.¹³ Here, I recognize the limits of my *White House* drawings as



Fig. 1.4 El Metro by Bianca Weeko Martin for FOLD Magazine/Design Talks Calgary, Marker and gouache on paper, 2021.

architectural design. Yet in representing the real features of a built house—and employing the straight, orthographic lines that I had learned to hand-draft in architecture school—the series begins with the tradition of the architectural drawing. If we consider the subject of the *White House* drawings and of *Universal House/Particular House* to be an unreachable space from the past, the relation between drawing and subject is inevitably one not concerned with the realization of a new building. Can architectural representation account for the weight of generational time and migration? Perhaps the drawings' "relation to what they represent" described by Evans is a relation more in line with the relation described by Édouard Glissant as being "an open totality evolving upon itself."¹⁴ I consider drawing an act

12 National Gallery, London. "Disegno." Accessed April 7, 2022. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/glossary/disegno/>

13 Marco Frescari. *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing*. (London: Routledge, 2011).

14 Édouard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 192.

of recalling and translating a memory, and later formatting this translation into an artefact that can be shared and discussed with others. Drawing is the act of releasing this part of identity into the world, with hopes and fears that others may project their own memories or dreams onto it and thus, extend its evolution. Drawing is research, participatory in the process of conceptualization but also in its contemplation after the fact.

In the large-scale drawing *Universal House/Particular House* (pictured in full in **Figure 1.19**), I make the deliberate and conscious decision to have the final artefact read as a drawing rather than a painting. I return to the reading of *Perspective Hinge*, where Pérez-Gómez weighs the drawings of the painter against those of the architect. Citing Leon Battista Alberti, Pérez-Gómez writes that, “while the painter “takes pains to emphasize the relief of objects in paintings with shading and diminishing lines and angles” through the methods of linear perspective... the architect represents depth by drawing the footprint or *ichnographia*—literally, an inscription parallel to the plane of the horizon...”¹⁵ Though I acknowledge within my work a faithfulness to lines and “true angles” over painterly shading, as well as abundant references to the notations of *ichnographia*, my drawings are not aligned completely with Alberti’s advocacy of “simple, unadorned models for generating architectural ideas.”¹⁶ Conversely, the quality of drawing endows my work with what I imagine to be an endless state of ideation and flux. “There is of-

ten something inchoate about a sketch that typically isn’t present in a sculpture or a painting,” Larry Walsh writes in the introduction to *Daniel Arsham: Sketchbook*.¹⁷ Drawings—especially the gestural, analog kind—are in my memory of architecture school closely associated with the dynamic parti-making stages of a project. This is perhaps where my decision to primarily use analog sketching media figures in. And yet, rather than submitting myself entirely to art’s looseness and freedom, I find myself clinging to architecture’s beholdenness to structure and detail, to the built facts of the world. Perhaps drawing, then, is finding footing in bridging the worlds of art and architecture. To present an artefact of creation to the world without committing to changing it; to trace.

Retaining the quality of a drawing required careful consideration during the process of scaling up from paper to large canvas. Translating drawing across these scales (and I will return again to the concept of translation in following sections) brought technical challenges that urged me to learn to work with new drawing materials. Working on a 6’ tall canvas firstly meant selecting media that would adhere well to the canvas fabric and be clearly visible from a distance; it also required manipulating the media in wider, stronger, more embodied gestures. I retained the “feel” of drawing in *Universal House/Particular House* through the use of soft pastel and encaustic paint sticks, which allowed me to achieve precise linework and text. For the American painter and sculptor Cy Twombly, whose work was “a lifetime effort to create a flow from

15 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louis Pelletier. *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 27.

16 Ibid.

17 Larry Walsh, *Daniel Arsham: Sketchbook*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 2022.

his body to the canvas,"¹⁸ the technique of encaustic was taught as a method in which heated pigmented material was directly fused onto the surface of a panel. Apparently Twombly was drawn to the way this enabled underlayers to show through for brilliant and illuminating effects, and though he found the medium at times tedious, he adapted it by doing crayon drawings, heating and scratching, which is "a form of encaustic."¹⁹ For myself, encaustic sticks—the extents of material held in one's hand, unseparated from the hand by wood or aerosol mechanisms—bring the body in close proximity, at times even synergy, with the drawing surface itself.

It is this closeness and intimacy that I bring to my drawings, both in their construction and in their subject. In *Universal House/Particular House*, the drawing pictured in this section's pages, I obey and break the rules of traditional architectural representation. I do this, not in order to construct a new physical structure, but to generate the blueprint for its remembrance, posterity, and exchange. In recognizing both the history of architectural drawing and the limits of geometry within its representations, I welcome the contemporary possibility that the drawing "might move from its supposed status as a mirror or blueprint for reality" and, rather than telling one story of consensus, "remember and acknowledge multiple, even contradictory versions of reality."²⁰



18 Christine Kondoleon, Anne Carson, and Kate Nesin. *Cy Twombly: Making Past Present*. (Boston: MFA Publications, 2020), 28.

19 Ibid.

20 Katie Lloyd Thomas. "Lines in Practice: Thinking Architectural Representation through Feminist Critiques of Geometry." *Geography Research Forum*, Vol. 21 (2001): 57-76.

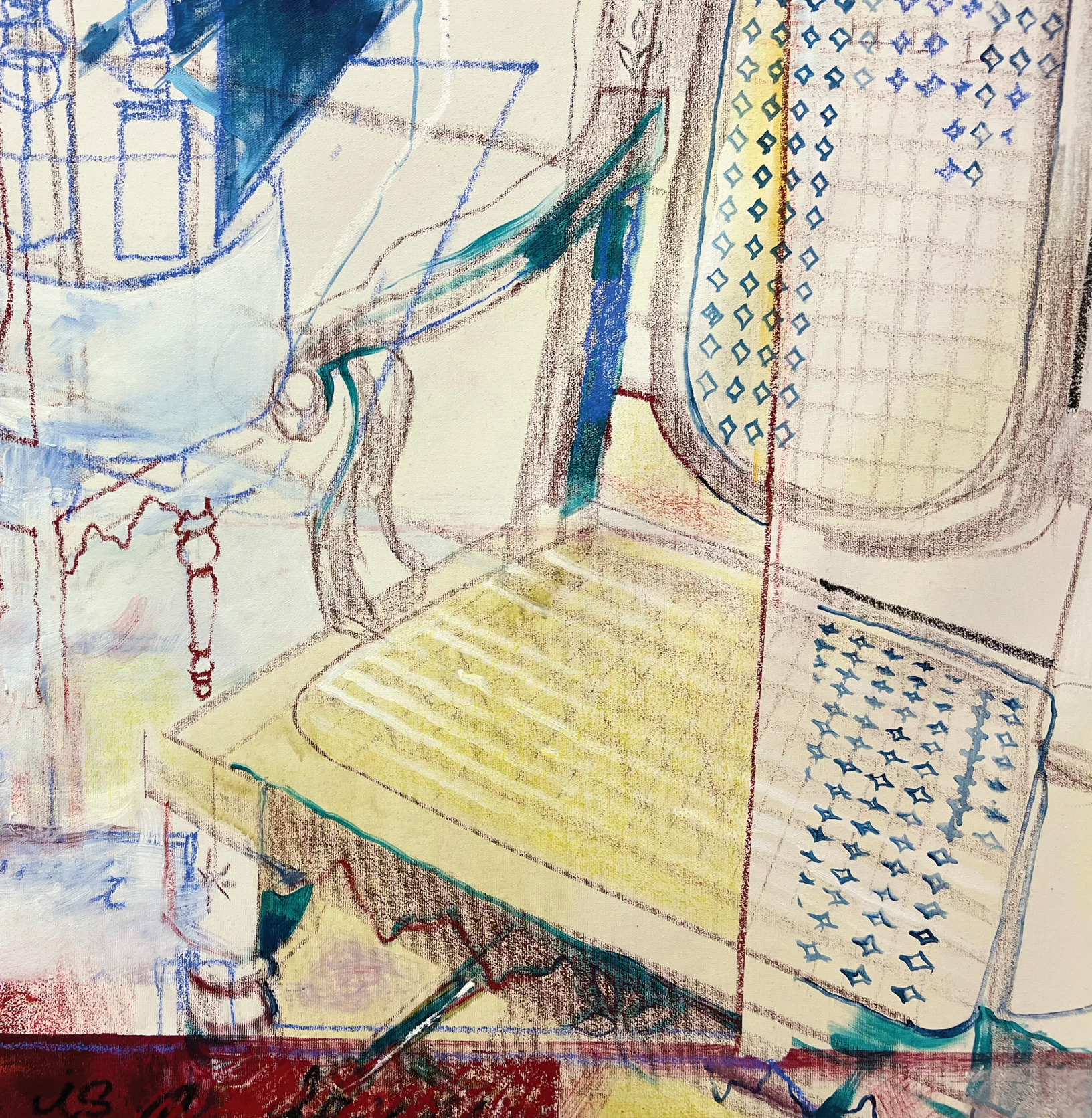


Fig. 1.5 Universal House/Particular House,
detail view, 2022



Fig. 1.6 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)



Fig. 1.7 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)





Fig. 1.9 Cy Twombly, *Leda and the Swan*, Rome, Oil, graphite, and wax crayon on canvas, 1962. Detail view. (Image: MoMA)



Fig. 1.10 Buffed and unbuffed graffiti in Colonia Escandón, Mexico City, 2022

Fig. 1.8 (Facing) Universal House/Particular House, detail view, 2022

On Writing

Writing serves various purposes, functional and ornamental. For the Uruguayan journalist Eduardo Galeano, one writes “out of a need to communicate and to commune with others, to denounce that which gives pain and to share that which gives happiness,” and “one writes against one’s solitude and against the solitude of others.”²¹ And for Cy Twombly, the writing of texts in pencil was key to a broader innovation concerning the introduction of language into painting. His artistic intention has been described as “making his actions visible,” “inviting the viewer into his methods and perceptions,” and therefore within his work, “it is not so much about conveying a particular message, but rather about evoking the spontaneity and emotions he associated with the “feel” of writing.”²² Writing, then, is wrought out of feeling and the need to share it, and it is a feeling in and of itself.

Furthermore, Twombly used the inscription of words as a method to recall and embed within his work the Ancient world, mostly drawing inspiration from Greek and Roman texts (**Figure 1.9**). He stated a preference for “the line of the pencil over the brushstroke of painting,” earning him detractors who called these marks scribbles or found them transgressive in the way they occlude legibility. Writers often refer to the markings in

21 Eduardo Galeano. *Days and Nights of Love and War*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

22 Christine Kondoleon, Anne Carson, and Kate Nesin. *Cy Twombly: Making Past Present*. (Boston: MFA Publications, 2020), 28.

23 Bahay kubo is the Filipino term for a vernacular nipa hut, but it is also the title of a folk song that references the nipa hut surrounded by different kinds of vegetables.

Twombly's work as "graffiti," a description he resisted. (Graffiti is an art form I will discuss in this thesis at length in the section *Baliuag: The White House*, as well as through the photographs that make up *Toronto: Graffiti*.) My own motivations for integrating text inscriptions into my drawings are similarly concerned with locating heritage and connecting the past with the present. What kind of connection did Twombly imagine united him with western antiquity? I do not see their artists as ancestors. Yet I will reference technological contributions from classical Europe later in this thesis as they pertain to publishing, perspective, and religious architecture.

My text inscriptions draw from historical accounts of Philippine wars and events both familiar and unfamiliar to me, family lore, and even folk songs such as *Bahay Kubo*.²³ Writing these historical texts into my drawing, I ask myself: does my quality of life improve by engaging with, being better acquainted with, and literally writing out my inherited history? The inscriptions occasionally draw from my own original writing, a preoccupation which I have at times felt at odds with or distant from my drawing practice. Writing into my drawing integrates the two, and thus the drawings of the *White House* explicitly contain writings and poetry about the *White House* too. These inscriptions are also exercises of meditation and discipline. In Danh Vo's 2.2.1861 (**Figure 1.12**), Vo highlights the "pure labor" of calligraphy²⁴ by commissioning the writing of his father, a skilled Vietnamese

calligrapher. The letter which Vo asked his father to write out was a copy of an 1861 letter written by a French missionary awaiting execution. The fascinating disconnect lies in the fact that Vo's father spoke neither English nor French.

At times, even architecture may be language-like without being language. Robin Evans wrote that to translate is to convey; to translate is to move something without altering it, and by analogy with translatory motion, the same applies to the translation of languages.²⁵ Yet the substratum across which the sense of words is translated from language to language does not appear to have the requisite evenness and continuity; things can get broken or lost on the way.²⁶ Similarly, the art historian Amelia Jones has written about the prefix *trans-*, which designates "a movement or connection *across, through* or *beyond* the quality it precedes. It also signals change... *Trans-* connects (a performer and an audience, the present soon to be past act and future histories) and opens the creative arts to embodiment, fluidity, duration, movement and change: transtemporality, transhistory, transgenealogy, transmigratory, transmogrification."²⁷

The process of obscuring words, which happens after writing them, is one where I engage with temporality. It expresses various forms of erasure, which can be achieved by wiping clean or by covering over. This act of concealment in graffiti is called buffing (**Figure 1.10**), a term which

24 Danh Vo. *Danh Vo: Mothertongue* (Venice: Venice Biennale; Copenhagen: Danish Arts Foundation, 2015), 12.

25 Robin Evans. *Translations from Drawing to Building*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 154.

26 Ibid.

27 Amelia Jones. "Introduction", *Performance Research* 21 no. 5, 1-11 (2016), 2. DOI:10.1080/13528165.2016.1223432.

28 Larry Walsh. *Daniel Arsham: Sketchbook*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 8.

encompasses all of erasing, painting over in one color, and removing inscriptions using chemicals or solvents. Often these methods leave a residual ghost. Time becomes a differentiating factor across the layers of drawing, alongside the variables of colour and lineweight which I often keep within my arsenal. In this vein, I appreciate the description of the sketches of contemporary artist Daniel Arsham as “an act of dragging material culture to and fro in a fantastical time span, and then examining the results.”²⁸



Fig. 1.11 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin, detail views of the artist's hand and mobile phone reference photography in the drawing process, 2022 (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)

20 janvier 1861.

F. M. F

Très cher, très honoré et bien-aimé Père,

Puisque ma sentence se fait encore attendre, je veux vous adresser un nouvel adieu, qui sera probablement le dernier. Les jours de ma prison s'écoulaient paisiblement. Tous ceux qui m'entourent m'honorent, un bon nombre m'aiment. Depuis le grand mandarin jusqu'au dernier soldat, tous regrettent que la loi du royaume me condamne à la mort. Je n'ai point eu à endurer de tortures, comme beaucoup de mes frères. Un léger coup de sabre séparera ma tête, comme une fleur printanière que le Maître du jardin cueille pour son plaisir. Nous sommes tous des fleurs plantées sur cette terre que Dieu cueille en son temps, un peu plus tôt, un peu plus tard. Autre est la rose empourprée, autre le lys virginal, autre l'humble violette. Trêchons tous de plaire, selon le parfum ou l'éclat qui nous sont donnés, au souverain Seigneur et Maître.

Je vous souhaite, cher Père, une longue, paisible et vertueuse vieillesse. Portez doucement la croix de cette vie, à la suite de Jésus, jusqu'au calvaire d'un heureux trépas. Père et fils se reverront au paradis. Moi, petit éphémère, je m'en vais le premier. Adieu.

Notre très dévoué et respectueux fils.

F. Théophile Déhard

m. s.

Fig. 1.12 Danh Vo, 2.2.1861, 2009
(Image: The Guggenheim Museum)



Fig. 1.13 Robert Houle, In Memoriam, 1987
(Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)



On Hachure

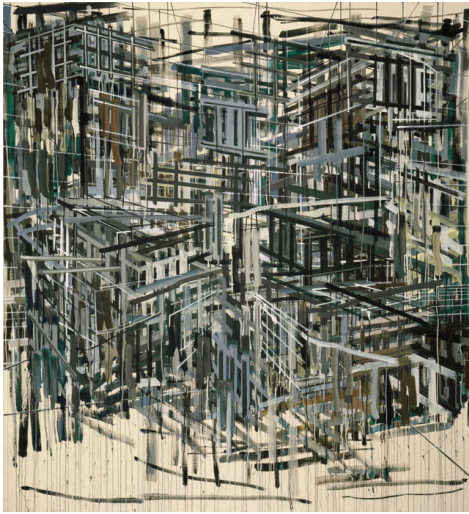


Fig. 1.14 Denyse Thomasos, *Yves Bleu*, Acrylic on canvas, 1999 (Image: Hyper-Allergic)

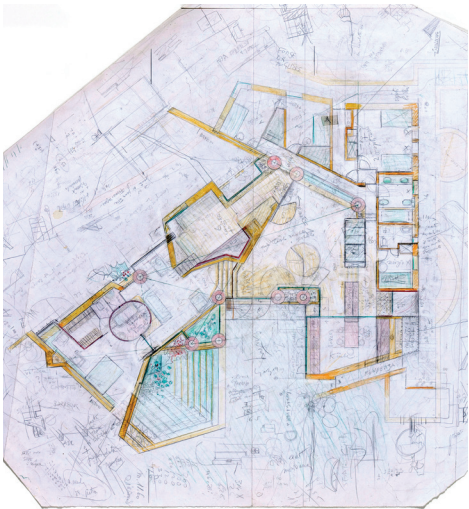


Fig. 1.16 Carlos Scarpa, *Villa Ottolenghi Site Plan*, 1974-1978 (Image: Architectural Review)

Fig. 1.15 (Facing) *Universal House/Particular House*, 2022, detail view

Hachure is defined as linework used for shading and denoting surfaces in relief, as in map drawing.²⁹

Linework plays a dual role in my personal act of drawing; as bold and singular lines they denote figures or the extents of walls and openings, and multiplied in hatching motions they comprise fields of colour and intensity. When intensity grows and colours layer over atop one another, the colours become whiteness; the colours become light.

A million incisions of colours and lines on or into a surface. Layers sitting in stacks and cross-fertilizing amongst themselves, sometimes losing oneself within another. The raw canvas beneath reveals itself, on occasion, as a presence that is new rather than the original slate. Hachure is movement that is captured as form.

What are the things that become subsumed by what lies on top? What are the things that remain unperturbed, as they undergird and become undergirded, resisting assimilation, creolization, exchange, hybridity? What are the forms of hybridity that depart from their source material and take on their own novel shapes?

29 Merriam-Webster. "Hachure." Accessed April 7, 2022. Merriam-Webster.com.

If hachure is the single line turned to new form, the trembling line can be considered part of hachure's representational suite. In the words of Glissant, trembling thinking encourages us to move beyond fixed identity as a single root.³⁰ He writes, "even when I am fighting for my identity, I consider my identity not as the only possible identity in the world." This applies to contested personal and national identity, and within my practice it applies to the meditative act of delineating space with lines. I generate the marks of *ichnographia* with the confidence and boldness of a vector, and yet the lines contain small quivers. Through the lens of trembling thinking, I see this aesthetic quality as an opportunity to open drawing up to acknowledging multiple truths. As Carlos Fuentes writes in the *Buried Mirror*, nothing expressed the uncertainty of the New World in Latin America (and likewise in the Philippines) better than "the [Baroque] art of paradox, the art of abundance based on want and necessity, the art of proliferation based on insecurity, rapidly filling in the vacuums of our personal and social history after the conquest with anything that it found at hand."³¹

Earlier I referenced the artist Cy Twombly in his use of "graffiti-like" inscriptions and encaustic sticks; there is, however, a certain tension between the resolution of our respective works. Twombly is not straightforwardly my muse. His paintings speak to full subsumption, scenes of melted wax and drowning graphite more akin to the "collapses of horizon" that Byung-Chul Han invokes in his "hyperculture." Clear-

cut figures are foregone in favour of inextricable, uninhibited layers, enmeshed. In his time, Twombly with his emotive abstractions was looking well into the future. Now that I feel to be acting on the brink of that "hypercultural" future, I instead turn to and cling to the deep and particular histories of both Western and non-Western lore for inspiration, as I cleave lines that delineate opaque and self-assured objects and planes. These are objects I choose to preserve—the angels and saints that once upheld a nation's belief system; sweeping baroque curves that mediated Spanish and indigenous forms of expression; the footprint of a doormat I know very well. Though, at times, those objects give way to spontaneity and disorder and I, as draftsman, relinquish some control, my drawings are at their core about enabling agency, as I select the parts of myself that are and are not offered up for discovery and loss.

My marker-based drawing series—which preceded the large-scale drawing I have just likened to trembling thinking and intermittent opacity—leaves traces of a different nature. These marker-based pigments forcefully leave alcohol-like stains, lines, and curves that refuse to bleed into one another and, on the backside of a thin surface, offer colourful ghosts that reduce patches of hachure to (I posit) their most honest gestures and incisions. They are flattened but they refuse to be dissolved; they are translucent and they are opaque. A key dimension to these marker drawings is their capacity for translation from analog to digital media. As cited previously, translation involves

30 Édouard Glissant and Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Archipelago*. (Isolarii, 2021), 148.

31 Carlos Fuentes. *The Buried Mirror*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999).

32 Robin Evans. *Translations from Drawing to Building*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 154.

movement without alteration, and yet things get lost along the path of translation.³² The stain-like quality of marker drawings imparts an affordance for digital space throughout the process of scanning, editing and publishing for the screen. Because digital dissemination figures prominently in my practice, I utilize the medium of marker pigment for the uncanny relationships they hold with their pixelated counterparts. The analog, palimpsestuous techniques exhibited in *Universal House/Particular House*, on the other hand, are not so easily compatible with digital translation, but the (post-pandemic) intention of this drawing had always concerned public exhibition. Perhaps, then, the two kinds of drawing convey separate forms of hachure. While pastel-based *Universal House/Particular House* is focused on the movement and interactions of layers within its surface area, the marker-based *White House* drawings move across physical and digital space, and form a continuum across this thesis document.



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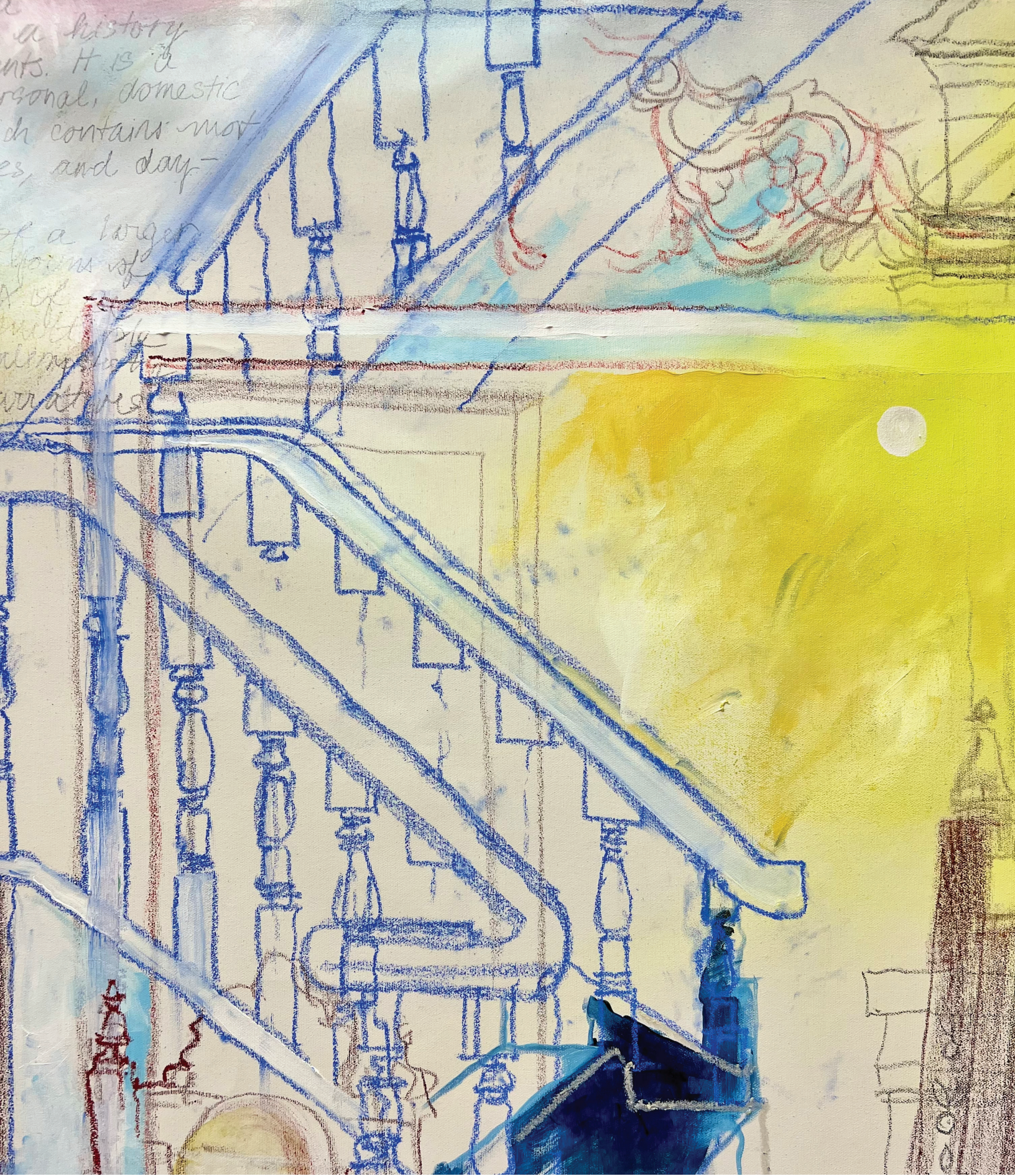




Fig. 1.17 Universal House/Particular House by
Bianca Weeko Martin, 2022
(Photo: Jeffrey CF So)

Universal House/Particular House

Universal House/Particular House is a large-scale drawing that was exhibited at the 2022 DesignTO Festival in Toronto. *Universal House/Particular House* speaks to the tension between the universality of nostalgia and the specificity of sited details. The drawing's composition is based on *Rattan Chair* (**Figure 0.1**) from the *White House* drawing series. A sense of the familiar and domestic is conveyed using fields of colour and common viewfinding shapes like a doorway or window, while furnishings specific to my family's Philippine ancestral house, such as the namesake rattan rocking chair, are rendered in miniaturistic detail. The metaphor of a palimpsest offered additional inspiration in the ways in which material is applied and removed. The installation site's glass wall added another layer of reflection, literally and figuratively.

The Toronto-based architectural and heritage conservation firm Giaimo acted as host venue, offering the window space of a luxury condo property near Yonge and Dundas Square in Downtown Toronto. The installation was hosted in this space from January 22 to February 22, 2022. Although the drawing was exhibited publicly for the period that Giaimo's window space was available, I continued to work on *Universal House/Particular House* in successive layers and additions for the occasion of this thesis's physical defence. The following pages summarize the drawing's creation and installation phases.

