LOST [AND FOUND] IN PLAY

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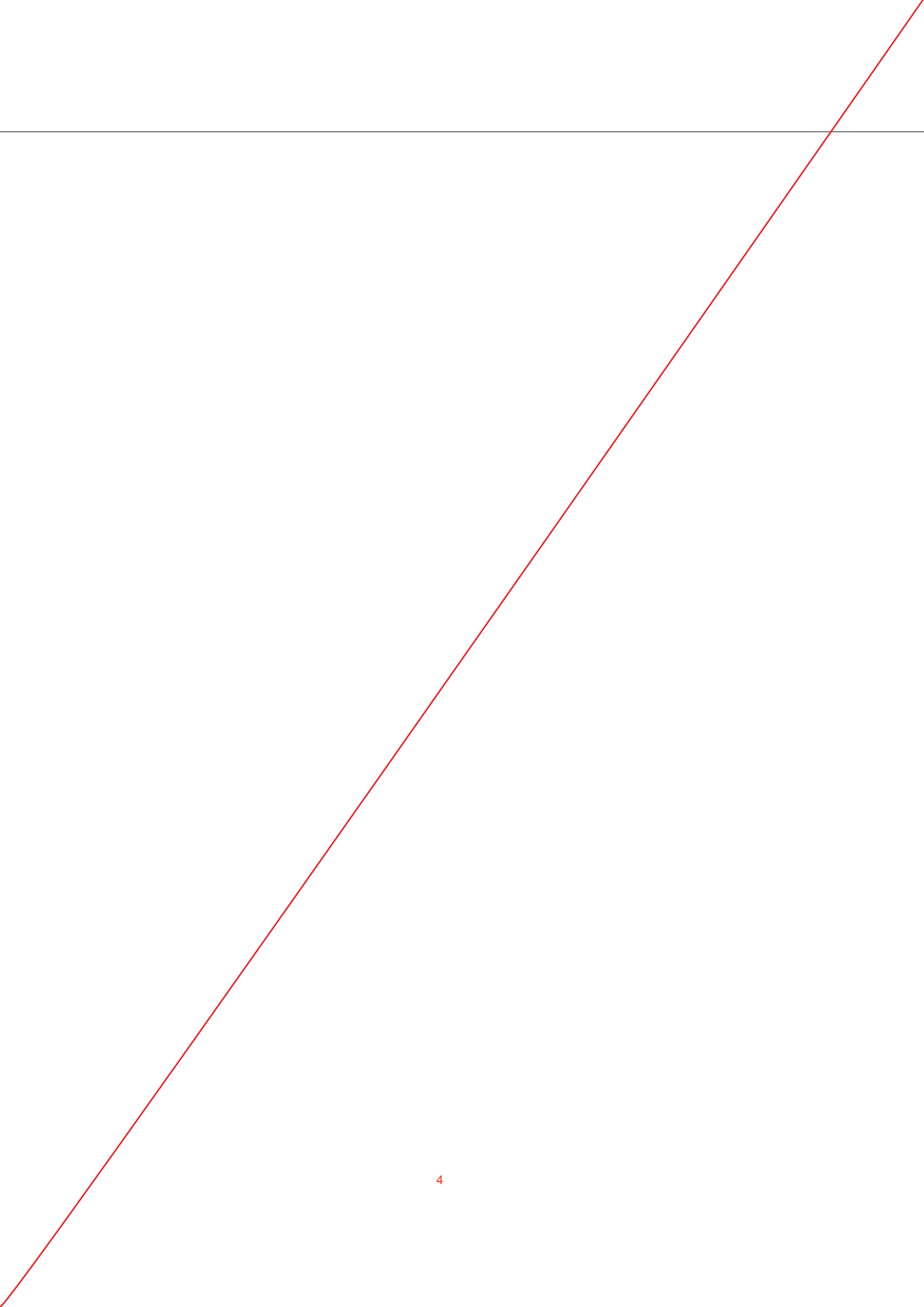
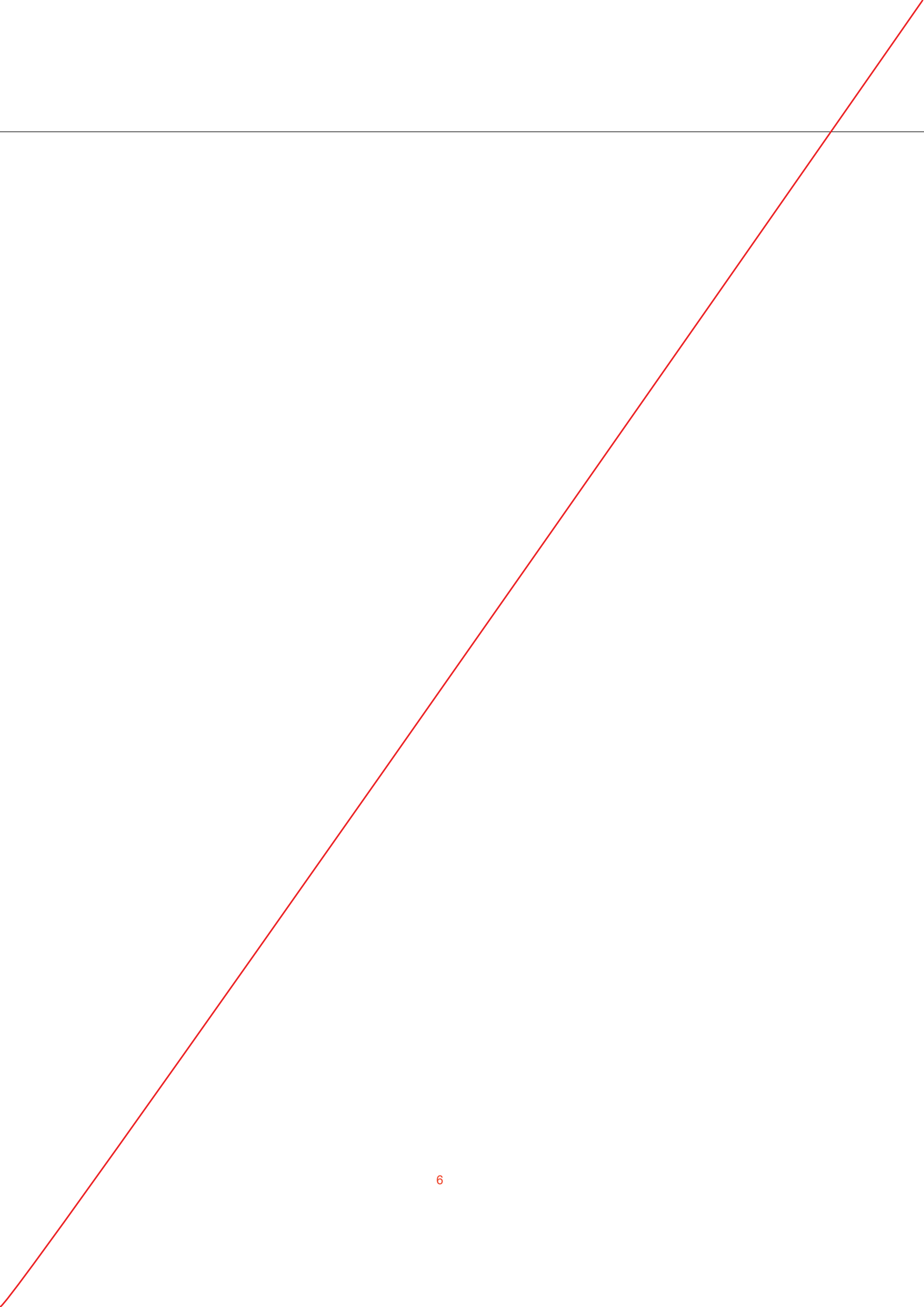


INTRODUCTION:



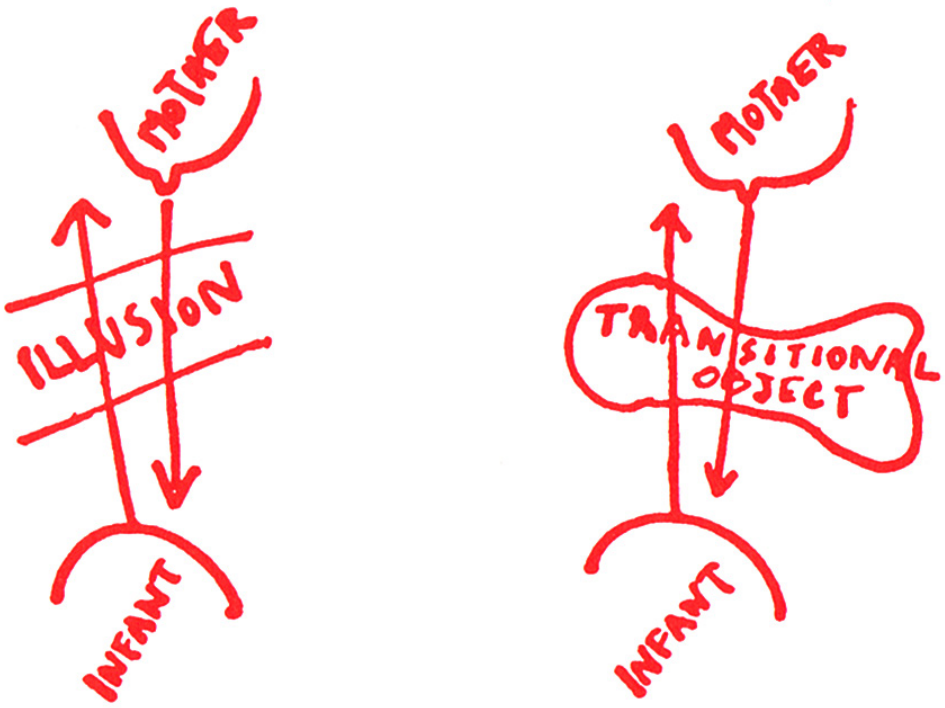


fig. 1 - Winnicott ,1953.

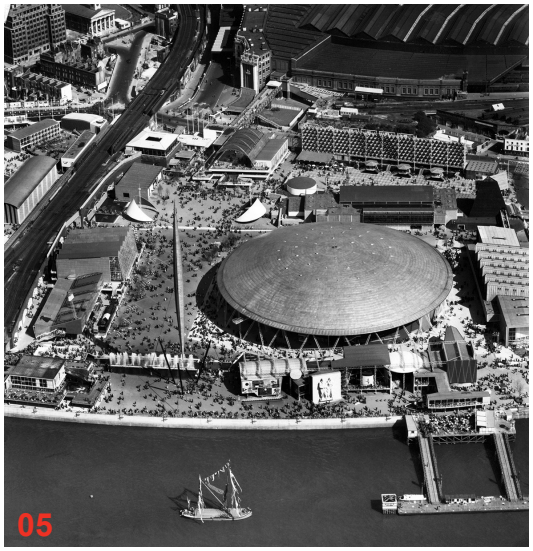
INTRODUCTION

Donald Winnicott (1896 – 1971) is now regarded as one of the most significant post-war psychoanalytic practitioners and theoreticians. In his seminal lecture *Playing and Reality*, delivered in the early 1950s and published in 1971, he identified the 'potential space' which occurs at the moment when the infant begins separating the 'self' from the mother; the infant (together with the intuition of the mother) fills this space with 'creative play' and the imaginative transformation of first possessions, what Winnicott refers to as 'transitional objects' *(fig.1)*.[1] The space of cleavage that results from separation is colonised, tested and explored through play. Is play then, essentially about the codifying or interrogation of new space? Winnicott understood that the use of these transitional objects belonged to an intermediate area between the 'subjective' interior of the infant and the perceived 'objective' exterior, and that such play/use of symbols is the foundation of all cultural experiment and life.[2] When Winnicott then reformulates these ideas in terms of the adult that can play, the adult he choses is an architect:

> It is present as much in the moment-by-moment living of a backward child who is enjoying breathing as it is in the inspiration of an *architect* who suddenly knows what it is that he wishes to construct, and who is thinking in terms of material that can actually be used so that his creative impulse may take form and shape, and the world may witness.[3]

Architecture was clearly on Winnicott's mind in the 1950s: during the Second World War, Winnicott served as consultant psychiatrist to the evacuee programme in which he worked with Clare Britton, a psychiatric social worker who became his colleague in treating children displaced from their homes by wartime evacuation. From 1951 they lived together in Chester Square, Belgravia, adjacent to the emerging Pimlico housing scheme across the river from the transformational Festival of Britain Exhibition with the gravity defying Skylon by Powell and Moya and the culturally aspirational Royal Festival Hall by Leslie Martin *(figs.2-4)*. The project brought together social, cultural and civic renewal, and signalled the rebirth of modern Britain after the trauma of the Second World War. But Winnicott's choice of the architect as his adult playing subject can also be understood in less immediate and certainly less public terms that remain pertinent to the interrogation of new spatial configuration.

[1] I use Winnicott's convention of the 'mother' understanding that this can also refer to any parental carer regardless of gender. Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 135.
[2] Ibid., 107.
[3] Ibid., 92-93.



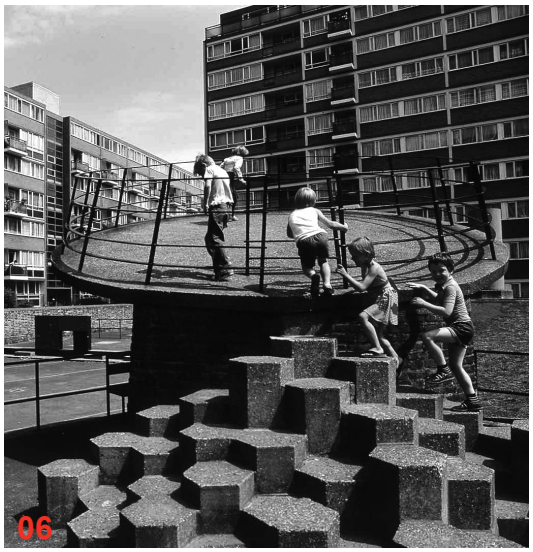


fig. 2 - The Skylon, 1951.
fig. 3 - Festival of Britain, South Bank 1951.
fig. 4 - Churchill Gardens estate, 1978.

Importantly, Winnicott recognised that the architect inhabits an 'intermediate area', constructively interleaving imagined and real worlds. This imaginative domain of the architect is continuous with the "play area" of the small child who is "lost in play".[4] Winnicott's assertion is endorsed by Stephen Nachmanovitch in *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, where he writes that "improvisation, composition, writing, painting, theatre, invention, all creative acts are forms of play; without play, learning and evolution are impossible".[5]

Winnicott's framework allows us to understand more clearly the continuity of creativity through play, which links the individual to the wider world, and the nuanced distinction between creative artists who use language – Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Joyce – and those using non-verbal, improvisatory communication – the pre-language infant but also the visual artist, composer and architect. The focus of this thesis is on this latter group who, without words, are able to communicate evocatively with an engaged audience and, on occasion, reclaim a distracted audience. Applying Winnicott's framework to the performance art of Stuart Brisley and the musical improvisation of Don Ellis, the thesis will address the following questions: may play be viewed as an apparatus which engages the imagination to test and even transcend its own boundaries? What are the economies of play? What lessons can students of architecture draw from non-verbal creative practice, music, performance? How may this be instrumentalised in an architectural proposition?

[4] Ibid., 18. This 'intermediate area' is the site of Stuart Brisley's performance and the improvisation of Don Ellis, discussed in *Part II: Bubble and Kernel*.
[5] Stephen Nachmanovitch, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, (New York: Penguin, 1991), 42.

PART I: ‘Playing’ reality with Donald Winnicott

Mother below is weeping
weeping
weeping
Thus I knew her

Once, stretched out on her lap
as now on dead tree
I learned to make her smile
to stem her tears
to stem her guilt
to cure her inward death

To enliven her was my living[6]

D.W. Winnicott, 1963

[6] “Before Winnicott went to boarding school he would do his homework in a special tree in the garden”; it was his literal pre-school, physical and emotional sanctuary. Adam Phillips, *Winnicott*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989), 28-29.

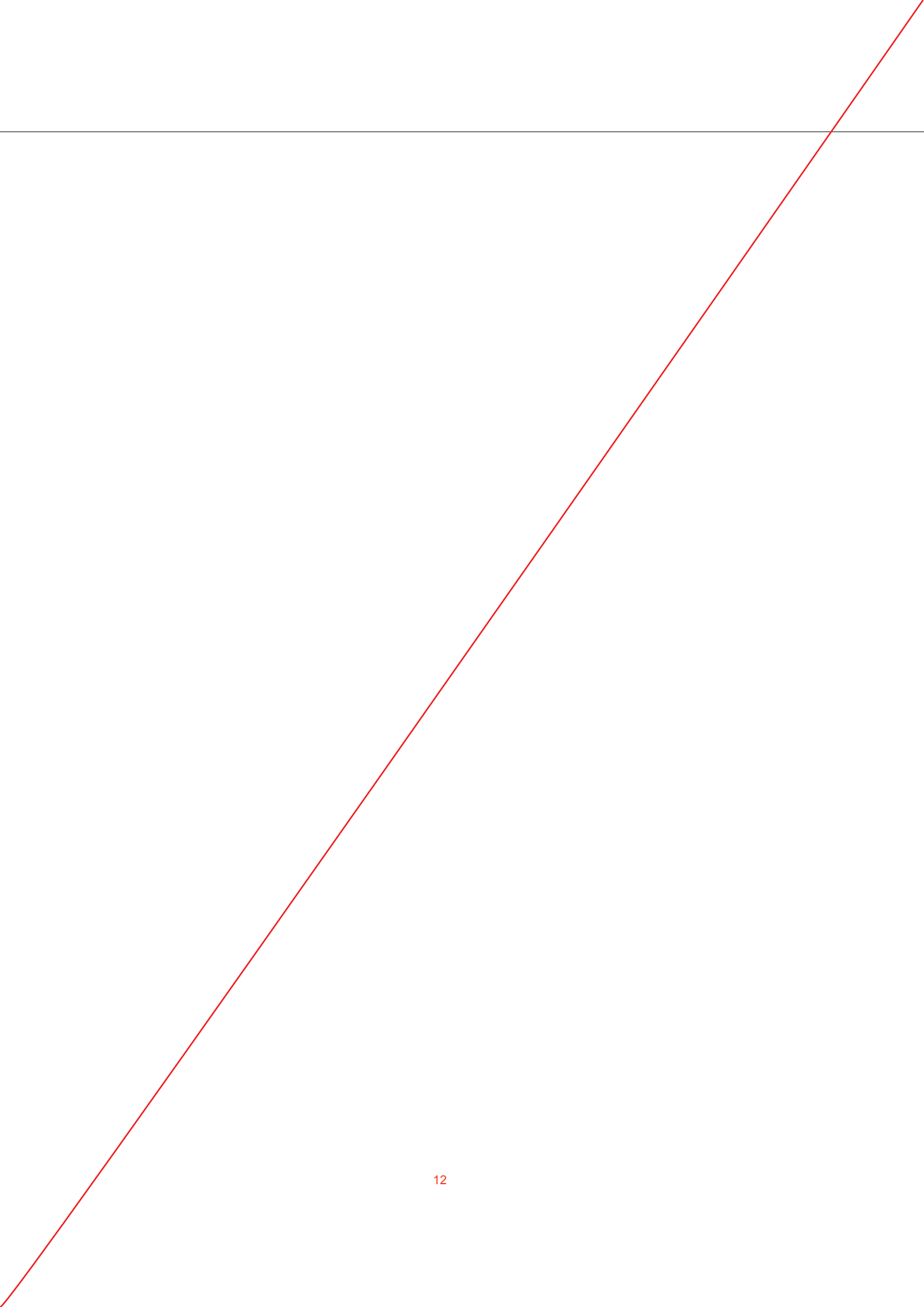


fig. 5 - Winnicott and Play.

PART I: ‘Playing’ reality with Donald Winnicott

This poem recalls Winnicott’s early experience of his mother’s depression and “her consequent inability to hold him” in her arms or mind.[7] He later defined ‘holding’ in both senses as the formative experience of a child’s life and the foundation of reliability. The “absence” of the mother, be it through narcissism or depression or both, distracts children from their own development through the need to “look after the mother’s mood” – to keep the mother alive.[8] Given this traumatic beginning, is it surprising that Winnicott would later describe his concept of the “holding environment” as “the mother’s technique of holding, of bathing, of feeding, everything she did for the baby, added up to the child’s first idea of the mother” and surprisingly he would extend this to say, “a correct and well-timed interpretation in an analytic treatment gives a sense of being held physically that is more real… than if a real holding or nursing had taken place?”[9]

Winnicott understood that the relationship between the intuitive, empathetic ‘good-enough mother’ and the child, pre-language, was the foundation of the healthy self, imaginatively and constructively engaging with everyone and everything; an evolved model of *Playing and Reality*, the source of all creativity in science, art and life. However, it was not until the War, when he met and began to work with Clare Britton, who became his most important professional and personal partner that Winnicott personally experienced the reality of the ‘good-enough mother’: as emotional and intellectual collaborator they together could explore and extend the interplay between the internal and external reality. Clare Winnicott later explained “we played with ideas, tossed them about at random with the freedom of knowing that we need not agree, and that we were strong enough not to be hurt by each other”.[10]

It was during this period that the role of the transitional object emerged. C. Winnicott’s work with evacuee children and their dislocated parents in London hostels provided unique insight into fractured relationships and the need for the child carer to ensure that what a child identifies with their past, both physical and psychological, is brought with them and integrated into the new environment. These transitional objects with which the horizon of the child’s separating identity had been negotiated – the filthy clothes, the corner of a blanket,

[7] Ibid., 29.
[8] Ibid., 29.
[9] Winnicott, *Human Nature*, (London: Free Association Books, 1988), 61-62.
[10] Care and Donald Winnicott understood that the professional self develops through the synthesis of personal, interpersonal and professional experience, evidenced in the Winnicotts’ life and work. Clare Winnicott, “D.W.W.: A Reflection (1978)” in *Face to Face with Children: The Life and Work of Clare Winnicott*, Joel Kanter, ed. (London: Karnac 2004), 250.

a rag doll or furry animal – stood for continuity, a therapeutic bridge between past and present. Understandably, the ideas and writings of Clare and Donald Winnicott interlock in time and content. C. Winnicott's wartime experience and an awareness of her own insecurities allowed her to empathise with the helplessness, anxiety and the sense of incompetence of the hostel staff. She recognised that "holding," containing the anxiety, allowed the staff to "hold" the foster parents, which allowed them in turn to "hold" their children.[11] These ideas mirror precisely Donald Winnicott's own thoughts on the adequate mother.[12]

Graduating as a doctor in 1926, Winnicott initially studied paediatrics and by 1960 had treated approximately 60,000 children *(fig.5)*. This offered him a unique perspective as a psychoanalyst. His essential contribution to the theoretical and therapeutic model was to replace the notion that the infant's psychic drama was enacted within its own subjective space, with an inclusive model that included the start of complex relationships and reciprocity with the objective world, not simply its own pleasure. Winnicott recognised that the infant could be better understood by examining its psychical and psychological surrounding: the objects, responsive and non-responsive, that create a "facilitating environment" encouraging growth or causing the self to hide.[13]

He traces the development of the child from its initially narcissistic symbiotic world through a gradual process, nurtured by the adequate mother, until it develops the capacity to be alone and, aided by its transitional objects, play alone in the presence of the mother and thereafter to begin relating to the mother as an 'other' rather than a projection of its own needs. The 'good enough mother' adapts herself to the baby's needs and then slowly weans the baby off instant gratification. Such a mother establishes a space where absolute reality can soften and align with the needs or capacity of the child's psyche. A mother who through narcissism, won't or is unable to adapt results in what Winnicott names a *precarious* environment, no *third space*, and therefore no play.[14]

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[11] Ibid., 66-67. This use of the notion "holding" is found in Clare Winnicott's first solely authored paper, "Children who Cannot Play" written and published in 1945; her 1954 paper "Casework Techniques in the Child Care Services"; as well as Donald Winnicott's later articles like "The Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship" published in 1960. Clare Britton, "Children Who Cannot Play (1945)", in *Face to Face with Children: The Life and Work of Clare Winnicott*, edited by Joel Kanter, (London: Karnac, 2004), 112-123. Clare Britton, "Casework Techniques in the Child Care Services (1955)", in *Face to Face with Children: The Life and Work of Clare Winnicott*, edited by Joel Kanter, (London: Karnac, 2004), 145-165. Donald Winnicott, "The Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship," in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, no. 41 (1960): 585-595. Respectively.

