A Museum of Self Archaeology: Exploring the Potential of Narrative in Architecture

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A Museum of Self Archaeology: Exploring the Potential of Narrative in Architecture
by
Jonathan Martin

A Terminal Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
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Major: Architecture
Under the Supervision of Professor Rumiko Handa
Lincoln, Nebraska
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The idea of translating a literary work into architectural space seems somehow novel; an idea that is positioned so far outside the spectrum of corporate stigma that it rarely surfaces in architectural practice. However, the few blips throughout history where it does pop up, the projects tend to receive a high degree of attention. The idea of narrative translation has never been suggested as a kind of widespread architectural manifesto, that is it has only ever been used to memorialize a person or event. Such a sparing use of this method suggests a kind of deep significance that it brings to a project. Perhaps this is what draws my interest as I begin to think about a project to invest a year of my life in.

The intent of this thesis project is to question the methods of translation between narrative text and architectural space and to examine new questions and creative directions of infusing text and story into architectural practice. I must be critical of the conditions of use where this type of method have been and can be used. Is it merely appropriate in the circumstances of culturally significant or memorialized buildings, or is there a broader use by which it can affect architecture on a larger scale? I must also be critical of how much influence and integration this method can have on architectural practice and the techniques of today. I intend not to dismiss the methods of contemporary architecture, but to lend a way of creating a greater significance in our work.

A few but important historical examples will demand an in-depth study, from the early modern examples of Giuseppe Terragni to the latest of graduate projects by Thomas Hillier. There are two professional projects and three thesis projects that have guided my research thus far: The Danteum by Giuseppe Terragni (1938), Joyce’s Garden by Bernard Tschumi (1977), The Trial by Don Brady (2003), Translation and Repetition by Daniel Lesh (2004), and The Emperor’s Castle by Thomas Hillier (2009). Perhaps the most influential of these is a project by Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943), an Italian architect at the time of Mussolini and Italy’s fascist regime. He was a member of Gruppo 7, an assembly of seven young architects pushing for reform. Terragni accomplished a truly deep and poetic building, one that would engage and provoke its visitors to stop and think, as though they would standing in front of a great painting.

Terragni was commissioned to design a commemorative building for the greatest of Italian poets, Dante Alighieri. This building would serve as a temple, a glorifying of the arts, a library complete with all that is needed for students of Dante. It was to be completed in time for the Exposition of 1942, and would have made it to realization if not for the onslaught of World War II.

A “Danteum” is to be created in Rome: A National Organization that proposes to erect, on the Via dell’Impero, in this epoch, in which the will and genius of the Duce have realized the Imperial dream of Dante, a Temple to the greatest of Italian Poets.

1. The first statute specifically outlined for the Danteum in Schumacher’s The Danteum, p.37
The proposal for the building was received with high enthusiasm by Mussolini in 1938, but did not go without criticism, especially by those of CIAM and Euro-communist views. The idea of infusing literary text with architecture was not explored again until the 1970's with Bernard Tschumi's Joyce's Garden, based on the narrative Finnegans Wake. Despite criticism Christopher Schumacher makes the argument that Terragni's building makes sense and could be defended as a system of memory in much the way literature codifies memory. In fact, the Danteum was reliant upon memory for all Italians whom would visit the building. This was to be a cathedral for the literate, not the illiterate, so those who grew up with the teachings of Dante in school would be able to apply their knowledge of the poem and its characters to the abstract elements of Terragni's design. His focus for designing the building was to abstract the structure of the poem and use it to structure the building. This would create a common ground or equal footing by which to begin relating the two pieces.

Architectural monument and literary work can adhere to a singular scheme without losing, in this union, any of each work's essential qualities only if both posses a structure and a harmonic rule that can allow them to confront each other... In our case the architecture could adhere to the literary work only through an examination of the admirable structure of the Divine Poem...