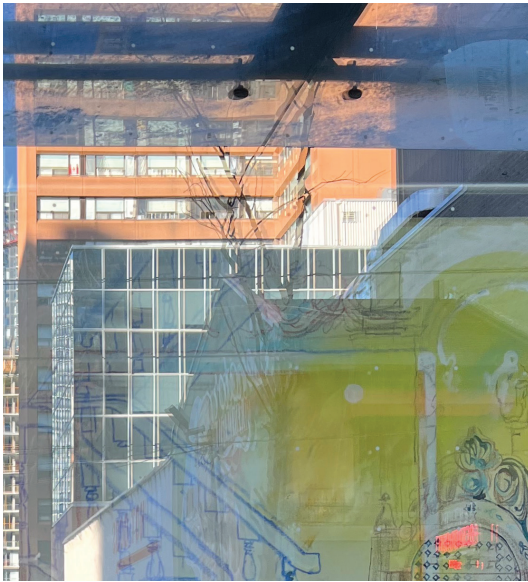


Fig. 1.18 *Universal House/Particular House*, Installation view in Downtown Toronto showing window reflections coalescing with drawing elements, 2022





Fig. 1.20 (Above) Universal House/Particular House, Installation nighttime view with city context, 2022

Fig. 1.19 (Facing) Universal House/Particular House, Installation daytime view with city context, 2022

Installation



Fig. 1.21 The canvas is affixed to a metal pipe and then hung from a beam, 2022

In the window space, two metal pipes were installed with S-hooks to stretch the canvas flat and affix it to the overhead beam. The window glass was reflective, which meant that the drawing viewed from the outside was partially concealed by the refracted light of the nearby buildings.



Fig. 1.22 The piece is moved into elevation and position, 2022

Though the reflectiveness of the glass came as a surprise, I considered the possibility that these reflected buildings made up an additional, spontaneous and palimpsestuous "layer". If this drawing was meant to evoke childhood memories from an ancestral land, the modern towers now hovering near its surface more closely reflected the spaces in which I now spend my days.



Fig. 1.23 Universal House/Particular House, Installation view in Downtown Toronto showing window reflections coalescing with drawing elements, 2022

Creation



Fig. 1.24 I fixed the unstretched canvas to the wall; the blankness was daunting.



Fig. 1.25 To appease my anxieties looking out toward empty space, I began with the outline of a memory—an heirloom rattan chair, a staircase and capiz shell windows sharp enough to slice through the tropical heat and make themselves remembered.

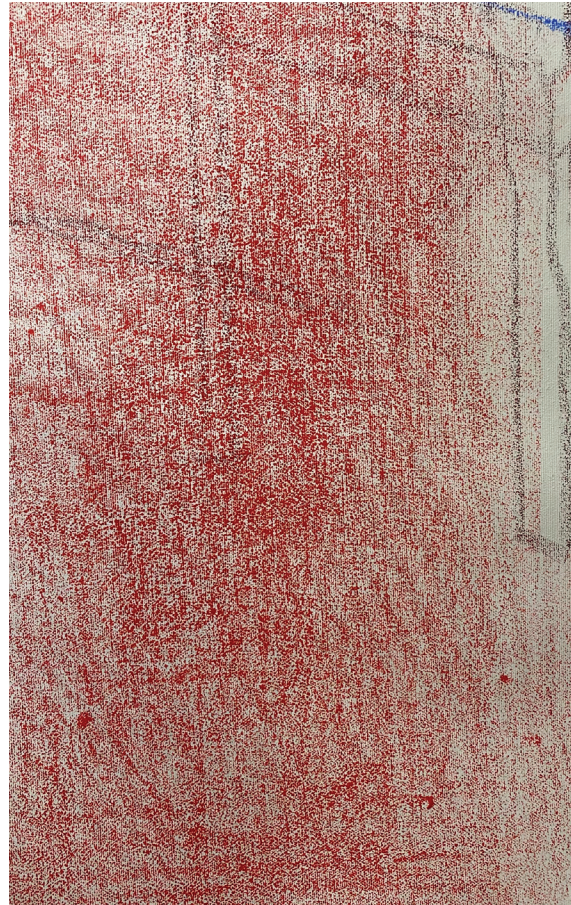


Fig. 1.26 After the first pass of soft pastel—which outlined the figures of things familiar to me—I used encaustic paint stick to create a field of colour: red. The stick adhered more completely to the fabric but it acted at the whim of the canvas's existing texture and grain.

“When Filarete speaks about the process of maturing a project by making its drawing “in the mind,” it is unlikely that he would be referring to linear perspective. Instead, the traditional ichnographia and orthographia were generating devices; like the seeds of a plant, they were meant to germinate slowly until the building is born.”

Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, 1997.

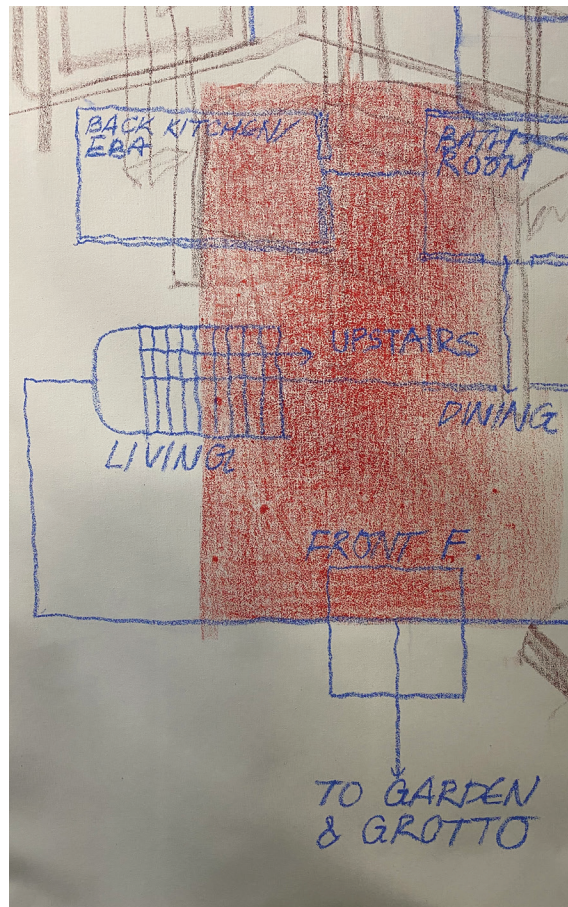


Fig. 1.27 While easing into the proverbial state of being “lost in drawing”, I reflected on the *White House* (specifically, in plan). Taking inspiration from *The Life of Henry Brulard* by Stendhal, I sketched a rough sequence of rooms from memory, beginning with the threshold between the house and exterior grotto.

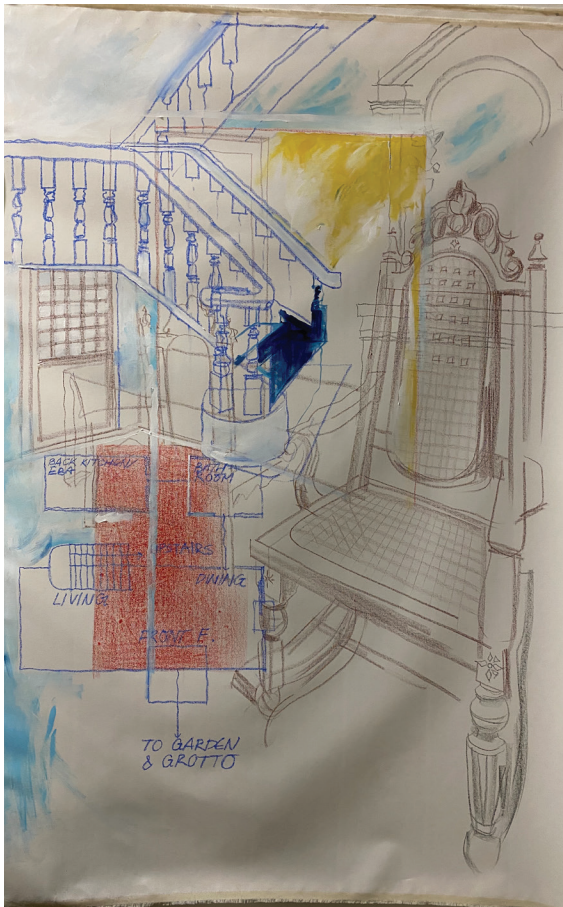


Fig. 1.28 I began to add colour, starting with my primaries I knew equally well. I started to feel the scale of the drawing through the physical application of these blocks of colour.

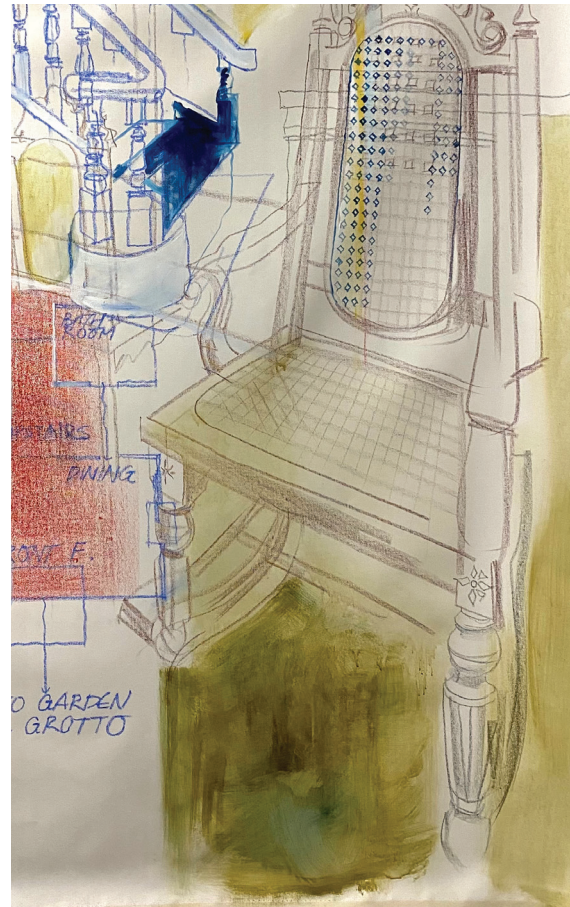


Fig. 1.29 In addition to introducing different types of pastels and paints, each medium's characteristics held the potential of being further modulated through water content, stroke, and brush width. This offered nuance, layers within layers, a matrix.

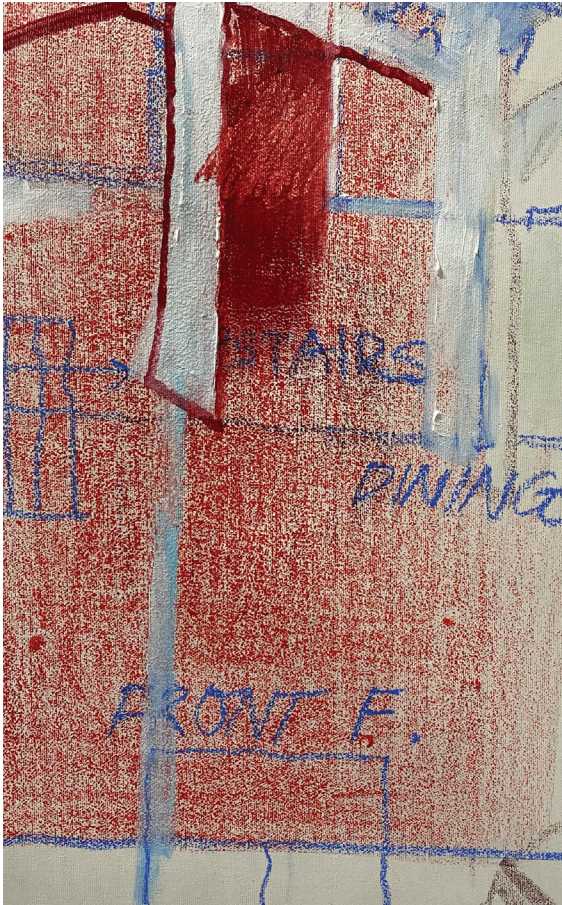


Fig. 1.30 Scratching into acrylic paint produced *sgraffito*-like markings. Brushing paint over chalk pastel smudges absorbed the pastel colour, while encaustic pastel resisted the layers that attempted to come above it. Thus, the materials either cross-fertilized or remained alone.

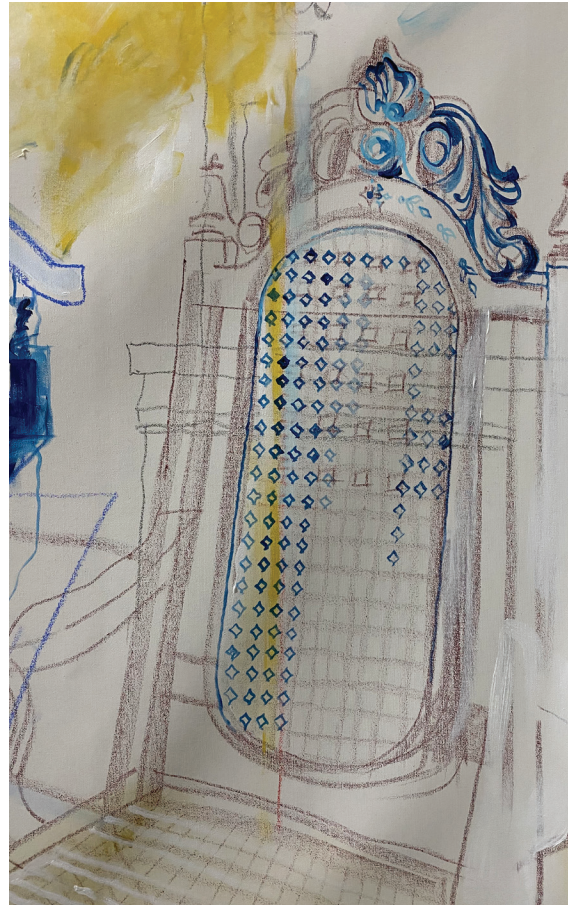


Fig. 1.31 I translated the intricate interweaving of rattan into a patterned grid. Grids subsumed grids. Alongside their straight lines, I meditated on the swooping curves of the wood carvings, and what they wished to express in the Baroque of a former Spanish colony.



Fig. 1.32 Building up layers...



Fig. 1.33 Inscribing words...



Fig. 1.34 Peeling away and concealing figures...



Fig. 1.35 Finishing with colour...



Fig. 1.36 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)



Fig. 1.37 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)



Fig. 1.38 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)

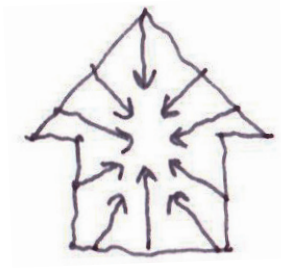


Fig. 1.39 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)



Fig. 1.40 Drawing of Universal House/Particular House by Bianca Weeko Martin. (Photo: Nam Phi Dang)

BALIUAG: THE WHITE HOUSE



Standing at the entry of the White House means to stand at its front gate, a barrier which separates the family enclosure from the loud, bustling streets of provincial Baliuag. The front gate has gone through various changes in its lifetime, its first iteration (seen in blue) having been an appropriation of found material, an artefact of Philippine wartime. To erect it, punctured steel mattings that served as makeshift road surfaces for American military vehicles during World War II were reclaimed and assembled into patterned fence panels. Bamboo and standardized metal now stand in their place.



Fig. 2.1 The Front Gate from the White House series, Marker on paper, 2020

“Continents weigh us down. They are thick and sumptuous. Archipelagos are able to diffract, they create diversity and expansiveness, they are spaces of relation that recognize all the infinite details of the real. Being in harmony with the world through archipelagos means inhabiting this diffraction, while still rallying coastlines and joining horizons. They open us to a sea of wandering: to ambiguity, to fragility, to drifting, which is not the same as futility.”

Édouard Glissant, *Archipelago*, 2021

A Personal History

Let's begin again with two stories. The two stories are actually histories; the first is a personal history, and at its center there is a house. The house is mine, or rather my family's—an ancestral house in provincial Philippines which, due to the colour of its yakal wood facade, and the colour its image assumes in my memory, I will refer to as the *White House*. When I attempted to fit together my embodied knowledge of the *White House* with the national history of the Philippines I later learned through its monuments and books, they did not come together in a way that satisfied me, and so I searched for other methods of representation and record-making that did not betray my desire to emplace myself within my paternal heritage.

As an immigrant child growing into the new life my parents had chosen for me in Canada, the *White House* existed in my psyche as a fragmentary memory, one that I associated with those particularly long summers when my family could not resist the pull of the homeland. The house's memory came to me in tandem with key characters who doubled up as its main caretakers, everything wrapped up in the distorting haze that only the intense heat and humidity of the tropics can conjure. After a pause of several years, we made one final trip to the *White House* in 2019 for a family reunion, where I learned about the full extent of the house's great drama: its



Fig. 2.2 The White House in the 1930s shortly after construction

joys, tragedies, uncanny synchronicities, and that it would soon be put up for sale.

Emptied of all its original inhabitants, lost either to time or to the great global forces of migration and urbanization, the *White House* possessed a beautifully maintained exterior which belied the fact that it was now a shell of its original liveliness. It was my Tito Oyo³³ whose service and diligence rendered the house so well preserved, a fact that reached me only in my adult years. The house was originally built in 1934 by his grandfather, Bernardino Santiago, Senior. The house is a copy; Bernardino was short of money and desperate to move out with his wife and child, and so he borrowed the architectural plans from a neighbour to cut costs and expedite construction. The original

³³ *Tito* is the Tagalog/Filipino word for 'uncle'. Oyo is my uncle's nickname shortened from 'Gregorio'. Thus, Tito Oyo, a deeply loving and iconic person I saw every time my family would visit Baliuag, and who now lives in New Jersey with his husband, Tito Arnold.



Fig. 2.3 My father, Bernardino Jr., in front of the White House, 1960s

fence enclosing the plot of land was an ingenious appropriation of found material—punctured steel mattings that served as makeshift road surfaces for American military vehicles during World War II. In the 1940s, the *White House* was occupied by a Japanese military official during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and the original residents (including my Lola³⁴) were pushed into the attic which then constituted the new extents of their own home.

The *White House* prompted me to look to ancestral stories, family lore, and genealogy, as alternative repositories of knowledge that have been eluded by the Western canon. These are stories of larger historical events and colonial encounters trickling down to the level of the civilian, the *White House's* architecture serving as a datum point for the recollection of their effects. But there are “smaller” stories, too, which revolve more closely around the house's

inhabitants and their day-to-day lives. My favourite story is one concerning my Lola, and the stroke of fate imbued in this thesis's conditions of existence. The only reason she and her descendants (my father and his siblings) were able to spend their lives in the house is because her parents-in-law had seen how hard she worked to perform manual tasks like pumping water. Impressed, they transgressed Philippine tradition, which dictated that a married woman go live with her husband in his family home; my Lola Socorro was sent back to the *White House* by her in-laws to start her new life with her husband there. In 2000, a stone grotto was constructed in the garden to re-dedicate the *House* to Catholicism and to commemorate family values (a statue of the Holy Family stands in substitution for the image of the Virgin Mary at the grotto's center). A recreational *bahay kubo*, or nipa hut, was built nearby using the excess bamboo scaffolding left over from the repainting of the *White House's* facade during a major renovation. These renovations tell a story of changing ownership and extended familial relations—at one time, the front foyer was converted into a physician's clinic, to provide support for a relative in the medical profession who needed a place to practice. Walls were knocked down to create more open common spaces. Rooms were converted into rentals for local students. In 2019, my Tito Oyo submitted an application to have the *White House* preserved at an open-air museum of renovated and re-assembled ancestral houses in nearby Laguna Province, *Las Casas de Acuzar*. It was rejected for not being “historic” enough.

³⁴ *Lola* is the Tagalog/Filipino word for ‘grandmother’.

The *White House* belongs to a particular housing typology in the Philippines called *bahay na bato*. To explain the *bahay na bato* and its architectural and metaphysical significance, I will begin with etymology, and outline how the term's meaning has evolved beyond literal translation. *Bahay na bato* means "house of stone" in Filipino. It is the wood and stone house of the Spanish colonial period, which became the epitome of the historical urban house in the Philippines and would eventually be positioned by nationalist regimes as a part of core "Filipino" heritage requiring deep preservation.³⁵ Today, the *bahay na bato* is often simplified to the loose term of "ancestral house" by the Filipinos that make up its nostalgic fan base.³⁶ Though the stone- or brick-covered ground level has proven relatively efficient in resisting the country's frequent earthquakes, the *bahay na bato* is characterized also by a material transparency lent by wide, sliding windows and functional adaptations to the tropical climate inspired by the indigenous *bahay kubo*.³⁷ This diversity in manpower, technical knowledge, and materiality highlights the "deep cultural dialogue among, at least, these three traditions" of the indigenous, the Chinese, and the Spanish.³⁷ The furnishings and decorative arts these houses carry within are made from natural and symbolic materials—window panes from capiz shell, *caribao* bone inlaid in rattan furniture (endemic to Bulacan, the province where the *White House* is located), and Catho-

lic religious icons treated like auspicious idols. Though the rise of the *bahay na bato* begins in the sixteenth century with the Filipino elite, construction of particular features gradually becomes more accessible over time, and the example of the *bahay na bato* typology that you see in the *White House* ironically contains no stone. And as previously mentioned, its first owner, my great-grandfather, borrowed the architectural plans of his neighbour who had graciously "offered" his house as a cost-efficient copy.

I posit that the Filipino ancestral house lives in the family psyche, acting beyond a vessel that is simply occupied and filled. One of the ways I do so is to "read literature," which the scholar Lisa Lowe has described as offering "a space for a different kind of thinking... an attention to both the "what-could-have-been" and the "what-will-be" that would otherwise be subsumed in the march of received official history."³⁸ In the classic Filipino short story, *The Woman with Two Navels*, Nick Joaquin describes the main character, a Filipino expatriate in Hong Kong, remembering his family house:

But, now, a war had come and destroyed the house. It was waiting no longer. They might still go back, they could never go home now, though Pepe Monson, more vividly remember[ed] that house he had never seen... than any of the houses he had actually lived in.³⁹

35 Kiyoko Yamaguchi, "The New 'American' Houses in the Colonial Philippines and the Rise of the Urban Filipino Elite," *Philippine Studies* 54 no. 3 (2006), 412–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42633879>.

36 The public Facebook group "Ancestral House in the Philippines (AHP), a page dedicated to sharing photos of ancestral and heritage houses in the Philippines, has 91,000+ members as of February 2022. The page defines an ancestral house as "a family home that had been lived in by one's ancestors, great-grandparents and older".

37 *Bahay kubo* in Filipino/Tagalog means nipa hut, referring to the indigenous bamboo-and-thatch stilted house of the Philippines.

38 Lisa Lowe. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 99.

39 Pedro Luengo. *The Convents of Manila: Globalized Architecture during the Iberian Union*. Translation by C. L. Rosales. (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2018).

40 Nick Joaquin. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*. (London: Penguin, 2017).

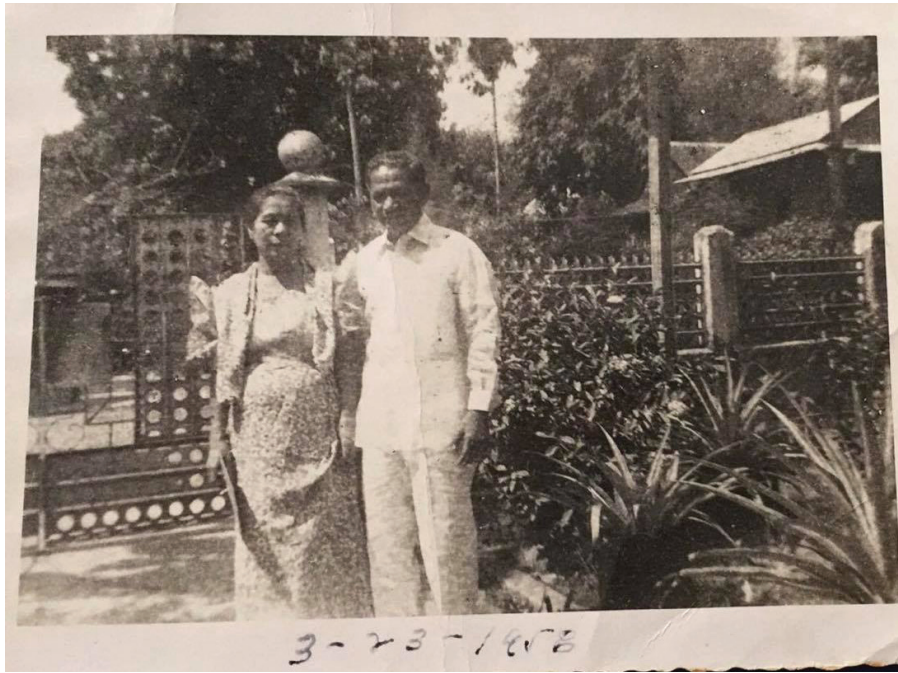


Fig. 2.4 The White House's original owners with the steel matting fence, 1958



Fig. 2.5 The front yard of the White House, showing the protruding windowsill, 1950s

History of a Nation

The same year I bade the *White House* farewell, I was engaged in an architectural guidebook project which tasked me with very rapidly developing an understanding of the modern history of Manila, with only the prerequisite knowledge of instinct and a partially formed family myth. With my family's main destination of the *White House* 57 kilometers north of Manila, there was no great need in my childhood to spend time in the city, and so the center of my memories shifted in accordance. When I started working on the guidebook, the architecture of the city came to view with both surprise and déjà vu, which relieved me. I saw massive Brutalist palaces I never knew had a place in the canon of the tropics. I attended mass in modern churches that, having been reiterated again and again, stood as testaments to the complicated success of those first sixteenth century Spanish Catholic missions. I drove past monuments—shrines, government palaces, towers, carillons—which impressed themselves on the landscape as physically resolved objects of commemoration, touted as gifts of some foreign power; an architectural climax marking the end of a war, struggle, or era. All of these sights fascinated me, but also obfuscated what the identity of modern Filipino architecture was and, by extension, a person of Filipino heritage.

Though the project of the book was an incredible opportunity to document and study Philippine history, objectively

writing about a hundred buildings was draining, and focusing the book's contents on just the public surface of the country's architecture seemed an injustice to the complexity of the archipelago that is today known as the Philippines. Nevertheless, I was able to jump-start what has become a deep research interest and commitment to Philippine cultural heritage, and amass knowledge on Manila's buildings that would later reemerge in the form of more intentional provocations (as in the section of this thesis entitled *Venice: Philippine Copycats*.)

Though *Maynila* had already existed for centuries as a center of trade for the Brunei Sultante, the capital city of Manila was founded by Spanish conquistadors in 1571—a year that has been likened to the birth of global trade as the port-city made possible “substantial, direct and continuous trade between America and Asia for the first time in history,”⁴¹ namely through the Manila Galleon Trade that linked the coasts of Mexico and the Philippines. The public architecture in Manila built from 1900 onwards can be understood, as a starting point, through the following themes: American Commonwealth, Philippine Brutalism, Churches, Tropical Modernism, and Neoliberal Architecture. Each theme speaks, in varying degrees, to an influence which was over time absorbed into the Philippine culture and consolidated with buildings.

Buildings of the American Commonwealth period were introduced as part of the United States of America's mission to “civilize” their new Asian colony. They were organized by the logic

41 Rebecca Tinio McKenna. *American Imperial Pastoral: the Architecture of US Colonialism in the Philippines*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 4.

