

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Tinneney, Roisin (2016) Fingerprints of the Mac: how a building remembers its inhabitants [dissertation]. The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow.

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ROISIN TINNENY

2015 | 2016

FINGERPRINTS OF THE MAC

HOW A BUILDING REMEMBERS IT'S INHABITANTS

Whilst saddening, I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time in and study the Mac prior to its renovation.

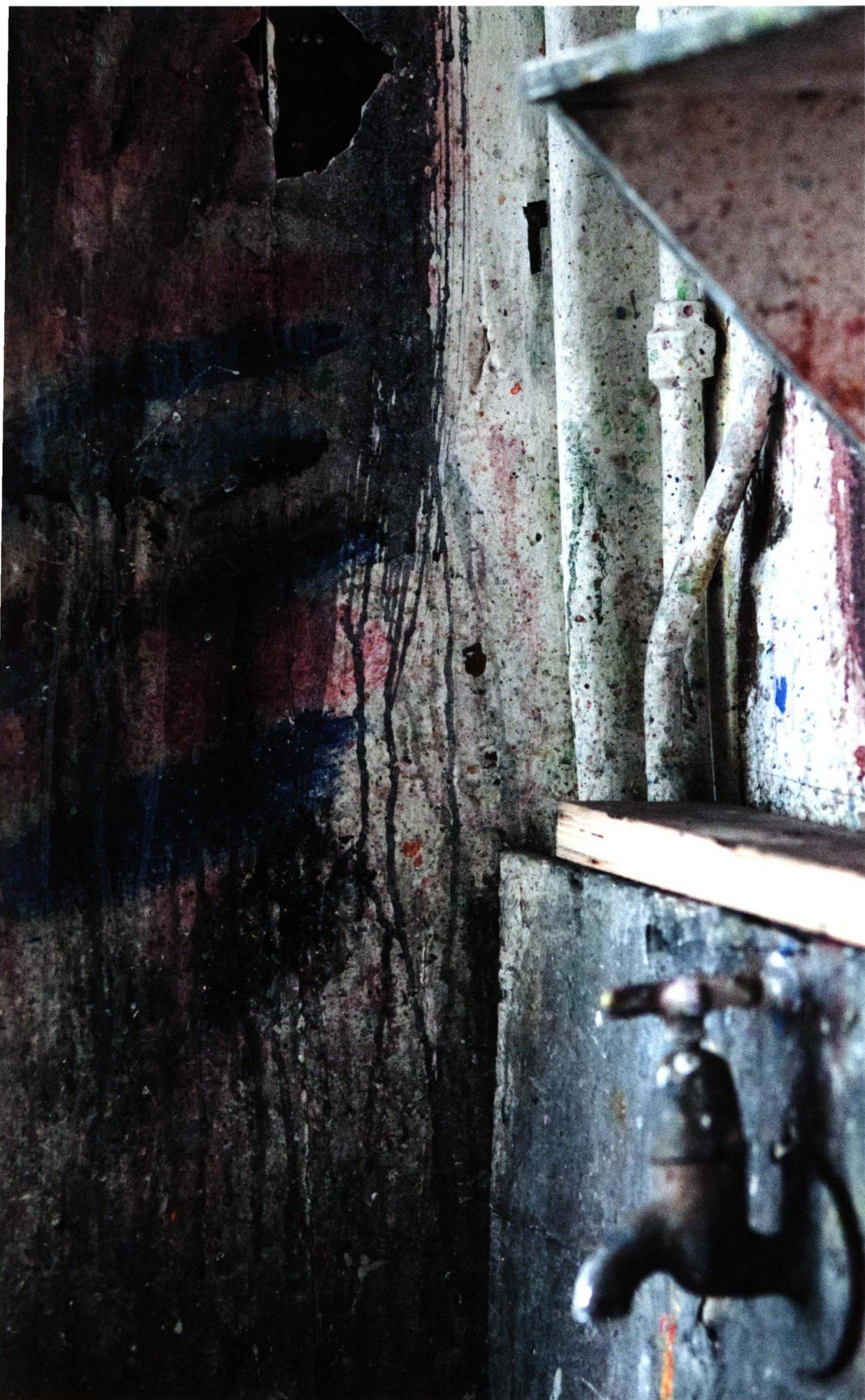
I would like to thank Jo Crotch for supporting me throughout this project; the Mackintosh Restoration Team, Liz, Sarah and Philip for granting me access to the building; to the team at Page/Park, and especially to Sarah MacKinnon and Natalia Burakowska for taking the time to meet with me and answer my questions. It has been a pleasure.

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"You don't know how wonderful dirt is."

James Joyce.¹

¹ Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2009), 101.



INTRODUCTION

"Yet for better or for worse we do love things that bear the marks of grime, soot, and weather, and we love the colours and the sheen that call to mind the past that made them. Living in these old houses among these old objects is in some mysterious way a source of peace and repose."²

The internal weathering of the Glasgow School of Art by its inhabitants enhances the atmosphere of the spaces within. We feel connected to architecture that shows us its vulnerabilities - stains, cracks, and ageing; for it is mortal like us.

This dissertation records traces of human inhabitation that have accumulated over the past 100 years now held within the Art School (prior to renovation), using the medium of still photography. This is complemented by theories which interweave time with the patina of human use to a surface, thus forming a visual history and memory.

The following definitions were considered initially and are used throughout:

- **patina**

NOUN

any distinctive surface appearance acquired over time..³

- **dirt**

NOUN

a substance, such as mud or dust that soils someone or something

- **internal weathering**

VERB

the wear or change in form and appearance of interiors and surfaces by exposure to inhabitants and use as opposed to the elements.

² Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise Of Shadows* (London: Vintage Classics, 2001), 11–12.

³ Angus Stevenson and Catherine Soanes, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

A focus on the ageing of internal surfaces is important in locating our bodies in time and place. Pallasmaa puts forth the argument in, *'The Eyes of the Skin'*, that, "All matter exists in the continuum of time; the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction."⁴ Furthermore the task of architecture is to help us understand that we are rooted in the continuity of time and to 'domesticate' limitless time so we are able to inhabit the world..⁵

A photographic study depicting the signs of inhabitation in the Glasgow School Art, centres on spaces which were undamaged by the fire. These photographs are categorised by building elements and then by taxonomy of patination. The images exemplify how the surfaces are accepting of touch and how internal weathering enhances the atmosphere. Gregor Eichinger believes that, "Use invariably also means accepting wounds such as wrinkles and scratches. This is what makes things interesting and distinct. This is where atmosphere comes from. When we set foot in an old building, we can instantly feel its entire epoch in the surface."⁶ These are the necessary imperfections that cannot be designed.

Modernism refers to the global architectural movement that dominated the 20th century and which inculcated an aspiration to whiteness and cleanliness. Consideration of the philosophies of Modernism will help understand negative attitudes towards age and wear. This is exemplified in the writings of Le Corbusier, where whiteness was taken to signify honesty and dependability..⁷ This ideal explains the fear architects have of dirt, as it signals the encroachment of time into the sterile perfection of architecture..⁸ Using Holl's Reid Building as a contrast to Mackintosh's Art School, the ideal of whiteness is tested against the daily activities of Design Students. The still photography exposes how the surfaces are less excepting of patination and appear as 'dirt', and 'faults' in the structure.

⁴ Juhani Pallasmaa, Peter MacKeith, and Steven Holl, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, Third edition. (Wiley, 2013), 34.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶ Gregor Eichinger and Eberhard Tröger, *Touch Me: The Mystery of the Surface* (London: Springer [distributor], 2010), 30.

⁷ Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering: The Life of Buildings in Time* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1993), 76.

⁸ Till, *Architecture Depends*, 101.

In contrast, the concept of 'completeness' is explored by David Leatherbarrow and Mohsen Mostafavi. They view buildings as incomplete when just finished and see weathering as a form of completion.⁹ This theory is explored to argue that it is not just external weathering that brings a building towards completion but also the internal wear its inhabitants exert on it. Consequently, the Art School will never be complete as it continues to absorb the tactile traces of its students. Investigating the restoration is essential to discover how much patina will be retained.

The ultimate purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the interior of the Art School, like our own skin, is subject to the vicissitudes of time. The patina has meaning and is an important part of its identity.

*"Memory is [...] the ground of self-identity; we are what we remember."*¹⁰

Memory is the ground of self-identity; a building is what it remembers – a slightly battered, working Art School; where surfaces are a record of the building's history and a device for locating oneself in time.

⁹ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 45.

¹⁰ Juhani Pallasmaa, 'Space, Place, Memory and Imagination: The Temporal Dimension of Existential Space', in *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, ed. Marc Treib (London: Routledge, 2009), 18.

1

How important is the ageing and wear of internal spaces in helping us understand time and place? Weathering marks the passage of time. Architecture provides a vessel for human inhabitation and activity. We respond emotionally to traces that mark a personal history of the internal architecture, in much the same way as wrinkles and scars have "deeply communicative qualities of the wrinkled but gentle face of an elderly man or woman"..¹¹

Saskia Lewis, Architect and tutor, believes it is the atmosphere of a building that we respond to..¹² She believes atmosphere is present in the "wear and tear that bears witness to the events" that take place in our lived environments..¹³ Lewis presents the hypothesis that, through our occupation of architecture, spaces may absorb evidence of our existence and narratives..¹⁴ By looking forensically at buildings, specifically at the "graffiti of use"..¹⁵ we are able to unearth clues as to what activities they have been witness to. This suggests that spaces and the fabric of buildings are capable of remembering occupants; through a dent in the wall or layers of paint left behind on a sink. Memory forms the grounds of self-identity. As events in your life have shaped who you have become, so too, the activities that occur within a building must shape its physical identity..¹⁶ Herein lies the 'voice' of a space, the traces that endure on its surface, the confirmation being that they evoke an emotional response within us.

Likewise Peter Ackroyd, author and critic, proposes that people can impose an identity on a place that becomes a permanent part of the building in a nonmaterial manner..¹⁷ *"The sense of place [...] may have something to do with the history of the building. The past can be a very powerful presence [...] (Buildings) are not simply assemblies of dull stones but are powerfully affected by human inhabitation and human practice."*¹⁸ This implies that it is not just visual patination that affects atmosphere but that events affect it intangibly too. The

¹¹ Roderick Kemsley and Christopher Joseph Platt, *Dwelling with Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2012), 50.

¹² Saskia Lewis, 'Epilogue', in *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, ed. Saskia Lewis and David Littlefield (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 229.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ David Littlefield, 'The Young Vic Theatre', in *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, ed. Saskia Lewis and David Littlefield (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 65.

¹⁶ Pallasmaa, 'Space, Place, Memory and Imagination: The Temporal Dimension of Existential Space', 18.

¹⁷ David Littlefield, 'Royal Mail Sorting Office, Victoria London', in *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, ed. Saskia Lewis and David Littlefield (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 146.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

atmosphere is a sum of the smells it retains and the noises it makes. This can explain the spirituality experienced in places of worship or the uneasiness felt at scenes of tragedy.

This theme is developed by David Littlefield, Architectural writer, who considers how individuals and buildings can merge.¹⁹ Not only do we leave traces of our activities through dents, cracks and graffiti, by simply being within a space, we also leave parts of ourselves, our DNA. He cites Roman Polanski's "The Tenant", in which inhabited spaces "*become loaded with biological debris – the dust of flaking skin, the hair, the exhaled air, the humidity, heat and bodily fluids that get left behind by generations of occupants.*"²⁰ These combine to form "a peculiarly human trace". Likening the continued inhabitation of a space to a well-worn coat becoming more human with each wear.²¹ This type of patination is microscopically small and continuously replaced, however he believes that it must be detectable by "others from the species".²²

Gotthard Booth, American therapist, said "*nothing gives man fuller satisfaction than participation in processes that supersede the span of individual life.*"²³ What is integral to the theories presented here is acknowledging the passage of time. Allowing patina to accumulate is not a gimmick. As humans we need our environment to help us understand that we are rooted in the "continuity of time" and to 'domesticate' limitless time so we are able to inhabit the world.²⁴ Pallasmaa describes the pleasure of touching a "*door handle shining from the thousands of hands that have entered the door before us [...]. The tactile sense connects us with time and tradition: through impressions of touch we shake the hands of countless generations.*"²⁵ Aalto captures this in his door handles (Fig1-4). Patina and evidence of use allow us to understand time, an abstract concept, and help us locate ourselves historically. What appears to be dirt can in fact be very important to our understanding of the world.

¹⁹ David Littlefield and Saskia Lewis, *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 10–11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pallasmaa, MacKeith, and Holl, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

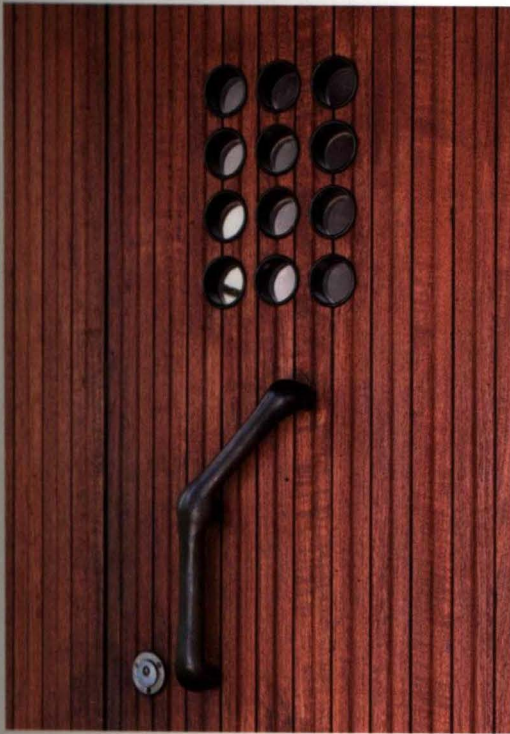


Fig1 | Villa Mairea, Alvar Aalto.

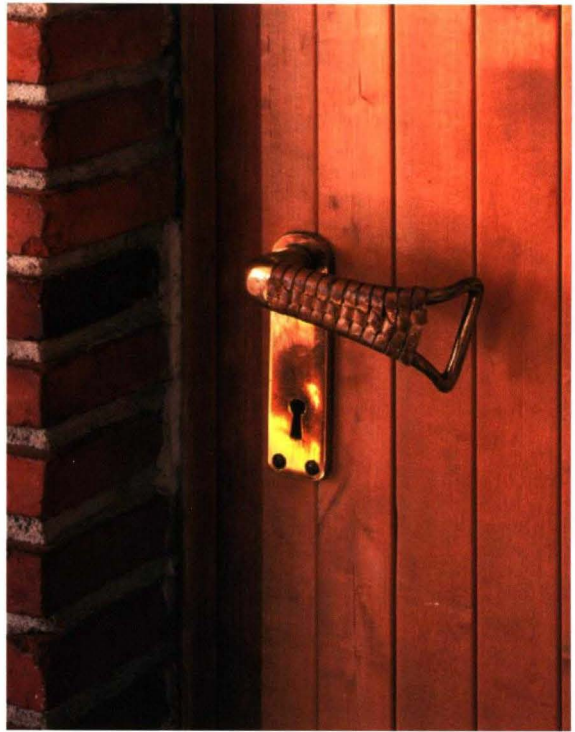


Fig2 | Villa Mairea, Alvar Aalto.



Fig3 | Säynätsalo town hall, Alvar Aalto.

