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## Phenomenology of Home

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Phenomenology of Home

by

Lidiya Angelova

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Architecture  
School of Architecture and Community Design  
College of The Arts  
University of South Florida

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March 24, 2010

Keywords: architecture, dwelling, house, place, experience

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Dedication

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*To Zahari with all my love  
To all who are searching for their place in the world*

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## Acknowledgments

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## Phenomenology of Home

Lidiya Angelova

### ABSTRACT

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The intent of this Master's Thesis project is to investigate the meaning of home through the bodily experience and psychological perception of space.

An inherent ambiguity to the word, as it fails to translate in languages other than those of the Germanic group, causes confusion in defining what home is. In English the word home suggests a deeper understanding and attachment to the surrounding environment, a sort of fusing of the spatial, time and material elements into a single intense experience of being.

In languages that do not contain the word the notion of home is expressed in poetry through the idea of the journey from and to a point of origin and through the symbol of the fireplace.

The project uses these ideas pertaining to home in an effort to understand how we form our place in the world.

## Chapter One Introduction

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What is the meaning of home? And what does it mean to the person?

As an immigrant I often find myself trying to answer these two questions. In my native Bulgarian there is no word home. To express the idea I would have to use words like *дом* [dom] or *къща* [kashta] which mean house. Or I can use the phrase *бащино огнище* [bashtino ognishte] which means paternal fireplace, or *роден* [roden] which means native. Each of these words embodies aspects that pertain to home and suggest that the notion is present even if the word is not.

### House or Home?

Contradictions rise from the careless interchangeable use of the words home and house in the English language today. This is rather troubling, especially given the fact that a lot of the housing construction, in various parts of the world, severely lacks in homelike qualities.

Where does the difference between house and home start? To draw on Bulgarian folklore there is a saying: *a house cannot hug you*. In many ways this folk wisdom

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Fig.1.House or Home?



expresses, quite clearly, the confusion in substituting the word house for the word home. The suggestion is that a building cannot give the comfort of the embrace that you can receive from someone or something animated. The saying shows, that there has to be more to a house than mere material enclosure, in order for one to feel at home there. What that more consists of or in has no easy and direct answer. Moreover, the answer is not always necessarily tangible.

Another example for the confused delineation between house and home is the Bulgarian word *вкъщи* [vkashti] meaning, in direct translation, inhouse. The word stirred a lot of debate in the linguistic departments as to what would be the correct spelling - *в къщи* or *вкъщи*. What is important to note here is the addition of the *in* to the word *house* and the decision to write it *inhouse* together. In the Bulgarian language *inhouse* already suggests a relationship mainly *being in* as in *inhabiting*. It also suggests a desire to express something different than just a house. When a Bulgarian says *отивам си вкъщи* [otivam si vkashti] a translation closer to the embodied meaning of the phrase would be *I am going home*, and not *I am going in the house*.

In another aspect, the phrase also shows, that home is not a limited notion to the scale of the house. In fact the notion of home manages to find its way in expressing a value of belonging and intimacy on scales that range from the body to the world. Consider the question what is the notion of home for an immigrant. When an immigrant says *I am going home* he or she most likely means the country

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or city of origin rather than a specific house or apartment.

Even though house and home are different notions it is important to mention that the distinction between them cannot be drawn with a surgical precision. Both are intimately connected to the notions of dwelling and constructing. Once we inhabit a space we layer our meanings and memories onto it and we modify it to fit our needs. It becomes the holding ground for us, and gives us focus. It becomes our home.

Not all languages have a word home, because the notion is, or used to be, somehow embedded in the tradition of building. Moreover, that is the main reason to built - to create a place in the world. Unfortunately this tradition is at stake today and the delineation between house and home is present in the constructed world around us.

#### The Notion of Home in Poetry

As a notion home holds a strong emotional value for the person. Therefore, it is not surprising to find its numerous expressions in poetry.

I will give as an example a poem by the Bulgarian poet Ran Bosilek:

*Родна Стряха*

*Бяла, спретната къщурка,  
две липи отпред.  
Тука майчина милувка  
сетих най-напред.*

---

*Тука, под липите стари  
не веднъж играх;  
тука с весели другари  
скачах и се смях...*

*Къщичке на дните златни,  
кът свиден и мил!  
И за царските палати  
не бих те сменил!*

Native Eave

White, tidy little house  
Two lindens in the front.  
Here my mother's gentle touch  
I sensed for the first time.

Here, underneath the old lindens  
I have played more than once;  
Here with merry friends  
I have jumped and laughed ...

Little house of the golden days,  
Dear and precious nook,  
I would not trade you  
Even for the king's palace!

Think about the situation and how the actions  
through the poem take place. The author is coming back to

---

a place. The first two lines describe exterior and physical properties. White, little, tidy speak of the properties of the house. The two lindens in the front are a reference to nature and to the sensorial experience of smell. This is an image charged with phenomenological significance. The poet is painting a painting but there is no spatial depth described in these words. He is not talking about walking towards the little house or about entering it. He is being with it. The house is being approached not through the act of walking but through the act of remembrance. It is an image that belongs to memory.

What follows is the situational placement. A place has been established, “Here”, through the occurring action “my mother’s gentle touch/ I sensed for the first time.” The author is coming back to the sense of belonging and intimacy. He is coming home. This moment is a realization of being in the world. It is unclear where exactly the here occurs in relationship to the white, tidy little house. Is it inside, outside, in-between? This is in a way showing that sense of belonging and intimacy is not constituted by the house only. Here speaks of place rather than the space that the house occupies. It is understood in a wholesome totality at once with the world that it is in.

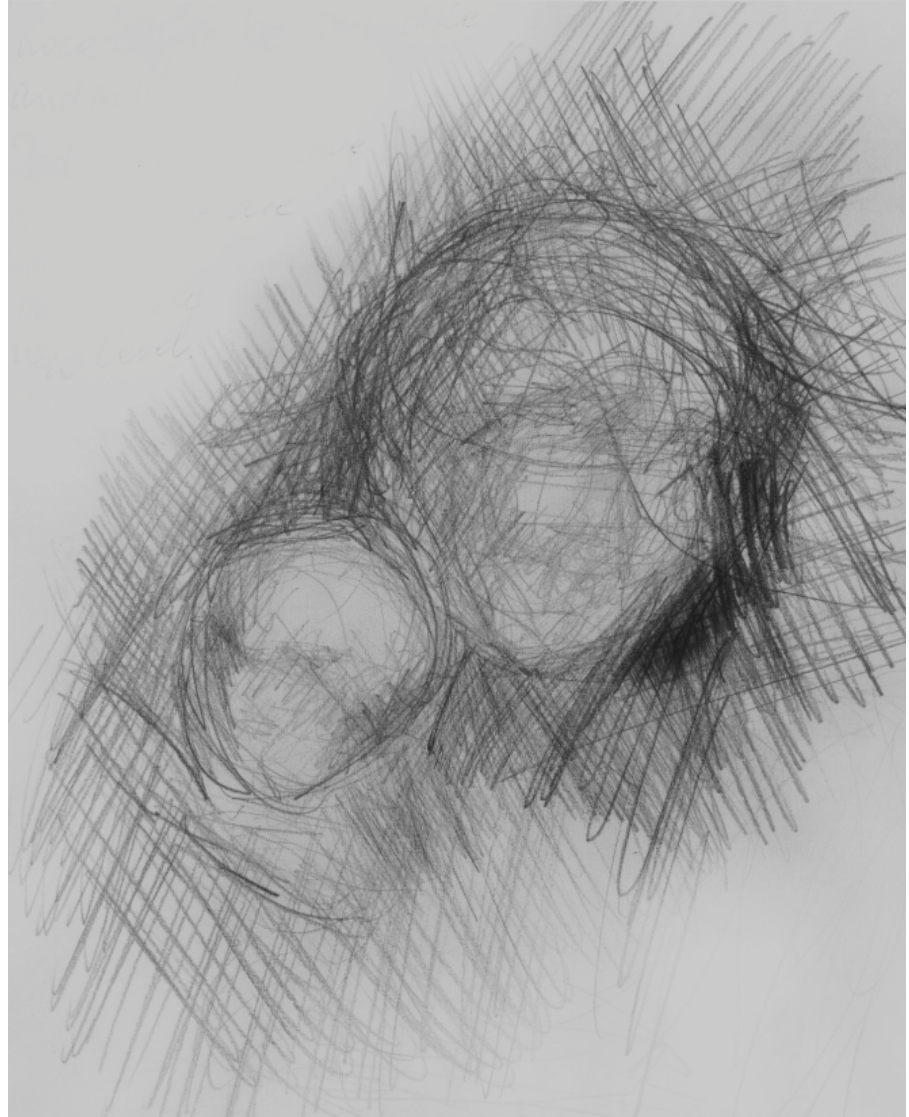
The second here is derived from the first one. It is a concentric circle of intimacy which expands outward. The actions involve people, probably kids playing together. It suggests growing evolving. The space acquires spatial definition, a relationship to the surrounding world.

In the last verse the author is directly speaking to the house, as if the house is animated being in itself. He

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Fig.2.Mother and Child



situates it in a time line – “the golden days” and calls it, with much love, “dear and precious nook”. Through the exclamation in the end the author suggests that the little house and the memories that were created around it are something priceless. It can never be traded.

The author is returning to his childhood. He is returning to where he is from, unconditionally and intimately. He is not returning physically, but through the act of remembrance.

Even if that belonging did only take place in “the golden days”, the mental structure or the memory has remained. The little tidy white house is a memory. It is a nook vital for the mental well-being.

Let’s go back to the title of the poem – *Родна Стряха*. The word *родна* [rodna] means that place where one was born. But beyond the literal English translation of native, underlies a notion that is in close relationship to the meaning of home. The way this word occurs in the Bulgarian as well as in the English languages relates it back to the act of giving birth. Thus the author uses this word as he wants to express and put emphasis on the significance of this sense of intimacy and belonging. The relationship with the house is paralleled to the relationship with the mother in order to express a notion of home. The nook is in a way a womb.

The other word in the title speaks of a built element. The eave is sheltering you. It is above your head and covers you. The spatiality that an eave creates is one of the in between. As it is part of the house but it protrudes outward to claim space from the outside. When one is under the

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eave one is on the threshold between inside and outside.

What the poem allows us to do is to go back to our own childhood. The memory of the motherly touch establishes a first point of reference. It is the first home that we inhabit. Later we leave the intimate scale of our immediate surroundings and start to comprehend things such as the white, tidy, little house and the trees. We make friends. In this outbound travel that which is unknown becomes known through the initial reference point. The memory of those relationships gives a sense of certainty of being and inhabiting a specific time and place.

#### On Home and Sacredness

Mircea Eliade suggests, that for the person who dwells in a sacred world, space is not homogeneous. The strong attachment one feels to a home can be understood as a sacred experience, or hierophany, since, for the person, the place is qualitatively different from other places. (Eliade 1957, 24) The expression of the sacred can be shown through two aspects that describe the notion of home: the symbol of the fire place and the idea of the journey.

The fire place is often considered a universal symbol of home, but how exactly does it relate to sacredness? In a sacred world orientation is possible, because an absolute fixed point has been revealed through a break in homogeneity of space. (Eliade 1957, 21) In that aspect, the fire place establishes this break, in the form of a vertical axis from the ground towards the sky, and gives a focus

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from which the rest of the world unfolds. The warmth is both physical and spiritual, allowing for a perceptive experience of being.

At the same time if there is no fireplace everything around falls apart. The void is cut both in the material and the mental world of the person. What remains is the pieces of a shattered universe, or a profane space, in which everything is relative and uncertain. (Eliade 1957, 24)

Rykwert poses the question: “Does a home need to be anything build at all, any fabric?”. His answer is no, but he goes on to acknowledge the importance of the focus that a fire establishes. (Rykwert 1991, 51) The presence of the fireplace gives hope that there is another way of life, which is not destructive in nature. An enclosure can be assembled again, sacred space can be rediscovered anew, and home can be found.

The other aspect, the journey, relates to sacredness through the metaphorical path towards self discovery, much like a pilgrimage that allows us to understand that which is important to us. Moreover, the etymology of the word home, traces it back to an Indo-European root *\*kei* which implies lying down and even to an extent cemetery. (Hollander 1991, 44) In this sense home is the eternal home towards which we all travel, and carries the same strength of certainty that the origin is the womb. Thus, the notion of home becomes a beginning and an end point, associated with life and death, and the journey through life.

Looking from the perspective of sacredness, the loss of meaning in the word home seems to be an indicator of a much deeper problem. We are forgetting to reach out

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Fig.3.Deserted Fire Place



Fig.4.Emptiness



Fig.5.Rebuilding

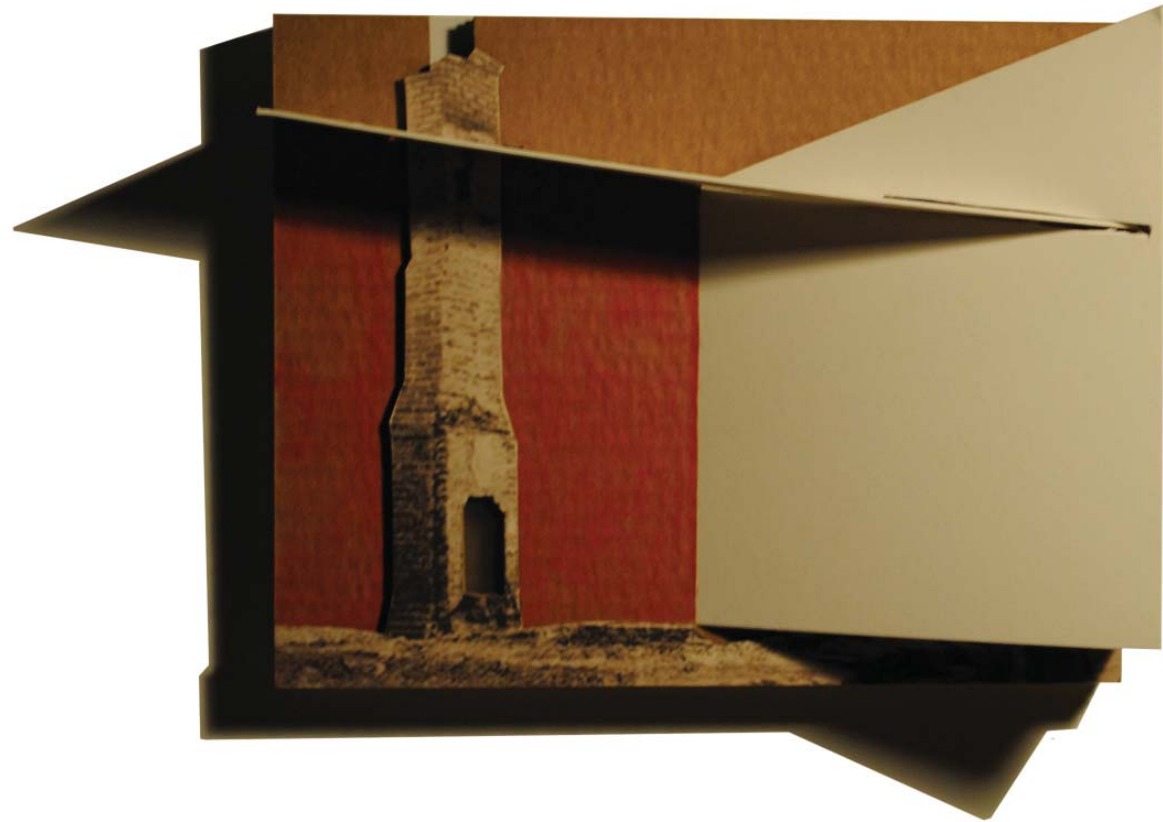


Fig.6.Candle





to that which is beyond, to align ourselves with the world and seek meaning. We are at risk to diminish the sacred meaning of home to the appearance of a scented candle in the house.

#### On Home and Site

In his book “The House of Breath”, William Goyen writes: “That people could come into the world in a place they could not at first even name and had never known before; and that out of a nameless and unknown place they could grow and move around in it until its name they knew and called with love, and call it HOME, and put roots there and love others there; so that whenever they left this place they would sing homesick songs about it and write poems of yearning for it, like a lover; ... and forever be returning to it or leaving it again!”

The quote shows that the notion of home is tightly connected to the notion of settling. Since it is a place in the world, home needs a site, but at the same time to think that it can be contained only at one specific geographical location is at best naive. Home is at once physical and psychological, and it becomes a matter of perception for someone to feel a certain place as a home.

As our bodies are in space there is always something in front, behind, above or on the side of us. The standing figure of the human being is much like the vertical axis that a fireplace establishes. One becomes the center from which everything else is perceived. Humans are restless and the centrality that is achieved, when standing still,

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is temporal. Home can be understood as something that has been derived from the upright position, in order to understand the world around. The enclosure that is later built is a result of this desire to be able to hold still for a while and observe.

On the other hand, the notion of home is in constant reevaluation by each and every one of us. And what better attests to that than the frustration and the disbelief we feel upon entering a house of our childhood. Surely this brings a lot of memories, but at the same time we clearly know that this is no longer our home. What remains is the knowledge of a certain way of being in the world. With that said, we often seek to recreate aspects of things that made us feel happy and content. That is why our adulthood homes often carry certain resemblance with the childhood ones. As we go through life and construct our dwellings, more than just to provide shelter, we also embed that which we believe in.

If we understand, like Heidegger, that building is indeed dwelling, than the enclosures we build can become a site for a home, and as we construct and inhabit them, they acquire homelike qualities.

### Conclusion

The way humans have built can be differentiated, depending on technology, culture and climate. However, there has always been the drive to establish our place in the world. The notion of home is an expression of our physical and psychological need, to have a base from which to comprehend the world we live in.

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## Chapter Two Build Houses

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Heidegger has said that language is the master of men. (Heidegger 1971, 146) But language is not the same everywhere. It has variations. And is not architecture but a language? Is architecture a language in the sense that everywhere in the world there are variations of expression of a roof, of a ceiling, of a wall, of a window, of a shelf, of a floor, of a step, of a door? The material gathers around to form the example. Architecture allows for the empathy of the body and the essence of space is best understood by being there.

What would be an architectural implication of home? And how does home manifests itself in the materials we gather?

An initial drive to analyze houses is easily understood given the fact that the interchangeable use of the words home and house and the problems arising from that is one of the first questions posted in this research. The three houses of choice have some architectural acclaim. The similarity they share is the remoteness they have from denser populated settlements. I chose this to be a criterion because home is a place where you go when you need to gather your strengths.

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## Poli House

Of much interest is the Poli House by Pezo von Ellrichshausen architects. A house of nooks, rugged and unapologetically geometric this cube with holes might seem unfriendly at first. Nonetheless it draws the attention and raises questions as to how this man made thing appeared on the site. Upon entering one passes through what appears to be a solid wall. Actually it is a periphery, a spatial rhythm of thresholds translating between outside and inside. Here one is moving around a center. Two separate staircases, one leading to the private and intimate enclosures of the bedrooms and one leading to the roof, speak of two different paths. As one is ascending to the roof, the view of the horizon, the sky and the ocean is taken away and given back through a series of openings. On the inside one is circling around a vertical space. The other path, somehow more mundane, is not directly adjacent to the verticality, but inscribes what is the rest of the inner spaces in the house. The bedrooms open up to this vertical space, however the relationship is from one interior to another. The bedrooms themselves seem to have a spatial rhythm as the floor in them is of two levels transitioned through with a step. The level that is for the bed is higher. The enclosure around the level that is lower is a lot more perforated, opening up both to the vertical space, but also to the outside through the two enclosing layers of the periphery space. With its circling periphery and carefully crafted spatial adjacencies the Poli House allows one to create a temporary home in the harsh and dramatic landscape in which it is situated.

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Fig.7.Poli House Location and Floor Plans

