

Excavating Minutia: Identity, Memory and Interstitial Space in San Francisco

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INTRODUCTION

The urban identity of a city is the collective expression of its various physical attributes indexed through its fabric of streets and neighborhoods, its significant historic and contemporary buildings, its everyday spaces and lesser-known built environment. Urban memory has a temporal aspect, endured through the palimpsestic traces of historic architecture, monuments, practices of commemoration, records of various kinds, lived experience and oral histories, layered over decades or even centuries. Despite this complex weave, grand historical narratives of urban identity are often braided into a few strands that recall celebrated buildings and urban spaces, and memory is then seen as an outcome of their enduring presence. This presence nonetheless, over the last century, has been an object of struggle, characterized by modernism's desire to wipe the slate clean and postmodernism's inclination to re-inscribe nineteenth century imagery onto the canvas of architectural and urban design.

A recent symposium held on the subject of memory in architecture and landscape was framed in terms of similar oppositional trajectories of design: on the one hand, willfully "memory-laden" projects such as New Urbanism and "activist historic preservation," and on the other hand, abstracted architecture deracinated from considerations of history or place.¹ Such a schism leaves architects, urban designers, planners, and most importantly students of architecture, with the increasingly difficult task of having to decide what to look at, and what to recall and subsequently what to sustain in our built

environment. The messages are unclear and more in opposing directions.

To confound matters further, some scholars and critics point out—ironically, within the confines of the previously mentioned symposium—that there has been a surfeit of conferences, articles, books and projects devoted to the subject of memory, impelling the notion of what is termed as the "memory industry."² Such a situation can perhaps be tied to another proposition: that the city finds itself at the center of the memory discourse, reclaiming its (lost) connection to the past, galvanized in the last three decades by a plethora of preservation alliances, conservation groups, historians, museums and listed buildings.³ Mark Crinson summarizes this condition in paradoxical terms, when he says, "The past is everywhere and it is nowhere."⁴

This paper attempts to take on this dialectic by charting a course through which urban architectural memory could be potentially mined and reclaimed from the city (for the city) by documenting and interpreting specific kinds of typological, yet overlooked spaces. In the context of a memory industry, where monuments and memorials, history walks and downtown tours consist of our various trysts with the past, I propose instead a Benjaminian reexamination of the historic city that could resonate with students of architecture and urban design. Walter Benjamin's reflections on the life and form of cities, I hope to demonstrate, provide an implicit critical and philosophical framework to better understand issues of urban identity and memory, which can, in turn, be

meaningfully translated to urban observation, analysis and interpretation.

From the vantage point of the early twentieth century, the mercantile and industrial history of nineteenth century European urbanism was Benjamin's focus of critical inquiry. Paris and Berlin, the great cities of this epoch, among others, were Benjamin's laboratories, as he went about excavating their history through a sustained engagement with their built environment, by interpreting myriad texts and by means of actual, lived experience. In contrast to Paris, "the promised land of the flaneur," Rome for Benjamin was a city "too full of temples, enclosed squares, national shrines, to be able to enter *tout entiere*—with every cobblestone, every shop sign, every step, and every gateway—into the passerby's dream."⁵ Instead, through his immense body of writings that dealt with the material history and memory of city space and city life, Benjamin closely observed and described numerous, infinitesimally small objects and marginal spaces. These encounters and experiences were construed as a counterpoint to the phantasmagoria of nineteenth century city planning idealized through the broad perspectival vistas of Haussmannian Paris and its attending "spiritual and secular power" celebrated through monuments such as "a church, a train station, an equestrian statue or some other symbol of civilization."⁶ Dreaming for Benjamin was like memorizing, realized in a way through the act of flaneurie: of endlessly walking, losing oneself, sub-consciously discovering the city, and unearthing its past. It is in awakening from such dreaming, according to Benjamin—or memory construction—that one transports the past into present awareness.⁷