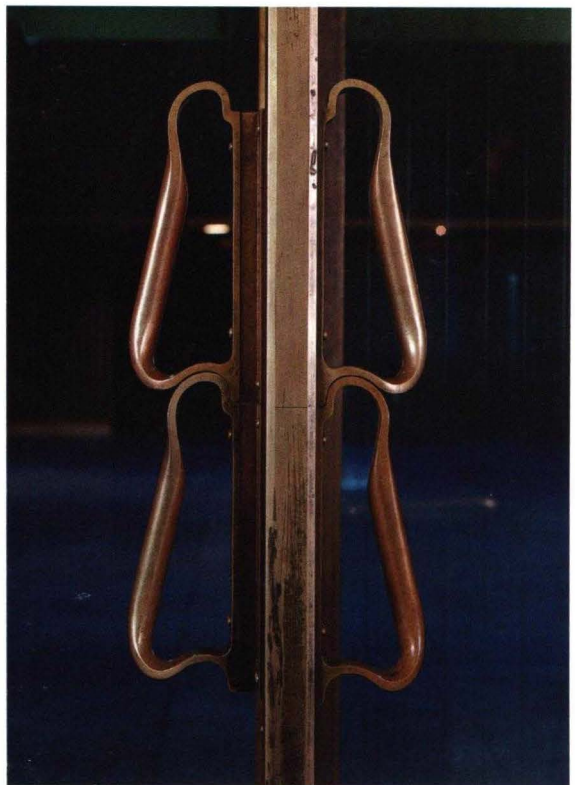


Fig4 | Rautatalo office building, Alvar Aalto.

There is reassurance in knowing that you are not alone in the world. It is humbling to walk in the steps of previous generations and build upon their knowledge. This is exemplified in a description of a much loved building on MIT Campus, Building 20, originally erected as a temporary structure during World War II.²⁶

*"The wide wood stairs in Building 20 show wear in a way that adds to its myth. You feel yourself walking in historic footsteps in pursuit of technical solutions that might be elegant precisely because they are quick and dirty. And that describes the building: elegant because it is quick and dirty."*²⁷ (Fig.5) This highlights the importance of patination on the built fabric. It demonstrates how it has been shaped by its occupants and in turn inspires new occupants, leaving its mark on them.

Lewis has a similar understanding of her family home, describing the gradual wearing of a particular step as a "quiet creation [...] to a slow sculpture"²⁸ (Fig.6). This element of the building is a device for locating Lewis in its history and sensing others who have walked there before her. *"Everyone who has ever walked across it has contributed to the slow dip in its surface. When we are gone there will be others to continue the work."*²⁹ The step is a mnemonic device and has a profound emotional effect on Lewis; it gives her home character.

The patina of human use whilst inevitable, is of vital importance. Though inanimate, the surfaces of our environments provide life and history. Buildings are evidence of the cultures that made them.³⁰ You understand who you are and where you are because you can see the evidence of time and people past. We become part of our architecture physically and through our sculpting of it, the architecture anthropomorphises. Understanding architecture as mortal reminds us that we too will weather, like the objects around us.

²⁶ Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*, New edition edition (London: W&N, 1997), 27.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lewis, 'Architectural Voices', 228.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Adam Sharr, *Reading Architecture and Culture: Researching Buildings, Spaces and Documents* (London: Routledge, 2012), 3.



Fig5 | Walking in historic footsteps in Building 20's worn staircase.

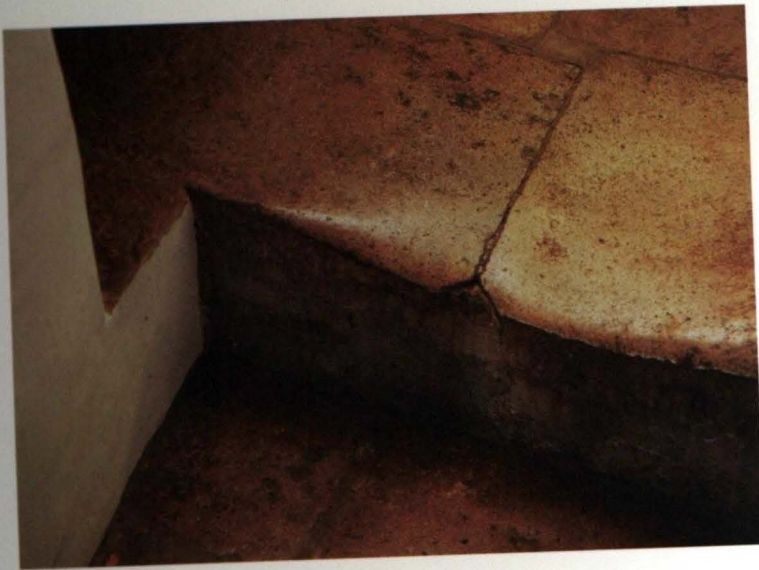


Fig6 | The 'slow sculpture' of Saskia Lewis's kitchen step

||

This chapter presents photographs illustrating internal weathering of the Art School. Focusing on elements of the building that have acquired a patina and examining their contribution to the atmosphere. To establish which effects of ageing are pleasant and which are dirt, a hierarchy must be created. Littlefield suggests the life of a building and its voice, if such a thing can be physical, may be "an atom thick and even a cursory clean-up may remove it."³¹ Given the forthcoming restoration of the Art School, this hierarchy becomes essential; if too much of the internal fabric is cleaned or replaced will the voice of the building be lost?

A consistent methodology was employed in recording elements for comparison i.e. a consistent lens size (70-200mm), landscape orientation and where practical, elements were shot square on. Time spent within each space, allowed the author to draw on relevant details. These photographs reflect the subjective interest of the author and are noteworthy as items of value that survived the fire have been removed. The building especially with the loss of the library, is like a person without their finest jewellery, yet, it is still a beautiful place to be in. There is beauty in these photographs of dirt and patina.

³¹ David Littlefield, 'Memory, Consciousness and Trace: Interview with Peter Murray', in *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, ed. Saskia Lewis and David Littlefield (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 57.

ELEMENTS

Door

Floor

Furniture

Handrail

Sink

Stair

Wall

Window sill

DOOR

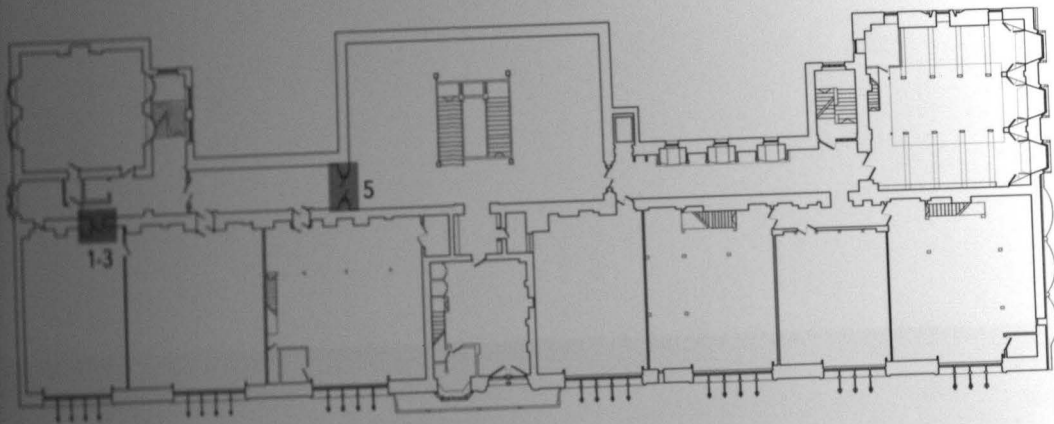
(1) Visible on the door facing into Studio 38 are well-defined traces of damp, paint covered hands of students. These marks "voice" a multitude of stories, events and most importantly students' attitudes. It was an element that was subservient to the activity that happened within this room. (2) and (3) show the bottom of the same door and its handle. The door might be original but the handle is clearly not. Should the handle be removed? and how is the missing chunk of wood addressed?

Photograph (4) shows the layering of coats of paint applied to the door over the years. In (5), the natural wood is visible as a result of heavy traffic through the museum space into the studios. One can imagine the door paint flaking off as they swung past each other, people constantly moving

through the spaces, only standing still when the building was closed.

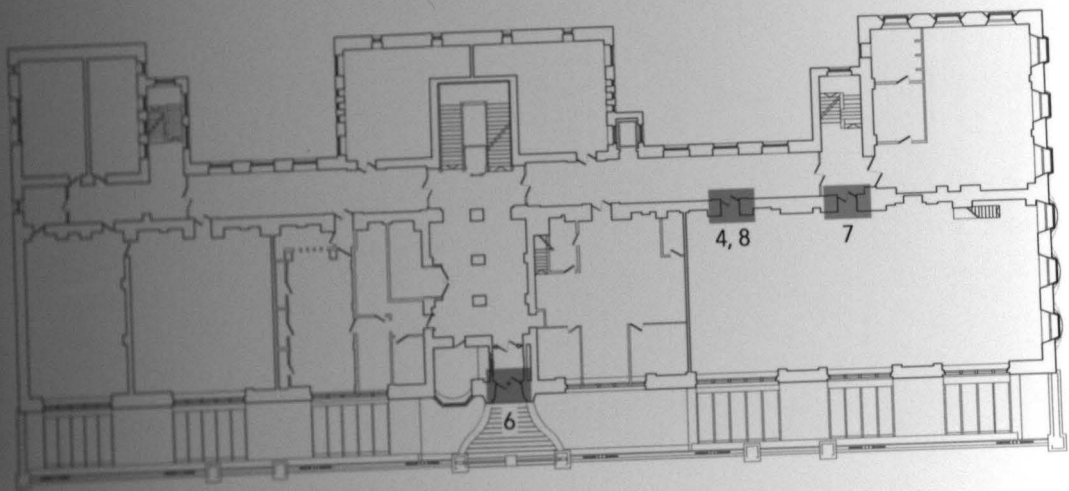
Photograph (6) shows the brass patina on the front doors to the Art School, as people made contact when passing through. The texture of the material is certainly pleasing and evokes an understanding of the age of this building when entering.

During the degree show, it is poignant to see work in place with the partitions and floors, yet entering and leaving each space remembering the working hands that made the work. (8). Photograph (8) evokes a particular remembrance, undeniably someone felt strongly about their distinct handprint on this place.



FIRST FLOOR

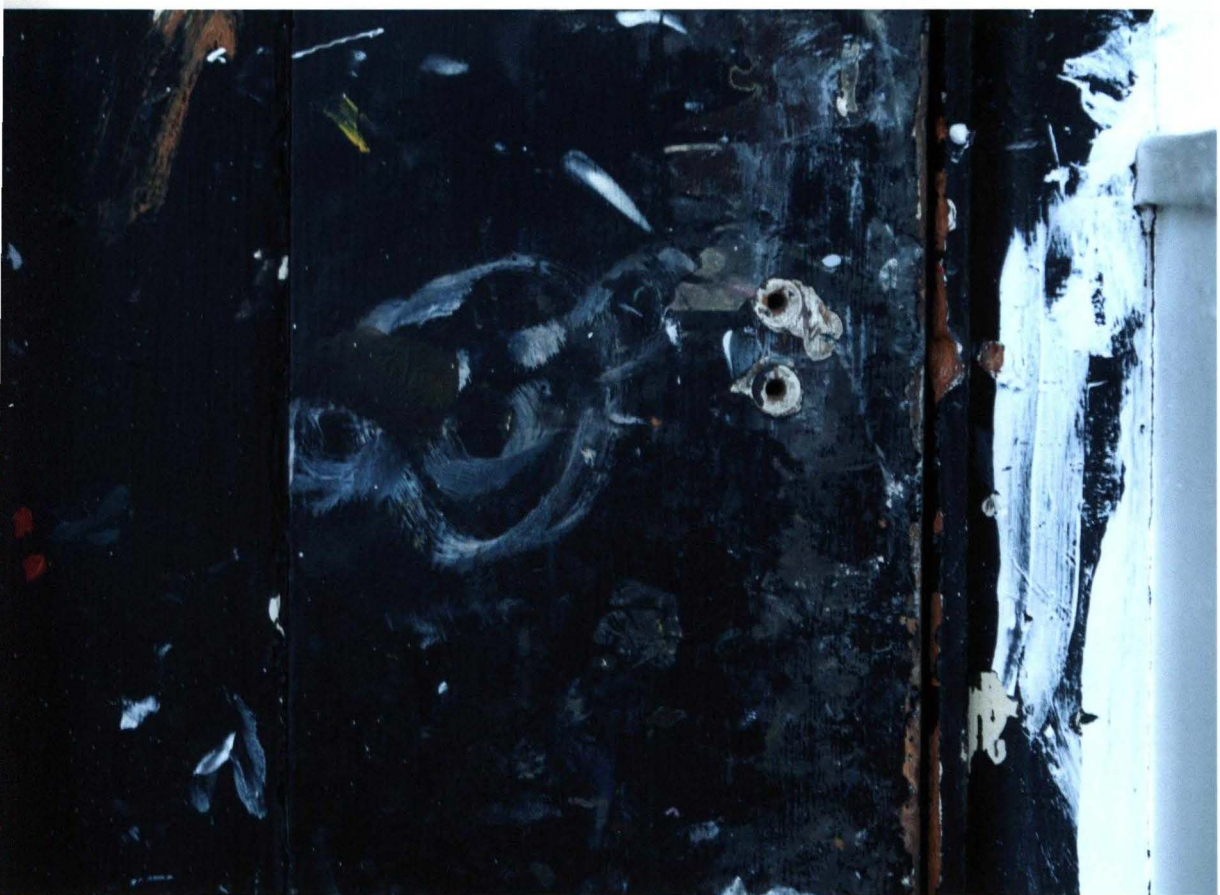
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GROUND FLOOR

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1-3. Studio 38. 4. Studio 30. 5. Museum - Circulation. 6. Door IN. 7. Studio 31. 8. Studio 30 (Inside).