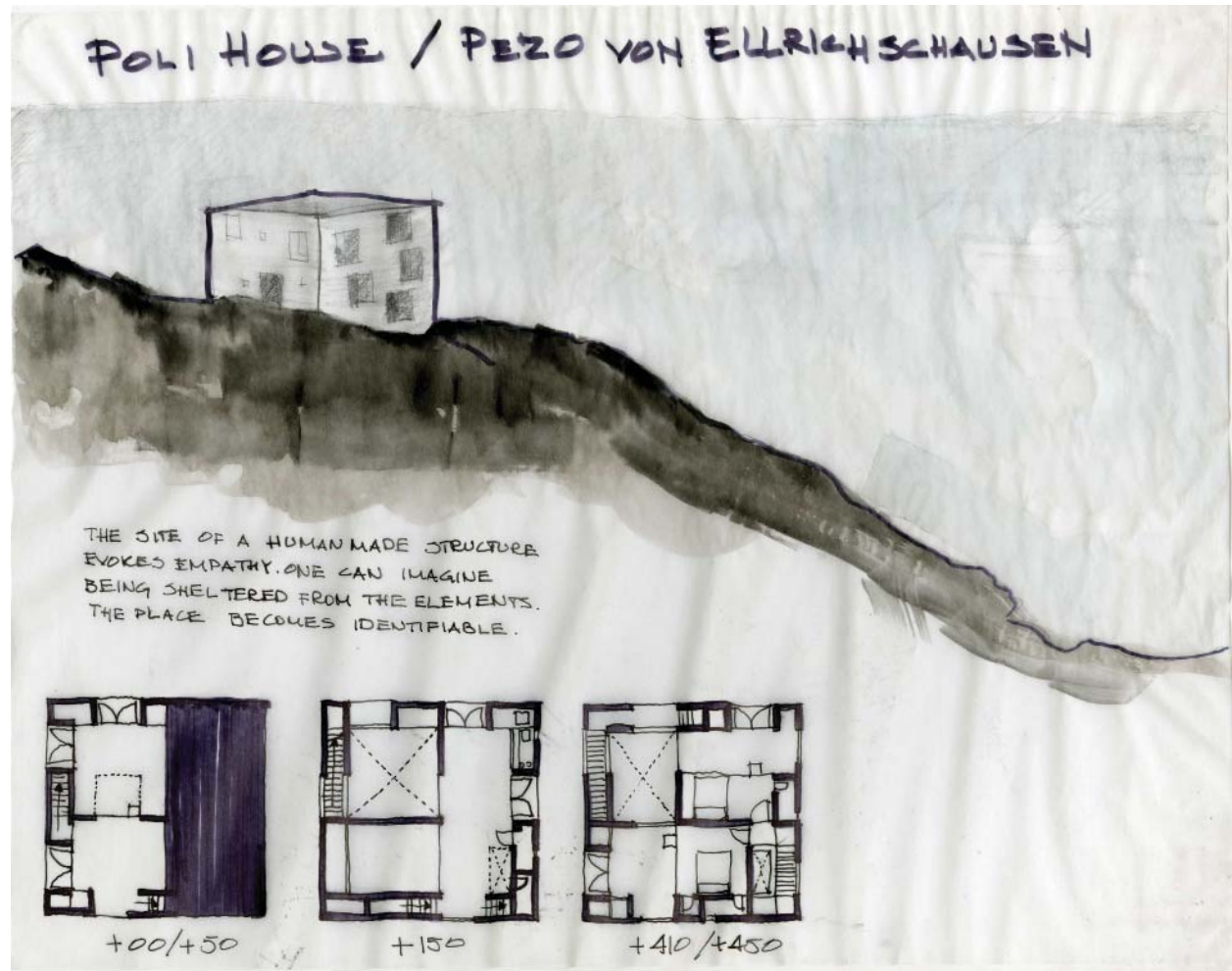


Fig.8.Poli House Parti

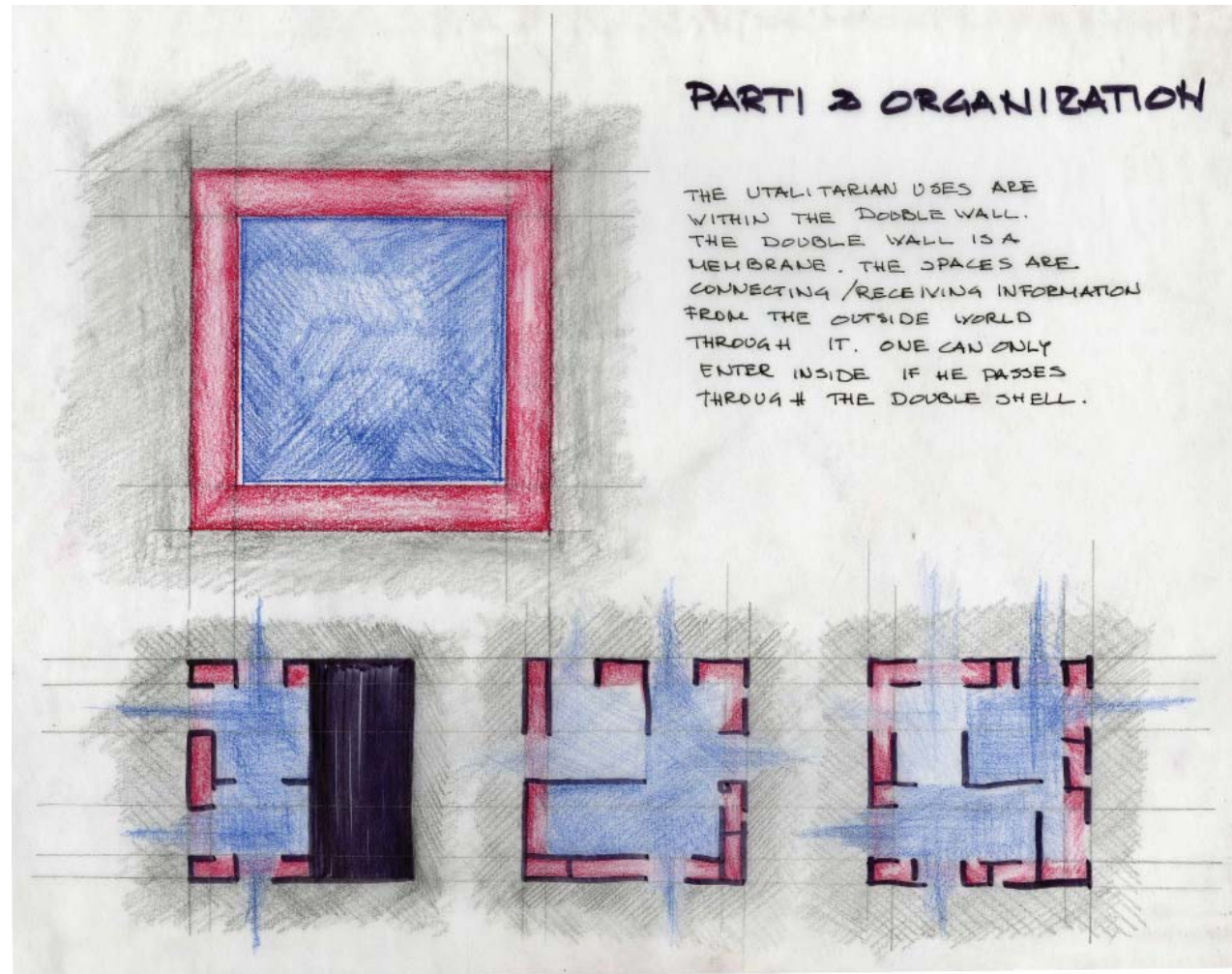


Fig.9.Poli House Program

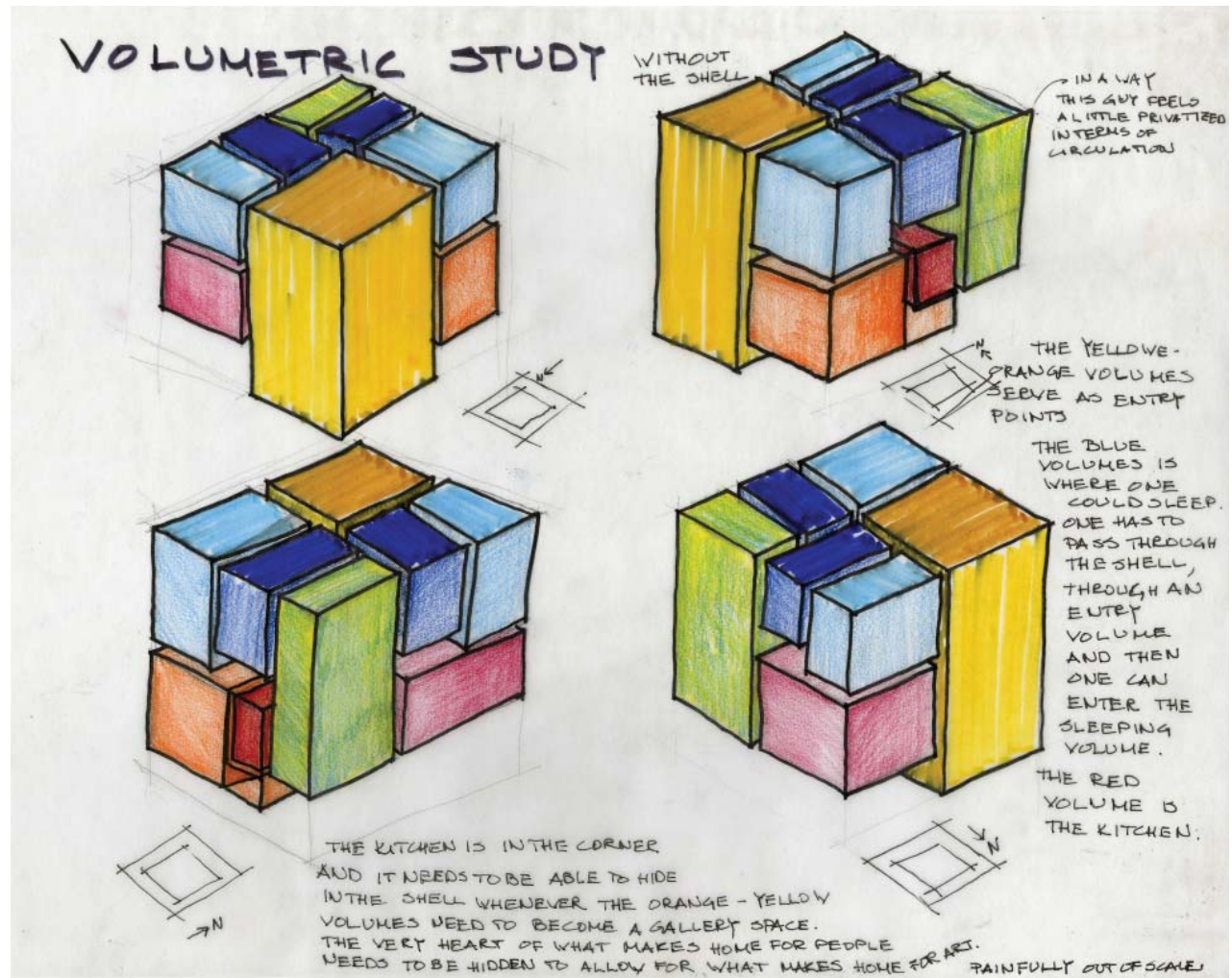


Fig.10.Poli House Circulation

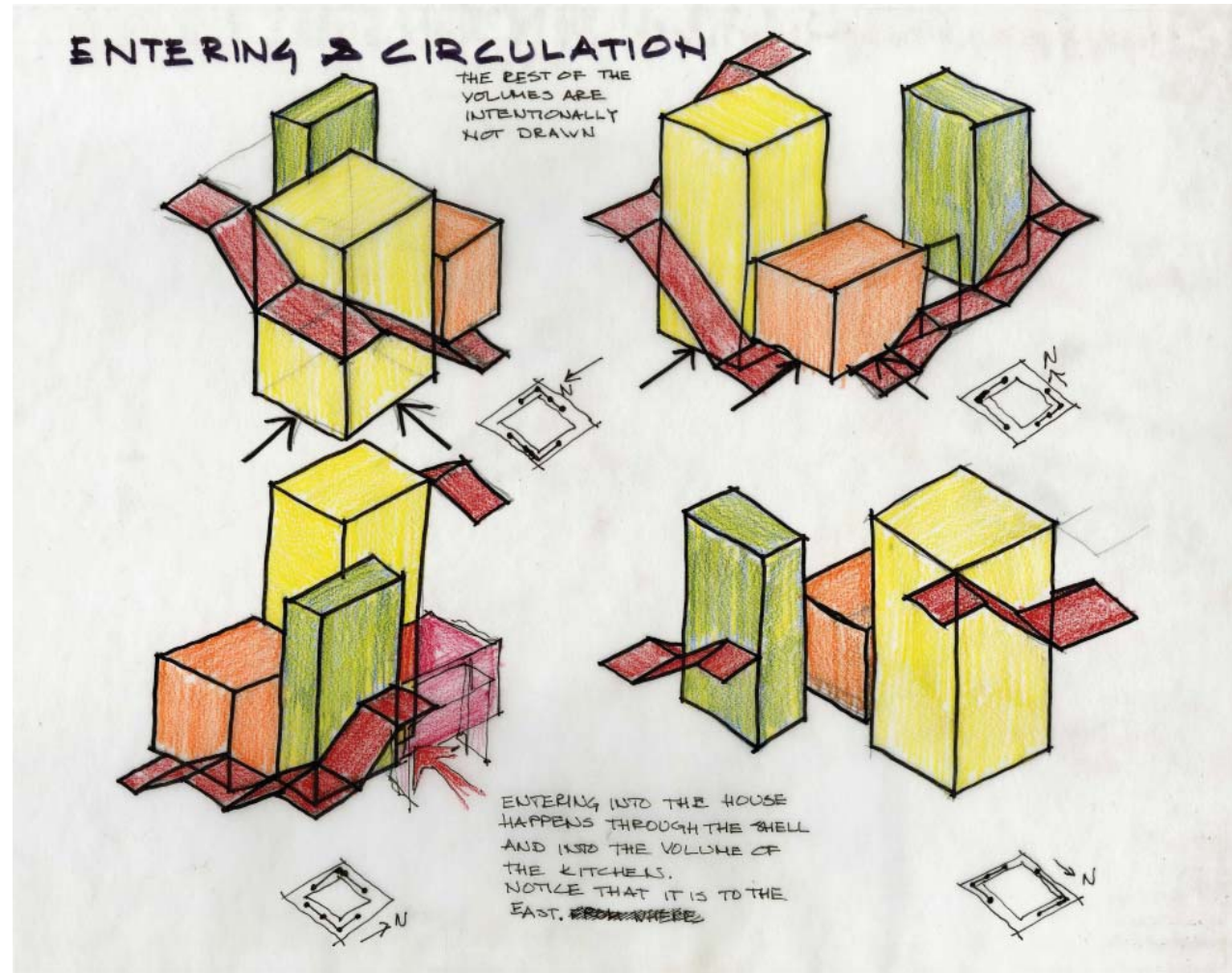




Fig.11.Poli House Section Study

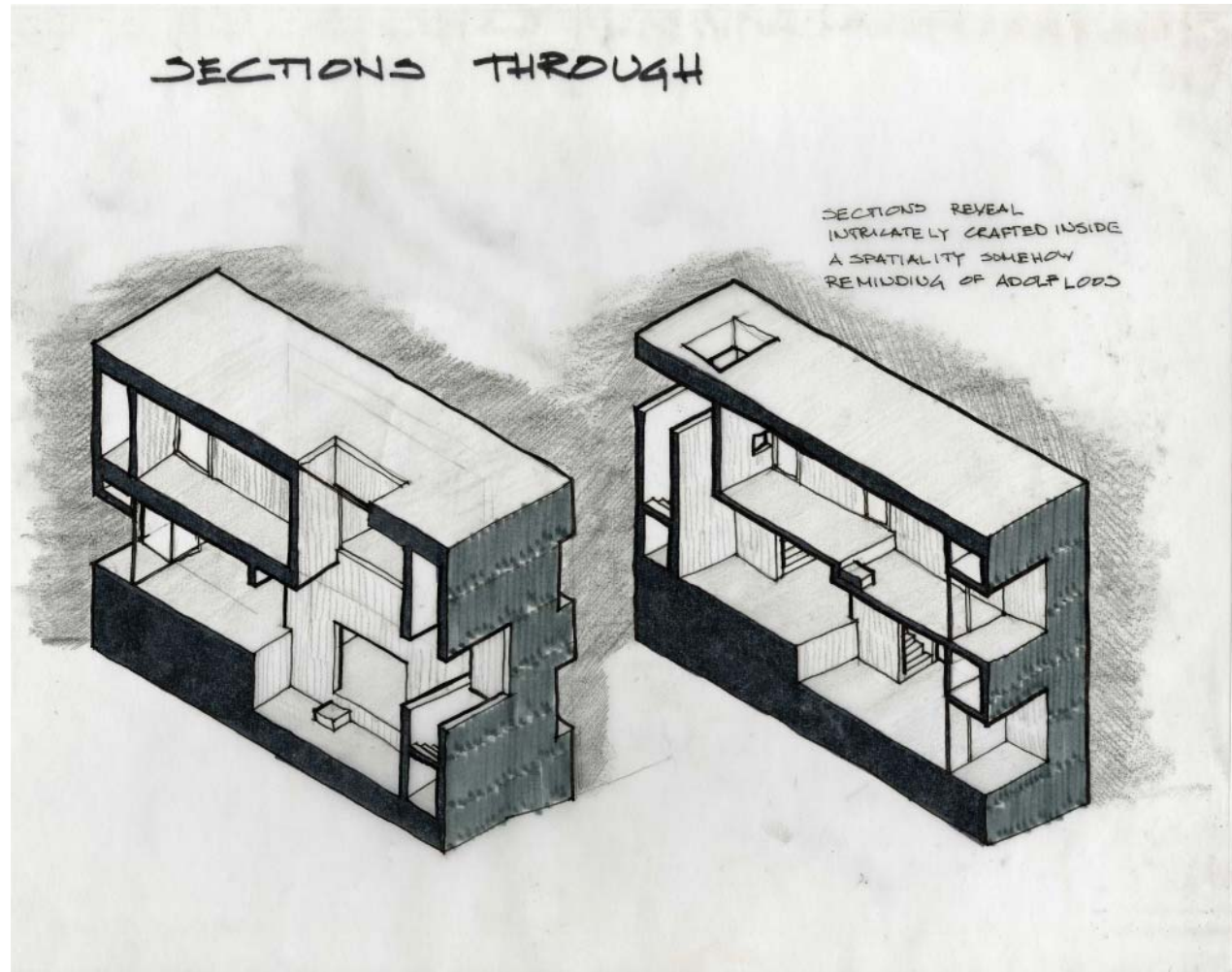


Fig.12.Poli House Shell Study

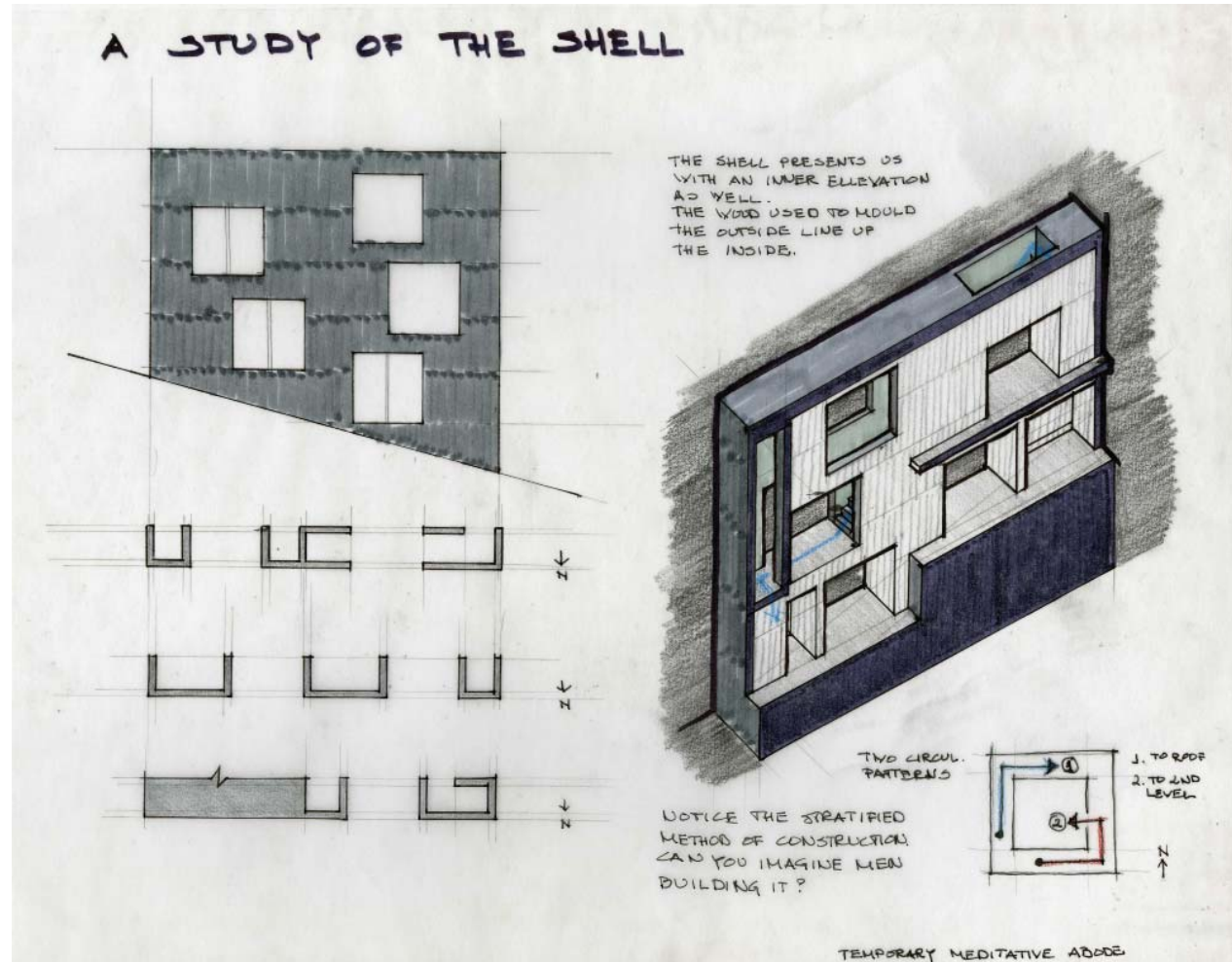


Fig.13.Poli House Roof Terrace

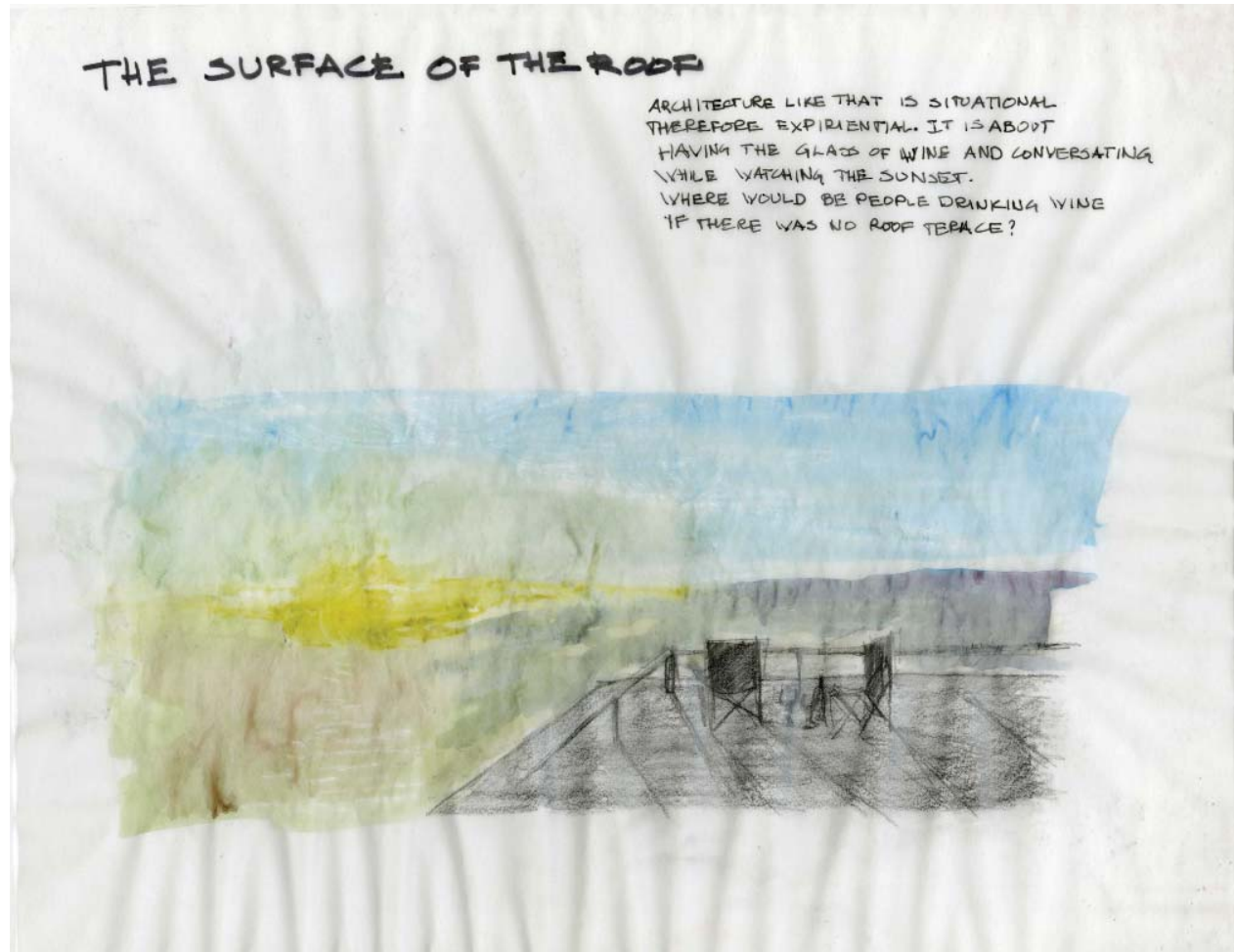
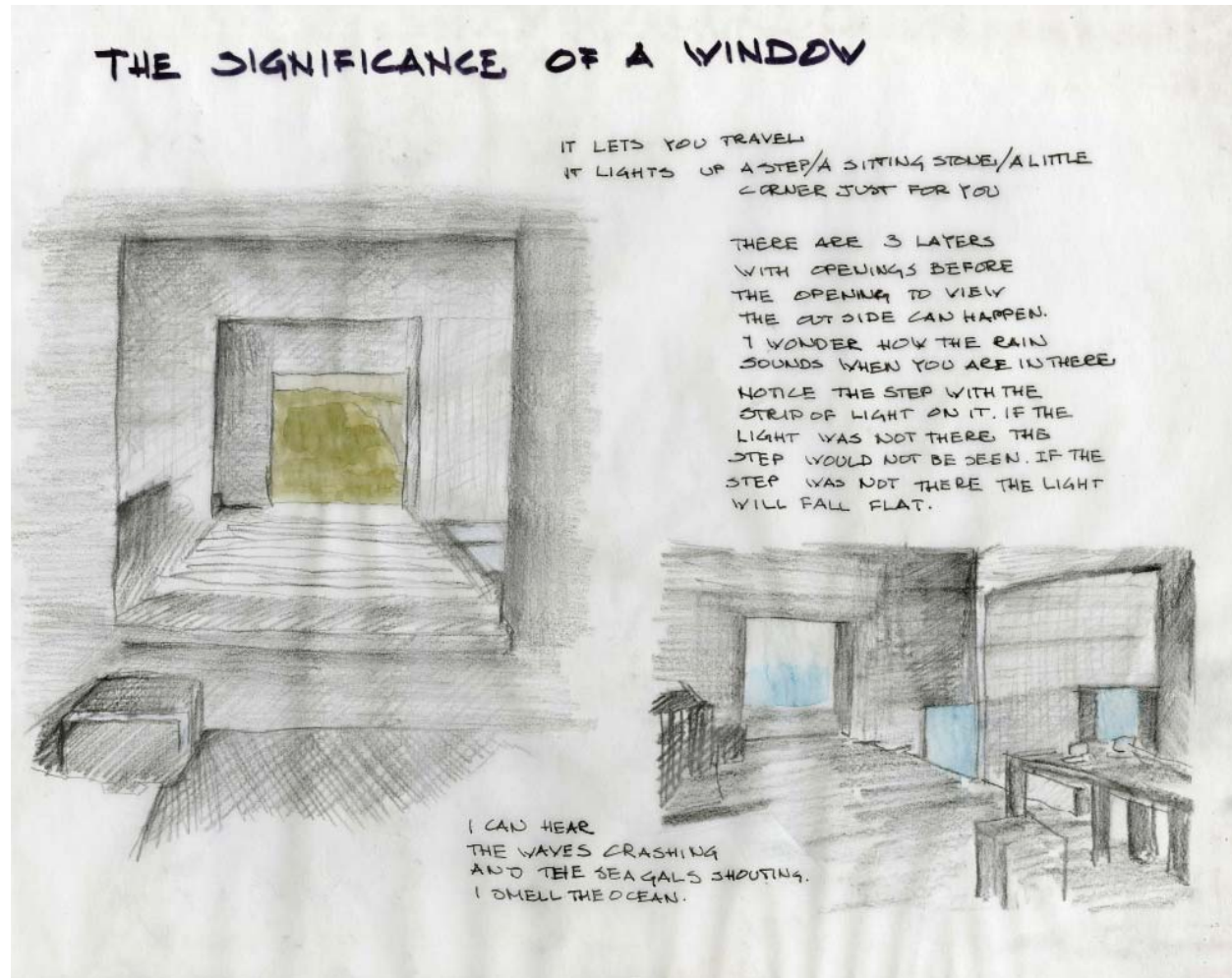


Fig.14.Poli House Significance of the Window



## St Andrews Beach House

St Andrews Beach House designed by Sean Godsell is situated in St Andrews Beach, Australia. The spatiality of the house has a linear rhythm. The tube-like form, wrapped around with a double skin, appears to be floating above the trees and the flat landscape. The house extends four columns and a staircase to the ground below. Once the elevated floor plane is reached the movement through the house happens in narrow long spaces, however the transparency and delicate scale of the skin and the constant exposure to nature, soften the intensity of the linear path. Moreover once the destination point at the end of the tube is reached, the clear opening rewards the traveler with the view of the horizon beyond. Programmatically the house is divided into two volumes within the skin, one is geared towards the individual, the other suggest gathering. The boundaries of the rooms become less defined and more maneuverable in the end of the common space, where the glass wall enclosures can be opened up to welcome the landscape. The bedrooms on the other hand are much more enclosed and are somehow reminiscent of monastic cells. Their window openings are covered by the delicate skin and the doors open up to the linear corridor. The layered enclosure of these rooms allow one to feel protected, but not isolated.