42 Ibid.



National Museum of Fine Art

Padre Burgos Ave, Ermita
Ralph Harrington Doane
and Antonio Toledo
1926



QR

To the architectural historian, the National Museum of Fine Art is Manila's most prominent example of Neoclassicism; to the attentive Filipino, it is an enduring symbol of American intervention in the Filipino psyche. The urban planner Daniel Burnham had included this building in his 1905 Plan of Manila and had initially designated it as a public library. Thus, the design of the building was undertaken by American Ralph Harrington Doane, the consulting architect of the Bureau of Public Works, along with Filipino architect Antonio Toledo. Renovations began in 2003 to convert the grand legislative building into the National Museum's gallery of fine art, which remains

its purpose today. A two-storey, four-columned portico adorns the entrance of the building. Above sits a triangular pediment with sculptures representing the islands Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao; law, education, commerce, and agriculture. On each end of the building is a two-columned portico complementing its central façade, with sculptures by Otto Fisher-Credo, a German expatriate who lived in the Philippines during the pre-war years. One of the building's most opulent features is the Old Session Hall, which served as a chamber for the Senate of the Philippines. It is three stories high with mezzanine galleries around the edges; the overall design evokes a sort of secular cathedral more than it does a law-making chamber. Today, the hall houses an intricately carved hardwood ceiling and a sweeping mural by National Artist Botong Francisco, entitled 'Filipino Struggles through History'.



Fig. 2.6 A spread from forthcoming publication *Architectural Guide Manila* showing the National Museum of Fine Art in Manila, 2020

of urban planner Daniel Burnham's 1905 plan for Manila, and unified aesthetically through Neoclassical elements such as columns and architraves. The US's acquisition of the Philippines in 1898 foreshadowed what would come to increasingly characterize US power in the world in the coming decades: the dissociation of economic from territorial expansion, a control exercised over more abstract ter-

ritory (such as the world market) rather than direct control of physical territory.⁴² One prominent American Commonwealth building can be seen in **Figure 2.6**, a guidebook spread detailing the National Museum of Fine Art designed by American architect Ralph Harrington Doane and Filipino architect Antonio Toledo. The building was originally included in Daniel Burnham's Plan of Manila

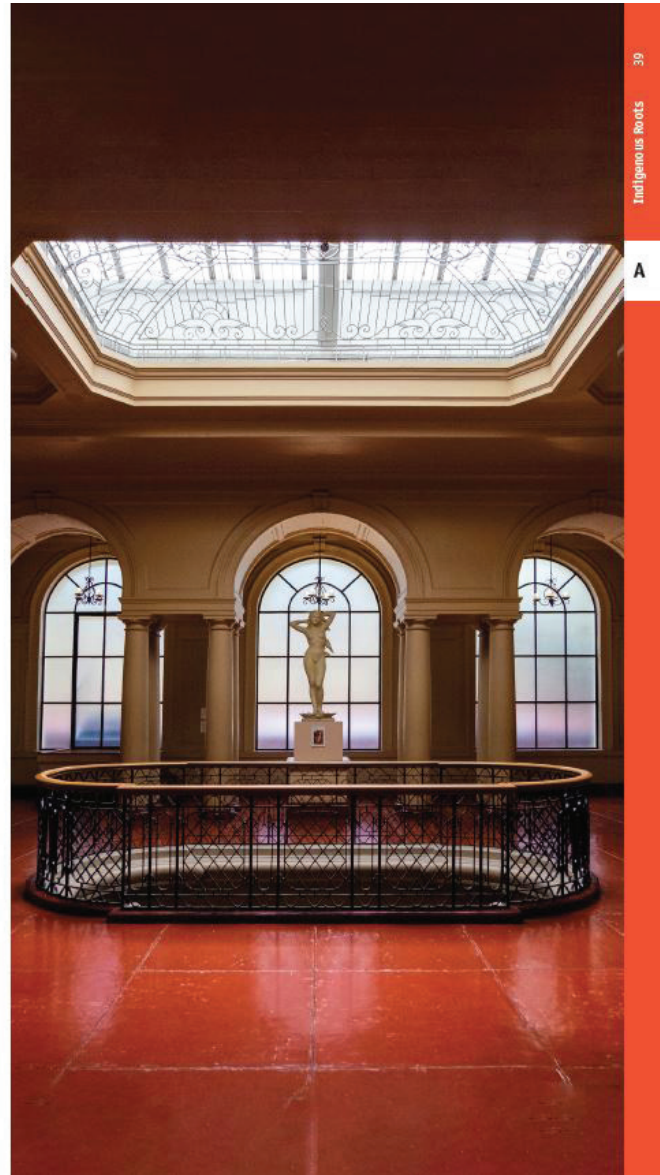




Fig. 2.7 Epifanio De Los Santos (EDSA) Shrine, Manila, 2019

as a designated public library before its conversion into a national arts museum, which remains its function today.⁴³

Beginning with the Spanish rule of the Philippines through to its occupation by the United States and even to this day, the Philippines remains a majority Christian nation, except for the Muslim Moro region in the south. It is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, with about 75 percent of its population historically professing Roman Catholicism.⁴⁴ Thus, churches are abundant in the capital city of Manila. Though churches were originally built to impose

Catholicism on indigenous Filipinos and solidify Spanish rule, modern churches in the Philippines have been reinterpreted by homegrown Filipino architects to now qualify as what I consider to be some of the Philippines' most expressive and experimental architecture (**Figures 2.8, 2.9**). The churches shown in these images (designed by Filipino architects Leandro V. Locsin and Dominic Galicia) exhibit an openness to the surrounding environment which echoes the architectural principles of the Philippines' indigenous nipa dwelling structures. The success of these kinds of churches reflects the fervor with which Filipinos

43 Gerard Lico. *50 Sagisag Arkitektura*. (Manila: National Commission on Culture and the Arts, 2018,) 41.

44 United States. Department of State. Office of Media Services. *The Philippines: Fact Sheet*. Washington: Dept. of State; for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1963.

and the Filipino diaspora hold to their imported religious beliefs, and also the phenomenon of religious syncretism which can be seen across the entire former dominion of the Spanish Empire. This ability to re-appropriate, reclaim, at times even to caricature, foreign influences extends beyond things imposed through direct colonization. Indeed, the totality of Philippine Brutalist architecture was conceived on the whim of a Filipino dictatorship, whose concrete architectural vision is often linked to the Soviet stylings of Brutalism in Eastern Europe due to their common function as state tools of sociopolitical control. The Marcos regime, as the tumultuous period from 1966 to 1986 is known, saw the erection of massive concrete buildings such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines (**Figure 2.10**), one out of an idealized series of public buildings which were aimed at winning over public support and reinforcing the myth of a progressive national collective.⁴⁵

The story of modern architecture in the Philippines ends, for the time being, with Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism as a term has notably been explored in depth by urban theorists Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore after observing its being “increasingly seen as an essential descriptor of the contemporary urban condition.”⁴⁶ In the Filipino context, the scholar Edson Cabalfin used Neoliberalism as a major point of discussion in the Philippine’s entry to the 16th Biennale of Architecture in Venice in 2018, particularly in the development

of business districts scattered around and within the urban environment.⁴⁷ I use the term Neoliberal Towers in the guidebook to refer to the high-tech, mainly glass skyscrapers concentrated within the business and financial districts of Manila, namely Bonifacio Global City (BGC) and Makati. While these buildings are programmed primarily as office buildings, the shopping malls that are interwoven with them at ground level, and which dominate much of Manila’s urban fabric, have come to encompass a self-contained monolithic complex of retail, entertainment, dining, and at times, even religious spaces.⁴⁸ Many are designed by well-known International architects, employing styles of building indistinguishable from those in Singapore or Sydney.

This large and long-spanning range of foreign influences in the Filipino architectural landscape not only obscures what constitutes “Filipino” architecture, it does very little to illustrate the lives of the majority of citizens aside from colonial, economic and political elites. This, compounded with the destruction wrought on Manila by the second World War, makes a strong case for reconsidering the lens of architectural history on the Philippines—and including the private domestic space in its architectural reading.

45 Gerard Lico. *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture*. (Manila: Ateneo University Press, 2003), 6.

46 Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore. “Neoliberalism and the urban condition.” *City: Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action* 9, no. 1 (2005): 101-107. DOI: 10.1080/13604810500092106

47 Edson Cabalfin. “The City Who Had Two Navels: Introduction,” In *The City Who Had Two Navels - Catalogue of the Philippine Pavilion* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2018).

48 Gerard Lico, “Bagong Lipunan Brutal: Brutalism and Post-colonial Identity Politics in Architecture,” In *Architectural Guide Manila* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2023).



Fig. 2.8 (Above) St Andrew the Apostle, Manila, 2019

Fig. 2.9 (Below) Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Antipolo, 2019

Fig. 2.10 (Facing) Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, 2019



The Need for a Palimpsest

The misalignments that came from enmeshing a personal and national history pushed me to seek a new framework for understanding histories of space and built form, and how they might relate to architectural representation. The metaphor of a palimpsest offered some direction. “Palimpsest” is a word I had used, intuitively, to describe the city of Manila, and something I thought about during my walks through graffiti-ravaged underpasses on the Lower Don trail and my outdoor lectures in Rome. In Rome, where I spent a semester of my undergraduate studies, my class was taught about the deep excavations which constituted the first of the city’s foundations, a form of emplacement which seemed at odds with the lightweight nipa huts that formed the first settlements of the Philippines. The modern buildings in Manila I studied, and even the *White House* I knew so well, were somehow more similar to the Rome that Michel Serres describes as being founded on deeply consequential acts of violence, tragedy.⁴⁹ And yet, the inherent qualities of Maaliwalas⁵⁰ from the first open nipa dwellings and multi-family homes seeped through those layers—whether foundational or additive—like the ground beneath bleeding through the cracks.

At home in Toronto, as I navigated cycling paths and west-end sidewalks,



Fig. 2.11 I watched this wall for a couple of months in Parkdale and noticed that the inscriptions would accumulate with the passing days

my eyes would latch instinctively onto the silent vector formed by graffiti tags, which constellated and coated alley walls and peripheral surfaces with colour and words. Occupying public space left desolate by pandemic restrictions, these inscriptions felt like the only noise on my lone walks downtown; I closely observed the noise. From one day to the next a piece would be erased to reveal an unsuspecting set of letters beneath; a certain name might be the only part of a wall left alone, in accordance with an unspoken code; at times all of these layers would be covered up entirely with something new or feigning virginity. At this longer time scale, the cycle of layering and un-layering remained in constant motion even when the other parts of the city felt dead. And yet graffiti is not new. In Pompeii, the ancient,

49 Michel Serres. *Rome: The First Book of Foundations*. (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2015), 14.

50 Maaliwalas translates from Tagalog/Filipino to clear, bright, spacious.

51 Rebecca Benefiel. “If These Walls Could Talk.” *Overheard at National Geographic*, Hosted by Peter Gwin, Episode 7, National Geographic, November 26, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/podcasts/overheard/article/episode-7-these-walls-could-talk-pompeii-graffiti>

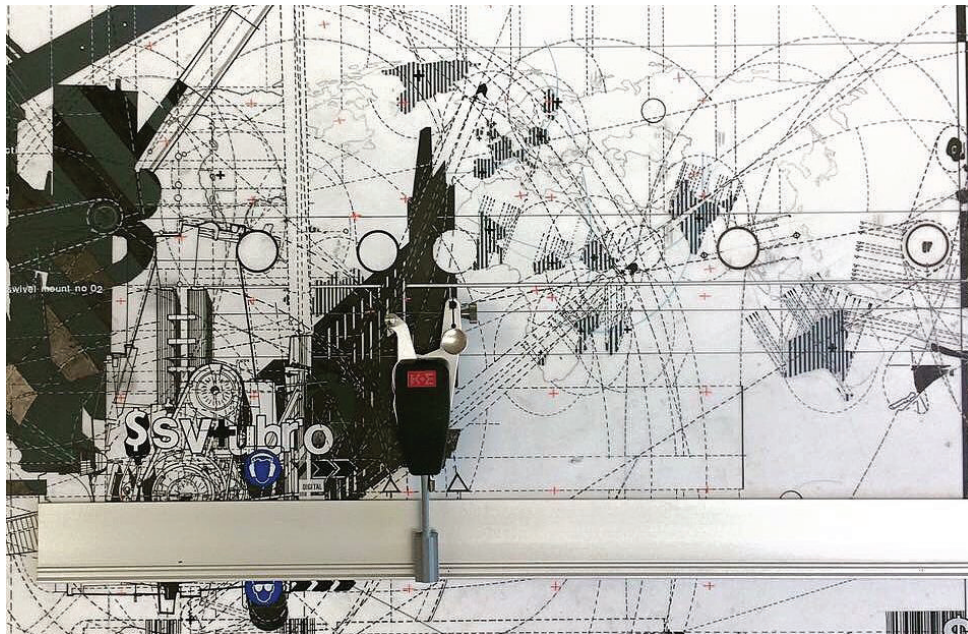


Fig. 2.12 Bryan Cantley, Drafting the Palimpsest, from Palimpsestuous Relationships series, 2017

archaeologically significant Italian city, graffiti covering walls has been used to shed light on the lives and histories of the masses as opposed to the elites and leading citizens, “the ones who have the nice homes with the good art,” according to Rebecca Benefiel, professor and director of The Ancient Graffiti Project (a digital resource.) She remarks that, “now people are interested in knowing what... the entire population like.”⁵¹

Historic and contemporary forms of graffiti offer one version of a palimpsest. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a palimpsest is “paper, parchment, or other writing-material prepared for writing on and wiping out again, like a slate.”⁵² A palimpsest is thus known primarily in the graphic, surface-oriented sense. Breaking this concept of a palimpsest down into its essential ingredi-

ents and translating them into a theory of urbanism is not new; for instance, historic European cities like Geneva and Brussels have already been studied through the application of “palimpsest theory” in order to uncover both changes and consistencies across time. The art historian Andre Corboz is credited with having formulated the notion of territory as palimpsest in 1983, when he studied Geneva’s structure of road system, land parcels and buildings particularly in their chronological evolution.⁵³ Corboz studied these features according to three modalities: permanence (when traces are present faithfully), persistence (when traces are perceptible but modified) and disappearance (when they no longer exist).⁵⁴ The key impacts of this study pointed to a “territorial turn” which linked the expanding territorial scale of public policies with the dissolution

52 Oxford English Dictionary. “Palimpsest.” Accessed 7 April 2022. oed.com.

53 Andre Corboz. “La Territoire Comme Palimpseste.” *Diogenes*, 121 (1983): 14-35.

54 Marine Declève. “Reading the Brussels Palimpsest in the History of the Nouveau Plan de Bruxelles Industriel (1910).” *Urban Planning* 5, no. 2 (2020): 229-242. DOI:10.17645/up.v5i2.2809.

of the then-prevalent city-countryside opposition. This binary opposition had previously oversimplified and limited the perception of what constituted the geography of the “urban”. At the same time, in Belgium, the architect Maurice Culot conducted a similar project which produced an archival visual inventory of architecture linked to spaces of industrial production and urban transformation.⁵⁵ This project has prompted more recent propositions for a “lisuel” (both readable, *lisible*, and visual, *visuel*) layer which encourages additional processes of extraction, classification, and juxtaposition of archives in the visual reading of an archival palimpsest.

Artists and architects, too, have produced visual forms of representation that speak to the qualities of a palimpsest. Professor of design theory Bryan Cantley produced a series of experimental drawings in 2017 entitled *Palimpsestuous Relationships* (**Figure 2.12**), exploring the sanctity of organized religion in the face of social media and the re-definition of “self”. Cantley deliberately uses analog drawing techniques in order to examine the “purity and deity” of the architectural drawing, preserving a sense of tactility which digital mediums do not always offer. Similarly, Perry Kulper’s architectural drawings (**Figure 2.13**) have been described as a “cosmos of information and possibilities that resist the banal and simplistic reductionism so typical of contemporary architectural representation.”⁵⁶ The key here is a focus on the so-called crisis of reduction, and how such palimpsestic drawings might reduce the risk of reduc-

tion during the design process in architectural practice. These two designers work with orthographic notation in their explorations of drawing, echoing Corboz’s and Culot’s manipulation of maps.

Beyond architectural convention, artists like Julie Mehretu (**Figure 2.15**) and Jean Paul Riopelle (**Figure 2.14**) work prominently with the metaphor of a palimpsest. Canadian artist Jean Paul Riopelle has made paintings that make use of subtraction, which is also crucial in the thickness and layering we speak of with a palimpsest. Resorting regularly to spray paint toward the end of his career, Riopelle underwent a dedicated search for possible ways of presenting the negative imprint of an object.⁵⁷ His 1992 panoramic paintings *L’Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg* show the fuzzy spray outlines of geese and ferns, leaving the impression of absence as opposed to presence. Though I have likened this example to the action of removal that could be used in the palimpsest metaphor, we also circle back to modern-day graffiti through the medium of aerosol paint, itself a common hardware store product reappropriated across the globe by graffiti writers and street artists.

So, what do we do with the additional complexities introduced to us by the framework of a palimpsest? It is clear that in the examples cited, the additional steps taken create rich nuance but complicate the way by which subject matter is understood, whether in the maps of a cadastre or a drawing meant to efficiently invoke occupiable space. The truth is that a palimpsest is compli-

55 Ibid.

56 WAI Architecture Think Tan., “Drawing Conversation with Perry Kulper.” Archinect News, Archinect. August 15, 2012. Accessed April 1, 2021. <https://archinect.com/news/article/54767042/drawing-architecture-conversation-with-perry-kulper>.

57 François Marc Gagnon. *Jean Paul Riopelle: Life & Work*. (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2019).



Fig. 2.14 Jean-Paul Riopelle, *L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg* (Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg), Acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 1992

cated, messy, and can place its users in a position of often unwanted agency. A palimpsest does not correlate with modern minimalism. Many people prefer things sorted out and filtered prior to dissemination. Similarly, the studies, writings, and drawings that form the multiple fragmentary parts of my thesis each tell a story when read alone, but together, can act as successive layers illuminating something latent within the one before.



Fig. 2.13 Perry Kulper, *Proto_Formal Section*, 2006

The Philippines as Palimpsest



Fig. 2.15 Julie Mehretu, Six Bardos: Transmigration, 2018

The metaphor of a palimpsest for the Philippines operates at a few scales. Firstly, at the urban scale, we have seen that the capital city of Manila dons a layer of colonial public architecture—Spanish-Catholic, American; Brutalist remnants of a dictatorship; Neoliberal skyscrapers—that obscures what we might be able to consider the ‘ground’ condition of an original Filipino architecture. At the same time, these layers interact amongst one another and are undeniably part of a national and diasporic Filipino identity today. Closely identifying and separating these layers out is valuable, as urban theory’s historic focus on a “small number of European and North American cities” has made it so that “an understanding of the increasing mixing of people, cultures, and identities in most cities throughout the world has not yet been realized in wider academic debates.”⁵⁸ Even within the Asian context, the Philippines is an outlier. In Kuan-Hsing Chen’s “utopian Asia,” Filipino-American E. San Juan Jr. writes, “the Philippines looms behind as a weird spectre, an enigmatic sport. While geographically located in Asia, the Philippines has not exactly conformed with the subalternist, homogenizing paradigm of Asia that global North theorists such as Gayatri Spivak, Aihwa Ong and Rey Chow have privileged in their mandarin discourses about transnationalization and cosmopolitanism. The uncomfortable reason is that the Philippines remains a neo-colony of the imperial powers, chiefly the United States and sub-imperial allies (Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore), and thus evokes the ghosts of 19th- and

58 De Boeck, Filip. “Spectral Kinshasa: Building the City through an Architecture of Words.” In *Urban Theory Beyond the West: A World of Cities*, edited by Tim Edensor and Mark Jayne, 311-328. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

59 E San Juan, Jr. “Reflections on Academic Cultural Studies and the Problem of Indigenization in the Philippines.” *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, no. 29 (2013), 73-94.

early-20th-century aborted or coopted revolutions.”⁵⁹ I acknowledge the pioneering contributions of postcolonial theorists like Spivak and Ong, yet like San Juan I seek a method of representation that recognizes the particular nuances of the Philippines’ cultural development, and offers identification other than the disenfranchised subaltern.

Here, a palimpsest might offer agency. A palimpsest framework such as the one used by Corboz could be applied to Manila to uncover or bring attention to the sizable number of nationally significant buildings that were demolished in war or are at risk of being demolished in the future, such as the art deco theaters in Old Manila which have garnered attention and activism as of late.⁶⁰ Secondly, at the scale of the home: I have suggested that the act of layering embodied personal history with public architectural history reflects the qualities of a palimpsest, producing both harmonies and misalignments rendering the project of emplacement complex. In writing about the *White House*, I invoke the home, and in particular the Filipino hybrid *bahay na bato*, as a window into the more intimate world of domestic life in parallel with the larger-picture events of the country’s national history. Several of the house’s features and stories relate to national historical events; it can be said that the home, and operations performed at home, are linked intimately with human identity, and that this process involves a two-way interaction.⁶¹ Thus architecture at the scale of the home plays a vital role in the forging of personal identi-

ty—in the process of emplacement. But what is emplacement? Do we require both the top-down lens of canonical history, of collective memory, and the bottom-up view of domestic, personal memory to feel a sense of belonging with our physical environment? Furthermore, what are the interactions between these two layers, and can one be used as a masking frame by which we view the other?

60 Sai Villafuerte. “In Manila, Heritage Architecture Struggles to Survive.” CNN Philippines. July 14, 2020. <https://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/2020/7/14/capitol-theater-heritage-structures-manila.html>.

61 Neil Leach. *Camouflage*. (Boston: MIT Press, 2006), 7.

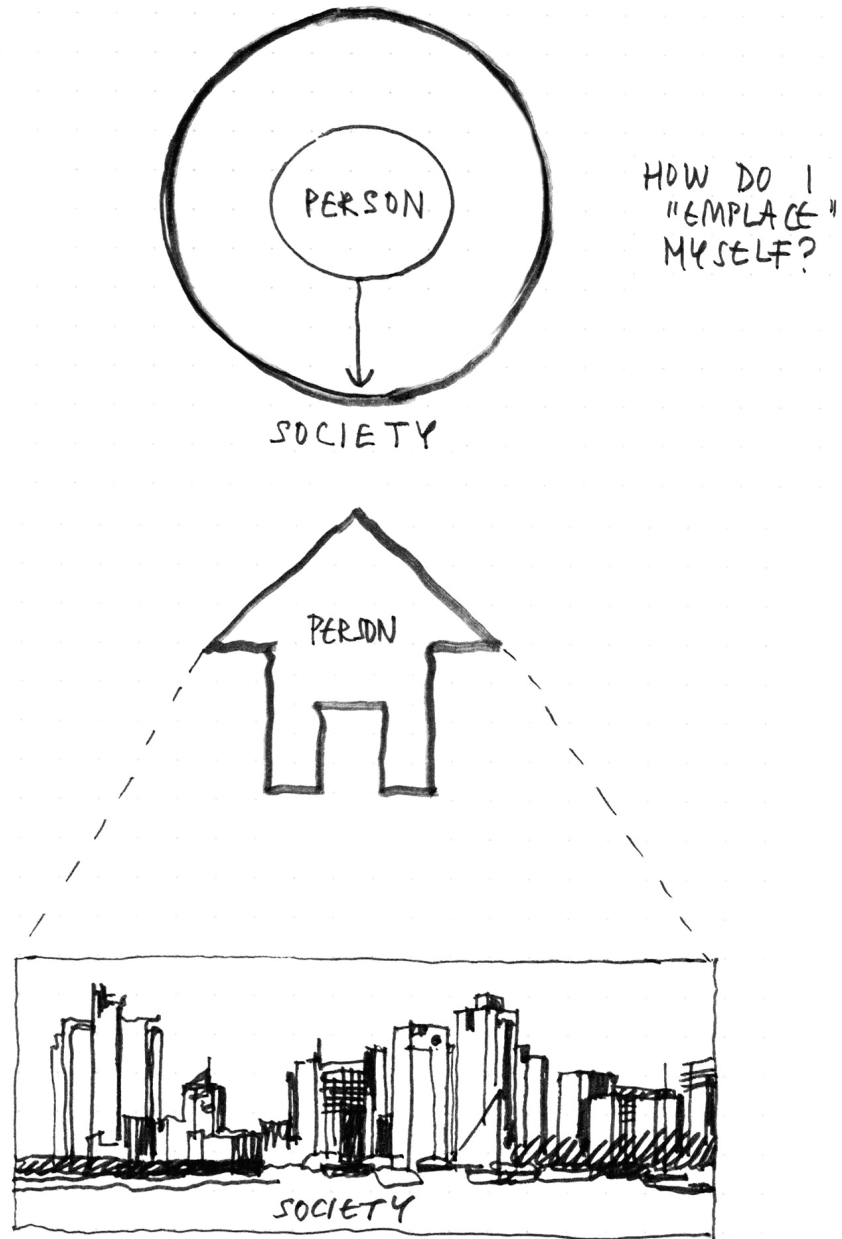


Fig. 2.16 Diagram Phase 1: Architectural Emplacement from the Individual to the Collective

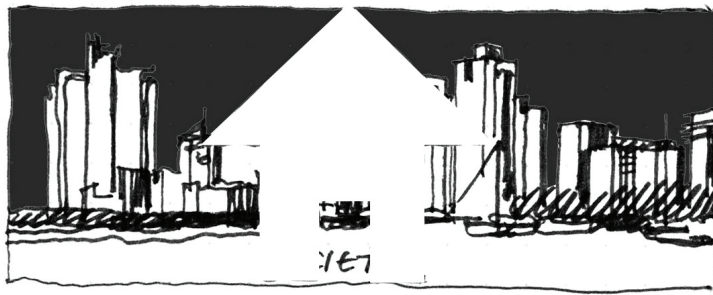
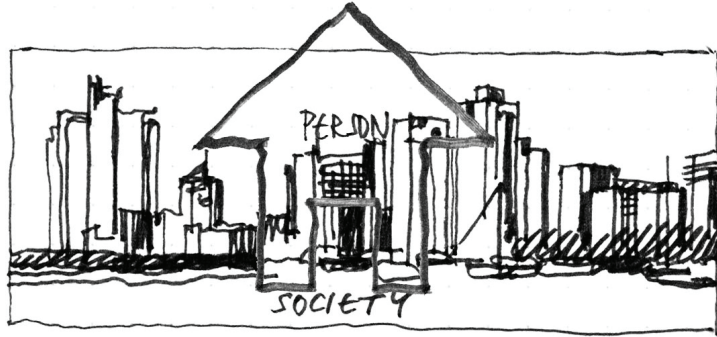


Fig. 2.17 Diagram Phase 2: The Metaphor of a Palimpsest for the Personal and the Collective

The initial purpose of drawing in the context of this thesis was to weave together the personal history I outlined in the first part of this section, and to explore the graphic qualities of the palimpsest I gestured towards in the succeeding paragraphs. The story of the *White House* was conveyed to me through artefacts of archival photography, my own memories, and oral accounts from individual family members who had their own varied biases about what gave the house meaning. The drawings—and the poetic, anachronistic narrative that the drawings originally accompanied—closed gaps in the nearly one hundred year span of the house’s lifetime and gave the distant house in my mind a real presence, demarcated not by the walls or fence that surrounded it but by the physical changes, additions and human activity which gave the building the quality of *life*. Some drawings represented multiple vantage points in a single recollected memory, challenging the credibility (or creativity) of memory when representing something that is far away. Some showed different periods of time layered over a single space, tracking various uses, renovations and occupants through time, and revealing the hidden histories of a lived space. And finally, drawing offered the ability to visualize a space not sufficiently documented, a useful tool when dealing with oral histories. The first *White House* drawing series is interspersed in the opening spread of each section of this thesis. These drawings are personal, whimsical, and in some ways delicate. Though the drawings were useful in expressing a clean hierarchy of layers and lines and colours that made architectural space easier to

read, they did not yet resemble what I have come to associate with a palimpsest. The large-scale drawing discussed at length in the previous section of this thesis entitled *Universal House Particular House* more explicitly tackles the fictive qualities of a palimpsest. Though this section opens my thesis document, the work was actually created after the initial smaller-scale drawing series.

