CHAPTER 1. Introduction

ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis was to study the relationship between film and architecture. Qualitative research methods were employed during precedent studies. The dynamic medium of film inspired an architectural anchor, the South African film archives. The Pretoria CBD was chosen as the backdrop for the *Archive Cinema Complex*, surrounded by public transport, pedestrianised streets and arcades.

The objective of the design was to celebrate cinema and the collective heritage embodied in film. The programme was positioned in an existing building envelope, and it was allowed to partially occupy the roofscape, becoming a display to the city. The theory informed the need to identify views early on in the design process. Movement patterns around viewpoints define the viewer's perspective during the spatial experience. Thus allowing the spectator to become the observed. The roof provided advantageous height required for an urban visual interplay.

Investigation into circulation, in and around the building, created opportunities for interaction between various role players. These include the built environment, film, user and the city of Pretoria amongst others. The programme was extrapolated along this circulation route allowing the user to navigate the building. Cinematic devices, in particular memory and mental montage, were employed to define the route.

On street level various images announce the programme. The placement of the building and visual interplay of projecting screens exposes the urban dwellers to film.

Fig. 1 Perspective of Archive Cinema Complex

AIMS

The aim of this thesis is to create a dynamic architectural urban environment that celebrates film and its heritage. The film archive ultimately transforms Pretoria into a cinematic experience lived through memory.

Film is investigated and probed to inspire a typology closely related to the medium itself. Inventive connections to film are covered to add to the body of theory that currently exists. This aims to surpass the superfluous relations, such as narrative, visual aspects, director/architect, and rather inspire the design process. Film becomes cinema through the medium of architecture. The Archive architecture must match the exciting and dynamic medium of film in order to promote it to the man on the street.

DESIGN PROBLEM

Film and architecture are vastly different mediums with their own inherent logic and objectives. The difficulty lies in the translation of film to built form; of a medium that renders time and space in ways architecture is unable to. Which aspects are important and astute to guide the design proposal to successful completion? Film theory can assist architecture in consolidating the non-public nature of the Archive to the realm of public heritage.

Film theory is put to the test to determine whether it can solely resolve a complex architectural problem.

LITERATURE STUDY

This dissertation is a continuation of the author's theory essay submitted in 2008 for Honours RFS module also entitled *Film and Architecture*. The research proved rewarding and ample information is available on various topics in the bigger theorem of architecture and film.

An immense wealth of information was gathered early on in order to identify information that can directly influence and guide the design. Much room for debate remains about the influence film has on architecture. Can film act as a sufficient theoretical discourse for an architectural intervention? In the process of answering this question, filmmakers and architects that have addressed some of the issues were looked at and the information accumulated to form one theoretical argument.

Bernard Tschumi is the most published architect in the field, because film theory inspired part of his Parc de la Villete (1982) design in Paris. The publication *Manhattan Transcripts* (first edition published in 1981) contains diagrammatic representations resembling sequential frames of a filmstrip. This publication is the prequel to his competition-winning proposal and in many ways the concrete amalgamation of film theory into architecture. Architects including Rem Koolhaas, Jean Nouvel, Juhani Pallaasma and Le Corbusier share his interest in the subject and have all written about their enthusiasm. The Architectural Design (AD) magazine has debated subjects from metropolis to Russian avant-garde filmmakers to mall movies in two editions dedicated to film and architecture in 1994 and 2000. The publications relate to architectural philosophy rather than praxis, creating a void that this dissertation ultimately fills.

PRECEDENT STUDY

Three precedent studies are analysed to inform different aspects of the design proposal. A film precedent, *The Science of Sleep*, by the French director Michel Gondry, strengthens the theoretical argument and becomes an exemplification of the numerous films watched during the research period. Understanding of the film medium is necessitated through this choice of study.

The typological precedent, the London Southbank BFI (British Film Institute), having been visited by the author inspired the idea of a rejuvenation of the South African Film Archive. The dynamic British film archive stands in stark contrast to the dismal state of our own film archive. The BFI takes pride in its preservation of film and has bred a culture of film interest with film festivals screening year round.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is focused on an array of different opinions from architects and filmmakers and their interpretation of the subject. Film production has been studied to audit the design process of architecture in order to learn a few practical techniques. Ideas have been substantiated by famous thinkers and explained through numerous references to films. Qualitative analysis is deemed necessary, especially to map the emotional and memory aspects associated with films and human experience. These conclusions are predominantly objective, however subjective experiences have not been omitted in order to explain the nature of the human mind.

All of the important decisions made early on in the design process are first discussed according to their qualities and then followed by data to validate the choices made. Nothing is arbitrary in the process and a film research premise is maintained throughout the year. It follows from the theoretical argument that a design dogma is imposed that will have film architecture as a result. The diagrams, research, analysis and writing style speak a filmic language, easily integrated into the architecture vocabulary. Certain film terms deconstruct architectural meaning that excites further investigation, which in turn leads to a wider field of enquiry. The research methodology calls for a coherent film exploration that finally leads to a well thought out design proposal.