In St Andrews Beach House one is constantly reminded of the landscape beyond. This triggers a certain awareness of nature and our link to it. It is a home in the sense that it connects to the surrounding world.

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Fig.15.St Andrews Beach House Approach



Fig.16.St Andrews Beach House Plans and Parti

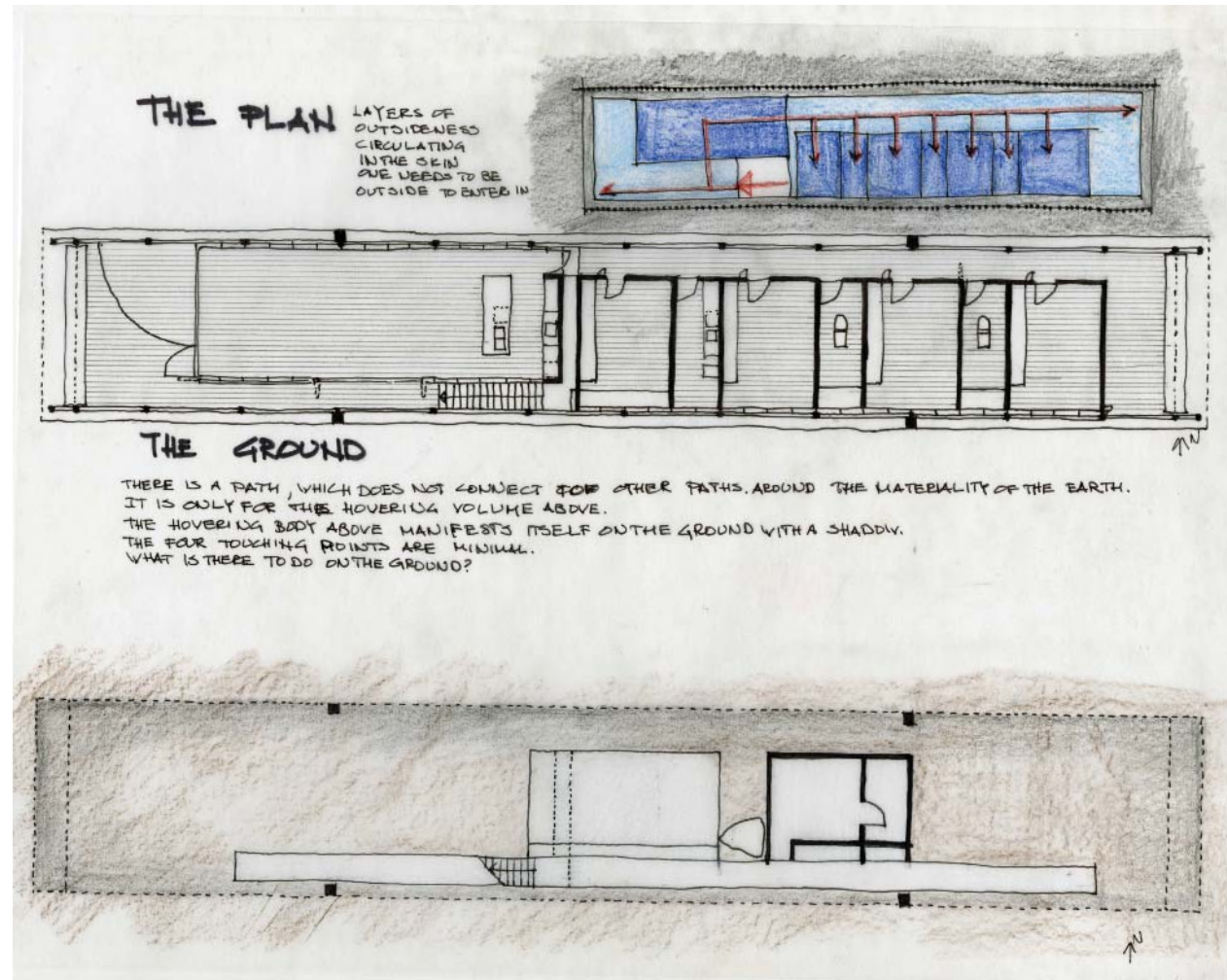


Fig.17.St Andrews Beach House Program

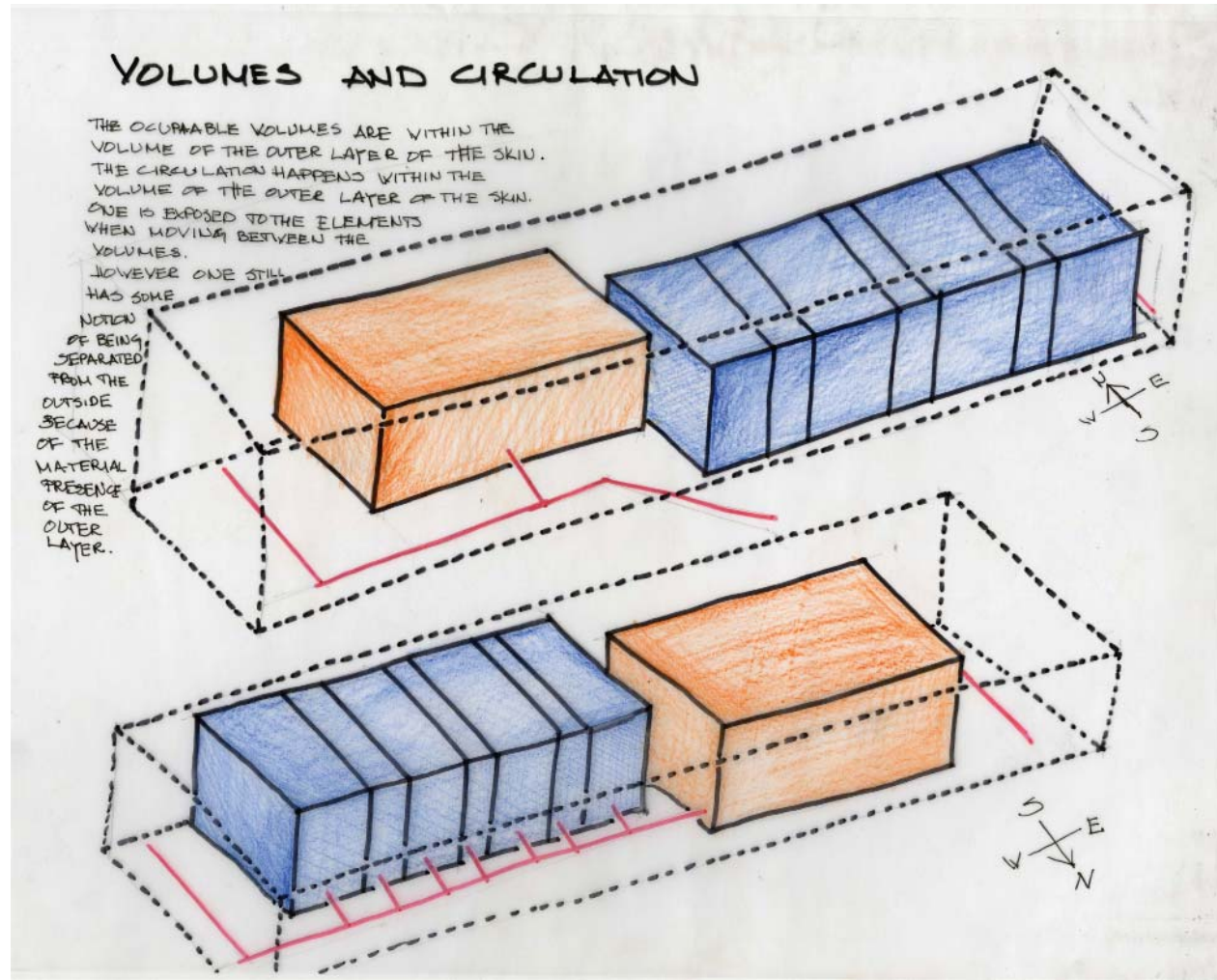




Fig.18.St Andrews Beach House Skin Study

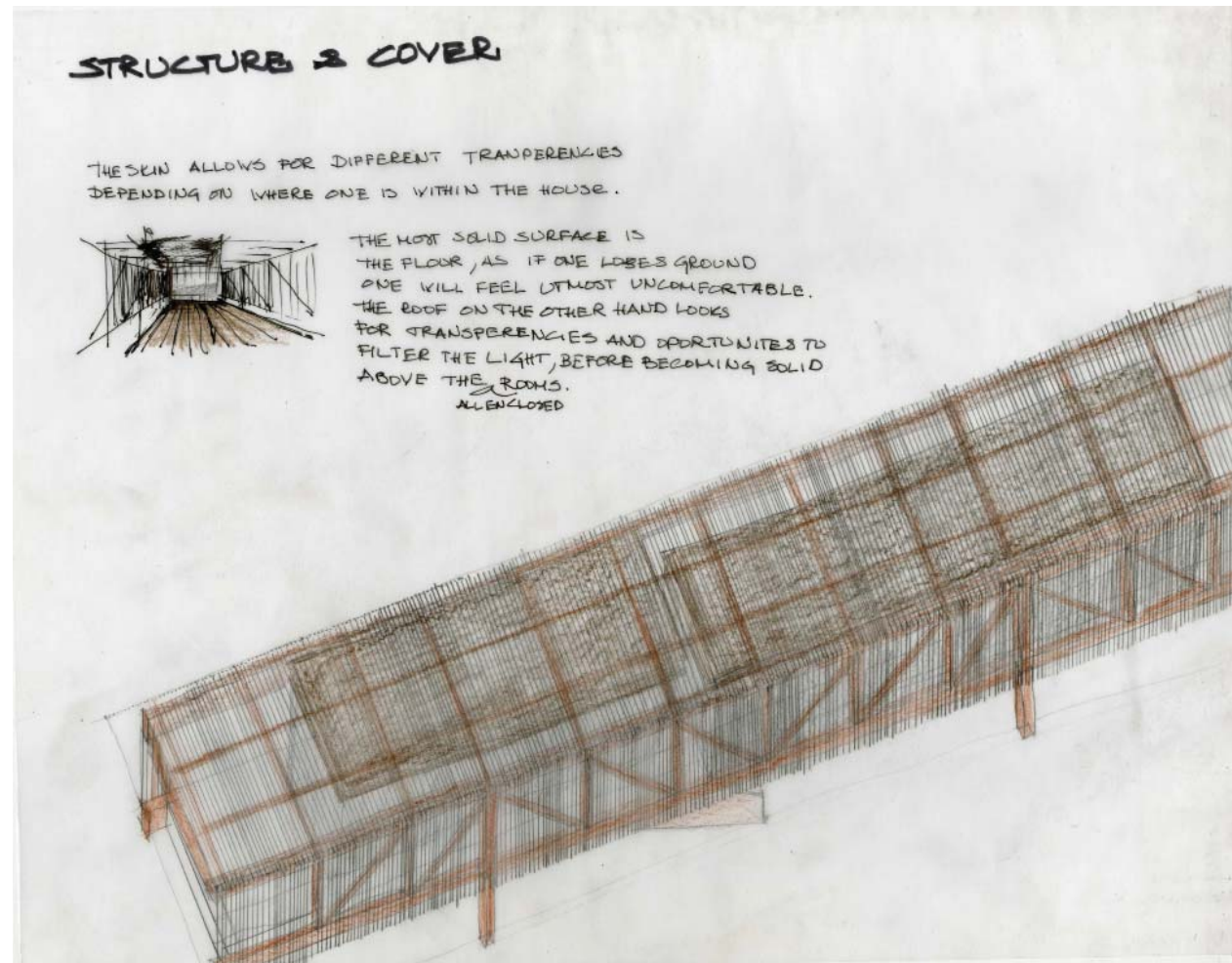
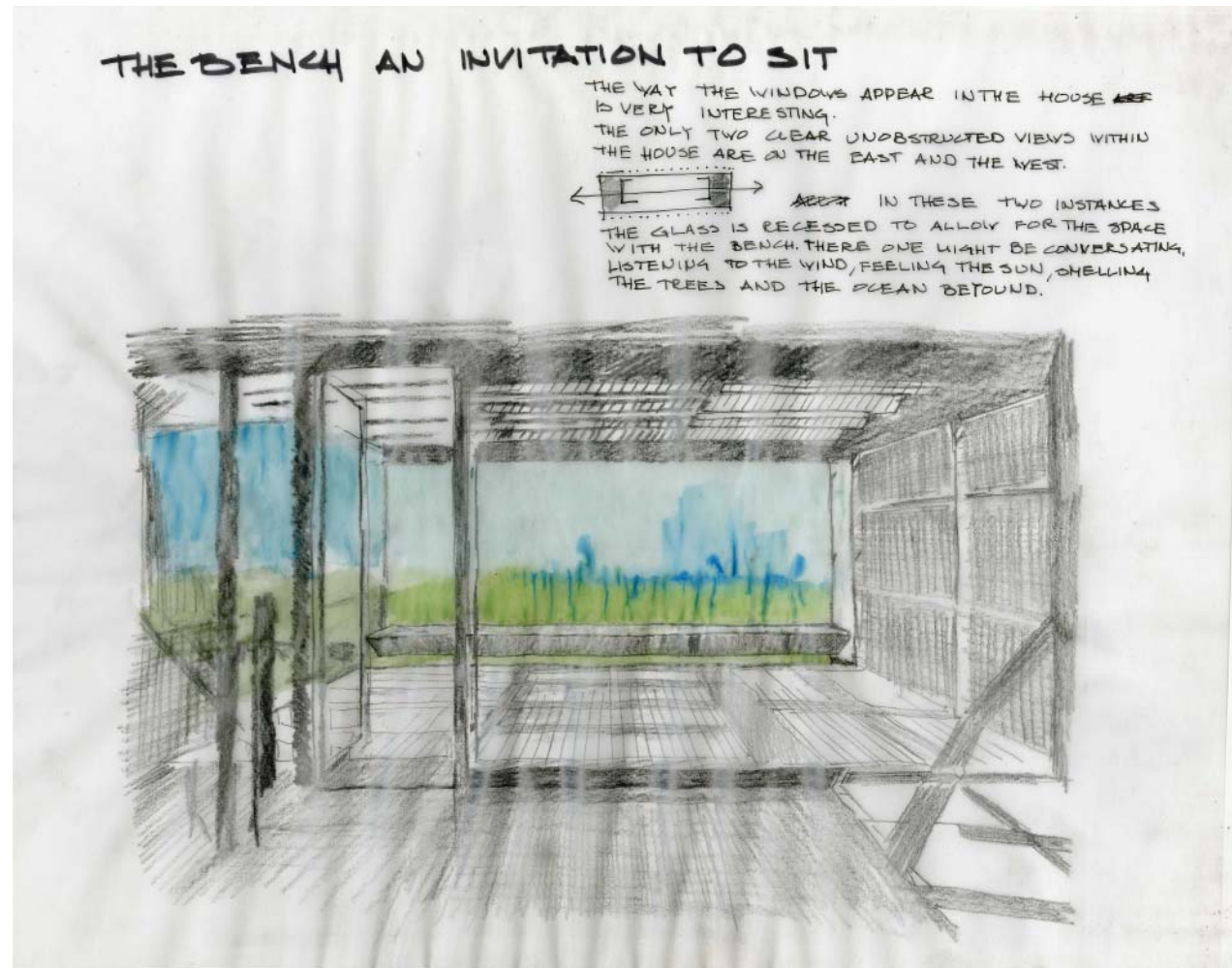


Fig.19.St. Andrews Beach House Window



## Alpine Barn and Stable

Alpine Barn and Stable by Devanthery & Lamuniere probably more than the other two case studies triggers a more traditional association with an image of home.

Small and modest, deeply rooted in the slope, the house speaks about the harsh environment in which it sits. The pitched roof, stone walls and rough wood siding seem genuine to the site. Somehow the materiality speaks of a tradition of building in a certain way, based on long range of empirical knowledge. However, even though remote, the house is quite in tune with advances in the world. There is no fireplace, so heating is achieved through technological ingenuity, probably emanating from the surfaces that constitute the enclosure of the rooms. In order to preserve the warmth the spaces are closely knit together. The kitchen, bathroom and the sauna, which are tucked under the earth, add a touch of modern day comfort.

As one enters one descends two steps down and the sunken floor reestablishes the connection to the ground. The enclosure at this level is one of concrete and stone. The bottom landing of the staircase peaks into the room and leads up to the intimate space for sleeping. Once in the upper floor one is enclosed by warm wood paneling. The vertical relationship between the two floors acknowledges gravity, as that which is heavier supports that which is lighter and more fragile. The material transition also establishes a certain psychological stability and a perceptual nuance between the spaces in the house, giving certain comfort and clarity to those who inhabit this dwelling.

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Fig.20.Alpine Barn and Stable in the Landscape