[12] While Clare Winnicott was clearly a co-author of much of the theory explored in *Playing and Reality* (as seen in several papers paper written by both Winnicotts, such as "The Problem of Homeless Children"), it was Winnicott's vast experience that informed the work. Clare Britton and Donald Winnicott, "The Problem of Homeless Children (1944)", in *Face to Face with Children: The Life and Work of Clare Winnicott, edited by Joel Kanter*, (London: Karnac, 2004).

[13] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 191.

[14] Ibid., 191.

fig. 6 - WInnicott,1967.

> I have introduced the terms 'transitional objects' and 'transitional phenomena' for designation of the intermediate area of experience, between thumb and the teddy bear, between the oral eroticism and the true object-relationship, between primary creative activity and projection.[15]

Within this framework objects rewrite space and conversely, space, objects: "There is no such thing as a baby" was Winnicott's outburst at a conference, adding that the baby was always accompanied by its environmental interface, the good-enough mother and their shared transitional objects, blankets, rag dolls, etc.[16] Winnicott is therefore dismantling the self-referential autonomous object of the baby into a field of interactions. This is similar to the transformation of the existential naked man to a complex network of relations in a Stuart Brisley performances; or Don Ellis's use of city sound as a contextualising experience for feeling; or the architect compounding the perceived notion of an onomatopoeic object into an emotional landscape of ideas. Winnicott shifted the singular focus from the internal world of mother or baby to an integrated study of mother and child. He recognised that, in addition to responding with kindness to the baby's needs, the mother had to allow space and time to contain her own sense of vulnerability or anxiety, triggered by awareness of her personal responsibility. This would facilitate that the emotional, intellectual and individual identity of the baby should successfully separate and become whole. The single mother/baby study is replaced with the study of two dynamically linked and separate individuals who both share a 'common space' and preserve their separate private space. This idea of parallel space is fundamental to Winnicott's thinking, as is the dynamic enrichment of this space through play and interaction with transitional objects. But can the nature of this imaginative terrain and its horizons be revealed and expanded through shared play, and the use of physical and non-physical transitional objects?[17]

Winnicott focused upon "the first possession" – those rags, blankets, cloths, teddy bears and other *transitional objects* to which infants become attached – "in considering the place of these phenomena in the life of the child one must recognize the central position of Winnie the Pooh".[18] He acknowledged that these charged objects belonged to an intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived; "the transitional object

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[15] Ibid., 2-3. It is important to distinguish Winnicott's transitional object concept from Melanie Klein's (1934) concept of the 'internal object': "the transitional object is not an internal object (which is a mental concept) – it is a mental possession. Yet it is not (for the infant) an external object either." Ibid., 12.

[16] Francis Robert Rodman, *Winnicott: His Life and Work* (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004), 175.

[17] "Transitional objects and transitional phenomena belong to the realm of illusion which is at the basis of initiation of experience. This early stage in development is made possible by the mother's special capacity for making adaptation to the needs of her infant, thus allowing the infant the illusion that what the infant creates really exists… This intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect of its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work." Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 19.

[18] Ibid., xvi.

never comes under magical or 'omnipotent' control like an internal object or fantasy; nor is it outside the infant's control like the real mother (world)."[19] From this he came to posit what he called 'potential space' between the baby and the mother, which is the arena of 'creative play'. Play, for Winnicott, was a 'transitional phenomenon'. Its precariousness is derived from the fact that it is poised on "the theoretical line between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived".[20] This precarious space, as we shall see, becomes crucial to the performance art and music practices which will be explored later, using Winnicott's ideas. This "potential space" he defined as "the hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist) between the baby and the object (mother or part of mother) during the phase of the repudiation of the object as not-me, that is, at the end of being merged in with the object".[21] Thus Winnicott establishes that objecthood, space and identity are inseparably linked.

While Winnicott was developing his ideas, the use of play therapy was also being explored across the Atlantic. Virginia Mae Axline was a psychologist and one of the pioneers in the use of play therapy. In 1964 she published Dibs in Search of Self: Personality Development in Play Therapy which chronicles a series of play therapy sessions over a period of one year with an emotionally lost child (Dibs). The method employed was based on Carl Rogers' person-centred approach; the therapist Axline establishes an emotionally supportive environment within which Dibs is free to do / say whatever comes to mind. In the first session Dibs sat silent and appeared to confirm the earlier diagnosis that he was mentally defective. Over the course of one year Dibs began, incrementally, to examine his thoughts and feelings. Axline's responses confirmed that she was listening without judging. The book charts Dibs' progress from zero interaction to someone who could discuss and cope with his feelings and relate to family and close friends. The space which contained/defined this safe environment, a windowless room, could also be witnessed from the outside through an internal window with "one-way vision glass".[22] Thus, the implied intimacy and psychological immersion of Dibs and Axline could itself be dispassionately viewed by an outsider.[23] This one-way vision is reconfigured, as we shall see, to that of the audience in Stuart Brisley's performances who are precariously (emotionally and intellectually) both inside and outside the envelope of his playing.

At this time Winnicott was the only psychoanalyst who was also a paediatrician in Britain and his ideas may be seen as the genesis of a science of imagination and cultural activity.

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[19] Ibid., 13.
[20] Ibid., 68.
[21] Ibid., 144.
[22] Virginia Mae Axline, *Dibs in Search of Self: Personality Development in Play Therapy* (London: Penguin, 1990), 61.
[23] Axline's room, for Winnicott, became a complex envelope, spatially and behaviourally: "I appreciate Axline's work in a special way because it joins up with the point that I make in reporting what I call 'therapeutic consultations', that the significant moment is that at which the child surprises himself or herself. It is not the moment of my clever interpretation that is significant." Jan Abram, *The Language of Winnicott: A Dictionary of Winnicott's use of Words* (London: Karnac, 2007), 256 – 257.

He considered the 'potential space' (which is in direct continuity with the play area of the child) as both sacred to the individual and where creative living is experienced.[24] He also regarded the experienced "interplay between originality and the acceptance of tradition as the basis for inventiveness", which in turn emerged from the "interplay between separateness and union" with tradition as the "good enough mother".[25] This situated psychoanalysis within an imaginative humanistic endeavour, akin both to poetry and to love, rather than as an exact science with unvarying rules. To fellow analyst and ex patient, Harry Guntrip, Winnicott remarked that "we differ from Freud who was for curing symptoms. We're concerned with living persons, whole living and loving".[26] It was not simply the removal of symptoms, it was also the ability to play, to be creative; "we are poor indeed…if we are only sane".[27] This notion is reflected in Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938); Huizinga defines play as "we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly".[28]

However, within this space of play it is essential to Winnicott that the play environment is an anxiety free space of exploration: "it is not possible for a child of this age to get meaning out of a game unless first of all the game is *played and enjoyed*" *(fig.6)*.[29] It is through pleasure that anxiety is mastered and contained within the total experience. Winnicott's own enjoyment in his play with the child is palpable: "already I had made friends with the teddy-bear who was sitting on the floor by the desk."[30] We sense that Winnicott's poetic capacity, his willingness not to be 'only sane', enables a degree of entry rare for any adult into the unhappy child's world, with its "black mommy," its "sush baby," and the terrifying "babacar."[31] He perceives and accepts the transference, but he does much more; he

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[24] Winnicott's discussion of the transitional space resembles that of the cultural anthropologist, Victor Turner's understanding of "liminality" as something which is neither fully "this" or "that" and at the same time both "this and that". This is similar to an architectural interstitial space, such as a space carved out of a castle wall. Turner, Winnicott and Ghent identify an intermediary state of consciousness (liminality) in which the conventional destruction of inner/outer or subjective/objective are fused, removing the false self (Ghent) while the psychological space of creativity (Winnicott) and transformation (Bollas) are reengaged. Turner is primarily concerned with the social, community-constructing role of liminality, i.e. in the liminal state social/intellectual distinctions are removed and the community is held together through shared experience. Turner calls ritual a "transforming experience' and links the culture-creating power of ritual to its evocation of a "liminal" (or transitional) state: "through its liminal processes [ritual] holds the generating source of culture". See: James William Jones, *Terror and Transformation: The Ambiguity of Religion in Psychoanalytic Perspective*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 91-92. The spatial ideas of liminality are communicated in Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage", in *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University press, 1967), 93-111. Respectively.

[25] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 134.

[26] Martha Nussbaum, *Philosophical Interventions: Reviews 1986-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 275.

[27] Donald Winnicott, "Primitive Emotional Development", International Journal of Psychoanalysis, no. 26 (1945): 137 – 143, footnote 140.

[28] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 13.

[29] Donald Winnicott, *The Piggle: An Account of the Psychoanalytic Treatment of a Little Girl*, (London: Penguin, 1991), 175.

[30] Ibid., 9.

[31] Ibid., 9.

fig. 7 - The Spatula Game.

1 / Transitional object; “what is that?”
2 / Transitional phenomena; bridge between interior and exterior
3 / Third space; object broken
4 / Third space; object restored

brings it to life by enacting the various roles allotted to him. The dramatisation of the child's inner world enables her to experience and play with those fantasies that most disturb her. He is managing the boundary of experimentation by ensuring anxiety and suspense are within the child's capacity.[32]

While play was regarded by Winnicott as invaluable to individuals of all ages – directly rewarding and contributing to a healthy real self – clinically, it was a strategic diagnostic tool to examine the wellbeing of the child, mother and evolving relationship between them.[33] Winnicott was thus able to calibrate precisely the health, openness and innate confidence of child and mother. *The Spatula Game* was employed with infants (pre-language); Winnicott would place a shiny reflective instrument (tongue depressor) close to the infant *(figs.7-8)*. The infant's excitement, curiosity, anxiety and need/disregard for the mother together with the mother's appropriate/inappropriate response, provided an immediate insight into their individual characters and the relationship between them. The abstraction of an object reduces it to elemental properties – reflective, smooth profile, moveable, droppable, noisy – which can be intuitively understood and shared, allowing it to bridge reality and imagination. This diagnostic process allowed Winnicott and subjects to understand the shared world of mother and child, and the child's understanding of where she herself stops and the world / mother begins: this spatial understanding of identity horizon is triggered and drawn even, by an object.

Winnicott considered that "if he is just an ordinary baby he will notice the attractive object… and he will reach for it… [then] in the course of a little while he will discover what he wants to do with it."[34] From the child's initial hesitation in making use of the spatula, Winnicott later derived his idea of the necessary 'moment of hesitation') in childhood (or analysis), which makes possible a true connection to the toy, interpretation or object presented for transference. The moment of hesitation is a threshold between internal emotion and context / outer-world, which as we shall see, manifest as an appropriate silence in the work of Don Ellis, and a pause or visible internal reflection in Stuart Brisley's performance. The absence of language in each means that a layer of camouflage is removed entirely; Winnicott observed that with older children and intellectual adults, language and literal delivery had to be reinterpreted to uncover what was being masked by the words and expressed through hesitation, humour or deflection, verbal or physical. The 'unspoken' is, as we shall see, of central importance to both the performance of Brisley and the 'in-between' space, and tonal void in the improvisation of Ellis.

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[32] Winnicott would, on occasion, respond by listening without judging; however, he would also become an active participant in the play, thus extending the child's confidence in its imaginative projection. Curating the performance envelope and suspended disbelief is also essential to the performances of Stuart Brisley and Don Ellis.
[33] Similarly, as will become apparent in the following section, Brisley is diagnosing the ills of the state/society in his work, while Ellis is de and re-constructing musical space from the bottom up.
[34] Donald Winnicott, *The Child, the Family, and the Outside World*, (London: Penguin, 1987), 75-76.

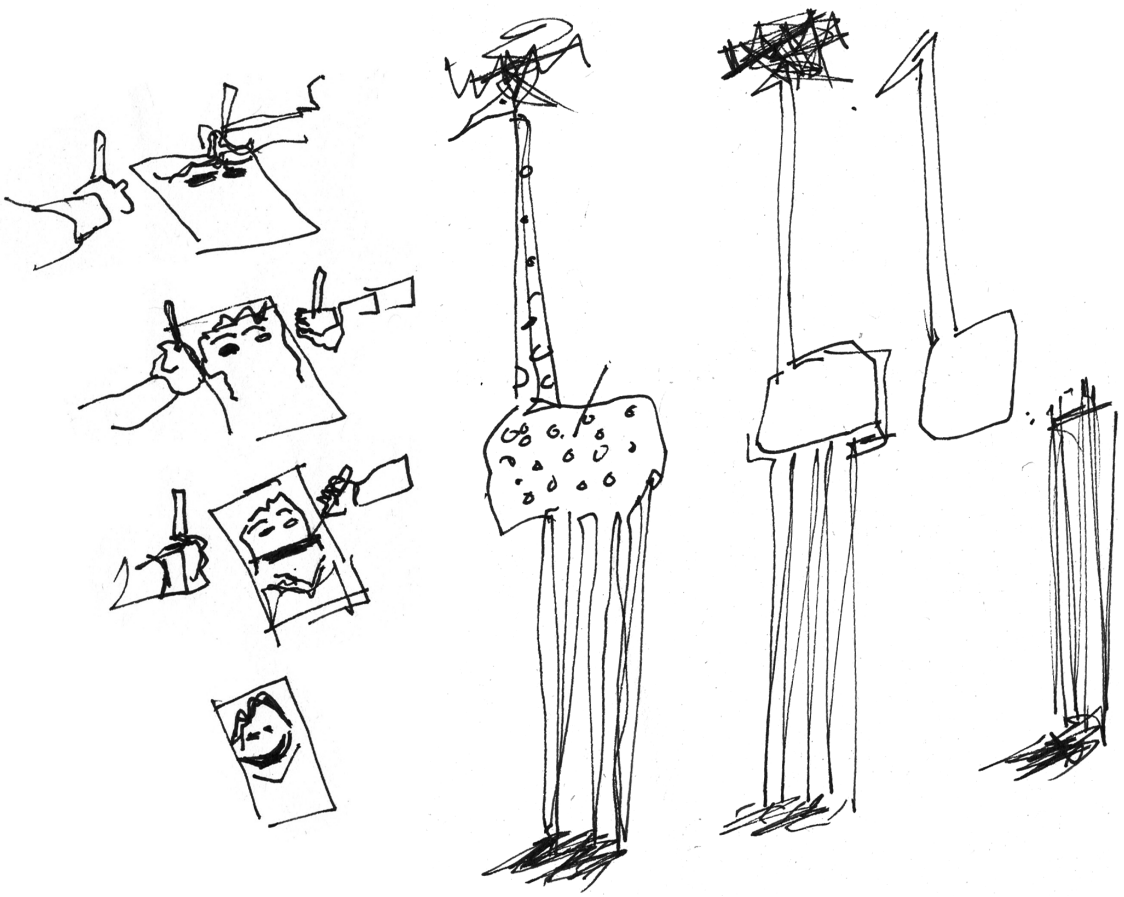

fig. 8 - The Squiggle Game.

1 / Sequential interactive marks by two hands A and B
2 / A1 – squiggle
3 / B1 – adds top half
4 / A2 – adds hair
5 / B2 – adds spots to the hairy giraffe

Language, and literature in particular, was an instructive space for Winnicott's own play and the complex identity envelopes involved:

> He [Hamlet] was searching for a way to state the dissociation that had taken place in his personality between his male and female elements, elements which have up to the time of the death of his father lived together in harmony… [thereafter] his unwelcome male element threatening to take over his whole personality… Yes, inevitably I write as if writing of a person not a stage character… but Hamlet could not go to Shakespeare's play.[35]

Stuart Brisley's audience are subject to a similar double-understanding, being both outside and inside the performance and essential to it. Winnicott understood that the greatest beneficiary from watching Hamlet would have been Hamlet himself, 'to be or not to be…'. Hamlet is unable to construct an alternative to being, i.e. doing. He remains trapped within his 'false self', dislocated from his multiple identities. The idea of the author or central character who is also able to stand outside the work (and become the audience) will reappear in the work of Stuart Brisely and Don Ellis. Within the formal language tradition, literature and literary mythology play are often used to transcend identity constants, author-character, and temporality horizons. This leads to the past, afterlife and present being effortlessly interwoven and affords a more 'objective' reciprocal conversation with a dead author than a forensic analysis of his work. It is therefore precisely in the underworld that Homer's Odysseus discusses his wife Penelope with his late mother. It is there that Dante searches for the real Homer, and again, in the *Inferno*, that Ulysses mirrors Dante's own exile and quest for knowledge rather than return home, resulting in their shared descent into hell. Dante and Homer's journey is parodied and admired in Joyce's compound character (his own 'younger self'), Stephan Daedalus and Leopold Bloom, in their peregrination around Dublin on June 16th 1904 (the date Joyce met Nora Barnacle).[36] Forty years later literary mythology was replaced by reality in Primo Levi's life-sustaining need to remember Dante's lines rather than fight for food in the infernal reality of Auschwitz.[37] This level of elastic interleaving of imagination and reality is essential to literature but also to design integrity; the unforeseen inhabitation and emotional nutrition of the architectural proposal.

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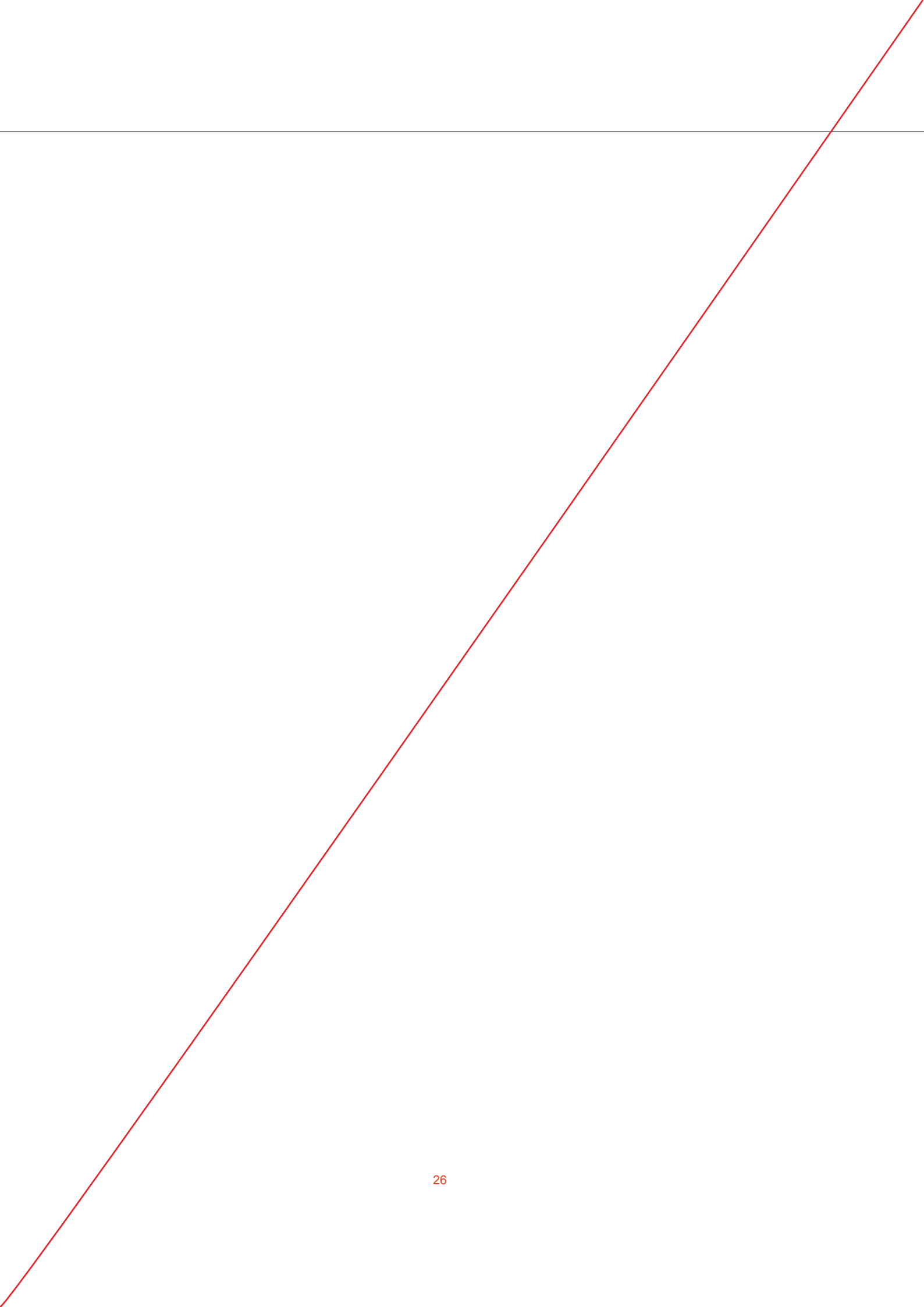
[35] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 112-113.