Glossary

Establishing Shot - a shot which shows the environment in which the action will take place, usually early in the sequence.

Film - The successive production by means of a photographic camera of a number of images of the same object or objects in motion and reproducing the same in the order of taking by means of 'a projector' ... with one or more intermittently operated film drums (Robertson: pg. 61)

Continuity system/ continuity editing - a system of editing generally used within mainstream cinema to seamlessly cut from one shot to another without calling attention to the editing. This system includes invisible editing, eye line matches, and cutting on action.

Frame - individual still image of a film or video, or the rectangle within which the image is composed or captured.

Mise en scene - French term from the theatre that literally means 'whats put in the scene'. To the cinema it refers to the elements of a shot - the set, the props, the actors, the use of colour and light - and the way these elements are composed or choreographed.

Persistence of vision - Sensory phenomenon to which cinema owes its existence: the perception of fluid movement from still images projected above a threshold speed. Below this speed image flickers (hence the term 'the flicks' coined when silent film was shot at lower speeds, c.16-20 frames per second)

Storyboard - Series of drawings, much like a comic strip, used to plan a sequence of shots.

Shot - A single continuous image.

(www.bfi.org.uk)

CHAPTER 2. Film

Filmography, South African Film History, Timeline

The moving image was invented by Louis Aime Augustin Le Prince in New York in 1885. He applied for an American patent in 1886 that read: "T*he successive production by means of a photographic camera of a number of images of the same object or objects in motion and reproducing the same in the order of taking by means of 'a projector' ... with one or more intermittently operated film drums*" (Robertson: pg. 61). In fact France, Germany and Edison in America were also busy with their film experiments. Thus, when the technology was finally available, it developed worldwide in a very short time. Germany dominated the early years of film in what are now referred to as German expressionist films. After the Second World War, the USA dominated the world film market.

Fig. 2 Playtime, Jacques Tati (1967)

Fig. 3 Blow Up, Michelangelo Antonioni (1965)

Fig. 6 Rear Window, Alfred Hitchcock(1954)

Fig. 7 The Shining, Stanley Kubrick (1980)

Fig. 4 Metropolis, Fritz Lang (1927)

Fig. 5 Wings of Desire, Wim Wenders(1987)

Fig. 8 City of God, Fernando Meirelles (2002)

Fig. 9 Louis Aime Augustin Le Prince

Fig. 11 Lumiere Brothers, 1895

Fig. 10   U-Carmen e-Khayelitsha

SOUTH AFRICAN FILM HISTORY

South Africa saw films simultaneously with European and American audiences. The first public projection was held in Johannesburg on 11 May 1896, only a year after the first world premiere in Paris on 22 March 1895 by the Lumiere brothers. The year after, Edgar Hyman started filming real life scenes in Johannesburg and also captured President Paul Kruger in 1898 leaving his house on the way to the Raad-zaal (SAhistory).

South Africa is amongst the pioneering countries in the early film years. At the grand opening of the Capitol Theatre in Pretoria in 1931, two South African sound films were premiered: Joseph Albrecht's *Sarie Marais* and *Moedertjie*, only four years after the first international talkie, *The Jazz Singer* (1927) (Robertson, 1986: 70), was screened.

The local film industry boomed in the late 1950s after a new film subsidy system was introduced. This marked a lucrative period that lasted until the 1980s (SAhistory). At the height of Afrikaner nationalism an increasing number of anti-Apartheid films were produced and released to international film audiences. *Katrina, Boesman en Lena*, *The Fourth Reich* and *Place of Weeping* were examples, and interestingly some were popular in the Republic as well. Film's popularity transcended escalating racial discrimination; 'coloured people only' theatres were established as early as 1910 in Durban (SAhistory). A black film industry, financed by beer halls and churches, was created in 1970 (SAhistory). These films were of low quality

until Simon M. Sabela directed *U'Deliwe* in 1974 and raised the local standard dramatically.

In the 1980s South African cinema focused on American Films, which became increasingly popular. Jamie Uys directed some of the few local successes in the 80s, *The Gods Must Be Crazy* and *Beautiful People*, the latter winning a Golden Globe for best documentary film. In the last years of Apartheid a number of films on the subject were released – such as *Cry the Beloved Country*, and *Sarafina!* both directed and produced by James Roodt and Anant Singh. Afrikaans cinema came to a virtual halt in the period leading up to the 1994 elections.

CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa became an active member of the international film community after 1994. The film industry has been injected with new interest and many films have been produced in this second fruitful period. Films of note are *Yesterday, Paljas, Stander, Blood Diamond, Lord of War, 10 000 BC* and the Oscar winner *Tsotsi*. The British-born, South African independent director Dumford May received critical acclaim for the Xhosa adaptation of Bizet's opera, . The film entitled *U-Carmen e-Khayelitsha* was shot in its entirety in the Cape Town township Khayelitsha and has become the "definitive Bizet opera" according the British Telegraph (Rees, 2005). *Son of Man* (2007), his latest release, is the nativity Bible story placed amidst African politics.

