PARTICIPATION
and
PERCEPTION

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This project is based in Shannon Airport and uses the device of an air-cargo terminal and public park to present both a new future for the site and to allow people into the airport - allowing the public to experience this visible but removed place and enjoy the spectacle of flight.
Prelude

This essay initially examines how the body experiences place, and whether through an analysis of this, a new way of adding value to spaces of supermodernity can occur. Spaces of supermodernity include airports, motorways, shopping centres, the virtual world of the internet etc. These are homogenous or ‘parallel’ spaces that have no attachment to the landscape they sit in, yet where people are spending increasing amounts of time; places where you are everywhere and nowhere and which exist only as a result of the spatialities and needs of contemporary society. By analysing place through a temporal lens and exploring the modes of the visual and perception, new methods are suggested as a potential way of thinking about these places differently. There is value in these places and it is through these means that they can perhaps be thought of differently and given an enhanced meaning.

Place

‘Place’ is the immediate experienced environment of a body. Space, “the encompassing volumetric void in which things (including human beings) are positioned” is transformed into a place by its inhabitation by bodies and the self, or as Michel de Certeau states; “a frequented place, an intersection of moving bodies; it is the pedestrians who transform a street into a place.” The body interprets and inhabits place experientially, visually and temporally. Place requires it to be experienced to exist - just as the body needs place to do the same.

Places are stronger than people, the fixed scene stronger than the transitory succession of events. This is the theoretical basis of architecture itself.

Aldo Rossi

Due to technological and societal adaptations and developments, humans have begun to become abstracted from their inhabitation of place. The scale of interaction and experience of a place has one pole of intensity and richness at the level of pedestrians interacting on the street; this being the level where sensory experience is active and detail appreciated. This physicality decreases as modes of transport are introduced that increase the speed by which the body moves; bike, car, train, etc. These transform the body to a spectator of place rather than participant - the street experienced as driven through is vastly different to the street that is walked through. As a contemporary society we spend increasing amounts of time on motorways, in airports, at a computer, using earphones and otherwise abstracted from the physical place we are inhabiting. Marc Augé describes place with these attributes as ‘non-place’, a conceptual term that can be described similarly as ‘parallel-place’; in that they exist alongside or in-between (but not with or part of) place as thought of traditionally.

The question I pose is what our experience and habitation of these places of “supermodernity” means and whether we can collaborate or design through / with / because of these experiences. Are the parameters by which we inhabit place (experientially, visually and temporally) changing due to our evolving habits? If so, how does analysis, documentation and design shift accordingly?

Edward S. Casey suggests that the move from premodern to postmodern and now to supermodern has resulted in “certain habitual patterns of relating to places having become attenuated to the point of disappearing altogether.” Edward Soja suggests that “there is reason to be concerned that the practical and theoretical understanding of space and spatiality is being muddled and misconstrued either by a baggage of tradition, by older definitions that no longer fit the changing contexts of the contemporary moment.” He presents, as a way of analysing the complex spaces of supermodernity, a ‘thirdspace’; a term describing the shift towards a “third existential dimension...infusing the traditional coupling of historicality - sociality with new modes of thinking.” This third dimension is spatiality, and its reciprocal interdependence with existing modes. It is this deconstruction of previously accepted parameters that is perhaps necessary to think about when analysing and interpreting the issue of place in the age of supermodernity.
A sense of place, genius loci, or identification of place derives some of its status from the layers of history embedded in its physical and temporal code. Visual traces of times past, stories of what used to be and a sense of temporality all form a palimpsest of a place. Marc Augé describes this foundation of history in place; “Streng in ourselves how we have changed, the image of what we are no longer. The inhabitant of the anthropological place does not make history; he lives in it.” Victoria Meyers suggests that “buildings can be called archaeological maps of our past overlaid by visions of the future.” In tandem, Casey believes that the body “bears the traces of the places it has known”, suggesting that spatial history (of recollected memory, experience etc.) is part of the composition of a body.