1



2



3



4



5

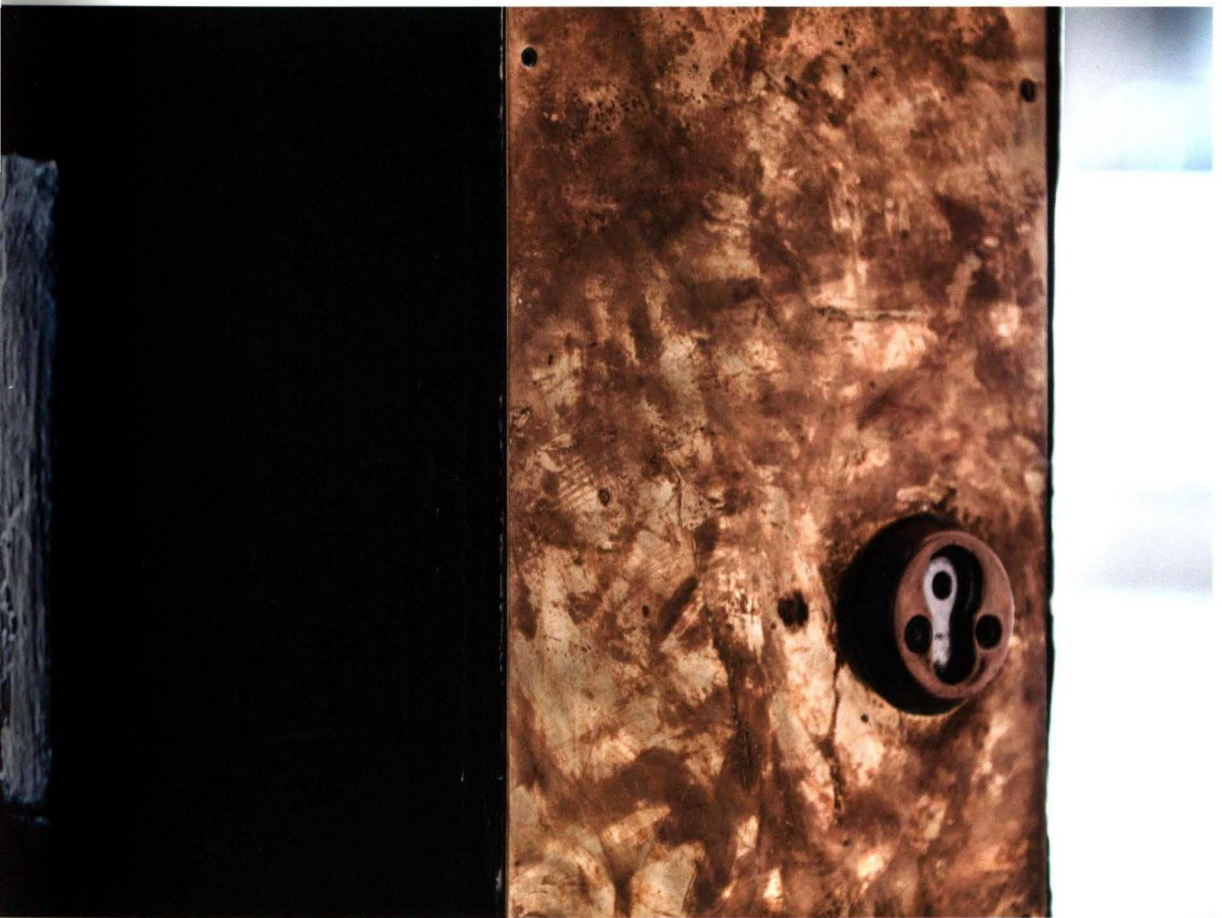
"Interiors do not just remind us who we are, where we're from, or how to behave. They remind us to remember. In fact, the story of memory always begins with a room, or at least begins with the end of one."³²

³² Edward Hollis, *The Memory Palace: A Book of Lost Interiors* (London: Portobello Books, 2013), 15.

CLASSIC
SCHOOL OF
LIBRARY

"Interiors do not just remind us who we are, where we're from, or how to behave. They remind us to remember. In fact, the story of memory always begins with a room, or at least begins with the end of one."³²

³² Edward Hollis, *The Memory Palace: A Book of Lost Interiors* (London: Portobello Books, 2013), 15.



6

CLASSICAL
LIBRARY



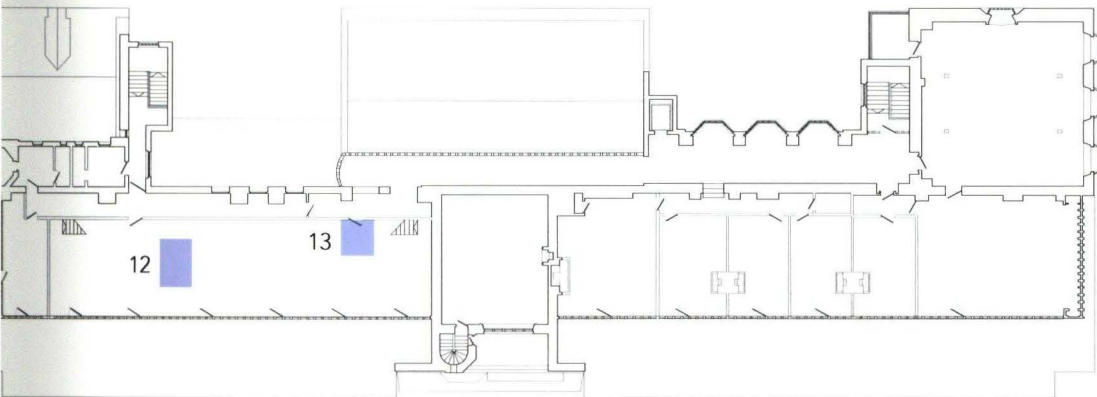
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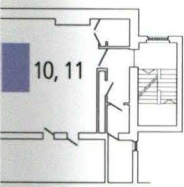
FLOOR

Photographs (9)-(11) show dirt and paint stains on studio floors. Rich colours and textures reveal themselves upon close examination. In (11) one can see traces of dirty footprints. These show how internal wear contributes to the atmosphere but are not necessarily valuable. Photographs (12) and (13) depict worn off floorboards revealing a rich timber underneath, (13) holds more intrigue, showing the marks of a door scraping back and forth across its surface. Photograph (14) shows the remnants of a workshop post-fire and (15) is the beginnings of an installation pre-fire. Neither merit being preserved as they would not have lasted. It is inevitable that the floorboards would be refinished despite the resistance. These surfaces are most continuously sculpted by us; they can only be treated with pragmatism.

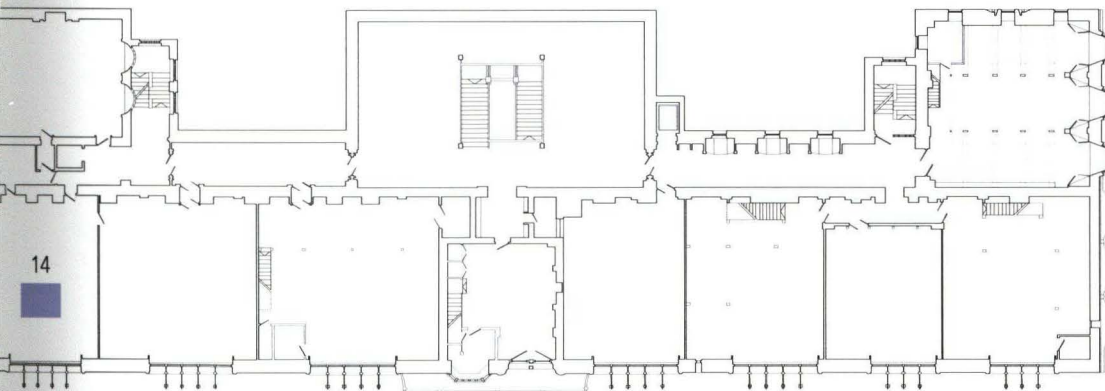


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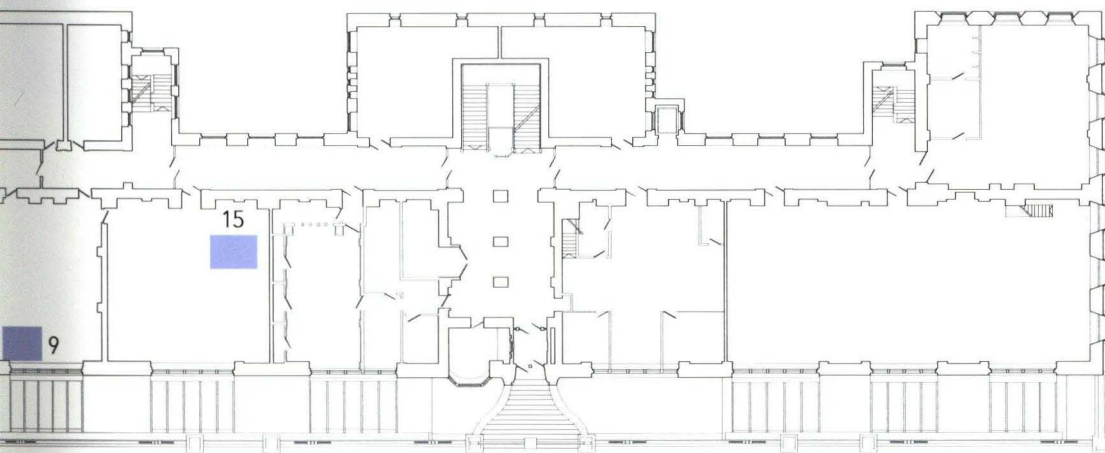


FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE



FIRST FLOOR

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GROUND FLOOR

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9



10





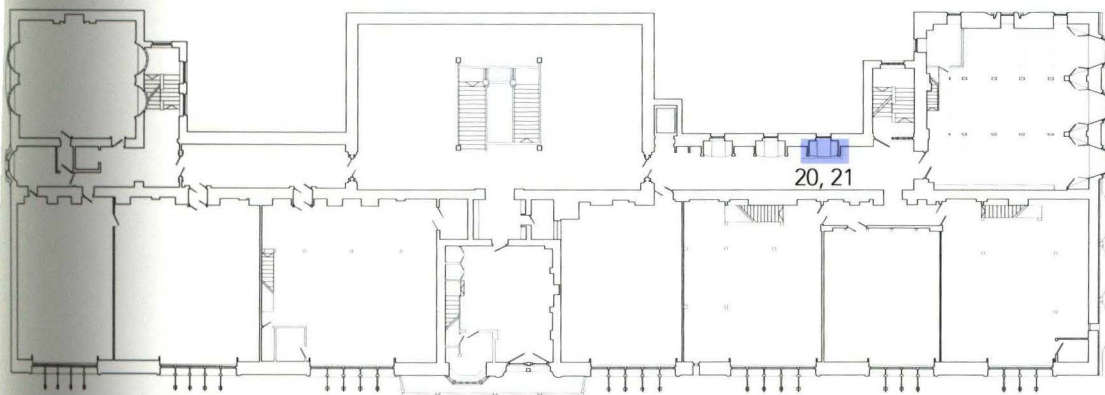
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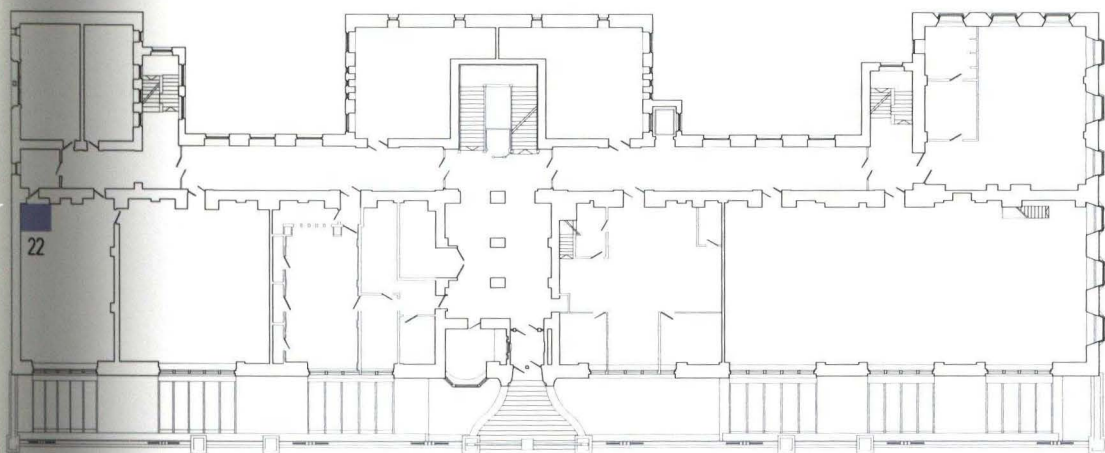
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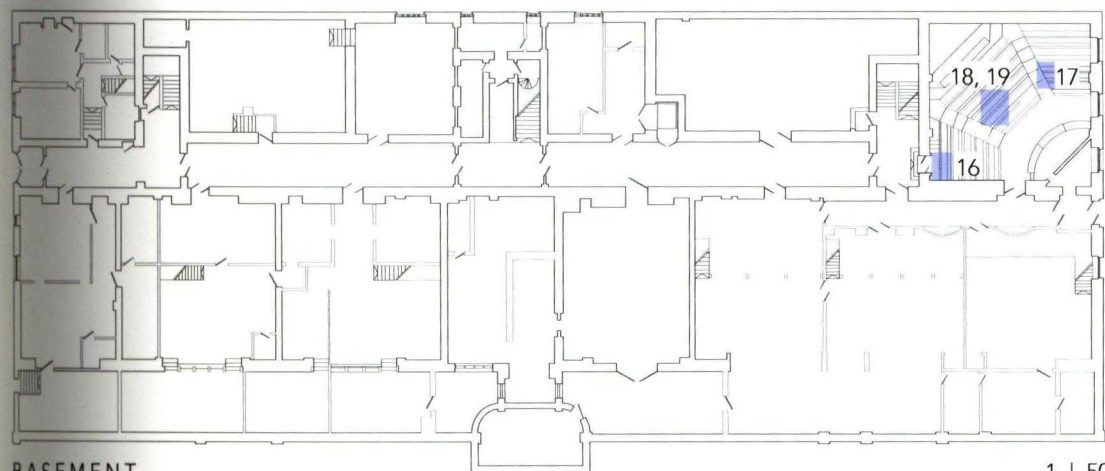
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GROUND FLOOR