Benjamin's fantastically esoteric prose provide great inspiration, and at the same time plenty of theoretical latitude with which to interpret the built environment. One of the texts that presents a lucid interpretation of Benjamin's vast body of work on the city is Graeme Gilloch's book entitled *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*.⁸ In reading Gilloch, I have culled four distinct ideas that form a structure for engagement, observation, analysis and interpretation of the city. First, Benjamin proposes an historical approach predicated on an "archeological excavation" of the city.⁹ He suggests that we look past the beguiling forms of the city into its unknown, hidden places so as to engage memory (social and architectural) in a criti-

cal dialogue with the present. Second, he proposes that we focus on the "minutia and marginalia" of the city such as derelict buildings, marginal spaces, and discarded objects found in flea markets that reflect the overlooked entities of the city.¹⁰ Third, Benjamin implies what could be a method of (architectural) analysis based on "porosity," and the "monad" where the universal (identity, aesthetic) is discernible in the particular.¹¹ Finally, Benjamin provides the pivotal interpretive idea of the "dialectical image" where we see a mutual momentary illumination of the past and present, thus opening up distinct possibilities for design in the future.¹²

Benjamin's ideas, I have found, audibly resonate with my own recent explorations and research of architecture and urban design in San Francisco. Turned off by the shrieking edifices of Victorian architecture and its concomitant discourse of style that have led to its pecuniary objectification; disconcerted by the endless descriptions of picturesque place that is San Francisco; and sometimes, equally alienated by new beguiling neomodernist architectural forms, I have tried to recalibrate "seeing" and reengage the marginal, yet aesthetically edifying, spaces of the city to suggest a new future for design. The historical city has still been my focus, as have been Victorians, because they are bounded by a nineteenth century urban fabric that contains, in a morphological sense, the memory code of the city.

My specific focus is spaces I term "slots"—slim slivers or gaps found between Victorian-era residential buildings in San Francisco [Figure 1]. These voids were primarily introduced in late-nineteenth century row-house developments to bring sunlight and air into the inner rooms of the long and narrow Victorians. Unlike Victorian row house typologies in Europe or on the East Coast, which present a continuous street wall, numerous row house developments in San Francisco are separated at the face by the slot, thus lending the slot a unique street presence that blurs the distinction between public and private and contributes to the experience of the public realm. Despite their apparent visibility, use, and latent aesthetic potential, slots have inadvertently resided in a collective architectural unconscious, remaining mostly overlooked, undocumented and undiscussed.

My objective is to illustrate the intrinsic, yet unrealized, place of interstitial spaces such as slots in