“In-between” or “parallel” places of transit, commerce and virtual communication of supermodernity do not have these historical qualities. The superficiality of contemporary space, as Meyers notes, “communicates that we are losing access to memory as it was previously understood. We are losing access to memory with any depth of field.” The rational space of the motorway makes no attempt to identify with its context of place and is simply carved through or placed on the landscape in the most economical manner as a route between two nodes. It is a system that reflects how we live and (need to) move as an evolving society. The perspective is linear and is of the “parallel-place” in front, rather than presenting a sense, or genius loci of the place and landscape that exists alongside. The “historical consciousness that exposes the psychic connectivity of landscapes both urban and rural” exists twice in the same place - for the “existing” landscape and for the motorway in parallel. Perhaps it is partly due to the relative newness of these places, especially in an Irish context, but Augé seems to agree that these spaces of modernity lack temporal, and thus place-making qualities. “If a space can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.”

MEMORY

A sense of memory is alluded to above as part of the place-making process and analysis. Meyers suggests that architecture can be “described as an analogue for human memory.” Memories of places are, it can be argued, part of the infrastructural fabric of that place - a kind of virtual palimpsest. Conversely, it is a place exists in our memory surely it forms part of the fabric and infrastructure of the body also. Casey discusses the body as the “exacting vehicle of being-in-place” for Soja’s “Thirdspace”. A transference of values and attributes occurs between the body and place. “The place-world is energized and transformed by the bodies that belong to it, while in turn these bodies are guided and influenced by the worlds inherent structures.” This description conjures up the initial comparison between body and place as being co-dependent. The body learns and adapts through memory and experience of place. Thus, memory transcends from the virtual to the tangible and is manifest in the composition of the body, which ultimately is subject to place and its parameters.

What, then, of memory in the context of parallel-place? What does it mean that people spend all this time commuting on motorways and waiting in airports, for them to rarely if ever think of the event again, or (perhaps just as negatively) to be unable to extract any specific journey or experience from the myriad of self-similar memories? Rem Koolhaas asserts that “Junkspace is postexistential; it makes you uncertain where you are, obscures where you go, undoes where you were.” “Junkspace” is a term that is an alternative to Augé’s “Non-Places” or “parallel-place” - for Koolhaas these are the undesired physical constructs and manifests of supermodernity and contemporary society.

Does this mean that these places do not contribute to us as self, or detract from our make up as bodies? What if the role of the architect as facilitator was in part to introduce a sense of memory to these parallel places? This, therefore, begins to transform them into places that enrich the body rather than, as is the current situation, not having this experiential quality.

Because it cannot be grasped, Junkspace cannot be remembered

Rem Koolhaas

TIME

Another potential arises if these memories - temporal artefacts of place - were part of the documentation of place, or another form of context for the design process. In Ulysses, James Joyce narrates Dublin in minute detail, with various threads of time woven together to form the story of a route experienced through the city’s streets. As Till describes:

“Threads of epic time (the time of the Homeric gods), natural cyclical time (the rivers, shifting sands), historical cyclical time (the repetitive sense of Ireland’s identity), linear historical time (the particular chronological response to colonisation), personal time (Joyce’s own life reinscribed in the pages), fuzzy time (memories snatched), focused time (the endless newspapers), their future time, my future time (when will I finish it?) etc.”

The concept of time as a dimension is central to Joyce’s text: it is understood and described as not a linear concept but something much more variable and complex. This resonates with Michel Serre, who describes time as “paradoxical. It folds or twists, it is as various as the dance of flames in a brazier, here interrupted, there vertical, mobile and unexpected.” The temporality of place is something that affects us after we have finished experiencing the place. According to Casey, “In every case, we are still, even many years later, in the places to which we are subject because (and to the exact extent that) they are in us.”

In parallel, the concept of time and temporality is integral to the whole issue, description, process of architecture. In All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace, Jay Forrester states that time with regards to problem solving is too often thought of as an exclusively linear process;

Most people think of action as ‘here’s a problem, I’ll take action, I’ll solve it’. Straight line. But that’s not the system in which we live. There’s a problem, we take action, it maintains things. It gives us a new environment for taking the next action and changing things, and so we live in these feedback loops that are controlling us and those things we interact with.”
The flux of temporality is an exciting yet complex force to deal with. Like Robert Smithson, Till believes that we should be alert to “temporal surfaces, aware of time as experienced rather than of some abstracted and eventually ideological construct of it”.