Drawing and photography are two forms of architectural representation; the following sections of this thesis describe other avenues of representation and dissemination such as writing and publishing, both in print and online. Although the *White House* forms the subject of these representational forms, each one takes on a distinct quality as a result of its direct context, which spares representation from generalizing. The location of dissemination can be said to influence the artefacts just as much as the *White House*’s site of origin. Today, published media can itself be seen as forms of time; Vilém Flusser describes three forms of time as “the time of the image, the time of the book and the time of the bit—in geometrical terms, plane-like time, linear time and point-like time... the time of the image belongs to mythical time... the time of the book belongs to historical time.”⁶² I wonder how our artefacts of representation, once released into the world—the terms of their time, geography, and original audience set—can attain a “time”, a life and agency of their own.

62 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2022), 11.

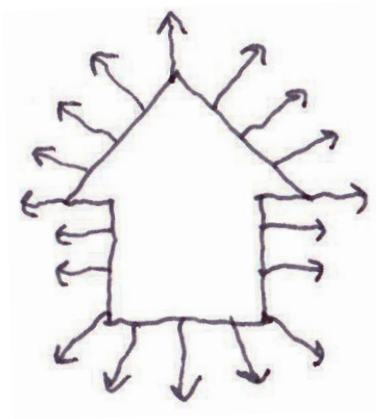


Fig. 2.18 Rosario Street and Binondo Church, Manila, ca. 1840-45. These two images are part of a series of daguerrotypes exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2022 for the exhibition, *Faith and Fortune: Art Across the Global Spanish Empire*.



Fig. 2.19 Stilt houses on the road leading out of Majayjay to Magdalena, Laguna Province, ca. 1840-45.

TORONTO: GRAFFITI



The front rooms of the White House underwent several renovations, which at times even reoriented the direction in which the first entryway faced. The foyer, for example, was at one time blocked off and used as a physician's clinic by a family member, indicated by the signage captured at one point in the house's history - 'Dr. Fel Cruz, Physician.'

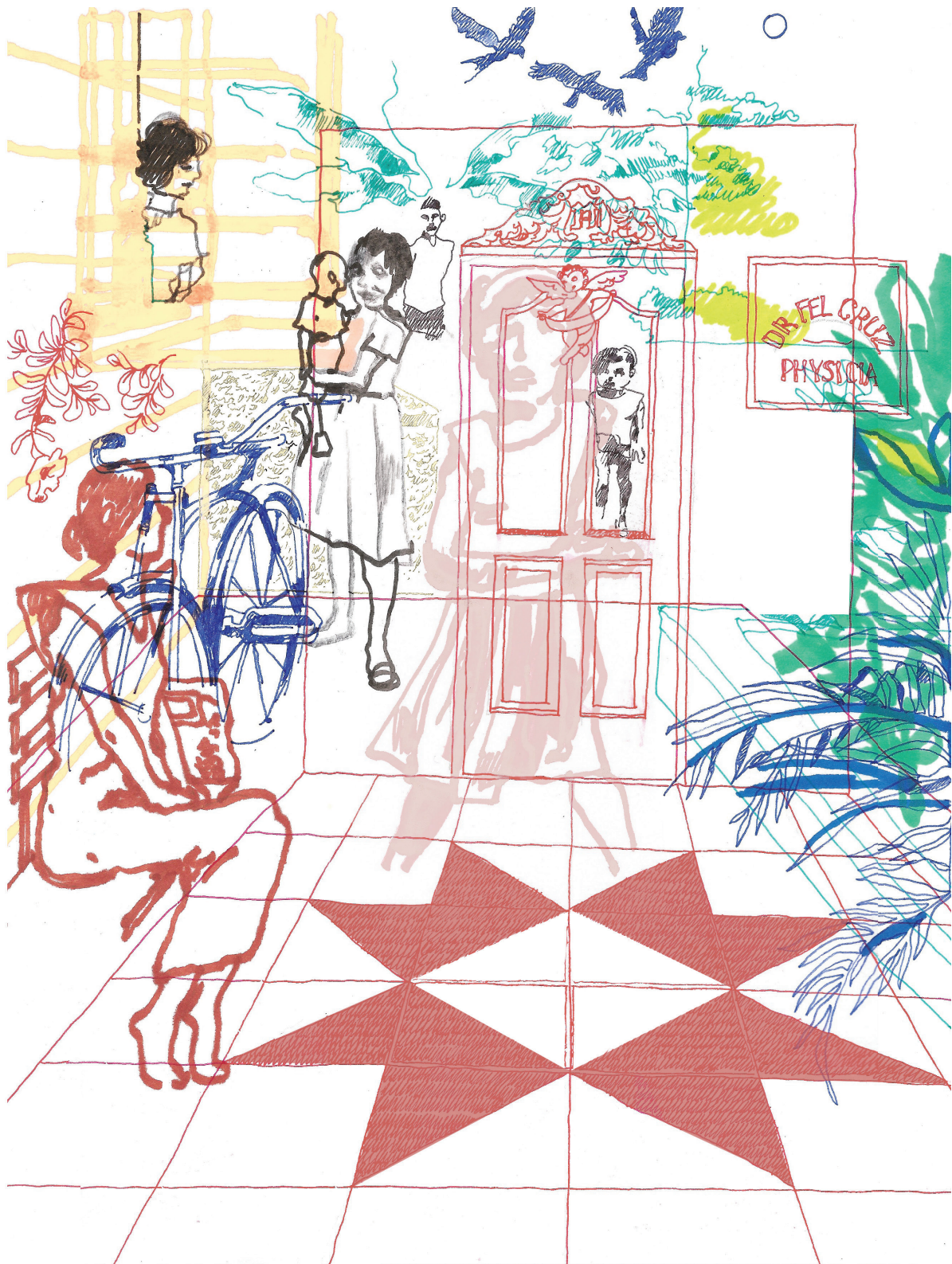


Fig. 3.1 The Front Yard, Marker on paper, 2021

“In time I learned to disguise myself in words, which were actually clouds. For the gift of seeing likeness is nothing but a weak vestige of the old compulsion to become and act like somebody else.

But words exercised this coercion on me. Not those that made me resemble models of good behaviour, but those that made me like dwellings, furniture, clothing.”

Walter Benjamin, *Die Mummerehlen*



Fig. 3.2 Graffiti tags skirting the sky on the West Toronto Railpath, 2021



Fig. 3.3 Buffing fails to conceal the intent of graffiti throw-ups near Parkdale, 2021



Fig. 3.4 Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, formerly Tower Automotive Building.
West facade, 2021



Fig. 3.5 Emmanuel Jarus, MOCA Building mural, 2021



Fig. 3.6 Emmanuel Jarus, Former Tower Automotive Building mural, 2013



Fig. 3.7 KWEST, Wildstyle mural inside the former Tower Automotive Building, 2015. Does the free-space of graffiti always precede the delayed instincts of a developer?
(Photo: Todd Korol for The Toronto Star)



Fig. 3.9 Tags on old Toronto Brick company building, 2021



Fig. 3.8 Children's chalk markings inside Evergreen Brickworks, 2021



Fig. 3.10 Evergreen Brickworks, renovated from a quarry and brick factory-turned city dump. (Photo: Claude Cormier and Associates)



Fig. 3.11 Mural within Evergreen Brickworks, 2021



Fig. 3.12 Graffiti tag on glass bus shelter, 2021.
(Photo: Alex Willms)



Fig. 3.13 (Above) Graffiti tags in an underpass on the Lower Don Trail, Toronto, 2021. Detail

Fig. 3.14 (Facing) Graffiti tags in an underpass on the Lower Don Trail, Toronto, 2021

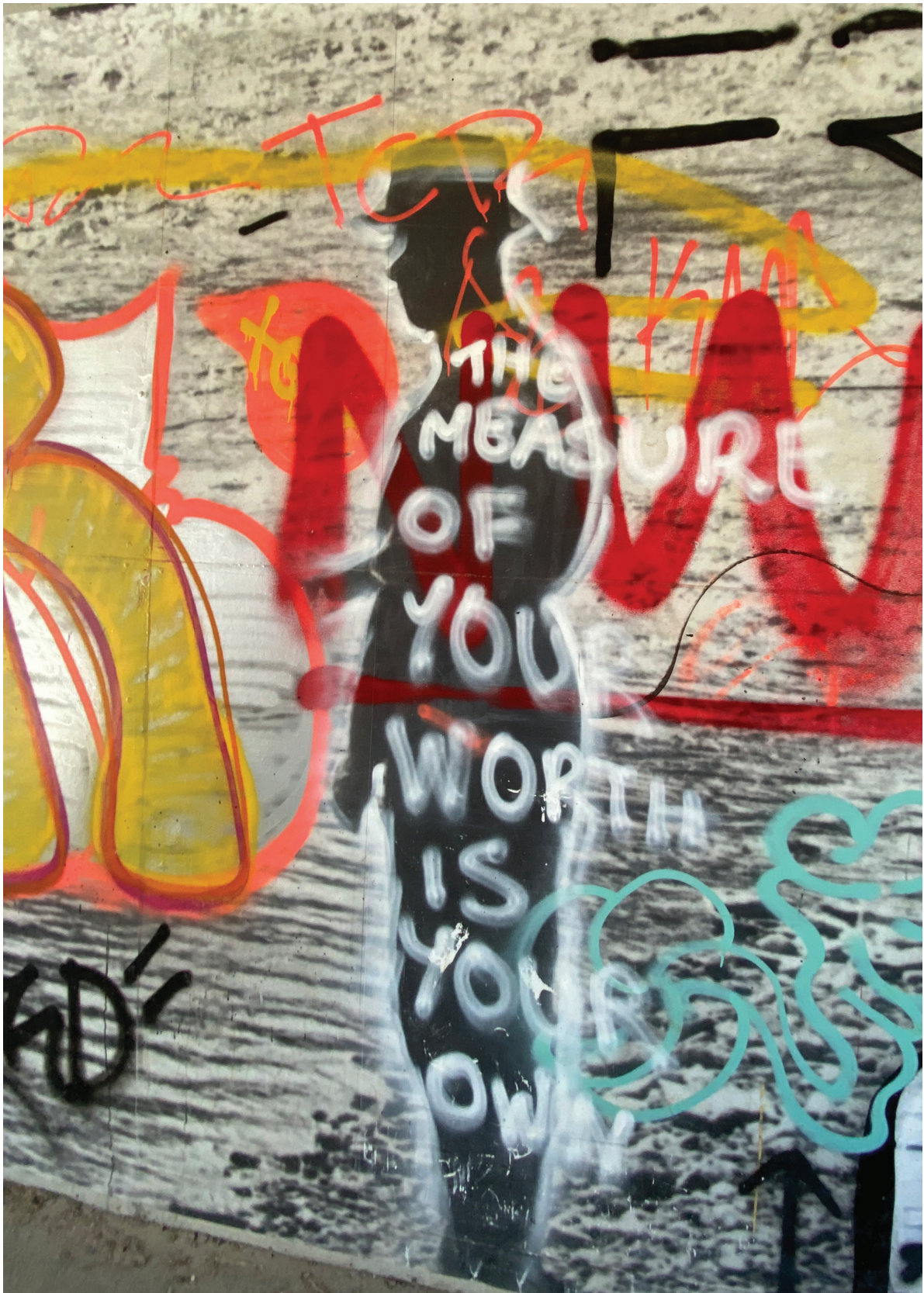




Fig. 3.15 R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant. (Photo: Taylor Hazell Architects)



Fig. 3.16 Beach adjacent to the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, 2021. Graffiti covers the retaining wall marking the edge of what I call the “underbelly” of this large and finely manicured architectural site.





Fig. 3.17 (Above) Former location of Keele Wall, now a Mattamy Homes construction site, 2022

Fig. 3.18 (Facing) Bus and Benjamin Moore ad, 2022

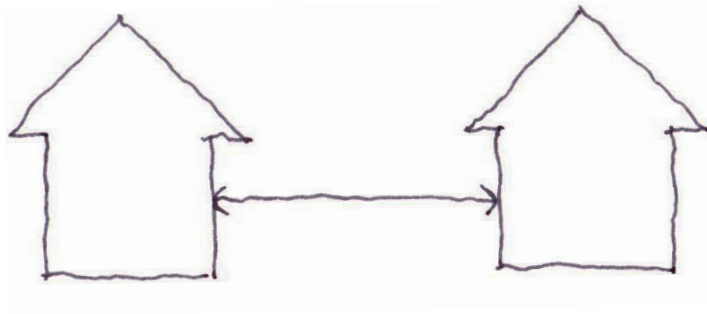


Fig. 3.19 A building for lease on Dundas Street West, formerly A-1 Auto Service, 2021



Fig. 3.20 Public art with tags near Queen and Dovercourt, 2022

VENICE: PHILIPPINE COPYCATS



In 2000, at the turn of the century, a grotto was constructed in front of the White House. It was inspired by the grotto in Lourdes, France, where an apparition of the Virgin Mary purportedly came to Saint Bernadette. In our family home, my Tito Oyo replaced the singular figure of Mary with a statuette of the entire Holy Family. They stand above stones, greenery, tilapia, lily pads floating on water.



Fig. 4.1 The Grotto from the White House series, Marker on paper, 2020

“What [José Rizal — Philippine national hero] meant by this was a new, restless double-consciousness which made it impossible ever after to experience Berlin without at once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin. Here indeed is the origin of nationalism, which lives by making comparisons.”

Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (1998)



*T:

SANTA MARIA GLORIOSA DEI FRARI

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2021
59

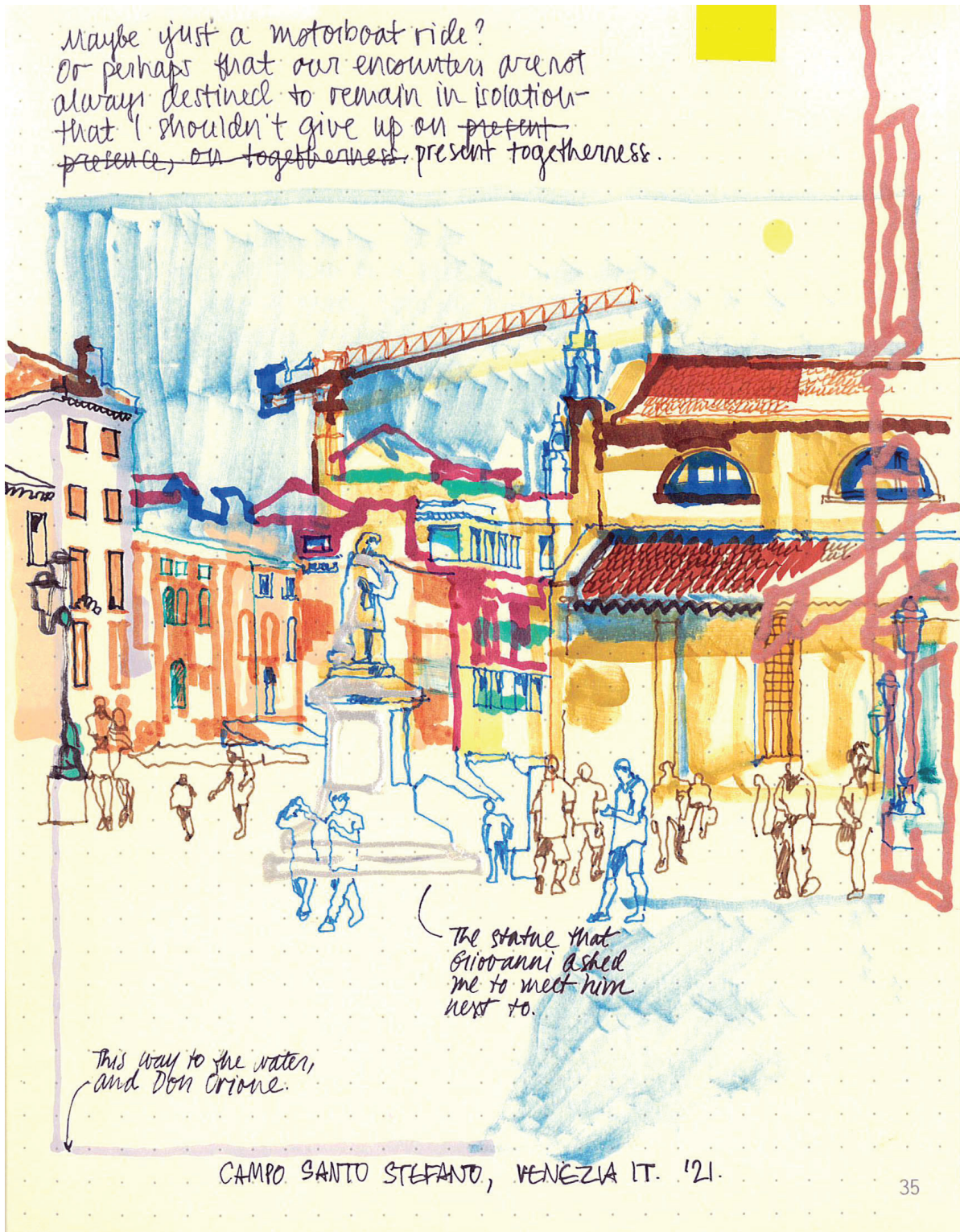


Fig. 4.2 (above) 'Campo Santo Stefano', Venice notebook sketches, 2021

Fig. 4.3 (facing) 'Santa Maria Gloriosa Dei Frari', Venice notebook sketches, 2021

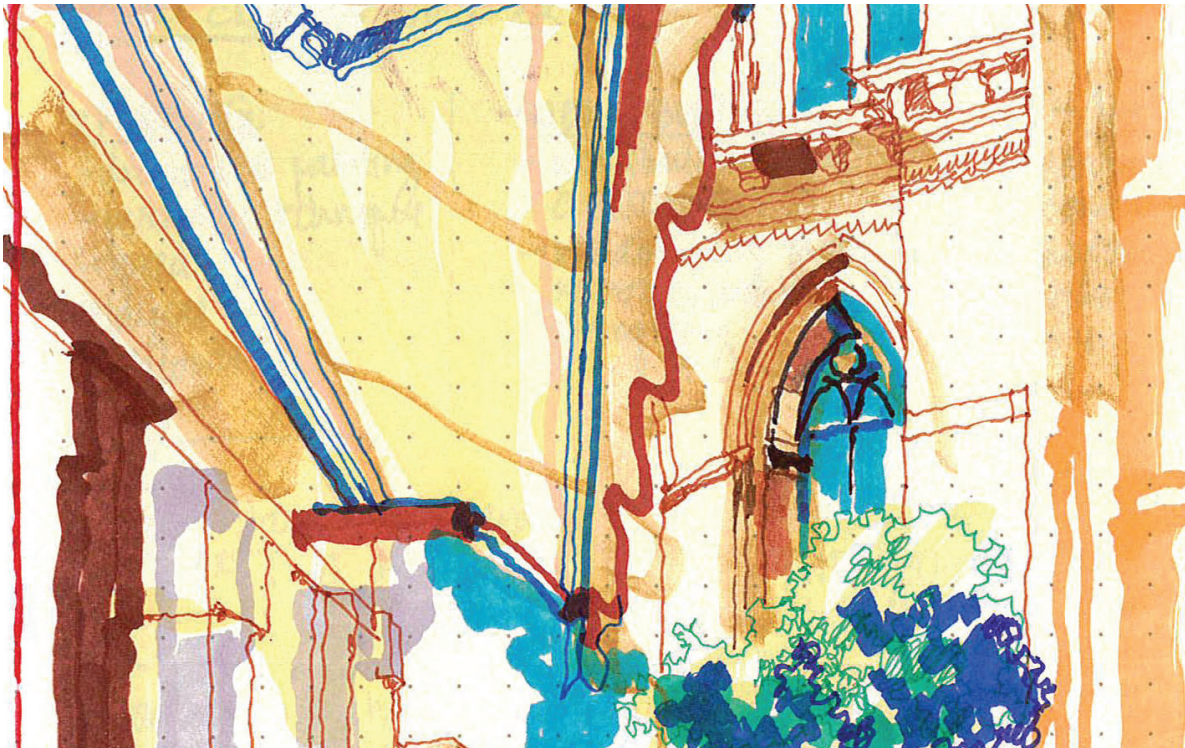


Fig. 4.4 (above) 'Santa Maria Gloriosa Dei Frari', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing architectural features.



Fig. 4.5 (left) 'Santa Maria Gloriosa Dei Frari', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing local woman on phone.

Fig. 4.6 (facing, left) 'Santa Maria Gloriosa Dei Frari', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing woman walking.

Fig. 4.7 (facing, right) 'Campo Santo Stefano', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing crane and statue of Niccolò Tommaseo.



JULY 8

- Teatro Italia Despar for groceries.
'Bianca' tag on the bridge on the way back, near Piazza le Rome. (Cars!)
- Jewish ghetto... Cannaregio
- Went to Palazzo Zenobio for research [supposedly a ~~Venetian~~ home to one of Venice's most famous bookbinders, within an Armenian Catholic palace] but it seems closed. There goes the PUBLISHING RESEARCH.
- Ended up at the bookshop/biblioteca of IUAV University (Tolentini) instead. Here I found various DOLL GUIDES, Paul's included. (He had just happened to message me at that moment, so strange.) Good Scarpa garden. Bought a student mag - Dune.
- Neighbourhood bar in Dorsoduro afterwards. Waiter's name is Ali. 'offers' me a free spitz. Crossing the bridge are all sorts of architecture students, old ladies. All in golden hour sunlight. I do not miss the rolls of bond paper, paper with holes cut, portfolio sleeves.

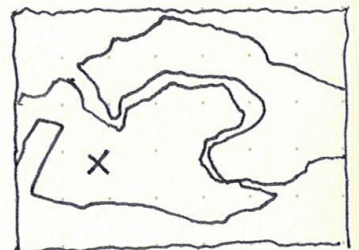
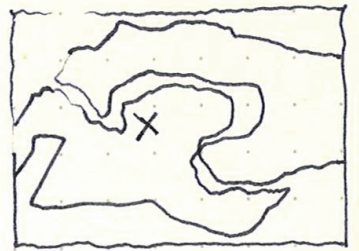
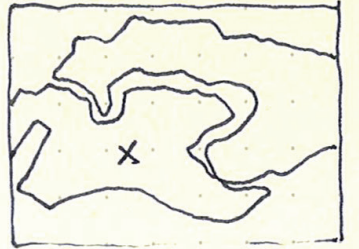
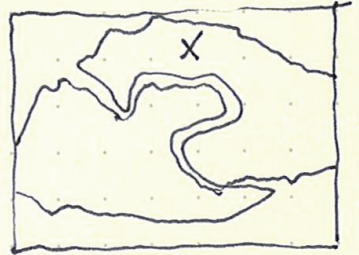
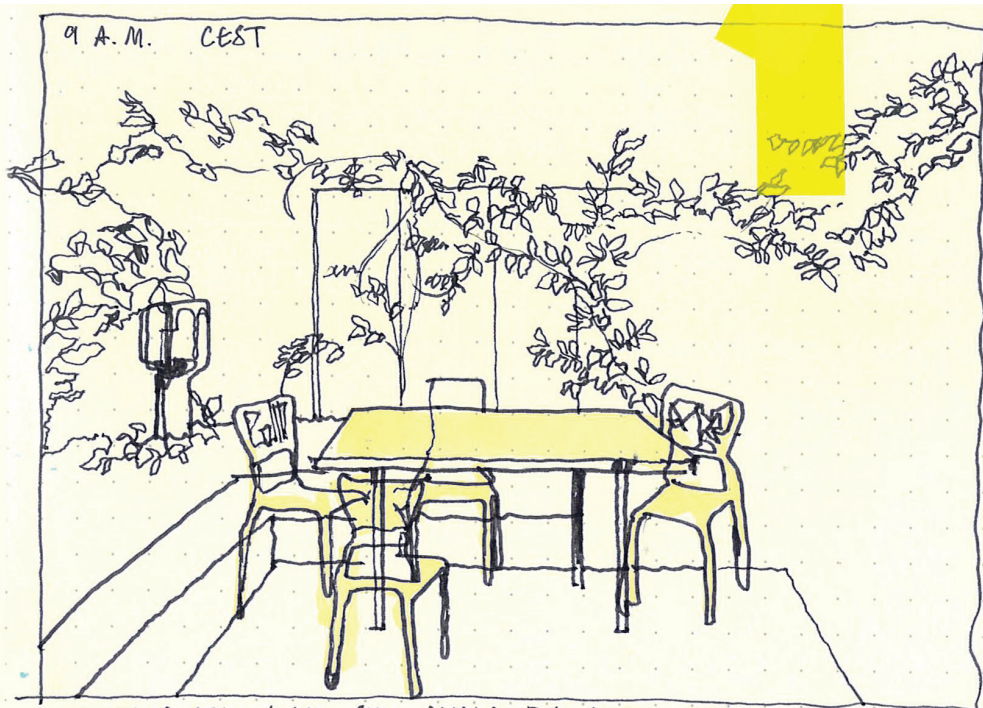




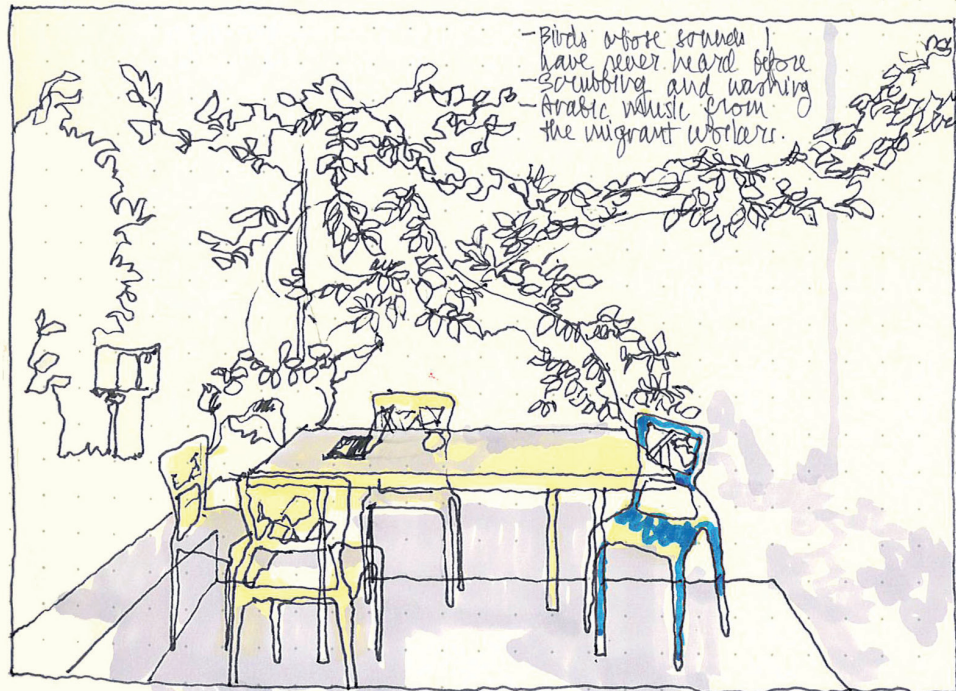
Fig. 4.8 'Cannaregio', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. I attempted to map out and visit historic publishing houses in Venice, but they were closed, so I ended up at a book shop instead.