Fig.21.Alpine Barn and Stable Floor Plan

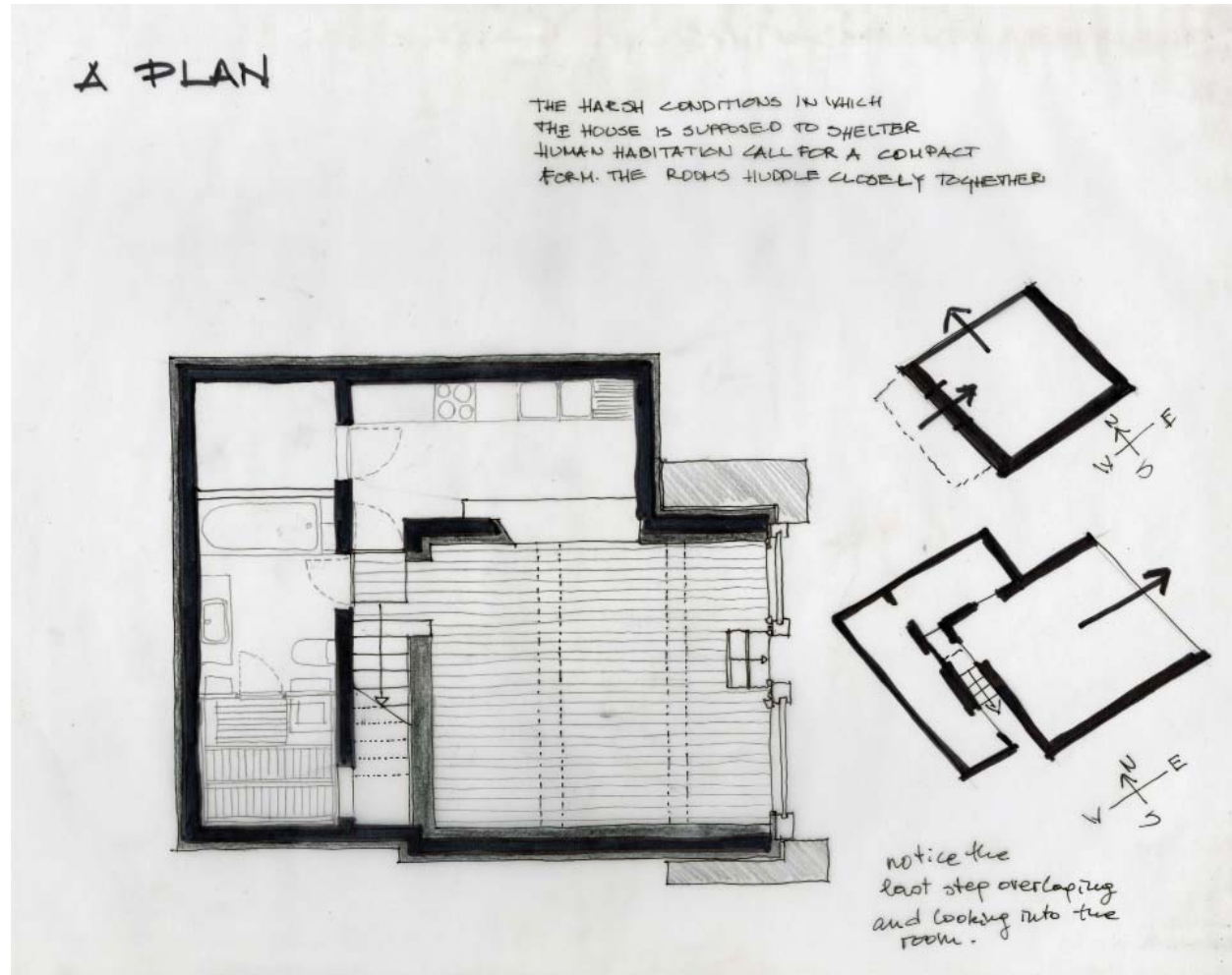


Fig.22.Alpine Barn and Stable Sections

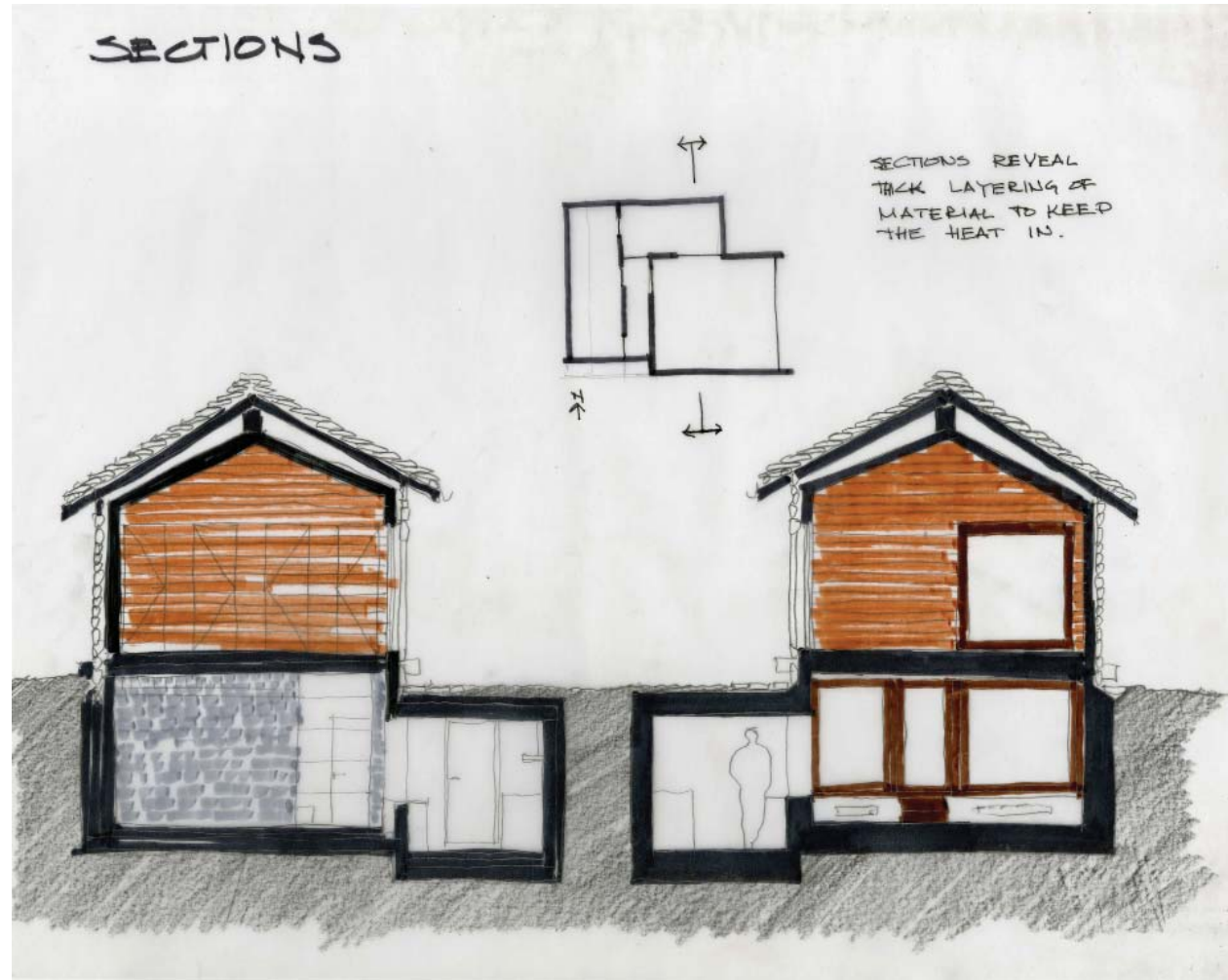


Fig.23.Alpine Barn and Stable Program

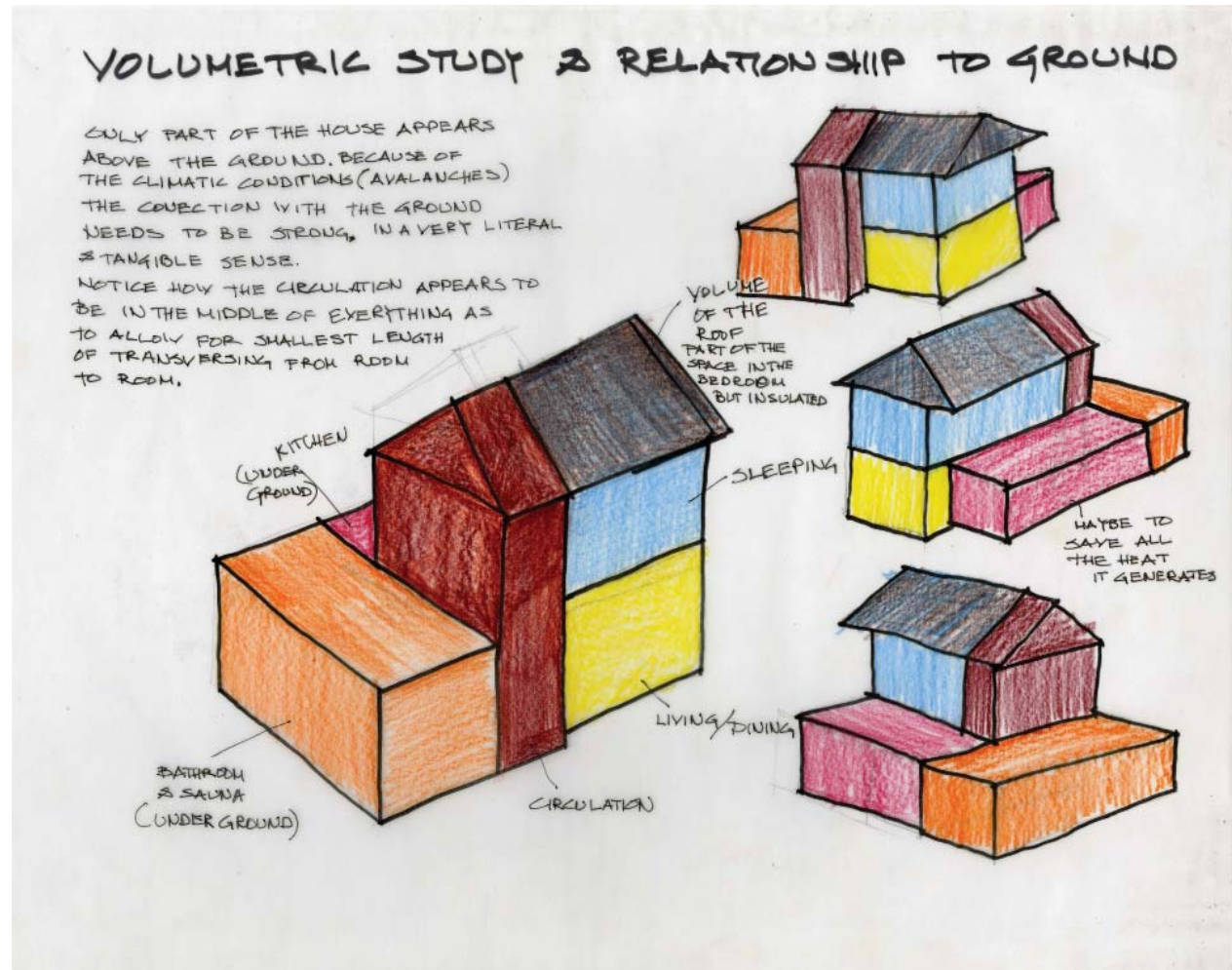


Fig.24.Alpine Barn and Stable Materiality





## Conclusion

The three analyzed houses embody certain qualities of homeliness. In their unique way they respond to the need to dwell.

Poli House reminds us of the intimate scale of the nook and the human ability to construct protection in otherwise hostile environment. St Andrews Beach House talks about the landscape and the importance to be in tune with nature. Alpine Barn and Stable shows that what is traditional can be reinterpreted and attuned to the expectations of today.

Most importantly the three houses show that the home quality lies in the intangible sense of comfort and belonging, which results from meaningful construction of spaces that understand our bodies and psyche.

## Chapter Three Program

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How does one program a home?

There is a struggle in this because what home means is different for every one of us.

A home is lived in, and gives us a tangible base on which to build memories. The quality of the spaces should be such that supports human habitation and the actions that are to take place. Even though one cannot foresee all that can happen or how people will behave, we share common traits both on physical and perceptual level. For example we all eat, sleep, procreate and we search for an enclosure to do these things free of frustrations and interruptions. At the same time our bodies react in a similar way to things that are high or low, vast or narrow, hot and cold and so on.

As a notion, home provides us with a certainty and familiarity rooted in a rhythmic repetition of actions and perceptive knowledge of the spaces we are in. Thinking about it this way, the program acquires a sort of ritualistic aspect, building on the claim that home is a sacred notion. These rituals can differ based on culture, age, climate, but there are elements that remain universal, or more appropriately said, common for all of us.

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## On the Significance of the Entrance

Since home is a place in the world, a small universe in the bigger universe, one must be able to enter as well as exit it.

The significance of the entrance lies in the fact that it is that door or space that lets you transition from the unknown to the familiar and vice versa. What lies on the two sides of a door is vastly different. Whether it is opened or closed also completely changes the space. As one goes through, one leaves something behind to acquire something beyond and in this sense is transformed.

For example in Bulgaria people usually take their shoes off as they enter their own house. The gesture acknowledges that one is entering a place different from the outside. The desire to keep clean is not only physical, but also spiritual.

Exiting or leaving has different traditions associated with it. Upon departure for a long trip Bulgarians spill water in front of the door and the one who is leaving walks on it for good luck. Russians sit for a little bit and say a prayer.

The space of the threshold is thickly layered with memories and traditions. The moments of arrival and departure are short, but they concentrate a lot of emotion. Often they signify milestones in a life of a person - departure for college, a wedding day, coming home with a baby, death. The thought that you have finally arrived at a place where you no longer have to carry your luggage gives tremendous psychological comfort.

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Fig.25.Entrance

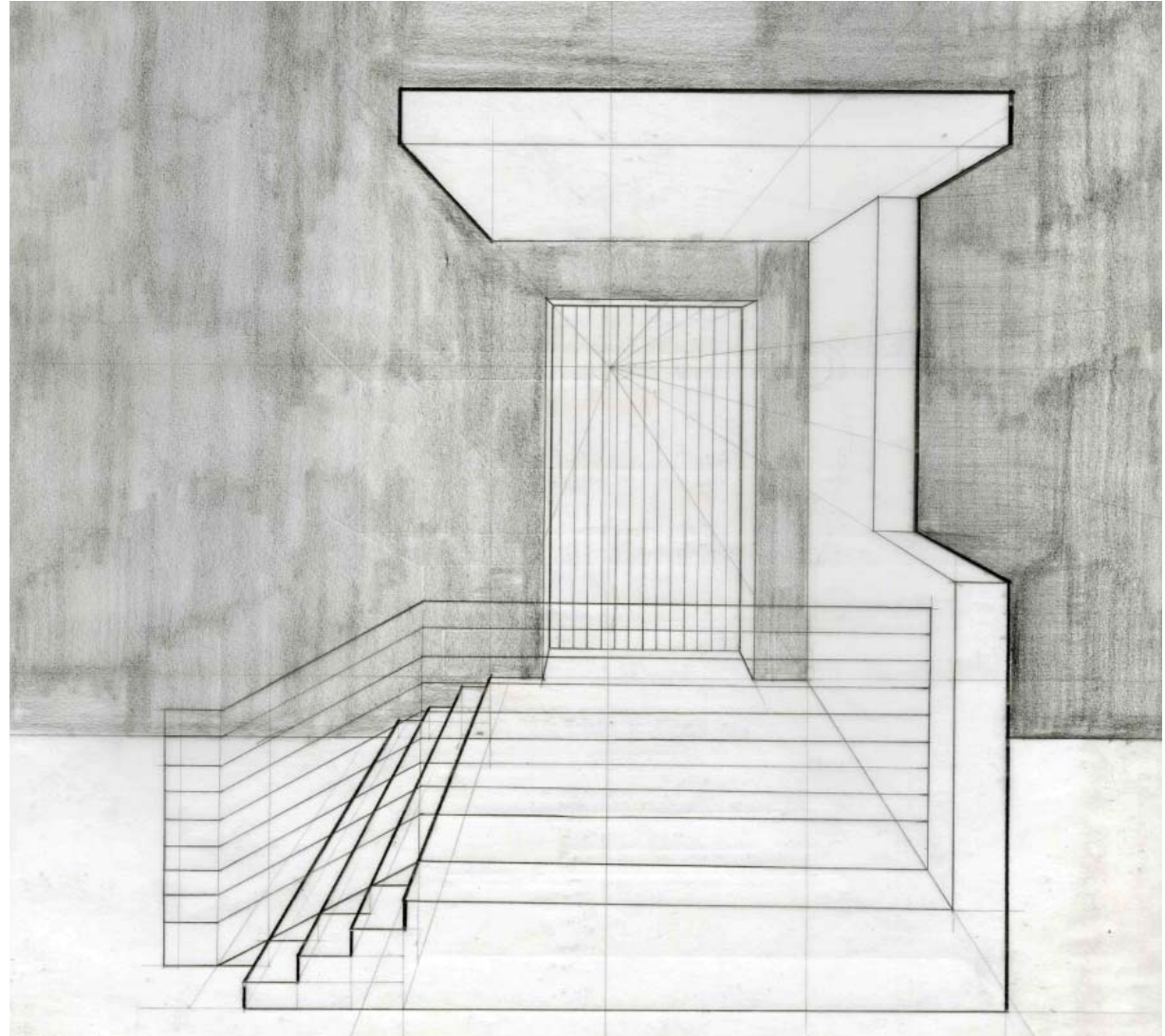
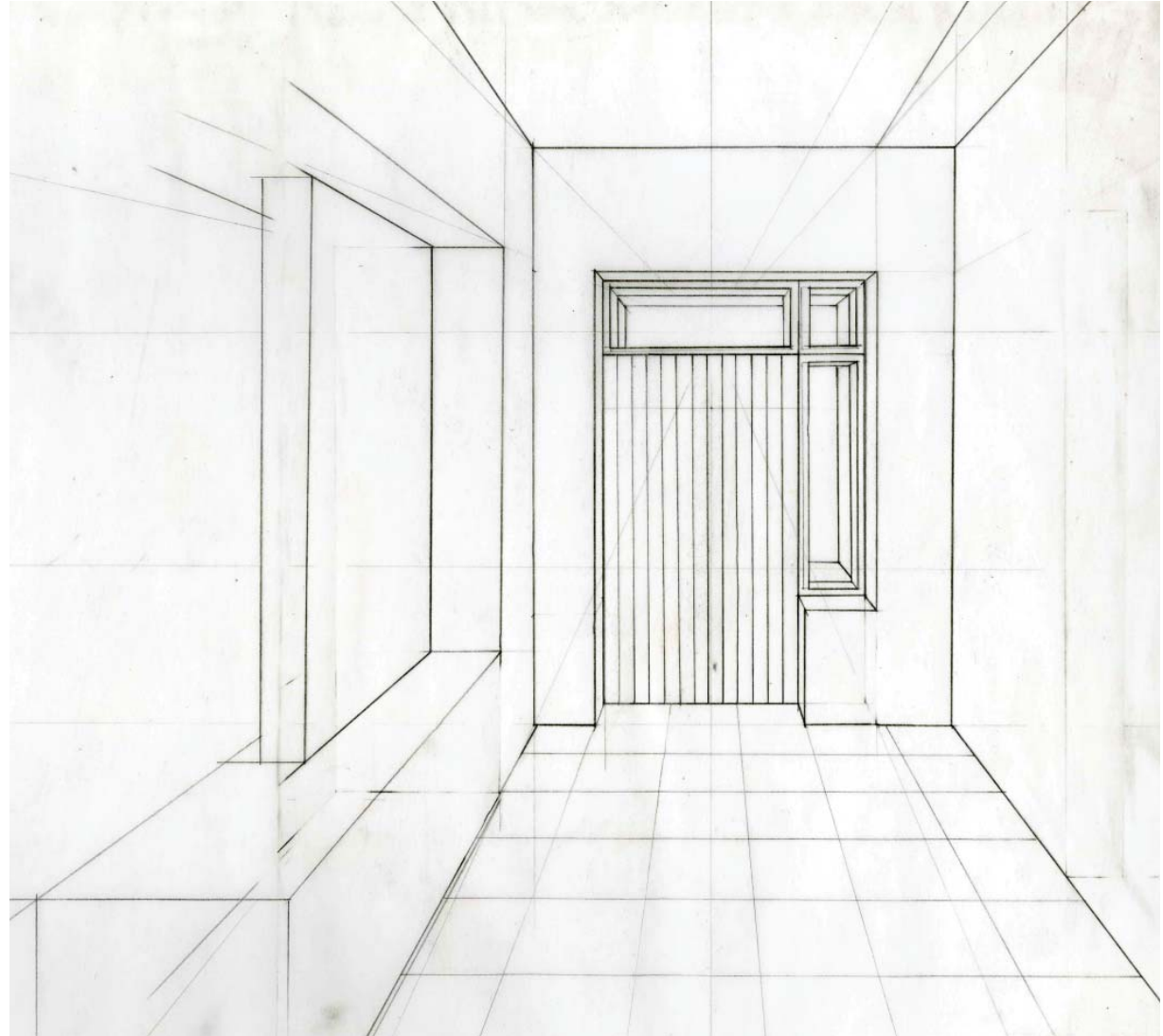


Fig.26.Leaving



## Window and Light

So what guides us in once we have passed the entrance/leaving threshold? What reveals to us that which is inside?

Once we have gained access, a space welcomes us in. Light enters through openings to animate the enclosure. In this, windows play an important role in how the space is going to be perceived, both during the day and during the night.

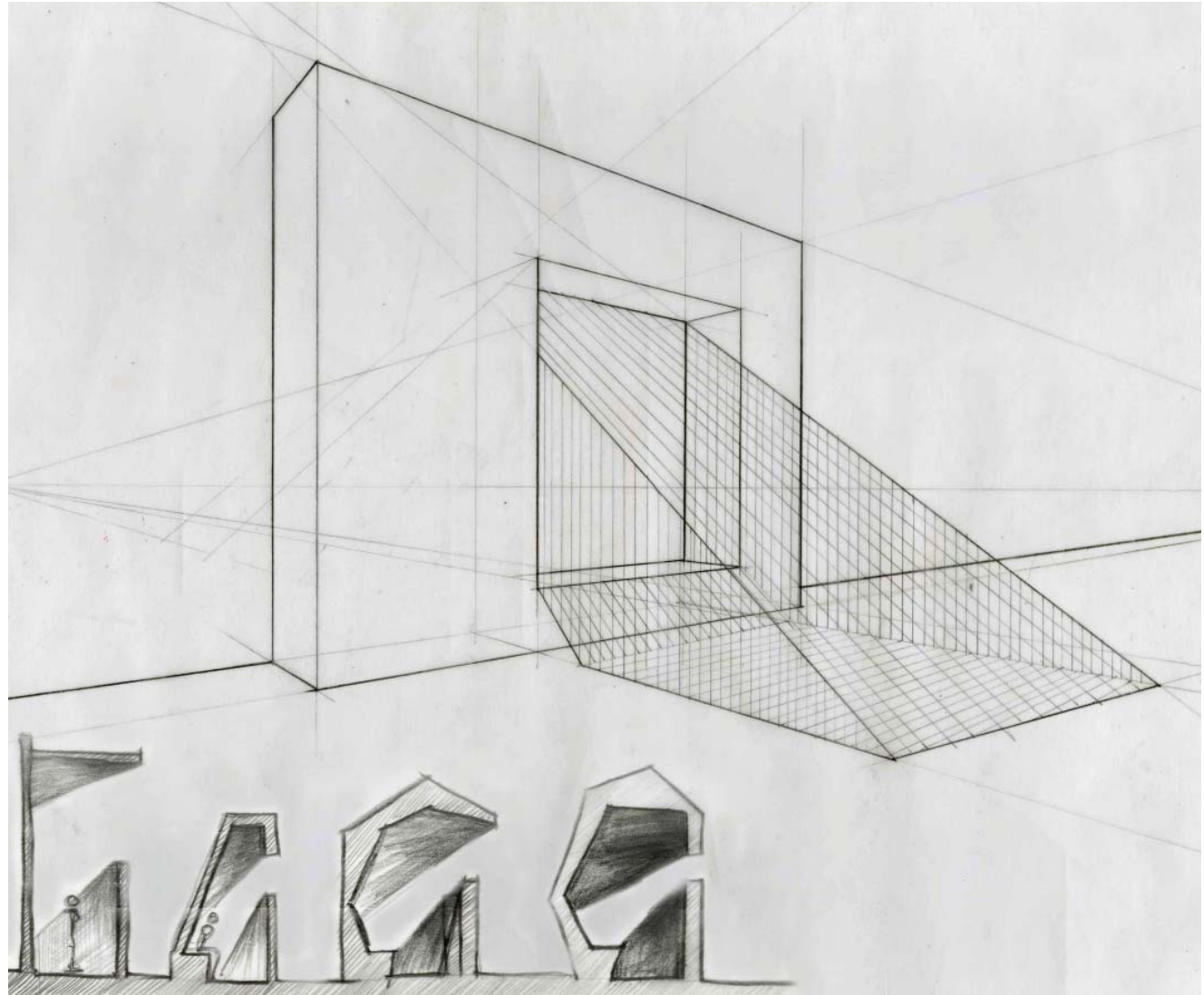
Windows provide access, but it is different from the one given by a door. The threshold that a window creates is imaginative and virtual. A skylight, or the opening that brings the horizon, touches upon the untouchable, even the idea that anything is possible. During the day a window allows for the mind to travel outside to as far as what it reveals. Thus, the space of within connects to that which is beyond. A window frames a world of possibilities. It is often a favorite place for someone to engage in daydreaming.

The night renders the windows as dark patches on the wall. At that time, the lights one ignites, shine from within onto the darkness around. If viewed from the outside the enclosure becomes a beacon of comfort and warmth. To a distant traveler a place for rest is in sight. From the inside the inhabitant is sheltered from the unknown.

The dualistic nature of a window allows us to create connections both from inside out and from outside in. Light and the world around become a programmatic element of the home. At the same time the inside touches the world around.

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Fig.27.Light



## The Centrality of the Fire Place

If we forget for a moment today's reality of the electric bulb and go back to a time when fire was the thing that enlightened the night we will get at the heart of what makes a home here in this world.

When people roamed the earth, the day probably felt safe as the sun was warming the ground and that which was around was visible. At night however, they depended on fire to cast light into the shadows of the unknown, to allow for the food to be prepared, to give focus and warmth, to arrange people around in a circle so conversations can spark and questions can be answered. This focus point, a small piece of the sun at night, nurtured social interaction and physical comfort.

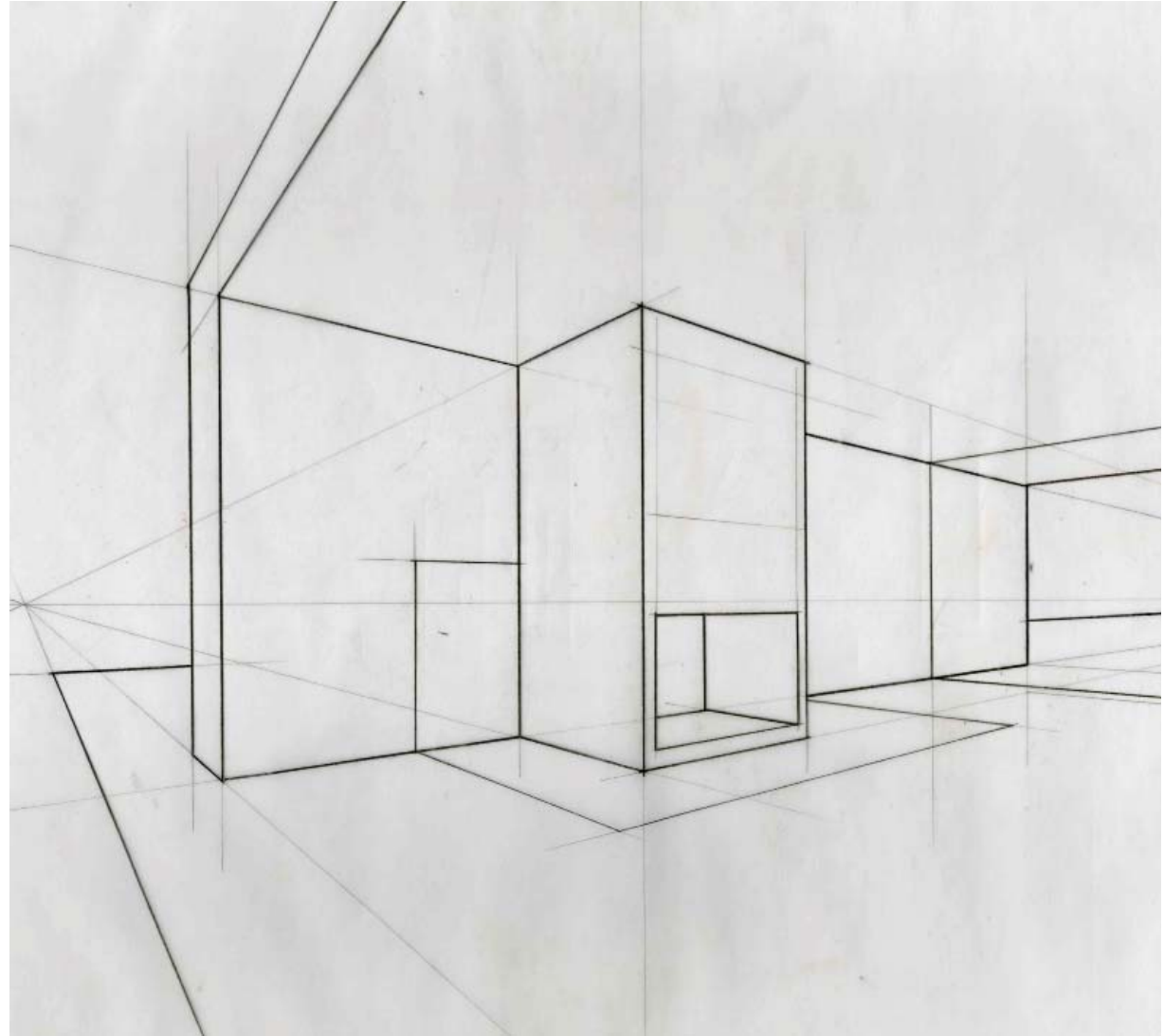
Today we do not depend on fire for the light at night or the warmth in winter. But that does not mean that we have lost the meaning. In the spaces we inhabit today metaphorical fires burn and those should be acknowledged and designed for.

The tangible example of the fire place provides focus, centrality, a point from which the world unfolds. A space that carries qualities that allow for gathering is the modern day metonymic device for the fire place. The body finds many postures here. One can be sitting, laying, standing. The body also finds many different engagements. One can be cooking, eating, reading, learning, listening, thinking. In any case the warmth that one seeks is both physical and psychological. Programmatically a home is bound to acknowledge this need.