What if time, rather than space, was a context for architecture? What if we began to think of “temporalised space - space full of time - rather than spatialised time”? In the context of parallel-places described earlier, since these are abstracted from place and the landscape they sit in, what if you began to think about and approach them in a different manner by introducing temporality and a new sense of documentation and analysis? If this was to lead to an alternative projection - an alternative architecture - it might begin to design that responds to the increasing complexities of modernity and, by extension, of the complex construct of parallel-place.

Architecture necessarily has to accommodate temporality, thus to describe something that exists out of time is to describe something that is not architecture. It is therefore necessary to reverse the modernist equation that tampered with time, to move from seeing time as held in architecture to understanding architecture in time.

Temporality in terms of memories or embedded traces of place rarely exists in these spaces of supermodernity. The deep value of these traces to the body is stated by Alberto Pérez-Gomez in Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge; “Using projections conceived as ephemeral traces or indexes rather than as imaginative translation, may generate an architecture...in which the spectator / participant may catch a glimpse of his or her place in a fragmented wholeness”. Without these projections and mental artefacts, the body loses its sense and location in temporal place. Currently this is the case, as argued by Rem Koolhaas and others.

PARALLEL-PLACE

With the concepts of temporality and the visual in mind, how do parallel-places affect the body? What are they like?

Politics have become manifesto by Photoshop.

Rem Koolhaas

Junkspace by Rem Koolhaas strongly argues against the proliferation of the transient spaces of a “vast potential utopia clogged by its users.”

The continually fluctuating temporality of these places mean they are “a body double of space”, which replace “hierarchy with accumulation, composition with addition.” Here he is talking about parallel-place; airports, motorway systems, transient places in their function and existence. He states them to be “beyond measure, beyond code”, where the rapid temporality produces a plan as “a radar screen where individual pulses survive for unpredictable periods of time.”

The image and experience presented in Junkspace is a carefully crafted one of consumption and control. “All perspective is gone, as in a rainforest.” The body in Junkspace is subject to the order of the place - an undesired perspective (into the retail unit, at the hoarding, along the queue, up at the signage). These are the visual ordering of parallel-places; the body being subject to a frozen temporality of the image or direction.

Further, in terms of architectural presentation and process, a sense of experience being pre-ordained from the architect is often evident, partly a result of the advances in technological and digital representation that make such control possible. As Sola-Morales notes,

“The modernist promenade architecturale (a defined route through a sequence of architectural experience) is not a diversity but an itinerary that admits the possibility of control...it is time organised from a linear viewpoint.”

These further expulsions of time are a “concession of the fragility of architecture in the face of time.” August describes another frozen temporality in terms of traces of history as contemporary set-piece; “there is no room for history, unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle.” As Henry Lefebvre discussed; “the manifest expulsion of time is arguably one of the hallmarks of modernity.” In these spaces of supermodernity, shared time in the form of history and memory is fetishized into a commodity rather than an artefact of place; not something to enrich the body through temporal place but an image presented as a sign at the side of a motorway or alongside an escalator; a subconscious commercialisation.

Earlier the narrow perspective of the motorway was mentioned. In Junkspace a linear or frozen temporality of the visual accompanies this description of a parallel-place. The visual perception in Junkspace has been taken out of the hands of the place-maker, where it should be another tool in the analysis, documentation and design process. In order to grasp the complex order - reflecting the complexities of modern life - of these places, an investigation into how they are perceived and represented is required.

PROJECTION AND PERCEPTION

The concepts of temporality (history, memory and the projective) and experience as constructs of place and self-making have been investigated thus far, but there exists in parallel another dimension to the analysis and construct of place; the visual. The importance of how space is both perceived and how it is represented - both as a reflection on process and product - is elemental to architecture, yet there is fundamental, possibly not fully realised, potential in the relationship between representation, perception, process and the built object and their discourses.

“Projection is literally the hyphen between idea and experience”, writes Gomez. By stating this in the beginning of his book, he defines the importance of projection and perception to the very meaning of both architecture and representation to the body.

The requirements of our technological society have often reduced representation to its pragmatic capacity (increasingly standardised drawing conventions for building) or commodifying potential (the static image as selling point or false representation). The tools of representation are value-laden and “underlie the conception and realisation of architecture.”