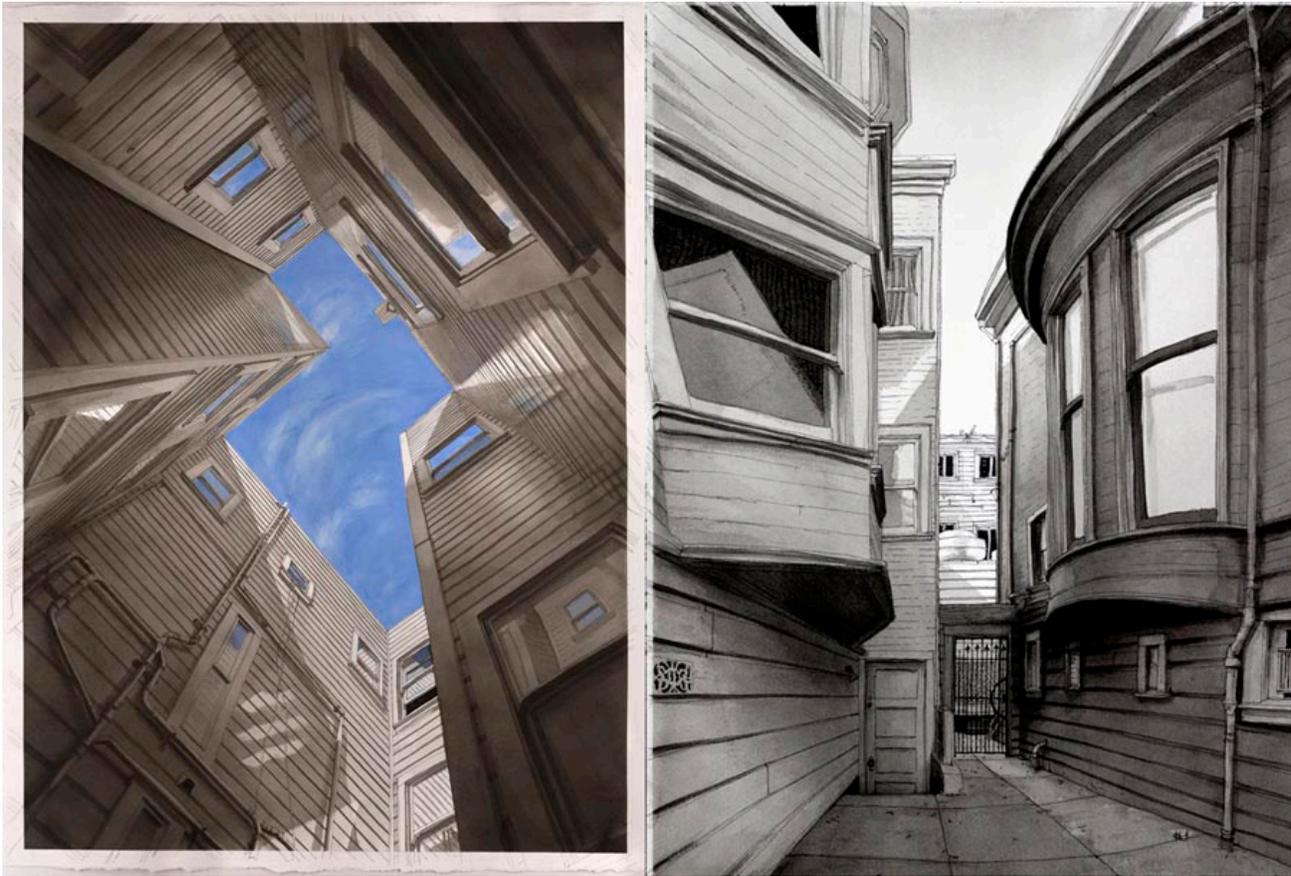


Figure 1: Slots in San Francisco (drawings by Paul Madonna)

the identity and memory of San Francisco's architecture and urban form, and the rich potential that their interpretive representations provide in developing new perspectives in architectural and urban design. Such an investigation, I hope to demonstrate, opens up the possibility of an architectural identity that is not limited to neo-traditionalist (historic/nostalgic) or neo-modernist (technological/futuristic) oppositions, or the depiction of the city as picturesque tableaux (scenographic). Instead, unraveling and interpreting the city's hidden spaces points to alternative narratives—alluding to what a future architecture might look like—where a city's past and present and projected into the future.

WALTER BENJAMIN AND URBAN MEMORY

Graeme Gilloch provides a cogent interpretation for understanding Benjamin's numerous writings on cities.¹³ Gilloch charts the territories of physiognomy, phenomenology, history, mythology, politics

and text, to produce a road-map, which offers us the possibility of framing relevant questions related to the analysis and design of cities. For example: Through what lens or with which bias does Benjamin approach or look at the city? What does he specifically focus on? Is there a process of observation and analysis (for architects) that emerges from his approach? And, finally, what possibilities, specifically for architectural and urban design, do Benjamin's cityscapes initiate?

Benjamin's primary approach or lens of looking at the city, as Graeme Gilloch puts it, is analogous to an "urban physiognomist who is part archeologist, part collector and part detective."¹⁴ Physiognomic reading for Benjamin is a critical enterprise that penetrates beneath the facades of things to reveal their true character. For Benjamin "the metropolis is a multi-faceted entity," an intricate "picture puzzle" that cannot be reduced or depicted in a singular mode.¹⁵ Instead, Benjamin seeks provisional,

often incomplete, readings of the city gleaned from the various fragments of physical character and social life that he stumbles upon, consciously eschewing an overarching perspective. In his numerous encounters with cities, an example of which is encapsulated in the article he wrote on Naples after a trip in 1924, Benjamin was not intent on depicting Naples as the “cradle of Western civilization, but was interested in particular forms of mundane life found within the urban environment.”¹⁶ Benjamin was focused on peripheral aspects of urbanity, not only as a critique of the overarching forms of modernity, but also to provide a set of emblematic motifs that could form the basis of redemptive social models and practices. Benjamin, Gilloch says, “gives voice to the periphera, the experiences of those that modern forms of order strive to render silent and invisible.”¹⁷

In Benjamin’s essay on Naples, one of the major visual tools that he uses to illustrate his observations of the city is the concept of porosity. In using such a perspective, Benjamin negates spatial and elemental clarity in the city, blurring distinctions between the public and private, and inside and outside; and, as it can be inferred, between solid and void, and figure and ground. Porosity enables us to look for what is concealed and hidden in the fabric of city, “a key to the interpretation of the urban setting.”¹⁸ Benjamin is intent on “finding” the overlooked parts (places, spaces, things, experiences) of the city, which is mostly possible when boundaries are blurred, and less so when the city is neatly packaged into legible and clear spatial compartments or predetermined memory walks and city tours.