Terragni further played with metaphor and syntax to elaborate other significant ties to the poem and structure of the building. Terragni's method for articulating a literary work into architecture has served as a foundation for many others exploring this topic. My research will also look into the project of Joyce's Garden by Bernard Tschumi as a postmodern example of narrative translation. While these professional works may serve as historical precedent for this method, the area where I may make most ground is in critically analyzing the works of several late thesis projects, two of which resulted in widespread acclaim. One of these was a project from the Bartlett school in London in 2009, which sparked my interest in the idea of translating a narrative work into an architectural space. The project was "The Emperor's Castle" translated by graduate student Thomas Hillier. It received international acclaim and is probably the most widely published thesis in recent years. The difference this project introduced from that of Terragni and Tschumi, is to think of the characters in terms of architectural description. It also moved beyond the condition of an abstract building to extend the translation into an architectural landscape. I think this shows a potential for rethinking or exploring the methods of translation between story and built form.

Aside from Hillier's project, there were two other proposals in 2003 and 2004 examining the topic of narrative translation. One was again from the Bartlett school, a translation of Franz Kafka's The Trial, into a large abstract architectural space. Dan Brady was the student, and he received similar acclaim to Hillier, having his final model purchased by a renowned art gallery.

\[\text{"An excerpt from "The Relazione sul Danteum," para. 5 in Schumacher's The Danteum. p.132}\]
which quickly catapulted him to the position of one of London's young talents. The other project was happening at the University of Cincinnati's college of architecture and did not receive as high acclaim. This student's proposal was much weaker in terms of explorative development, following too closely to the methods of Terragni. The lesson here is to be critical of the methods and projects of precedent and to invent and explore a new twist on the idea of translation.

I will take the summer to settle on a text worth translating into an architectural space. This text will provide or give impulse as to a site and program for which to create the project. As of now I am considering the novel Austerlitz, the final novel of acclaimed holocaust writer W.G. Sebald before his death in 2001. This novel charts the memory of a man (Austerlitz) with a lost or blurry childhood from the holocaust. The book is full of architectural reference, which will make it a good candidate. I will also be reading several books by Jules Verne and H.G. Wells as possible literary works in the science fiction category.

By the end of this semester I hope to finalize and obtain a collection of potential literary works and precedent projects that I can read over the summer. This way I can choose a novel to move forward with by the start of fall and have a firm understanding of what has been explored in relation to narrative translation. For the mid-term of fall, I intend to have finalized a site and program to begin translating into an architectural space. By the end of fall semester I should have developed a method or series of methods for translation, and have experimented with them in physical form. For the spring mid-term I should be developing a final model and have an explicit method for developing a model for the final review. By the end of spring I plan to have a large model, both physical and digital, potentially aided by other media such as film or writing. The final models and work are likely to be abstract with an emphasis on theoretical concepts rather than pragmatic issues. Likewise, the building type will not be a solitary building, but likely an architectural landscape with multiple buildings and landscape features.

NAAB criteria
Through the course of research, design and final presentation, the prescribed project will encompass and comply with the following minimum NAAB performance criteria.

1. Speaking and Writing Skills: Ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively on subject matter contained in the professional curriculum.
2. Critical Thinking Skills: Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test them against relevant criteria and standards

\* An excerpt from "The Relazione sul Danteum," para. 5 in Schumacher's The Danteum, p.132
3. Graphic Skills: Ability to use appropriate representational media, including freehand drawing and computer technology, to convey essential formal elements at each stage of the programming and design process.

4. Research Skills: Ability to gather, assess, record, and apply relevant information in architectural coursework.

5. Formal Ordering Systems: Understanding of the fundamentals of visual perception and the principles and systems of order that inform two- and three-dimensional design, architectural composition, and urban design.

6. Fundamental Design Skills: Ability to use basic architectural principles in the design of buildings, interior spaces, and sites.

11. Use of Precedents: Ability to incorporate relevant precedents into architectural and urban design projects.

12. Human Behavior: Understanding of the theories and methods of inquiry that seek the relationships between behavior and the physical environment.

14. Accessibility: Ability to design both site and building to accommodate individuals with varying physical abilities.

16. Program Preparation: Ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architecture project, including assessment of client and user needs, a critical review of appropriate precedents, an inventory of space and equipment requirements, an analysis of site conditions, a review of the relevant laws and standards and assessment of their implication for the project, and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria.