Architecture and the built environment exists visually both in perception...
and projection. Perception has to do with the body; as Perrault is quoted in Perspective Hinge: “Architecture and its representations existed in perspective space.” A later elaboration begins to explain the depth and breadth of the effect of perspective on the body and experience: “The lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one.” To experience and perceive visually is a total medium, related to but not fully translatable to any other visual media such as photography, film or drawing. By projecting we are representing the reality of architecture or a place, the means by which is discussed by Gomez in the Perspective Hinge. The very image of architectural endeavour, for him, “is a projection linking time and space.” How, then, has this image of architecture been represented traditionally?

The perspective of sight, or perspectiva naturalis was first elaborated fully by Euclid in the third century B.C.E. It was related to as a mathematical concept and was used to comprehend “the physical and metaphysical structure of reality.” In his Optica, he demonstrates how perception relies on the relationship of the observer (ie. the body) to the object, a relationship that could be “expressed accurately through geometry.” This presents a subjectivity and inherent link to the self that is expressed visually through perspective. To represent this in another medium was a discussion and exploration that arose in the Renaissance, with the development of perspectiva artificialis, a mathematically based method of linear perspective that was codified in 1435 by Alberti in his treatise, De Pictura. This development was a manifest of the desire for artists and architects to reveal the “geometric dimensionality of depth.” This desire to reveal and understand the geometric ordering of perspective was an attempt to decode this total medium of vision. However, just as important was the awareness of the embodied observer or self as a native element in perspective. It is this link between object and observer, participant and subject along with its inherent temporality and fluctuation that begins to measure the potential and richness that lies in the perspective.

This ordering between the observer and self suggested by the perspective can be explained further with the use of anamorphism, which presents the “potential discontinuity between an object present to perception and its visual appearance.”

The use of a perspectival anamorphosis is clear in The Two Ambassadors, a painting by Hans Holbein (National Gallery, London, 1532) (left). The effect of the technique is to suggest an inherent order that is implied by the artist through his use of perspective. The painting seems to present a privileged frontal view, yet when the viewer moves to a certain tangential point around the painting, a secondary perspective reveals itself. A perspectival anamorphosis is used to present the unintelligible grey streak as a human skull. Thus, the artist has used the visual to create a hierarchy for the participant in this set-piece, “an order nested within another order.” For Meyers, the consequence of this is in relation to the self: “it suggests that our bodies are engaged with vision in extraordinary ways.” The image of the skull is presented beyond its visual limit, “implicitly questioning the status of appearance.”

If perspective embodies the self and a specificity of space, the development of parallel projection is an alternative to this subjectivity. Axonometry and isometry are descriptive geometries that attempt to “describe realities with absolute precision.” Gomez describes the mediation between measurement and abstraction as “oscillating between the extremes of self-evident representation (accurate description) and self-referential formulation (freedom from representation).”

Interestingly, in discussing the historical development of these terms, Gomez describes isometry as being derived from “a perspective construction in which the converging points are postulated at infinity, so that these parallel lines can remain parallel.” This notion of infinity in the world, although impossible to experience, had to have been accepted for this description of isometry to be developed. Further, it presents a hierarchy to these representational conventions; parallel projection is an order of perspectival projection, albeit abstracted.

If perspective places the self in the world as an embodied subject, it also subjects the self to the world’s “passions and motions, willing to acknowledge and remain subordinate to the larger orders of nature and politics.” In opposition, the disembodiment of axonometry and isometry represents an observer in pursuit of “freedom, a projection of observer from the first time capable of self-conscious disengagement from the limits granted by the body and the world.”

We see the inherent relationship between self and object / subject that representation holds and portrays. When thinking about these methods as process or product, is it possible to think of them as affecting rather than being an effect? Can these media influence the perceptual process of the self? There is an area of richness in the specificity of scene that perspective achieves that has been used by architects to capture or give importance to certain moments or points of a space. At the baths at Leça da Palmeira outside Porto, designed by Alvaro Siza, the entrance sequence (image, left) brings the user down a slope in between two walls. By doing so the procession of descending towards the horizon and, eventually, to the water begins. The two walls you descend between are skewed in plan, which is otherwise perceptible in perspective, but for one moment they create a forced perspective along the journey. The apparent line of perspective draws the eye up the coast to a lighthouse, and in this way the geometry presents a snapshot that interrupts time; freezing what would otherwise be fleeting. The perspective could also be thought of as another form of context for the design; the geometry referencing other buildings along the coast. Whether the intention of the architect was to freeze this particular scene with the perspective is conjecture; however even the sense of mystery alone that the event creates adds a rich dimension to the experience of the project. This is similar to the order introduced by Holbein in The Two Ambassadors; the architect here has used a projective method to order and in this case, for a moment, focus our bodily experience of place on a particular scene.