Benjamin’s writings are not merely vignettes or sketches of a city frozen in time, but are an incisive critique of modernity, and as I shall further explore, imbued with implicit actions and future possibilities. For example, in the essay on Naples, Benjamin writes, “Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything they [buildings] preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations.”¹⁹ This statement potentially suggests ideas of reuse, renewal and redeployment. Gilloch says that Benjamin’s later writings on cities strengthened ephemeral observation with rigorous historic critique, inaugurating the idea of the “monad” in which the “universal is discernible within the particular. Each element recovered is monadological, containing

within it the totality whence it came, and is also illuminating as parts of the new montage in which it is assembled.”²⁰

“Lost times are like overlooked places,” says Gilloch in reference to Benjamin’s writings on Berlin and the sense of historic memory that cities contain.²¹ But if one were to reverse that statement, that is, overlooked places are like lost time, it suggests an erasure of a significant part of the memory of a city. Benjamin’s writings aid in regaining a sense of historic time, not a nostalgic past, but a critical engagement with history. They potentially provide architects and urbanists with a critical approach, a distinct focus, and methods for analysis and representation. Finally, they suggest the production of critical “memory images,” where various fragments of the urban setting can be renewed and rearranged as new forms in the city.²²

A CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Before I delve into an examination of slots, let me briefly consider the historiography of urban and architectural design in San Francisco, so as to locate this study within a wider discourse, and thereby point to certain obvious signifiers that have taken root. In the 1950’s and 60’s, following the Urban Renewal Act of 1949, not only were significant historic structures and the city’s Victorian housing stock threatened and destroyed but the physical image of the city, which was a unique amalgam of natural setting and built form was also altered in intractable ways. By the mid 1960’s, the San Francisco Planning Department took up the task of producing a comprehensive vision for future development that was crystallized in the 1971 Urban Design Plan.²³ This plan was informed in large part by Kevin Lynch’s *The Image of the City* (1960), in which the city was seen as a “construction in space,” where its constituent parts and patterns—its paths, edges, nodes, districts and landmarks—could be easily grasped and organized into a coherent, unified whole, namely the “image.”²⁴ Indeed, San Francisco needed a strong statement in support of its aesthetic aspirations, but the 1971 Plan, inspired by Lynch, also put in place a conception of the city as an extrinsic construct and an image focused on its visual form.

Inasmuch as the urban form of San Francisco was shaped by macro concerns of formal legibility, the