17. Site Conditions: Ability to respond to natural and built site characteristics in the development of a program and design of a project.

23. Building System Integration: Ability to assess, select, and integrate structural systems, building envelope systems, environmental systems, life-safety systems, and building service systems into building design. This will be covered, but not in the traditional sense. They will be more theoretical concepts than resolved pragmatic conditions.

28. Comprehensive Design: Ability to produce a comprehensive architectural project based on a building program and site that includes development of programmed spaces demonstrating an understanding of structural and environmental systems, building envelope systems, life-safety provisions, wall sections and building assemblies, and the principles of sustainability. These issues will be covered, but again in a more theoretical notion than a pragmatic sense.
Bibliography


To begin analyzing the methods of translating narrative content into architectural form, I needed to understand what has been explored to this point. Thomas Schumacher’s analysis of the Danteum by Giuseppe Terragni was the most comprehensive and complete scrutiny of a narrative project translated to architecture. The project was an unbuilt work from the 1930’s during the Italian Fascist Regime. The importance of this time period to the project is the cultural turmoil that was pressed on architects to follow traditional and nationalistic regiment while the more progressive global architecture community was following LeCorbusier and the international style. Terragni was very young at this point and wanting to follow or engage the global progressives while maintaining commitment to Italy and Mussolini, created a project that engaged as much as it could both sides.
The Danteum was to be a project without context. It was an inward focused building and thus needed no correlation to the world around it. We see this in the monolithic walls that act more as shields than a harmonious neighbor to the surrounding buildings.
Douglas Darden
Melvila
Conceptual project, New York
The famous Neapolitan artist, Michelangelo, painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel using a ladder made of wood and wires. The artist would stand on the ladder, which was supported by a network of wires, and paint the ceiling. This method allowed Michelangelo to access areas that would be difficult or impossible to reach otherwise.

Dear Sir/Madam:

I would appreciate it if your exhibition has become trapped between two workshops.
Thomas Hillier
The Emperor’s Castle
I needed an intellectual framework with which to understand the different ways of incorporating the potentials of narrative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Architectural Design by</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Narrative Title</th>
<th>Narrative Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Danteum</td>
<td>Giuseppe Terragni</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Italian Nationalist Project</td>
<td>The Divine Comedy</td>
<td>Dante Alighieri</td>
<td>1321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melville</td>
<td>Douglas Darden</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Archive and homage to Herman Melville</td>
<td>Moby Dick</td>
<td>Douglas Darden</td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually Venice</td>
<td>CJ Lim</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Commission for British Architecture Pavilion</td>
<td>The Travels of Marco Polo</td>
<td>Marco Polo</td>
<td>1271-1291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration of Mel and Judith</td>
<td>Thomas Hillier</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>House for traveling couple (school project)</td>
<td>Migration of Mel and Judith</td>
<td>Thomas Hillier</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Emperor’s Castle</td>
<td>Thomas Hillier</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>The Emperor’s Castle</td>
<td>Ando Hiroshige</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I found that literary criticism often employs three angles in order to analyze a narrative. They are: CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND STYLE.

Content Based: Melvilla

Douglas Darden used a method - popular at the time - of abstracting images from the content of the story and overlaying them in a collage he termed a “Composite Ideogram” which was used to generate the organization of the building
Content Based: The Emperor’s Castle

Thomas Hillier created architectural metaphors out of the characters from the story. For example, he used the descriptions such as the inflating of the Emperor’s lungs, and applied them to architecture by creating large towers that expand and contract.
Structure Based: The Danteum

Giuseppe Terragni used the writing structure of the *Divine Comedy* to divide and organize the structure of the danteum. The chapters and paragraphs become spatial divisions and material compositions.
I realized through this framework, that style has not been explored much. I decided to give an emphasis to style, but also incorporate content and structure for my project.
Again, the main goal of this project is to explore the potential of narrative in influencing and heightening the cultural value of architecture. In doing so, the project will explore all three aspects of narrative - content, structure, and style - with a particular emphasis on style.