**LANDSCAPE IMAGE**

The possibilities and richness embedded in analysing and designing through perception and projection have begun to be explained and demonstrated above. However, The Two Ambassadors and Baths at Leça da Palmeira are, respectively, from the sixteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. The technological society we have begun to inhabit and be subjected to in the
twenty-first century must be discussed in relation to these visual concepts. How important does projection and perception become as societies, communities and place begin to mediate between the physical and the virtual?

As Christine Boyer states in CyberCities: Visual Perception in the Age of Electronic Communication, “images no longer constitute a window on the world, they are no longer controlled by linear perspective and seen at a distance.” Keeping in mind the way people experience place in contemporary society, and in particular parallel-places, perhaps this discussion of perception and projection becomes more important in this context. The potential contained in these concepts of the visual are in danger of being lost, as we are increasingly pulled “into the receding space of the electronic matrix in total withdrawal from the world.” In her set of essays Boyer explores the “disappearance of the city from our postmodern social and cultural agendas”, and that the alternative reality then proposed by computers and emerging connectivity through the internet (the book was published in 1996) was pulling the body away from engagement with place and “into the cybernetic representations of the virtual world.”

Yet, paradoxically, this perceived withdrawal from ‘reality’ might oblige the body to “pay close attention to the links and nodes that interlace reality and appearances, illusions and symptoms, images and models.” The perception of a system - in this case the city - is in reference here. Due to the complexity of this technological society, it is not a linear process to mediate between the physical and the virtual; there is a logic of displacement and delay at play - from computers to the city and back - that is not a progressive, cause-and-effect rational argumentation arriving at a final conclusion. Instead - as electronic communication allows - we dance with data, enjoying recursive reflexivity, strange loops, and nonlinear inconclusive structures.

This temporal complexity engagement between the physical and virtual has ramifications that, according to Paul Virilio, causes the city to attempt to reflect the hyper-speed of information flows in its physicality; “every city is over-exposed and its physical sense of space decomposed as our eyes are constantly bombarded with ephemeral and interchangeable images.” A sense of this is also discussed in Recovering Landscapes: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture, a collection of essays compiled by James Corner. In Airport / Landscape, written by Denis Cosgrove, the landscape as a contemporary construct is described:

Landscape today is unbounded, flexible and mobile, composed of forms, connections, and spaces that can neither be contained within conventional frames nor pictured according to the scopic conventions of distance, authoring eye. Landscape mobilizes both material and mind, nature and imagination, space and technique, in novel and imaginative ways.

Landscape then begins to represent the distinctive spatialities of the contemporary world. This temporal engagement with place reflects what has been, what is, and from these projections the questions of what may be arise. To return to Gomez, who states that “Architecture addresses directly our whole embodied perception”, if we are inhabiting parallel-place and our participation with the city is increasingly “action at a distance”, perhaps the specificity of scene and place that visual projection and perception allows is how we should be beginning to think about how the body participates with these constructs of contemporary society. The traditional meaning of landschaft is an occupied milieu, the effects and significance of which accrue through tactility, use, and engagement over time. Can we use the tools (of the temporal, perceptual and visual) described to begin to understand and participate with parallel-places in a similar way to that of the landschaft?

If the architect is a facilitator, perhaps the opportunity with parallel-place is to coordinate the experience of place to awaken the participation of the body through a temporal lens and with a projective and perceptive method.

CONCLUSION

We will find history as a discourse of the imagination aimed at discovering the inexhaustible hidden potential in the “traces” of our traditions, our true “memory” embedded in documents, buildings, drawings, and so forth, will open up whole new worlds for us.

The role of the architect as facilitator has been mentioned above. There is a latency to the analysis of place and its constructs that is not being fully explored or valued. The way we move and live as a technological and contemporary society is having profound implications for the relationship of the body to place. This is not to say that what is being forgotten or not appreciated is irretrievable; rather, it is being hidden and suppressed in this apparent desire to think of our lives as another stream in the informational flow of networks and cyberspace. Rather than trying to do this, the way we might begin to recapture place in all its deep importance to the body is by providing, somewhat paradoxically, a counterpoint. Moments of specificity and staticness that reposition the body - if only for a moment - as fully perceived and projected in place that might thus enrich the body by doing so.