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Fig.28.Fire Place



## A Home within the Home

To our homes we bring that which is dear to us, things that have meaning, that we want to protect. We gather objects to preserve memories.

The small spaces that shelves create, help us organize and understand that which is important to us. Maybe something is kept at a hands reach, but other things are tucked out of sight. The way we arrange our belongings creates a choreographic play of values and beliefs. In that shelves often become small alters, or homes to objects that we find important.

Different spatial values can be shown through the way adjacencies are done. Here the element of stairs has served a big role in crafting transitions between different levels. Stairs, simply by their nature, suggest a vertical space, an aspiration to reach either higher towards the sky, or lower into the ground. In any case, they connect spaces with different habitation needs and acknowledge that although home has a focus, one cannot understand it simply as a sphere. Apart from the threshold that leads into the home there are yet smaller scale thresholds inside.

For example there is a transition between the space where one eats and the space where one sleeps. The two actions are things which we all do. While eating can have a more communal feel to it, sleeping is strictly individual. When one is sleeping one is alone and the body seeks to lie down and rest. The space for sleeping can be understood as a smaller home within the home, a home for the self. Moreover, we can understand sleeping as an attempt to

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Fig.29.Shelf

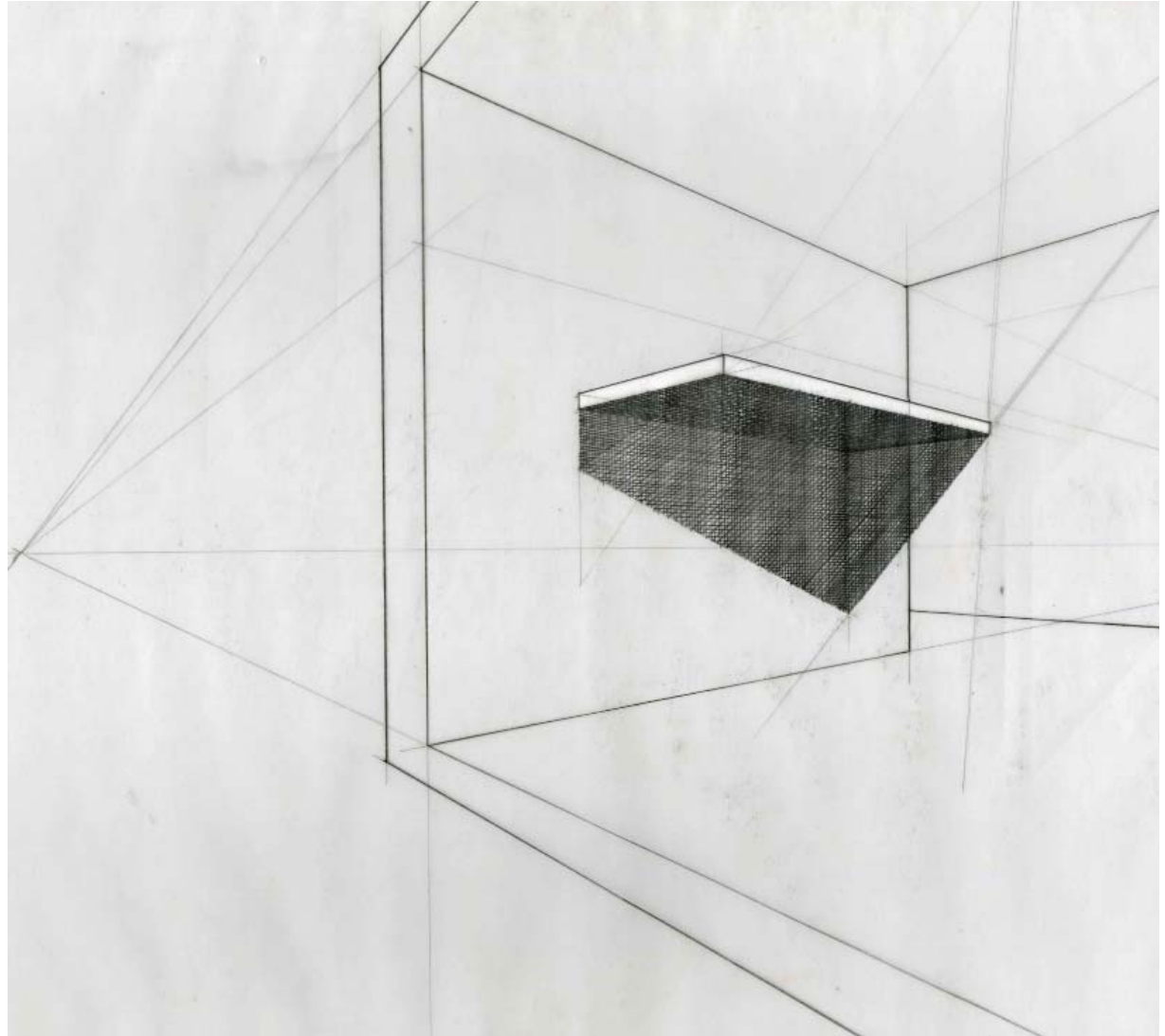


Fig.30.Stair

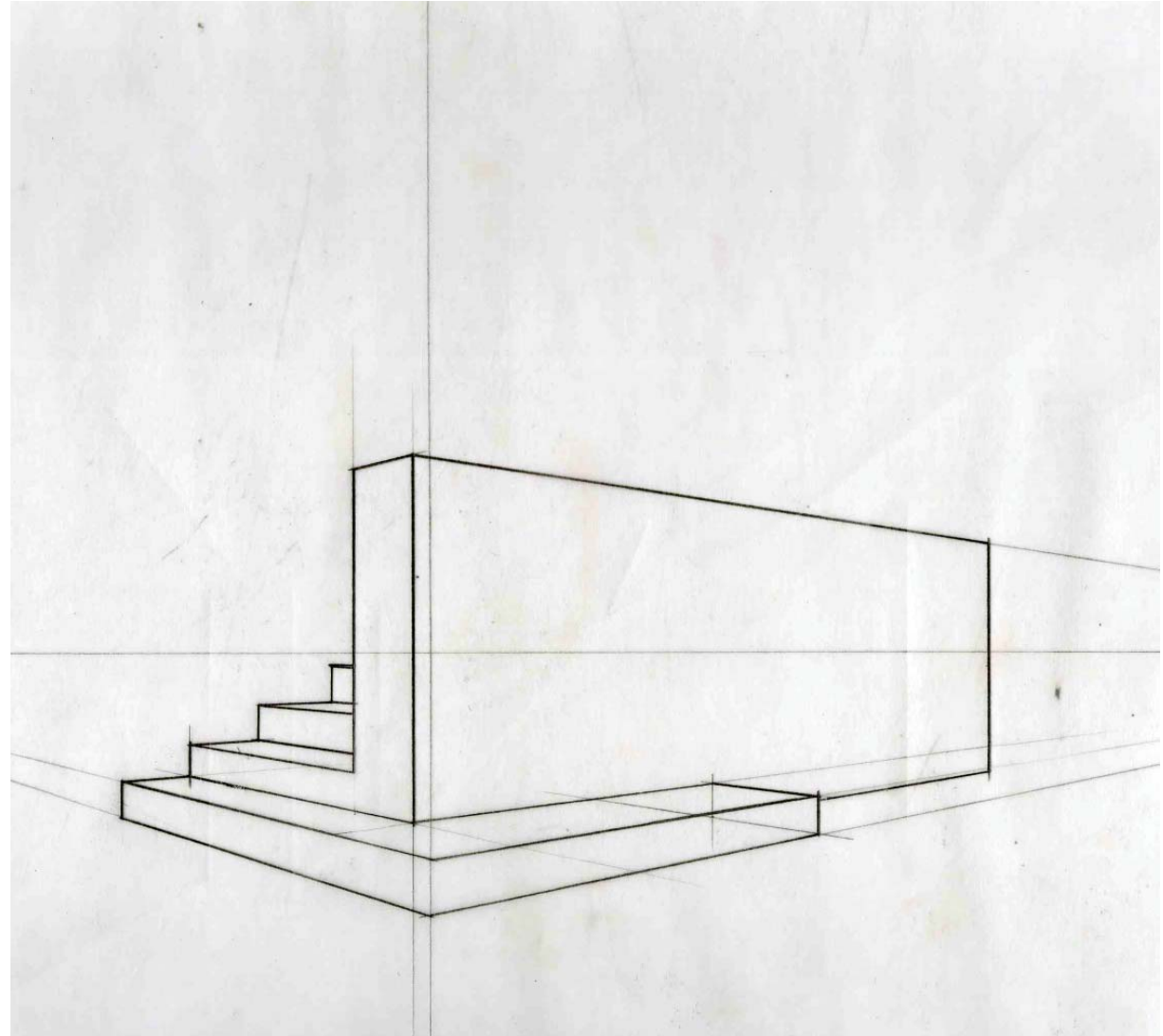
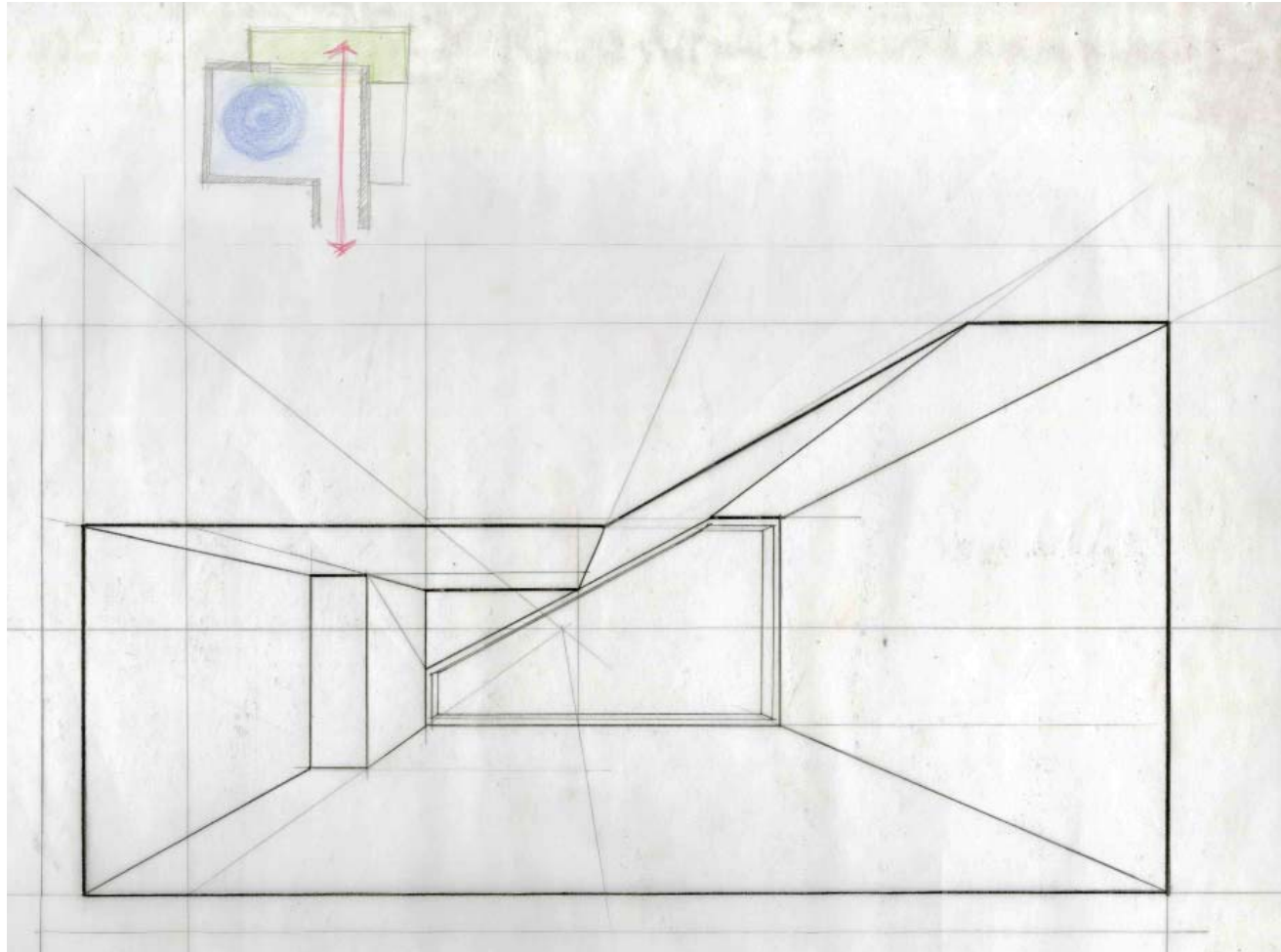


Fig.31.Sleeping



reach the beyond and even eternity as in eternal sleep or death. In this way of thinking, what is revealed to us is that this smaller home relates to the sacredness of life itself and can be understood as a metaphor for life and death here on earth in the actions of waking up in the morning and falling asleep at night. The way the space is programmatically charged is guided by the understanding that home is a space for inner reflection as well, therefore the focus is not directed only outward to the beyond of the horizon but also to the beyond that is inside us.

### Conclusion

A threshold, a focus, a quiet spot for ourselves, these can all help us make sense of the world. The program of a home is a reflection of the person that lives in it. And although the form and the resolution can differ, there are quite a few similarities that we share and that we can build on.

## Chapter Four Research through Drawing

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Looking for the meaning of home solely through reading presents its limitations. In this research, drawing has been a useful method for investigation of ideas.

Initially the graphics stemmed from the thoughts that were discovered in readings, or were based on conclusions derived from the case study analysis and the program. However, as images they acquired a life on their own and provoked questions as to how well they manage to portray the ideas that they came from.

The drawings that followed turned from reflective into analytical. They became quite abstract, as what was being investigated did not have neither a readily available image to symbolize it, nor a clear definition.

Further investigation was conducted through the making of three dimensional objects, or models. Those proved valuable, since they required some sort of structural integrity. With the gain of this understanding more drawings were produced.

Over the process the images evolved in their complexity, as the concepts were understood further. Some are more successful than others in portraying the ideas, but they are all valuable steps along the way.

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## The Fold

The image of the fold is built on the idea of a journey towards a center. The spiral movement around a point allows for the reference of previous points along the way. The path that brings the mind in, is visible through an opening, once the mind is inside. The different levels are formed to acknowledge the need to go towards multiple different center points, since things that have different nature require different kind of focus.

In a similar way the notion of home changes through the life of the person. Previous formulations can be referenced back as soon as the new, reevaluated definition is achieved. At the same time, the mind frame evaluates and prioritizes and in this establishes different levels and their relationship. The principles that form the fold constantly change, as the mind frame changes.

Since feeling at home in a certain place is a matter of perception, the mental image is of equal importance as the tangible reality. In the mental realm, in the search for focus, the world unfolds from a point, to fold back in again. The center remains empty, for that which we are trying to achieve is space in which the mind can dwell.

On a sheet of paper, before one knows anything, a line can show where the gap is. In the gap the mind can dwell, for now there is a boundary drawn, and space can be anticipated. From there on after, one can unfold and build around. This alignment and temporal understanding of where one is can be achieved again, because now, one knows how to draw the first line.

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Fig.32.Fold

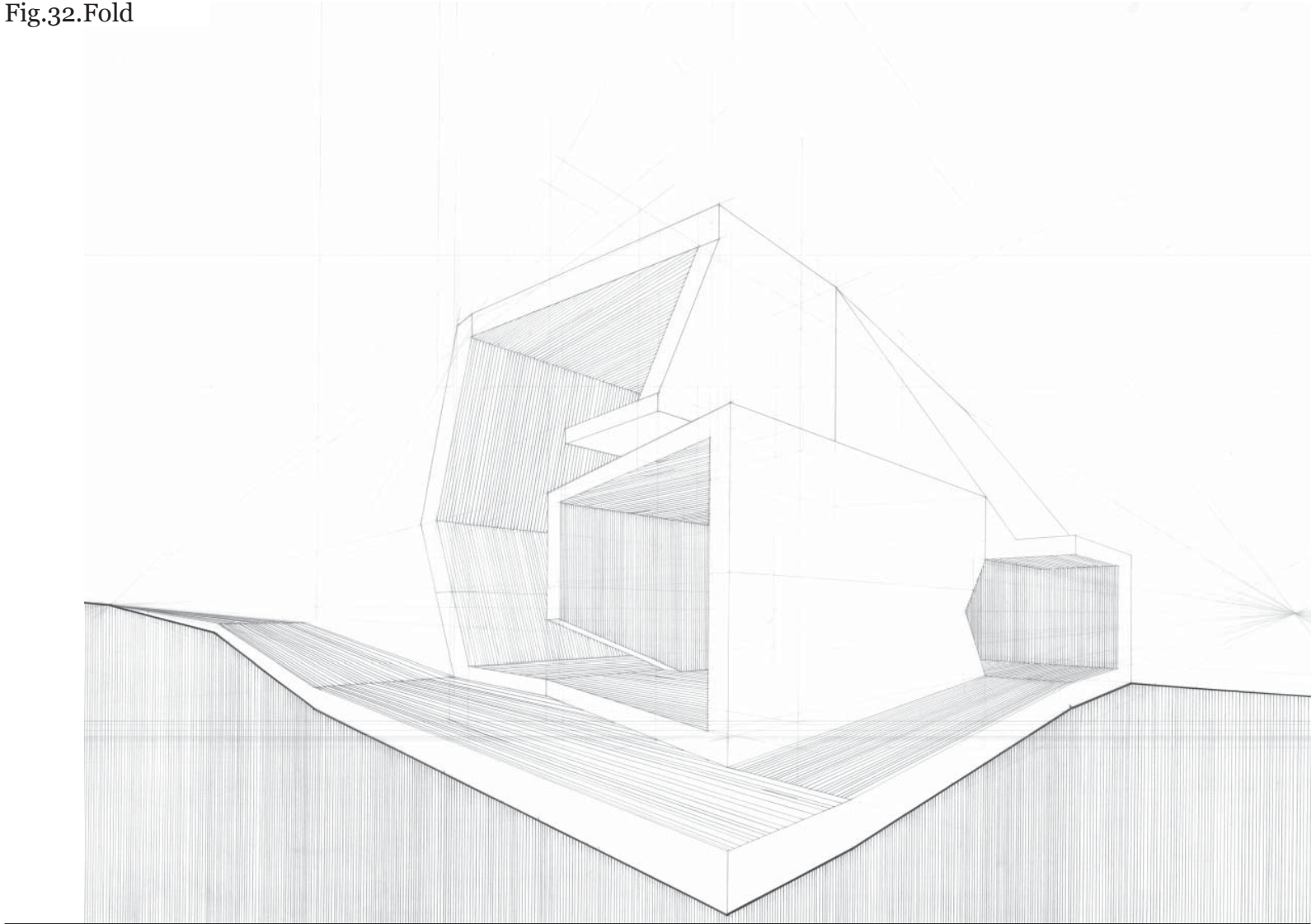
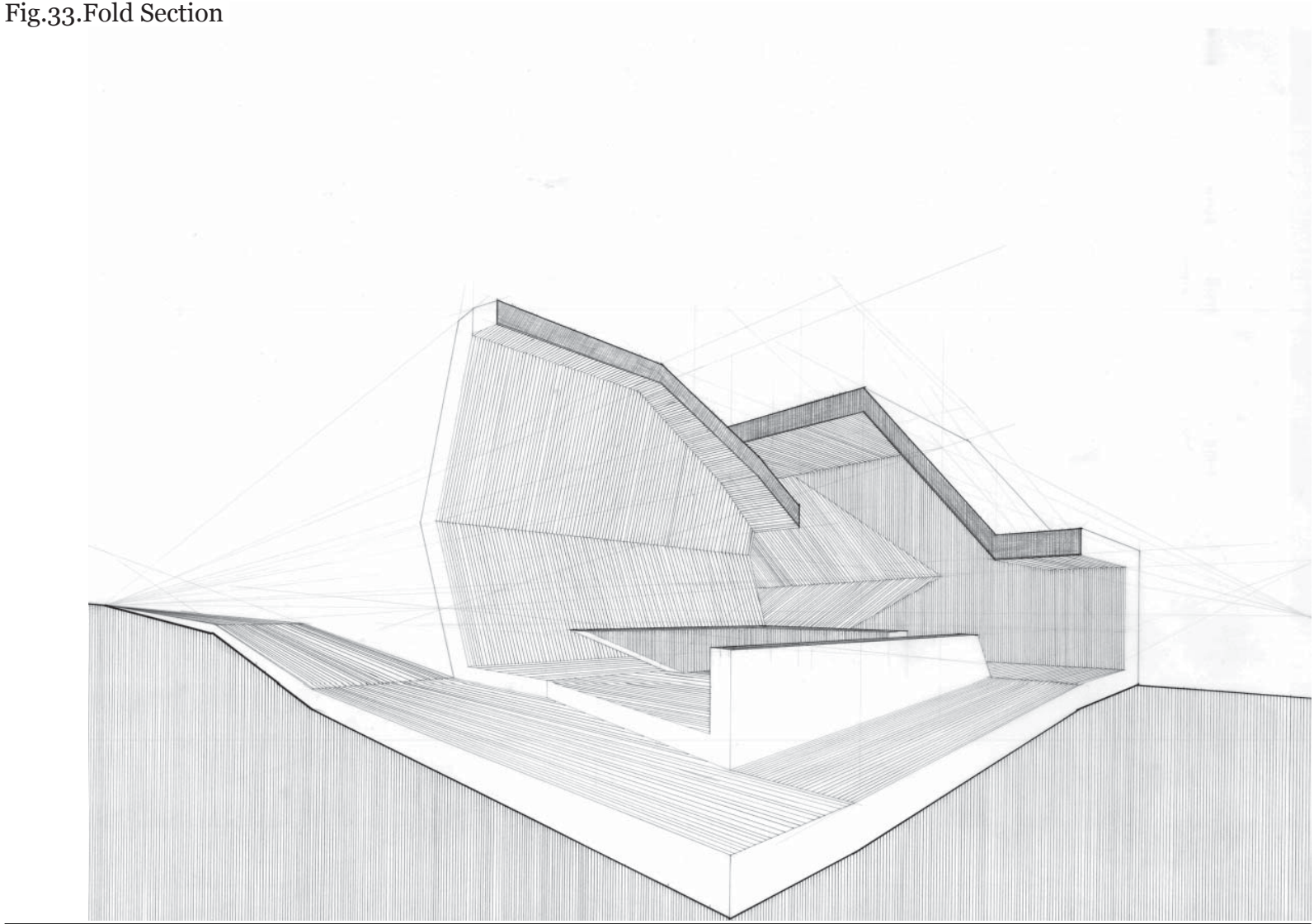


Fig.33.Fold Section



## Between Solid and Empty

We dwell between the infinitely solid and the infinitely empty. The empty allows for movement, the solid provides context. The two infinities cannot be comprehended fully, but the middle ground in which we stand allows us to strive towards them. We can establish planes and levels from which to reference what is around.

The drawings are carvings. The first is inspired by the way men initially found an opening in the ground and in turn dug further, in order to create a space to dwell. Therefore, at the end of a path, the void swells. The single entry, takes one to a innermost place, where one feels nurtured and contained. The solid becomes a holding ground. Further on, when the path is carved all the way through the mass, two entry points are established. Thus, a beginning and an end can be referenced from the gray area. Here one moves between two separate distant horizons, one being birth, the other one death. And finally, in the crossing of two carved paths, lays again a reference point.

If one takes the idea of the intersection into a tectonic study of a frame, what results is the knowledge of how to form a place even if the holding ground is not present. The crossing develops in the three dimensions simultaneously. A point is established and there solidity and growth can develop. Once put into space the crossing casts a shadow and begins to exist. By crossing linear elements, the void in the carving becomes the solid in the construct. Therefore, we can understand the holding ground as the primordial mold that thought us how to establish reference points.