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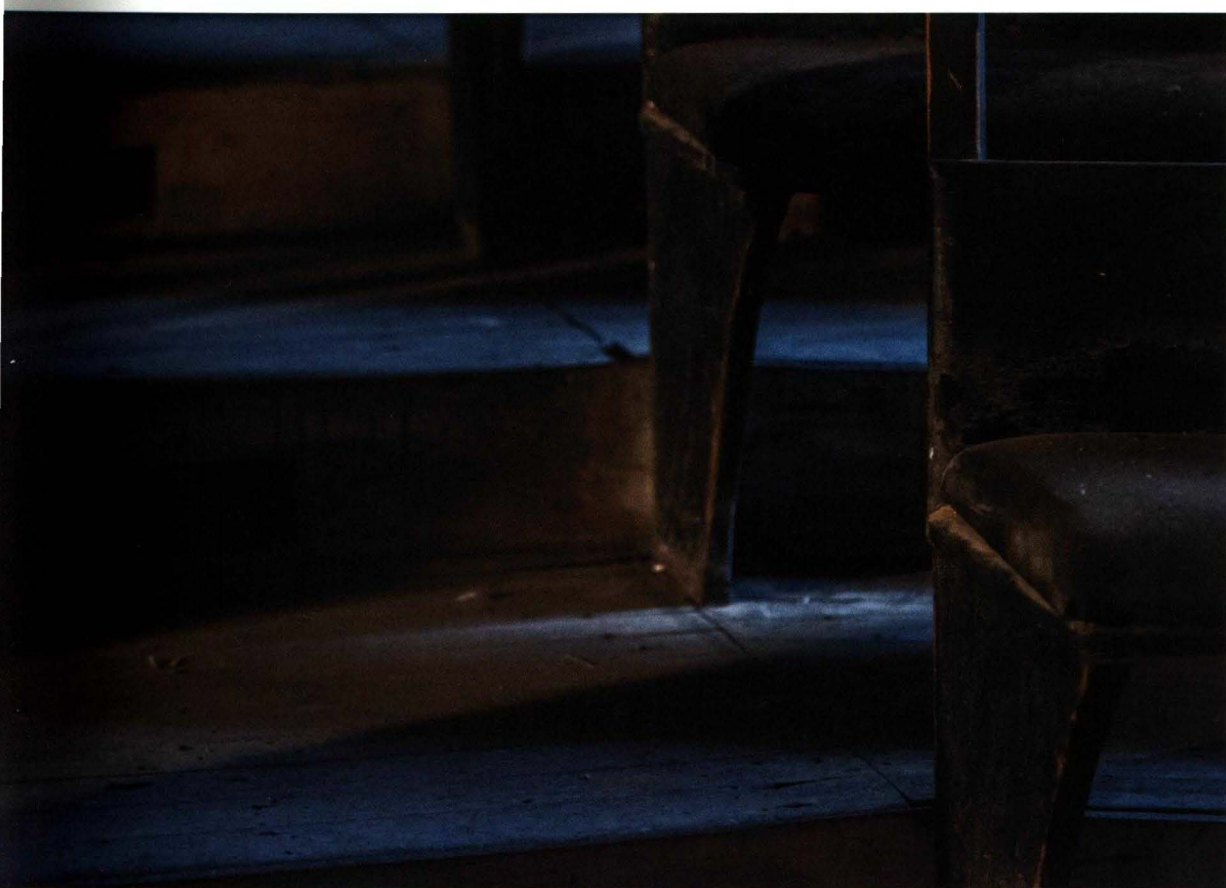
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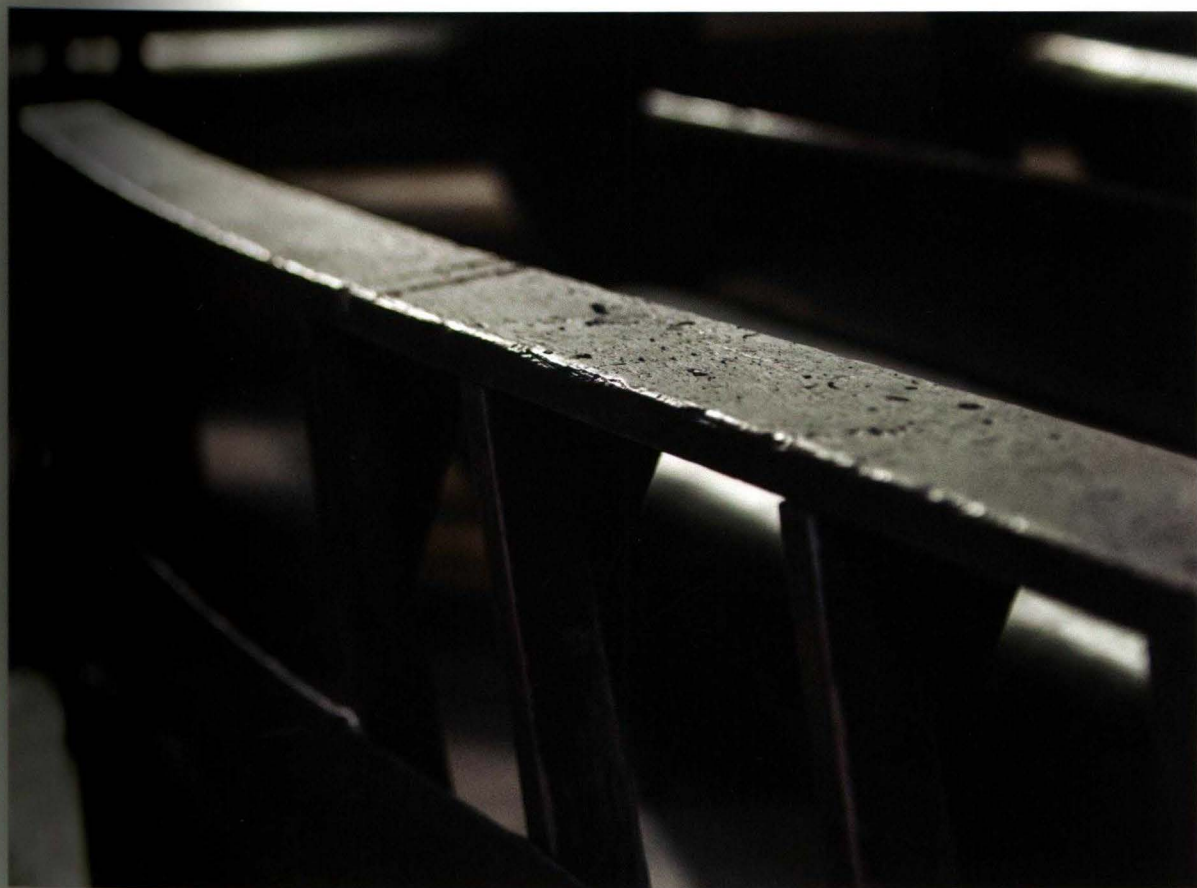


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FURNITURE

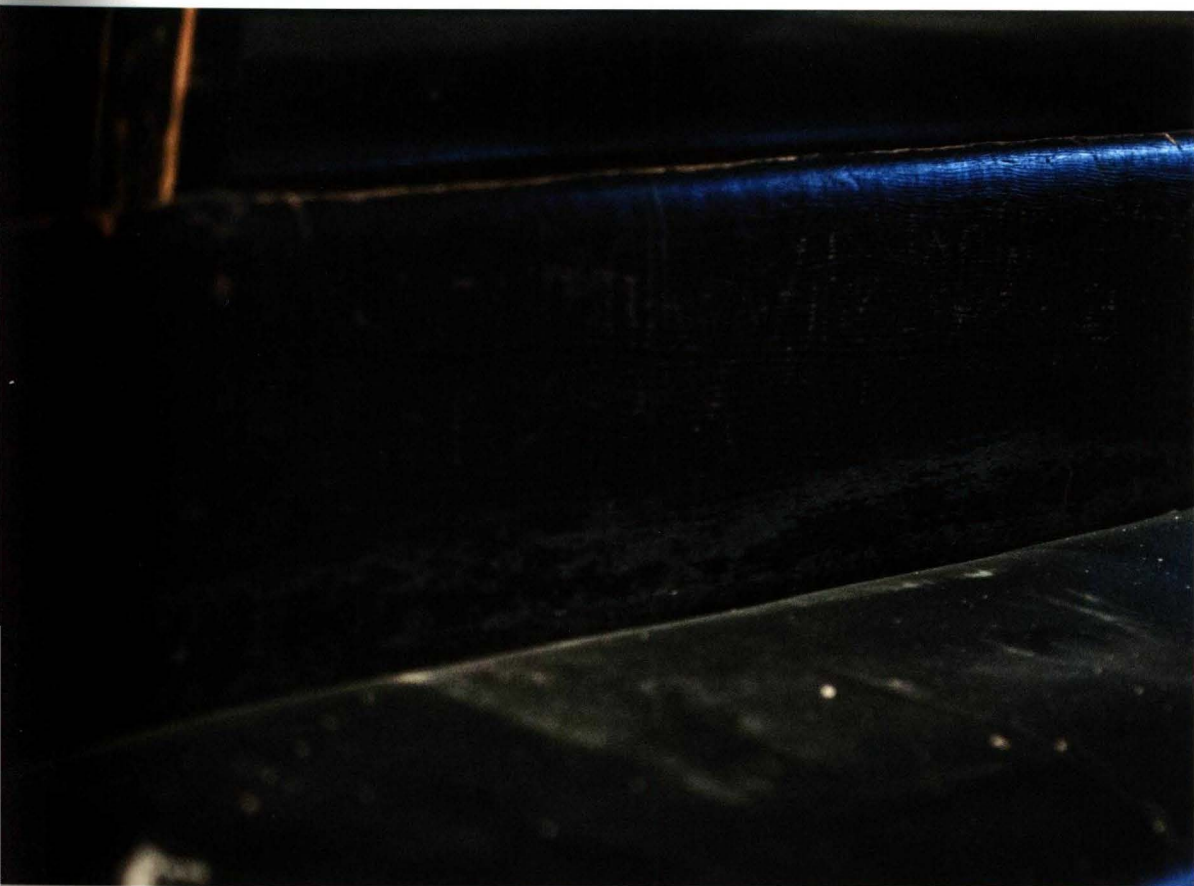


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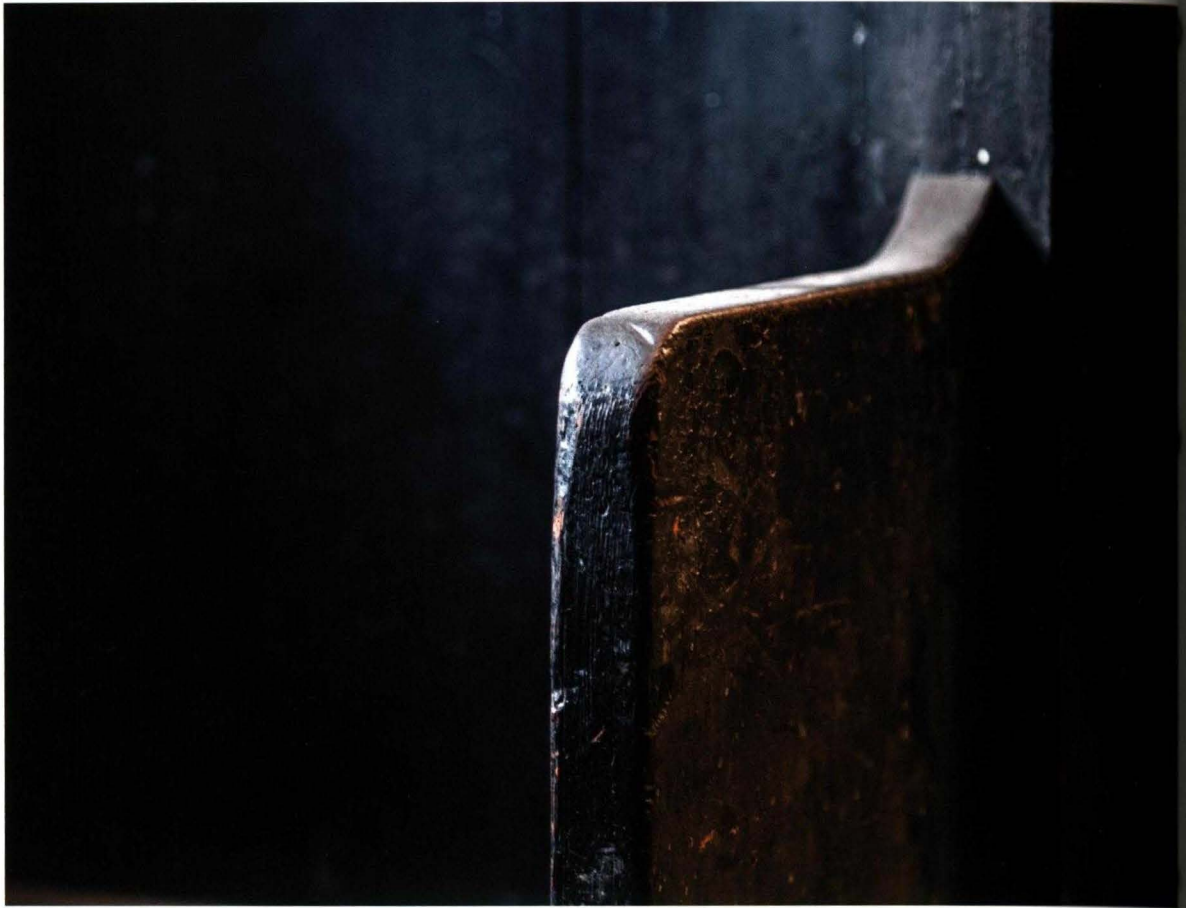


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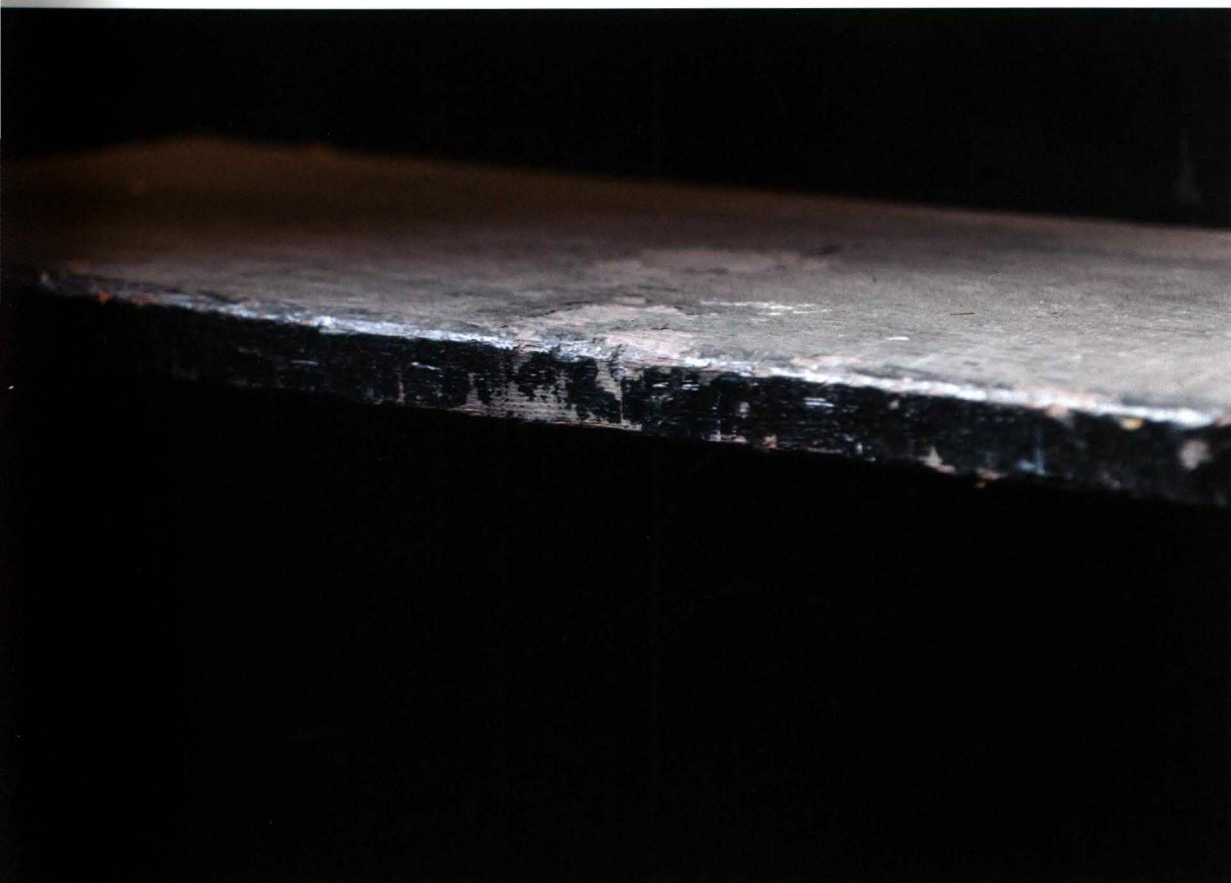
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22

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HANDRAIL

The handrails reveal how the same element with differing materiality results in a range of weathering. The most obvious is (27); the handrail from the entrance down to the basement with the timber severely scored. The metal handrails when examined closely show a surprising amount of dents, some of which could be attributed to their manufacture. The timber may be sanded back and retreated but it will never be perfect and will hold the wear and tear deep within it.