The themes outlined in Dumford May's films outline the narrative shift that has occurred since the turn of the century. According to Trevor Blake, a staff member of the film ar-

chives of South Africa, the shift has finally been accomplished from injustice and minority rule to the post reconciliation period. Political film-makers no longer dent the South African image abroad. This is our greatest film achievement, but it came through a lot of effort and research.

At the Los Angeles Location Expo, South Africa won first prize for their 2009 exhibition stall (Filmmaker.co.za, 2009). The Department of Trade and Industry has introduced tax incentives for film crews to decrease production costs.

Film in South Africa has become a very lucrative industry that currently generates R1 billion for the local economy (SAgoodnews. co.za, 2009). South Africa's biodiversity and cityscapes can easily substitute any other found on the planet, which is an attractive proposition for location scouts. To accommodate the surge of film crews into Cape Town a mega film studio is under construction that will compete with other international facilities. This project aims to inject the local economy with even more international film commissions.

FILM ARCHIVES

In 1910 Anker Kirkerby created the world's first film archive in Copenhagen, Denmark realising film's historic importance. (Robertson, 1986: 66). The first national archives were established in Britain and Germany in 1935. The *International Federation of Film Archives* (FIAF) was created in 1939 to promote and standardise the preservation of film. Their aims are to protect, promote, preserve and improve accessibility of film worldwide. South Africa

forms part of the 120 member institution of the FIAF represented by the *National Film Video and Sound Archives* (NFVSA).

The NFVSA is located in an old farmhouse on the grounds of the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Film in this context refers to photography and video moving images of historical importance. [This thesis will use the term 'film' as described by Le Prince's patent]. The archive has a number of problems that undermines the importance of film in our cultural heritage. The building is removed from the urban public realm and remains inaccessible in terms of information and physical access.

Even though the archive has an extensive collection of items, no formal cataloguing system exists to indicate what is available. Programme specific spaces, like cinemas and exhibition halls are not accommodated in the complex. It is difficult to imagine anyone getting excited about film in such an uninspiring film museum. The staff maintains that historic films are unpopular and no future screenings are planned outside the *Klein Karoo National Arts Festival*.

Film screenings in Europe remain popular; in Bonn, Germany the silent film festival has been running for 25 years (Goethe-Institut). The film is accompanied by picnics, wine and a symphony orchestra that plays original film scores. The BFI (British Film Institute) forms part of the Southbank Centre in London, a vibrant arts and culture precinct. The archive hosts film cross-programme events, such as music or architecture and film. The BFI is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 when it is analysed as a typological precedent.

CHAPTER 3. Theory

Montage, Existential Space, Memory, Space and Time, Cinema Experience

Film has become a very important topic for architects and architecture schools in the last two decades. Prominent architecture schools have film classes where they discuss the form and content of films. Short films are produced in conjunction with the design proposal to demonstrate complex spatial structures and theories. Why did architecture become conscious to these possibilities only recently? This poses an interesting question as the two mediums have been affiliated with one another for nearly a millennium.

ORIGINS OF FILM

The origins of film can be traced back long before the first projected images or the invention of photography. The Acropolis was designed as a cinematic experience; the eye is led on a path structured by narrative. Choisy argues that its composition is planned as if viewed by the eye of a filmmaker, offering an architectural sequence "*subtly composed, shot by shot*" (Lukez, 1999). The architect carefully choreographs the user's experience and his emotions could subsequently be controlled. In fact, the word 'cinema' is derived from the Greek word kinema – "*which connotes both motion and emotion*" (Bruno, 2007: 7).

It was only when the Classical era was revisited in the Renaissance that the second cinematic advancement, namely Linear Perspective, was made. Cinematic thinking was once again triggered when it became possible to capture views