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Fig.34.Carving 1

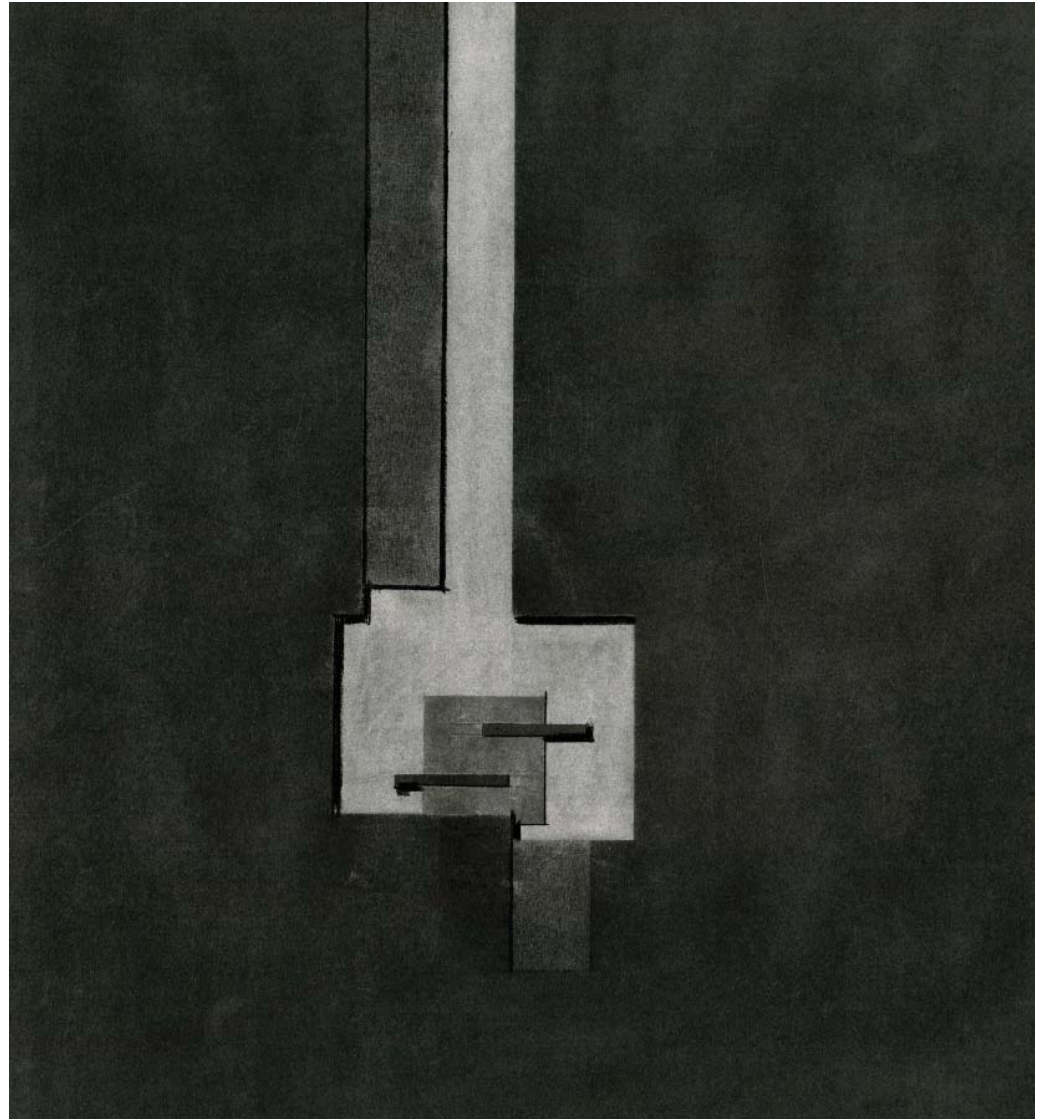


Fig.35.Carving 2

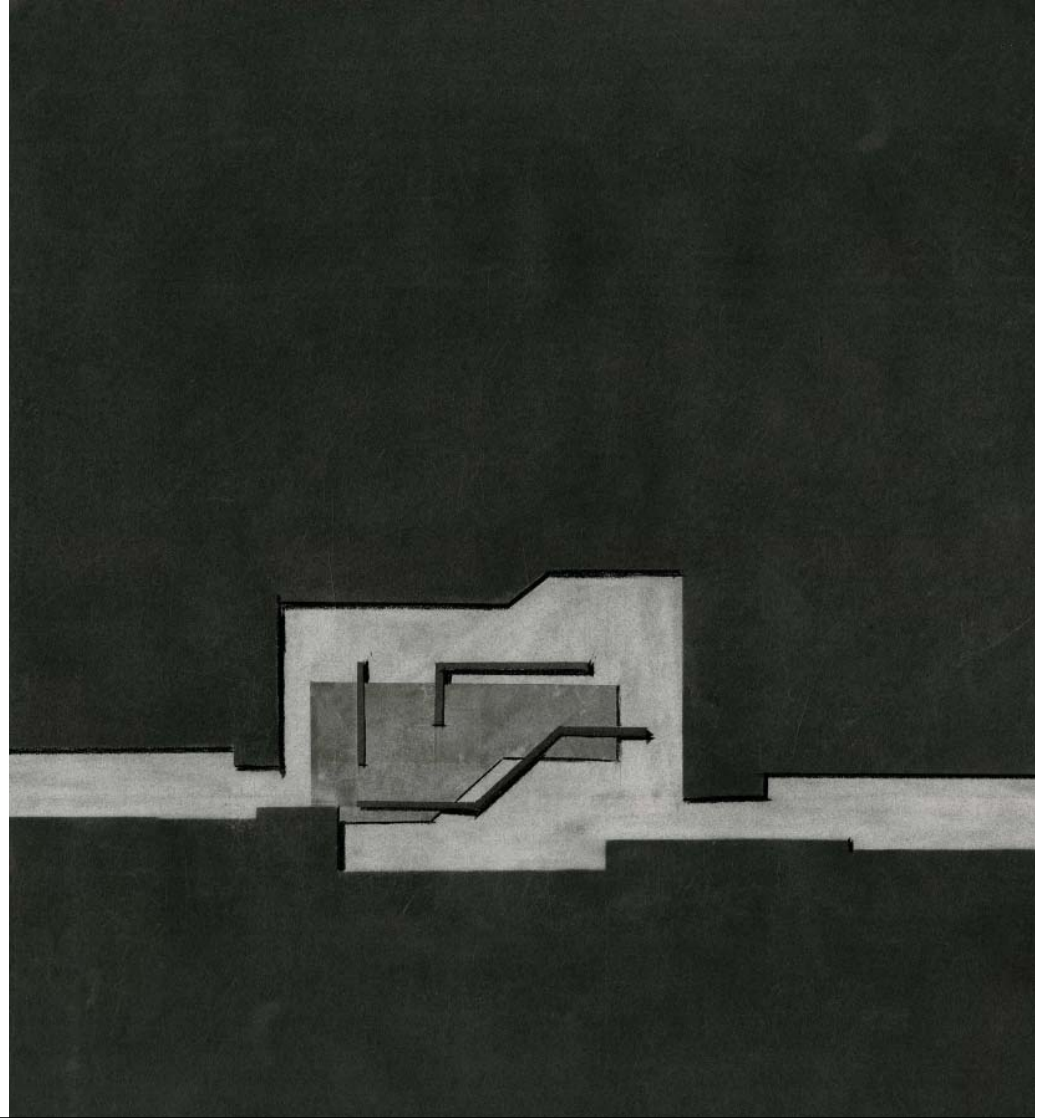


Fig.36.Carving 3

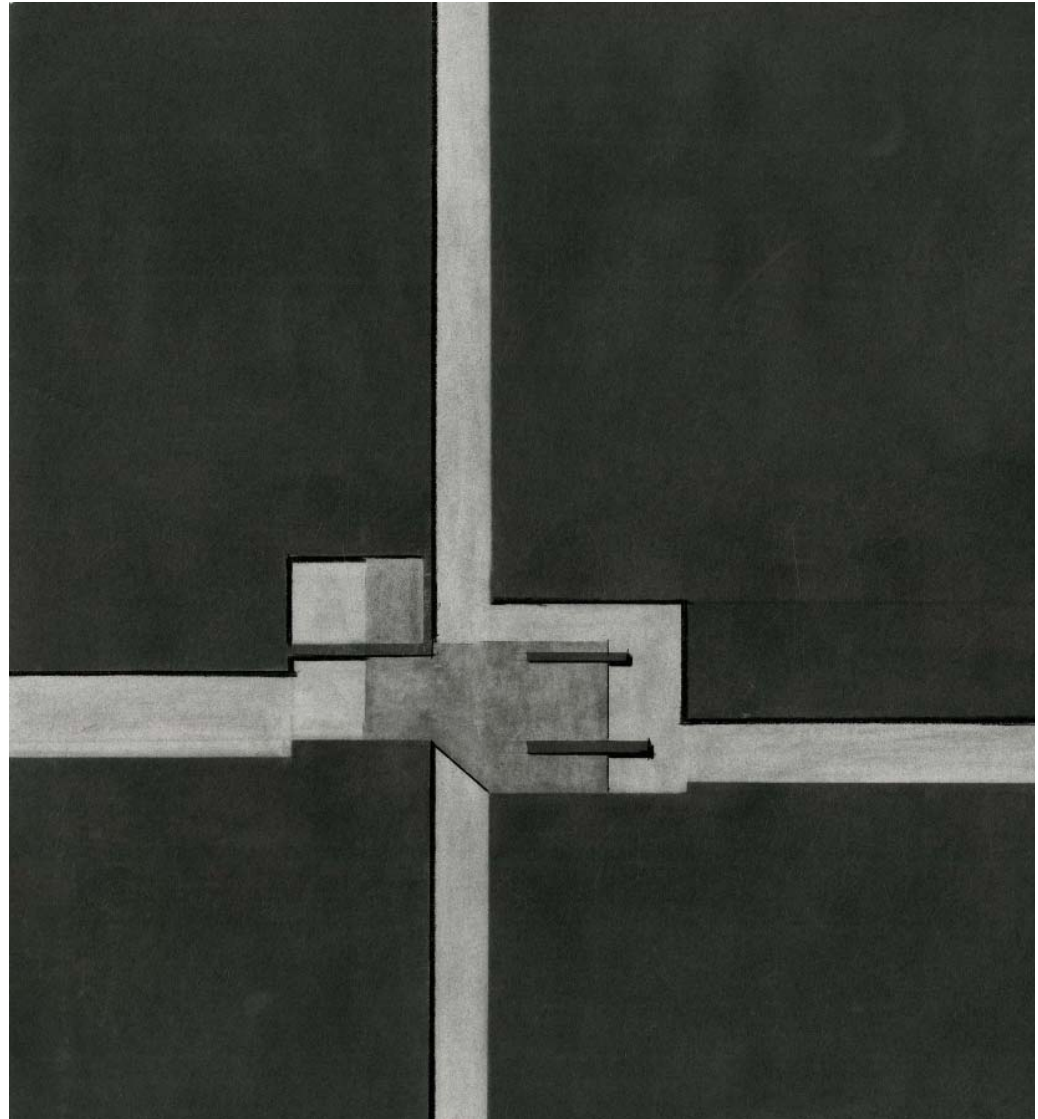
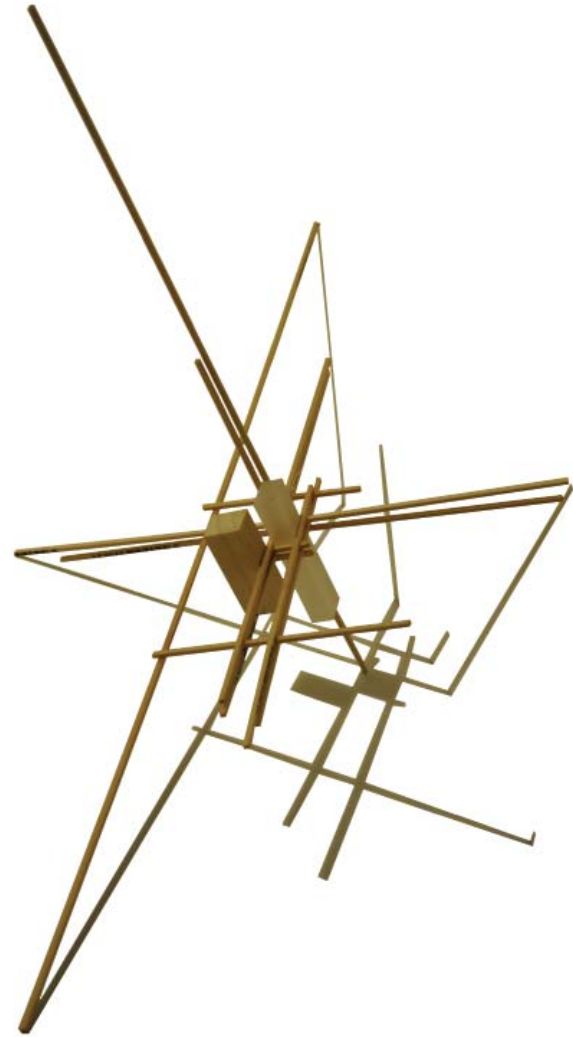


Fig.37.The Construct of Intersection



## The Floating Planes

The floating planes are an exploration of the spatial implication and relationship between path, entry, cellar, ground level and garret. As the path moves through, the spaces form around it. The entry is the threshold between outside and inside. Once inside, the cellar, ground level and the garret relate in a vertical manner, stacked one on top of each other. To use Bachelard's understanding of the house might seem like a stretch. (Bachelard 1964, 17) However, the verticality and the centrality he talks about in "The Poetics of Space" echo key concepts that help define the notion of home for a person. Mainly, the vertical relationship relates to the idea of the axis, through which the connection from ground to sky is established and a point of reference is formed.

In the drawings the ground and the sky are not present. The quality of the light is omnidirectional, because the ideas have not found a ground to settle yet, so their relationship to a light source is still ambiguous.

The images are abstract images of the mind. The ideas float. Initially the spatial relationship is not entirely clear either. However, drawing allows for testing and building up of the ideas. As the drawings become more complex, the planes become more articulated. Subtle level changes become apparent towards the last investigation. The path acquires a plane of its own, independent of the planes that define the spaces that the path goes through. The entry threshold is consistently present, whereas the rest of the spaces are constantly in flux.