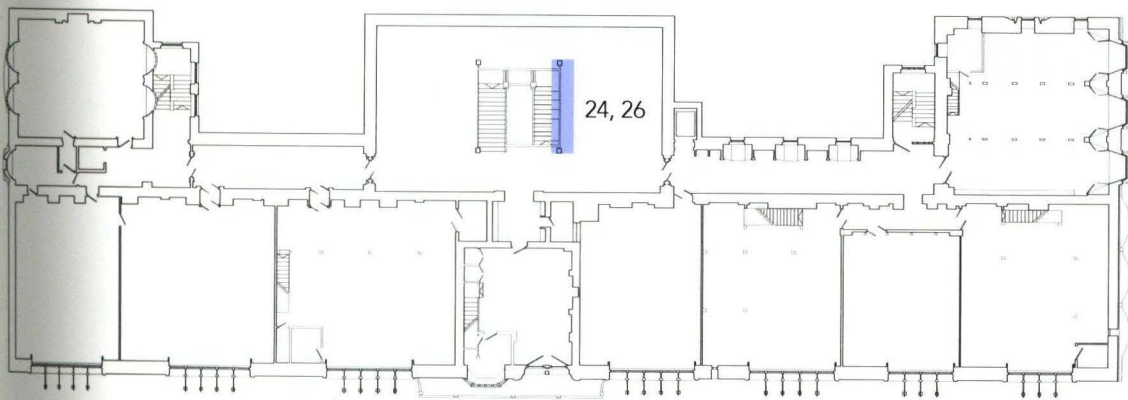
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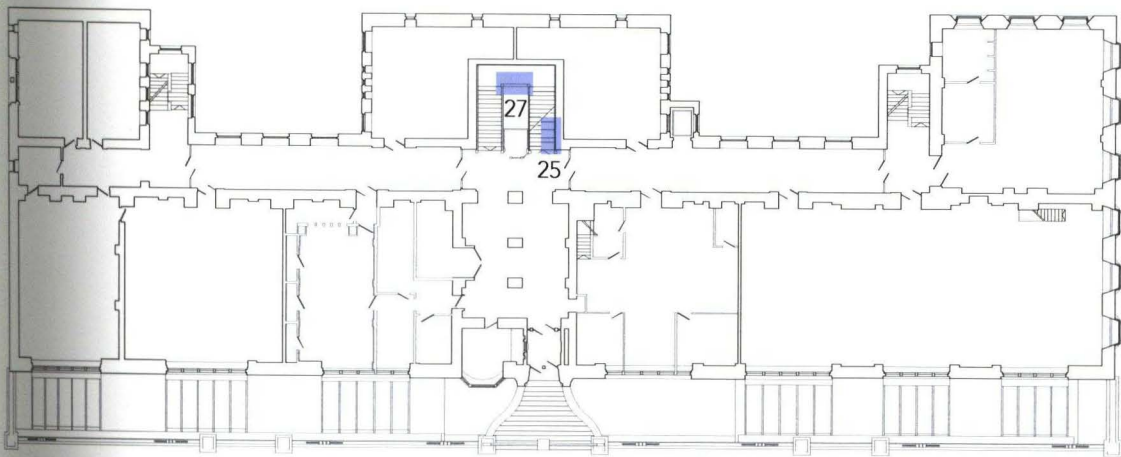


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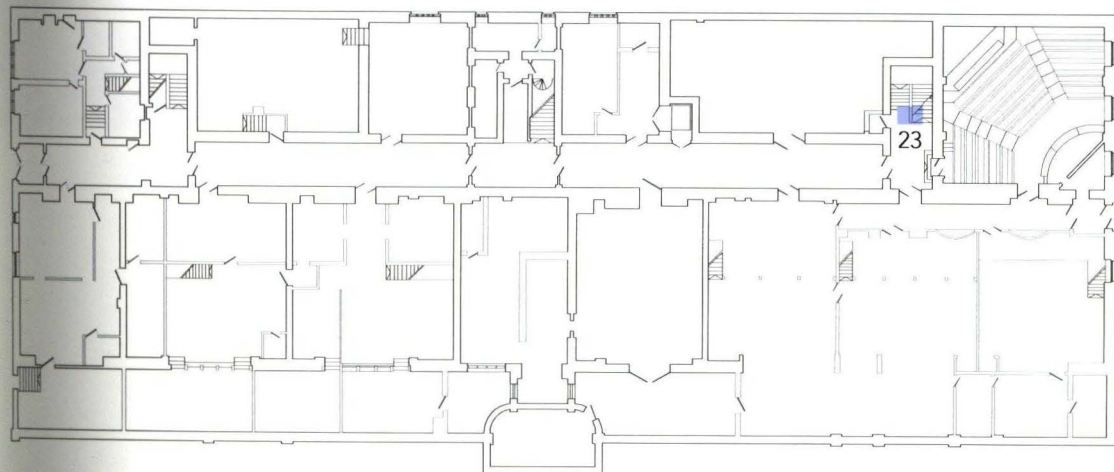
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GROUND FLOOR

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BASEMENT

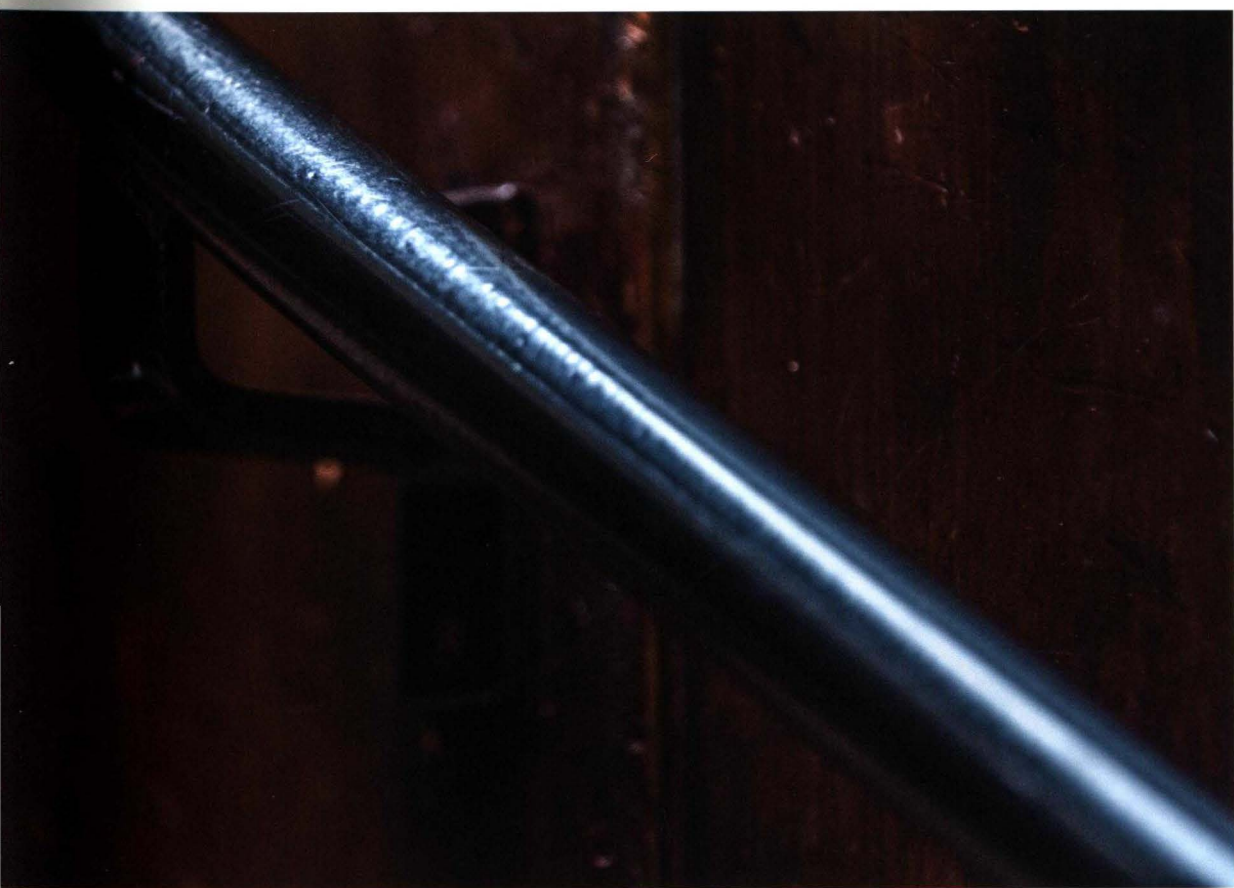
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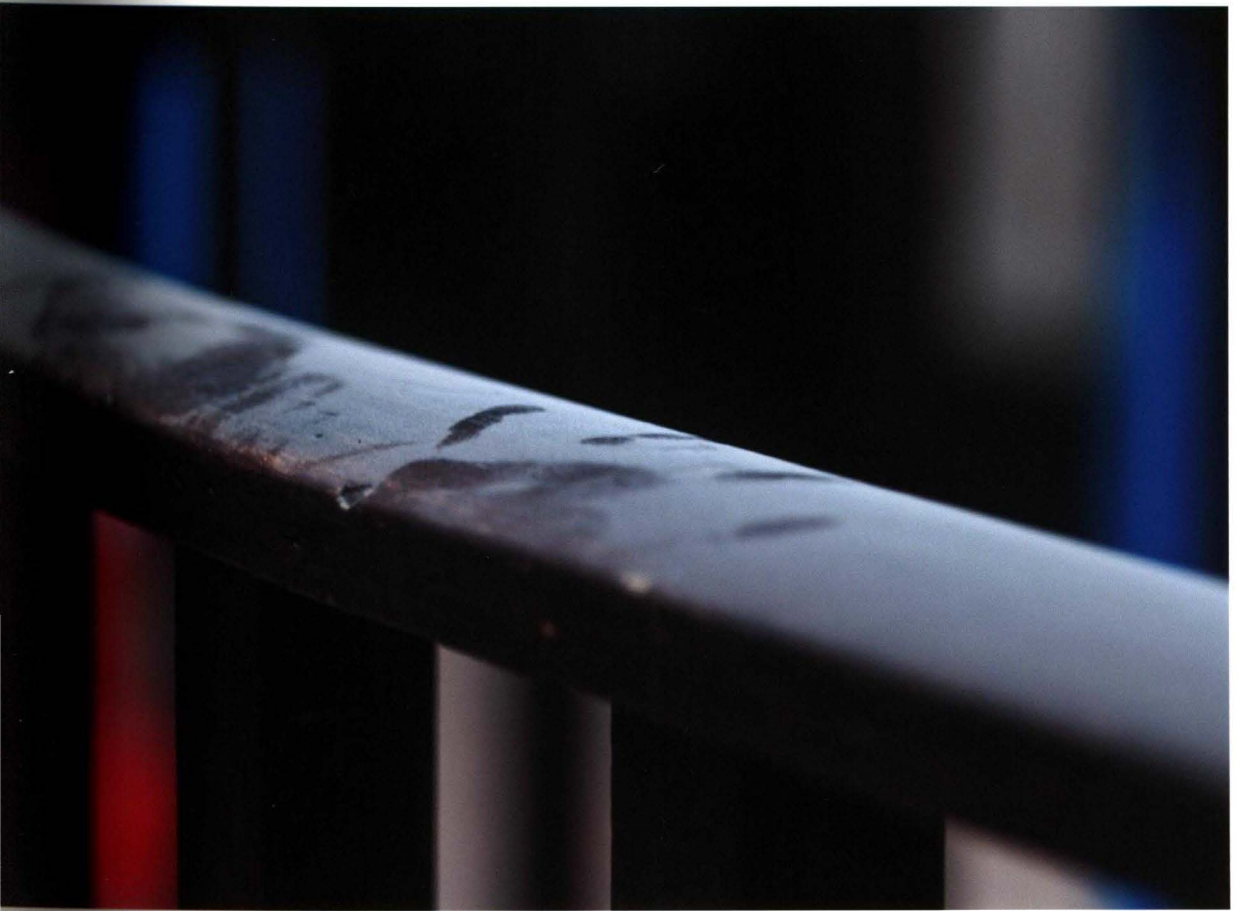


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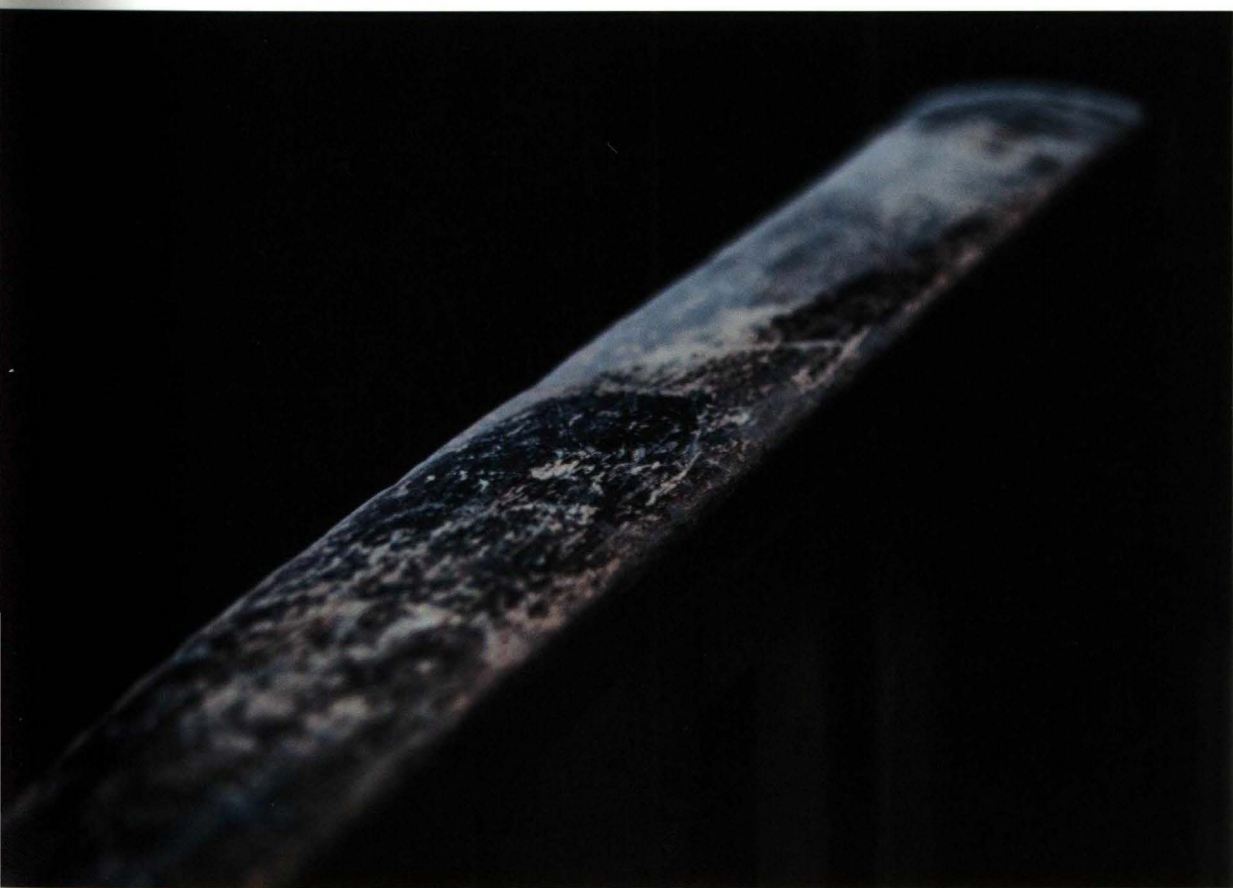






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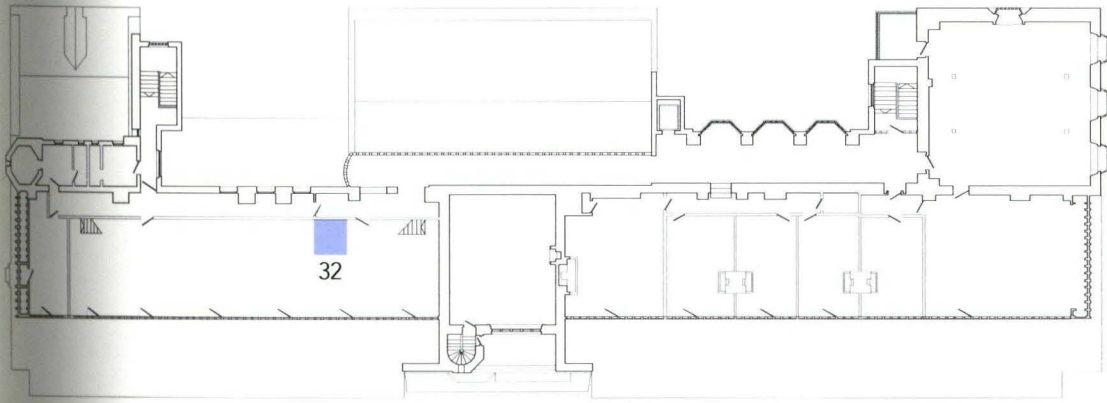
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27