Fig. 13 Montage Lion Sequence from Battleship Potemkin, Sergei Eisenstein
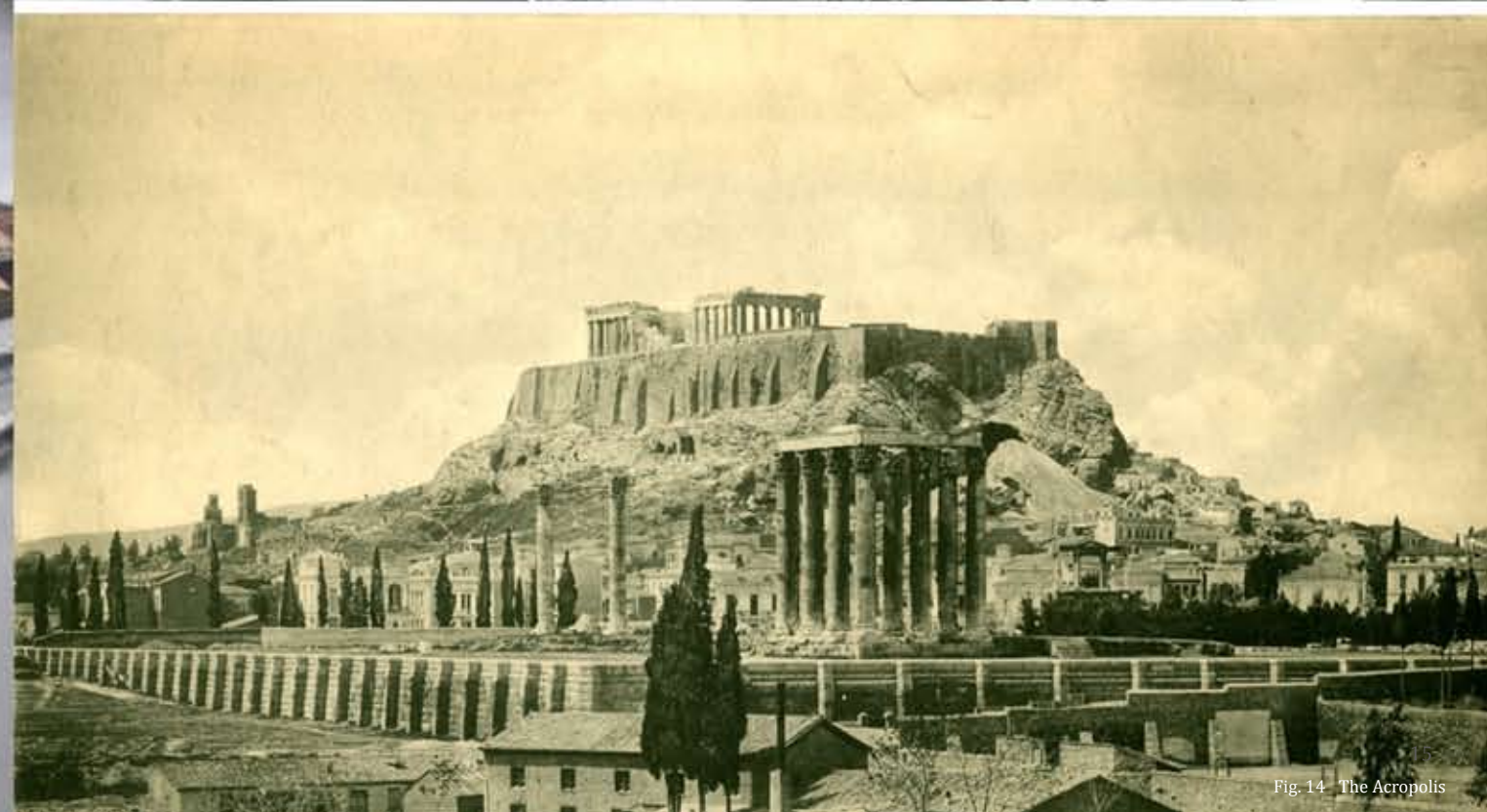

Fig. 12 Camera Obscura

Fig. 14 The Acropolis
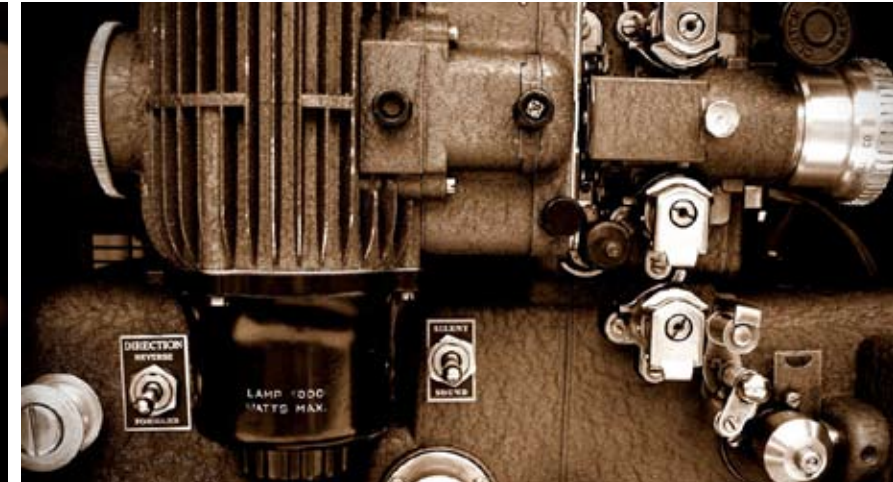
Fig. 15 The Acropolis

Fig. 16 Film Projector

Fig. 17 Film Projector

accurately, as the human eye perceives them. In the 16th century, the Camera Obscura dazzled its first audiences with its magical visual encounter with reality. The projected, constant changing pictures were the first truly objective view of our world. The Camera Obscura is not only a projection device – the word camera literally means 'chamber/room' (Oxford Dictionary). Rattenbury states that "*in the Camera Obscura, the room disappears (as does the cinema auditorium), you see life, but at a remove; profoundly different to being out there*" (Toy, 1994). The purpose of film is to reveal a detached reality, a reality we can escape to and from which we can gain perspective and insight.

ARCHITECTURE OF FILM

To examine the birth of film it is important to do so at the hand of Walter Benjamin, a philosopher of the early 20th century, and author of an article named "*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter Seiner Technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*" (Blunden, 1936) (*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*). In his argument he predicts the imminent world of commercialism and debates whether it's possible to nurture art in this climate.