[36] For example it affords Joyce a conversation, through Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom, with virtually everyone in literary history, as if they were in the pub and not a library.

[37] Winnicott was avid for experience, and he would have hated to miss the inner experience of the reality of his own death, and he imaginatively achieved that experience; "What was happening when I died? My prayer had been answered. I was alive when I died." He then goes on to discuss the difficulty that a man has dying without a son to imaginatively kill and to survive him – "to provide the only continuity that men know. Women are continuous." His preoccupation with and reference to Hamlet is ultimately a reference to himself. Winnicott, "D.W.W.: A Reflection (1978)", 239-240.

PART II: Bubble and kernel, two case studies

The *bubble* is the relationship between emotional pressure outside and inside the child's sense of self. The *kerne*l is the child 'self'. This dyad is the inextricable and evolving link between mother and child [Winnicott], tonal structure and improvisation [Ellis], spatial context and actions [Brisley]. It is the relationship between the environmental / emotional context of the play and its heart / idea.



PART II: Bubble and kernel, two case studies

2.1 The continuous exploration of musical space and audience envelope by Don Ellis

> The infant who develops from the centre of gravity and therefore is lodged in the kernel (his own sense of self) as opposed to the shell (his mother's narcissistic need for herself to be seen) is able to apperceive creatively. It is this and only this that leads to a sense of self and of feeling real. This sense lends meaning to life and makes living worth while.[38]

In "The Use of an Object", Winnicott explains that "it is the destructive drive that creates the quality of externality" and that "this quality of *always being destroyed*" is what facilitates the discovery of the object anew.[39] This concept of destruction and reinvention is also employed in Stuart Brisley's performances which test materials, objects, the body and time, frequently to their literal breaking points. Don Ellis's improvisation de and re constructs the musical structure and tonality, before reinstating the 'enriched by other' original. C. Winnicott informs us that towards the end of Winnicott's life, it was in the late Beethoven string quartets that he found a "refinement and abstraction in the musical idiom" (a significant *transitional object*), which "helped him to gather in and realise in himself the rich harvest of a lifetime".[40]

Don Ellis is an American jazz trumpeter, drummer and composer. He is best known for his extensive musical experimentation, particularly in the area of unusual time signatures. Ellis's innovations include the use of electronic instruments, electronic sound-altering devices, experiments with quartertones, and the infusion of twentieth century classical music devices into the jazz idiom. His greatest contributions, however, came in the area of rhythm. New rhythmic devices ultimately became the Don Ellis trademark. His compositions frequently display time signatures with numerators of 5, 7, 9, 11, 19, 25, 33, etc. His approach within more conventional time signatures could be equally innovative through the use of rhythmic superimpositions. Later in his life, he wrote a number of scores for film. In the *French Connection*, Ellis captures the sounds of 1970 New York City to create not only a musical backdrop of urban drama, but also the sense of a system going dangerously awry through an interactive sound response to the improvised script.

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[38] Abram, *The Language of Winnicott: A Dictionary of Winnicott's use of Words*, 295.
[39] Donald Winnicott, "The Use of an Object" in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, no.50 (1969): 714.
[40] Winnicott, "D.W.W: A Reflection (1978)", 251

Throughout his career Ellis challenged and inverted the conventions of musical horizon - classical, jazz; cultural instrumentation; composition of orchestra; and time signatures. Moving to Greenwich Village in the 1960s, Ellis was exposed to the innovative contemporary musical environment of New York, where traditional musical demarcation was being challenged. There, he played with Charles Mingus and George Russell's Sextet. Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept* (a circle of fifths, which creates consonance and sharp dissonances) became the foundation of Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, which jumps between three Lydian chromatic scales *(fig.9)*; Lydian C, A flat and E.[41] Russell valued Ellis' effortless ability to move between conventional and Lydian scales, and amplify the tonal integrity of an improvisation heard for the first time, i.e. the embodiment of empiricism, invention and emotional cohabitation in play. Ellis vaulted musical borders reintegrating Indian, Hindustan, Bulgarian, Greek, Japanese music, instrumentation, time signatures (5/4, 7/8, 9/4, 27/16) and meters into improvisation and performance; *Strawberry Soup*, as the name suggests, is a complex amalgam of metric complexity and improvisation.[42] Most key to the questions here, Ellis explained that a primary challenge in composition and improvisation was establishing both a structure and a meaningful absence of structure. One of the methods was to identify an emotional rather than a technical tonal armature, which would establish the sound envelope of performance and audience, i.e. a thematically determined *third space*.

The t*ransitional phenomenon* in Ellis' work is then the emotional sound spectrum, from *Despair to Hope*, improvised through the instrumental interaction between Ellis and Al Francis.[43] Unrestrained by score or precedent, they could focus upon their tonal interchange, the extension / challenge to their tonal other, within the mutuality of the envelope. The product is a timeless example of the (unrehearsed) *third space* of sound. Ellis' performance objective is emotional enrichment. Each musical experiment progresses within its own framework of time and harmonies, creating an intelligible envelope of sound. This may be fractured intentionally or contradicted to jump-start the performance and reengage the

[41] A prototypical Lydian chromatic scale starts on the Lydian tonic by stacking fifths and missing 7th and 8th notes. All of its developed sequences contain only Pythagorean intervals – consisting of perfect fifths (3/2) and fourths (4/3) and octaves (2/1). These are the only absolute consonances of this system. All other intervals have varying degrees of dissonances from smooth to coarse. George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation, *Lydian Chromatic Concept*, http://www.lydianchromaticconcept.com/faq.html [accessed 25 February 2017].

[42] At the Monterey 1966 Jazz Festival he received a standing ovation, for a work based on the subdivision of the indivisible 9th prime number 19 into; 33, 222, 1, 222.

[43] Ellis on recording free play: "A great deal in jazz has always been left up to chance, but a framework of some sort was always in use (whether written, or stylized by custom). Al Francis and I tried improvising a duet with just free associations. This was not satisfying to me. I needed to hear more of an overall direction than aimless rambling. The idea of using an emotional framework, rather than a musical one occurred to me. We tried it once keeping in mind the thought of progressing from despair to hope. It 'happened.' I did not try it again before the record date for fear of establishing any set musical routine. When we came into the studio, this was the first thing recorded. Other than the emotional framework and the instruments and means at our disposal nothing was planned. We did one take." Sean Fenlon, *Don Ellis Music* (2014), http://donellismusic.com/ellis-recordings/new-ideas/: [accessed 25 February 2017].

audience. This musical process may involve juxtaposition of instrumental / city sound or, stretching tonal boundaries and, importantly, the space between tones before redefining the sound envelope followed by the space of silence. Like Winnicott's play, improvisation theory in music has a particular economy and rule set: If there is 'no wrong note' in improvisation then the whole economy of right note / wrong note is dismantled, there is no error. But some notes are better than others, within this economy there is a highly tolerant margin.[44] Thus improvisation in jazz may reinforce the notion of tolerance in play, and the nature of its margins. By combining a sophisticated tonal, Lydian structure and a distorted / extended space between tones (found in raga music), Ellis was able to establish an emotional envelope around audience and performance in which understanding is felt and implicit, without explanation.[45] This constructed intelligibility fulfils the role of the good enough mother.

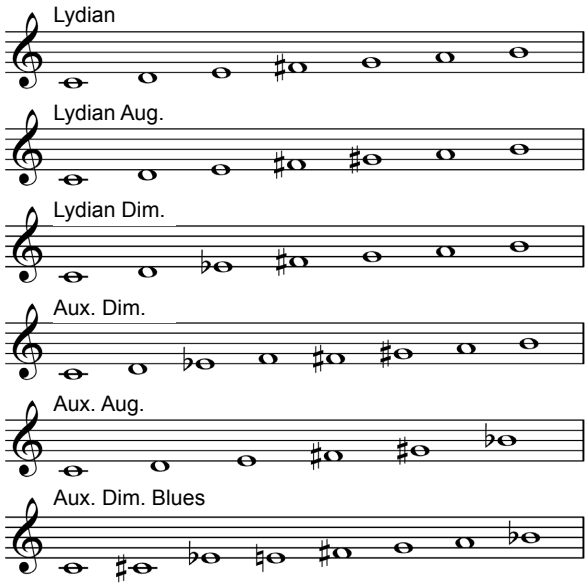

fig. 9 - Russell's six Lydian scales

[44] Thelonious Monk's improvisation formula" echoes Ellis's own practice: "there is no wrong note, it has to do with how you resolve it". Francesca Hughes, T*he Architecture of Error: Matter, Measure, and the Misadventures of Precision* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 268.

[45] Ellis described the inspiration for *Despair to Hope* "came while listening to a John Cage concert. The concert tended to make one more aware of the music in the sounds surrounding us in our daily living, but I had the feeling that jazz musicians, given the conception, could do much more with the indeterminacy principle involved. One of the pieces, *Cartridge Music*, was performed by Mr. Cage and David Tudor. They had cards to which they referred, presumably for directions. This to me, is 'controlled' indeterminacy, which is an extension of something which has been taking place in music for a long time. It seemed valid to take Cage's idea one step further and not predetermine anything except the performers and their instruments. The idea of having planned cards with predetermined choices seemed too rigid. If the performers had more freedom they would be able to interact with the audience even more – giving a heightened dimension. Classical musicians, I reasoned, are not trained for this type of extemporizing today, but jazz musicians are. Why not see what could be done?" Sean Fenlon, *Don Ellis Music*.

fig. 10 - Frog I and II in New York, *French Connection I*.
fig. 11 - Popeye in Marseille, *French Connection II*.
fig. 12 - Car-train chase, *French Connection I*.

Ellis's use of sound as a multiple meaning transitional object is found in his score for the film *French Connection*, where the architecture of 'improvisation' and its alignment with an evolving narrative is most clearly visible and audible. Located in mild midwinter Marseille and frosty New York, this film tracks the interaction of "Frog I" (cool urbane European criminal) and "Popeye Doyle" (working class, rage-filled New York, drug squad).[46] Their leitmotifs are respectively: electronic music with occasional African rhythm, ship horns, French horns, bass and footsteps on hard traffic free surfaces; and jazz, hip-hop, street chaos, fire engines, cars screeching, shouting and 'jingle bells' *(figs.10-12)*.

Abstracted sound becomes the transitional object; signalling exotic sophistication (Frog I) and its other, the dull, predictable quotidian (Popeye). Silence is used to extend inaction; waiting, listening, thinking and heightening (affording the necessary space to align feeling and meaning similar to Winnicott's ideas on hesitation in the spatula game). The juxtaposition and often contradictory intersection of visual and sound disclosure manipulates the audience's understanding, to generate a real sense of there being an unscripted outcome 'like chance in a game', thus maintaining the envelope of suspended disbelief similar to Winnicott's anxiety free space.[47]

In one scene, financiers and low-grade gangsters strike a deal in a jazz club, witnessed by Popeye. They are accompanied by inaudible conversation and (ironically suggesting success) the club vocalist singing *Everybody's Going to the Moon*. Here Ellis's score is the acoustic furniture of the club; it is not until the next scene that it evolves into a *transitional object*. Then it conveys the unspoken paranoid interpretation that Popeye is projecting onto the actions of a fraudster couple who change cars, clothes, wigs and drive to a grubby corner shop, collect bundles of the day's newspapers (not drugs as Popeye had hoped) from a car boot and open up their shop. The scene meaning / mood is understood through Ellis's score: The acceleration of a 5-tone chord at the bottom register of the piano bumping into single notes from the top octave with diminishing space between collisions amplifies tension and anticipation until it is collapsed through anti-climax of no drugs cache (which destroys the *third space*) into the silence of the sleeping city. In Winnicott's terms therefore, the projected reality could not withstand destruction and the host reality (within the film) is restored.

[46] *French Connection I*, dir. by William Friedkin, 104 minutes (20th Century Fox, 1971).

[47] This was mirrored by the director William Friedkin, of *French Connection*, who works in a dialogue with the actors. An overall narrative armature is established, this is subdivided into a time and location sequence. The motivation, feelings and scene objectives are outlined to the actors who then develop improvised responses to the situation as found, with minimum speech. Ellis was then invited to improvise sound as a supportive or foreground amplification of the visual montage and its message. The plot unfolds around four primary interactions / latent contests between the film's protagonists; 'fantasy jazz club and morning reality', 'musical chairs Frog I / Popeye', 'car-train chase' and the 'empty space inhabited by sound protagonists'.

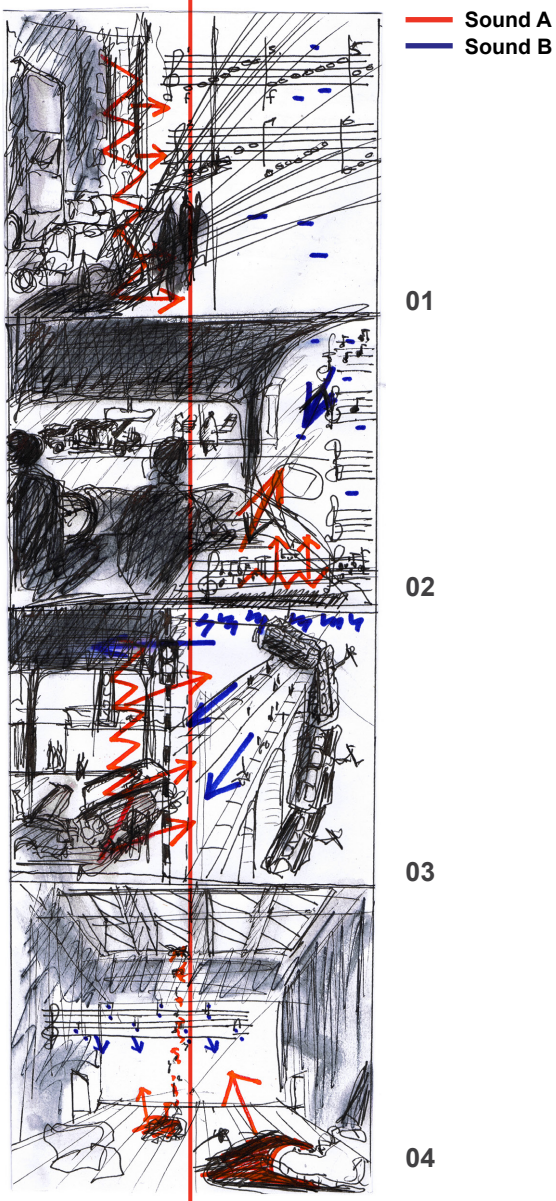

fig. 13 - Ellis's score for *French Connection I.*

1 / Sound as transitional object; the juxtaposition of city sound [**A**] – traffic, horns, crowds – and atmospheric moods [**B**] through the use of a Lydian tonal structure.
2 / Transitional phenomena; opening scene, innocent action is presented in silence; paranoia and a building suspense is communicated through collisions of disparate sounds [**A** and **B**].
3 / Third Space; in scene III feelings of city chaos [**A** - car chase and crashing sounds] are simultaneously paralleled with tension in the train [**B** - electronics, French horn and no dialogue].
4 / Third Space; the final denouement takes place in an abandoned warehouse with electronic chords and gongs [**B**] pursued by water underfoot [**A**]

Later an inconclusive, silent game of musical chairs is played out by Frog I and Popeye in hot pursuit. They get on, off, on, then off again an underground train ending with Frog I on platform waving to Popeye trapped in the departing train. All communication is visual: eye-contact and avoiding eye-contact. The sound of train arrival / departure operates throughout like a time stretching metronome.

Armed Frog II then hijacks an overhead train, shoots the guard, terrorises passengers and crashes the train. Popeye follows the hijacked train in a 'borrowed' car below the elevated tracks with chaotic and dangerous driving. The two interlocking acoustic *transitional object* soundscapes explain the growing tension and frustration: in the train, exotic electronic instrumentation interrupted with French horn blasts; and in the car, traffic crashing, tyres screeching, brakes and horn. The space between the frantically competing sounds links the independent actions in train and car, and holds the audience until a single gunshot unites and separates the protagonists.

In the last scene drugs are exchanged for money, silence, brief jubilation. Frog I leaves and crosses the Brooklyn Bridge, to be confronted by a wall of police cars, and Popeye returning the 'underground wave'. With a screech of car tyres in reverse, Frog I disappears into disused factory pursued by Popeye. The visual silence is inhabited by two sounds; electronic chords / gong (unseen Frog I), dripping water and water underfoot, unseen Popeye. The sequence ends with gunshot out of site: *Nil sum gain (fig.13)*. Don Ellis saw play as a continuous exploration of the interior and exterior of musical space and the way in which this space can be used, felt and understood by audience and performer. He performs on the edge of Winnicott's precarious space. His safety-net is the ability to recover and turn a 'wrong note' into a moment of reinvention. This instinctive creative reversal will be reencountered in Brisley and the architectural intervention for Långholmen.

fig. 14 - *Cut*, 2009.

2.2 No-man's land: the space of self in the work of Stuart Brisley

Stuart Brisley studied art in Britain, Germany and America following a period of military service in immediately post-war Germany. After a few years of painting he determined to give art a use value, not an exclusively aesthetic value. His work since examines the struggle and conflicted relationship between the universal self, physically and emotionally vulnerable in its search for individual identity (akin to Winnicott's pre-language child) and the blind and blinding forces of state bureaucracy and power (Winnicott's 'not good-enough mother'). For Brisley, performance art is a window into reality. By repositioning reality, performance and audience within the envelope of play, the audience become aware of 'reality' and latent forces at work behind its content, not unlike Winnicott's notion of Hamlet watching a performance of *Hamlet*. Brisley never rehearses for his performance, in which he disappears into a world where he plays with chairs, food, paint, water, paper, string, gravity, violence, words, mirrors and his body. His view is that the acts within a performance cannot be forced and can only emerge instinctively, an essentially undirected activity with which the audience is complicit: it both accepts and questions the mutual suspension of disbelief.

Brisley constructs bridges between performance, buried subtext, ideas, the performer and the audience, which he calls a dialogue of action and reaction. Through this oscillation between belief and disbelief, the viewer and viewed are released from the conventions of social behaviour and allowed to witness afresh the defamiliarised habitual. His work challenges political / cultural / personal assumptions and our understanding and perception of indeterminate and biological time, together with finite beginning and end (as seen in the performances of *The Last breath* and latterly *Cut - fig.14*).[48] Ultimately the performance and its unfolding reality challenge the conventions of culture itself, which Brisley regards as equivalent, in Winnicott's terms, to being nurtured by a negligent parent, i.e. one whose own narcissism inhibits growth of the child's 'true self'. The performance and relationship between actor/audience becomes the equivalent of a protected, sealed and 'anxiety free' environment within which reality may be re-examined akin to a *third space*.

Brisley's unrehearsed performances are shaped by an unscripted bridge between what is seen and unseen intent, invisible and below the surface. This hidden structure facilitates the simultaneous inhabitation and delivery of meaning, be it social, political, human or dis-

[48] In *The Last Breath*, Brisley juxtaposes two memories of the indeterminacy of approaching death and every-man witnessing the reality of being burnt to death, confronting the reality of a finite end. This notion was responded to and further explored in *Cut*; "an expression of the relationship between acts of destruction and its inevitable interrelationship with its other, as in the Hegelian thesis/antithesis of the dialectic". *The Last Breath*, dir. by Stuart Brisley, 14 minutes (2016). Available at: https://vimeo.com/15539059 [accessed 6 February 2017]. *Cut*, dir. by Stuart Brisley, 46 minutes (2009). Available at: https://vimeo.com/15592643 [accessed 10 March 2017]. Stuart Brisley, *Cut*, 2009, http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/33/00s/Works/Cut/page:24 [accessed 10 March 2017].

fig. 15 - *Leaching out at and from the Intersection*, 1981.

torting biological expectation. This intuitive armature allows Brisley to meander, to reinforce the message without the intervention of thought, and allows the audience to absorb and amplify imaginatively their interior and exterior reality. For example, the detritus in *Leaching Out at the Intersection* is read as both itself and material evidence of society's selective blindness to inequality *(fig.15)*. The corporality of Brisley who may be naked, cold, covered in paint or detritus and/or hungry, is understood both as 'reality' and as metaphor by the audience, and accesses both the emotive and intellectual intent of the author's themes.

Within the economy of Brisley's play, vomiting is genderless, everything is itself, all things – string, chair, word – are of equal value, they are themselves, not counterfeit symbols.[49] The performance becomes a reality within reality, permitted and protected by the *third space*. Brisley's performance proceeds within a double perimeter, that of the "bubble" and the "kernel".[50] The former is the envelope of collective engagement that contains the performance, the audience and *the third space* of emotional / cognitive interchange and anxiety free suspension of disbelief. The latter is the latent understanding at the core or heart of the work, which progresses at the appropriate pace within its physical, temporal perimeter. The collective exchange is sustained by maintaining the interest / suspension of disbelief by invention, improvisation and an intuitive understanding of the audience's tolerance threshold. On occasion the intentional fracture of the envelope allows the performance and audience to become more self-aware of the 'shared' double reality and actively reengage, within the restored 'bubble'. This process, its dynamic, heightened sense of both emotional union and separation, is the objective and reward of the performance and of Winnicott's children at play. The adaptability of these tools, and their potential relevance to architecture, may be better understood by examining them within specific examples of Brisley's performance work.