How I am going to achieve the goals I set for myself:

The project is a museum for the archaeology of the self, at the site of Antwerp Centraal Station and the abandoned underground subway tunnels that depart from the station, and adopt Sebald’s *Austerlitz* as the narrative.

I have chosen for my literature, W.G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*. A story where an unnamed narrator, resting in the waiting room of the Antwerp Centraal Station in the late 1960’s, strikes up a conversation with an odd figure standing in the room, Austerlitz. Over the next several years, the narrator runs into his acquaintance by chance on his travels, until a gap of nearly two years, Austerlitz decides to tell the narrator the story of his life and his search for his own archaeology. A dark and haunting journey unfolds as the torment of a forgotten childhood and the search of parents he has no memory of only deepens his isolation and depression.
I have chosen for the program, a museum of the archaeology of the self. The reason I chose the museum of self archaeology, is to connect with the purpose of the story which is the journey of discovering one’s self or identity. A museum also has the potential to relate to the historical digressions and expose the atrocities infused within the story.
I have chosen for the site Antwerp Centraal Station and the abandoned underground subway tunnels that depart from the station. The reason I chose this particular site is for its potential to relate to the narrative in terms of content, structure and style. The story begins in Antwerp Centraal Station, which is the hub of the city’s train and metro system. Like the structure of a book, the tunnels are linear, taking people from a beginning to a destination. And like the forgotten past of the character Austerlitz, the metro tunnels in Antwerp were vacant and forgotten for over forty years.
Main cities in Austerlitz

Left_Antwerp, Belgium
Right_London, England
Main rail stations in Austerlitz

Left_Antwerp Station
Right_Austerlitz Station
When searching for images of the abandoned metro tunnels in Antwerp, I came across many online galleries of “urban explorer’s” who have a deep interest in exploring these tunnels by whatever means necessary. Many of the entrances are difficult enough to even come across and are often gated or closed off in some manner. I became fascinated with the kind of culture that has developed because of the mystery of these structures. There are an overwhelming number of online galleries of people who engage in this kind of juvenile subculture. The interest is in fact much more public and not only held by the youthful and daring.
In 2009 after De Lijn reopened half of the existing tunnels for rail use, they held a “Tunnel Event” open to the public to explore the tunnels that were not being used.
Figure_1,2,3 Temporary scaffolding entrance to tunnels >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_1 Entering a tunnel from the maintenance shaft >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_2 Small station along the tunnels >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_1 Station lit up for the “Tunnel Event” >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_2 Temporary boardwalk in place for event >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_3 Anonymous maintenance station >> image from www.flickr.com
Figure_4 Anonymous station >> image from www.flickr.com
The atmosphere of the tunnels was something I wanted to keep in the design of the museum. There is a lot of interest in abandoned and ageing structures, and likewise in the mystery of dimly lit spaces.
Figure_1 Upper level of a maintenance station >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure_2 Ageing tracks that have never been used >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure_3 Stair to lower level of a station >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure_4 opening in floor to lower tunnel >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure 1 Panoramic interior of mid-level tunnel >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Almost as fascinating as the tunnels themselves are the mysterious entrances scattered throughout the city. Tucked in the alleyways between buildings, at the edges of isolated streets, or in the middle of a unused lots, there are many seemingly random staircases giving a glimpse of the forgotten underworld of Antwerp. In the nearly forty years that the tunnels sat empty, a generation or two have grown up after the construction was stopped. These mysterious stair wells are the only evidence that these tunnels exist.
Antwerp Centraal Station is ranked among the nicest rail stations in the world. Built in 1905, and the concourse nearly fifty years later, the station has stood as an icon in the city for the last century. Many visitors to Antwerp will experience this station as their first impression of city. Located in the Diamond District of Antwerp, the station is a testament of the wealth and afluency of the city. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the station is the multi-level concourse that extends deep below the streets of Antwerp.
The concourse serves regular pedestrian trains at levels 0 & -2. In between these two platforms is a shopping level at -1. The lowest platform at level -3 was a later addition to accommodate high speed trains that can continue through the station without having to reverse direction.
Figure 1 Tunnel diggers >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure 2 Excavation methods for working under existing streets >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure 3 Proximity of premetro tunnels alongside Centraal Station >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
Figure 4 Excavation of tunnels beneath Astrid Plaza >> image from www.skyscrapercity.com
I tried not to approach the programs through the manifestation of a single
and finalized building, but through a multiplicity of architectural "spaces".