Benjamin poses the question: How does the cameraman compare to the painter? He uses the analogy of a cameraman as surgeon and a painter as magician both trying to heal a person. A surgeon must penetrate the patient, cut him open and operate while a magician can heal from a distance. A painter can keep distant from reality, while the cameraman must infiltrate into the fabric of that realm (Blunden, 1936).

An early criticism of film believes that it is impossible to analyse and contemplate film since,

just as a frame was being understood a new one replaced it. "*I can no longer think what I want to think, my thoughts have been replaced by moving images*" (Duhamel, quoted by Blunden, 1936). It is an artform characterised by constant change; it must be seen in its entirety, "*the movement image*" according to Deleuze (Frampton, 1991). The smallest constituent of film is the frame, a photograph of a freeze in time, positioned in its exact place by the art of montage.

MONTAGE

Montage: The process or technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole (Oxford Dictionary).

The Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein is fundamental in the theorem of montage: "*Montage becomes the mightiest means for a really important creative remoulding of nature*" (Leyda, 1963: 5). Montage is the process of giving things their place in relation to one another. Heidi Sohn sees this practice in architecture – where techniques "*acquire their position, their place, and hence result in a sort of system of classification*" (Sohn, 2006: 49). Architecture is also responsible for human 'montage'; it concerns itself with existentialism. Pallaasma outlines this point in the publication *Architecture of image: Existential Space in Cinema*: "*establishing a place is the fundamental task of architecture*" (Pallaasmaa, 2001: 20).

The whole is better than the sum of its parts, and through montage random raw footage gains its meaning. Sergei Eisenstein distinguishes cinema from architecture by the "*spatial eye's*" path. In cinema, the eye follows an imaginary route through a series of objects, "*through sight

as well as mind*" revealing "*diverse positions passing in front of an immobile spectator.*" In architecture, Eisenstein argues, the spectator moves "*through a series of carefully disposed phenomena*" which are observed with "his visual sense" (Lukez, 1999). Once again, we are walking on the path to the Acropolis, assembling the views and spatial arrangements through mind montage and the viewer's advance through space. Sergei Eisenstein referred to montage as the 4th dimension of film (Toorn, 1997).

SPACE AND TIME

A film represents time and space as a dynamic force. The duration of the film (usually less than two hours) depicts various events and actions in sequence. Michael Dear terms this the "*fusion of space and time*" (Dear, 1994). Filmic action needs to take place somewhere. This is why architecture has played such an important part in film history; to create the backdrop for action. Film addresses the space and time dimension directly; it cannot be avoided in film, as opposed to architecture.

The fourth dimension can be carefully scripted, user movement patterns predicted and the space designed accordingly. We can translate this condition to the architectural experience. Bernard Tschumi adopts this approach in his design process with his extensive use of movement diagrams.

Film can, however, render the fourth dimension in interesting new ways. Michel Gondry, a contemporary film director, supports the privileged position of film. In his Smirnoff advertisement, he uses a Vodka bottle as the '*narrative hook*' (Broodryk, 2009) that connects the characters from one space-time dimension

to the next. This device merges the various time periods and places that the two characters experience in their journey to freedom. Michel Gondry rendered a reality that makes us envious of cinematic space. Tschumi, in the publication entitled   argues that this could be done in architecture; if we adapt these filmic techniques to create architectural '*surprises*'.

VIEW AND REPRESENTATION

Views are closely related to the fourth dimension as they are a constant shifting phenomenon experienced when space is embodied. The habitation of space in itself becomes a spectacle.

Jane Jacobs argues that "*the sight of people still attracts other people*" and this curiosity contributes to safer streets and neighbourhoods (Sanders, 2002: 175).

Views aren't only pure entertainment. They transcend to the human desire to dream, to inhabit distant vistas. In a cathedral, the high vaulted ceilings, use of light and fresco paintings focus the gaze to the heavens. The Acropolis makes the user "*a consumer of views*" (Bruno, 2007: 58). Corbusier designed his strip window for the view – "*In my own work I seem to think as Eisenstein does in his films*" (Bruno, 2007: 58).

In fact, film has changed the way we view our world. The camera has become our "*prosthetic eye*" (Bruno, 2007: 256). Film set designers include camera angles (important viewing vistas) on their plans. Perhaps architects can learn from these representations. Tschumi's diagrams in *Manhattan Transcripts* read like a film: one diagram forms part of the larger representation and cannot be understood alone. *Event Cities* by Tschumi further explores the use of multiple drawings to explain his concepts. If one repre-

Fig. 18   Memento, Christopher Nolan (2000)

Fig. 19   HYPERmedia triad

sents an architectural reality in a dynamic way, it will inevitably influence the way one designs. One perspective cannot stand in for the whole design. Architecture must evolve from the Renaissance architect; space will be explored from a multitude of angles.