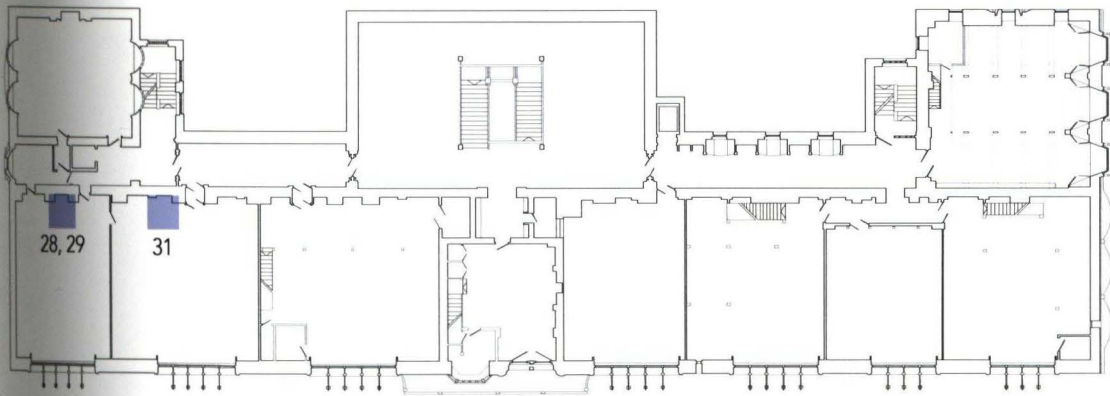
SINK

Photographs (28) and (29) show the paint accumulated on the sink in Studio 38. The thick layers of paint on the plasterboard behind and on the interior of the sink contrast with the relatively white exterior surface and suggest extensive usage. (30) portrays the darkness that comes with use and how the reds and yellows of fresher paints begin to shine through. (31) displays the underworking's of the sink and the trickles of escaped paint and dirty water. (32) exhibits historic layers of paint that have combined to form a brown mass that reflect their severe resistance to removal. (33) and (34) show the micro and macro views of the sink, how it sits within its context, the entropy of paint closest to the source. Examine the plasterboard closely and you will see the streaks and layers of paint from brushes being cleaned against the



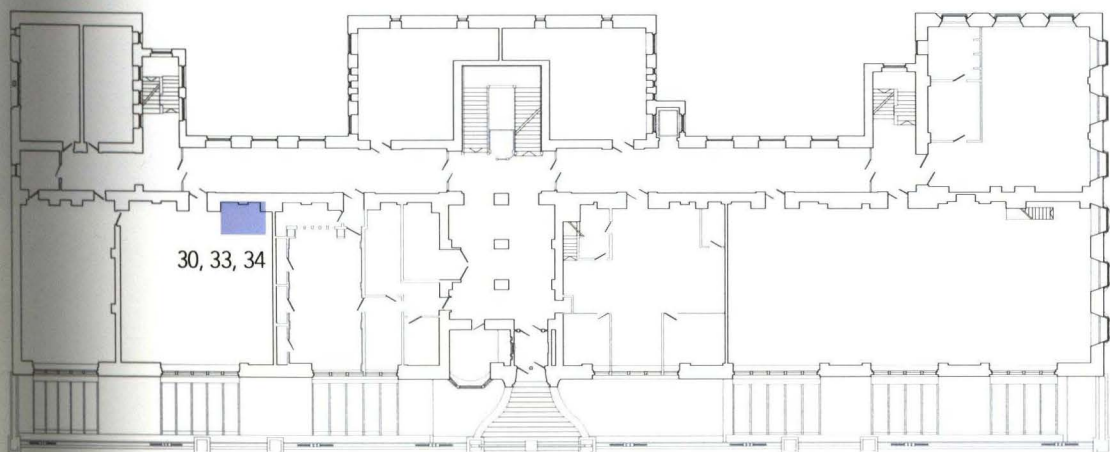
SECOND FLOOR

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FIRST FLOOR

1 | 500



GROUND FLOOR

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28

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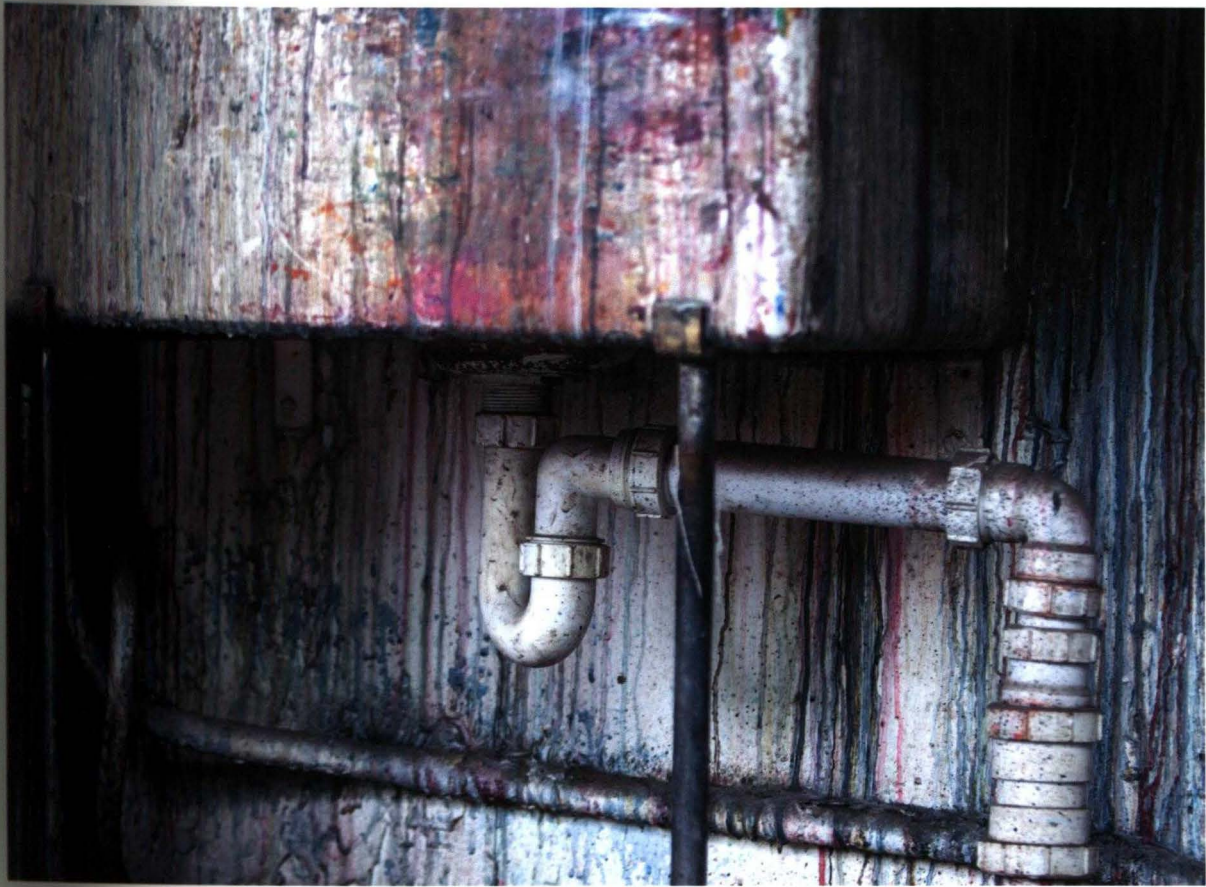




30

"The mouth kisses, the mouth spits; no one mistakes the saliva of the first for the second. Similarly, there is nothing necessarily impure about dirt."³⁴

³⁴ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 108.



31



32



Handwritten notes on the left margin, including the number '30' and some illegible scribbles.

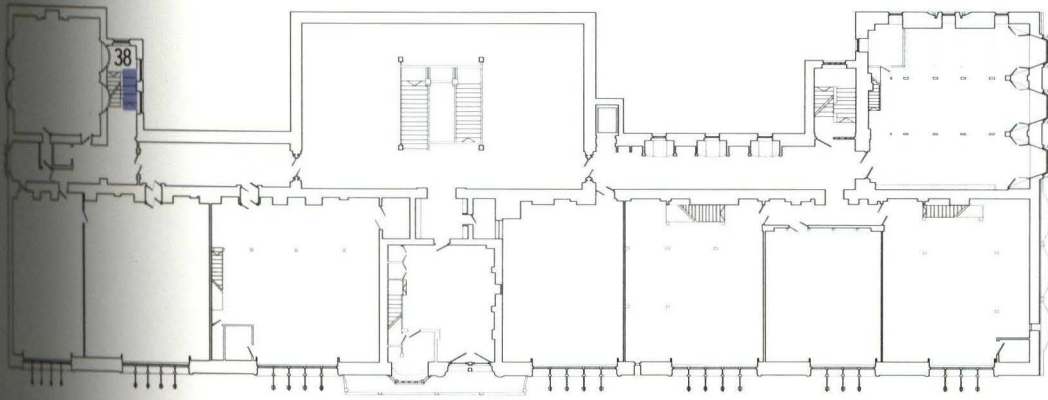


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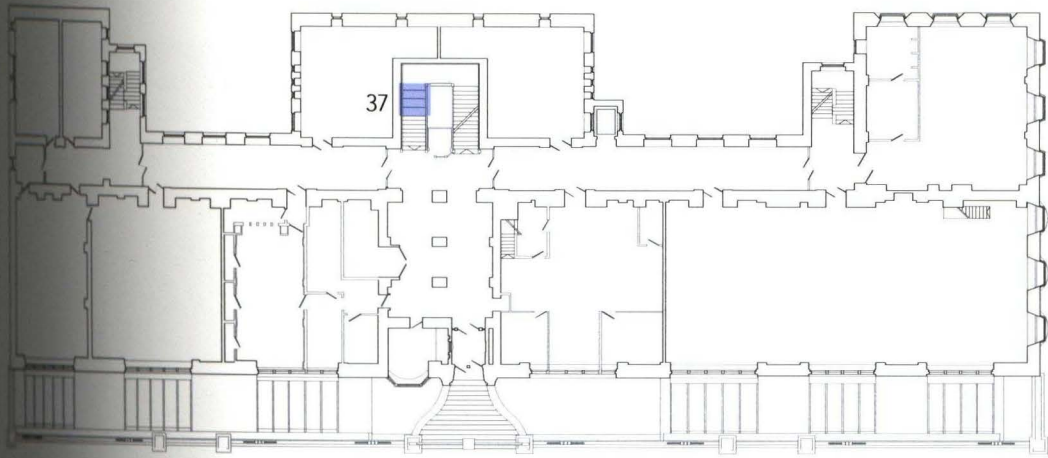
STAIR

(35) and (36) contrast the weathering of two timber stairs whilst (37) and (38) contrast concrete stairs. Overall, it is evident that the greatest wear is most prolific towards the bottom of the riser, as shoes are knocked against it moving from step to step. Similar to the handrails, the timber has weathered harshly. The stairs into the lecture theatre (38) evoke the wrinkles of an aged face, they communicate movement and the concrete step (37) shows a dip in its surface similar to the slow sculpture in Saskia Lewis' house.



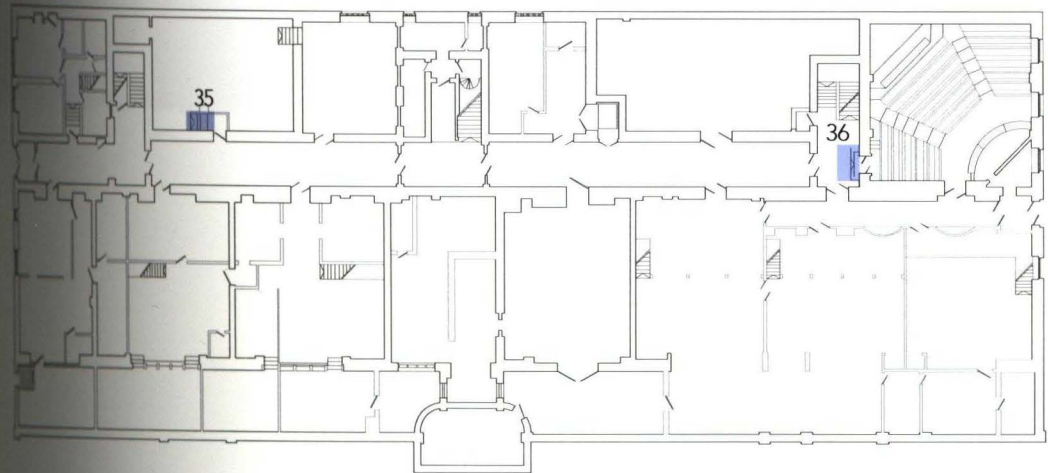
FIRST FLOOR

1 | 500



GROUND FLOOR

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BASEMENT

1 | 500



35



36

93



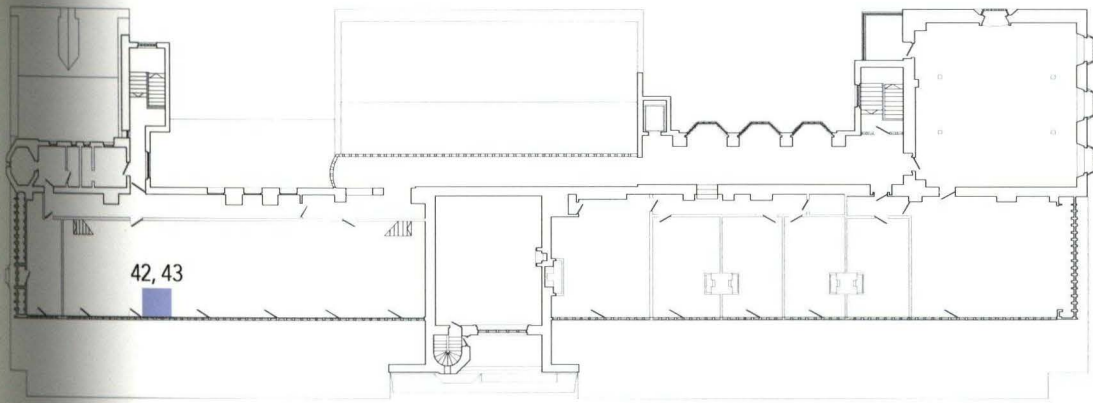
37



38

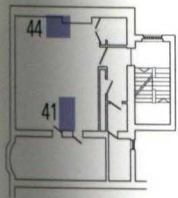
W A L L

The walls of the studios are both devices for communication between students (39)–(41) and life size palettes (45)–(46). Even when, painted over, the thin and rough layer will encourage future experimentation and deformation. (45) and (46) raises the question of when these pieces of wall started to become consciously populated with brush strokes to form a thoughtful composition.