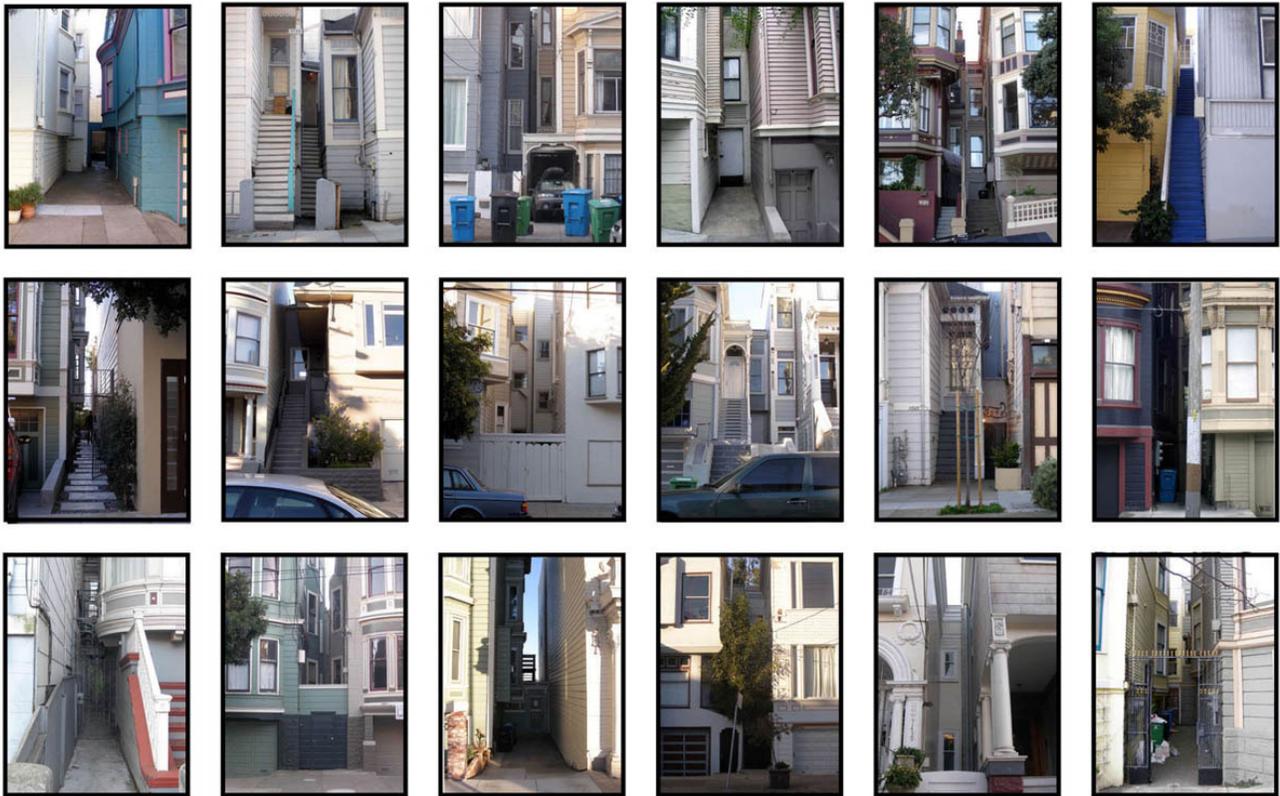


Figure 2: A wide range of slots found in the central part of San Francisco (photos, author)

architectural identity of the city was pegged to its historic residential districts, where the continuity of the street wall and the stylistic richness of its Victorian architecture were considered its character-defining features.²⁵ There were several studies and surveys published in the 1960's and 1970's that were intently focused on the facade of Victorians, leading to a style-based body of knowledge related to Victorian residential architecture.²⁶ In sum, it can be argued, that these approaches unwittingly created a culture of recognizing the strikingly obvious features of architecture and urban design, thereby developing an arguably closed set of signifiers by which the city was identified and memorialized.

SLOTS – REPOSITORIES OF URBAN MEMORY

The emergence of slots is inextricably linked to the indivisible relationship between house design and land subdivision. Between 1850 and 1900, as San Francisco expanded to the west from its initial north-east downtown nucleus, surveyors used a grid

form in conjunction with the Spanish vara (1 vara = 2.75 feet) unit of measurement to lay out the pattern of streets, blocks and open spaces. This survey (known as the 50 vara survey) resulted in blocks that had six square lots of 50 varas each and that measured 275 feet x 412 ½ feet. Over time, the 50 vara lots were further subdivided, or "short-platted" as was the term, to result in parcels that had a variety of dimensional combinations, with the most common being 27.5 feet x 137.5 feet (8.4 m x 41.9 m), 25 feet x 100 feet or 137.5 feet (7.6 m x 30.5 m or 41.9 m), and with some parcels being 30 feet wide.²⁷

The surge in speculative residential development and in owner-built homes beginning in the 1870's, resulted in numerous two, to four-story wood-frames houses constructed on contiguous lots over the next three decades.²⁸ The narrow and deep lots, built out with row house developments and single or dual townhouses, forced a linear arrangement of rooms in the residential unit along the longer dimension (100 feet or 137 ½ feet) and com-



Figure 3: Geometries, articulation and surface features of slots (photos, Moshe Quinn)

pelled builders to provide deep recesses or slots in the facades to bring daylight and air into the inner rooms. The result was a pattern of narrow open spaces that punctuated the street wall and connected the public realm to the private open space of the slot, and in some cases to the rear-yard. This pattern of light wells facing the street is unique to row house developments in San Francisco (on the East Coast and Europe, typically, light-wells are embedded within the house or provided in the rear) and can be seen across several neighborhoods in the central part of the city [Figure 2].

Slots are generally narrow spaces of varying width and depth that are approximately between three to eleven feet wide and ten to fifty feet deep. Their surfaces are punctuated by doors and windows, animated by faceted or semi-circular bay windows, and embellished with roof overhangs, service features and elemental articulation [Figure 3]. Variations in material conditions such as surface finishes, ornament, ground paving, plumbing fixtures and other functional details reflect socio-economic diversity across neighborhoods. A vast variety of forms are also seen, ranging from simple rectangular slots to more complex variations. Although initially planned almost exclusively to serve as light-wells and access to rear yards, slots have accommodated new func-

tions and transformed into service areas, garages, gardens and entrances creating new layers of use and meaning in the re-consideration of San Francisco's Victorian residential architecture.