This was not to limit or define any project as such.

In short, we are not an architecture, but need people about panel.


Key ingredients of narrative:

I think an important aspect is understanding details. By this I mean
all the seemingly small and unimportant details that help to
build your image of the story.

Another ingredient could be time sequence, or rather than assuming
any kind of combinational structure, we could keep
in mind longer and smaller fragments of time that make up the
whole of the story.

How do you capture time in architecture?

+ Think of past + lives, badges, stock.

+ Think of... just minimal and abstract examples.

Thoughts on spectacle or "optimization"?

Spectacle was probably the right word here.

- As an object, phenomenon, event that is visual, especially one that
  is impressive, exciting, or disturbing.

- Visual character

+ La Carrière + five points

- Weight, habitational, load, resulted name

Since this is a theoretical project I wanted to address that it is not

theoretical in the sense that Le Corbusier was, instead this is a box

master architectural style and more an exploration of an idea

Example - box, which strongly conveys the characteristics

of a grid, not just a particular
For technology, I always want the latest (cell phone for example)
you never desire the ten year old model. But the books, you
may desire the first Harry Potter book over the latest, and books
are not old like the first 10-second books.
My wife is just now reading Harry Potter which is by now outdated.
should I put others individually?
How many new ones come.
Does anyone know of an respect these?
If even local architects are unaware, that is not good.
Is it still the desire of architecture to find a lasting style or
importance? This is what we have all been seeking.
Many historical buildings have narrative, but applied in
the aftermath, (examples?) shoe molding that is known for
some event?

how to deal with everyday time sequence?

Some things are just done to alter perception of time. This is really old we
can do this.
Upon entering the station the narrator describes how an uneasy feeling came over them as they walked toward the escalator, despite a beautiful day. This feeling is provoked by the strange appearance of the terrier and the descent of the train downward into the terminal. The premonitory atmosphere at the beginning of the book is one of mystery. How can this be designed to provoke a similar feeling to that of a train station?

I recall my own arrival at Grand Central Station, which has probably the largest subterranean approach to aspiration that exists, stretching nearly 50 blocks underground. Mystery was definitely something I felt, however I didn't recall feeling uneasy as much as I was curious. Perhaps because there was nothing strange or unusual in the way in line couldn't see the station because you were submerged so far out.

Certainly I do not want to create something strange for this sake, but maybe there is a way to enter the station that does so in a way that seems strange, and maybe lighting could play a part in the uneasy atmosphere.

Perhaps a descent happens that is not totally submerged, but slowly more down, visually triggering the senses that may not be triggered in complete darkness.
The significance of the story is its portrayal of the conflict between the old, established ways and the new, innovative approaches. This conflict is evident in the protagonist's struggle to balance tradition and innovation in his work. The ultimate resolution of the story is the protagonist's realization that change is necessary and that innovation can bring about positive change. The reader is left with a sense of hope and optimism, as the protagonist embraces new ideas and approaches, leading to a more vibrant and dynamic future.
1. Main level concourse
2. Shopping
3. Lower level concourse
4. Lowest level / through trains
ANALYSIS OF SEBALD’S AUSTERLITZ
I used the framework above to characterize this piece of literature.

CONTENT: Some examples of the content of this literature are:

“I came on a glorious early summer’s day to the city of Antwerp, known to me previously only by name. Even on my arrival, as the train rolled slowly over the viaduct with its curious pointed turrets on both sides and into the dark station concourse, I had begun to feel unwell, and this sense of indisposition persisted for the whole of my visit to Belgium on that occasion.” Austerlitz, p.3

“Over the years, images of the interior of the Nocturama have become confused in my mind with my memories of the salle des pas perdus, as it is called in Antwerp Centraal Station. If I try to conjure up a picture of that waiting room today I immediately see the Nocturama, and if I think of the Nocturama the waiting room springs to mind.” Austerlitz, p.5
STRUCTURE: Some examples of the structure of this literature are:

“There are no paragraphs, no chapters, and only the occasional inch of space to bring pause to the writing. True, the technique of placing photographs of “fictional places” encountered by the writer’s characters does allow some visual pause, but those pauses are purely additive.”