MEMORY

Memory is what makes us aware of time; the residue of the past transforms into memories of the present (Comte-Sponville, 2004). In the film *Memento* the lead character Leonard (Guy Pearce) has lost his ability to remember. Every day he has to establish with the help of tattoos and notes, where he is, when it is and where he is going. In fact the film illustrates the power of memory when he distorts his past to "*manipulate his future self*" (Martin-Jones, 2006: 179) to commit an unmotivated murder.

Without memory, it would be impossible to experience architecture, or film. Without memory we cannot determine our place in the world.

It is through memory that we can understand the moving image – we remember the preceding frames, and our minds can follow the trajectory of movement. "*They establish a memory of the preceding frame, of the course of events. Their final meaning is cumulative; it does not depend merely on a single frame (such as a façade), but on a succession of frames or spaces*" (Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts, 1994).

Sanders argues that every film spectator has a mental New York imprinted in their mind. We construct blocks and streets with the fragments of memories left by the New York movie saga. In fact the way we 'record' the world according to Quintillian is similar to our film experiences: "*To remember the different parts of a discourse, one would imagine a building and implant the discourse in site as well as in sequence: that is, one would walk around the building and populate each part of the space with an image; then one would mentally retraverse the building, moving around and through the space, revisiting in turn all the rooms that had been 'decorated' with imaging. Conceived in this way, memories are motion pictures*" (Bruno, 2007: 221).

John Ruskin said that "*without architecture there would be no remembering*" (Californication, 2007). Memories happen somewhere. Bruno states that when revisiting an old building we used to inhabit, we not only remember the place, but the people we met, the conversations we had, the things we did there. The brain is like a room; neurons are triggered and long forgotten images are projected in our minds. The brain does not record events like the movie camera does. Through montage in our own minds we are able to rework old memories, make them applicable to new situations – a sign of human intelligence.

Architecture can play on these memories – most importantly the 'collective memories' as Carl Jung names it – t*he collective unconscious*. Public architecture can recreate homely, intimate spaces, or spaces that are a sign of movement, like corridors. Architecture can create spaces for repose, viewing – all concepts that are understood by the man on the street.

EXISTENTIAL SPACE AND THE HAPTIC

"*We place our feelings, desires and fears in buildings. A person who is afraid of the dark has no factual reason to fear darkness as such; he is afraid of his own imagination, or more precisely of the contents that his repressed fantasy may project into the darkness*" (Pallaasmaa, 2001: 31).
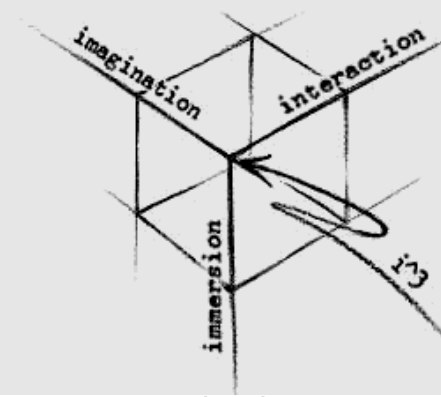
The human body is a receptive organ – it can distinguish between thousands of voices, faces, textures, temperatures, smells and tastes. Bruno believes that this receptive nature of the human is also reversed. When we touch we are touched. This haptic nature is not only an expression of the human hand; skin envelops us, and includes the eye membrane: "*We are moved by the moving image*" (Bruno, 2007: 254).

CINEMA ARCHITECTURE (THE ARCHITECTURE OF EXPERIENCE)

A small film production/art company, HYPERmedia has released a manifesto that calls for many changes in the film world. They are centred on the invention of new technology, like smaller, lightweight cameras. Certain archaic filming conventions must be abandoned; the camera can move freely in the filmic space and itself become a character. They want the cinema experience to be totally "i*mmersive, imaginative and interactive*" (HYPERMedia Manifesto, 2009).

Perhaps with their methods they will find the task a difficult thing to do. They are questioning the medium itself and would like to add computer gaming technology to the film experience. But architecture could help achieve their golden triad.

Film is experienced in a highly conditioned, silent environment – there are no distractions. Architecture, according to Walter Benjamin, is not so fortunate (Blunden, 1998). We do not give our undivided attention to architecture, perhaps the very reason that so many bad buildings have been erected without notice.

The ritual of going to a film is a conditioning process, an eerie environment easily reproducible. A grotesque comparison to this routine is again with the ancient Greeks. Oracles imposed visions and illusions on clients through a vicious experience. The client was subject to days of no sleep or food and confined to a dark room before they were considered worthy of council. Can any objective knowledge come from such an encounter?

A dark auditorium space is entered; darkness separates viewers from the screen and sets the scene for a spectacular projection of light. Sound blasts from all corners of the cinema to complete the wondrous illusion. Total attention is on the screen, as Rattenburry states: "*The creator invisibly provides and dominates the experience of the individual*" (1994). The very material projected on that screen is subjective, the director consciously decides what stimuli he wants to arouse in his rendering of reality. The context of a film screening is universal, it can be reproduced exactly anywhere in the world. After a screening, no evidence of that film exists; it is absorbed by the viewers and transformed into memories.