> In the artist of all kinds one can detect an inherent dilemma, which belongs to the co-existence of two trends, the urgent need to communicate and the still more urgent need *not to be found*.[51]

This is both the reward and the latent tragedy of play. The reward is when the child both loses and finds itself, and a compatible complementary other. The tragedy is when this new extended identity is removed by the uninvited sudden awareness of the artifice of play. In *Being and Doing (fig.16)*, Brisley and film maker Ken McMullen locate the foundation of

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[49] This shared unscripted journey through the imagination is a worked example of Winnicott's *third space* and the healthy interaction of adequate mother and child, in which both Brisley and the audience alternately become mother, then child.

[50] Bubble and Kernel refer to the responsible environment (provided by the adequate mother) within which the kernel / 'true self' / identity of the child evolves. Abram, *The Language of Winnicott: A Dictionary of Winnicott's use of Words*, 296-297.

[51] Phillips, *Winnicott*, 151-152.

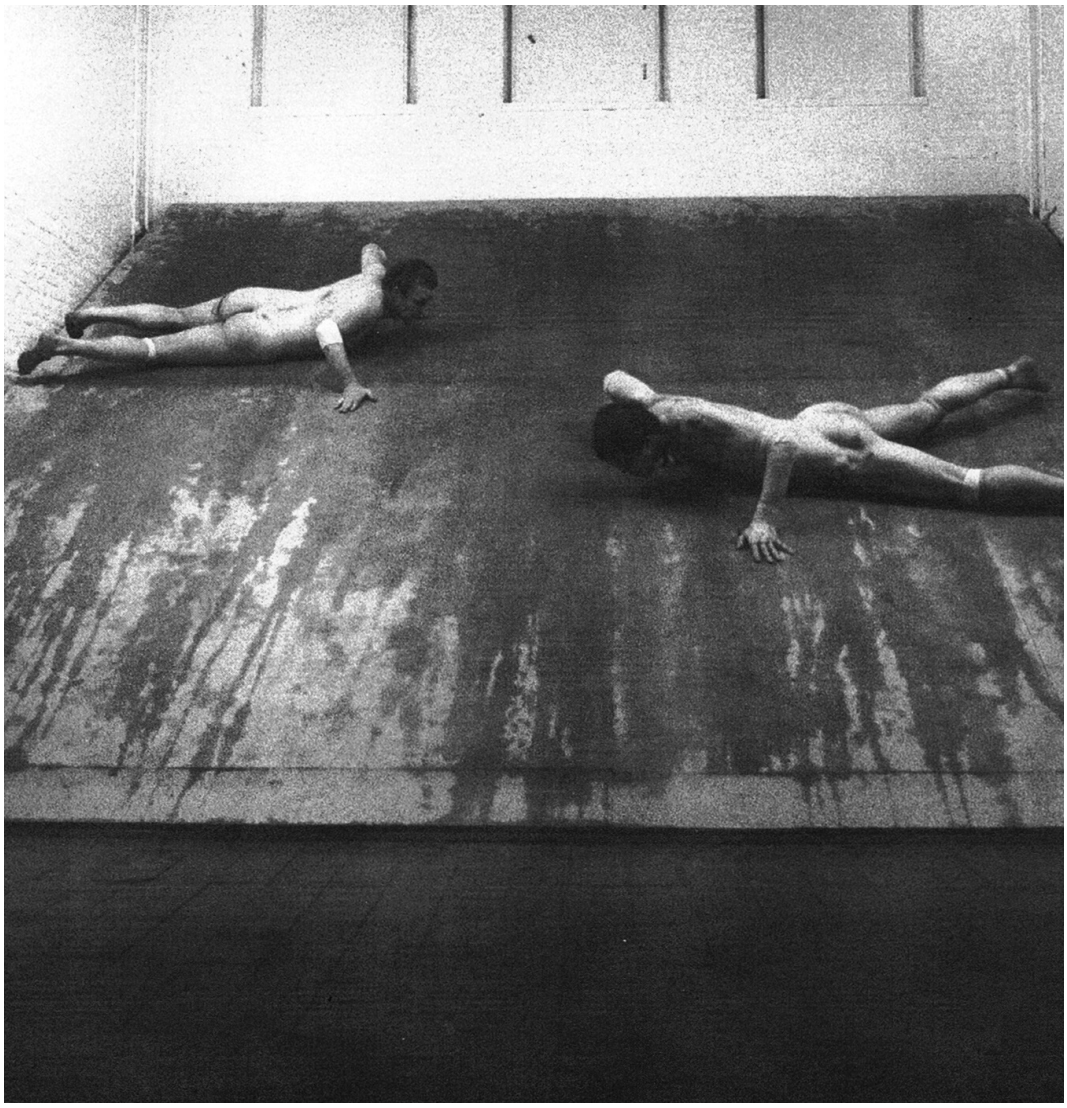

fig. 16 - *Being and Doing*, 1984.

performance art in European folk rituals where the artificial subdivision of performer and audience did not exist.[52] Performance art may be viewed as a dynamic juxtaposition of this ancient tradition and the contemporary artist's own alienation from it. Winnicott identified this same dilemma in both the artist and the child, simultaneously wanting and not wanting to be found and to communicate. The self is, by definition, protective and engaging in 'hide and seek', in which it is comforting to be hidden but a disaster not to be found. Later Winnicott contrasts the adult artist with the developing child. While for the artist there is "the still more urgent need *not to be found*", Winnicott offers us "a picture of a child establishing a private self that is not communicating, and at the same time wanting to communicate and to be found".[53] The film *Being and Doing* combines performance (by Brisley) and documentary footage. The artists in the film are chosen because their work challenges institutional orthodoxy. The performance images within the film are distorted, slowed down, fractured. This, together with jagged editing, allows the film to occupy a 'no mans' land' between past/present and performance art and folk rituals. This ability to acknowledge and convey a compound identity, will be examined more fully in the architectural play book.

Being and Doing, like many other performances by Brisley, involves a wall and his serial failure to climb/transcend it. Coincidentally, Winnicott had become interested in the meaning of walls; the Berlin wall in particular was for him the focal point of division within the so-called unified human race:

> The Berlin wall is the most notorious example of a phenomenon which can be found everywhere, but which gains special significance because of the fact that the world has now become one place and the human race has achieved some kind of unity… The common denominator of all these problems is the state of potential war that persists between factions which appear in couples. This theme, which is the theme that interests me while I am writing this, has to do with the meeting place between the factions and the organization at the place where the boundaries meet or where they would meet if it were not for the *no man's land* between the two boundaries.[54]

Another performance involving a wall, *Moments of Decision / Indecision* (1975), took place in one half of a large studio room in Warsaw.[55] The floor was covered with liberal quantities of black and white paint *(fig.17)*. Naked, and with a shaved head ('no-man' or "Muselmann",

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[52] *Being and Doing*, dir. by Stuart Brisley, 55 minutes (1984). Available at: https://vimeo.com/51508286 (accessed 6 February 2017).
[53] Ibid., 167.
[54] Donald Winnicott, *Home is Where We Start from: Essays by a Psychoanalyst* (London: Penguin, 1990), 221-226.
[55] Stuart Brisley, *Moments of Decision/Indecision* 1975, http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/27/70s/Works/Moments_of_Decision_Indecision/page:21 [accessed 6 February 2017].

fig. 17 - *Moments of Decision / Indecision*, 1975.

a figure reduced to nothing but survival[56]), Brisley attempts to climb the wall blinded by paint and guided only by instructions based upon what is seen through the viewfinder of the camera recording him.[57] The performance lasted an interminable six days, slowly uncovering misunderstood identity: individual, geographical, national, political. This can be understood in terms of the theft of the child's identity by the narcissistic, not-good-enough mother, here played by the absent not-good-enough state. Winnicott later observed that playing stops when one of the participants becomes dogmatic, when the analyst or mother imposes a pattern that is not of a piece with the patient's material. "Interpretation outside the ripeness of the material", he writes, "is indoctrination and produces compliance. A corollary is that resistance arises out of interpretation given outside the area of overlap of the patient's and the analyst's playing together". He believed that the child knows what interests him; the interpretation, just like the spatula, cannot be forced into the patient's mouth. It is there to be used, in the way Winnicott described the transitional object as being used, not revered, copied, or complied with; unconsciously employed as a two-way trapdoor between imagination and reality, like the audience viewing their own reflection as an integral and fractured component of the performance (see illustration opposite). And because it is essentially in transition to an unknowable destination, it can never be conclusive.[58]

Brisley argues that the audience needs to engage in order to 'disappear' during the performance, if they do not engage, e.g. if they are bored or distracted, they do not disappear and the *third space*, the performance envelope, collapses: an effect similar to that of the not-good-enough mother. However, if this process is intentionally precipitated, it is precisely at this induced moment of collapse that the audience become aware of the interior and exterior of the performance envelope – what they have lost – and enthusiastically, instinctively reengage with the performance, thus reinstating its envelope *(figs.18-19)*. Aware of this paradox, Brisley developed a number of tools that unexpectedly fracture, and immediately reconstruct the separateness and union of performer and audience and induce a heightened awareness of the performance's cognitive architecture. One such is a mirror: An apparatus that echoes the works of Brecht and Pina Bausch, is the introduction of a mirror in which the audience is confronted with its own reflection – the spectacle of its own spectating – in *Breath*, *Drawn* and *Before the Mast*.[59]

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[56] Interestingly this is the German for Muslim.

[57] This is reminiscent of Giorgio Agamben taking "up the *Muselmann* as a figure of what he calls bare life" – or the so-called *Muselmänner* seen in the survivors of Auschwitz. Michael Newman, *Stuart Brisley – Performing the Political Body and Eating Shit*, (Belfast: the MAC, 2015), 18. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics), (USA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[58] This is similar to the multiple interpretations which the audience may maintain in the mind. Phillips, *Winnicott*, 142-143.

[59] *Breath* (2014), Brisley Royal Academy of Art, London; *Drawn* (2016) DRAF Studio, London. Stuart Brisley, 10*s Works*, http://www.stuartbrisley.com/section/36/Works [accessed 6 February 2017]. *Before the Mast*, dir. by Stuart Brisley, 28 minutes (2013). Available at: https://vimeo.com/103694576 [accessed 6 February 2017].

fig. 18 - *Breath*, 2014.

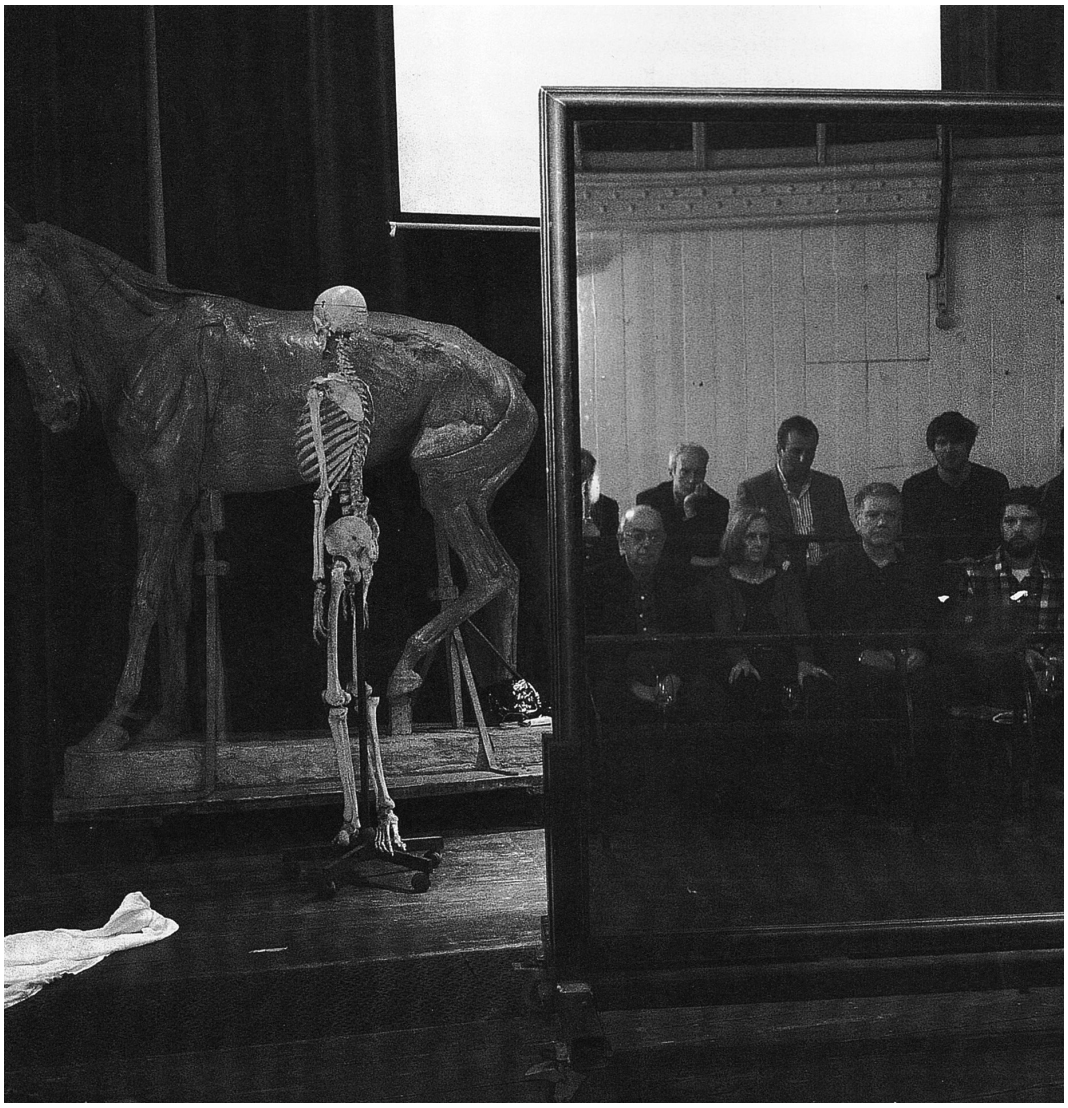


fig. 19 - *Breath*, 2014.

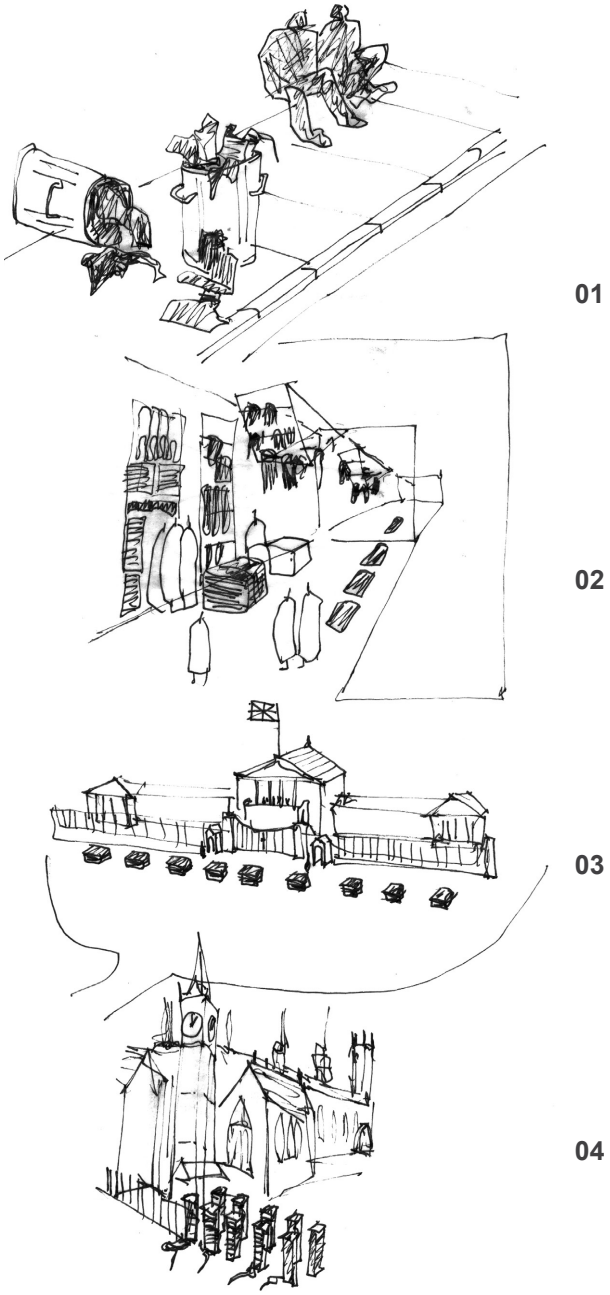


fig. 20 - Play within a play.

1 / Transitional object; unseen, every day detritus of the homeless surrounding Stuart Brisley's studio
2 / Transitional phenomena; the unseen seen, exhibition the rubbish in the ICA (the mall), leaching out
3 / Third Space (fiction); leaching out at the palace gates
4 / Third space (fiction); leaching out at parliament

In the performance of *Breath* in the Royal Academy of Art life studio, Brisley projects a film of *Before the Mast* – a Hamlet-like performance within a performance – and uses a mirror which constructs the space within a space, framed by the self-aware audience. This alerts the audience to the reality of the performance artifice, causing a collapse of the suspended disbelief. At this point the audience become more aware of the lost *third space* of which it was a part, dialectically reframing the two realities. Another of Brisley's such tools is to relocate one performance within another, either through film or repeating the first iteration in a more significant, contextualising location. For example, the unseen ubiquitous detritus of everyday life in his Georgina Collection, relocated within the ICA in the Mall, *Leaching Out at the Intersection* and into onto the steps of White Hall and the forecourt of Buckingham Palace *(figs.20-21)*.[60] Or, even more dramatically, Brisley breaking through the fourth wall before the scheduled end of the performance, declaring it a failure in *This way out of England* and engaging the audience in a discussion about its merits, reality/unreality, before returning and restoring the *third space*. This complex oscillation between the work (performance) and the destruction of work, paradoxically reinstates the performance (play) as reality *(fig.22)*.

Could the Brisley performance precedent be usefully imported into architectural design? Would the relocation of the 'real' world imaginatively transformed – 'play-within-a-play' or 'space-within-a-space' – allow the architect to explore the work in progress from the outside? Could this informed external perspective then be used to re-inform the work?

fig. 21 - Leaching out at and from the Intersection, 1981.

[60] The Georgina Collection was the unseen urban detritus which had accumulated in the unvalued domain adjacent to Brisley's studio (north east London), inhabited by the unseen homeless. This unseen London was then displayed in *Leaching Out at the Intersection* (1981), which was performed in the ICA, London. Stuart Brisley, *Leaching Out at the Intersection*, 1981, http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/28/80s/Works/Leaching_Out_at_the_Intersection/page:4 [accessed 6 February 2017].

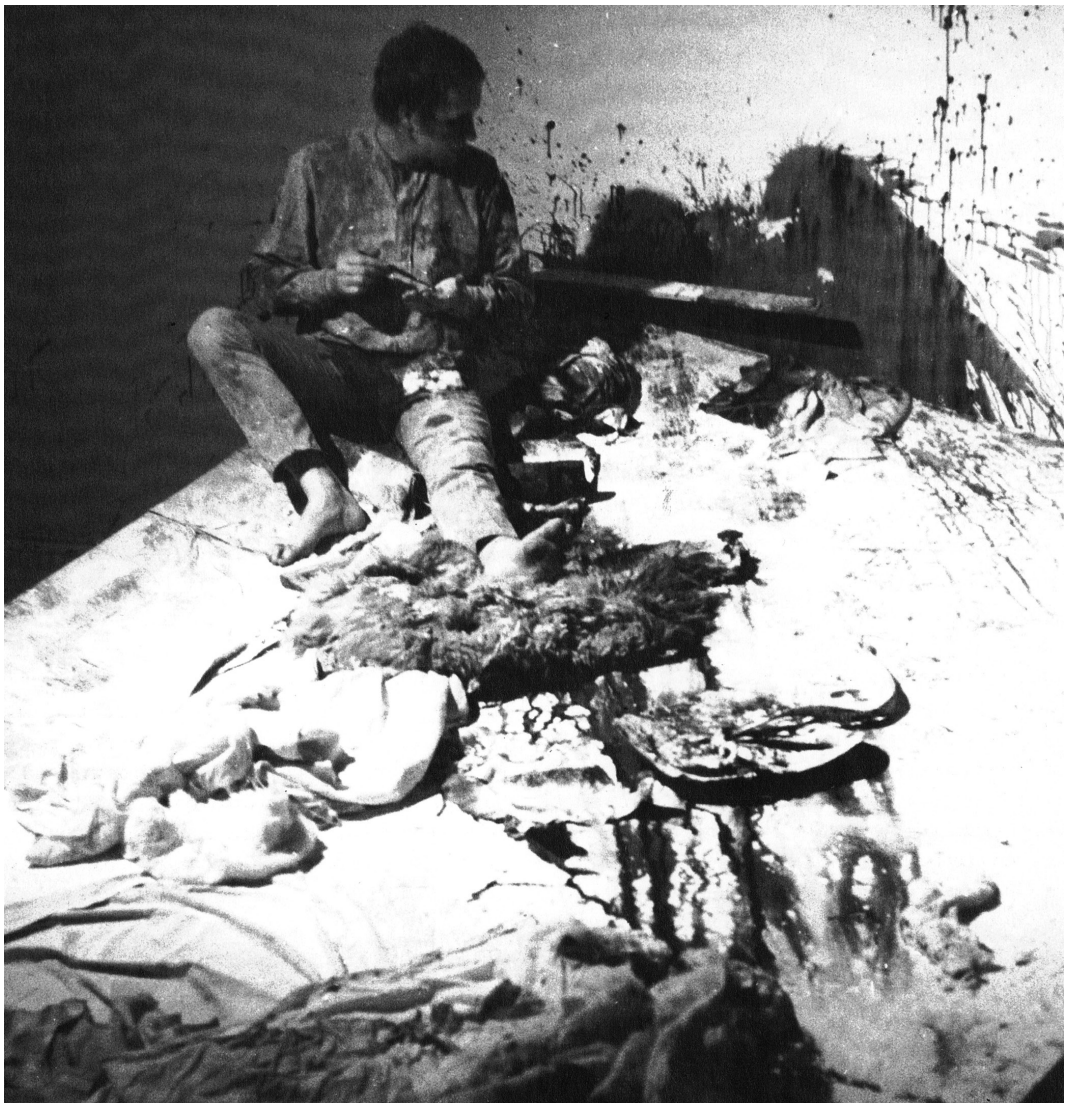


fig. 22 - *Artist as Whore*, 1972.