*Online review*

“The particular reason I like the structure of this, an apparent rambling narrative, is that it reflects the way I have conversations, jumping from one theme to another as inspired by a key word or thought. More relevantly, it’s how memory works, leading you from one thought to another without apparent direction, the only theme being the path in retrospect through those thoughts.”

*Online review*
STYLE: Some examples of the style of this literature are:

“One feature of the German language for which there is no corresponding grammatical form is the subjunctive mood for indirect speech, often referred to as the special subjunctive. This form occurs occasionally throughout Sebald, but is most common in passages such as Sebald’s narration of Austerlitz’s retelling of Vera’s narrative. The special subjunctive is one that renders German a stylistically more subtle medium, in that the verb is inflected in such a way as to distinguish it from the ordinary present or past, distancing the narrator from the question of veracity of the content of reported speech.” Understanding Sebald, p.126

“Freund also remarks, rightly, that the narrative method in which a narrator “re-narrates” at length the narration of another, stems from the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard.” Understanding Sebald, P.132
Design Explorations thus far:

Based on **Content**:

Based on **Structure**:

Based on **Style**:
Based on Content:

Based on the following descriptions from the story, I abstracted the content to create a field of curiously shaped turrets with dark niches as a way of dramatizing the elements of the story into architectural form.

“As the train rolled slowly over the viaduct with its curiously pointed turrets on both sides and into the dark station concourse...” p.3

“This magnificent foyer ought to have cages for lions and leopards let into its marble niches, and aquaria for sharks, octopuses, and crocodiles, just as some zoos, conversely have little railway trains in which you can, so to speak, travel to the furthest corners of the earth.” p.6
Curious pointed turrets

Nocturama animal niches
...as the train rolled slowly over the viaduct with its curiously pointed turrets on both sides and into the dark station concourse. I had begun to feel unwell, and this sense of disposition persisted...

With an unspecified train station as a site, I was trying to equal the feeling of unease that overcame the narrator upon entering the station, by drastically excavating the entrance to the concourse so that passengers would visually register their descent below the ground level.
Based on structure:

The single, uninterrupted procession from the ground level to the lower platforms, is an effort to parallel the uninterrupted structure of the narrative.
By pulling back the ground next to the Centraal Station, I am attempting to equal the style Sebald uses of revealing aspects of the past that have been forgotten. This would reveal the presence of a buried metro station that was also forgotten.

The platform to the station is revealed only enough to suggest the presence of something hidden. The trains and tracks themselves are still beyond view to create the sense of mystery that is so foreboding in the opening of the story.
By separating the paths leading to and from the metro station and the museum, I was attempting to achieve the stylistic effect that Sebald uses in layering narration. The paths are positioned in a way to cause visitors to become the viewed and the focus of other visitors.
Next semester will be a further development of exploring the potential of narrative in the design of a museum in the abandoned tunnels and stations of Antwerp. I will continue with the intellectual framework of abstracting content, structure and particularly style, from Sebald’s Austerlitz.

Criteria for success:

This project will be successful if it shows there is a way to approach architecture apart from the methods and values we typically use; if it challenges the way we think about architecture and forces us to be critical of the role it plays in society; and if it demonstrates the efficacy of stories and narratives as a valuable and generative influence in architecture.
The semester review was preceded by a “preview” gallery where every student was given one 8’x6’ panel to display a preview of their intent. The preview gallery was open to the school for both students and faculty to observe the work since the actual presentations are for faculty only.

For the mid-review, we were given three 8’x6’ boards and two 7’x6’ boards to present on plus the preview panel, but were not required to fill the entire space. My presentation filled four and half boards total, that’s including a board for the projector and the preview panel. Overall we were allowed twenty minutes to present and fifteen minutes to answer questions. I was using video animations and found it wise to practice well ahead of time and make sure I had a reliable computer. Everything played smoothly because of this.