CONCLUSION

Film is a play on light and architecture a play on space, but essentially they are equally real to us: "*Cinematic space moves not only through time and space or narrative development but through inner space. Film moves, and fundamentally "moves" us, with its ability to render effects and, in turn to affect*" (Bruno, 2007: 7).

We appreciate film because it is an extension of our minds, a medium closest to our perception of the world. Communication is a visual projection from one mind to another. We edit memories and experience them through the act of viewing.

Architecture that understands film, is architecture closely attuned to the human mind.
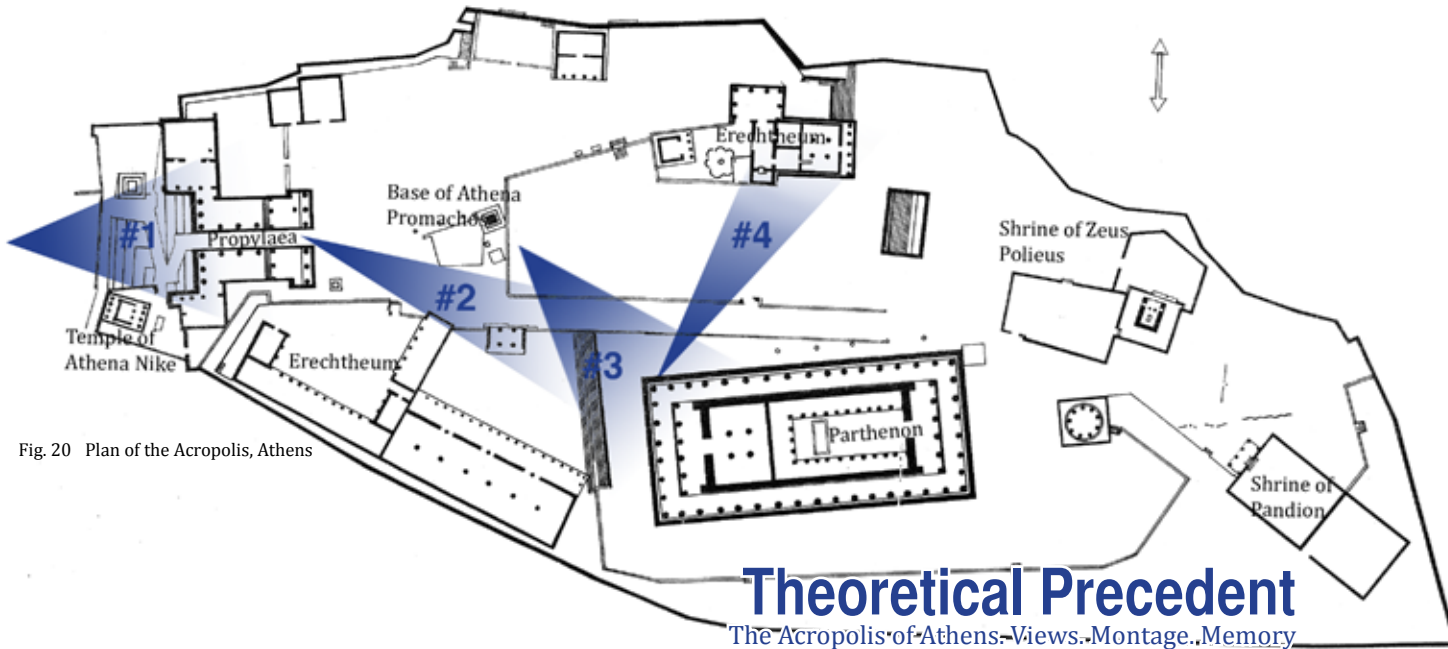
Fig. 20   Plan of the Acropolis, Athens

Theoretical Precedent
The Acropolis of Athens . Views . Montage . Memory

THE ACROPOLIS FROM THE EYE OF A FILMMAKER

In 1889 the French engineer Auguste Choisy released the publication Histoire de l'architecture. This seminal piece was of particular interest to Le Corbusier (as discussed in the famous *Towards a new Architecture*) and also the Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein.

His essay *Montage and Architecture* takes a close look at the narratives of Choisy in his description of the Acropolis and asks the reader to see it through the eyes of a filmmaker. He focuses on four composed shots of the Acropolis, using Choisy's sketches and descriptions to illustrate the composition of these shots.

Choisy and Eisenstein both argue, after analysing the compositions, that the Greeks calculated their place, scale, size and timing on the first impression they make.

"Our recollections invariably take us back to first impressions, and the Greeks strove, above all, to make it a favourable one" (Blois, 1989).

It is not only these compositions that interest Eisenstein, but also the architectural sequence, or in his terms, the montage i.e. relation from one shot to another.

"The Greeks have left us the most perfect examples of shot design, change of shot, and shot length (that is, the duration of a particular impression). Victor Hugo called the medieval cathedrals 'books in stone' (see Notre Dame de Paris). The Acropolis of Athens has an equal right to be called the perfect example of one of the most ancient films" (Bois, 1989).

The following views are described by Sergei Eisenstein in his article "Montage and Architecture" that appeared in Assemblage in 1989. Edited by Yve-Alian Bois.