INTERPRETING SLOTS

Spaces like slots would have meant a host of things to architectural theorists such as Aldo Rossi and Christine Boyer, who have provided seminal accounts on the role of identity and memory in the architecture of the city.²⁹ For Rossi, the slot would have been a historic typological entity or "urban artifact," a space through which the city remembers; the preservation of which is analogous to the retention of our memory of the city. But Rossi or even Boyer after him, were not content on mere preservation and replication as a means of sustaining memory. In fact, Boyer saw the architecture of the 1970's and '80's as nineteenth century stage sets deployed to reframe the urban spaces of our cities. The central task for architecture, urban design and historic preservation was to interpret history; or as Boyer provokes: "Can we like Walter Benjamin before us, recall, reexamine, and recontextualize memory images from the past until they awaken within us a new path to the future?"³⁰



Figure 4: Interpreting slots – lighting. Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco (author and Elaine Buckholtz)

In order to explore, and unravel this question, particularly the idea of “recontextualization,” I first turn to avant-garde research in the artistic domain as a methodological inspiration for the examination and interpretation of slots.

Benjamin’s writing on cities, his implicit theory of urbanism, reverberates through the work of a long line of theorists and practitioners such as Eugene Atget (1857 – 1927), Guy Debord (1931 – 1994), Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), Gordon Matta-Clark (1943 – 1978), and Rachel Whiteread (b.1963), for whom the liminal and marginal conditions of the city have served as a significant counterpoint to its celebrated urban spaces and institutional architecture. Employing documentary photography (Atget), the practice of derive (Debord), visual art and sculpture (Matta-Clark, Whiteread), their work brings into focus what Benjamin calls the “optical unconscious” of the city—things we see but don’t register but that the camera or sculpture illumi-

nate—thus redefining notions of urban memory and identity through distinctly experimental methods of inquiry and representation.³¹

The work of artists Bruce Nauman, Gordon Matta-Clark and Rachel Whiteread provides valuable conceptual and analytical tools for interpreting and representing unseen space. For instance, in the late 1960’s, American artist Bruce Nauman’s provocative minimal sculpture entitled *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, shifted the viewer’s gaze from the normative object to the otherwise neglected void space, and simultaneously gave form to that which was seemingly invisible or absent. In the late 1970’s, in a quest to reexamine the traditional art object and architecture, New York-based artist Gordon Matta-Clark and the group Anarchitecture rejected (and sometimes even destroyed) obvious architectural objects in favor of the voids, gaps and leftover spaces of the city. Quite clearly echoing Benjamin, Matta-Clark stated that their objective was not “to

demonstrate an alternative attitude to buildings," but to bring to attention spaces that were "perceptually significant" in the experience of the city.³²

Rachel Whiteread's concrete and resin sculptures of lost houses, the spaces behind books on a shelf or the insides of a bottle make tangible the liminal spaces of everyday life. Whiteread can be seen as an archaeologist of space, overturning objects to look underneath them, sifting through structures in a city to find cracks or hidden voids between them, and uncovering spatial conditions that are buried in the subconscious memory of the city. Whiteread's work is not focused merely on aesthetic exploration, but instead, like Benjamin, it is based on her acute perception of urban life: the desire to construct a narrative of the city and provide through her sculptural forms what Benjamin has called a "dialectical image," where the past and present, the mundane and phantasmagoric intersect in a single instance.³³

Echoing some of the work of these artists, and inspired by Benjamin's notion of the dialectical image, I propose two methods to interpret slots and produce "memory images" and architectonic representations that can fuel architectural and urban design in meaningful ways. The first is to do with lighting, i.e. illuminating the slots by night; and the second, is to do with casting or creating positive form from negative space.

In February 2010, a series of slots located on a Victorian block constructed in the late 1880's on Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco's North Panhandle (NOPA) district were illuminated at night using dual mounted stage floodlights [Figure 4].³⁴ The light installation proposed to shift the gaze of the observer from the normative, decorated façade of the Victorians, to the interstices by their side. By day, the slots, although intended to capture light, are relatively dark and in sharp contrast to the iridescent façades bathed in sunlight. By night, as