I was the last to present (as always) and received interest by most of the faculty, but concerns were focused around being too metaphorical and relying too heavily on the narrative of Austerlitz as the genesis of the design. Instructive comments were to create my own narrative and use the design to create a narrative rather than relying on allegory and symbolism.

I received a unanimous ten out of ten votes to continue. Two faculty were absent and thus could not vote.
Left: Astrid Station (two active lines at levels -2 & -3, inactive line at -1)
Middle: Opera Station (two active lines at levels -3, inactive line at -1)
Right: Diamant Station (two active lines at levels -2 & -3, inactive line at -1)
Time & Variation:
My interest in the narrative technique used by Sebald in layering of narration, where multiple characters and stories are weaved together, gave me the impetus to explore abstract ideas of iterative change over time to engage the morphing of multiple stories throughout a continuous space.
Descent:
The author Sebald used a technique at the beginning of his novel to foreshadow the melancholy and unease felt by the main character’s loss of self identity. The author does this through the engagement of character and environment, where the narrator enters Antwerp Centraal Station and as the train rolls past the curious pointed turrets and descends into the dark station concourse, he begins to feel unwell. I wanted to explore ideas of creating the feeling of descent into a dark and unknown world that may provoke visitors to experience a similar feeling as a reader of Sebald may experience.
1 - Astrid Station
Active lines at levels -2 & -3

2 - Opera Station
Active lines at levels -3

3 - Diamant Station
Active lines at levels -2 & -3

A - Museum Entrance
(The Descent - A stylistic plunge into the melancholy of a forgotten past)

D - Cinematic History
(Cinema - Contemporary displays of projected historical happenings)

B - Gallery 1
(Obscurity - Three paths start from the same place but remain separate)

E - Archives
(Narrowing - The closer one gets to the past, the narrower and more isolated...
C - MAIN GALLERY
(ARCHAEOLOGY - THE ROOTS AND HISTORY OF ABOVE BUILDINGS ARE REVEALED AT THEIR FOUNDATIONS)

F - STATION
(EXIT - THE END IS BACK TO THE BEGINNING)
MAIN GALLERY - The main gallery houses the largest of historical art. 
artifacts and reveals historic and foundational walls through archaeological excavation
Opera Station _walls are removed on two sides to make the station part of the museum

The UGC Building _cinema theater

CINEMATIC HISTORY - This Hallway sits beneath the largest cine
ma in Antwerp and displays historic events through digital media.
The Descent – The Autumn W.W.G. Selwood used the descent of a train ride into a dark and curious interior environment to navigate the feeling of Berlin and Potsdam as associated with the rise of one's memory that permeates the page. Aspenia

MAIN GALLERY: The main gallery shows the range of historical events and issues which are fundamental and through architectural intervention

Layered together by time and overhead materials

TIME
Final Thoughts

This project was one of the few projects that I rarely if ever grew weary of. I was eager to work on and explore the topic almost all the time. While the subject is not heavily explored, I believe there is a growing interest in narrative and architecture as I have discovered a few very highly awarded theses in recent years at other institutions both in the U.S. and abroad. Perhaps the most engaging aspect for me is that it almost forces or requires the constant balance of reading, writing, and designing.

I hope to further develop my interest in animation as a means to think about and represent architecture especially in relationship to narrative. I had hoped to develop this much further in the second semester, but unfortunately design and models ate at the majority of my time.

One of the most important aspects I am taking away from this project is to maintain your originality and be unabashed in pursuing even the most fictional and exuberant of ideas. I hope this project in some way inspires others to be bold and not limited by the concerns of practicality and convention. I also hope this encourages others to look for inspiration in the almost mundane occurrences that happen around us, like the act of people reading.

Lastly, I want to encourage those who pursue a thesis in their final year not to become discouraged and give up, as many of us felt from time to time. There is value in struggling through the stress and complexity encountered in the process. I believe thesis has pushed me to pursue and develop things I would not have experienced otherwise and equipped me with experience I will need in the future.
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