PART III: Terrain of Play

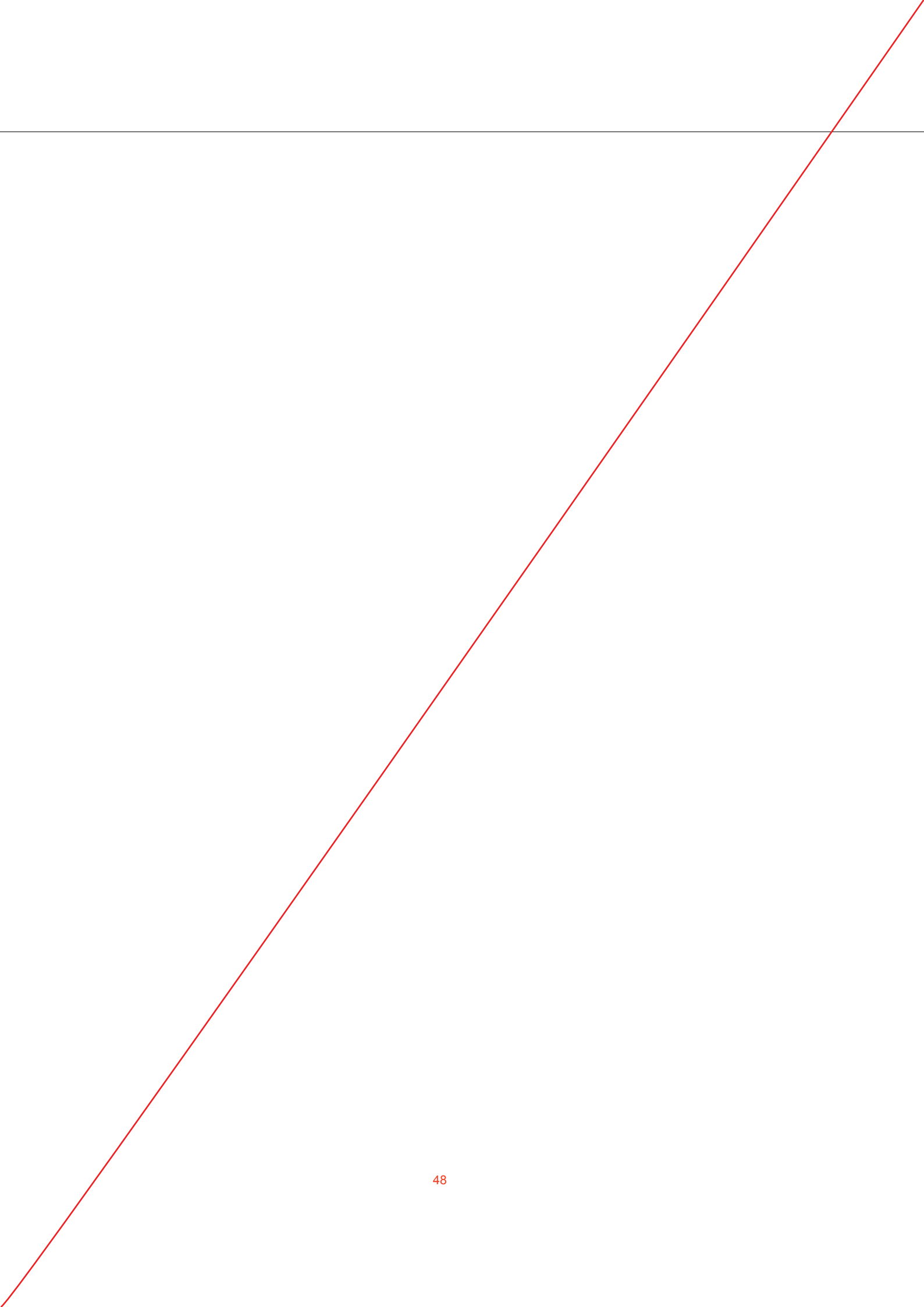
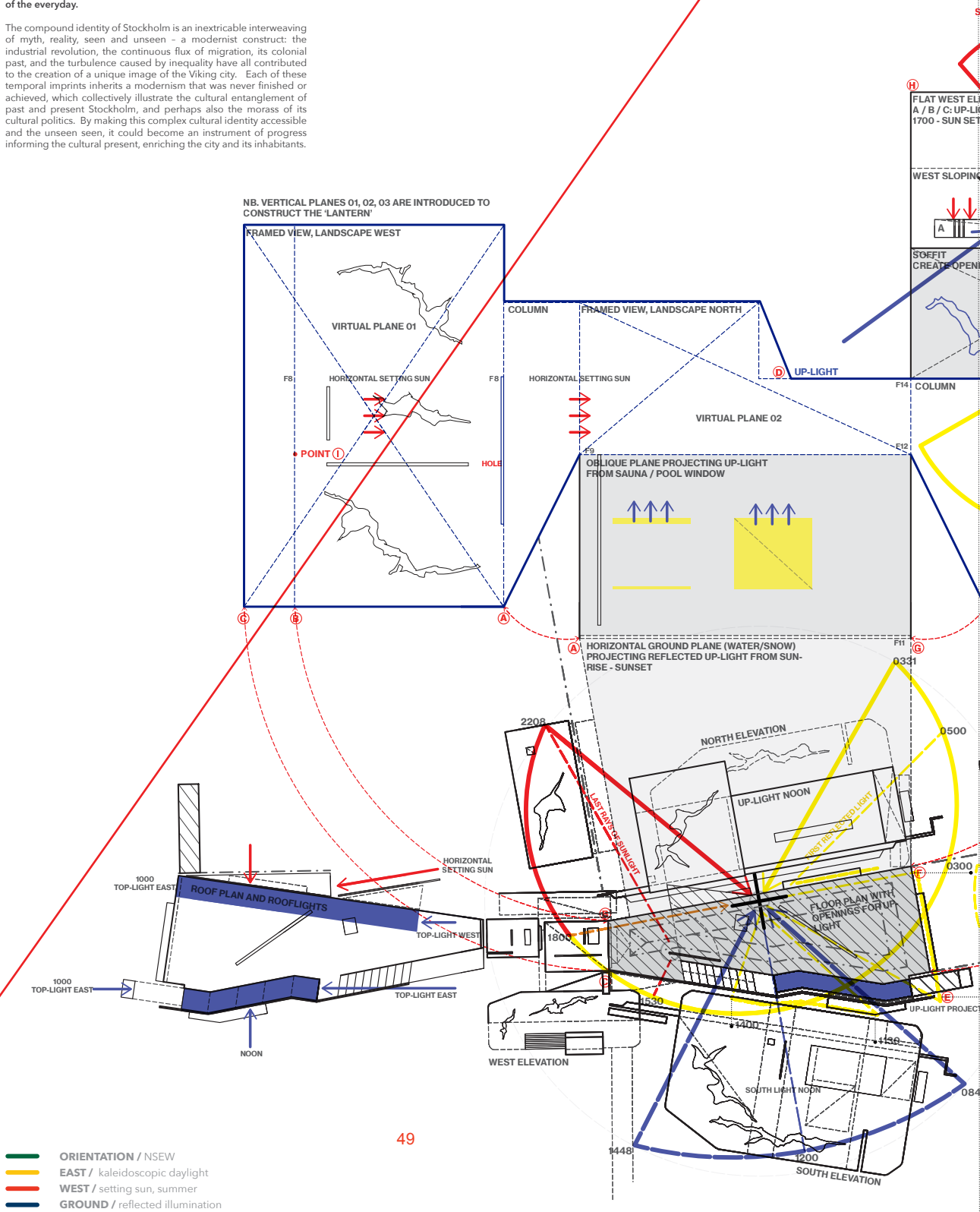


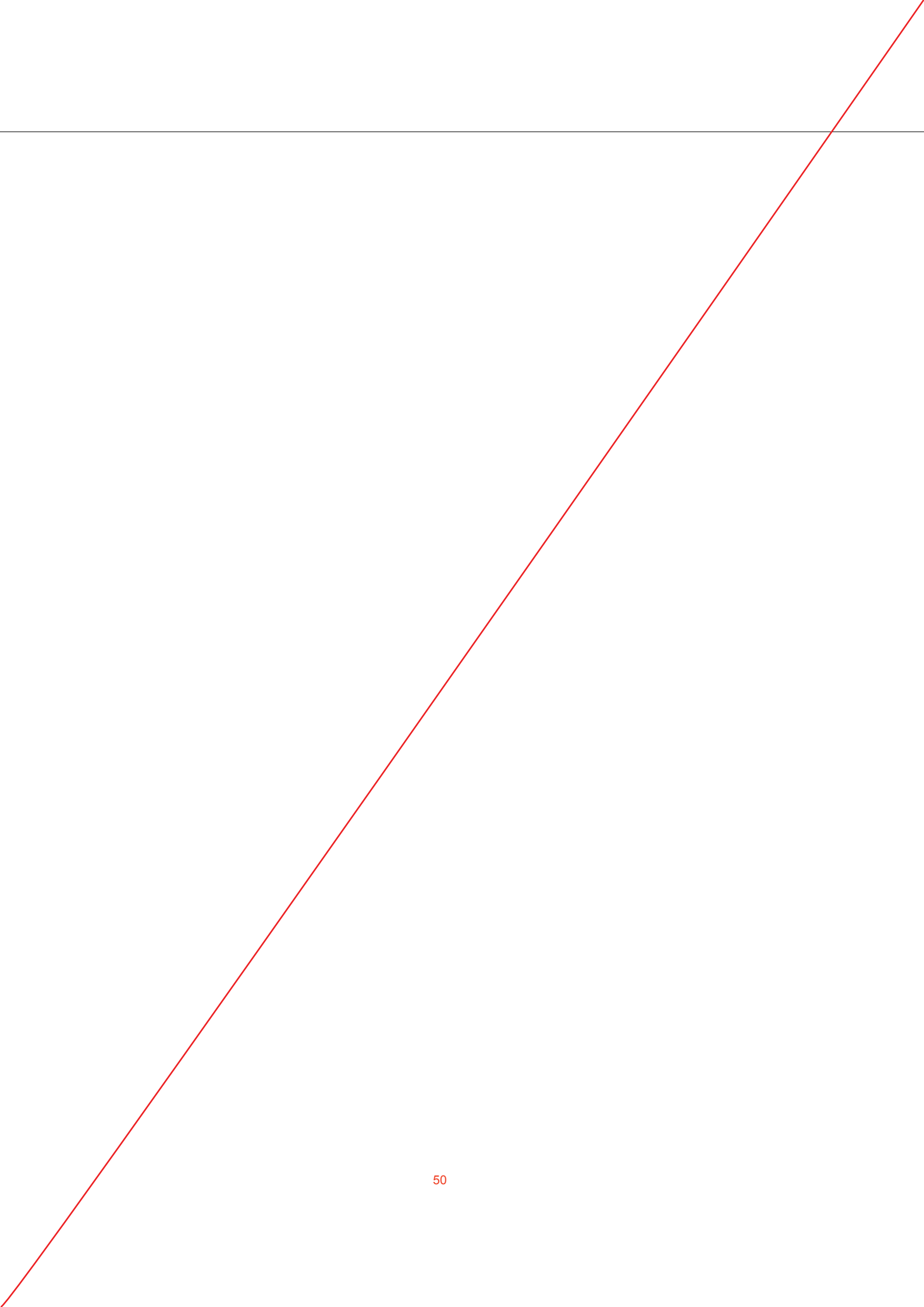
fig. 23 - The Third Space, a location plan.

The *interstitial space* is the realm between interior and exterior; an apparatus which heightens our awareness of the world beyond. It is a door to *'the third space'*, a creative / imaginative transformation of the everyday.

The compound identity of Stockholm is an inextricable interweaving of myth, reality, seen and unseen – a modernist construct: the industrial revolution, the continuous flux of migration, its colonial past, and the turbulence caused by inequality have all contributed to the creation of a unique image of the Viking city. Each of these temporal imprints inherits a modernism that was never finished or achieved, which collectively illustrate the cultural entanglement of past and present Stockholm, and perhaps also the morass of its cultural politics. By making this complex cultural identity accessible and the unseen seen, it could become an instrument of progress informing the cultural present, enriching the city and its inhabitants.



ORIENTATION / NSEW
EAST / kaleidoscopic daylight
WEST / setting sun, summer
GROUND / reflected illumination
INDEX / interstitial space



PART III: Terrain of Play

Intuitively the architect inhabits and meanders through the shared terrain of play, confronting reality with projected reality *(figs.23-24)*. What is the significance of play for others? For Winnicott the continuous interleaving of playing and reality is essential to the healthy self and one's relationship to others. For Ellis it is the landscape with no perimeter where one can effortlessly bridge musical geography and convention to invent and reinvent meaning and feeling. For Brisley it is the space of performance, in which remote, complex political abstraction and human suffering vividly become accessible.

An initial search for precedent within the terrain (which could be imported into architectural practice) reveals the emphatic absence of prescriptive method that is the first commonality. This void is filled with empathetic awareness and responses to situational triggers within a creative envelope which may be both inhabited and transcended. Winnicott spent his life developing his own ideas and deliberately disassociated himself from any school of psychoanalytic thought – Freud, Klein and even himself (there are no Winnicottians). He believed that it was for everyone to find their own route. Brisley defined the play terrain, then populated it with relevant and irrelevant props such as paper, detritus, film and mirror, leaving space for improvisation and an unscripted outcome. Similarly, Ellis was at his most inventive and relaxed when confronted by the unknown in the known; the unrehearsed and the 'one take', which renders time irrelevant and allows Ellis to meander unconstrained across the terrain of play.

The second commonality is the use of *transitional objects* – rag, doll, litter, chair, urban/instrumental sound – which belong to an intermediary realm, caught between 'fantasy' (imaginative control) and the objective world (out of control). This paradox must be accepted; the role of the *transitional object* is its reality and not its symbolic value, an understanding which is shared by Winnicott, Brisley and Ellis. The third commonality is the ability of reality to transcend projected destruction. Play affords the safety to destroy without risk. This is mirrored in Brisley's performances where he tests the limits of materials and envelope whilst Ellis tests the limits of tonal and instrumental structures.

Precariousness within a secure terrain is the fourth commonality. This is the paradoxical double reality of a physically and psychologically secure space of play, precariously balanced on the intersection of the subjective and that which is objectively perceived: "no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality."[61] Furthermore, in his description of Winnicott's *Naked Artist*, Peter Fuller explains that "the relief from this

[61] Peter Fuller, *The Naked Artist*, (London: Writers and Readers, 1983), 239.

strain… is provided by the continuance of an intermediate area which is not challenged: the potential space, originally between baby and mother, is ideally reproduced between child and family, and between individual and society or the world."[62] We may conclude "spontaneity only makes sense in a controlled setting. *Content is of no meaning without form*."[63]

> [Potential space] enables the individual reaching towards independence to 'engage in a significant interchange with the world, a *two-way process* in which self-enrichment alternates with the discovery of *meandering* in the world of seen things. Because of the continuing overlap of inner and outer worlds, the intensity of feeling and of the sense of Real invested in infantile experience and in playing is carried over into adult life.[64]

The final commonality is the importance and role of a 'two-way process' as we have seen between mother/child, analyst/child, artist/audience, individual/society. The significance of interplay between two individuals is exemplified in Clare and Donald Winnicott's personal and professional relationship, and witnessed in the interaction of Dibs and Axline through the 'hidden window', and by the audience exploring their own reflection in Brisley's performance. "Meandering" within this dialogue is essential as Winnicott explains communication comes about through "mutuality in experience".[65] There is a sharing or overlapping of potential spaces. The space of play is therefore flexible (both in time and technics) and there is a common ground, which begs the question where is the boundary? It is not caught between two walls, like an interstitial space, but between the observer and observed.

The architectural transfer of the play terrain will be more fully explored in the next section. This will relocate the method, commonalities and precedents of Winnicott's ideas, and their echoes in Brisley and Ellis' practice, within two architectural speculations. The first of these is initiated by an 'unfamiliar, engaging' found object – *Scene I: The Object* – which is required serially to transcend its own critical and physical destruction. Thereafter the exploration meanders to the interactive and evolving exchanges of *Scene II: The Play Room*.

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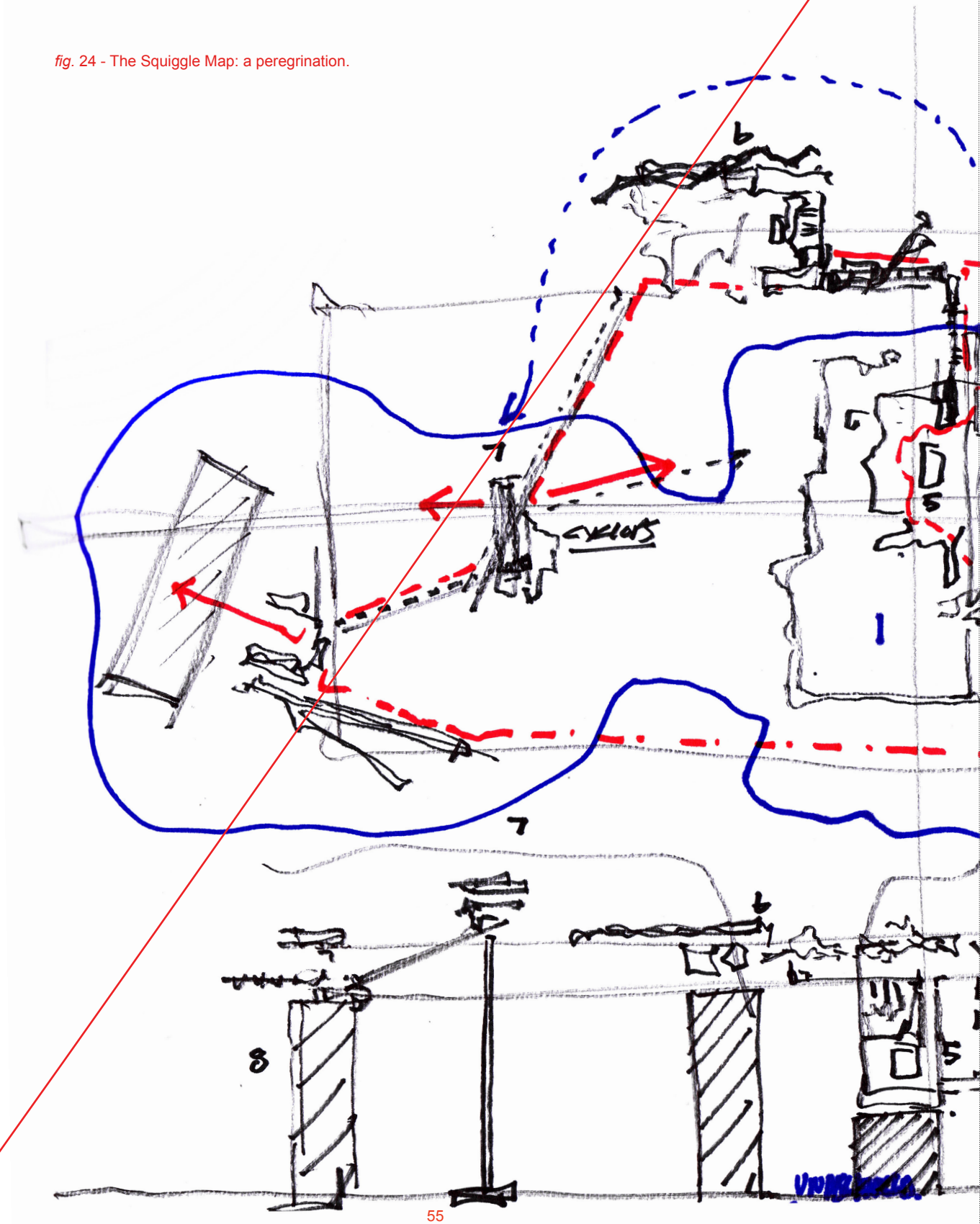
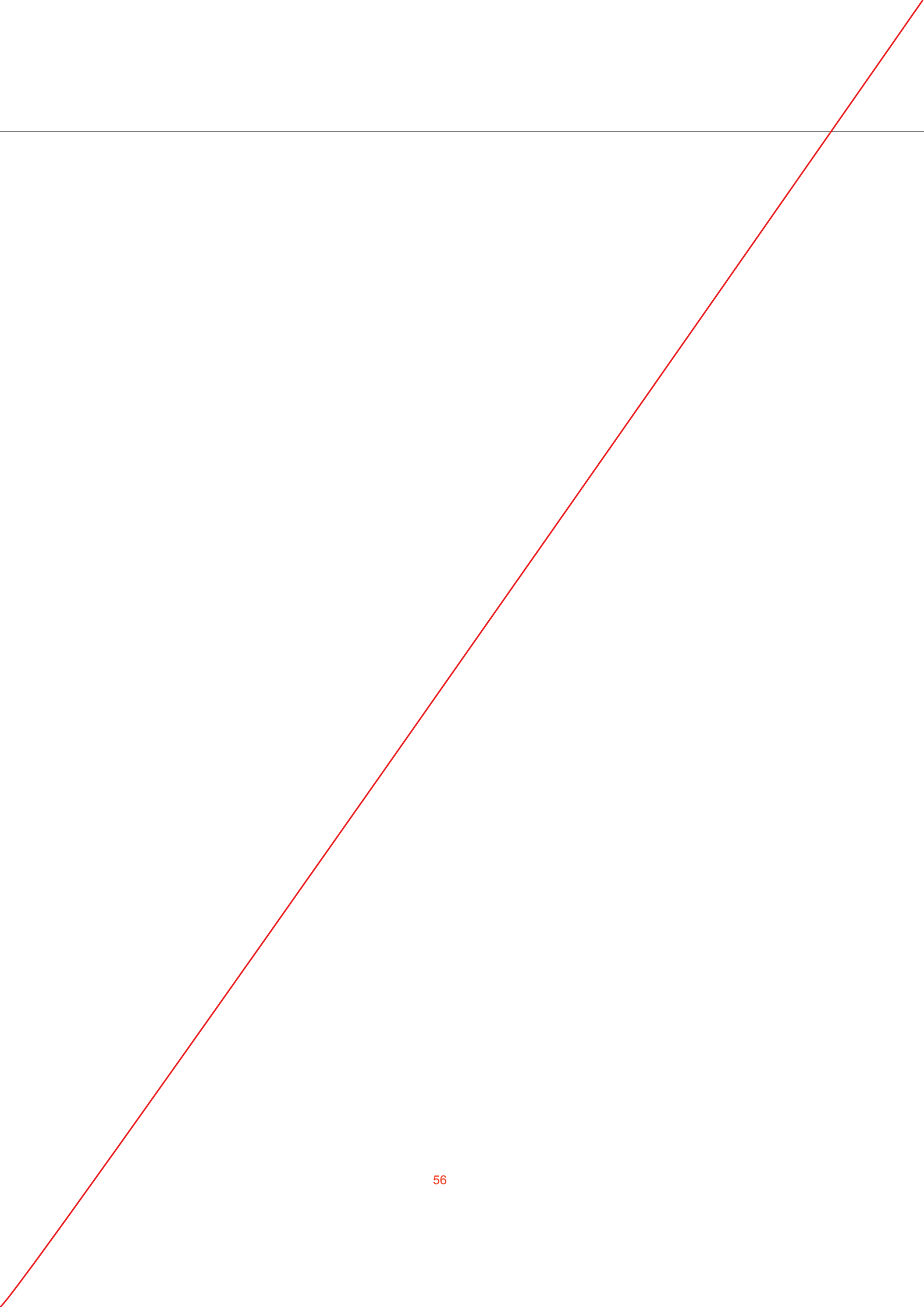
[62] Ibid., 239.
[63] Donald Winnicott in Madeleine Davis and David Wallbridge, *Boundary and Space: An Introduction to the Work of D.W. Winnicott*, (London: Karnac, 2004), 140.
[64] Ibid., 64.
[65] Ibid., 65.