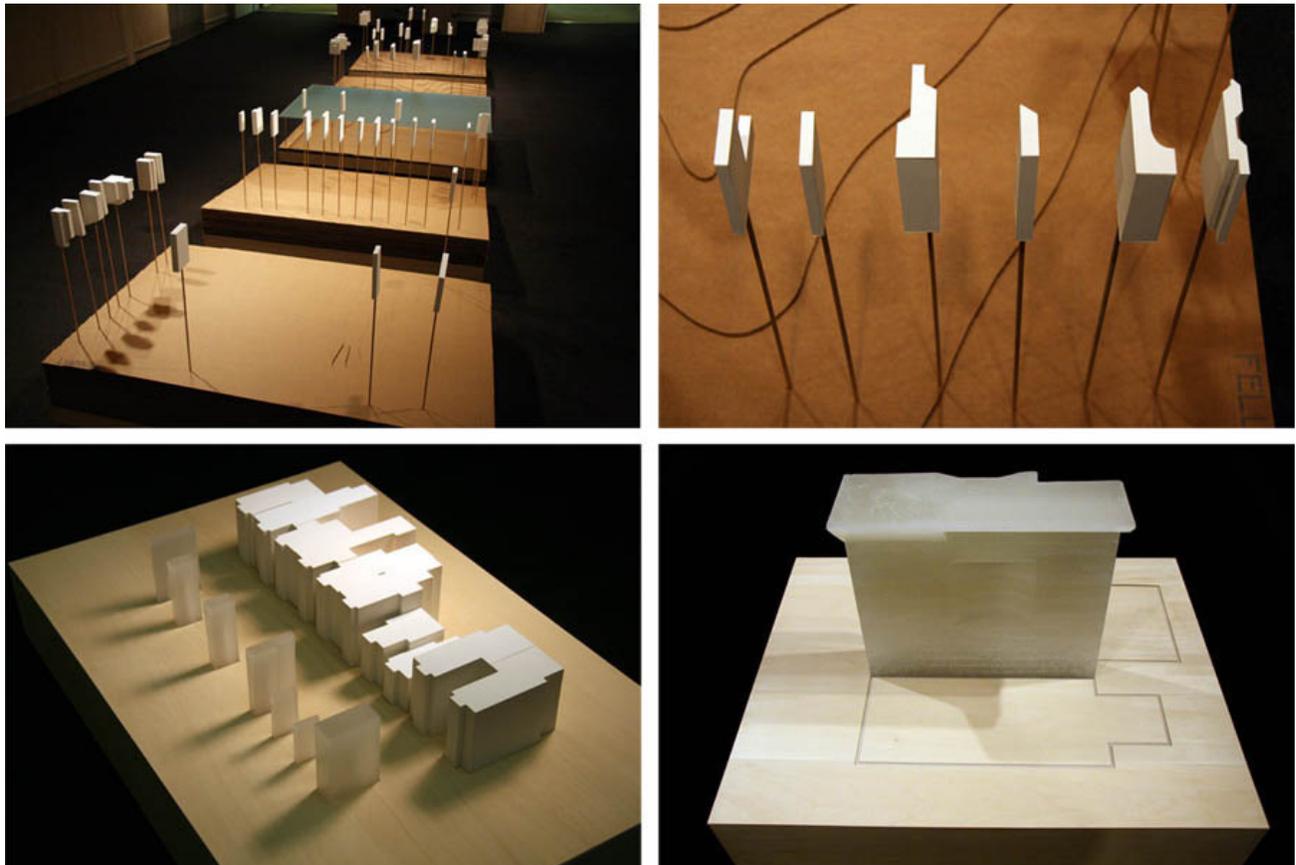


Figure 5: Interpreting slots – casting (models by Samuel North, Daniel Begaye, Michael Conrad)

the slots are washed in chromatic light, our normative perception of seeing a figure against ground, solid against void, and light against shadow is inverted, producing a perceptual reversal. Through light, the spaces are conveyed into an active public consciousness, recalling the hidden and sometimes lost spaces of the city.

To further emphasize and express the intricacies of slots, scaled replicas of the spaces were cast at various levels: multiple blocks, a single row on a block and at the level of the individual space [Figure 5]. What emerged were urban forms that comprised an archive, or a data base of interstitial space, excavated and independently expressed as a group of spatial fragments of the city. Not only do these architectonic representations of the nineteenth century historic fabric, and Victorian architecture, defamiliarize existing and familiar portrayals, but they also constitute an alternative narrative of the city, where urban identity and memory is expressed through its negative spaces.