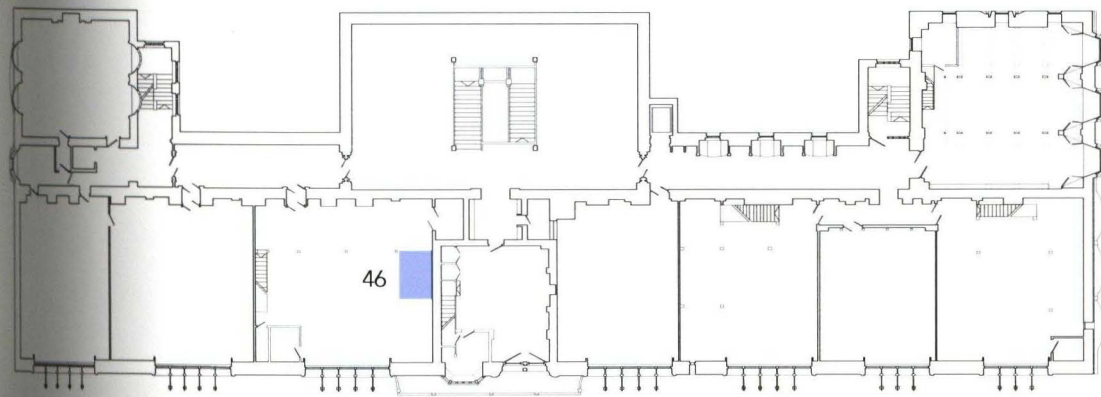


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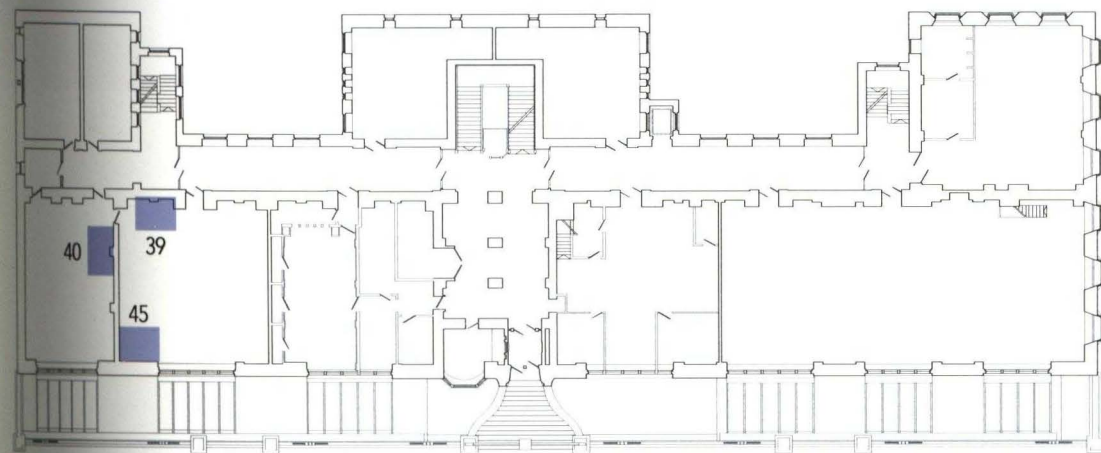


FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE



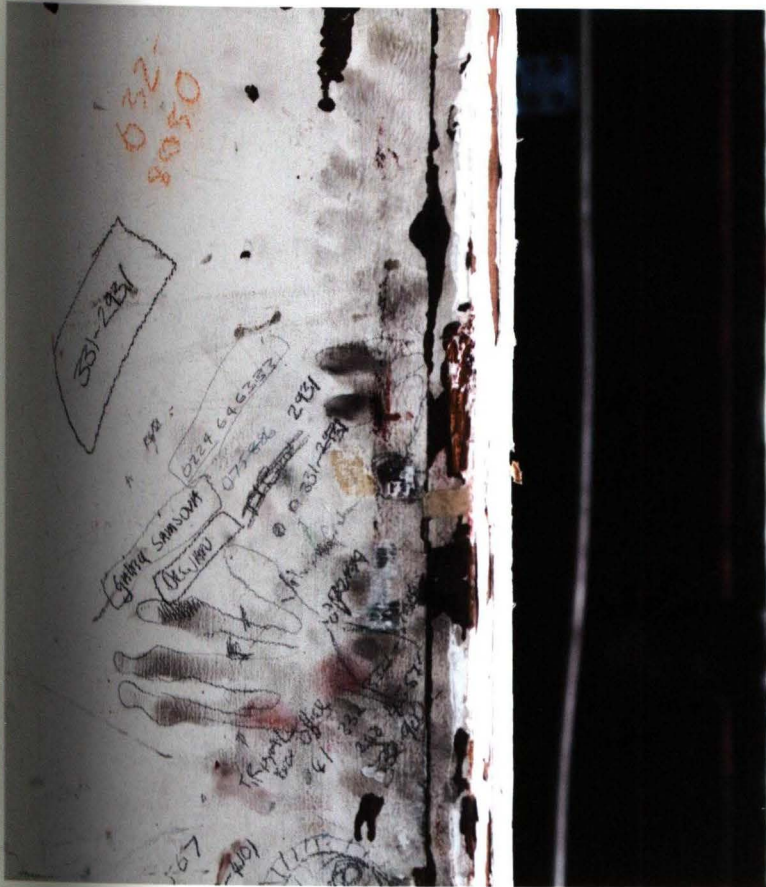
FIRST FLOOR

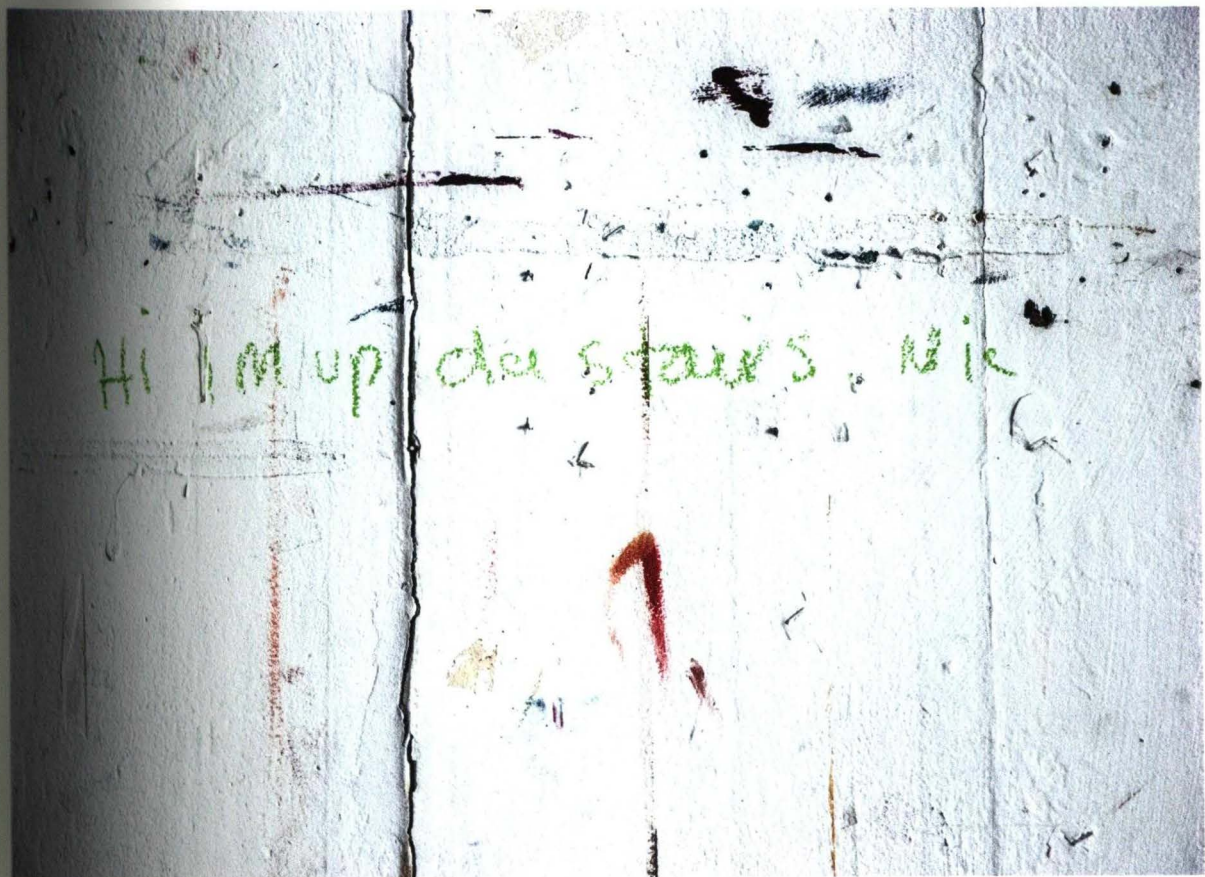
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GROUND FLOOR

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"... Whether this graffiti wall would survive. Certainly it would be covered up, but Yeo was hopeful that it would be simply concealed with dry-lining rather than expensively replastered. That way the wall would survive for someone else to uncover, creating a richer seam of what Yeo calls 'alchemy' or the 'strength of voice' within the place..."³⁵

³⁵ David Littlefield, 'Gibo and The Boathouse: Westminster and Ladbroke Grove, London', in *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, ed. Saskia Lewis and David Littlefield (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007), 182.



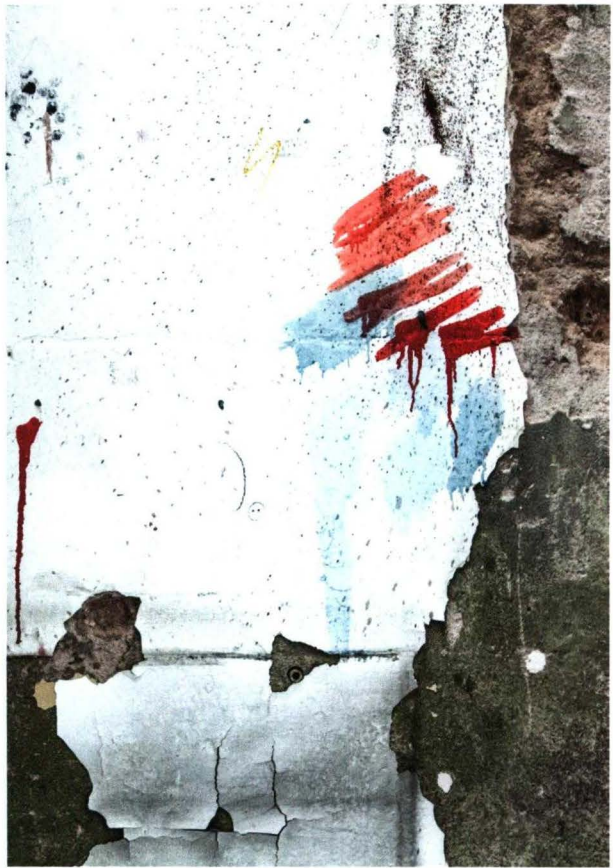
41



42



43



44



45



WINDOW SILL

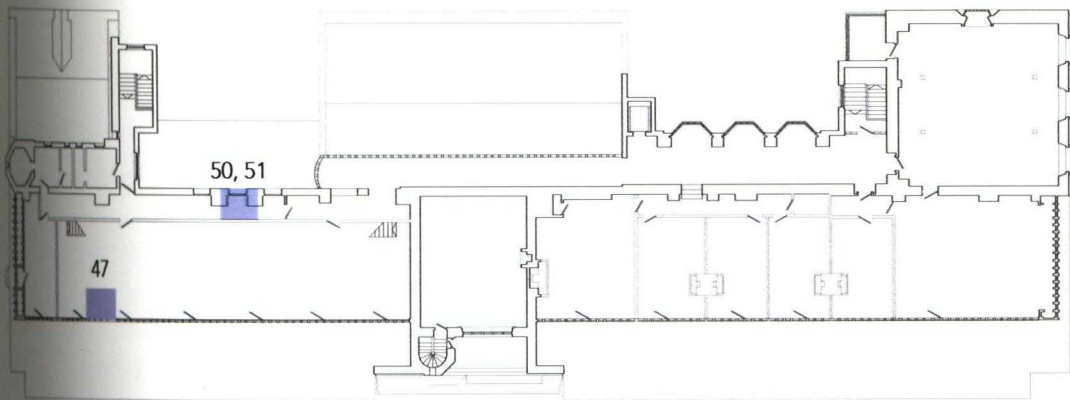
The white painted sills in the North studios (47) – (49) have weathered more harshly than the sills in the south facing top floor (50) – (51). This is due to the temperature and activity difference, the studios are subject to more prolonged use yet a slightly colder environment. The stains and peeling white paint are certainly less attractive than the dents and etching in the dark stained wood. This is a clear example of the distinction between dirt and patina.



SECON

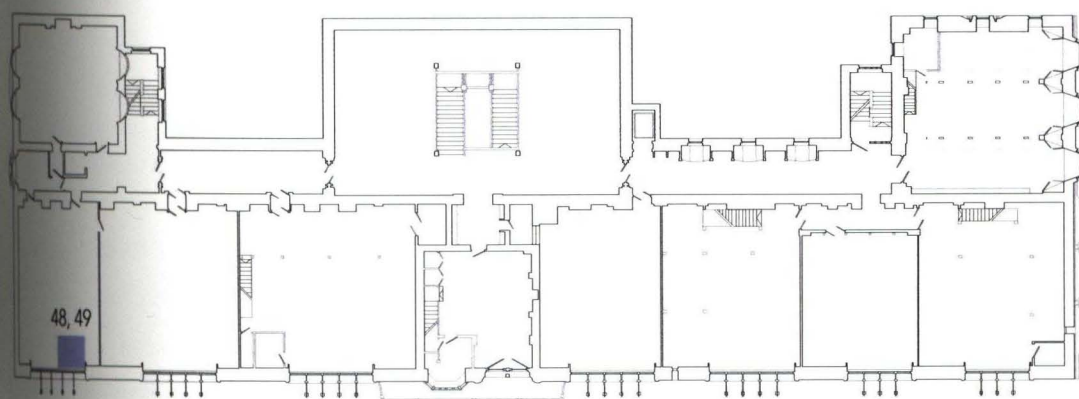


FIRST



SECOND FLOOR

1 | 500



FIRST FLOOR

1 | 500



47



48



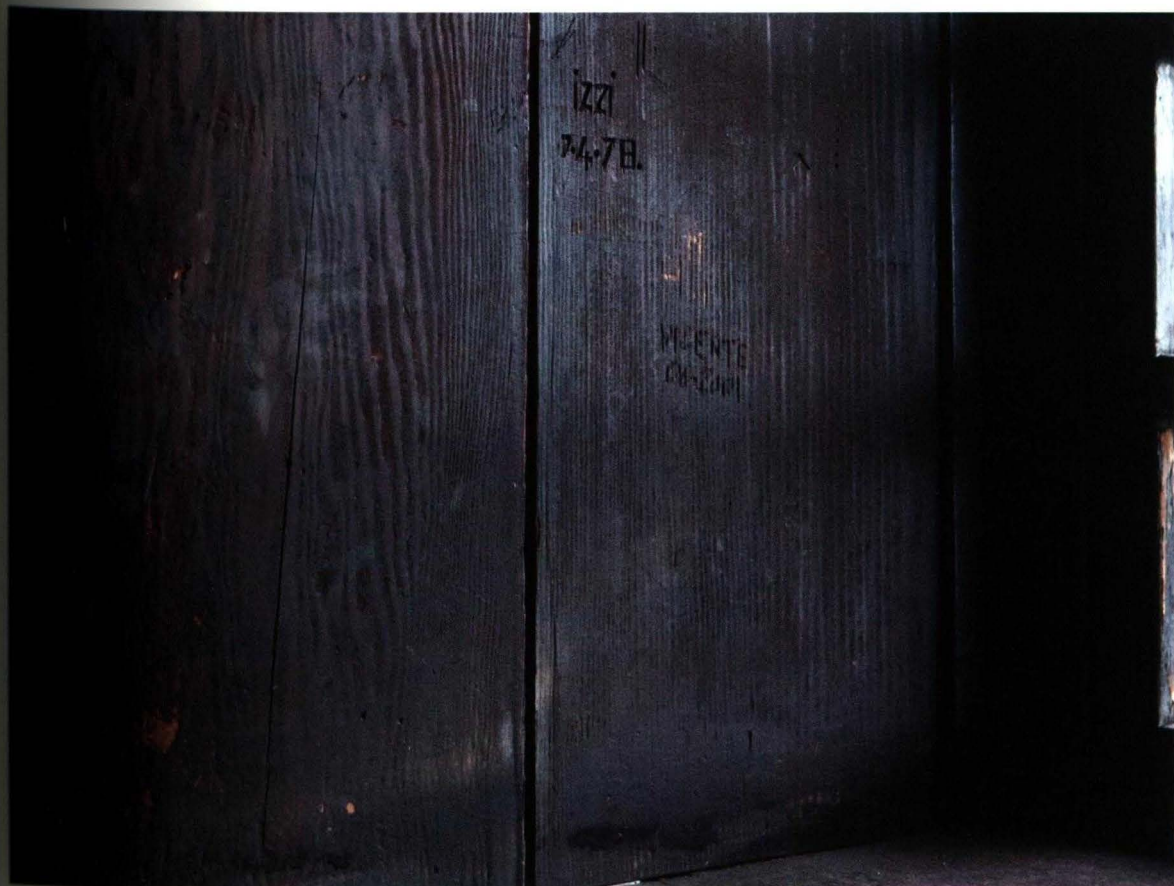
49



50

"I have found that the narrative - the story behind a street, a building, a room, a detail that exists — is a way of describing and exploring the atmosphere of a space."³⁶

³⁶ Lewis, 'Architectural Voices', 229.