Fig. 4.9 'Cannaregio', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Backside



FINDING THE IDEAL SUN ANGLE FOR WORK IN MY GARDEN...



31

Fig. 4.10 'Sunlight in my garden', Venice notebook sketches, 2021

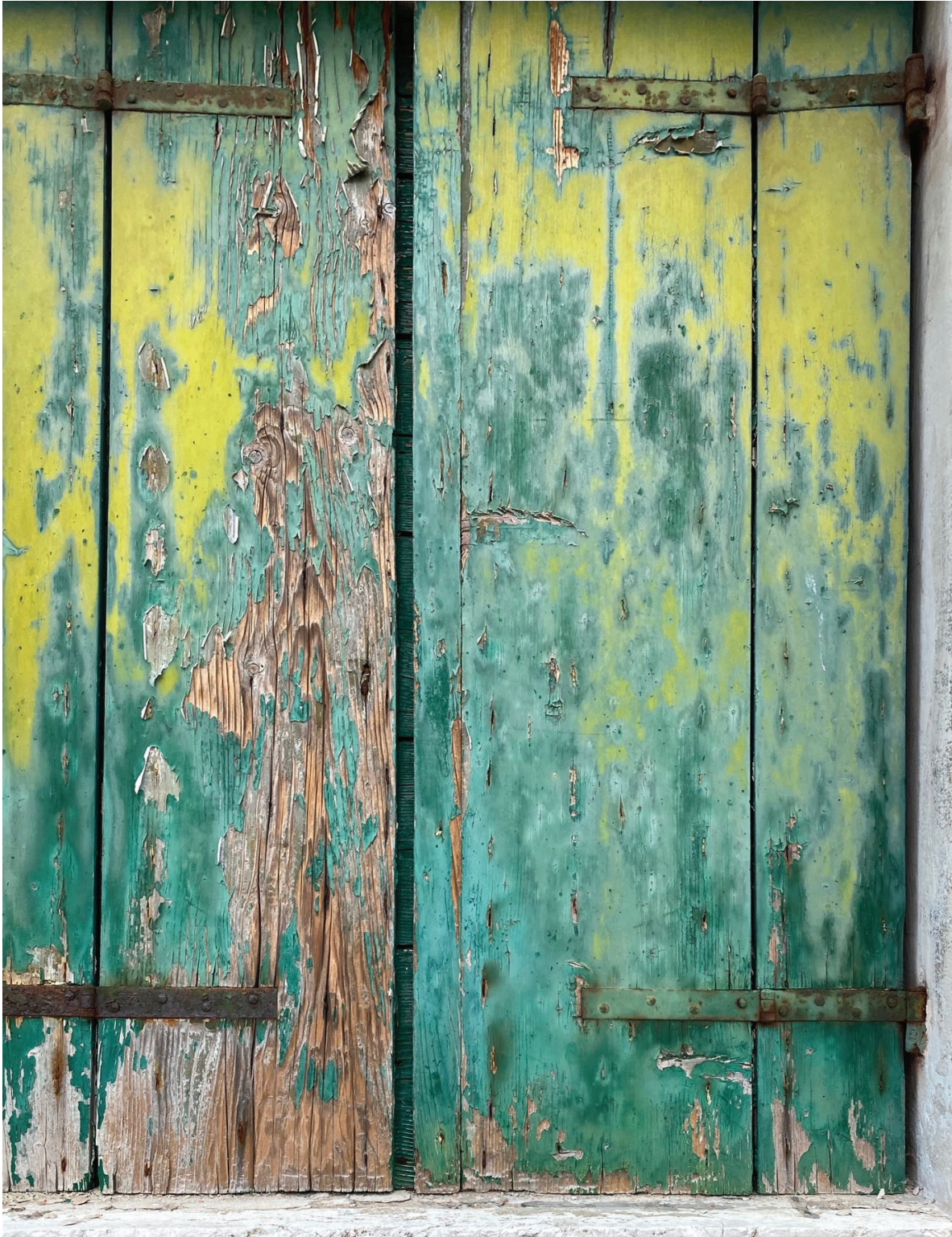


Fig. 4.11 (above) 'Venice Palimpsest #1: Turquoise', 2021

Fig. 4.12 (facing) 'Transportation Infrastructure', Venice notebook sketches, 2021

LIDO

- Bus to Alberoni, took Giovanni's advice (literally)
- Built a fort with a bedsheet and sticks
- Fe went over to the dunes, which doubled as cruising land, got in some...
- Electric bicycles back to the station, by sunset...
- NEGOTIATING ON THE WATER BUS

JULY 15

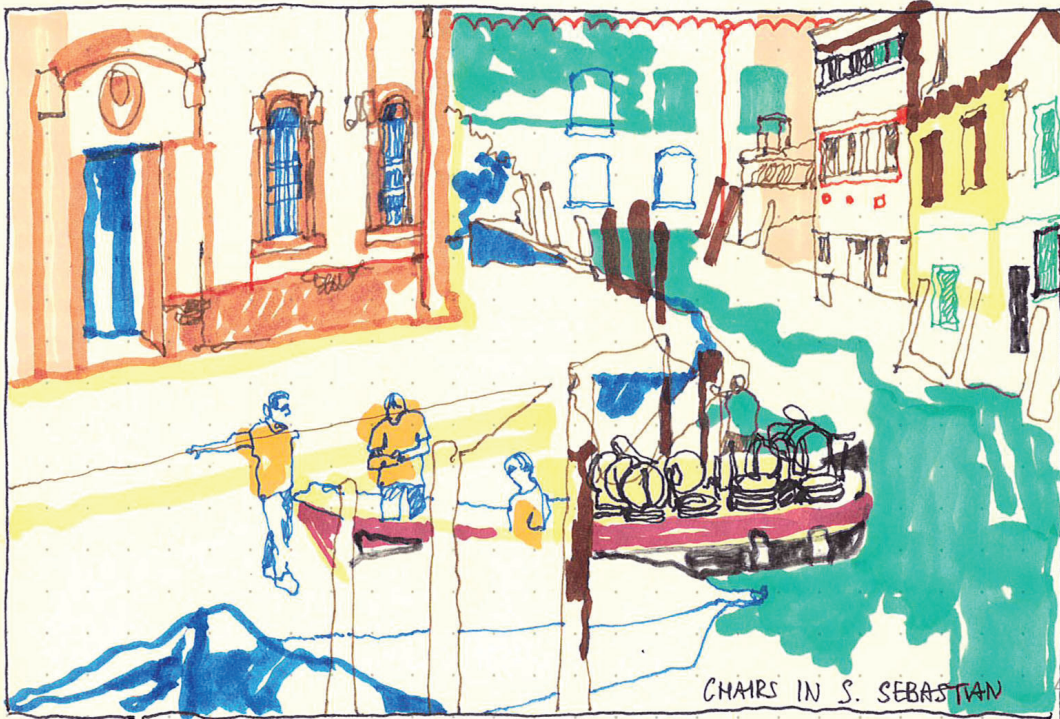




Fig. 4.13 'At the Arsenale/Giovanni and Yasmin', Venice notebook sketches, 2021



Fig. 4.14 'Venice Palimpsest #2: Politics', Venice notebook sketches, 2021



Fig. 4.15 'Venice Palimpsest #3: First Brick', 2021

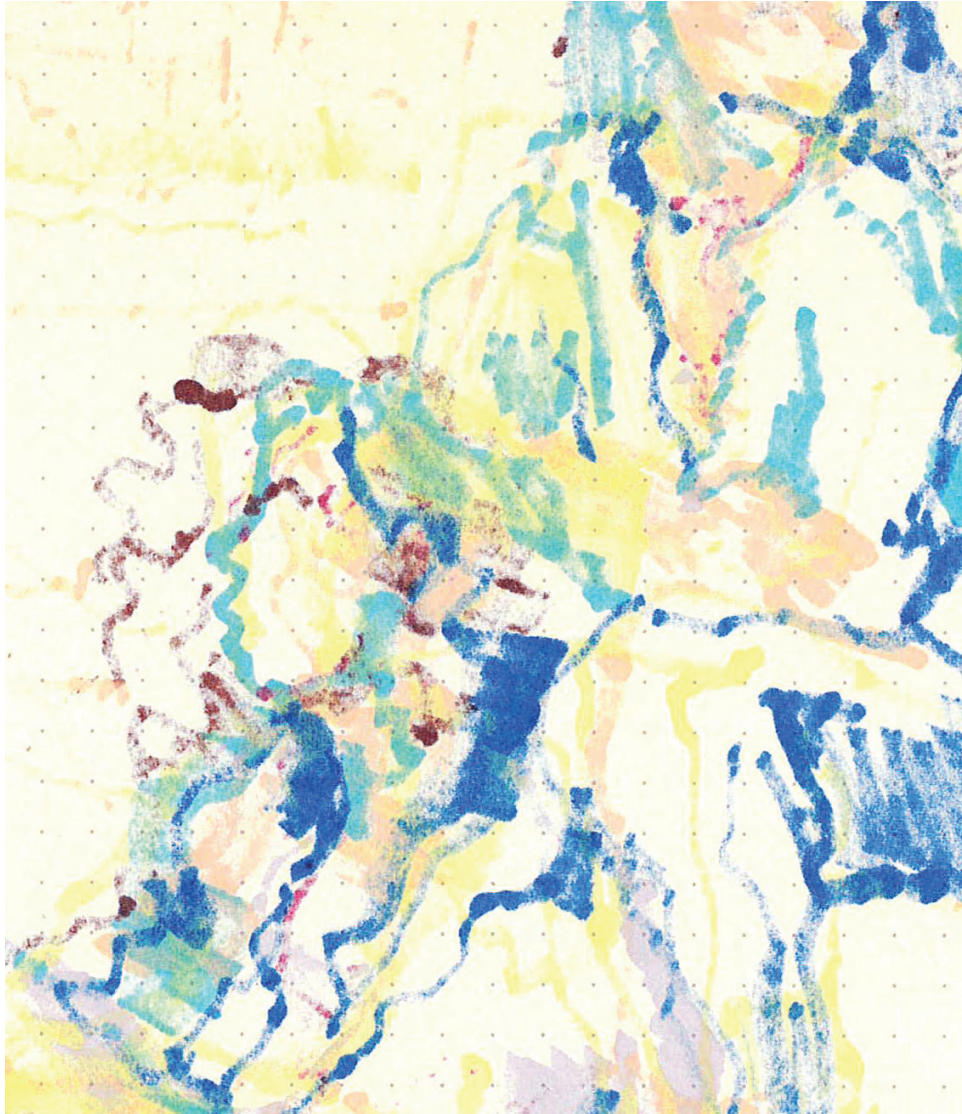


Fig. 4.16 (Above) 'At the Arsenale/Giovanni and Yasmin', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing reverse page where marker has bled through the paper.

Fig. 4.17 (Facing) 'At the Arsenale/Giovanni and Yasmin', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing architectural details.





Fig. 4.18 'Ponte Rialto', Venice notebook sketches, 2021



Fig. 4.19 'Venice Palimpsest #4: Pink', 2021

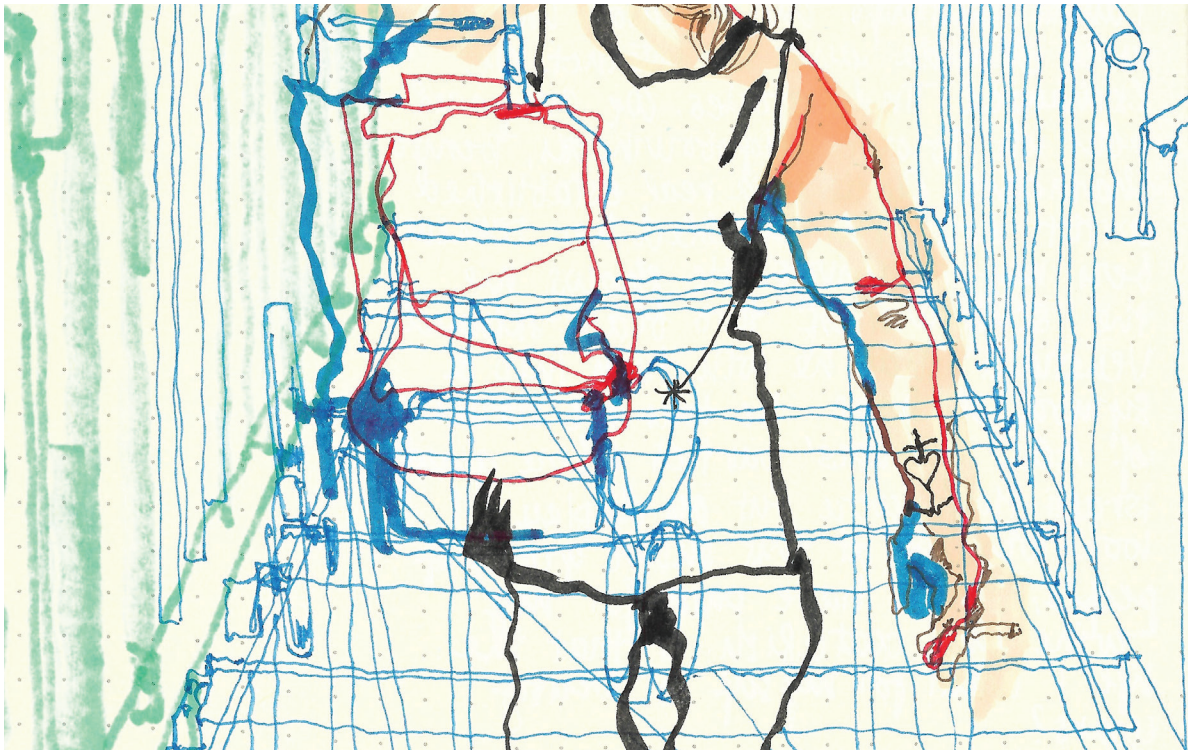


Fig. 4.20 'Ponte Rialto', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing a woman holding a trolley dolly and a cigarette.



Fig. 4.21 'Ponte Rialto', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing the Rialto Bridge and surrounding buildings.

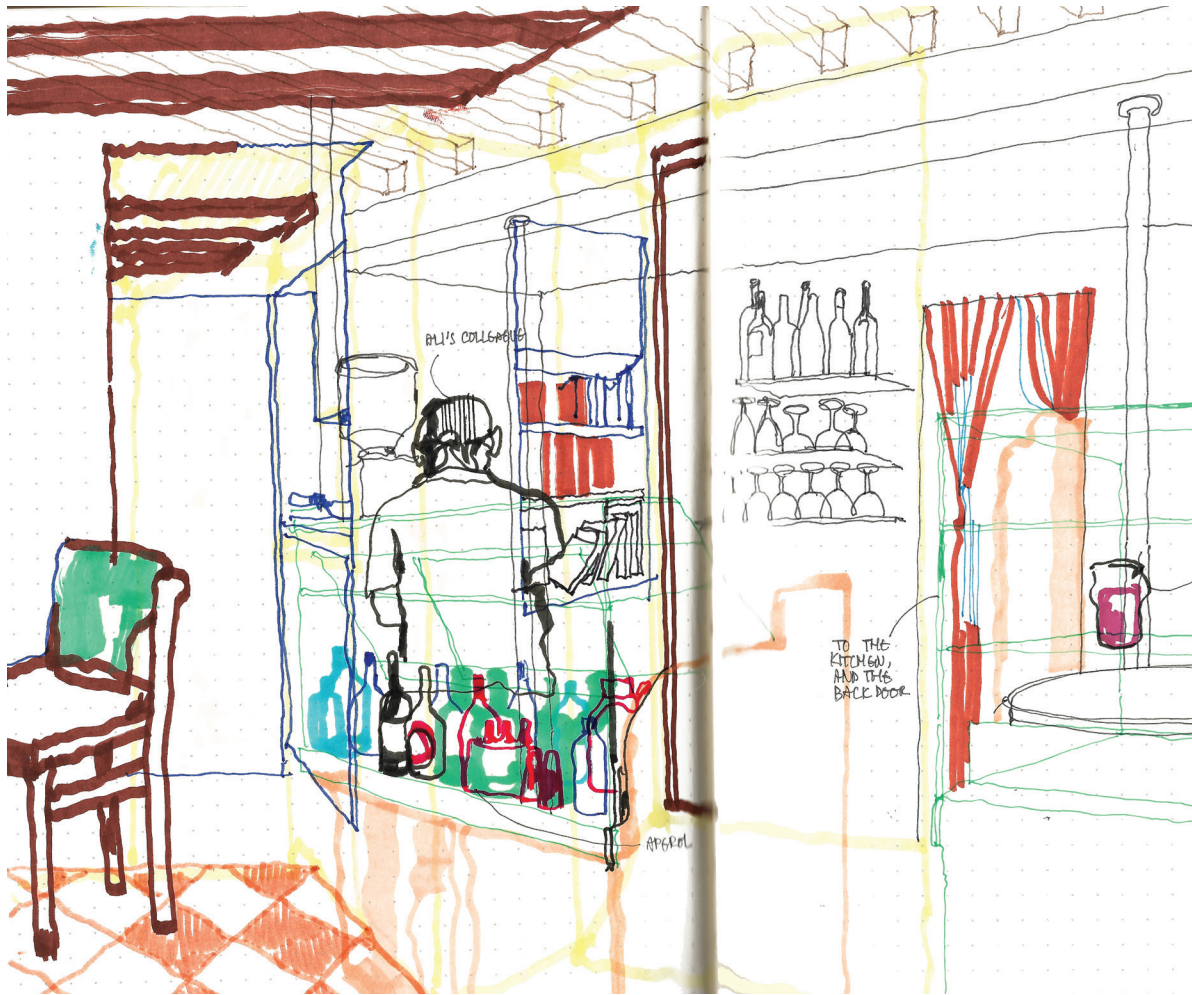


Fig. 4.22 'Giorai Pizza/My Bedroom', Venice notebook sketches, 2021



Fig. 4.23 'Ponte Rialto', Venice notebook sketches, 2021. Detail showing café-goers sitting at the edge of the Grand Canal.

Philippine Copycats⁶³

My first trip coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic was to Venice for the occasion of the 17th Biennale of Architecture. I arrived in June of 2021, when non-European tourists were only beginning to trickle back onto the *ses-tieres*, fishermen and small store owners were waking up from a two-year tourism slumber; and the Biennale was operating, optimistically, for what it projected would be a world audience.

In Venice, I was easily immersed in the genesis and the possibilities of architectural publishing. Venice is said to have effectively launched the publishing industry in the fifteenth century, becoming Europe's largest and most technologically innovative center of print.⁶⁴ This owed to its freedom of press (the *privilegio* was an early form of publisher's copyright, enforced by a senior government commission), development of typographic art, and supply of raw materials and trading conditions. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Jacopo de'Barbari's map of Venice (**Figure 4.25**) was printed, using six large wood-blocks covering nearly two square metres. The map's publisher, Anton Kolb, was a merchant from Nuremberg, which might explain the orientation of the map towards the Alps to the north. De'Barbari, being a Venetian, used a non-generic approach (relative to Medieval illuminations) in the creation of his bird's eye view, resulting in an uncompromisingly accurate record of the city's individual buildings and waterways. The print is still used by historians



Fig. 4.24 Cover of Dune Vol. 002 n. 002 (Photo: Yana Davydova, for Dune Journal)

today as a rich source of documentary knowledge about the appearance of the city in 1500. Despite this, de'Barbari took liberties with the representation of the urban geography, omitting houses and *calli* (alleyways) towards the left (west) part of the map in order to provide a more orderly composition, while key buildings at the heart of the city, such as the Ducal Palace, were enlarged for symbolic purposes.⁶⁵ This early example of a widely disseminated image thus demonstrates the ways in which personal bias and aesthetic preference can colour architectural representation.

In an attempt to visit and map out Venice's major publishing houses, I went on a walk that took me to Libreria Cluva,

63 Bianca Weeko Martin. "Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction," *Dune* Vol. 002 n.002 (2022): 18-27.

64 Lina L. Carroll and Eric Dursteler. *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*. (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2013), 617-618.

65 Tom Nichols. *Renaissance Art in Venice: From Tradition to Individualism*. (London: Laurence King, 2016).



Fig. 4.25 Jacopo de'Barbari, View of Venice, 1500 (Image: Minneapolis Institute of Art)

near the architecture school in the *sestiere* of Santa Croce. Steps away from Scarpa's playful concrete gate, it is a book store specializing in books on design and art. Inside, I noticed a journal called *Dune*. I was first intrigued by the title, which recalled the famed soon-to-release sci-fi remake starring Timothée Chalamet, and the steamy red cover image which was taken by Toronto-based photographer Bruce LaBruce. Upon purchasing and further reading, I learned that the publication was a recent project coming from the fashion design department of Università luav di Venezia (luav), and that they had decided to take an interdisciplinary approach focusing more broadly on "visual culture" rather than fashion or architecture. I was inspired by the journal and the particular theme that they proposed for their call for submissions, so I sent in an abstract for their then-forthcoming issue, *Value*.

Having spent a month in Venice, I found joy in the physicality of my encounters with architecture, people, and books, which the pandemic had made elusive. I wanted to (non-extractively) show my gratitude to my host community and, through

drawing and writing, make myself feel at home. I was intrigued by the possibility of participating in a conversation by way of the written word, and being disseminated alongside writers whose contributions might either bolster my views or offer alternative perspectives. The thematic call to which I responded read as follows:

Value in relation to authenticity, brought into question over the course of the 20th century by mechanical, electronic and digital means of reproduction. The copy, the forgery, the simulation and the clone are at the center of a culture of digital liquidity in which everything is duplicated, shared and spread around. Expressions that are feeding into the development and elaboration of this phenomenon range from Marjorie Perloff's notion of unoriginal genius (2010)—which attributes to the artist a role of control and diffusion of information rather than invention and which has influenced the poet and critic Kenneth Goldsmith—to the concept of migration of the aura explored by Bruno Latour and The Hacker Project of Gucci and Balenciaga.

My initial objective in getting published in this journal, frankly, was to maximize the dissemination of the photographs I had taken earlier of modern architecture in Manila, and to introduce readers to a complex Southeast Asian city whose built form is understudied. In other words, I selfishly wanted the Philippines to take up space in the Western imagination, in a void I knew was not even on both sides. The desire to be included in this Venetian publication was somewhat complicated by the biases that I was aware dominated the dissemination of many non-Western historical narratives. The scholar Lisa Lowe eloquently summarizes this issue, as well as the call to action that postcolonial literature and writing might offer:

In other words, “Europe” is the “silent referent in historical knowledge,” often even for histories that represent non-European nations or peoples. A philosophy of history that would not merely substitute another national subject within the same formal master narrative must create an analytic that interrogates European coloniality, epistemology, and philosophy of history. Anticolonial and antislavery works are among the most distinguished histories that undertake the work of negating this dominant form.⁶⁶

Between de’Barbari’s *View of Venice*, the national pavilions at the Architecture Biennale, and my draft abstract for a Venetian journal, I thought at length about what it means to publish—to lay claim to physical and digital space and posterity. This query accompanied me on my walks

through the cemetery on San Michele island, where I searched for the graves of Brodsky and Stravinsky. Who decides who does and does not get a grave on that island? And who decides which graves get marked, mapped, placed at the forefront? I also meditated on my research’s inclusion within *Dune*. I wondered if it would be possible to hold the attention of readers with a narrow entry point into my chosen area of expertise. I wondered how I could confidently acknowledge a place’s role in the history of a given technology (such as Venice, and its contribution to publishing), while also working within the bounds of that technology to address the knowledge disparities borne out of what Lisa Lowe calls “European coloniality.” After all, the printing press was introduced to the Philippines by Spanish missionaries imposing their Catholic catechisms on the native population.⁶⁷ Using the printed word, they renamed both people⁶⁸ and plants; yet the printed word was later used by the patriotic Filipino polymath José Rizal to disseminate a key expository critique of a society under Spanish colonial rule.⁶⁹

The following pages offer annotations that work to address some of the questions I’ve outlined. The annotations are paired with the final spreads of my article ‘Philippine Copycats: In Defence of the Reproduction’ published in *Dune* in 2022 and edited by Maria Luisa Frisa. Though the text itself underwent minimal edits during the proofing process, there was a newness for me in the article’s published form as a result of its curation, and the connections that could be drawn between individual contributions. For example, the

66 Lisa Lowe. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 159.

67 R. Fernández Rodríguez. “Early writing and printing in the Philippines.” 2013. HIPHILANGSCI. Accessed April 1, 2022. <http://hiphilangsci.net/2013/07/10/early-writing-and-printingin-the-philippines/>.

68 The *Catálogo alfabético de apellidos* was a book of surnames (in alphabetic order) published after Spanish Governor-General Narciso Clavería y Zaldúa issued a decree on November 21, 1849 to address the lack of a standard naming convention.

69 José Rizal. *Noli Me Tángere*. (Manila: Oriental Commercial co., 1933).

essay preceding my own, written by Petre Mogoș and Laura Naum of Bucharest, reflect critically on counterfeiting in the context of Eastern Europe in its transition from state-socialism to market-based capitalism. Further in the publication, researchers from the *Universidade de Lisboa* in Portugal search for value in the spontaneous monuments of European coastal cities, including religious architecture and flexible elements like beach umbrellas. Both of these pieces, though sited in Europe (as with the majority of the contributions in the journal), overlap with my text through discrete and shared architectural features. Some of these architectural features, like the Catholic grotto illustrated in **Figure 4.1**, can be said to have crossed over continental borders over historical time in a cultural passage.⁷⁰ When considering the idea of change in the process of sharing written work and histories, I like to remember the following quote offered by Glissant:

I can change through exchanging with others, without losing or diluting my sense of self.⁷¹

With this manifesto in mind, the annotations on the following pages isolate concepts and terms from the paper 'Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction.' They recontextualize some concepts discussed earlier in this thesis—such as translation, domestic space, and hybridity—within the specific examples of Manila's modern architecture. They are a reflection on writing and print as exchange, and an exercise in using architectural theory as a way to interrogate value. And, of course, they return to the *White House*, both through theory and through imagery.

70 Manthia Diawara, director. *Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation*. K'a Yéléma Productions, 2008.

71 Édouard Glissant and Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Archipelago*. (Isolarii, 2021), 67.

Imitazioni filippine: un elogio della riproduzione

Abstract

Come possiamo trovare nuovi approcci al valore storico-culturale nelle post-colonie? Siamo in grado di accettare una molteplicità di origini nella cultura visiva? Il paesaggio architettonico di Manila, nelle Filippine, è posto come esempio in cui le influenze stilistiche introdotte nelle successive occupazioni coloniali sono alterate, tradotte, tradotte male e attualizzate, fino all'emergere di una nuova fonte di valore localmente riscritta. Una panoramica delle tipologie architettoniche, come le chiese e gli edifici brutalisti, si appoggia agli scritti di Benjamin Buchloh sulle riproduzioni in arte.

Keywords

Riproduzione, Postcolonialismo, Sudest asiatico, Architettura, Filippine

Perché consideriamo l'originale più prezioso della copia? Siamo in grado di sopportare una molteplicità di origini nella cultura visiva? In linea di principio, un'opera d'arte è sempre stata riproducibile. Sarebbe il caso di rivalutare questo processo di produzione di copie, e l'annesso valore storico-culturale che attribuiamo a ciò che accettiamo come originale, soprattutto nel contesto delle ex colonie. Scrivo dell'architettura di Manila, nelle Filippine, in difesa della copia, in onore della ripetizione, in omaggio al trasferimento di uno stile che comincia con imposizione e finisce come traduzione, magari una traduzione sbagliata e, in certi casi, un'attualizzazione con un nuovo valore localmente attribuito. Cerco alternative a una scala riduttiva di discriminazione tra originale e copia, trovando metodi di condivisione del valore che evitano di assegnare il privilegio basandosi solo su una rivendicazione avanzata da un punto di origine, in particolare modo quando all'inizio questo punto di origine si propaga attraverso obiettivi di "civilizzazione" missionaria.