VIEW 1

"The general idea of the plan of the Propylaeum can be seen in view 1 ... We see the symmetrical central block and two noticeably different wings — the right-hand one broader and the left-hand one less so. ... At first sight, nothing could be more uneven than this plan, but in fact it constitutes a completely balanced whole in which the general symmetry of the masses is accompanied by a subtle diversity in the details. ... The optical symmetry is impeccable.

Both wings of the Propylaeum balance out at the exact moment when the general view of the building opens out in front of us." (Bois, 1989)
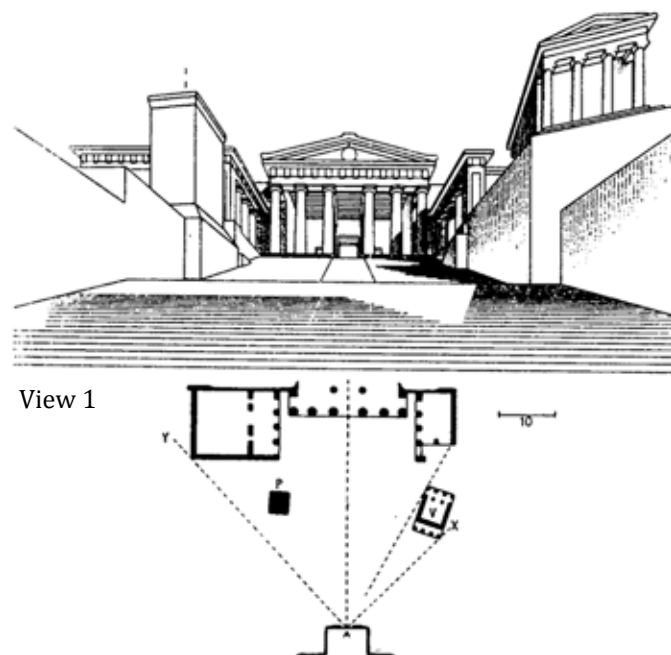
View 1

VIEW 2

"First view of the square; Athene Promakhos. Passing by the Propylaeum, the spectator's eye embraces the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, and Athene Promakhos (view 2). In the foreground towers the statue of Athene Promakhos; the Erechtheion and the Parthenon are in the background, so that the whole of this first panorama is subordinated to the statue, which is its central point and which creates an impression of unity. The Parthenon only acquires its significance when the visitor loses sight of this gigantic piece of sculpture. " (Bois, 1989)
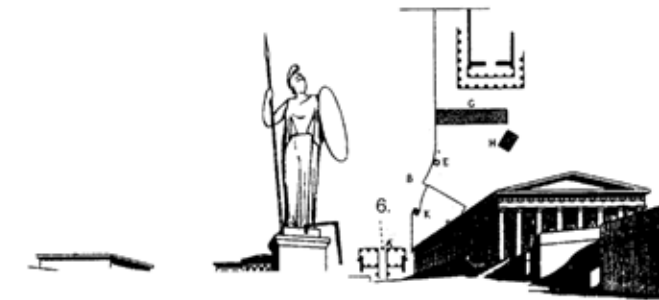
View 2

VIEW 3

"The parthenon and its oblique perspectives. To modern thinking, the Parthenon — the great temple of the Acropolis — should be placed opposite the main entrance, but the Greeks reasoned quite differently. The cliff of the Acropolis has an uneven surface, and the Greeks, without altering its natural relief, placed the main temple on the highest point at the edge of the cliff, facing the city (view 3). Placed thus, the Parthenon first of all faces the spectator obliquely. The ancients generally preferred oblique views: they are more picturesque, whereas a frontal view of the facade is more majestic.

Each of them is allotted a specific role. An oblique view is the general rule, while a view en face is a calculated exception." (Bois, 1989)

View 3

VIEW 4

"After the first panorama from the Erechtheion, let us continue our way across the Acropolis. At point 3 the Parthenon is still the only structure in our field of vision, but if we move on to point 4, it will be so close to us that we shall be unable to encompass its shape; at that moment the Erechtheion becomes the center of the panorama. It is precisely from this point that it offers us one of its most graceful silhouettes (view 4). The bare wall is enlivened by the Porch of the Caryatids, which stand out from it as though against a background specifically created for them. " (Bois, 1989)
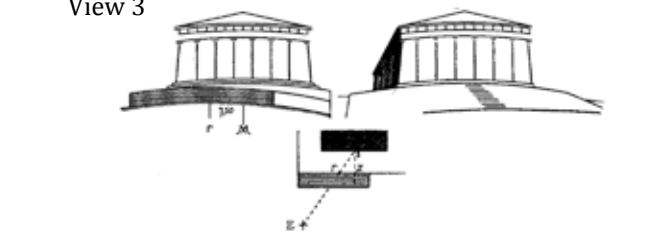
CONCLUSION

These shots and the architectural sequence undoubtedly render a cinematic experience. The compositions/shots, their placement and remnants in our mind and timing create a directed emotional response.

View 4

Fig. 21   View 1-4, Choisy's diagrams of the Acropolis