By using the modes and concepts as explored and discussed above, we might begin to determine the tools and methods that will help us to “open up whole new worlds”.

The fence
A NEW INFRASTRUCTURAL and PUBLIC LAYER for SHANNON AIRPORT

Thick Boundary (above)
Imaging an interruption and clashing of boundary events (below)
Shannon's Airport (SNN)

The airport is defined by a tapestry of history and layers. By exploring how Shannon has developed and what kind of place it is, a future projection is presented for both the existence of the airport and for the use of the public. It is at its very basic an interrogation of the methods discussed and explored in the essay - how do you bring parallel-place into the realm of the greater landscape? How can you design for people in this kind of place?

The history of Shannon Airport, located in South Clare along the Shannon Estuary, is one of innovation, spectacle and creative foresight. Economic and infrastructural leaps have occurred periodically throughout the history of the airport as required that have sustained it for a generation or age, each adding their own layer and trace to the site as place.

The airport is the location of the first duty-free in the world, and as this tax-free model was transferred to the Shannon Free Zone industrial park, it provided an economic and industrial core for the area. The geographic location of the site along the western seaboard of Europe resulted in the site being an important fueling stop off point for transatlantic air traffic. When the jet age was heralded in the late 1960s / early 1970s and planes could fly from mainland Europe to America without the need for a refuel, a runway 3,200m long was built with enough surplus capacity in its length that the site became a designated emergency landing point for both the NASA space shuttle and the Concorde. Shannon continues to be a category 9 airport, meaning that it is constantly available for emergency landings for aircraft of any size.

In the 1980s the neutrality of both the airport and Ireland politically gave an opportunity to offer the airport as a landing and fueling point for the American military during the first gulf war, a relationship which still continues presently. At the same time the Soviet Russian state airline, Aeroflot, began using Shannon as a fueling point. For fifteen years up until the late 1990s it was possible to fly directly to Havana or Moscow from Shannon and to this day Russian military during the first gulf war, a relationship which still continues presently. The context of the airport grows from a local hinterland to a much larger geographical area due to the nature or how people transit today and the evolved infrastructural capacities.

The surplus capacity of the systems of the airport introduces the possibility of other processes and functions being provided. Ireland as an island nation imports most goods and food through air or sea, sending vessels back empty or with less product. The climate of the area is temperate without major swings in temperature, and the relatively low residential density in the region means that the site could intensify its operations on a 24 hour schedule. These conditions and the under-use of the airport in terms of flight schedules means that the addition and expansion of cargo storage and transport facilities is a viable proposition for a new function to introduce to the airport. However, this process might grow or contract in time. What if you designed an infrastructure that allowed this fluctuation - or the development other uses or functions - to occur over time?

The context of the airport grows from a local hinterland to a much larger geographical area due to the nature or how people transit today and the evolved transport systems that facilitate this movement. People can walk, drive, fly or sail to the site in a few minutes or hours; the context is as much the motorway system as the local landscape. Unknown future uses of the site can be provided for by designing a system that can be plugged into and dimensioned in such a way that it can adapt and evolve. The existing complexities of the boundary can be a reference by which you mediate between landscape and airside, blurring the definition between parallel-place and landscape.

The project thus becomes the infrastructural intervention of a cargo terminal, this being the device by which people can safely access the interior public park. From here, the public can enjoy moments of proximity with the spectacle of flight and workings of the airport. It is an attempt to grasp and project the premise of this thesis into design and the interpretation of parallel-place.
Early stages of the project were attempting to design and analyse the boundary of the airport through a temporal lens. The site for a primer project was located at the boundary between the Shannon Free Zone Industrial park and the taxiway system of the airport. A section of ground here has been manipulated over a number of years but has now returned to grass. The existing concrete apron was re-used to determine the location and form of a meandering line that would provide promenade for planespotters, along with storage and working platforms for use by the aerospace industry which is located along this ‘thick’ edge. This insertion provided for future scenarios for the built piece to be used by the public, the aerospace industries, or both in an interweaving of leisure and industry.
Some photos outlining the history of the airport. The shots show some of the nostalgic memories of flying and the site; the entrance to the original terminal is into a building of almost residential scale - incomparable to modern airport terminals. The ability to drive and park at the front door of the terminal, a few metres away from the apron, shows the scale of numbers the airport dealt with in its formative years. An old aerial shot shows the original configuration of runways and taxiways, with the lagoon enclosed by the seaport crescent barrier yet to be reclaimed from the water.
The experiential overlapping explored in the primer project is something that has been developed further. A study of O’Hare airport in Chicago analyses how transport infrastructures are interlaced to result in unusual scenarios like the image below. The proximity to a moving aircraft is unexpected and a stimulating experience; one point of intensity where the boundary between public route and private airside function is blurred.