Lo storico poliglotta Benedict Anderson ha scritto che "pochi Paesi danno all'osservatore un senso più profondo di vertigine storica delle Filippine". Rispetto ai suoi vicini del Sudest asiatico, lo stile architettonico nazionale delle Filippine è arduo da definire, poiché l'insurrezione armata del Paese contro il governo spagnolo nel 1896 lo rende un precursore di tutti gli altri movimenti anticoloniali nella regione. Questa confusione stilistica si può in parte spiegare con le disparate occupazioni coloniali successive che riempiono buona parte della storia nota delle Filippine, dal periodo spagnolo durato dalla fine del Cinquecento alla fine dell'Ottocento, all'occupazione americana nella prima metà del Novecento, fino a un breve periodo di occupazione giapponese. Queste potenze straniere hanno esercitato un effetto diretto e visibile sul modo di creare gli spazi nelle Filippine, e si sono lasciate alle spalle influenze culturali e stilistiche sopravvissute molto più a lungo dei loro regimi di dominazione. C'è stata un'ulteriore forma di occupazione che si è manifestata nella forma di una dittatura locale, quella della famiglia Marcos, il cui governo è durato dagli anni sessanta fino agli anni ottanta. I Marcos sono riusciti ad approfittare della

di Bianca Weeko Martin Codice Archivio 002.033

"ricerca di uno stile filippino", che dopo gli anni cinquanta era diventata un'impresa dichiarata, in risposta alla pervasiva influenza americana su architettura, letteratura e pittura.

Considerando l'influenza capillare degli Stati Uniti sulle Filippine e nel resto del mondo, è giusto tenere conto del fatto che gli stessi americani sono stati imitatori nel campo della pittura, in particolare rispetto alla scuola parigina del primo Novecento. Le influenze prese a prestito nel paesaggio architettonico filippino, invece, hanno operato una scelta piuttosto sorprendente tra i precedenti europei. Per le Filippine, che alla metà del XX secolo avevano appena conquistato l'indipendenza, le commissioni edilizie post-coloniali che favorivano lo stile brutalista offrono l'occasione di ricostruire dopo la diffusa distruzione della Seconda guerra mondiale, e la possibilità di affermare la propria identità come nazione libera. Le chiese cattoliche introdotte dai primi missionari spagnoli presentavano una tipologia costruttiva che agiva da parametro programmatico per gli architetti. E su una nota più umoristica, nell'architettura "neoliberalista" dei suoi centri commerciali contemporanei, edifici playal di Manila come il Venice Grand Canal Mall (fig. 1, p. 20) rimandano a paesaggi cittadini europei del passato, in quanto equiparano i loro edifici e monumenti a pubbliche ostentazioni di lusso.

Nella sua raccolta di saggi *Formalism and Historicity*, Benjamin Buchloh descrive l'arte novecentesca non in termini di modernità buona o cattiva, o di avanguardia vecchia o nuova, ma di sostanziale andirivieni dialettico tra identico e diverso: o la forma di un'opera d'arte "ricomincia la propria storia intrinseca, il proprio ineluttabile tangere con modalità di ripetizione formale e mitopoietici astorici, oppure non lo fa". Secondo Buchloh, si può dire che la storia dell'arte dell'immediato dopoguerra, in particolare le scuole di pittura di Parigi e New York, sia emersa "tanto da fraintendimenti, omissioni e ignoranza della storia quanto dall'informazione artistica che era disponibile all'epoca, e che ci è poi stata tramandata". Per fare un esempio, la pittura parigina che ha influenzato l'arte newyorchese tramite riproduzioni in bianco e nero (più che esemplari di prima mano) ha fatto sì che i pittori americani sviluppassero un senso più indipendente del colore.

Sulla stessa falsariga, la procedura del fotomontaggio si è convertita in modo che possano applicarsi in simultanea quelli che Buchloh descrive come principi "allegorici": appropriazione e suadamento di significato, frammentazione e accostamento dialettico di frammenti, e la separazione sistematica di significante e significati. Come possono tradursi queste procedure in ambito architettonico? Anche se gli scritti di Buchloh si concentrano prevalentemente sul dialogo tra America ed Europa, in questo saggio il mio scopo è applicare osservazioni simili a quel paese marginale del Sudest asiatico che sono le Filippine, dove, secondo la mia ipotesi, sono andate in scena analoghe dialettiche tra le Filippine e la Spagna, gli Stati Uniti e l'Europa del *béton brut*.

Per illustrare queste "imitazioni" filippine, descriverò quattro tipologie architettoniche che si possono individuare nella città di Manila e nel Paese intero: brutalismo filippino, architettura neoliberalista, chiese cattoliche e case tradizionali. Questi edifici sono stati originariamente studiati e fotografati per il volume di prossima pubblicazione

Architectural City Guide: Manila, su cui ho lavorato con l'editore berlinese DOM Publishers dal 2019. Tali tipologie fungono anche da categorie per organizzare gli edifici moderni presentati in questo saggio, analizzando verso il Nuovo Mondo, il brutalismo si è lasciato alle spalle le sue origini discendenti, il CCP di Manila ha acquistato una nuova vita sotto gli auspici programmatici di compagnie residenti come il Philippine Ballet Theater e la Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra. Tenendo a mente questo confronto, e la molteplicità delle origini del brutalismo, mi pongo una domanda: la resilienza e la lunga durata di significato non dovrebbero essere visti come indicatori di valore che surclassano la cosiddetta originalità?

Brutalismo filippino

Dalla fine degli anni sessanta agli anni ottanta, le Filippine si stavano acclimando all'indipendenza appena riconquistata dagli Stati Uniti d'America. Il moderno stile internazionale allora prevalente fu spogliato di giungla, paesaggio architettonico del brutalismo: una devozione materiale al cemento che corrisponde all'assenza di nuovi centri culturali e commerciali nella Regione capitale nazionale di Manila. Nelle Filippine, questo "stile" architettonico è strettamente associato al governo autoritario di Ferdinand e Imelda Marcos, che cooptarono la natura monumentale del brutalismo sposandolo con il romanticismo nativista dell'epoca. In quel periodo l'architettura di stato seguiva gli stili materiali e formali del brutalismo, e simultaneamente agiva come uno dei meccanismi di legittimazione del regime dittatoriale per il controllo sociopolitico. Anche se in genere adottava forme spigolose e masse squadrate, il brutalismo filippino condivideva la sinuosità scultorea della tradizione brutalista delle nazioni tropicali ed equatoriali come l'India e il Brasile, esplorando il pieno potenziale del cemento come medium pur restando radicato nelle ideologie populiste, soprattutto data la velocità e la convenienza del suo impiego nella costruzione.

Uno dei simboli più visibili del brutalismo filippino è della parabola a esso strettamente intrecciata dei Marcos e il Cultural Center of the Philippines, o CCP (fig. 2, p. 21), progettato dall'architetto filippino Leandro V. Locsin e inaugurato nel 1969. Promuovendo la cultura delle masse, il CCP si impegnava a far rivivere le forme culturali locali nei nuovi materiali e a creare uno spazio performativo in cui le classi a cui era stato tolto il diritto di voto potessero "simbolicamente inscenare le loro richieste di riconoscimento sociale". L'edificio, tuttora simbolo controverso, traduce il cemento, che si trova all'interno del calcestruzzo, può essere considerato "una specie di pozza informale se non viene curato e plasmato", alludendo così a un altro metodo di collocazione: nel tempo. Un'altra caratteristica distintiva del CCP è l'allusione alla casa tipica delle Filippine, la *bahay kubo*, qui trasformata in una metafora brutalista di volumi fluttuanti.

Il brutalismo filippino a Manila del periodo del regime di Ferdinand e Imelda Marcos viene spesso collegato alle forme sovietiche del brutalismo nell'Est Europa, a causa della loro comune funzione di strumenti statali di controllo sociopolitico. Ma qual è l'origine del brutalismo, e chi la rivendica? I suoi "inventori" si attribuiscono il materiale, o piuttosto le ideologie che il materiale incarna oggi? Il termine "brutalismo" nel suo uso attuale viene di solito ricondotto agli architetti e teorici britannici Alison e Peter Smithson, che nel 1953 coniarono l'espressione "New Brutalism" per descrivere lo stile architettonico definito da un uso pronunciato del cemento grezzo a vista.

Per gli Smithson, tuttavia, il padre del brutalismo era l'architetto francese Le Corbusier, con le sue imponenti strutture in *béton brut*. Il CCP, come esempio principe del brutalismo filippino, fu inaugurato nel 1969 e resta ancora oggi il centro culturale funzionante; al contrario, l'*Arts*

of Brutalist Architecture pubblicato da Phaidon elenca numerosi edifici brutalisti in Europa e in Russia costruiti tra gli anni quaranta e la fine dei settanta che sono ormai inattivi, diroccati o già demoliti. In effetti, nel suo tragitto verso il Nuovo Mondo, il brutalismo si è lasciato alle spalle le sue origini discendenti, il CCP di Manila ha acquistato una nuova vita sotto gli auspici programmatici di compagnie residenti come il Philippine Ballet Theater e la Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra. Tenendo a mente questo confronto, e la molteplicità delle origini del brutalismo, mi pongo una domanda: la resilienza e la lunga durata di significato non dovrebbero essere visti come indicatori di valore che surclassano la cosiddetta originalità?

Chiese cattoliche

Anche se in origine nelle Filippine le chiese furono costruite per imporre il cattolicesimo ai cosiddetti indios e consolidare il dominio spagnolo, oggi sono state appropriate e reinterpretate da architetti locali per produrre alcune delle strutture più espressive e sperimentali delle Filippine. Prima di tutto, le Filippine sono l'unico Paese a maggioranza cattolica in Asia, con circa il 75% della popolazione che storicamente professa il cattolicesimo romano. Questo rende le chiese un'architettura nazionale unica nel contesto del tempo e delle pagode del Sudest asiatico. Ho parlato di brutalismo come copia stilistica ancorata al materiale e al tempo stesso all'ideologia, più avanti prendo in esame le abitazioni tradizionali come adattamento di una tipologia abitativa coloniale, le chiese cattoliche, sono copie nella loro peculiarissima funzione programmatica. In sostanza si tratta di luoghi di ritrovo; alcune caratteristiche che potrebbero unire dal punto di vista architettonico sono altare, navate, croci e cappelle. La chiesa non è una tipologia esclusiva della Spagna. È la basilica cristiana, che precede la chiesa, e il risultato di un lungo sviluppo in numerose fasi, dalla basilica civile ai "tempi pagani".

Le prime chiese barocche dell'occupazione spagnola si ergono ancora nelle parti vecchie di Manila e nelle province circostanti, come Laguna. Sono state costruite con alcune modifiche tese a mitigare gli effetti di terremoti e disastri naturali, come volte a botte in pietra e vestiboli ad arco. Inoltre, in queste chiese la decorazione desume spesso la forma da motivi e flora locali. Il convento di San Agustín a Intramuros, Manila, è un esempio importante in cui i precedenti missionari della missione agostiniana in Messico, e più ampiamente l'architettura monastica sudamericana, sono stati adattati alla pietra, ai materiali e alle condizioni climatiche delle Filippine. Il convento di San Agustín ospita una ricca collezione di pale d'altare, o *retablos*, che illustra un'evoluzione dai precedenti spagnoli alla locale tradizione di artigianato che ancora oggi persiste nelle Filippine. Il retablo filippino in genere integra l'arte locale dell'intaglio del legno, e diventa fonte di orgoglio nazionale. La matrice dei precedenti incarnati dal convento di San Agustín, che coprono non solo la Spagna e le Filippine ma anche le altre colonie dell'impero spagnolo, rimanda alla complessità e alle sfaccettature della ricerca dell'origine su scala globale. E una rapida scorsa all'uso e popolarità delle chiese nelle Filippine rivela che esse non sono più semplicemente imposizioni coloniali, ma - come dice del convento il curatore del Museo di San Agustín - "un tesoro del popolo filippino... che per la gente è fonte di identità e orgoglio".

Nella cultura contemporanea, le chiese più riuscite delle Filippine sono forse quelle adattate all'ambiente circo-

Imitazioni filippine: un elogio della riproduzione

Abstract

Come possiamo trovare nuovi approcci al valore storico-culturale nelle post-colonie? Siamo in grado di accettare una molteplicità di origini nella cultura visiva? Il paesaggio architettonico di Manila, nelle Filippine, è posto come esempio in cui le influenze stilistiche introdotte nelle successive occupazioni coloniali sono alterate, tradotte, tradotte male e attualizzate, fino all'emergere di una nuova fonte di valore localmente riscritta. Una panoramica delle tipologie architettoniche, come le chiese e gli edifici brutalisti, si appoggia agli scritti di Benjamin Buchloh sulle riproduzioni in arte.

Keywords

Riproduzione, Postcolonialismo, Sudest asiatico, Architettura, Filippine

Fig. 4.26 (Facing) *Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction* by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, pp119-120.



Fig. 4.27 The Feast of the Black Nazarene in the Philippines is known as *Traslación*, and is an annual procession in Manila that re-enacts the transferal of the Black Nazarene icon from its original shrine in the walled old city to the Minor Basilica (or Quiapo Church). The Black Nazarene was carved in the 16th century in Mexico before being transported to the Philippines in 1606, where it is widely renowned and considered by many to be miraculous. (Photo: J Singlador)

On Translation

Philippine Copycats, as with the other English-language texts in *Dune*, was translated into Italian. In Italian it is *Imitazioni Filippine: Un Elogio della Riproduzione*.

Though my paper focused on the translation (and mistranslations) of architectural typologies from colonial powers to the Philippines, language too has historically been a decision of much consequence amongst the patriotic writers of the Philippines. The writer Gina Apostol has described the previously cited writer Nick Joaquin's use of English as an "unapologetic, Calibanic choice... [that] is both rebuke to the occupier and revenge upon it."⁷² The act of translation is also present in syncretic forms of religious ritual in the Philippines, with one annual procession (Figure 4.27) itself being named *Traslación*. And returning to the writing of architect Robin Evans, whom I referenced in the section of this thesis entitled *Universal House/Particular House*, we recall that much of architecture may be language-like without being language, and that over the course of translating some things may get lost along the way. Does 'copycats' really represent 'imitazioni' in a 1:1 relationship? The relationship between architecture and language in the lens of translation warrants further contemplation.

⁷² Gina Apostol. "Foreword." In *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic* by Nick Joaquin. (London: Penguin Random House, 1961).



Fig. 4.28 (Facing) Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, pp20-21. Detail of Venice Grand Canal Mall, Taguig, Manila.

Copycats

Kjartansson says the work is deadly serious, paraphrasing Björk that “every song she writes starts as a joke and then she carves away until she finds the truth in it”.⁷³

The chosen title for the paper was *Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction*. It was possible to choose a word like ‘imitation,’ ‘reproduction,’ or simply ‘copy’ in place of ‘copycat.’ But ‘copycat’ had the aura of something quite comical, which is how I choose to defend the notion of value in Philippine architecture. With great humour, and reverence for the memories that have built my identity, I write about Manila’s architectural landscape in order to tease out the possibility of beauty and whimsy in artefacts previously ascribed to valuelessness. Similarly, an ironic stance can be positioned as “one possible attitude towards the plurality of convictions, or... ‘final vocabularies.’”⁷⁴ This spirit of plurality is at play in **Figure 4.28** embedded within the paper, a view of an open-air commercial center in Manila which I hoped would both draw in and amuse readers who were already familiar with Venice’s canals and gondolas.

73 Roth, Andrew. “From Russia with Schmaltz: Moscow’s Answer to Tate Modern Opens with a Santa Barbara Satire.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 9 Dec. 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/dec/09/russia-moscows-answer-tate-modern-ragnar-kjartansson-opens-santa-barbara-satire-us-soap>.

74 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley. 2022), 66.

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Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction

by Bianca Weeko Martin

1 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Harlow: Penguin Books, 1969).
2 Benedict Anderson, "First Filipino," *London Review of Books* 19, 20 (1997).
3 *Ibid.*
4 Gerard Lico, "Space, Spectacle, and Surveillance: Colonial Urbanism and Architecture in the Philippines," in Edison Caballin, ed., *The City Who*

Had Two Movels (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2021), 13.
Nobuyuki Ogura, David Leonides T. Yap, Kenichi Tanoue, "Modern Architecture in the Philippines and the Quest for Filipino Style," *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* 1, 2 (2002), 223.

Abstract
How can we find new approaches to historico-cultural value in the post-colony? Can we live with a multiplicity of origins in visual culture? The architectural landscape of Manila, Philippines is offered as an example where stylistic influences introduced through successive colonial occupations are altered, translated, mistranslated, and reactivated, until a new locally reinscribed source of value emerges. A survey of architectural typologies, such as churches and Brutalist buildings, is supported by Benjamin Buchloh's writings on reproductions in art.

Why do we value the original over the copy? Can we live with a multiplicity of origins in visual culture? In principle, a work of art has always been reproducible.¹ This process of reproducing copies, and relatedly the historico-cultural value we ascribe to what we accept as original, must be reassessed, particularly in the context of the formerly colonized. I write about the architecture of Manila, Philippines in defense of the copy, in praise of the repetition, in recognition of a transference of style that begins as an imposition and ends with translation, perhaps mistranslation, and, at times, reactivation with new locally inscribed value. I seek alternatives to a reductive scale of value spanning from an original to a copy, finding methods of value-sharing that do not assign privilege solely based on a claim laid by one point of origin — particularly when this point of origin propagates itself initially through "civilizing" missionary goals.

The polyglot historian Benedict Anderson wrote that "few countries give the observer a deeper feeling of historical vertigo than the Philippines".² Next to its Southeast Asian neighbors, the Philippines' national architectural style is difficult to pinpoint, though the country's armed uprising against the Spanish rule of 1896 makes it a forerunner of all other anti-colonial movements in the region.³ This stylistic confusion can be explained partially by the wide-ranging and successive colonial occupations that form much of the Philippines' known history, from the Spanish period lasting from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, the American occupation in the first half of the twentieth century, to a brief period of Japanese occupation. These foreign powers had a direct and explicit effect on the way spaces in the Philippines were produced,⁴ and left behind cultural and stylistic influences that far outlasted their ruling regimes. There was furthermore a sort of occupation that came in the form of a local dictatorship, the Marcos family, whose rule lasted from the 1960s to the 1980s. The Marcoses were able to take advantage of the "quest for Filipino style" which had just become an explicit undertaking after the 1950s in response to a pervasive American influence on architecture, literature and painting.⁵

Given the wide-reaching influence of the US in the Philippines and worldwide, we should consider that the Americans themselves underwent their own version of playing "copycat" in the field of painting, particularly to the Paris school of art in the early to mid-1900s.⁶ The borrowed influences in the Philippine architectural landscape, on the other hand, engaged a somewhat surprising choice of European precedents. For the newly independent Philippines of the mid-twentieth century, post-colonial building mandates favoring Brutalist stylings presented

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Dune

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Abstract

How can we find new approaches to historico-cultural value in the post-colony? Can we live with a multiplicity of origins in visual culture? The architectural landscape of Manila, Philippines is offered as an example where stylistic influences introduced through successive colonial occupations are altered, translated, mistranslated, and reactivated, until a new locally reinscribed source of value emerges. A survey of architectural typologies, such as churches and Brutalist buildings, is supported by Benjamin Buchloh's writings on reproductions in art.

Fig. 4.29 (Facing) Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, pp18-19.

Value

In responding to *Dune's* thematic call for abstracts, I chose to focus on the part of their text (cited on page 124) which called attention to the idea of authenticity in relation to value, particularly in "the copy, the forgery, the simulation and the clone." The example of Philippine architecture promptly came to mind with the questions of authorship and origination that it frequently poses and which preoccupies me. Benjamin Buchloh's *Formalism and Historicity* served as an interesting and useful resource to foreground the paper with its detailed descriptions of artistic mistranslations, particularly in the examples of photomontage and of colour within paintings travelling from the Paris to New York Schools of art.⁷⁵ Leveraging an existing text that probed the possibility of a multiplicity of visual origins led to a set of provocative reflections in the context of architecture. There is a further parallel here in more recent debates on multiculturalism, expressed within this passage:

*Hybrid are all those things that owe their existence to a blending of lines of tradition or chains of signifiers, that connect different discourses and technologies, that are produced with the techniques of collage, sampling, bricolage.*⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh. *Formalism and Historicity: Models and Methods in Twentieth-Century Art*. (Boston: MIT Press, 2015).

⁷⁶ Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2022), 20.

18 *Ibid.*
 19 United States. Department of State. Office of Media Services. *The Philippines: Fact Sheet*. Washington: Dept. of State, for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1963.
 20 John Gordon Davies. *The Origin and Development of Early Christian Church Architecture* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963).

21 Roy John de Guzman, Juan Carlos Cham, "Letania: Architectural Documentation of the Retablos of San Agustin Church in Manila," *Journal of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism*, 1 (2020), 23–30. <https://doi.org/10.51303/jtba.v1i1.358>.
 22 *Ibid.*

23 Pedro Galende, *San Agustin Art and History 1571-2000* (Manila: San Agustin Museum, 1996).
 24 Tropical modernism has been described as "something of a dialect that adapted international modernism to the climate and superabundant growth of the native tropical environment." Source: Terij, Jaesul.

"Tropical Modernism/Environmental Nationalism: The Politics of Built Space in Postcolonial Sri Lanka," *Publications* 27, 2, May 4, 2017, 134–50. DOI:10.1108/0253-18720171301886.
 25 Neil Brenner, Nik Theodore, "Neoliberalism and the urban condition," *City*, 6, 3, 2002, 321–307. DOI:10.1080/13604850000092106.

transformed here into a Brutalist metaphor of floating volumes. Philippine Brutalism in Manila under the regime of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos is often linked to the Soviet stylings of Brutalism in Eastern Europe, due to their common function as state tools of sociopolitical control. But where did Brutalism originate, and who claims it? Do the "originators" claim the material, or the ideologies the material now embodies? The term Brutalism as currently used is generally traced to the British architects and theorists Alison and Peter Smithson, who in 1953 coined the term "New Brutalism" to describe the architectural style defined by the increased use of exposed and unfinished concrete.²¹ Yet for the Smithsons, the originator of Brutalism was the French architect Le Corbusier, with his massive *béton brut* structures. The CCP, as a major exemplar of Philippine Brutalism, was opened in 1969 and remains a functioning cultural center today; in contrast, the *Atlas of Brutalist Architecture* published by Phaidon lists numerous Brutalist buildings in Europe and Russia erected between the 1940s and late 1970s that are no longer operational, in ruins or demolished. Indeed, when Brutalism travelled to the New World, it largely left behind the weight of politics,²² which is not the case for many of the utopian structures of Soviet Europe. Despite its dubious origins, the CCP in Manila has taken on a new life under the programmatic auspices of resident performance companies such as the Philippine Ballet Theater and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra. With this comparison, and Brutalism's multiplicity of origins, in mind, I ask: shouldn't resilience and length of meaningful use be seen as markers of value that trump so-called originality?

Catholic Churches

Though churches in the Philippines were originally built to impose Catholicism on the so-called *indios* and solidify Spanish rule, today churches in the Philippines have been appropriated and reinterpreted by homegrown Filipino architects to now qualify as some of the Philippines' most expressive and experimental architecture. Firstly, the Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, with about 75 percent of its population historically professing Roman Catholicism.²³ This makes churches a nationally unique architecture when set against the context of Southeast Asia's temples and pagodas. I have discussed Brutalism as a stylistic copy anchored by both material and ideology, and later in this paper, I will describe ancestral houses as an adaptation of a colonial housing type; Catholic churches, on the other hand, are copies in their very particular programmatic function. Churches are essentially gathering spaces; some features that might unify them architecturally include an altar, aisles, nave, crossing, and chapels. The church is not a typology unique to Spain. And the Christian basilica, which itself preceded the Christian church, is the result of an age-long development with numerous stages, from the civil basilica to pagan temples.²⁴ Early baroque churches from the Spanish occupation still remain in



historic parts of Manila and in surrounding provinces such as Laguna. These churches were built with modifications intended to mitigate the effects of earthquakes and natural disasters, such as stone barrel vaults and arched vestibules. In addition, surface decoration in these churches often took the form of local flora and patterns. The San Agustin Convent in Intramuros, Manila is a prominent example where Mexican precedents from the Augustinian mission in Mexico, and South American monastic architecture more broadly, were adapted to the local stone, materials and weather conditions of the Philippines.²⁵ The San Agustin Convent also hosts a rich collection of altarpieces, or *retablos*, which demonstrates an evolution from Spanish precedents to a local tradition of craft-making which persists in the Philippines today.²⁶ The Philippine *retablo* often integrates the local art of wood carving, the result being a source of national pride. The matrix of precedents embodied by the San Agustin Convent, spanning not only Spain and the Philippines but the other colonies within the Spanish Empire, points to the complexity and nuances of origin-finding at a global scale. And a cursory look at the usage and popularity of churches across the Philippines reveals that they are no longer simply colonial impositions but — as the curator of San Agustin Museum describes the convent — "a treasure of the Filipino people... [bringing to the people] recognition and pride."²⁷ In contemporary culture, the most successful churches in the Philippines are perhaps those adapted to the surrounding environment, integrating architectural translations that signify a sort of regional tropical modernism.²⁸ The Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Fig. 3) eliminates the ambulatory space traditionally reserved for church building edges in favor of open voids, facing directly onto the sounds and sights of the Philippine jungle. The Parish of the Holy Sacrifice (Fig. 4), located on university campus grounds, employs a thin-shelled concrete dome (the first in the country) to form a gathering space that is radial and unenclosed by doors. And the church of St. Andrew the Apostle (Fig. 5), built of sweeping concrete in a *salitre* cross plan inspired by the story of St. Andrew, echoes the work of Mexican architect Félix Candela with his use of parabolic forms. Incidentally, the latter two churches were designed by the same architect favored by the authoritarian Marcoses and who would go on to symbolize much of Philippine Brutalism: Leandro V. Locsin. His modern churches are a far cry from those first erected by the missionaries

Public Architecture



3 Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Antipolo City. (Image by author).



4 Parish of the Holy Sacrifice, Manila. (Image by author).



5 Church of St. Andrew the Apostle, Manila. (Image by author).

The paper *Philippine Copycats* became an opportunity to situate objective descriptions of modern Philippine architecture within a more critical argument. In this case, the argument was to confer value on an architecture where styles and motifs introduced through successive colonial occupations were repeated, altered, translated, mistranslated, and reactivated. To make this argument I broke down the architectural styles of the Philippines into groups, and traced the origins of these styles in great detail, which revealed discrepancies. Catholic churches could be traced back to the Spanish occupation of the Philippine Islands, and yet these churches imposed by the Spaniards were an iteration of ancient basilicas.⁷⁷ Brutalism is often associated with Soviet Europe; however, the British theorists Alison and Peter Smithson named the originator of Brutalism as the Frenchman Le Corbusier.⁷⁸ This origin-finding exercise added a new layer of critical analysis to knowledge and fieldwork previously gathered in Manila for the purposes of a more objective guidebook.