PART IV: Architectural transfer

fig. 24 - The Squiggle Map: a peregrination.





PART IV: Architectural transfer

> In 1968 Winnicott gave a lecture to the New York Psychoanalytic Society about his newest concept, the 'Use of an Object', which describes how infants and also patients in treatment can emerge from the realm of the magic effects of fantasy, including magical behaviour of an object (person), and live in a world of real relationships. This comes about through the destruction in fantasy of the object, which is then seen to survive in actuality without change to retaliation.[66]

Scene I: The Object

A large 'doll's house' model of a 'house for Winnicott' was constructed to examine and describe its interior / exterior.[67] Then echoing the child's destructive response to the spatula first discarding it by throwing it on to the ground and delighting in the unexpected sound, the model was dismembered and surprisingly became a more informative instrument when its limbs where individually relocated on the display table.[68] Significantly, this process both de- and re- constructed the precarious envelope between illusion and reality, and relocated experience within the play terrain *(figs.25-26)*. This accidental encounter of serial destruction / reconstruction became the foundation of the iterative method which informed *Scene II: The Play Room*.

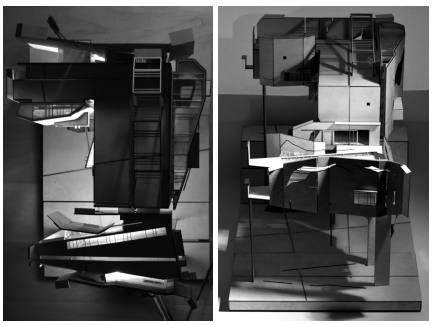


fig. 25 - The Object.

[66] Davis and Wallbridge, *Boundary and Space: An Introduction to the Work of D.W. Winnicott*, 192.
[67] The house was organised as a spatially continuous volume climbing vertically through four floors to a densely planted garden. Its sectional anatomy was determined by aligning it with the layers of meaning in Winnicott's view of human nature. The uppermost level is a space for unintegrated sleep and dreams. The more formal space below contains his study, library and piano and opens out onto the lower roof garden above the living-dining space. The undercroft houses his consulting room and waiting room, directly accessed from the mainland. The connecting mirrors which he used in his London flat perceptually to link his study, "back to the centre and back to the beginning", have been replaced with interlocking spatial connections. Ibid., 141.
[68] This unconscious intent is reminiscent of Brisley's references to Procrustes in *Drawn* (2016), who mutilated his guests to make their body fit an iron bed. Stuart Brisley, *Drawn, 2-5 March 2016*, http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/36/10s/Works/DRAWN/page:30 [accessed 10 March 2017].

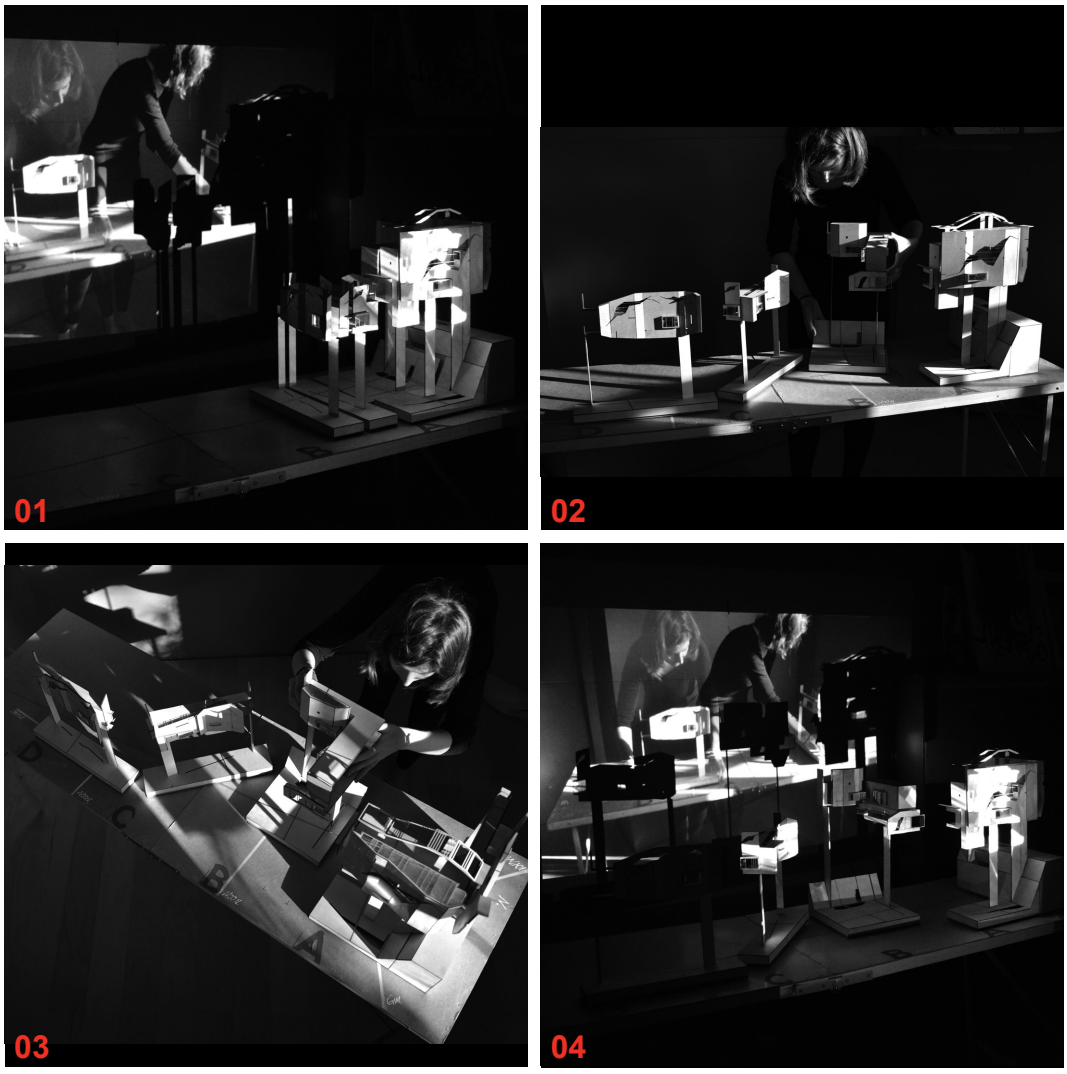


fig. 26 - The Object, dismembered.

1 / The room is empty apart from the projection of an installation on the north wall and the old town model / stuga
2 / Each component is moved into position through the filtered projection.
3 / The sequence reveals all faces of A-D.
4 / The audience may move move around the deconstructed object.

Scene II: The Play Room

My project constructed a play room or real-space intervention within a Bartlett studio which related to, and could stand in for the remote site, the island of Långholmen in Stockholm. The reclaimed identities of Långholmen could then be explored and examined through models of each of the interventions and their relationship to each other in the play room. The project therefore inhabits two sites; the disused island of Långholmen and the constructed interactive space of play within the Bartlett studio. This move between reality and play room is similar to the infant's move between reality and illusion, through the transitional object.

> In all departments of life Winnicott stressed the importance of the setting. It was to be found in the shape and size of the drawing paper that the little boy used and accepted; in the stage that holds the play so that we may experience the it without trauma because it is contained over *there* and our feelings are therefore bearable.[69]

The first site, the island of Långholmen, lies outside the conversation among the islands of Stockholm; a granite outcrop at the heart of the archipelago. It was initially a shipyard, then colonised as a prison, and transformed with mud transported by the prisoners into a naturally evolving and rarely visited forest. Following the dismantling of the prison, the closing of the shipyard and the construction of a road bridge that crosses above the island without making contact with it, the island continues to decline, reduced to semi-derelict moorings and land for wintering private boats.

It is however the island's hidden and buried identity that aligns it with the space of play and the idea of ethical inversion. Historically it was known as the Alcatraz of Stockholm, yet the island was accessible and the state did not prevent prisoners from escaping as their capture provided employment; a game of cat and mouse. It was synonymous with barbaric cruelty; "first his hands shall be cut off, then both thighbones, to be followed by the arms and elbows. Thereafter his chest and back shall be broken ad lastly, his head cut off [by the state]", a literal re-enactment of Brisley's 'Procrustes' performance.[70]

The second site is the play room, populated with play models, which evolve from an intersection of their island identity and the sequential locations visited at the same time of day

[69] Winnicott understood the important relationship between the scribble and the page, the performance, the stage and the audience. Similar care was exercised in aligning the real-space intervention (Bartlett), reality (Långholmen) and the serial interventions to both of these and their audiences. Davis and Wallbridge, *Boundary and Space: An Introduction to the Work of D.W. Winnicott*, 141.

[70] Långholmen's museum documents the history of the prison, and this is presented to the visitor as printed information within the cells themselves.

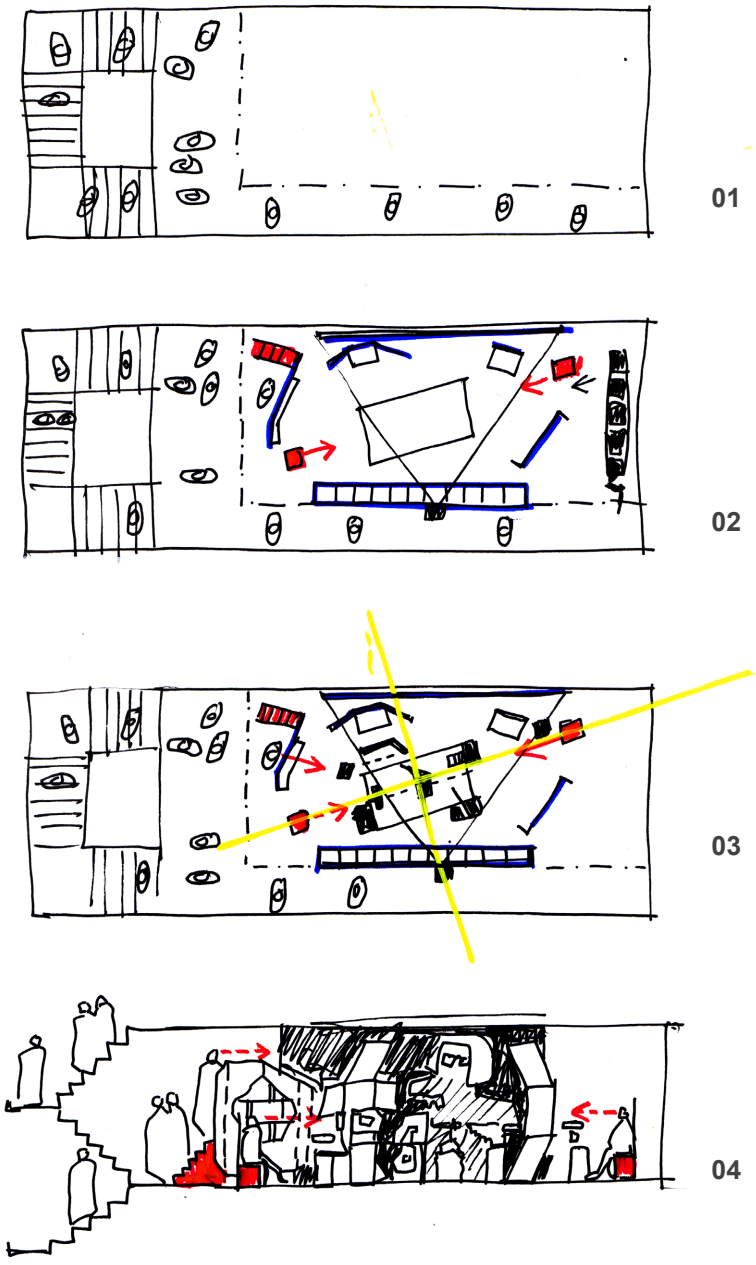


fig. 27 - Play room sequence.

1 / The play room is defined by three internal walls and the open public stair connecting all floors
2 / The east wall houses a row of intervention models (1-6) whilst a rectangular island floats mid-space and is book-ended by two stools (with mirror fragments) addressing each other across the space
3 / The author brings each of the objects in sequence (1-6) from the east wall ('the old town' and intervention 1) to their relative island position
4 / Moments of hesitation and reflection are induced between the installation of each model

by Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom on Bloomsday, providing the author with Joyce's thoughts on this play and this reality. These are: 1. *Martello Tower 8am* 2. *House I 8am* 3. *Lotus Eaters 10am* 4. *Hades 12pm* 5. *Lestrygonians 1pm* and *Wandering Rocks 3pm* and 6. *Cyclops 2am*.

The play room is defined by three internal walls and the open public stair connecting all floors. The west end of the space adjacent to the public stair establishes a permeable envelope consisting of a 1:10 punctured façade (modelled on the *Cyclops* intervention, 6) and a ladder which instrumentalises significant site topography. The north wall becomes a full-height screen for the projection of a film documenting an earlier installation of the objects. The suggestion of an inner envelope is established by two full height skeletal structures which support translucent coloured drawings of the interventions, 1-6. The south wall is re-defined by a row of audience chairs inset from the circulation. The east wall houses a row of intervention models (1-6) whilst a rectangular island floats mid-space and is book-ended by two stools (with mirror fragments) addressing each other across the space. This spatial construct is the holding transitional object, the physical envelope of the psychological and the imaginary third space of play *(fig.27)*.[71]

When the audience are seated the architectural performance is initiated with the projection of the film. The author brings each of the objects in sequence (1-6) from the east wall ('the old town' and intervention 1) to their relative island position. *House I* (2), is a portal amphitheatre which addresses its twin, the *Martello Tower*, and links to *Lotus eaters* (3), the projected structure suspended over the topographic gorge. The lowest level of which aligns with the subterranean, ethically inverted prison, *Hades* (4). This breaks through the ground plane into a labyrinthian garden of fractured walls and pools facing an off-shore south-facing island *Lestrygonians* and a migrating object, *Wandering Rocks* (5), which floats around the island and frames a glimpse through the trees of *Cyclops* (6) and the return to the point of origin.

Each of the interventions 1-6, is a transitional object within the play room. Individually they are informed by and inform the purpose and identity of their location. Each intervention is at an appropriate and individual scale to display its intent, materiality and character. This distorts convention and the perception of distance and the space between interventions. The precarious envelope of the third space is punctured in two directions (unlike the 'one-

[71] "For Brisley, the *play-within-the-play* in *Hamlet* has become a model of how an action or installation may be related to the 'reality' in which it takes place. It is clear that this relation it not one of separation or an infinite mirror-regression, but rather of an existential intensification of a relation to an inaugural event of not-yet-realised potential": the installation for Långholmen draws upon the idea of Shakespeare's play-within-the-play transformed within the work of Brisley to become a space within a space, and through this a reality within an unreality. This process anchors audience-author in Brisley's work, and is the stage and performance for the real space intervention in the Bartlett studio. Newman, *Stuart Brisley – Performing the Political Body and Eating Shit*, 34.

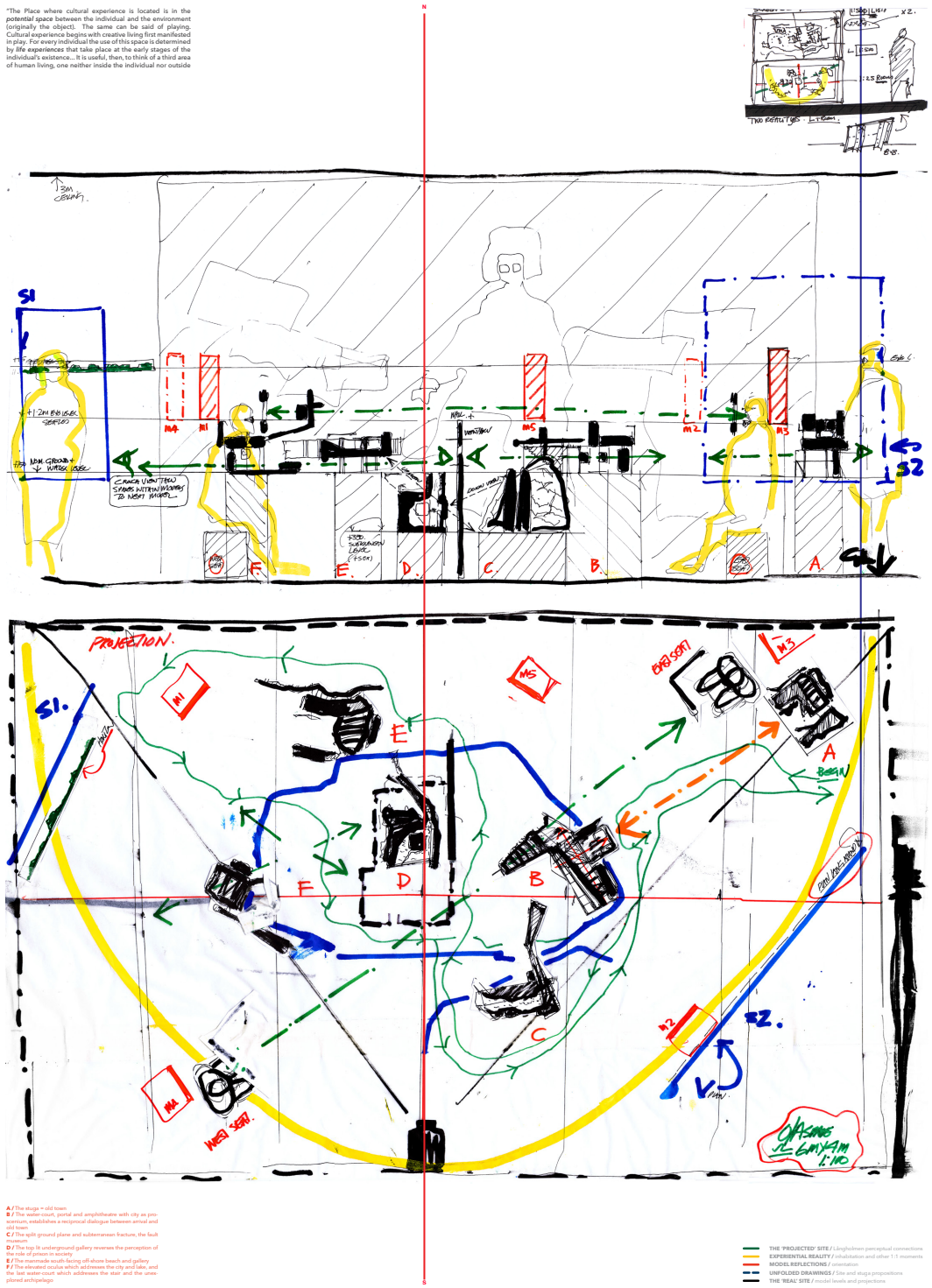


fig. 28 - Play room inhabited

way vision' window in *Dibs*) through the *Cyclops* aperture into and from the public stair (when the class from the studio above thunder down the stair). Moments of hesitation and reflection are induced between the installation of each model, when the audience are meandering through the interstitial space, between the models and again most significantly, when they return to the wall of chairs *(figs.28-29)*.

Another journey around the island is described by string, which is woven through the installation to identify the route from 8am until 2am, the following morning.[72] This aligns with the parallel narrative, broadcast on three speakers, of Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom's conversation as they progress around Dublin in the same time frame. This journey through time is mapped in the shaded drawings in which the shadows cast on each of the models align with the hour of the visit; architecture becomes the play room clock *(figs.30-34)*. The audience are encouraged to move through the space in their preferred sequence or to follow the string. A last moment of reflection is provided by the two stools located at the easterly ('Old Town') and westerly ('Lake Malaren') extremities of the room, a *moment of hesitation*. The stools allow the observer to look across the island, lake and room at model eye level and to address both horizon and a fragment reflection of themselves caught in the mirror halves attached to the stools. This introduction of the audience into the installation momentarily and intentionally disrupts the envelope of the *third space*. Without words the audience are able to experience the space and model embodiments of context and purpose. The audience's non-verbal and later articulated critique will be used as an interrogative instrument to refine, clarify and develop this architecture in miniature.[73] The licence and supportive parameters within the play room, provides both the stimulus and risk free context to explore Ellis-like experimentation / improvisation and change of direction. Put simply, the play room has become the good enough mother, and the author the child.