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Fig.38.Axonometric Study 1

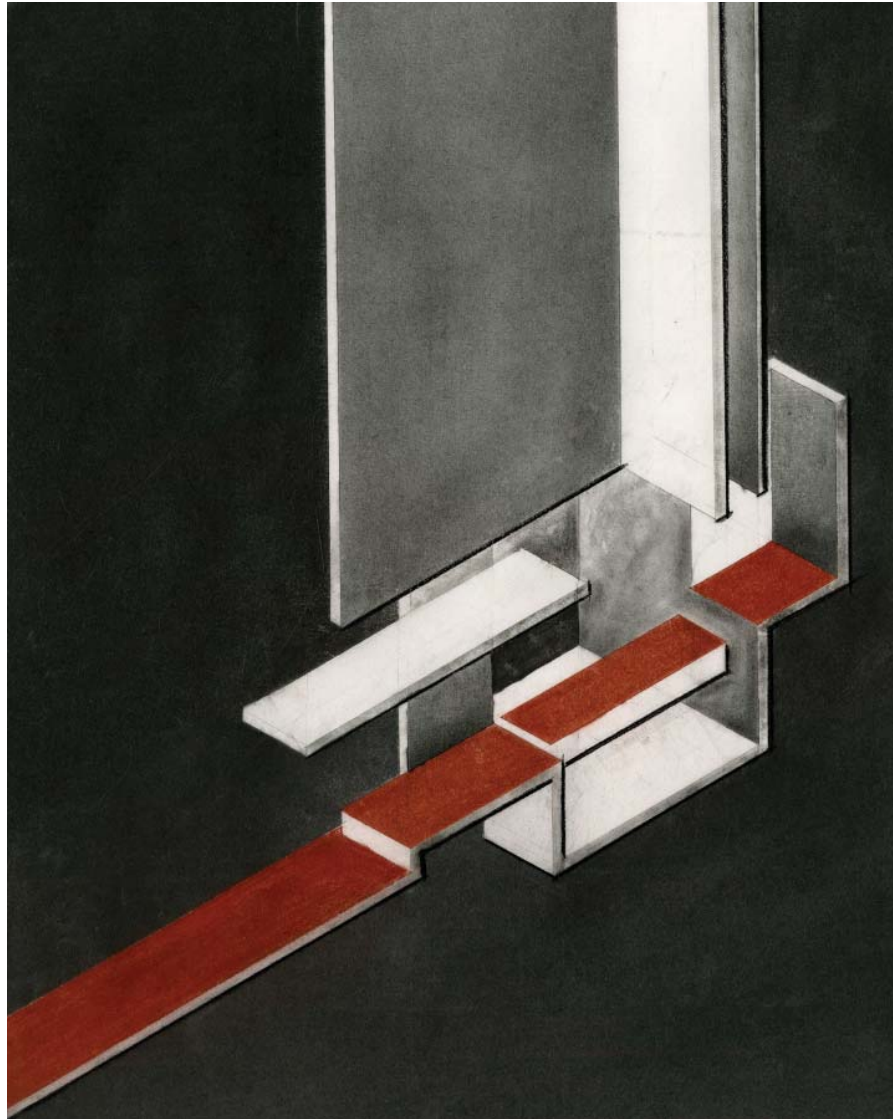


Fig.39.Axonometric Study 2

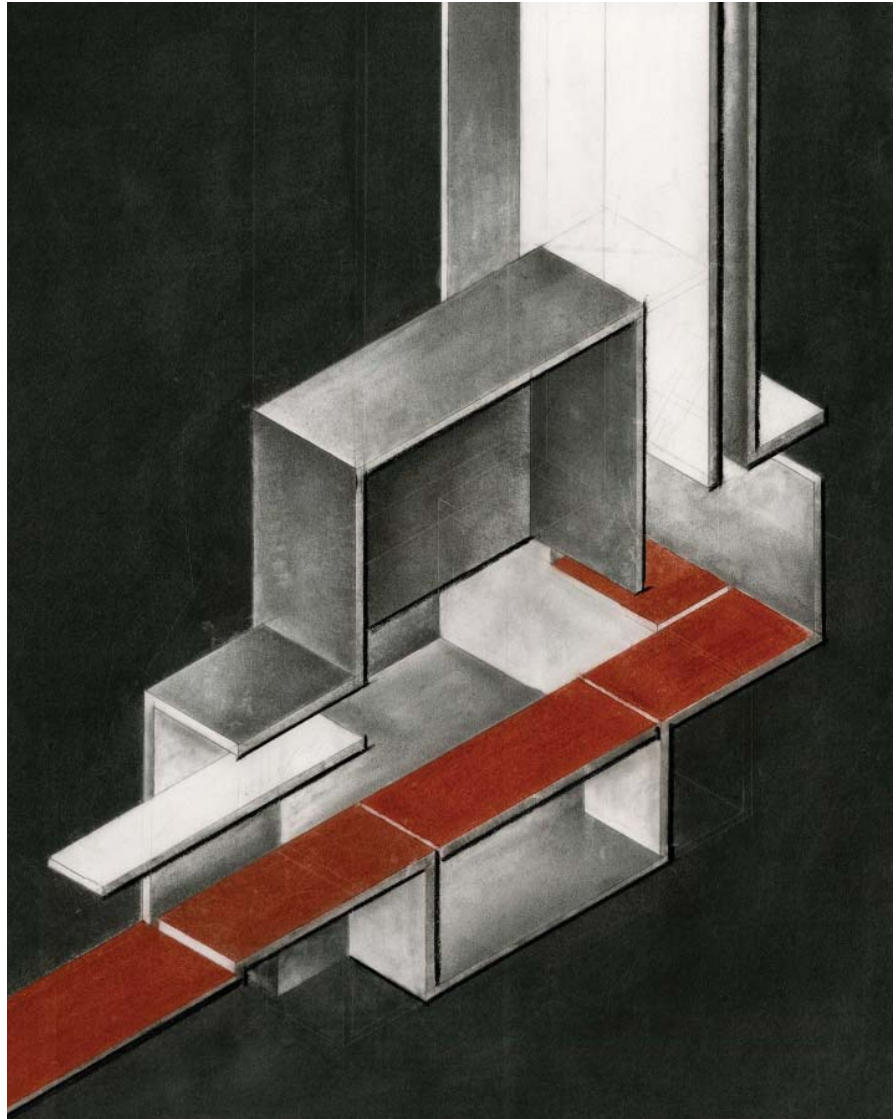


Fig.40.Axonometric Study 3

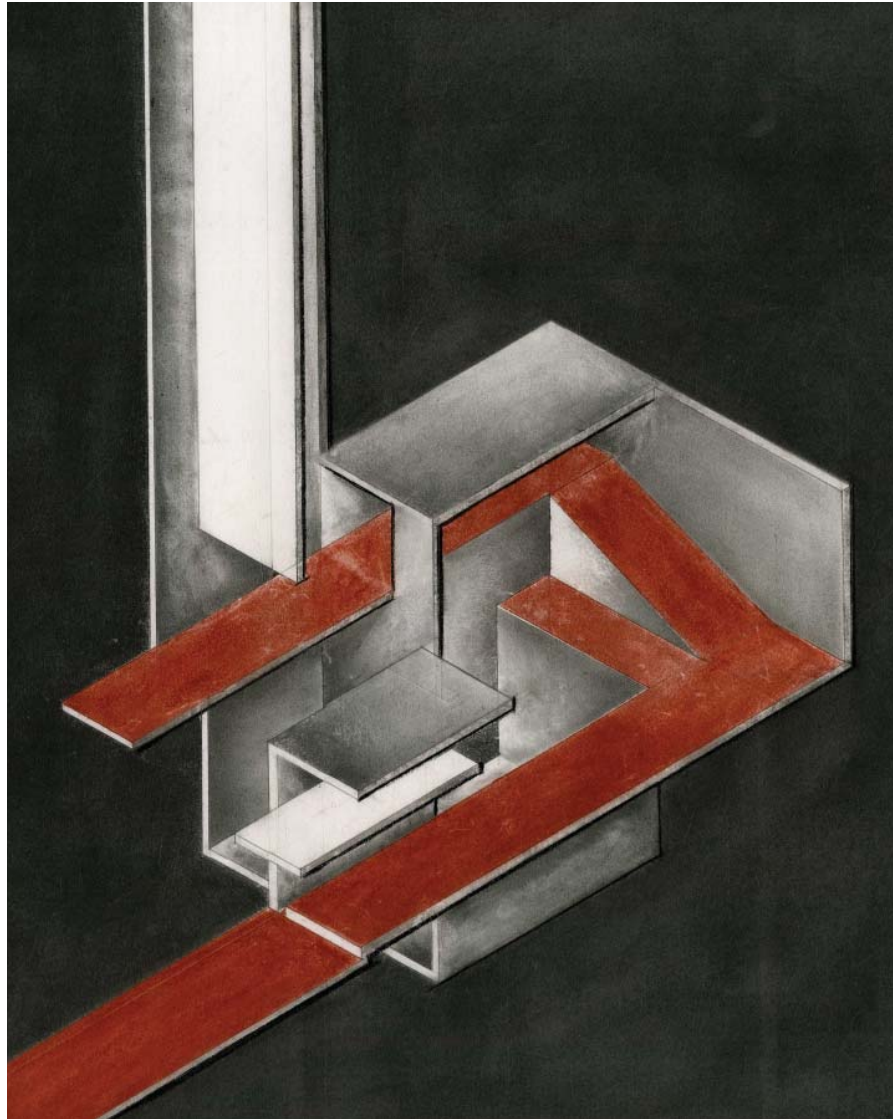


Fig.41.Axonometric Study 4

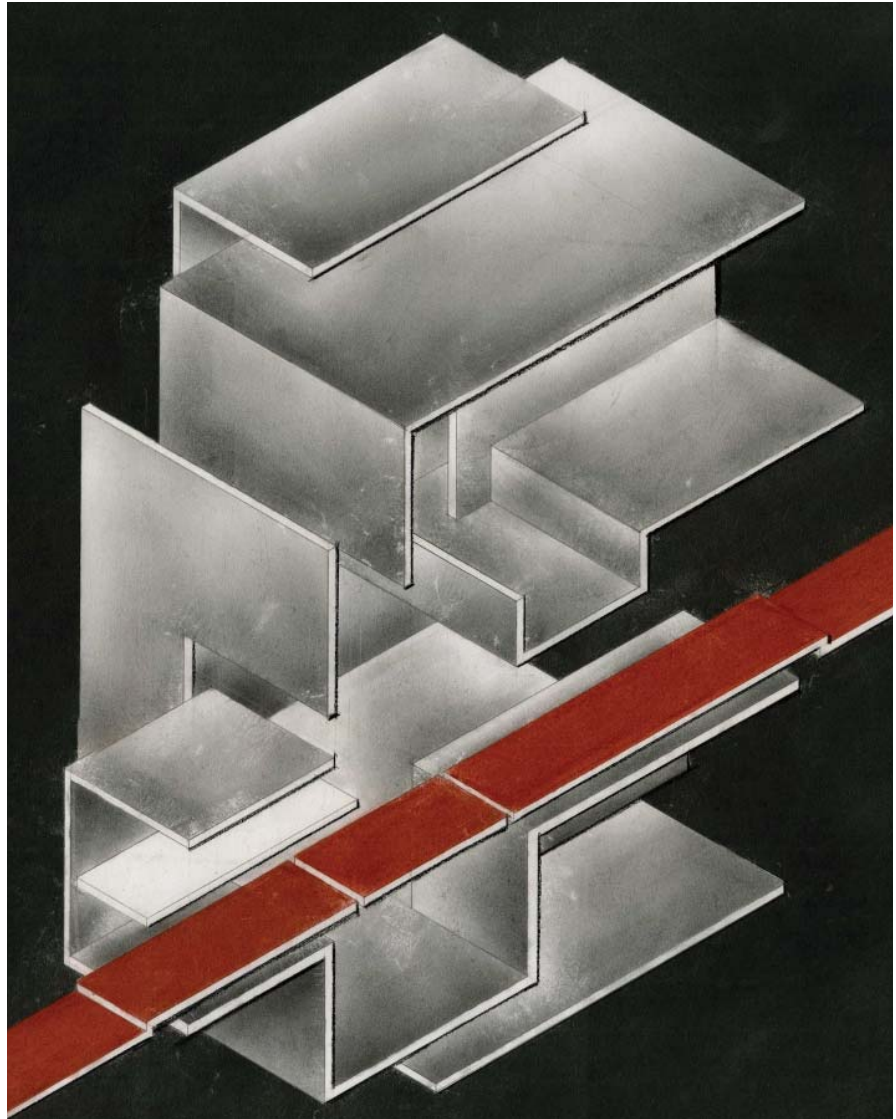
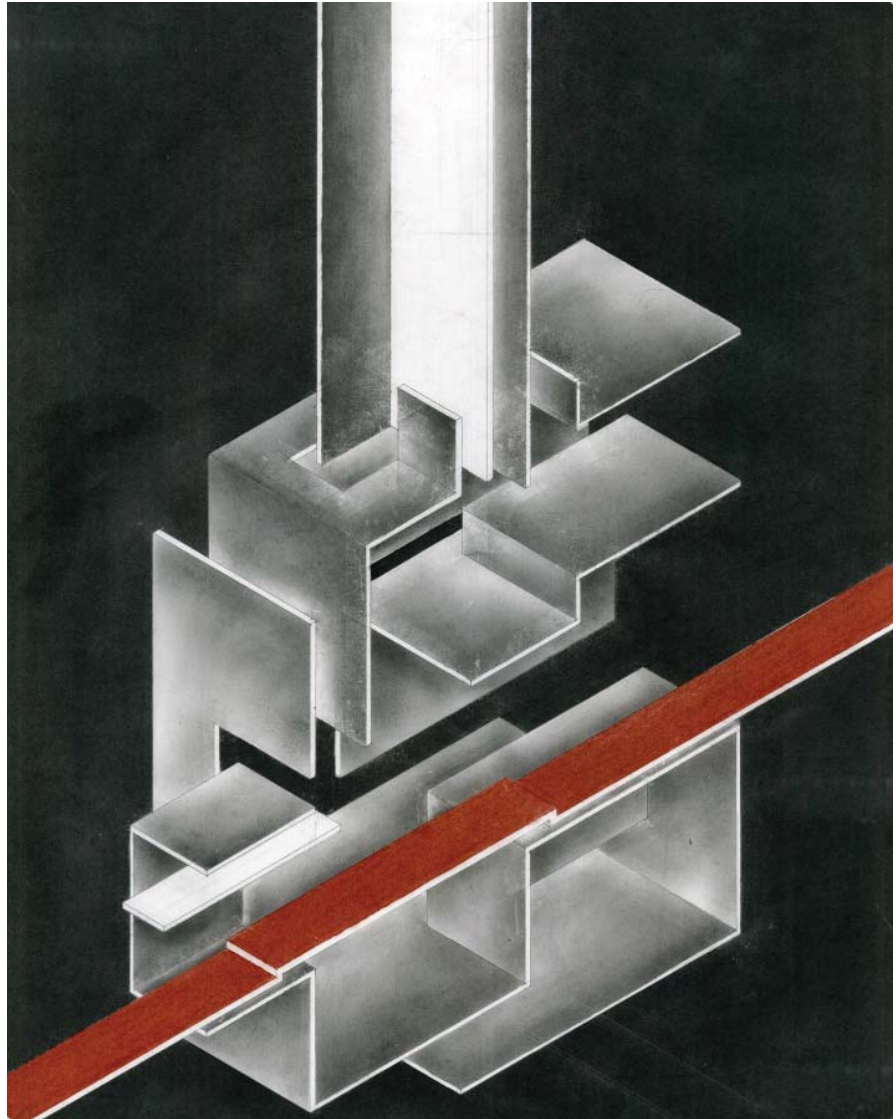


Fig.42.Axonometric Study 5



## Moments with a Dualistic Nature

Spatial relationships lead to the designation of specific moments. The build environment that we inhabit, is dualistic in nature and material formations can be perceived both from outside and inside. Thus, the same element gives two different experiences.

Approached from the outside the door and the window are little framed revelations of the space inside. The void in the wall allows for the movement through of body and sight. The materials stay in layered relationship, each one gradually enclosing the intimate space.

On the outside the stair emerges from the solidness of the ground. As the steps begin to aspire upward, a lightness becomes apparent as each step acquires its own definition and is anchored only to the wall, without touching the other steps. A lonely opening protrudes to look into the space. The void suggest that there is a layer behind, which might or might not be accessed by the stair.

When one is inside openings present the world beyond. As one passes through a door, a window reveals the distant horizon. The fire place brings the idea that the center is in the inner most core. Spaces are layered around each other until the warmth is reached. The openings show snippets of a staircase that takes you to an enclosure above, a space for dreams.

A certain melancholic ambience is maintained as the drawings focus on individual moments which are not tied into one, much like memories of moments when we felt at home, inevitably lost.

Fig.43.The Door from Outside

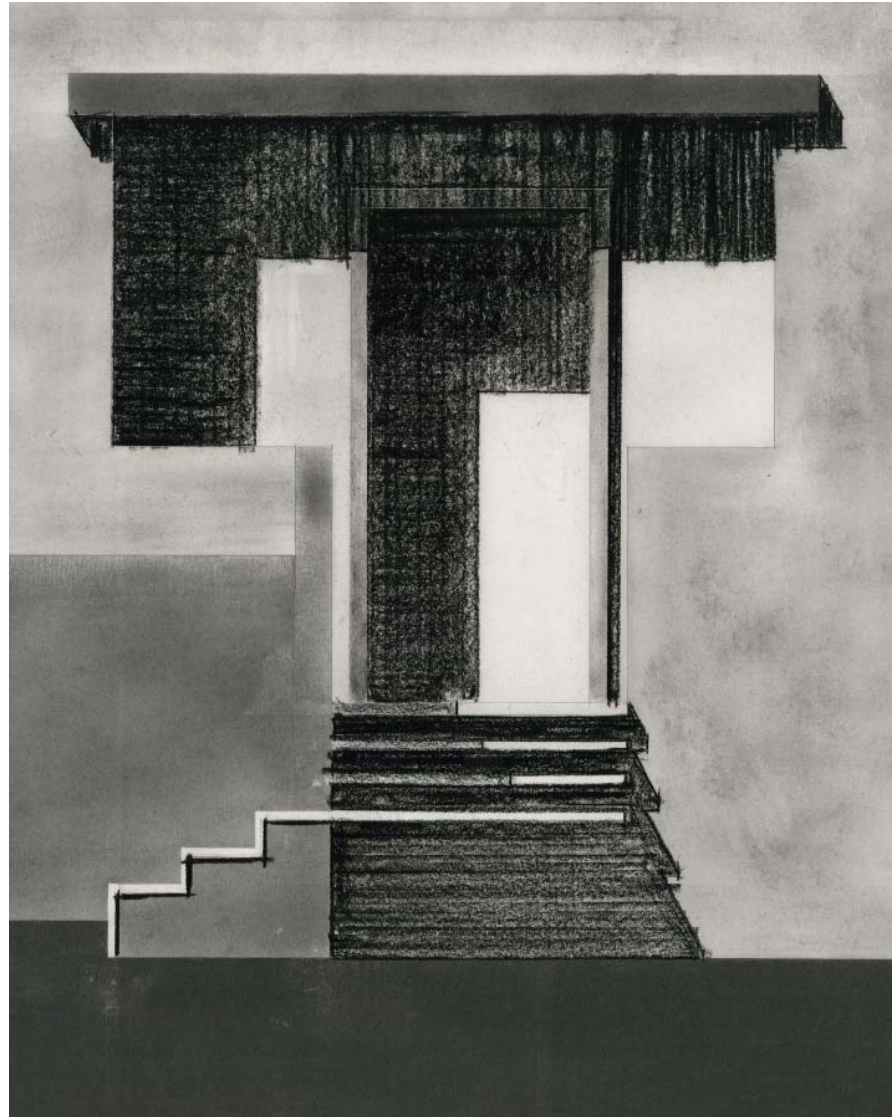


Fig.44.The Window from Outside

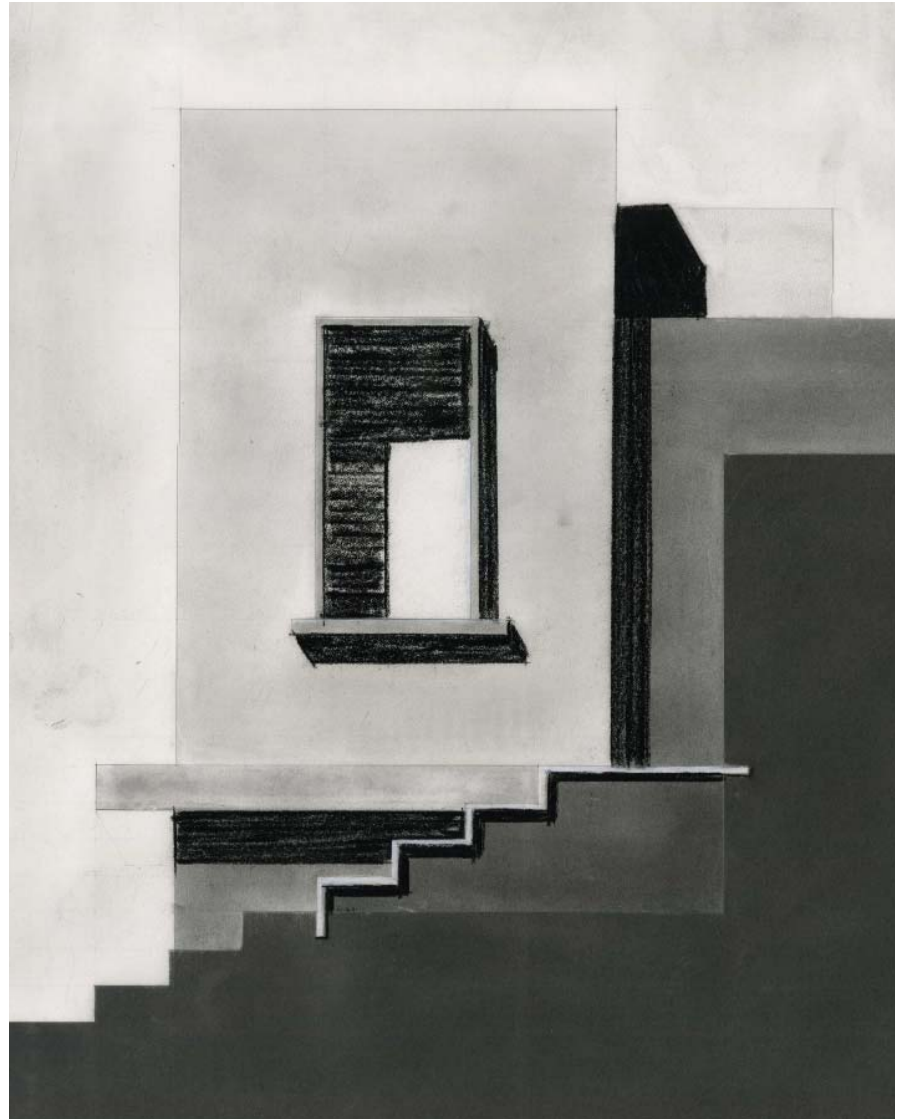




Fig.45.The Stair from Outside

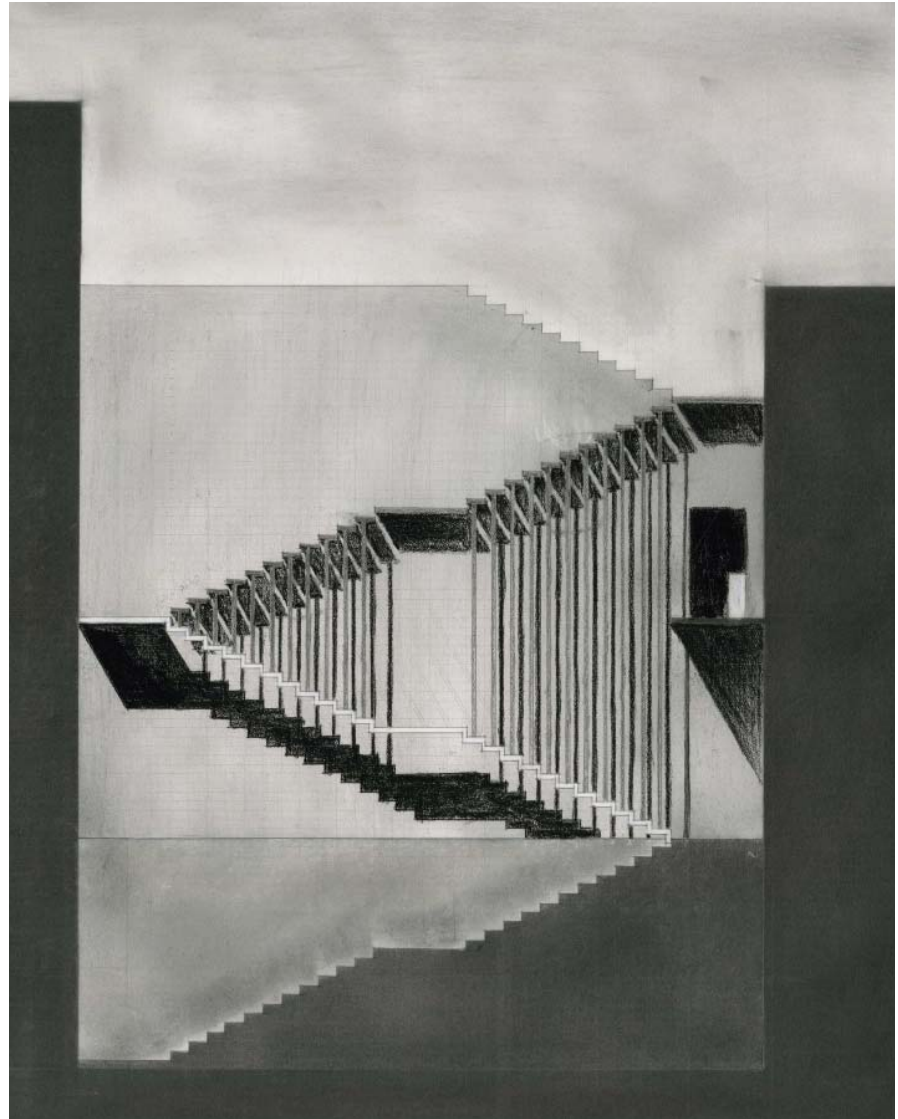


Fig.46.Threshold Movement in

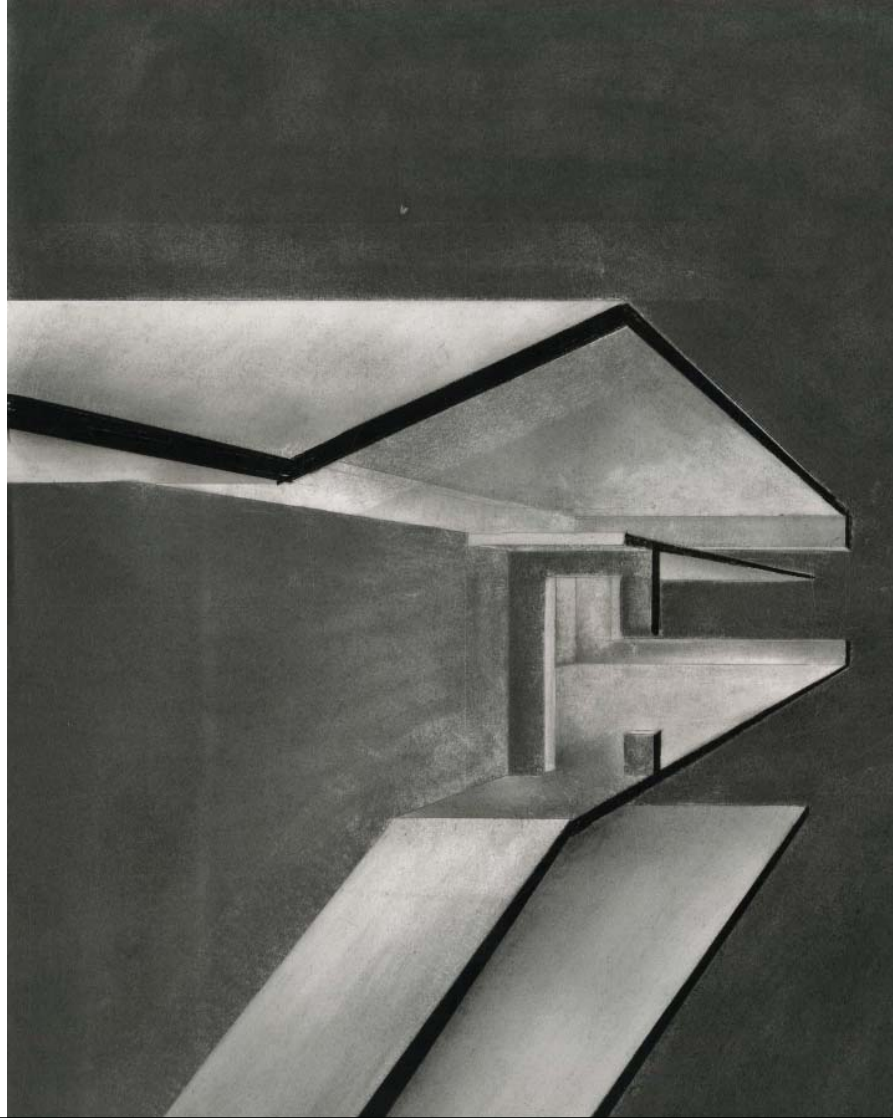
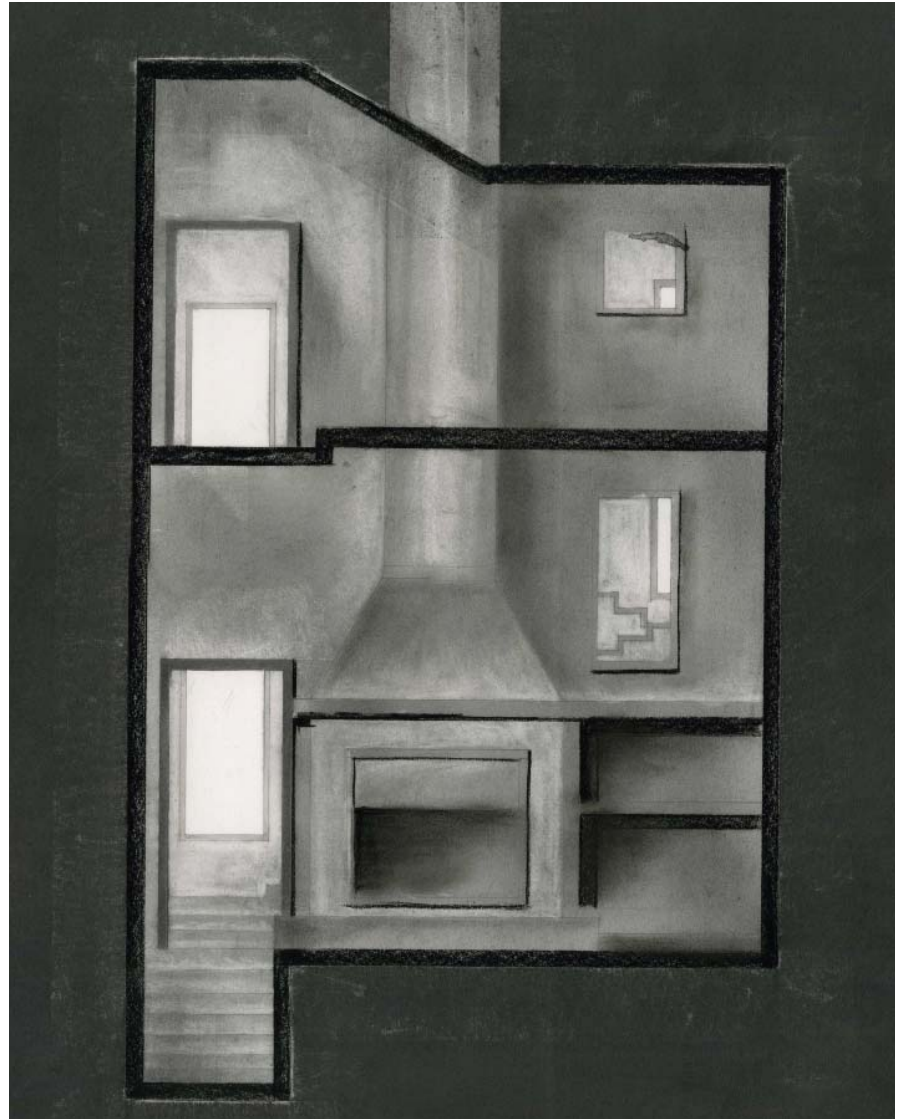


Fig.47.Window and Horizon



Fig.48.Fire Place Inside



## The Mold and the Cast

Casting is a difficult undertaking, because a lot of preparation needs to be coordinated.

First a mold needs to be constructed. The precision of the mold is directly responsible for the precision of the cast. However, it is not as simple as building an empty box and filling it in, because what is being made is not a solid block. To make a periphery, a wooden box sits inside another wooden box. Where perforations are needed, solid pieces are inserted, between the two boxes. The trickiest part is the assembling of the mold itself. First the reinforcing is placed on top of the base plate. Then the outer walls of the mold are assembled around, with the solids for the perforations protruding through the reinforcement. Finally the inner walls are sunk inside and screws are drilled through the solid parts, in order to keep the two walls together once the cement is poured. The forming walls are treated with vapor retarder and with release agent. Now the mold is assembled, and the material can be poured inside. Ideally the reinforcing would be the one thing that will be trapped inside the cast and no one will see it, however the lesson to be learned is that in the pouring of a wall the width should be larger than the height. Otherwise, traps can form if the material cures too fast.

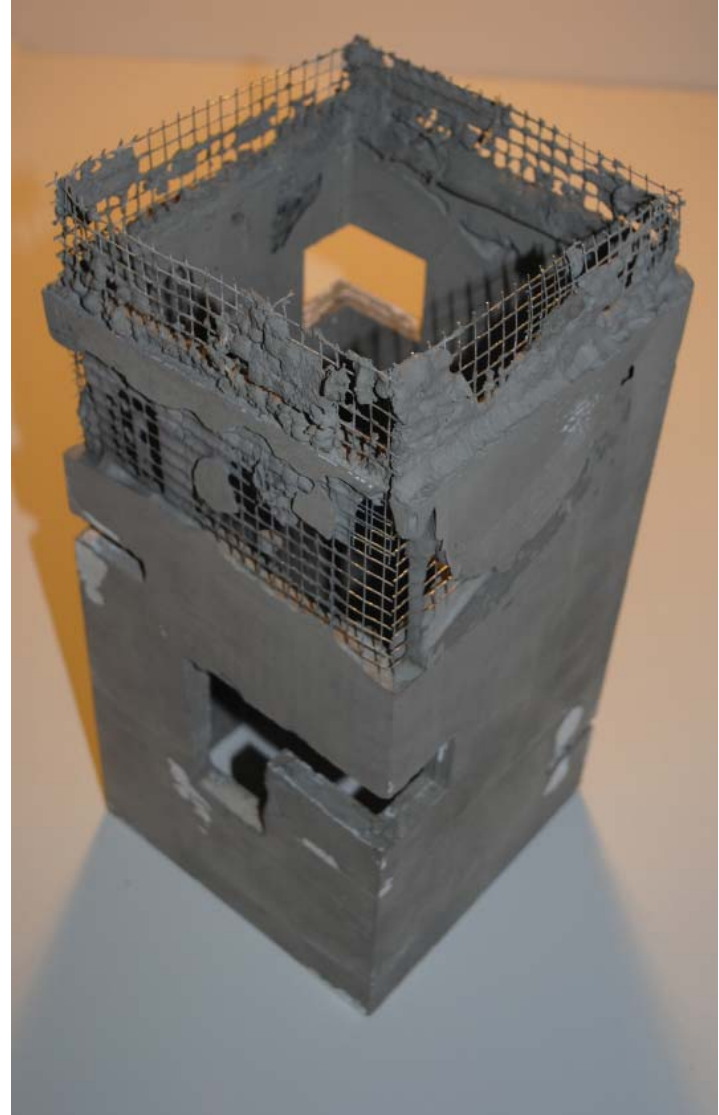
Direct involvement in constructing allows for the concretization of ideas. And if our thoughts can be understood as molds, than the casts that they produce are a direct reflection of the things that we believe in. Therefore, what we built and how we built is important.