Fig. 4.30 (Facing) Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, Spreads pp22-23.

77 John Gordon Davies. *The Origin and Development of Early Christian Church Architecture*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953).

78 Jon Scott Blanthorn. "Atlas of Brutalist Architecture." *The Canadian Architect* 64, no. 05 (May 2019): 57-58.

26 Raja M. Mitra, BPO Sector Growth and Inclusive Development in the Philippines (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2011). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/document/22298>.

27 Edson Caballin, "The City Who Had Two Navels: Introduction," in Edson Caballin, ed., *The City Who Had Two Navels - Catalogue of the Philippine Pavilion* (Quezon: National Commission for Culture and Arts, 2016), 23.

28 Ibid., 26.
29 Translates literally from Tagalog to "house of stone."
30 Kyoko Teraguchi, "The New American? Houses in the Colonial Philippines and the Rise of the Urban Filipino Elite," *Philippine Studies*, 64, 3 (2008), 412-61. Accessed August 27, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42623879>.

31 Nick Joaquin, *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic* (London: Penguin, 2017).

32 Ibid.

33 Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*

(North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2000).

34 Ibid.

35 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, cit., 159f.

of "Mother Spain," though the services and rituals housed within have remained largely the same, as dictated by Catholic tradition and dogma. If we continue to analyze the value of architectural and artistic heritage objects based on reinscribed local value and Buchloh's creative misinterpretations, churches in the Philippines might well hold a key piece of continuity between its architectural past and future.

Neoliberal Architecture

Much of Manila's contemporary built environment as of late has been driven by and examined under the lens of neoliberalism. This fact is reaffirmed by the Philippines' entry to the 16th Biennale of Architecture in Venice in 2018, *The City Who Had Two Navels*, curated by Professor Edson Caballin. Of the exhibition's two theoretical halves (or "navels"), one of them interrogated specifically the force of neoliberalism in Manila as it relates to new enclave central business districts, shopping centers, and malls. Neoliberalism as a term has notably been explored in depth by urban theorists Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore after observing its being "increasingly seen as an essential descriptor of the contemporary urban condition."²⁶ In the Philippines, central business districts are seen as a key bastion of Neoliberalism's forces, as these districts primarily service business process outsourcing (BPO) centers — companies that provide relatively inexpensive English-language customer service, call and contact centers, and other back-office services to corporations in the United States and Europe.²⁷ The proliferation of BPO centers is inextricable from the US's former occupation of and the spread of the English language in the Philippines. And connected to these business districts is the rise of shopping centers and malls which are increasingly replacing traditional public spaces in the country. The air-conditioning and security they offer transform what is fundamentally a privatized, consumerist space into programs that support gathering and socialization.²⁸ In some ways, these malls are not so different from the previously discussed churches, which have historically served partially as gathering spaces for religious communities. Rather than adaptations of Spanish monastic architecture, the shopping malls of the Philippines are more akin to mistranslations of large retail centers more traditionally associated with the consumer culture of the US.

What one might observe in the "neoliberal" business districts and malls of Manila is the risk of homogenization that threatens a city where architectural reproductions happen at an extremely rapid pace and global span. In a country like the Philippines, where the Second World War wrought the destruction of historical landmarks, and successive colonial occupations wore away at psychological ties between citizens and an indigenous visual culture, there is ample space for neoliberal reproductions to proliferate. At the end of his introductory essay to the 2018 Philippine National Pavilion, Edson Caballin asks: "Is neoliberalism the new form of colonialism?"²⁹ As we have observed in the architecture of Brutalist cultural centers and expressive Catholic churches, the idea of reproduction is not a

monolith. But could the aesthetic of Manila's glass skyscrapers and malls be one day appropriated and translated in a way that redefines them as artefacts of cultural heritage? The answer remains to be seen.

Ancestral Houses

Finally, looking back to some of the earliest hybridizations of architecture in the Philippines, we encounter the ancestral house, the *bahay na bato*.³⁰ The *bahay na bato* is the wood and stone house of the Spanish colonial period, which eventually went on to epitomize the historical urban house in the Philippines.³¹ Though the stone- or brick-covered ground level proved efficient in resisting the country's frequent earthquakes, this type of house was characterized also by a material transparency lent by wide, shell-glazed windows and unenclosed thresholds. They were built from the beginning of the Spanish occupation of the Philippines in the sixteenth century and went on to steadily grow in popularity until around the 1950s, when the Philippines acquired political independence from the United States and made rapid industrialization a national economic priority. These houses were grounded in "learned" Spanish building technologies and reclaimed through distinctly Filipino material additions and substitutions, such as capiz shell windows in place of glass

pane.³² The ancestral house in the Philippines is localized in people's minds by its distinct material palette and recurring architectural features, and shared between families as physical marker points where memories and childhood stories are fixed and reeled back into recollection. The *bahay na bato* occupies a place of deep sentimentality even for the Filipino diaspora abroad, as exemplified by this quote from the classic Filipino short story, *The Woman with Two Navels*:

"But, now, a war had come and destroyed the house. It was waiting no longer. They might still go back, they could never go home now, though Pepe Monson, more vividly remembering that house he had never seen... than any of the houses he had actually lived in."³³

In Nick Joaquin's story, the main character is a Filipino living in Hong Kong, who has allowed the fabled ancestral house of his father's stories to form a layer of purpose and emplacement so fictive in his psyche that its eventual destruction, though distant, disorients him. It is also interesting that Joaquin writes his books in English, which has been described by writer Gina Apostol as an "unapologetic, Calibanic choice... [that] is both rebuke to the occupier and revenge upon it."³⁴ Looking deeper within the field of language, to specific names, we see also the ironies embedded into the very names *Philippines* and *Filipinos*, which reveal that *las islas Filipinas* existed as a territorially demarcated country for more than three centuries before there were any Filipinos who would lay claim to its reality and proclaim loyalty to its existence.³⁵ The Philippines and the Filipino are thus permeated with foreign origins, their historical realities haunted by the ghosts of colonialism.³⁶ Living with this reality in place, I propose that reappropriating an architecture or art form with "foreign

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Fig. 4.31 (Facing) Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, pp24-25.

Private Architecture

I used the motif of the Philippine ancestral house, the *bahay na bato*, to conclude a series of descriptions of 'copycat' Philippine architectural typologies with one that is a colonial-native hybrid. Through the ancestral house, I discussed the power of memory in a domestic setting, proposing "locally-inscribed personal meaning" as a marker of value trumping so-called originality. The classic Filipino writer Nick Joaquin is again quoted here to leverage an architectural and artistic theory with readings of literature.

I have furthermore been inspired by Lisa Lowe's reading of literature to uncover processes of extraction and exchange of goods particularly in a domestic English setting. In *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lowe considers the role of goods as objects and means in the narrative rise and fall of *Vanity Fair*, an 1848 novel by William Makepeace Thackeray. Thackeray describes a bed curtain as a "chintz of a rich and fantastic Indian pattern," which according to Lowe "both reveals and conceals the long colonial history of cotton's production and reproduction [in India],"⁷⁹ in addition to the pattern design which evolved out of Islamic, Chinese, and European sources. This "hybridity" expresses the contact, conflicts, and exchanges of the preceding centuries.

79 Lisa Lowe. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 88.

origins" can become a practical tool of creative resistance in the face of a history of erasure.

In brief, value as traditionally bestowed to originals must be reconsidered and redistributed. The designation of an "original" in the first place becomes complex when a single author is conflated with entire nations, as seen in discussions of Brutalism or of Spanish monastic architecture. In this paper I have offered architectural examples comprising the modern landscape of the Philippines as case studies that might reveal new ways of ascribing historico-cultural value in art, architecture and design. I should note that this question of historico-cultural value should extend beyond architecture, to aspects of entertainment and pop culture such as food and even karaoke. Proposed alternative value markers discussed in this paper include the long-term usage of a building, the integration of a colonial building typology or program with its local climate and environment, and quite simply, the capacity for local users to identify with and find meaning in the spaces they have inherited — for these spaces to hold memories and stories. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin remarked that, "by making many reproductions, reproduction substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced."⁶ I'd like to believe that, if we were to remove the clutism of the original, meaningful reactivation can occur with any reproduction that is explored, reveled in, parodied and loved so fiercely that the copycat becomes, if not the originator, the rightful owner.



6 Rattan chair, marker on paper. Original drawing by author rendered as part of a study on domestic space and counter-histories within a Philippine ancestral house. (Image by author).

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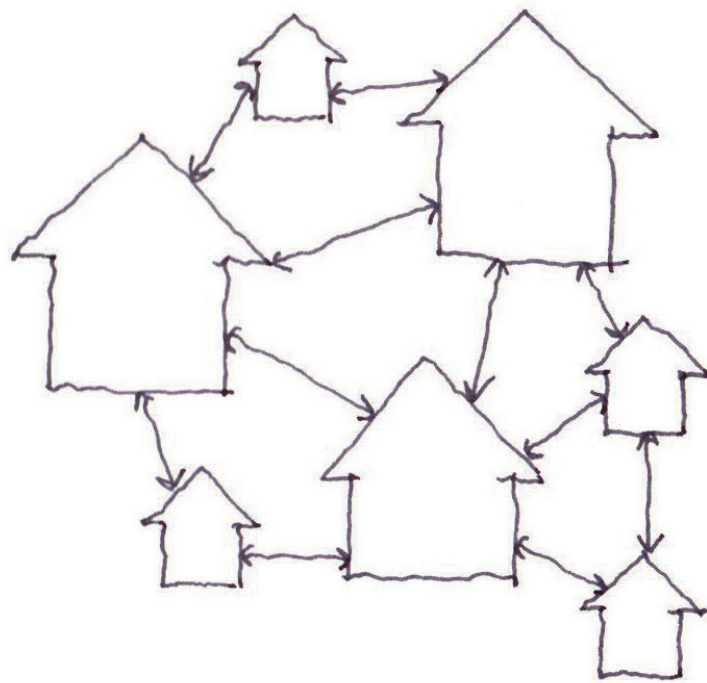
In brief, value as traditionally bestowed to originals must be reconsidered and redistributed. The designation of an “original” in the first place becomes complex when a single author is conflated with entire nations, as seen in discussions of Brutalism or of Spanish monastic architecture. In this paper I have offered architectural examples comprising the modern landscape of the Philippines as case studies that might reveal new ways of ascribing historico-cultural value in art, architecture and design... Proposed alternative value markers discussed in this paper include the long-term usage of a building, the integration of a colonial building typology or program with its local climate and environment, and quite simply, the capacity for local users to identify with and find meaning in the spaces they have inherited — for these spaces to hold memories and stories.

Fig. 4.32 (Facing) Philippine Copycats: In Praise of the Reproduction by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021, pp26-27, 119-120.

New Value Markers

It is worth noting that, alongside a list of value markers for architecture, the editors of the text requested permission to use my *White House* drawing Rattan Chair (**Figure 0.1**) at the very end of my paper for *Dune*. This drawing can be said to be a contemporary interpretation of a hybrid form of Philippine architecture, and an expression of how this architecture has accrued personal meaning and value notwithstanding a partially ‘unoriginal’ point of origin. The *White House* thus expresses the value markers which I describe in the paper as “the long-term usage of a building, the integration of a colonial building typology or program with its local climate and environment, and... the capacity for local users to identify with and find meaning in the spaces they have inherited”. Though I did not explicitly name the house within the paper, and chose to focus on public forms of architecture that might be less mysterious to a general non-Filipino reader, a drawing of the *White House* indicating care, attention to detail, and artistic interpretation perhaps speaks for itself.

TORONTO: ART



“The opposition ‘here I am but visiting, there is my home’ stays clear cut as before, but it is not easy to point out where the ‘there’ is. ‘There’ is increasingly stripped of all material features; the ‘home’ it contains is not even imaginary (any mental image would be too specific, too constraining)—but postulated; what is postulated is having a home, not a particular building, street, landscape or company of people... Homesickness is a dream of belonging—of being for once, of the place, not merely in... The value of ‘home’ in the homesickness lies precisely in its tendency to stay in the future tense forever. It cannot move to the present without being stripped of its charm and allure.”

Zygmunt Bauman,
from Byung-Chul Han's *Hyperculture*, 2022

The sliding windows of the White House are hallmarks of the ancestral home. Windowsills become surfaces for children to play. The light from outside is filtered through grids of capiz shell, a kind of windowpane oyster endemic to the Philippine island of Capiz. In their light, angels abound. One clutches a vase of flowers, and one is carved into the wood of the front doorframe. He perpetually stands on guard at the entry of the home.

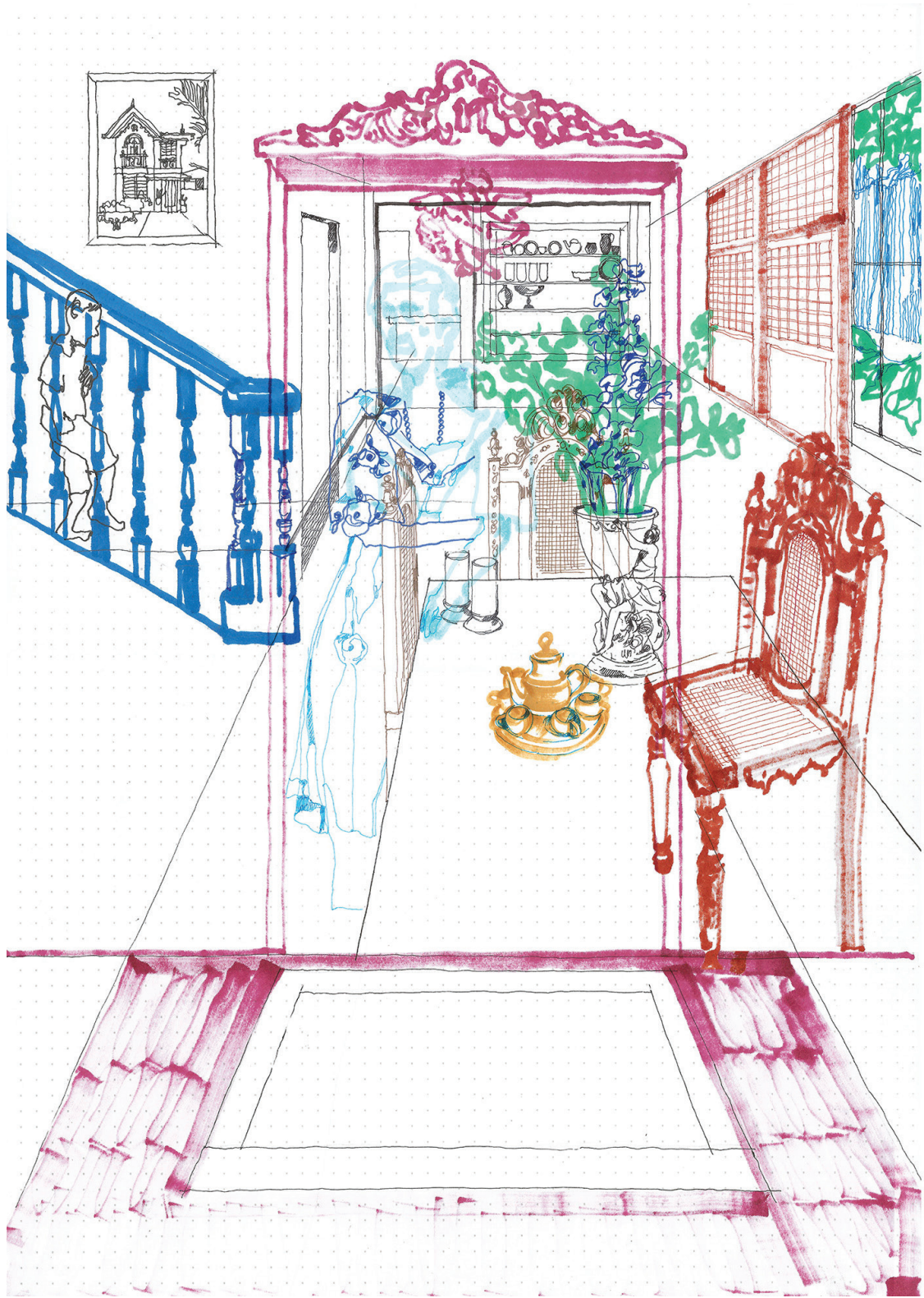
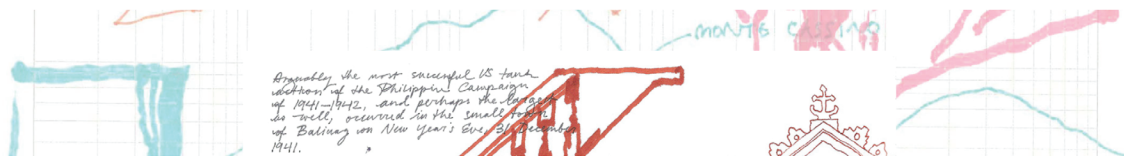


Fig. 5.1 Front Door from the White House series, Marker on paper, 2021



COUNTER- NARRATIVES & THE AGO COLLECTION



Arguably, the most successful US land
reduction of the Philippine Campaign
of 1941-1942, and perhaps the largest
so far, occurred in the small island
of Baliang on New Year's Eve, December
1941.

Fig. 5.2 Screenshot 1/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Title Heading



Fig. 5.3 Screenshot 2/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. 'Rattan Chair' in Introduction

Narrative reinforces or elucidates a given belief or truth. Narratives pervade scientific discovery, finance, media, and all areas of our lives because they frame the boundaries and possibilities of debate and gatekeep access.

Conversely, counter-narratives dispute commonly held assumptions about the nature of reality, place, positionality, and the political moment. Counter-narratives are a means to more fully understand the world and the built environment. Counter-narratives re-inscribe historical accounts with voices and ideas that have been previously silenced.

This is at the heart of the feminist approach to history that I apply... offering a counter narrative of how those at the margins actively shape the core in as of yet unacknowledged ways.

Fig. 5.4 Screenshot 3/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Counter-Narratives excerpt by Thaisa Way

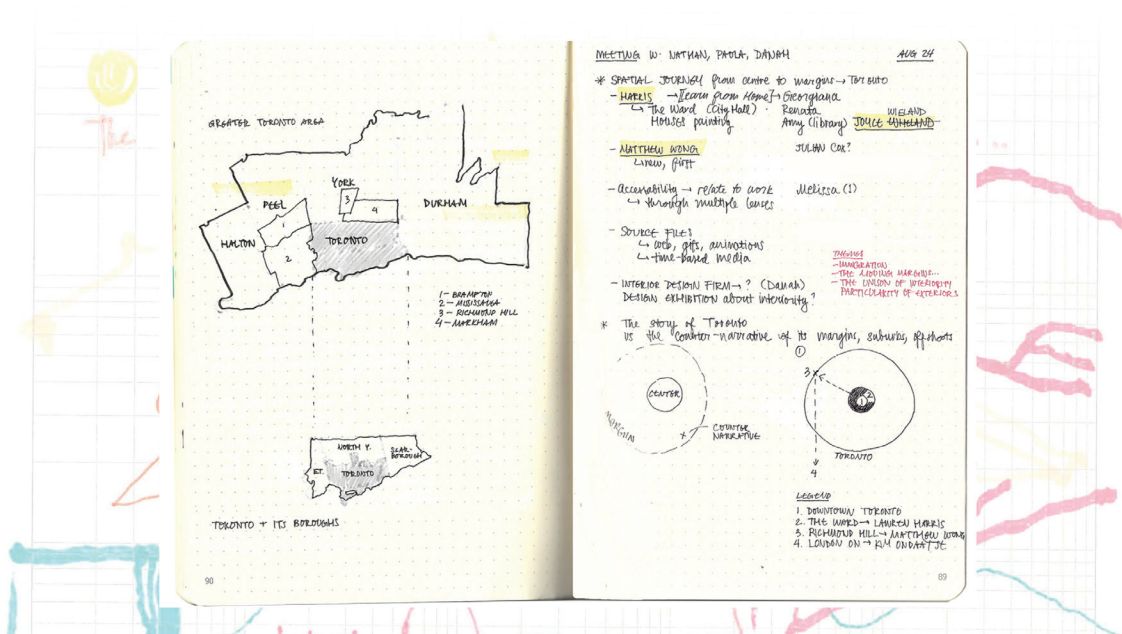


Fig. 5.5 Screenshot 4/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Notebook Scan detailing margins and centers

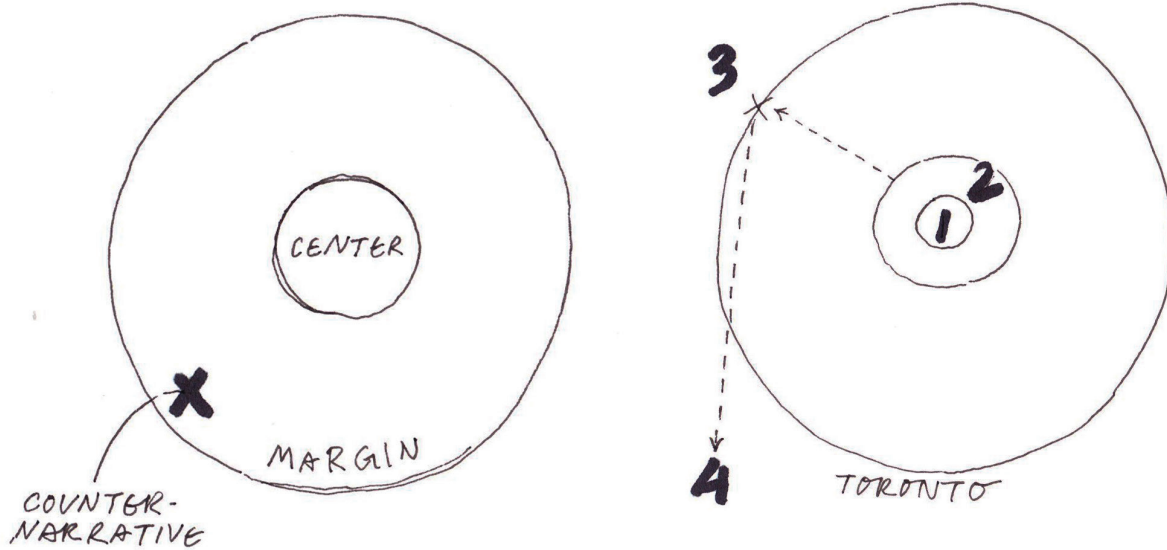


Fig. 5.6 Detail view of center-margin-narrative-counter-narrative sketches from Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021



Fig. 5.9 Kim Ondaatje, Blue Bedroom, Screenprint on paper, 1970 (Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)



Fig. 5.12 Matthew Wong, Hazelmere 2019
(Image: Matthew Wong Foundation)



Fig. 5.13 Screenshot 9/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. 'The Road' by Matthew Wong, 2018

Contemporary Canada imagines itself as an immigrant nation, but does not conceive of itself as encompassing a diaspora. ... As the Chinese-Canadian artist Ken Lum once opined: "Canada's artistic centre is neither a centre nor a margin; it is but a centrifuge, a study for specialists in chaos theory."

If that is the case, is there not something to be said about a returned artist like Matthew Wong - an artist who contradicts Canadianness not by leaving, but by returning?

Let us acknowledge Canada, then, as a native land that has sustained many arrivals, departures, displacements, and returns - rather than the orderly mosaic of settler-colonialists we have been taught to become.

Winnie Wong

Fig. 5.14 Screenshot 10/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Excerpt from Matthew Wong: Blue View Exhibition Catalog with essay by Winnie Wong



Fig. 5.15 Matthew Wong, *The Road*, 2018 (Image: Matthew Wong Foundation). According to Winnie Wong in the *Blue View Exhibition Catalog*, the white lines resembling trees might also be an allusion to the Bank of China Tower.

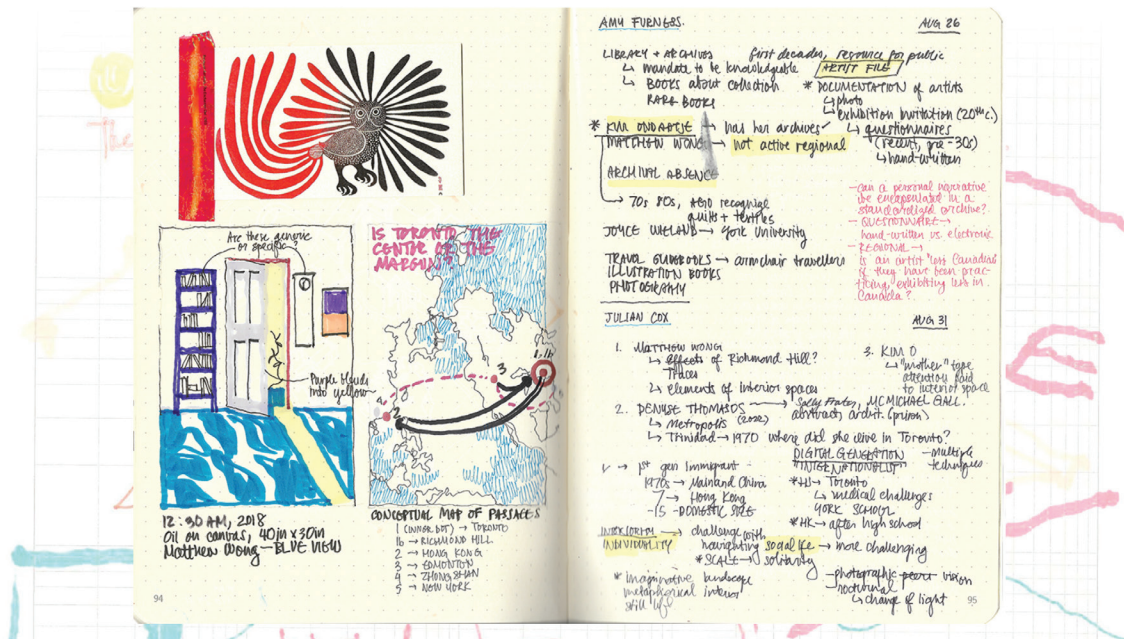


Fig. 5.16 Screencap 11/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Notebook scan from conversations with curators

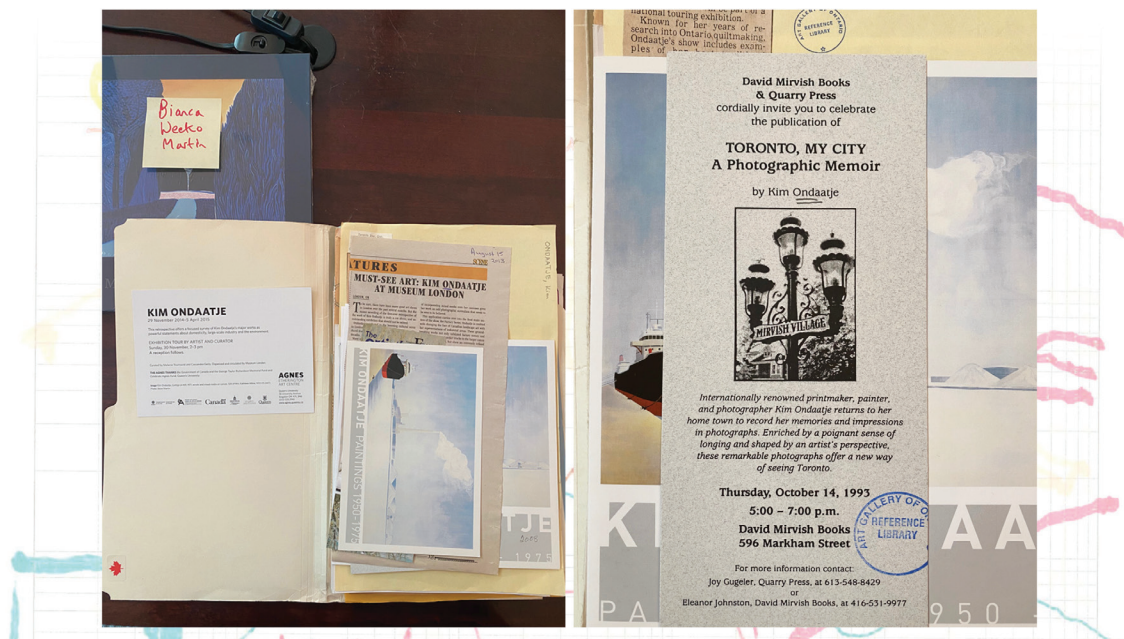


Fig. 5.17 Screencap 12/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Kim Ondaatje's artist file



Fig. 5.18 Detail view of center-margin-world-map sketches from Artist Researcher notebook by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021

and artifacts from her home, and sees them with the eye for intimate space and quiet nooks of a 17th-Century Dutchman rather than a 20th-Century English teacher. Yet perhaps this sureness in her sense of content reflects her literary background. *job to do...*

Most hard edge painters are concerned with getting at or revealing some basic or universal experience without being hindered by recognizable objects or figures or personal attitudes. Thus they often paint bands, stripes or fields of colour. I am concerned with obtaining the cool, abstract feeling of the hard edge style even though I am painting familiar objects and surroundings. I believe that in using the hard edge style, or perhaps what might better be called my own variation of it, I am able to create a sense of distance in that it cools down the feeling - creates a sense of detachment - and thus it enables the viewer to enter the painting with a minimum of interference from his - or the artist's - attitudes, feelings or experiences of the objects and background. Thus the viewer is able to get more directly to the basic or universal experience of the painting, the experience which occasioned it.