[72] Use of string is imported into the play room from Winnicott's consultation room and Brisley's copious use of string, rope and packing tape in many of his performances. "String can be looked upon as an extension of all other techniques of communication. String joins, just as it also helps in the wrapping up of objects and in the holding of unintegrated material. In this respect string has a symbolic meaning for everyone; an exaggeration of the use of string can easily belong to the beginnings of a sense of insecurity or the idea of a lack of communication." Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 25.

[73] Contextual notes and drawings are available overleaf; these describe each of the interventions and the relationship between them. The audience's critique will amplify the author's continuous interrogation and iteration of the ideas embodied in the proposition.

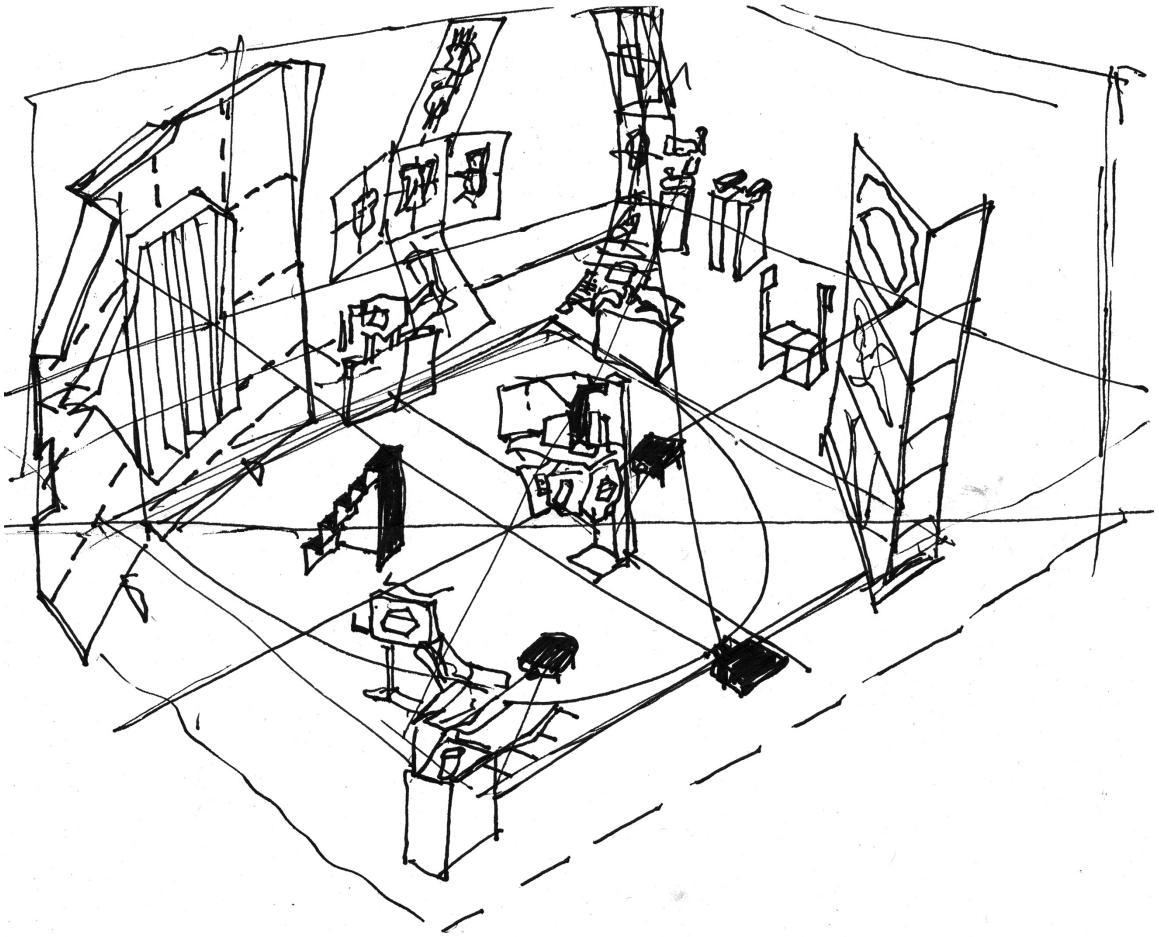
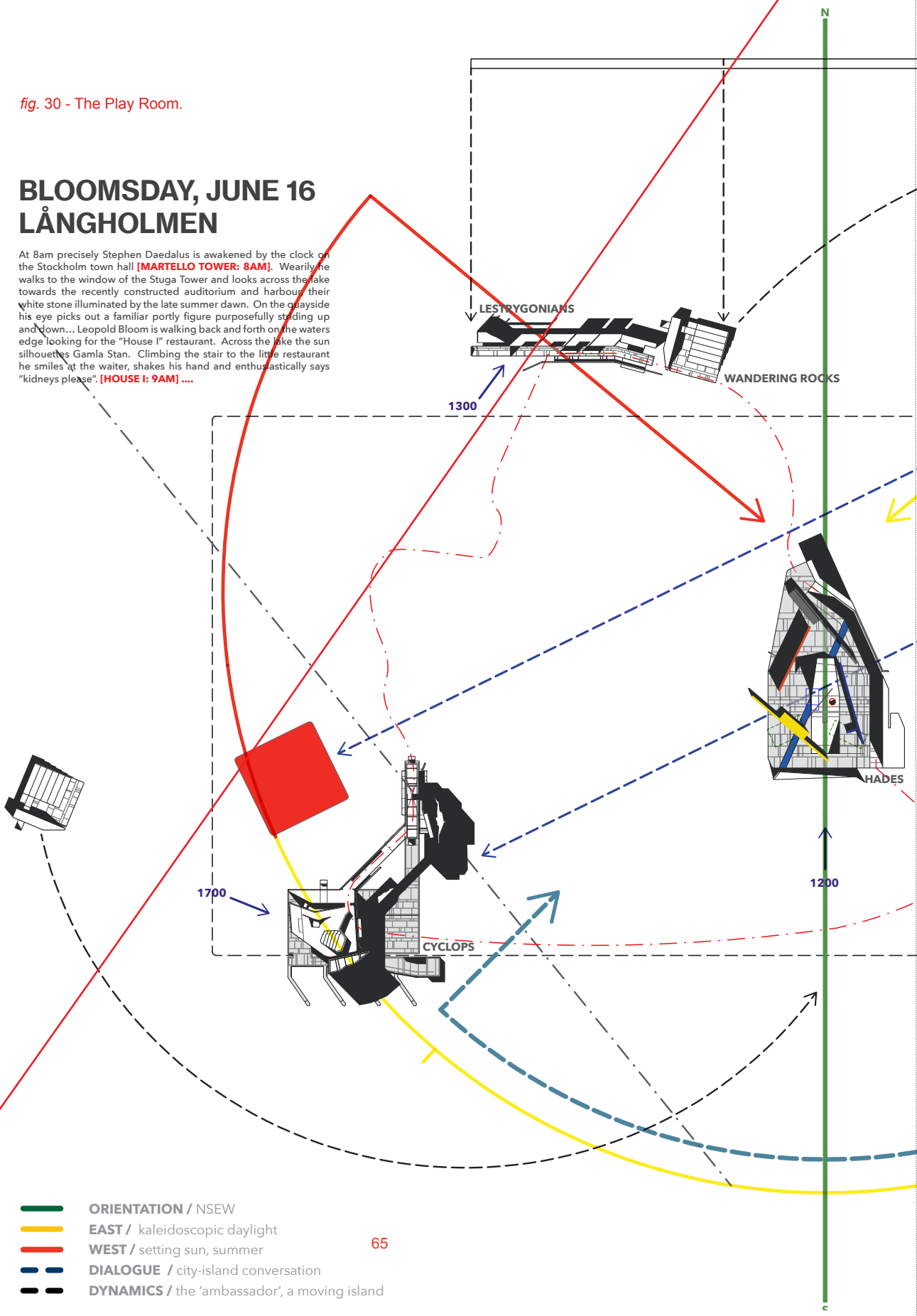


fig. 29 - Outside the envelope.

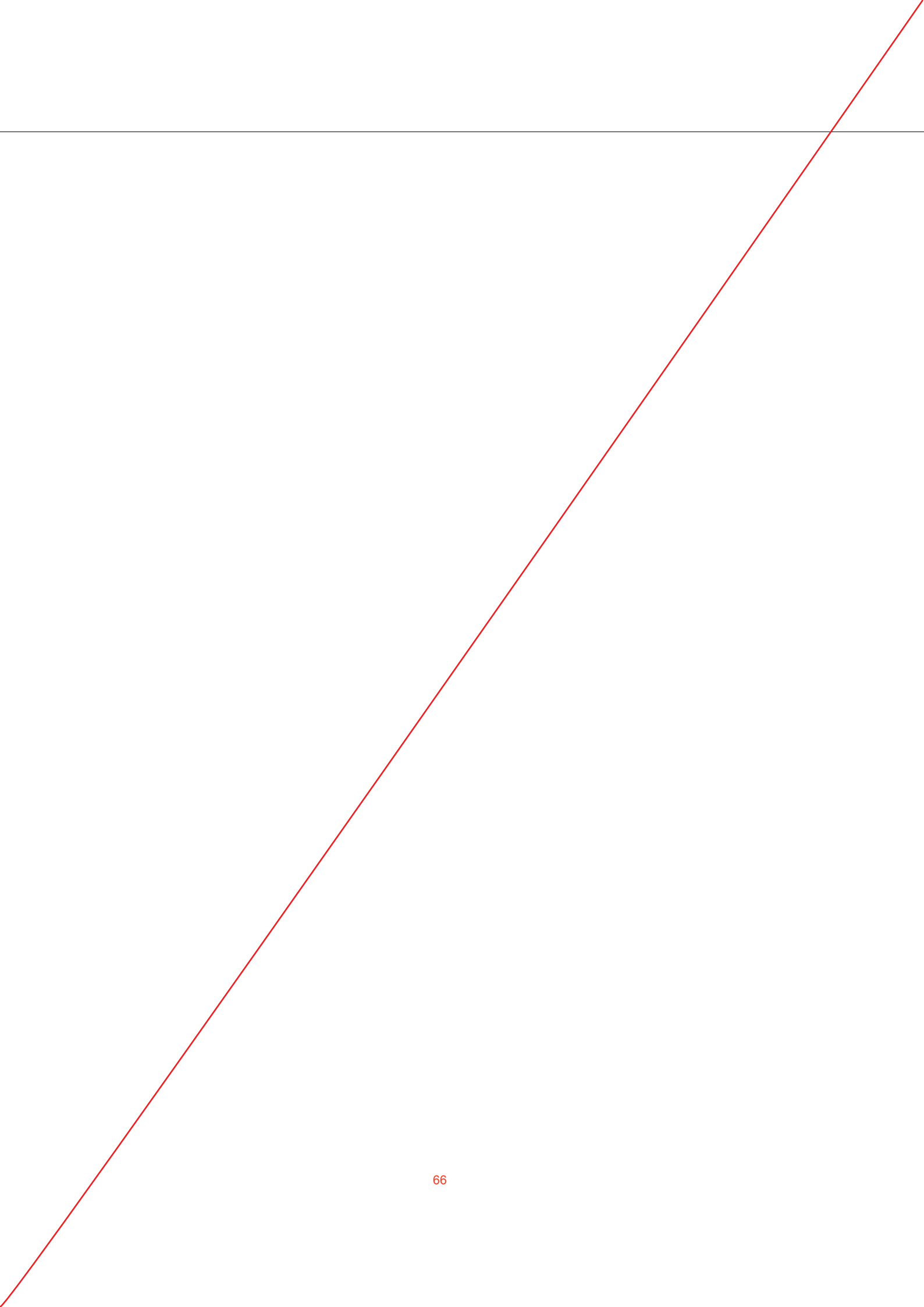
fig. 30 - The Play Room.

BLOOMSDAY, JUNE 16
LÅNGHOLMEN

At 8am precisely Stephen Daedalus is awakened by the clock on the Stockholm town hall **[MARTELLO TOWER: 8AM]**. Wearily he walks to the window of the Stuga Tower and looks across the lake towards the recently constructed auditorium and harbour, their white stone illuminated by the late summer dawn. On the quayside his eye picks out a familiar portly figure purposefully striding up and down... Leopold Bloom is walking back and forth on the waters edge looking for the "House I" restaurant. Across the lake the sun silhouettes Gamla Stan. Climbing the stair to the little restaurant he smiles at the waiter, shakes his hand and enthusiastically says "kidneys please". **[HOUSE I: 9AM] ....**



ORIENTATION / NSEW
EAST / kaleidoscopic daylight
WEST / setting sun, summer
DIALOGUE / city-island conversation
DYNAMICS / the 'ambassador', a moving island



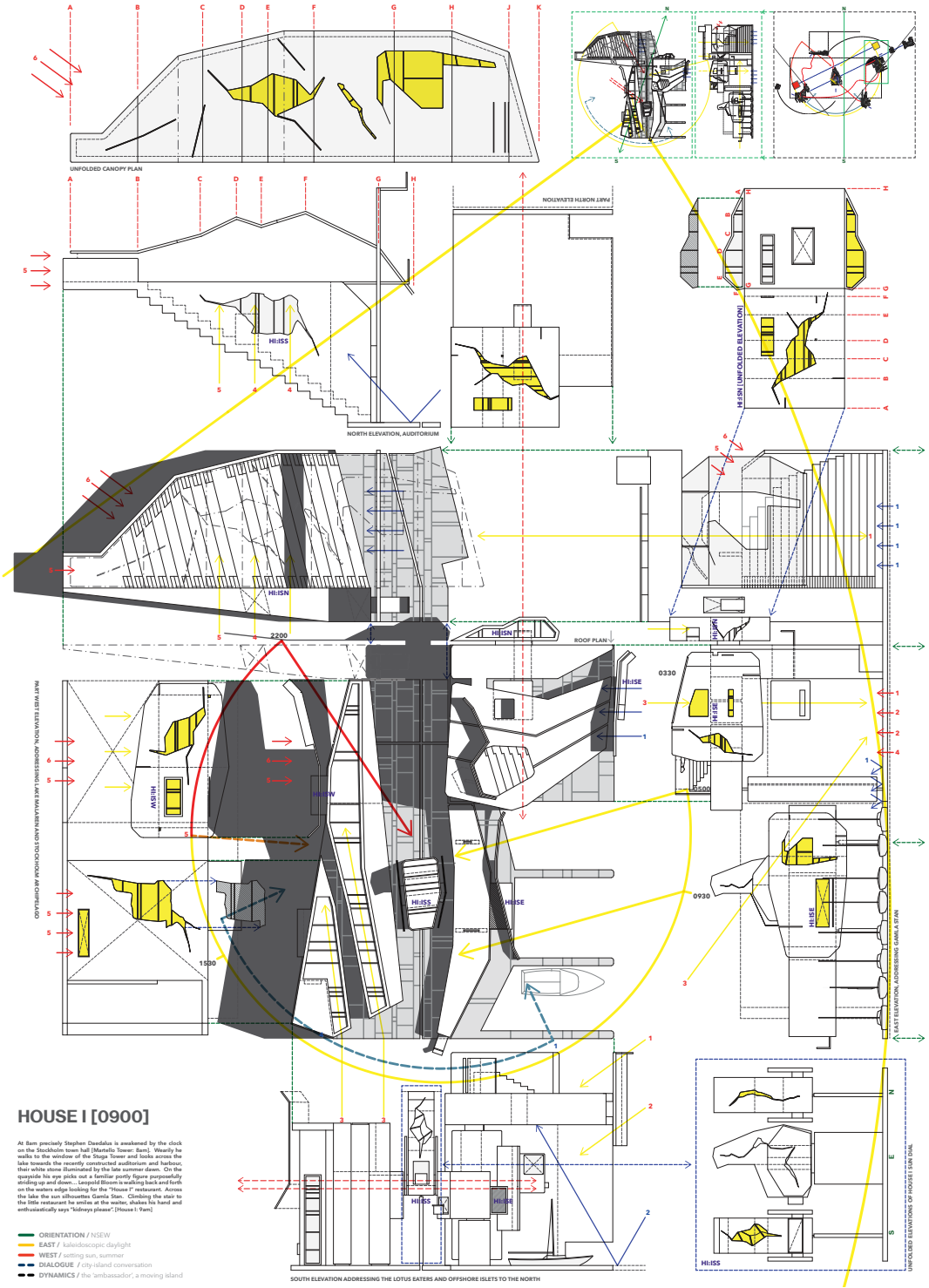


fig. 31 - *House I* [09:00]

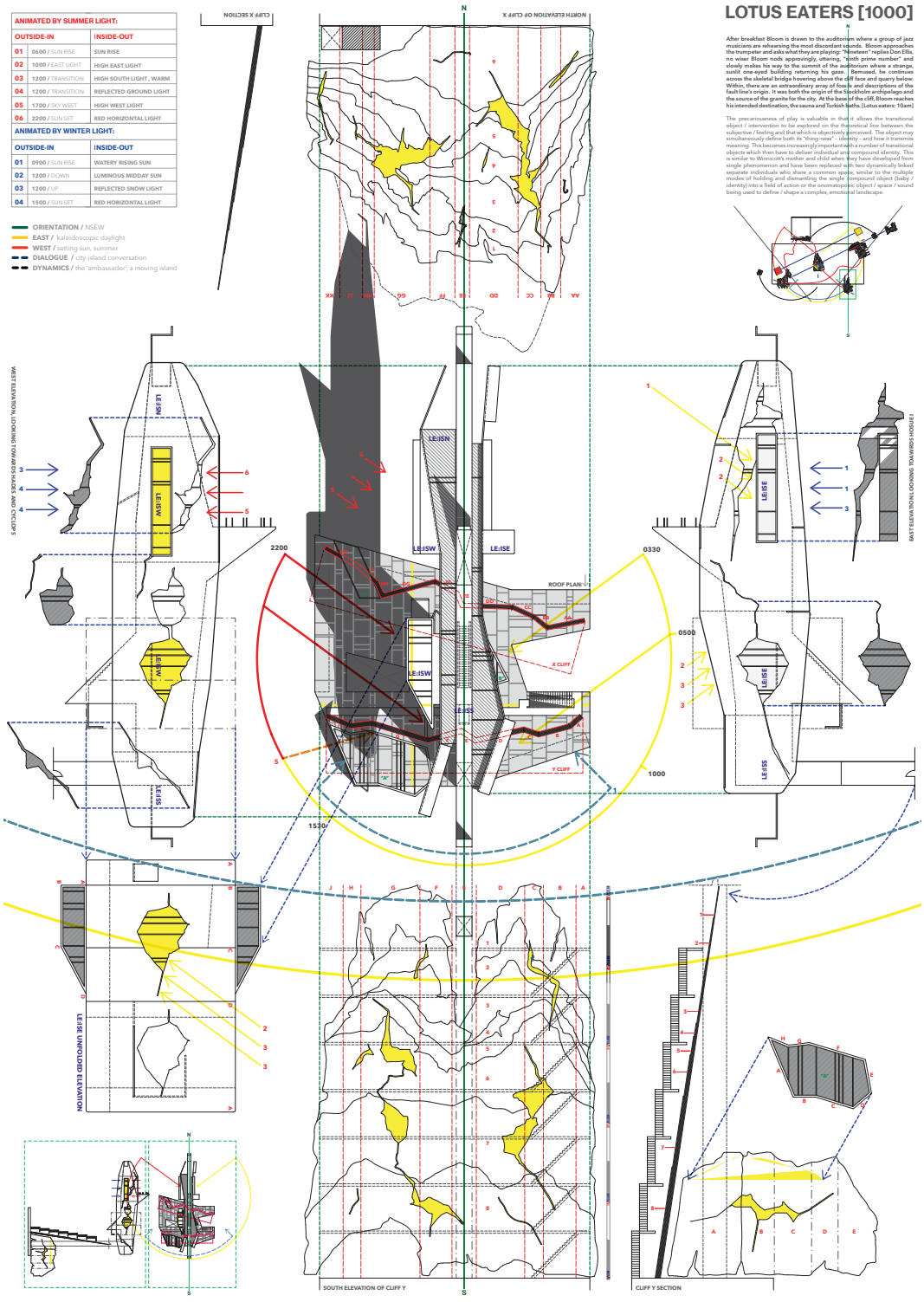


fig. 32 - *Lotus Eaters* [10:00]

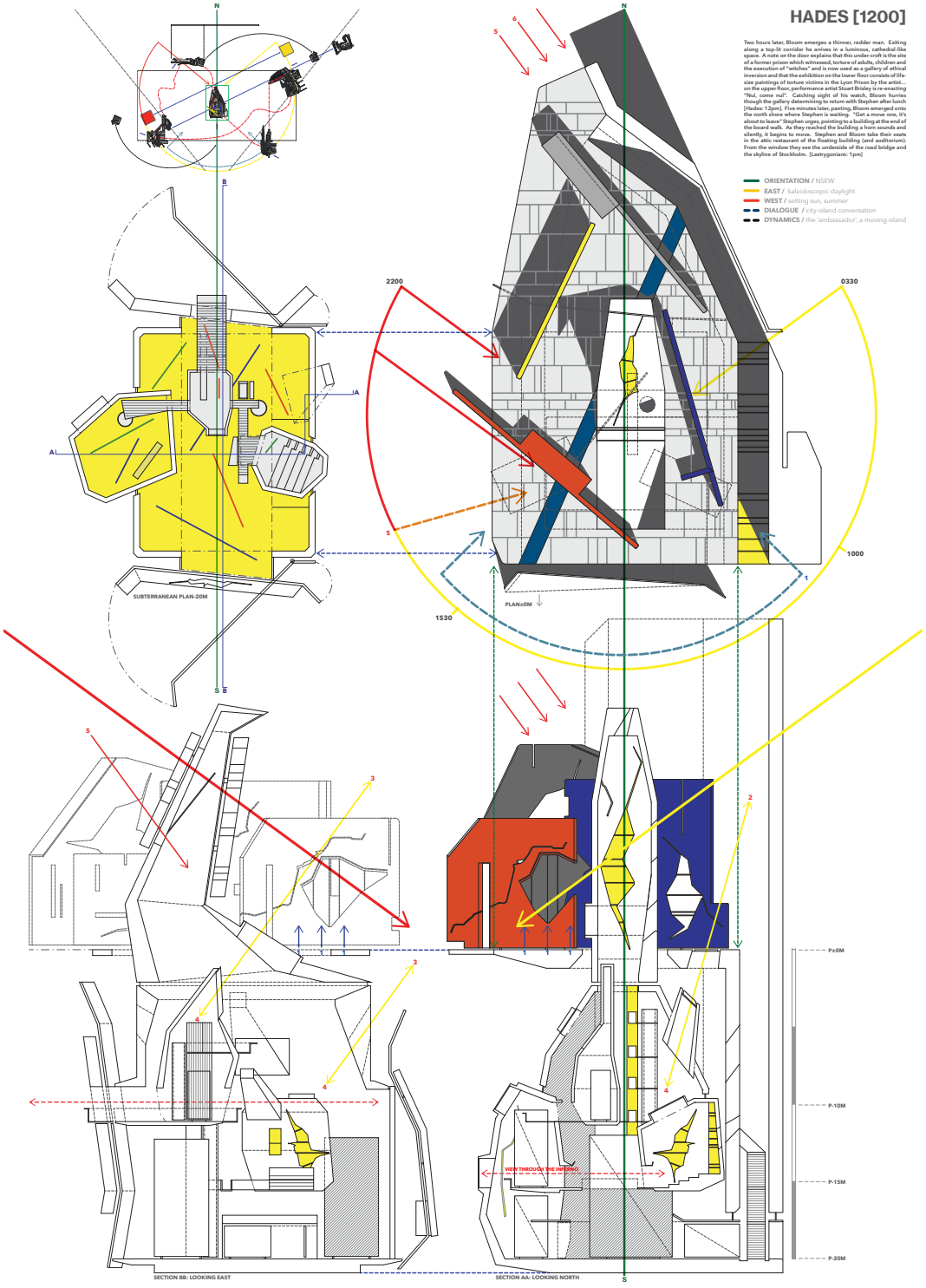


fig. 33 - *Hades* [12:00]