In a different manner, the plan (above) for the original terminal built in Dublin airport in 1939 describes the excitement and optimism that flight held at that time. The architecture was that of motion; curving lines of the interior spaces gently led passengers from terminal to apron. The viewing galleries on the roof above were popular with the public who came to enjoy the experience of flight. The terminal was a graceful journey and experience between landside and airside.
The ‘red zones’ of the airport are imaginary slopes rising from the runways that determine building heights and sightlines throughout and around the airport. These are invisible but vital for safe operation of aircraft and the airport. They shape the built fabric of the site and describe the additional infrastructural layers that determine the geometries of the airport.
Beginning to describe the experiential qualities of the project. The journey into the wide perspective of the park to enjoy the spectacle of flight is preceded by an unexpected encountering of the inner workings of the airport - an interlacing of public route and the workings of an air cargo terminal. The looped program diagram gives a sense of how this interlacing occurs, with the line perspectives of the final grid still relating to the earlier sketches.
A simple portal frame is the beginning of the structure - like the frames that form the structure of the various maintenance hangars in the airport. The use of concrete is to reference the materiality found along the boundary, from drystone walls and agricultural sheds to the granite blocks of the units in the Shannon Free Zone.

Through a process of sketches, modelmaking, and finally algorithmic scripting software, a grid was determined through the perspective for the structure which can always adapt to the varying widths, gradients and heights it forms as it undulates across the site. This grid deforms to provide a more complex surface: bifurcations and points of contact with the ground provide a deck the provides vantage, cover, descent into the structure, and allows for the natural, irregular movement of people.
The main geometries of the project are extensions of those found in the Shannon Free Zone and the underlying drainage grid; revealed in the parks as a ground surface treatment amongst the grassland. At three points the project ‘plugs’ into the boundary; on an existing concrete raft, a disused taxiway and where a drainage culvert emerges from underground. The rationality of the airport geometries are source of reference for the diagrammatic nature of the site plan.
Final Site Model, 1:2500 and earlier development schemes
Airport Cast - 1:7500

Shannon Free Zone / Airport Boundary Cast

Boundary Conditions

Initial Bounday Study Model
SCHEDULE OF AREAS

CARGO TERMINAL
- AIRCRAFT APRON - 60,000 M2
- BACKLOG IN - 5,000 M2
- SCALES
- BREAKDOWN AREA - 2,000 M2
- STORAGE WAREHOUSE - 8,000 M2
- SCALES
- BUILD-UP - 2,000 M2
- VEHICLE IN / OUT
- ROAD
- OFFICES - 500 M2
- STAFF CARPARKING - 500 M2
- STAFF CANTEEN - 100 M2
- SERVICES / MISC - 150 M2
- BACKLOG OUT - 3,000 M2
- FAST BUILD UP - 2,000 M2
- SCALES
- TRANSIT WAREHOUSE - 6,000 M2

PUBLIC PARK / VENUE
- PUBLIC PARK - 140,000 M2
- PUBLIC VIEWING PLATFORM / STAGE
- INFORMATION POINTS
- CARPARKING - 500 M2
- SERVICES / MISC - 100 M2
- AIRSIDE CONFERENCE / MEETING ROOMS - 500 M2
- SPORTS PITCHES X2

PRODUCTIVE LAND
- PUBLIC FARMING PARCEL - 5,000 M2
- ANCILLARY STRUCTURES / STORAGE

PUBLIC PARK - 140,000 M2 / 4150 M2
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THANK YOU

for

READING

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38 mb / 1 x 810 mm Roll / 1 x 610 mm Roll / 1 x 910 mm Roll / 1 8’X4” MDF Sheet / 2 X bag plaster / Many sheets of card