Lighting and casting serve as ways to make apparent, to foreground, and bring into focus spaces what until now had been part of an indeterminate background, or an architectural unconscious of the city. The forms and images that are produced through lighting and casting retain the impression and traces of a past architecture and urban form, echoing them in unfamiliar ways as new objects in the present. They produce a dialectical image, where the unseen and the seen, the public and private, the tangible and the amorphous, the past and the present, collide in a single moment of edification. As images that are materializations of memory, they potentially provide a starting point for design engagement in the future.

CONCLUSION

The spaces I have discussed in this paper exist by virtue of a very specific relationship of Victorian residential house form to land subdivision in San Francisco. However, they came to my attention through a physical engagement with the city: walking through it, drifting, getting lost; and looking between, aside, and beyond the edifices that frame public urban space. Such an approach to experiencing, observing, and subsequently designing in the city is repressed or even negated when urban form is conceived in terms of a bird's eye view

of elemental clarity and neatly defined compartments. My motivation to examine slots was also the product of a search for spaces—architecture and urban form—that deviated from grand nineteenth civic plazas, landscapes of urban revitalization, celebrated architectural objects, the decorated facades of Victorians and the old and new shimmering shopping malls that dot downtown. Instead, I sought out the marginal and unseen spaces of the city, in this case those that were imbued with historic and contemporary aesthetic signification, or in other words, the Benjaminian dialectical image. The slot as a monad, or spatial organism of the city, where the universal is discernible in the specific, and its experimental interpretations seen through lighting and casting, pose a provocative picture of the identity and memory of the city.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The symposium I am referring to is "Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape," which is also a title of collected volume of essays. See, Marc Treib, ed., *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).
- 2 Andrew See Shanken, "The Memory Industry and its Discontents: The Death and Life of a Keyword," in Marc Treib, ed., *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), c. 10, 218-240.
- 3 Mark Crinson, *Urban Memory - An Introduction*, from Mark Crinson, ed. *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 4 *Ibid.*, xi.
- 5 Walter Benjamin, "The Flanuer," in *The Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 417.
- 6 Benjamin, "Paris Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in the *The Arcades Project*, 24.
- 7 Benjamin, "The Arcades of Paris," in *The Arcades Project*, 884.
- 8 Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*, (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1996).
- 9 Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," in *The Arcades Project*, 612; also see Gilloch, 18.
- 10 Gilloch, op. cit., pp. 9-13.
- 11 See Benjamin's essay entitled "Naples," in Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, (Schoken, 1986), 165-166; Gilloch, 24-25.
- 12 Benjamin, "Exposes of 1935," in *The Arcades Project*, 10; Gilloch, 35.
- 13 Gilloch, 1996.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p.6.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp.169-170.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p.24.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p.9.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p.25.
- 19 Benjamin, "Naples," in *The Arcades Project*, 165-166.

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- 20 Gilloch, 35.
- 21 Ibid., 67.
- 22 Christine. M Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainment*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994), 24.
- 23 San Francisco Planning Department, *The Urban Design Plan*, San Francisco, 1971.
- 24 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1960).
- 25 See the discussion on City Pattern in *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan of San Francisco*, San Francisco Planning Department, May 1971, 21-35.
- 26 See for example, Joseph Armstrong Baird, *Time's Wondrous Change: San Francisco Architecture 1776-1915*, (California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1962); Tom Aidala and Curt Bruce, *The Great Houses of San Francisco*, (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1974); Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy*, 101 Productions, San Francisco 1978; Randolph Delehanty, *In the Victorian Style*, (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1991).
- 27 Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*, (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1986).
- 28 See, Anne Bloomfield, "The Real Estate Associates: A Land and Housing Developer of the 1870s in San Francisco," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 1978, v. 37, n. 1, 13-33.
- 29 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, MIT Press, *The Architecture of the City*, (Boston, MA.: MIT Press, 1982); Christine Boyer, 1994.
- 30 Boyer, 29.
- 31 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, (Schoken Books, New York, 1969).
- 32 Gordon Matta-Clark cited in Pamela Lee, *Object to be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*, (MIT Press, 2000), 105.
- 33 See Chris Townsend, "When We Collide," from Chris Townsend, ed., *The Art of Rachel Whiteread*, (Thames and Hudson, London, 2004), 6-34; and Gilloch, 35.
- 34 The installation was a collaboration between the author and light-artist Elaine Buckholtz, and part of an exhibition called the *Urban Unseen: Examining San Francisco's Interstitial Spaces*, held at the Thacher Gallery, University of San Francisco, February 25 – April 25, 2010.