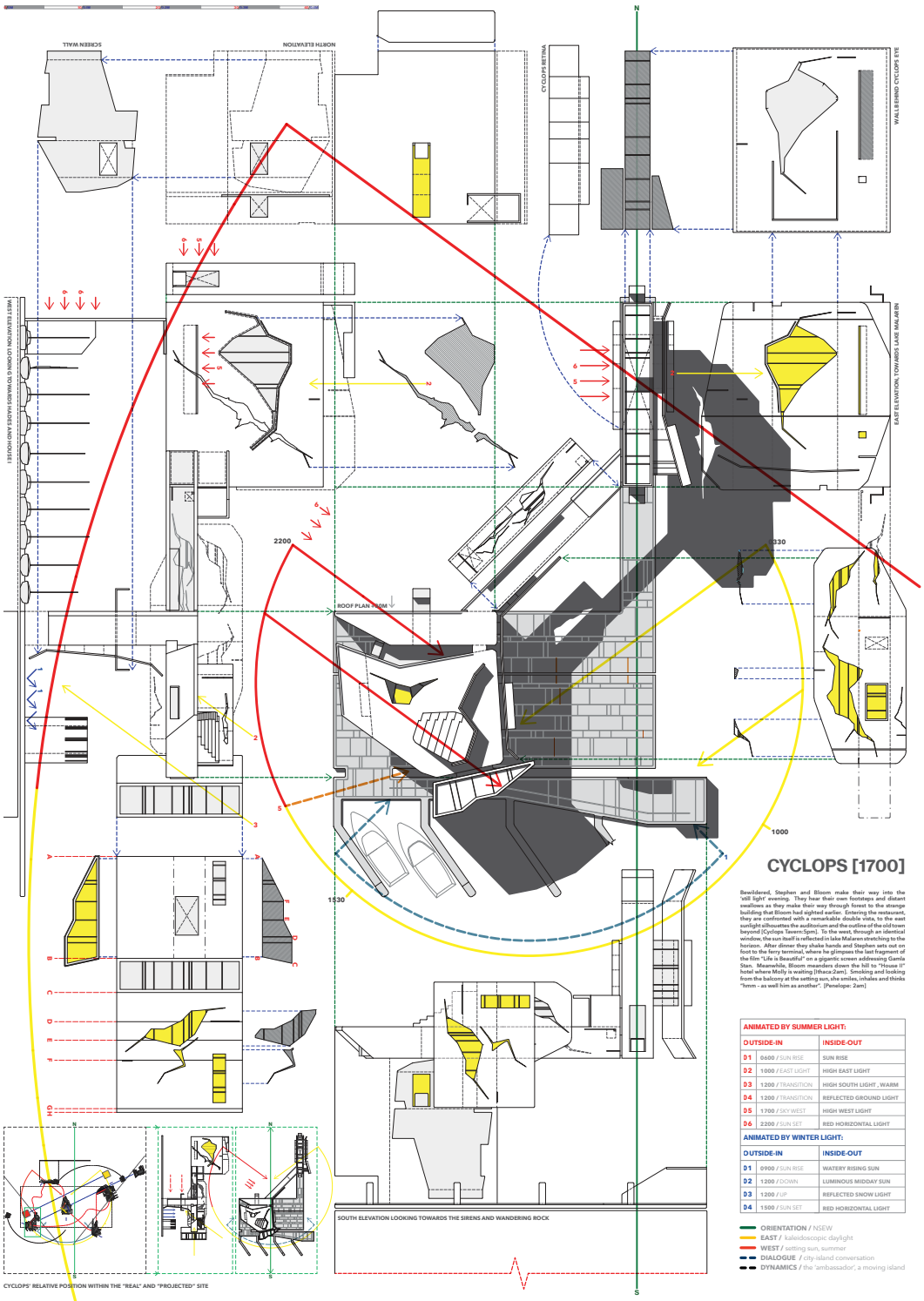


fig. 34 - *Cyclops* [17:00]

Postscript: Amoeba and cactus

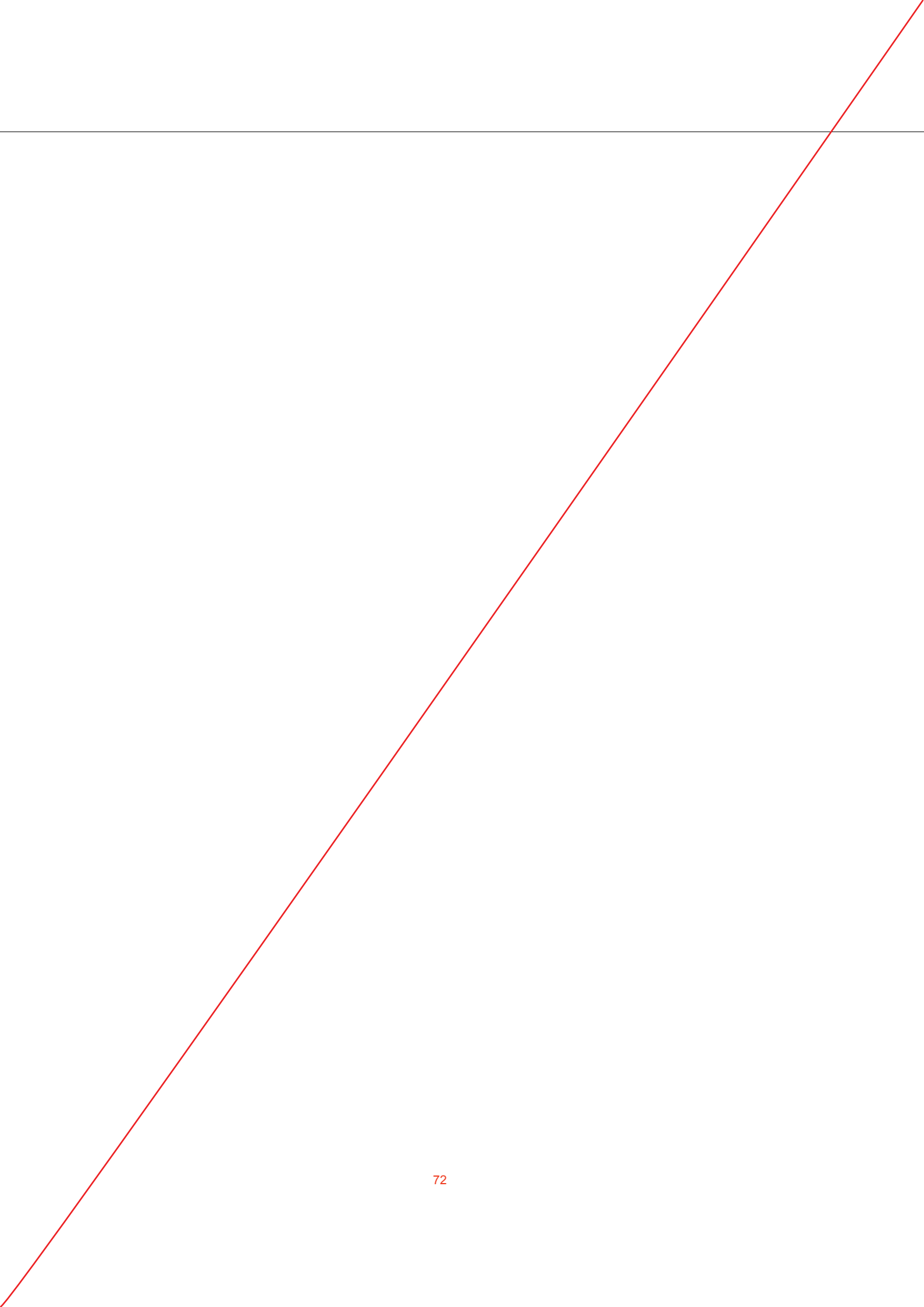


fig. 35 - The play room inhabited (March 2017).

Postscript: Amoeba and cactus

As architectural students we are constrained within Dante's purgatory; an in-between realm in which the reality of the imagined is a drawing or a model, never the unreplicable experience of architecture. Preliminary reflection on the real space intervention and play method suggests that it provides a useful intermediary between and shared understanding of, the intersection of play ('amoeba') and reality ('cactus'). The precariousness of the method rests upon the potentially unconstrained freedom of play, which through loss of critical distance, results in dismissible fantasy: 'the amoeba'. The predictability of convention and reality could produce the dull re-working of the known: 'the cactus'. Ideally the method will confirm that the cactus and the amoeba are the perfect complementary couple.

The construction of a play room populated with transitional objects, models, projections (both its content and unpredictable intersection with the physical space), sound, authorial narration, engagement, fragments of Joyce's *Ulysses*, together with paintings, drawings and photographs of proposals and actual site, afforded the author and audience a shared and active understanding of the ideas, room choreography and its relation to the proposed interventions and their specific identity reference on the island of Långholmen *(fig.35)*.

At a personal level, identification and direct engagement with each of the installations and the collective choreography was paradoxically more intimate, communicable and real than the conventional analytical / synthetic design process. This was due to the correct transference and alignment of the transitional space (the play room and island) and all of the transitional objects (intervention models and their island equivalent). Having the island and its spatial events convincingly to hand for approximately 9 months, allowed them to be fully inhabited and explored in the mind's eye: operationally, formally, spatially and materially, as individual, stand-alone propositions and as interlocking components of an evolving language.

With hindsight it becomes apparent that I was lost in play and the play room had become my more than 'good enough mother'. Reality was the play room focus and a second, even narrower focus was on the development of each object in relation to its own identity and the identity of the preceding object. Form emerged from the process itself *(fig.36)*. The inhabited bridge across the gorge was instinctively mirrored and inverted to become the subterranean journey along the fault line floor. This datum determined the level and underground location of the gallery of ethical inversion, 30m below the labyrinthian garden which replaced the prison yard. Ascending in the minds-eye from this underworld one is surprised to find that the overshadowed north shore has drifted into the middle of Lake Malaren and become a south-facing island with a beach and school of performing art.

In conclusion therefore, we must return to Winnicott: “I am not talking about playing games. I am talking about the capacity for operating in the limitless intermediate area where external and internal reality are compounded into the experience of living”.[74] He shared this understanding with William Wordsworth, who (through his life) searched for the clue to his “good fortune in that his inner world of imagination linked so much with his real experiences”. Winnicott saw his own dream world as the orchestral accompaniment to his life, “from you, Beethoven, Bach, Mozart / the substance of my dreams took fire”.[75] For D.W. Winnicott therefore, the ‘amoeba’ and ‘cactus’ are an indivisible binary whole.

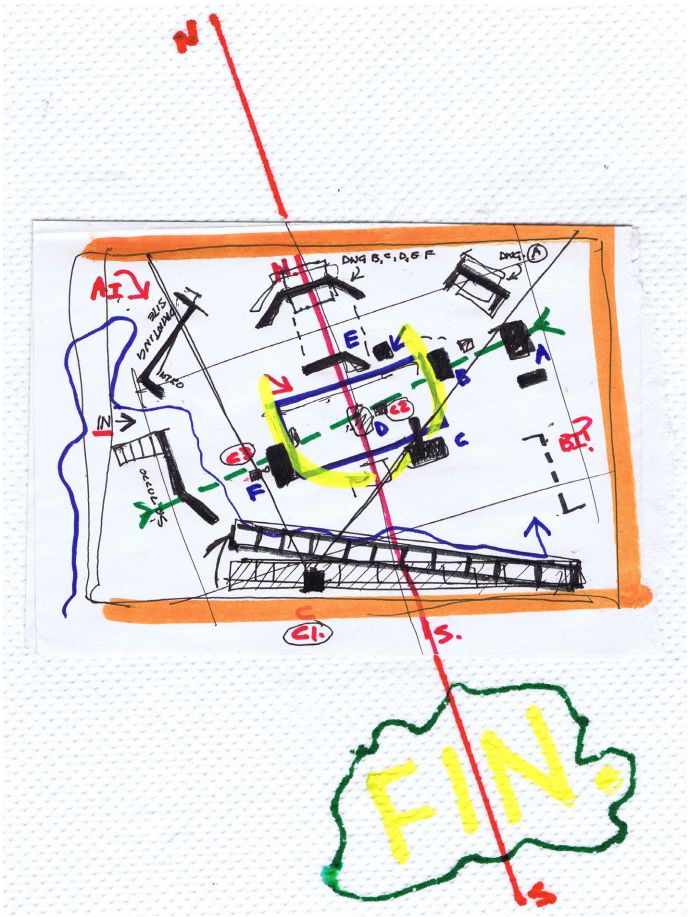


fig. 36 - The amoeba and cactus dance.

[74] Winnicott, “D.W.W.: A Reflection (1978),” 239.
[75] Clare Winnicott quoting Siegfried Sassoon in an early letter to Donald Winnicott. Clare Britton, “Early Observations on object relations theory (1943)” in *Face to Face with Children: The Life and Work of Clare Winnicott*, Joel Kanter, ed. (London: Karnac 2004), 280.

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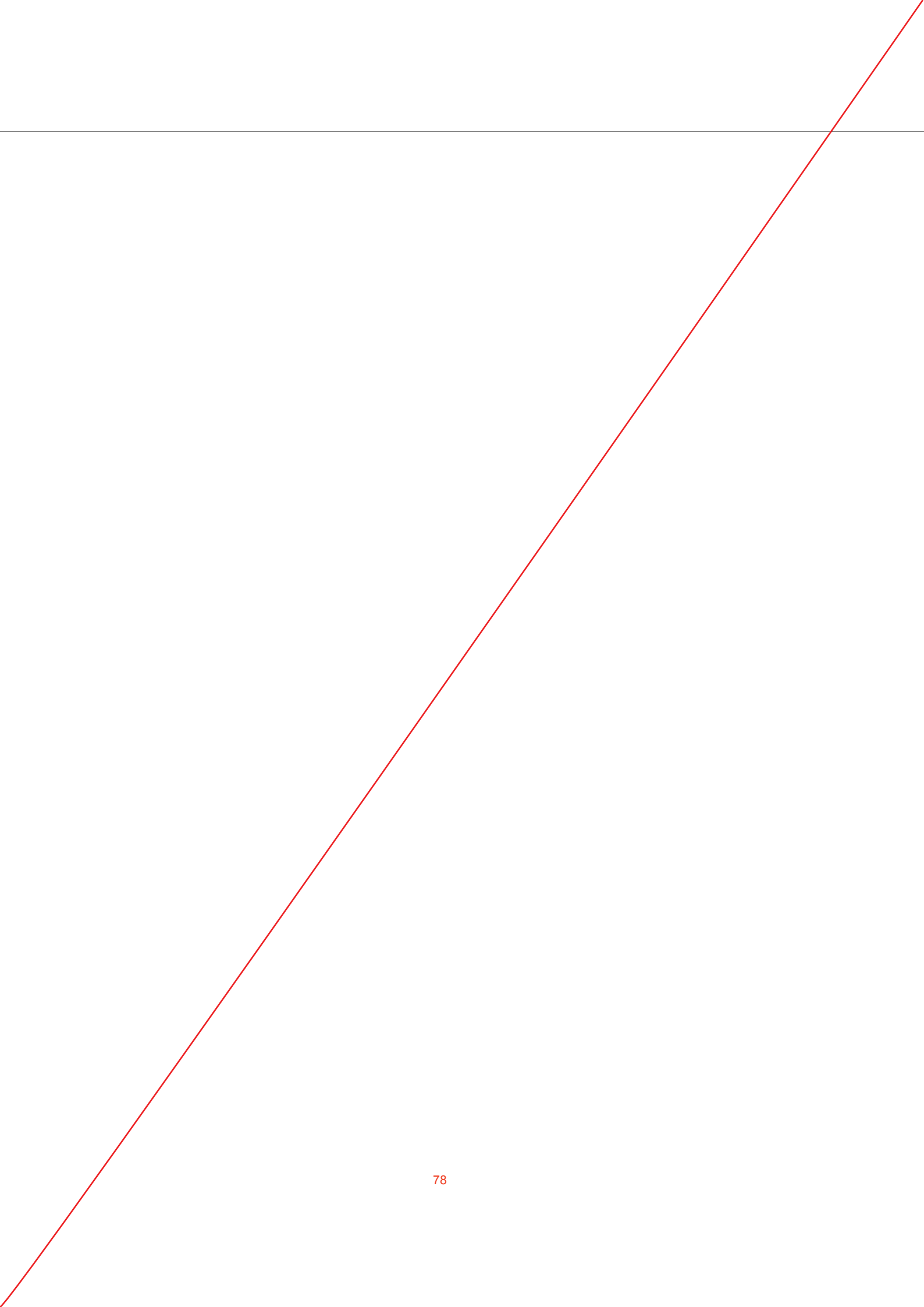

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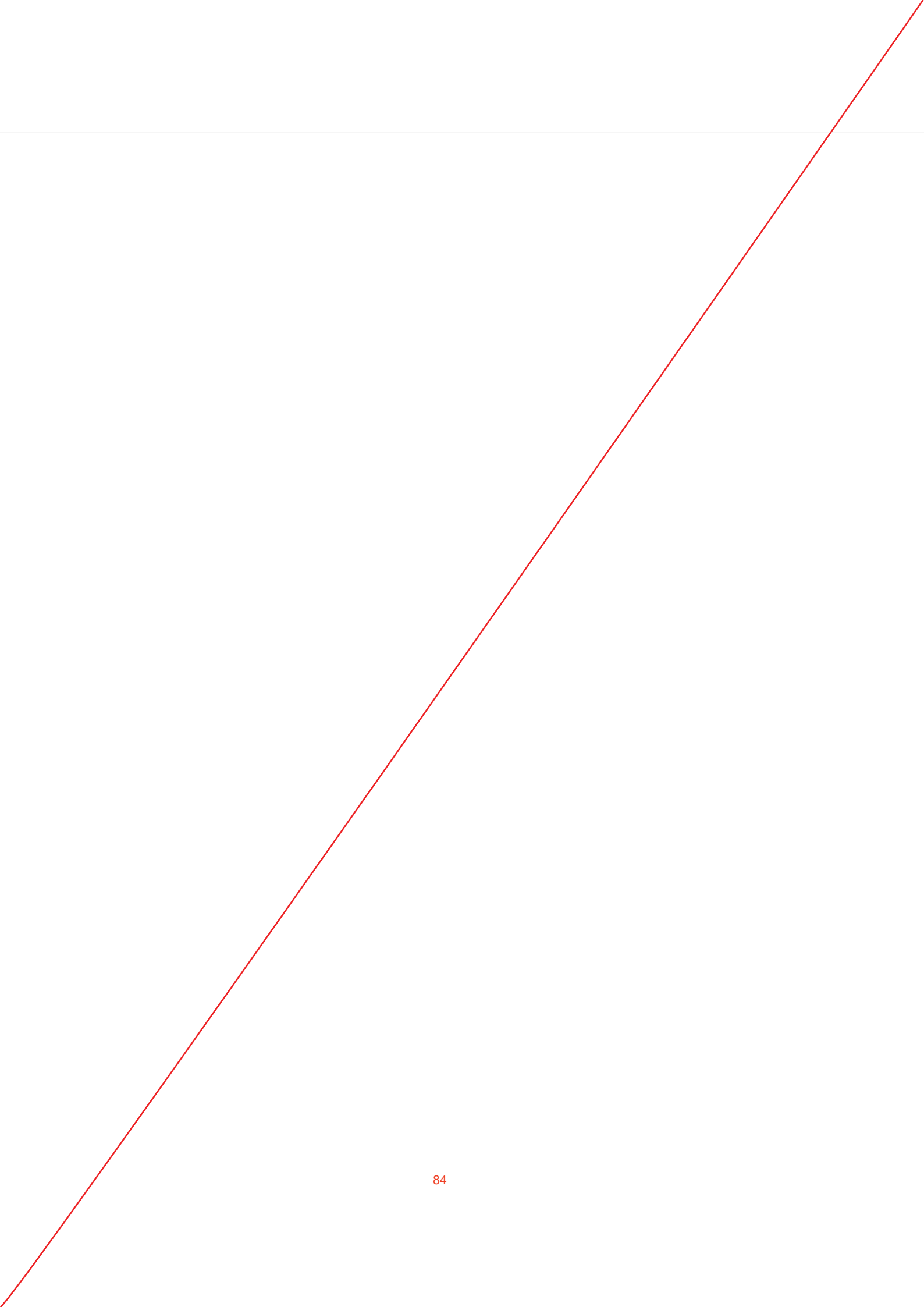

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