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Fig.49.The Mold



Fig.50.The Cast



## The Cave, the Frame and the Carpet

In the gathering of material and joining the material to form a shelter, different methods of construction have been employed. The fundamental ways recognized so far are the cave, the frame and the carpet. The relationship between them is up to the dweller forming the dwelling. The tectonic methods can be explored endlessly.

Essentially, the cave is a carved out space within the mass of the earth. The void allows for protection from a threatening environment. To an extent the cast has qualities reminiscent of the cave, as the solidity and the ruggedness it emanates are reminiscent of protective fortification.

On the other hand, the frame possesses lightness. When it attaches to the ground, the frame allows the human to rise up above the earth. Spaces that are formed above are not dependent on the solidity of the ground for enclosure. Moreover, frames can be formed in multiple locations and can be moved around. In the act of settling the person brings the spaces of the frame into the new environment. Much like when we move, what we believe in, comes with us.

Essentially the frame is structure, the bones that hold a certain body together. Here, the role of the carpet is to provide delicate enclosure, and also to soften up, otherwise crude conditions for living.

The three methods are not limiting, prescriptive definitions. They allow for personal expression. The way a construct between the three is made speaks of the way a person understands the world.

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Fig.51.The Cave

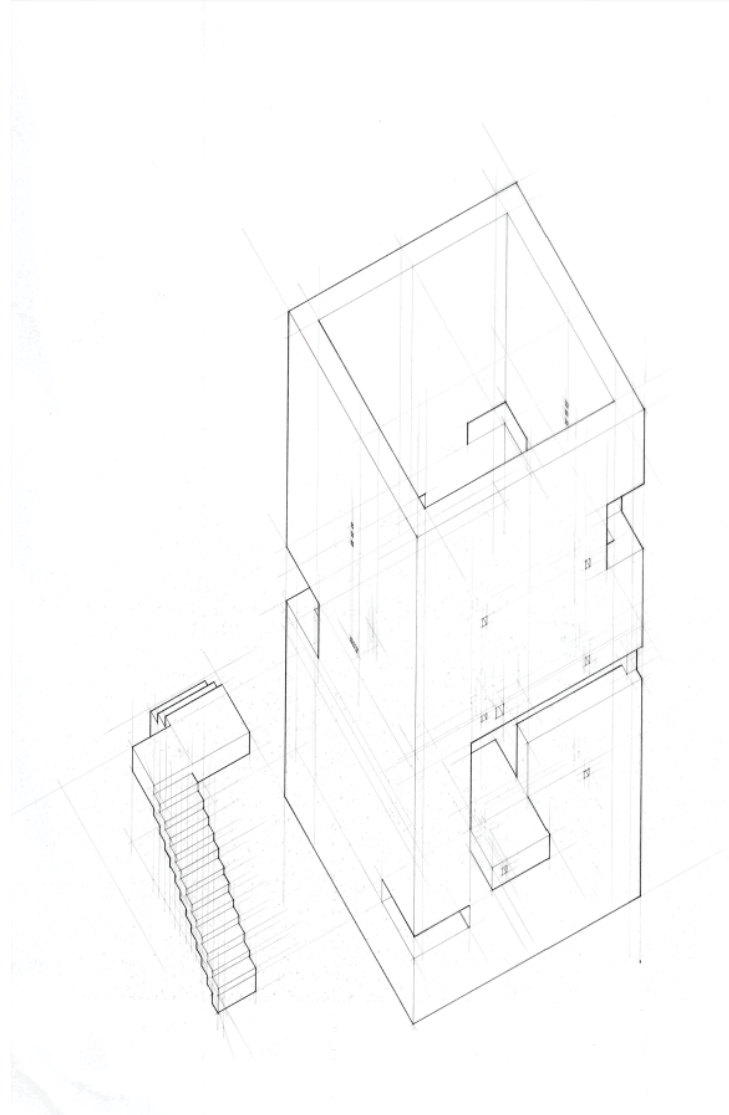


Fig.52.The Frame

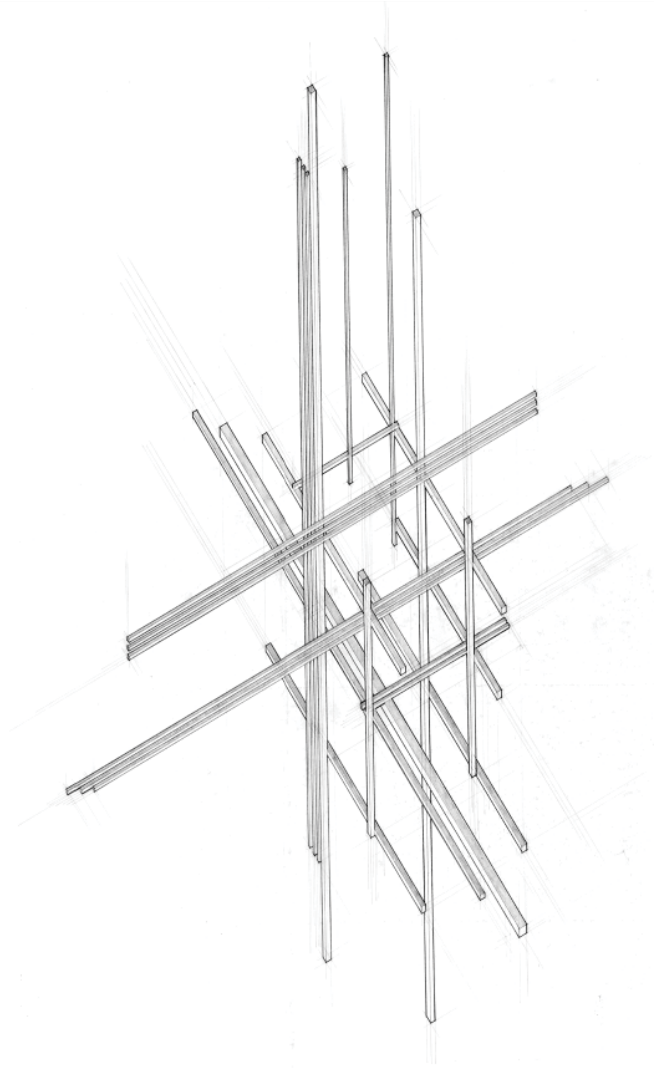
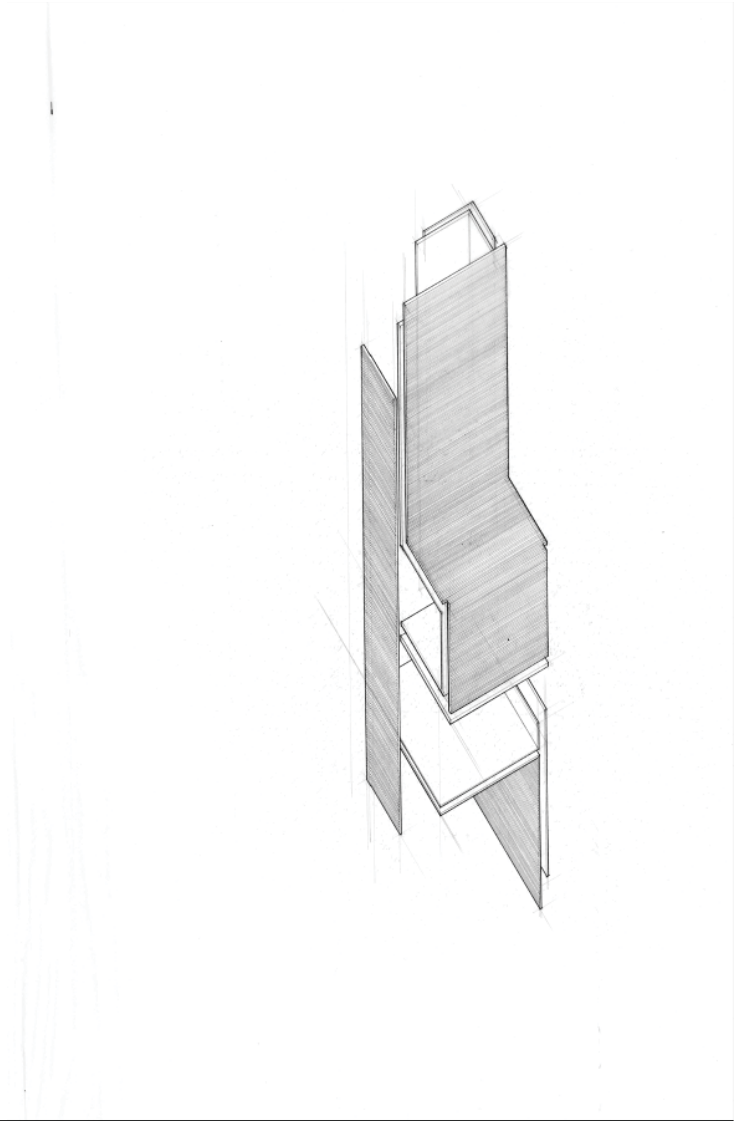


Fig.53.The Carpet



## The Experience of the Construct

A home emanates warmth. In a complete chaos and darkness, it gives us a point to go towards. In the making of enclosure we hope to secure such point and its existence.

In the tectonic construct there are two movements. One is linear, going through the ground floor; the other one is a spiral, which rises from the basement to end in the space of the lotus seat. The lotus seat is the destination of the mind which aspires to reach higher. The movements are reflected in the outer perforations of the cast. The linear one is expressed by two vertical voids on two opposing walls. The spiraling one is expressed through openings that wrap around the corners. Perceived from the outside this forms an anticipation of something that is building up around a center.

On the interior the frame anchors itself in the hard cast and holds up the lotus seat. The space of the lotus seat is wrapped in two layers of enclosure. Once the cast protects it from the outside. Second the carpet characterizes it as something separate inside. Placed above all other spaces, it is suggested to be a sacred space of innermost intimacy.

A vertical space is immediately adjacent. The axis stands for a sort of theoretical chimney, that can be experienced by looking up. The way one inhabits the vertical opening towards the sky, is through imagination. This suggests two things. First, in order for one to dream one has to have a ground to stand on and look up. Second, there must be something that remains unreachable, to remind us that life is transient.

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Fig.54.The Tectonic Construct



Fig.55.Upon Descend

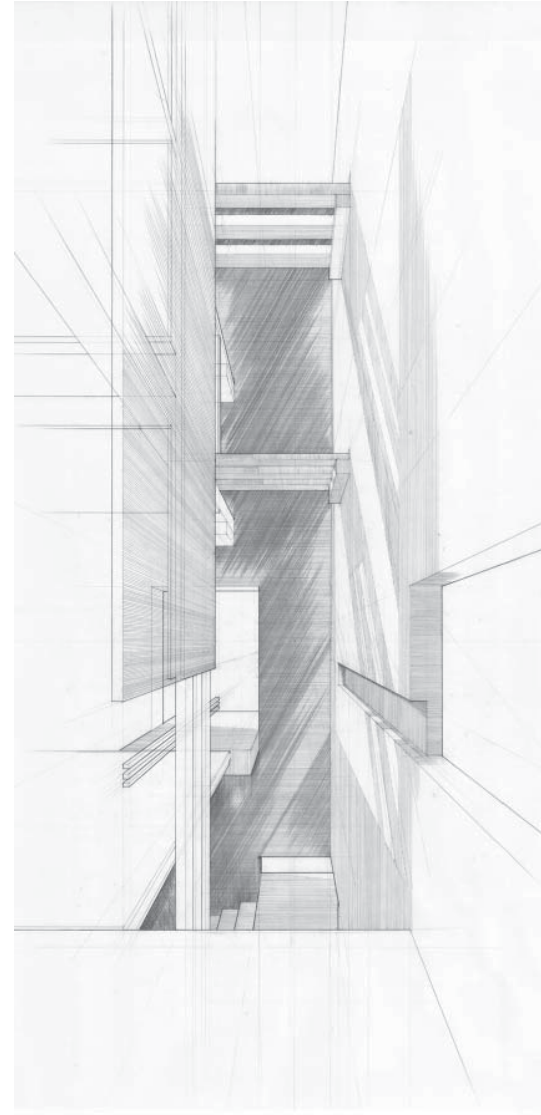


Fig.56.Upon Entry

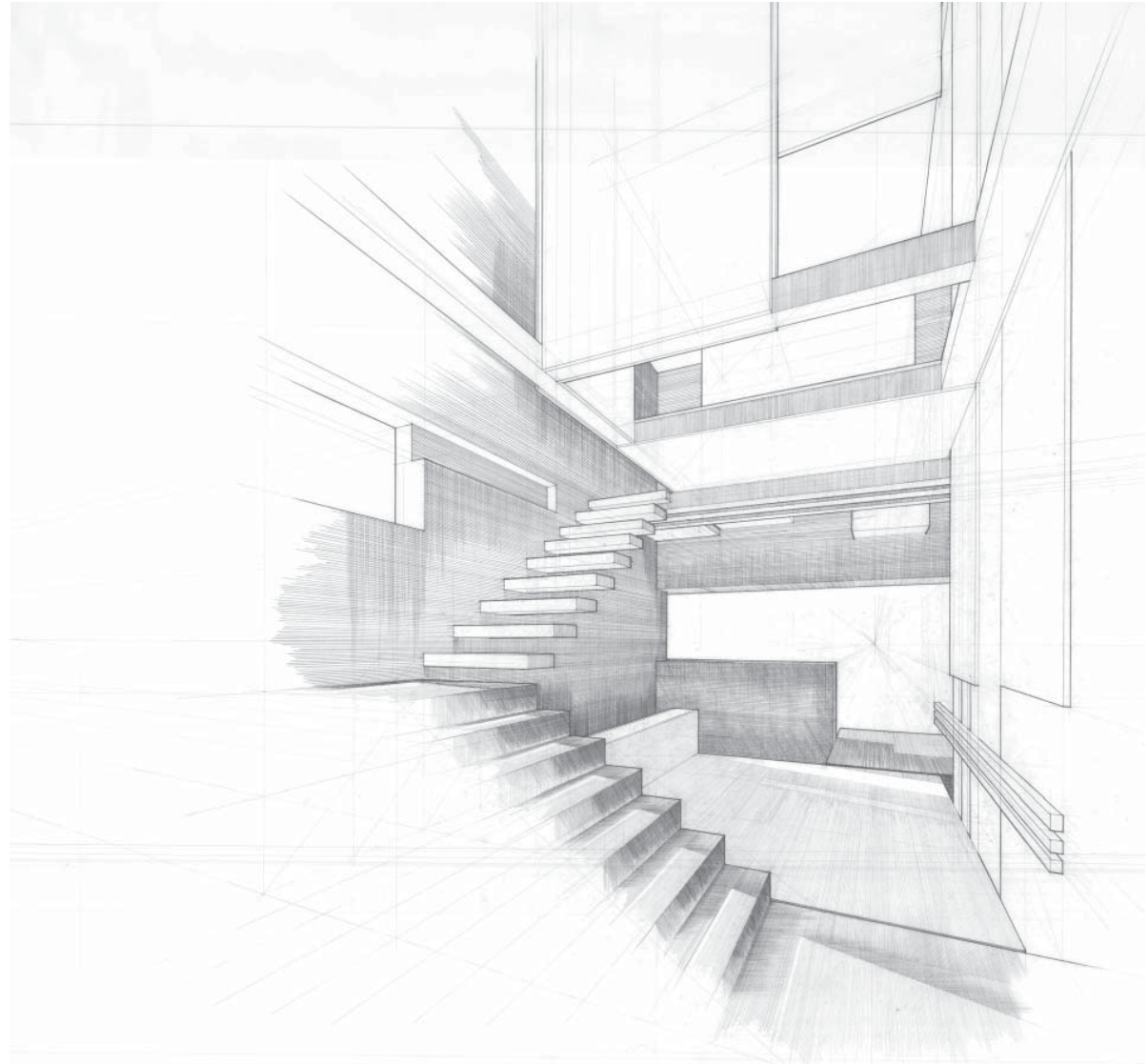


Fig.57.Ascending





Fig.58.The Lotus Seat

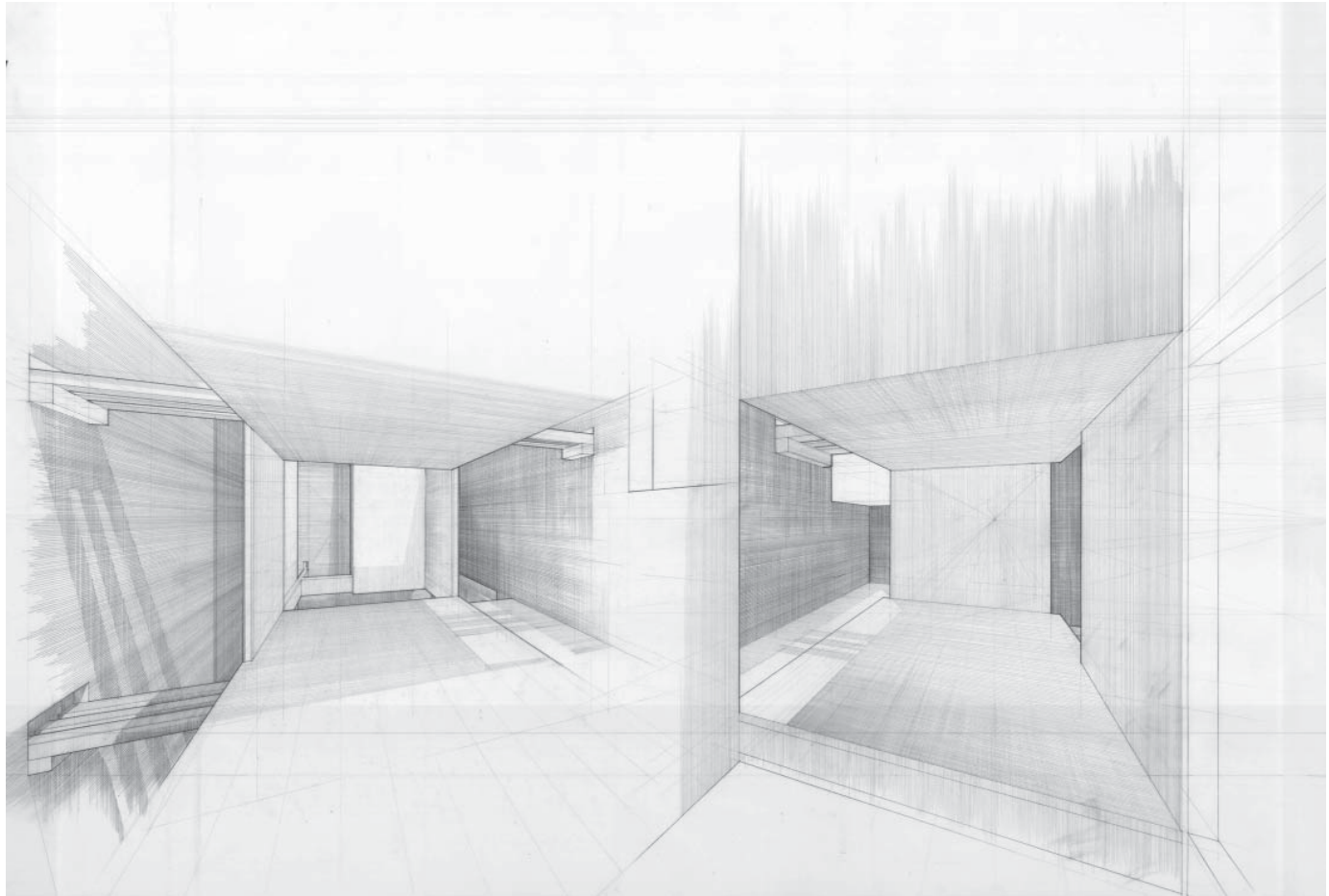
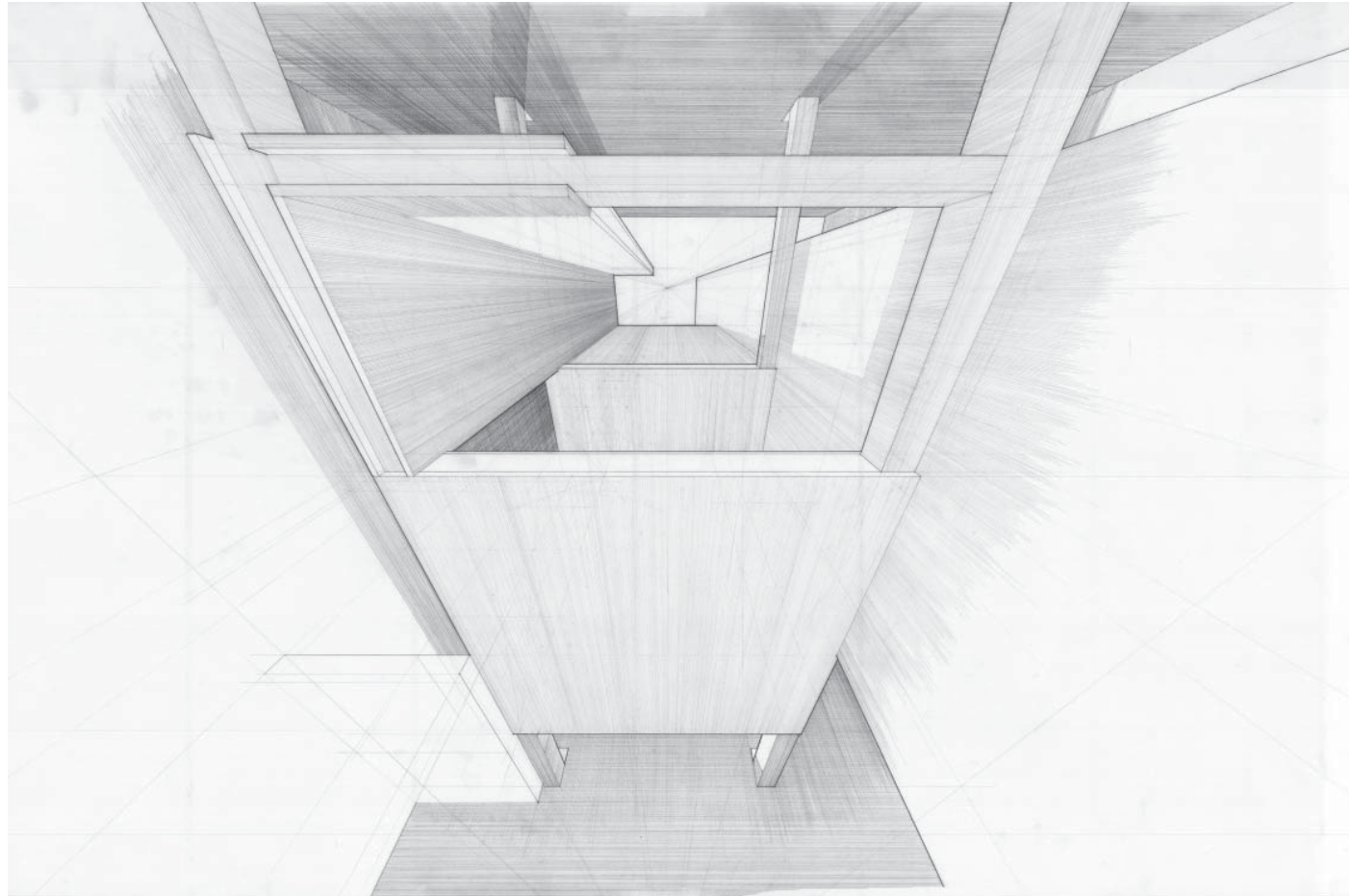


Fig.59.Looking Up



## Final Thoughts

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I do not know, how close I have gotten to the understanding of the meaning of home, but now I know the importance of a focus and clear thought when constructing.

During this year of research, I have established methods for myself, through which to question ideas. Writing, drawing and making all helped in clearing out the concepts.

The most important lesson for me is that we must always construct the build environment with the thought that people will live in it. As we are making places in the world we should design them with homelike qualities.

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