Recently, Marian Scott - a non-objective painter from Montreal - was in my studio and she was commenting on how many years she had worked along with many other non-objective or abstract hard edge painters, to get the object and the artist's personal attitudes out of paintings, and in view of this she found it interesting to notice the objects coming back as they do in my paintings, but coming back in a different way; in a way that shows that what the hard edge painters were doing has been understood and appreciated since these paintings' even with the objects in them are as cool and as detached as theirs. *

Fig. 5.19 Screenshot 13/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Scanned clipping from Kim Ondaatje artist file



Water Sark

Joyce Wieland
Canada / 13:30 / 1965 / sound / colour

I decided to make a film at my kitchen table, there is nothing like knowing my table. The



Fig. 5.20 Screenshot 14/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Works by Canadian artists Joanne Tod, Doris McCarthy, and Joyce Wieland

hard edge style even though I am painting **familiar** objects and surroundings. I believe that in using the hard edge style, or perhaps what might better be called my own variation of it, I am able to create a sense of distance in that it cools down the feeling - creates a sense of detachment - and thus it enables the viewer to enter the painting with a minimum of interference from his - or the artist's - attitudes, feelings or experiences of the objects and background. Thus the viewer is able to get more directly to the basic or **universal** experience of the painting, the experience which occasioned it.

Fig. 5.21 Detail view of scanned clipping from Kim Ondaatje artist file
(Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)

*A woman's counter-narrative: the dissolution of spatial borders.
Between studio and domestic space. Domestic space and the realm of
dreams. Recalled, redrawn with intimacy.*

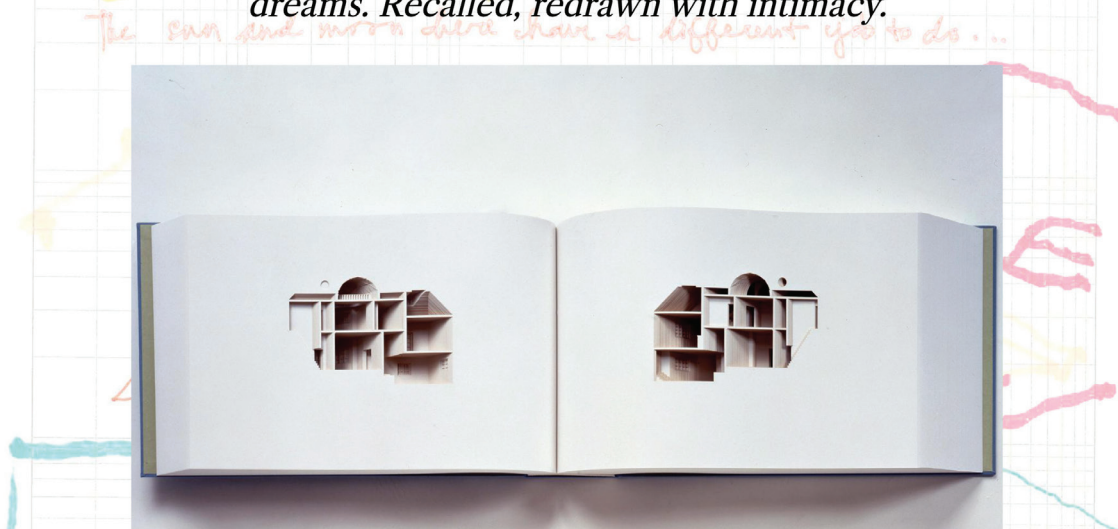


Fig. 5.22 Screenshot 15/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Photograph of Your House by Olafur Eliasson



Fig. 5.23 Screenshot 16/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Works by Vanessa Bell, Rae Johnson, and Carole Conde and Karl Beverage



Fig. 5.24 Carole Conde and Karl Beverige, *Untitled (Front Hallway)*, Colour screenprint on paper, c. 1979 (Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)



Fig. 5.25 Screenshot 17/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Works by Alex Morrison and Njideka Akunyili Crosby

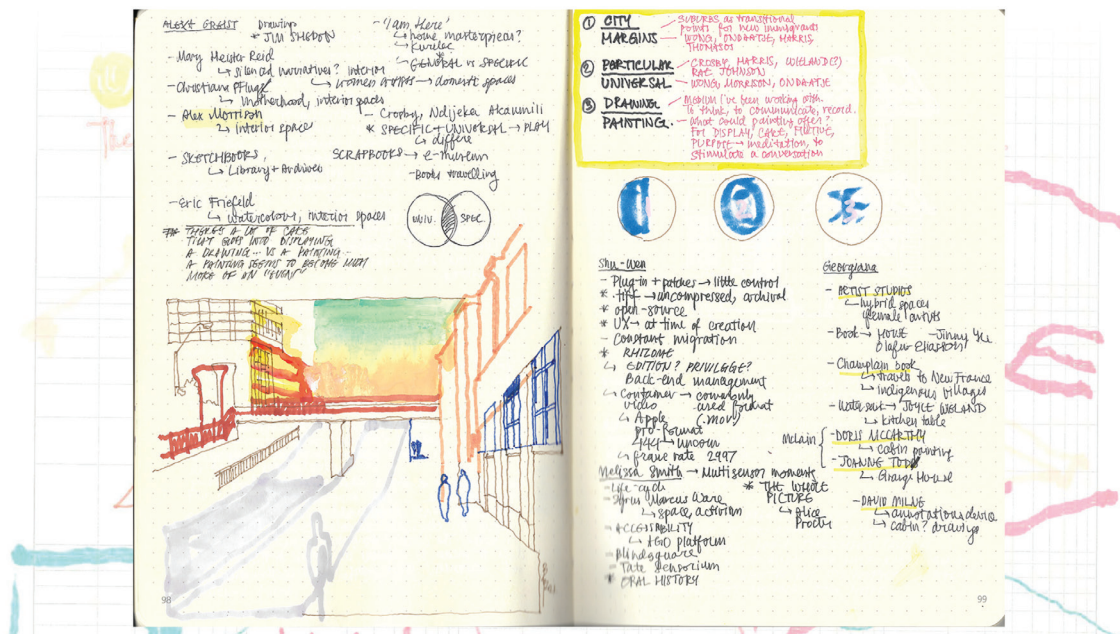


Fig. 5.26 Screenshot 18/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Notebook scan detailing key research themes



Fig. 5.27 Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *And We Begin To Let Go*, Acrylic, pastel, charcoal, collage, Xerox transfers, and marble dust on paper, c. 2013
(Image: Museum of Modern Art)

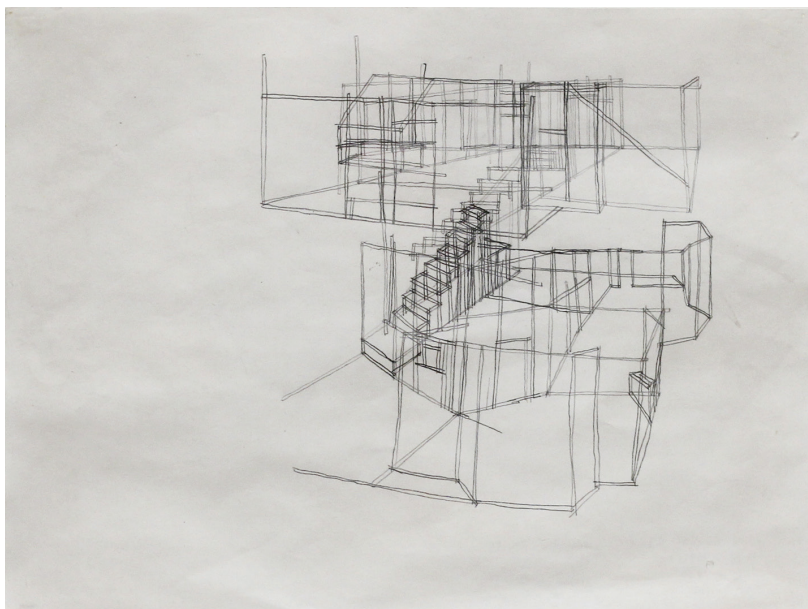


Fig. 5.28 Alex Morrison, *Every House I've Ever Lived in Drawn from Memory*, Ink on paper, 1999 (Image: McLean/Copeland Collection)

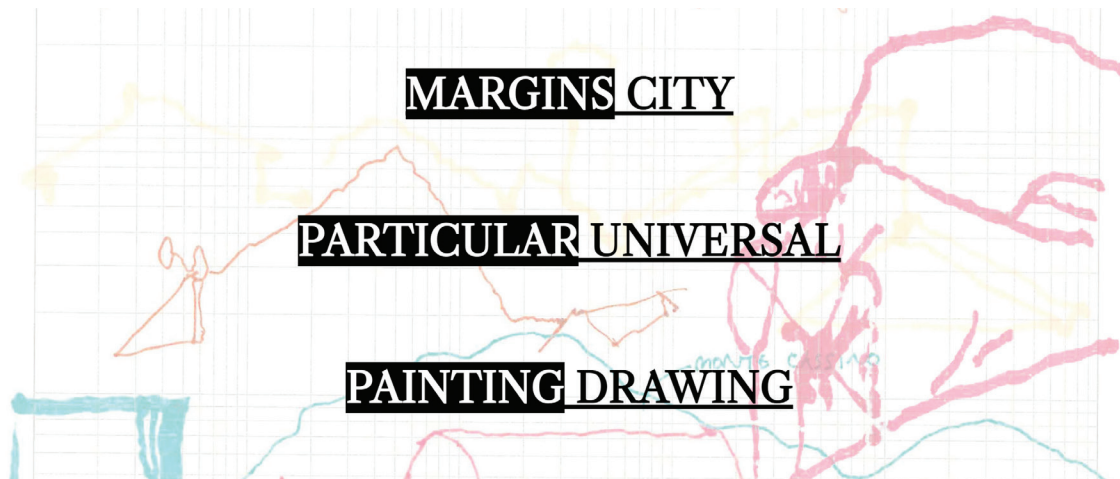


Fig. 5.29 Screenshot 19/19 of 'Counter-Narratives & the AGO Collection', Artist Researcher Presentation by Bianca Weeko Martin, 2021. Key research themes as hyperlinks

The Particular and the Universal

To organize my findings I came up with "research axes" to guide the digital work-in-progress material pictured in the preceding pages. These were: *margins vs. city; particular vs. universal; painting vs. drawing*. Margins were particularly interesting to me as possible sites of knowledge in the lens of a counter-narrative, since they often detail "how those at the margins actively shape the core in as of yet unacknowledged ways."⁸⁰ If the "core" was hypothetically the city, I positioned the "margin" as the suburbs which, from my experience growing up in Scarborough, contained spaces that held importance to immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area. It is

worth noting that the term "immigrant" is not all-encompassing, and although Canadians are generally receptive to immigration there is evidence that some recent immigrant groups, especially those concentrated in Toronto's inner suburbs, are not faring well economically.⁸¹ In contrast, historic cities have been described as having "emerged from the countryside around it... thus, the city was constructed gradually, like a kind of blood that flows out of the countryside and coagulates. The city is a coagulation of what comes from the countryside."⁸² The art generated in or about the suburbs, this transitional zone between city and countryside, seemed to me in need of further study.

Focusing on artists operating at these Canadian margins, such as Matthew Wong (Greater Toronto Area,

80 Thaisa Way. "Think like a Historian, Imagine like a Designer, 2021." March 5, 2021. <https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/think-like-a-historian-imagine-like-a-designer-a-conversation-on-landscape-history-and-design-education/>

81 Robert Murdie and Sutama Ghosh. "Does Spatial Concentration Always Mean a Lack of Integration? Exploring Ethnic Concentration and Integration in Toronto." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 no. 2 (2010), 293-311.

82 Édouard Glissant and Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Archipelago*. (Isolarii, 2021), 30.

Ontario) and Kim Ondaatje (London, Ontario), was an attempt at forging a more complete understanding of Canadian art. Looking closely at these artists also brought to light the different ways in which one could represent domestic interior space; particularly, how a composition could be tied to the universal or to the particular. Glissant writes that, “the particular resists a generalizing universal and soon begets specific and local senses of identity, in concentric circles.”⁸³ Within the art I studied, I became attuned to the distinction between a room appearing generic enough to belong to anyone at any time, and one that contained enough evidence of personal belongings and furnishings that its location and time would be given away. A good example of the former can be found in the work of Kim Ondaatje or Matthew Wong (Figure 5.30), which often focus on stark window or door openings, the light pouring in, subtle patterns that do not suggest any particular cultural tradition but rather offer a sort of inclusivity as to whom might be beholding the view. On the other end of the spectrum is work like the screenprint *Untitled (Front Hallway)* by Carole Conde and Karl Beverige (Figure 5.31), where upturned signs reading “...WANT JOBS NOT WELFARE!” as well as a clearly legible issue of the *Toronto Star* explicitly point to the city of Toronto as geographic location, and to a time of heightened political activism as the moment of creation. One way to reconcile the particular and the universal is perhaps to use both, layering one over the other. This can be seen in the work of Njideka Akunyili Crosby for instance (Figure 5.32), where black bodies, colour-blocked silhouettes, and stunningly collaged photographs and newspaper clippings coexist.



Fig. 5.30 Matthew Wong, *Untitled*, Oil on canvas, 2018 (Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)



Fig. 5.31 Carole Conde and Karl Beverige, *Untitled (Front Hallway)*, c. 1979. (Image: Art Gallery of Ontario)



Fig. 5.32 Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *And We Begin To Let Go by*, c. 2013. (Image: Museum of Modern Art)

83 Édouard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

A Topology of Canadian Art

This final section of the thesis aimed at summarizing the findings of a three week period of research supported by the Art Gallery of Ontario's Emerging Artist Exchange program. This mentorship period was awarded after submitting the project *The Homepage* (Figure 5.34), a series of webpages simulating a virtual walkthrough of *The White House*. The webpages presented the hand-drawn thesis sketches as scanned, edited, animated, formatted and made interactive for the web. Over the course of the artist researcher residency, and inspired by knowledge gleaned from earlier conversations surrounding *The White House*, interviews were conducted with curators and conservators at the Art Gallery of Ontario about Canadian artists who depicted interior domestic spaces in their paintings and drawings. Additional visits were made to the museum's library in order to view artist files and archives. The research culminated with an internal presentation which involved the creation of a new webpage.⁸⁴ The webpage acted as a sort of research board where images, quotes, and notebook scans could be embedded over time, much like with a journal; the webpage served simultaneously as presentation material as I screen-shared and scrolled through the research on the day of the presentation.

One resource that made an impression on me during the research residen-



Fig. 5.33 AGO X RBC Emerging Artists Exchange 2022 call for applications, featuring 'Bahay Kubo' by Bianca Weeko Martin

cy period was the catalog for the 2021 *Matthew Wong: Blue View* exhibition, a posthumously staged survey of the work of Matthew Wong. Wong was an artist who worked between China and Canada and exhibited internationally. In one of the book's essays, the scholar Winnie Wong visualizes the topology of contemporary Canada, as exemplified by an artist like Matthew Wong. She writes:

Contemporary Canada imagines itself as an immigrant nation, but does not conceive of itself as encompassing a diaspora. ... As the Chinese-Canadian artist Ken Lum once opined: "Canada's artistic centre is neither a centre nor a margin; it is but a centrifuge, a study for specialists in chaos theory."

If that is the case, is there not something to be said about a returned artist like Matthew Wong—an artist

84 Bianca Weeko Martin. "Counter-Narratives and the AGO Collection." Bianca Weeko Martin. September 21, 2021. <http://biancaweekomartin.com/ago-rbc-artist-research.html>.

85 Julian Cox, Nancy Spector, and Winnie Wong, (Eds.) *Matthew Wong: Blue View*. (New York: Delmonico Books/Art Gallery of Ontario, 2021).



Click to enter the front door



Fig. 5.34 Screenshot of The Homepage website project, 2021

who contradicts Canadianness not by leaving, but by returning?

Let us acknowledge Canada, then, as a native land that has sustained many arrivals, departures, displacements, and returns—rather than the orderly mosaic of settler-colonialists we have been taught to become.⁸⁵

Firstly, Wong writes that Canadians have been taught to become an “orderly mosaic of settler-colonialists.” Before breaking down this particular topology, I want to firstly contrast the “mosaic” with the “melting pot” that Canada’s southern neighbour, the United States of America, is more often associated with. In the most bleak texts on assimilation, the moral demands and collective identities of America’s native and immigrant cultures are described as essentially having vanished.⁸⁶ While a mosaic allows

immigrants and their respective cultures to co-exist, a melting pot is considered a metaphor for heterogenous society becoming more homogenous. Relatively, a mosaic is a positive aspiration, but it still lacks the turbulent seams of exchange, of shear and of friction, that could be associated with the interacting layers of a palimpsest we have discussed.

Wong goes on to cite the Chinese-Canadian artist Ken Lum in his conception of “Canada’s artistic centre” as a “centrifuge,” a place of arrivals and departures. Though generic, this topology is one that suggests greater movement and dynamism: hachure. This personal history of arrival and departure is true for Canadian artists captured in the artist researcher webpages, including Kim Ondaatje, Alex Morrison, and Joyce Wieland. The centrifuge might resonate with students and alumni of

86 Christopher Clausen. *Faded Mosaic: The Emergence of Post-Cultural America*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000).

the Waterloo Architecture undergraduate program, which has distinguished itself with a co-operative internship program known to integrate international travel. And lastly, the centrifuge reminds me of the changing seasons of southern Canada, with its freezing, interior winters, which I believe become the conditions for summer to truly assert itself.

I will now offer a third topology which forecasts a more extreme version of the dense, inextricable palimpsest. Byung-Chul Han describes this topology as a culture that “has become boundless, even site-less, hypercultural acoustic space in which the most diverse sounds are jammed together side by side... The hypercultural condition of the ‘side by side’, of simultaneity and of the ‘as well as’, would change the topology of happiness.”⁸⁷ Han goes on to describe a patchwork or multicoloured religion that presupposes the “decay of a unified horizon of meaning.” He adds that in this hypercultural side by side of different forms of faith, “art also works additively, helping itself to whatever it finds in the hypercultural pool of expressive forms and stylistic means. Hypercultural art no longer pursues the truth in the strong sense; it has nothing to reveal. Like patchwork religion, it presents itself as multicoloured and multiform.”⁸⁸ Thus, while Édouard Glissant, decades earlier, champions the need for borders to be more permeable, to “provide them with another meaning... that of a passage, a communication—a relation,”⁸⁹ Byung-Chul Han writes that, “the borders or enclosures that convey a semblance of cultural authenticity or genuineness are

dissolving... culture is bursting at the seams.”⁹⁰

How does the idea of home fit into this emergent world of precarious cultural identity—of an endless centrifuge of arriving and departing people, where the lines that once defined heritage and memory are dissolving? Zygmunt Bauman writes about home as something that is not material and not even imaginary, but postulated.⁹¹ He writes of homesickness as a dream of belonging, and that its value lies in its tendency to stay in the future tense; never moving to the present, never losing its charm and allure. Perhaps, then, home is a state of being—a state of collective dreaming, brainstorming and identity-making that is reactivated through encounters among the diaspora. Perhaps home is simply what grounds us in the face of uncertainty. Han’s hypothesis of “hyperculture” is one that makes no distinction between indigenous and foreign, near and far, the familiar and the exotic. I do not yet know if it is a view that speaks of tragedy or of kind inclusiveness.

I began this thesis within the fraught nationalism of the Philippines, and the specificity of its history continues to forge new kinships. I sought the foothold of ancestral history within a Filipino architectural typology that I knew intimately, and this revealed material and historic connections, its enduring lore. And yet I viewed it from afar, first in Toronto and then in Venice. Taking the *White House* with me, I returned and left and returned to Toronto, to the discovery of both “low” and “high” art forms

87 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2022), 5.

88 Ibid. 51.

89 Édouard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

90 Byung-Chul Han. *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalisation*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2022), 9.

co-existing within the same city bounds. I opted to conclude my thesis with a section about Canada—the country of my citizenship and the location of this thesis' writing—in order to reflect on nationality and immigration and how it might permeate into art, architecture, and culture. Drawing has accompanied me throughout this constellation of places, and so in my attempts to capture forms of movement through drawing, my drawings themselves have moved too. Through these drawings and through my writing, I have grieved the physical loss of a house from my memory, and its potential metaphysical loss in the face of emergent site-less “hyperculture.” Yet facing these losses, I freely confront the future holding aspects of deep cultural identity that might still resist change.

At this moment in time, I ready myself for the return to Manila. The trip has been delayed by nearly two years. One could see this thesis as something that filled the time that lodged itself unexpectedly between me and the “home-land,” and yet I feel that the explorations that filled the fissure have led me more closely to emplacement. Why do we diasporic artists so relentlessly chase after the ancestral land, the stories that our immigrant parents did so well to cast behind? Do we harbour an existential desire, a desire for that parallel version of ourselves that did not leave the house that our ancestors built?

Rather than proposing a definitive answer, I instead close this thesis with a segment of a poem, written by the late artist Etel Adnan:

91 Ibid. 40.

92 Etel Adnan. *Shifting the Silence*. (New York: Nightboat Books, 2020).

*Does the discovery of origins remove the dust?
The horizon's shimmering slows down all other perceptions. It reminds me of a childhood of emptiness which seems to have taken me near the beginnings of space and time.⁹²*





Fig. 5.35 Bianca Weeko Martin drawing, age 3, 2000



Fig. 5.36 Hybrid thesis defence at University of Waterloo, with Anne Bordeleau, Philip Beesley, Eric Haldenby, Robert Jan van Pelt, and Yanyun Chen, May 2, 2022

A family reunion coincides with news of the White House's approaching euthanasia. The silence of change is filled with karaoke, a Japanese invention made sacred in the Philippines. The porch is pulled out, the threshold extended—a videoke machine and beer-splattered folding table summoned—into the jungle of the front yard, which now quivers with aching 8-bit falsettos shared between siblings now separated by seas.

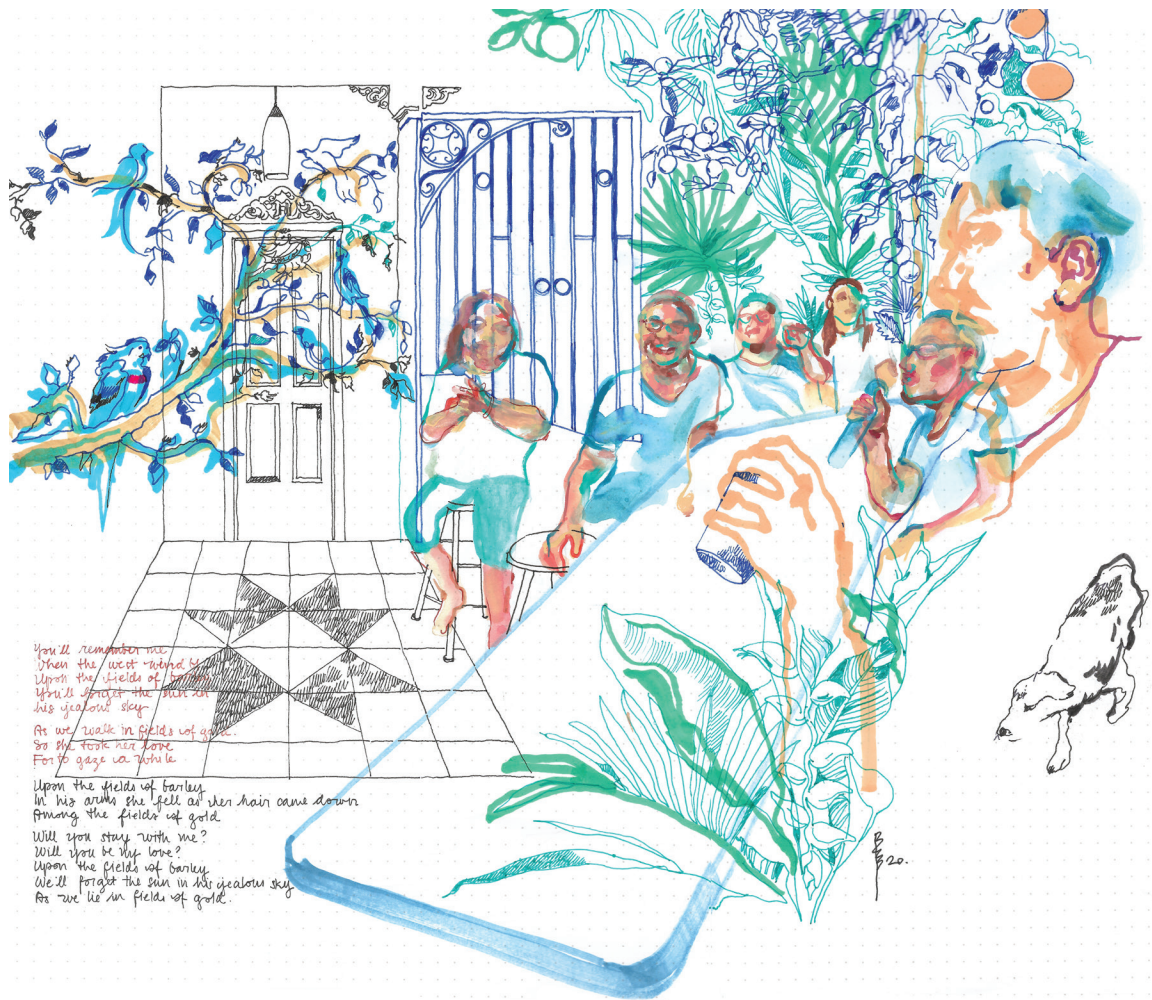


Fig. 5.37 Karaoke, Marker on paper, 2021

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