51

TAXONOMY

Brass patina

Cracks

Dust

Fire Charring and Soot

Graffiti

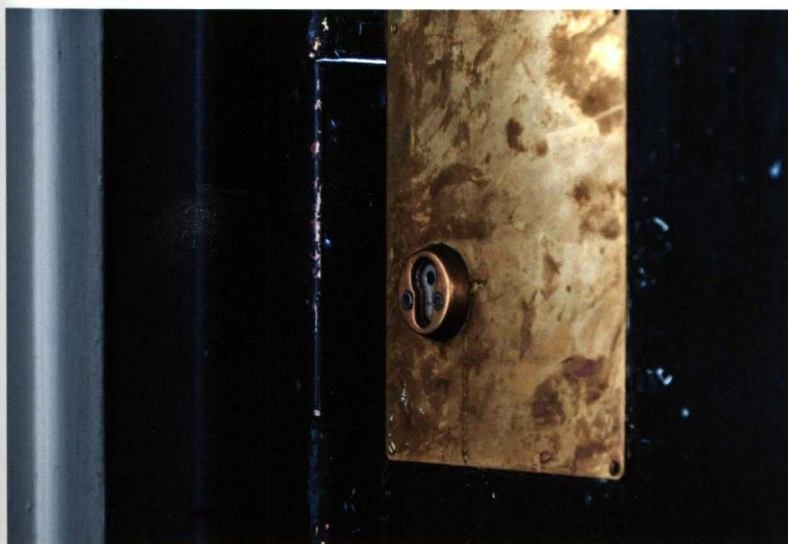
Mould

Paint

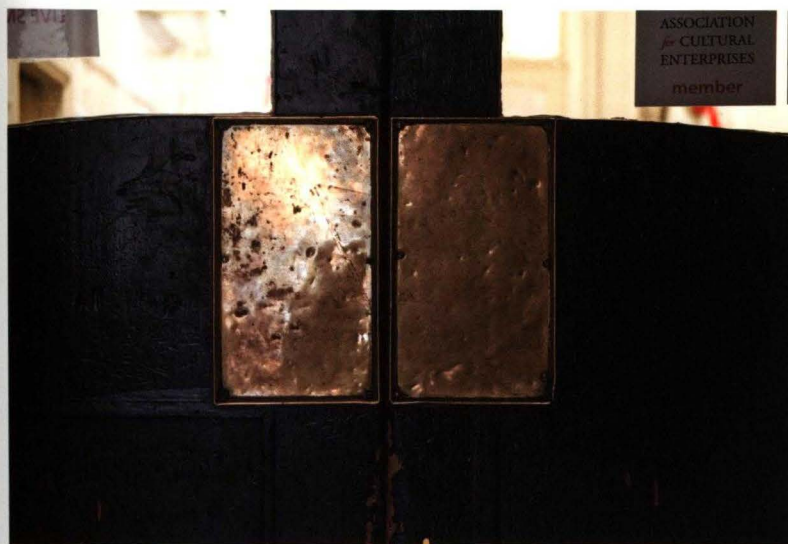
Peeling

Scratches

BRASS PATINA



52



53

“... this ‘sheen of antiquity’ of which we hear so much is in fact the glow of grime. In both Chinese and Japanese the words denoting this glow describe a polish that comes of being touched over and over again, a sheen produced by the oils that naturally permeate an object over long years of handling [...]”³⁷

The patination on the brass doorplates is a result of the natural oils on hands combining with the material after repeated touching. Its value is significant. This type of patination takes many years to accumulate and indicates the age of the material and the people that have touched it. Through touching them we shake the hands of countless generations.³⁸

³⁷ Tanizaki, *In Praise Of Shadows*, 22.

³⁸ Pallamaa, MacKeith, and Holl, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 62.

CRACKS



54



55

Present in all the elements aforementioned, this natural degradation requires evaluation of the cracked material. The examples shown would be difficult to replace and a small repair considered instead. Although not all cracks are caused by people, they still have value; like the wrinkles on an elderly face, they should be celebrated as patina and not faults.

DUST



26



50

In this context the dust implies dereliction, so it is pleasing to see the handprints of others as you walk alone through the Art School. Dust is obviously impossible to preserve and certainly falls in the category of grime that is of no value. It does not require the presence of people in order to occur.



FIRE



57

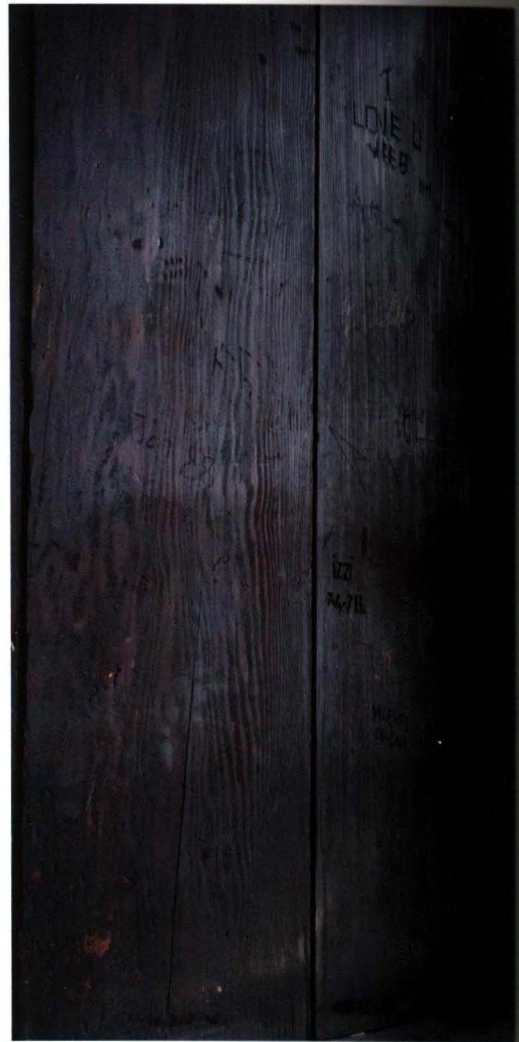


58

...like dust but in the context of the Art School holds more value because of its association with
... The soot is not ordinary dust but the fabric of the Art School transubstantiated. Charring can be
... and replaced but attempting to remove soot is difficult, inevitably embedding itself in the fabric
... atmosphere of the Art School. The bricks in the loggia will have the paint fully removed, a process
... by the fire.³⁹ The plaster cast statues will be cleaned but will probably remain blackened and be a
... of the fire.⁴⁰

³⁹ Sarah MacKinnon, Interview with Sarah MacKinnon, Project Manager: Mackintosh Restoration, 02 2016.

GRAFFITI



59

"[...] we cannot be precious about graffiti that would have been lost anyway through general building maintenance. As an example, graffiti etched into wooden window sills will stay but the graffiti on walls will be painted over."⁴¹

The value of graffiti is largely dependent upon the surface and space it exists. There is no need to be sentimental about graffiti that would not have endured anyway.

⁴¹ Natalia Burakowska, Interview with Natalia Burakowska, Page/Park, 03 2016.

MOULD

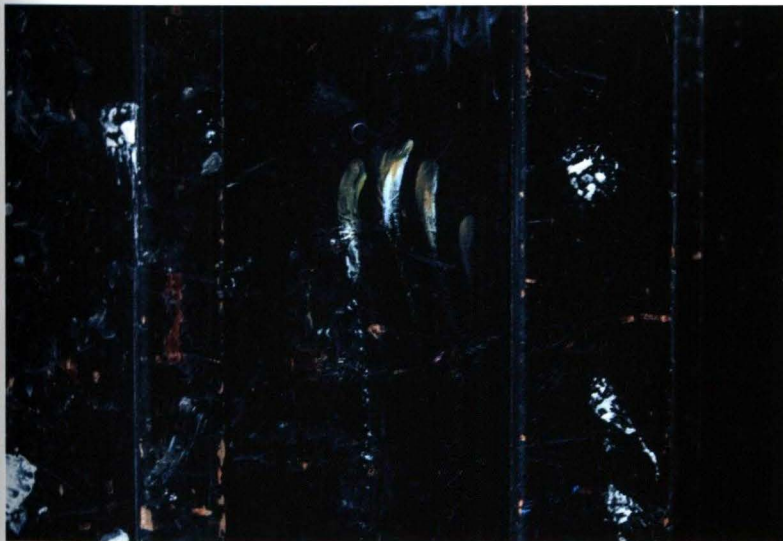


60

Mould signals the encroachment of time and the fragility of man-made objects being covered by nature. To remove it is not to deny the passing of time but rather to ensure the longevity of the Art School's life. Mould is certainly dirt and a type that can be detrimental.



PAINT



62



63

Paint, naturally covers nearly every surface within the studios: sinks, doors, walls, floors, handrails, window sills; it is ubiquitous. Its value is greatest as handprints on doors and layers on and behind sinks. This is once again a case of what would have been normal practice. To remove all traces of this patina would be saddening.

PEELING



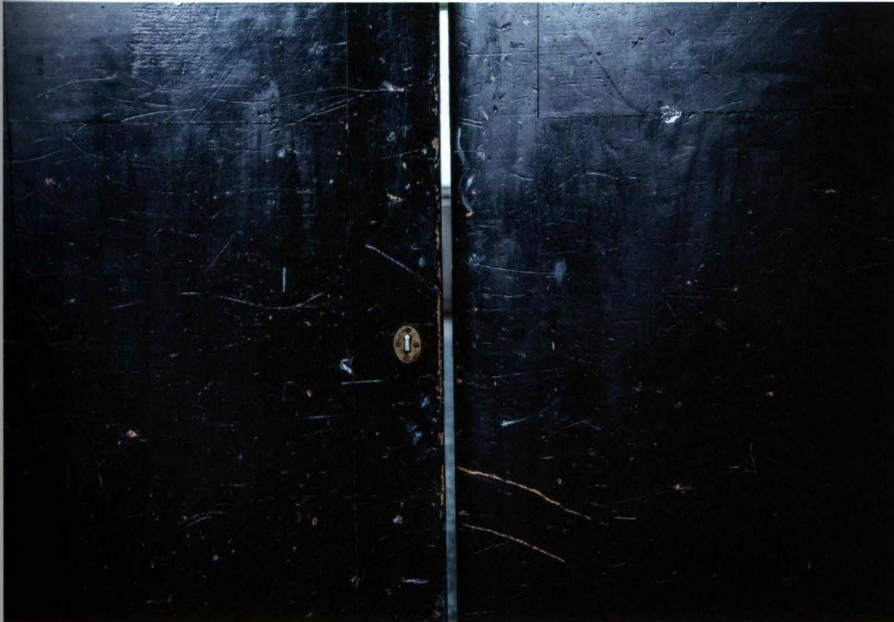
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44

The peeling of paint is a type of surface degradation that would happen regardless of inhabitation due to temperature change, shrinkage and so on. Therefore, whilst it signals the passing of time, it does not indicate the presence of people or add to the atmosphere.

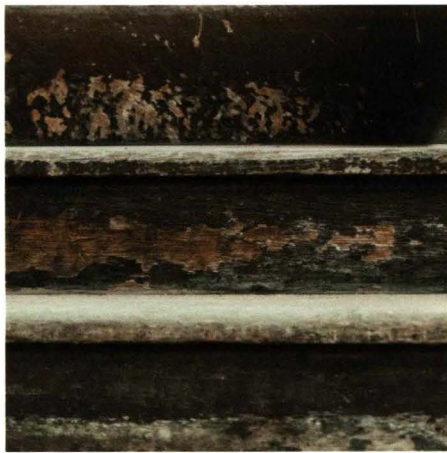
SCRATCHES



65

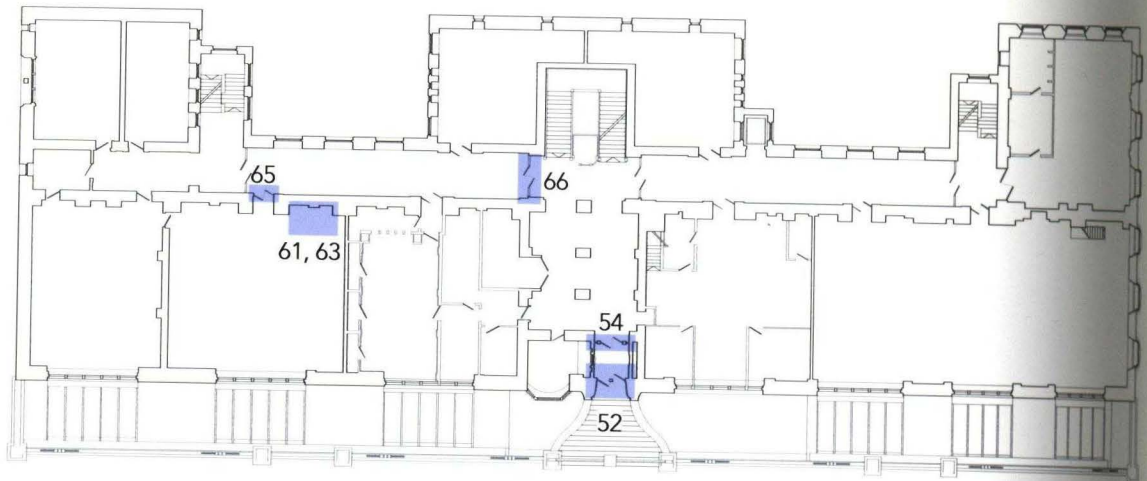


66



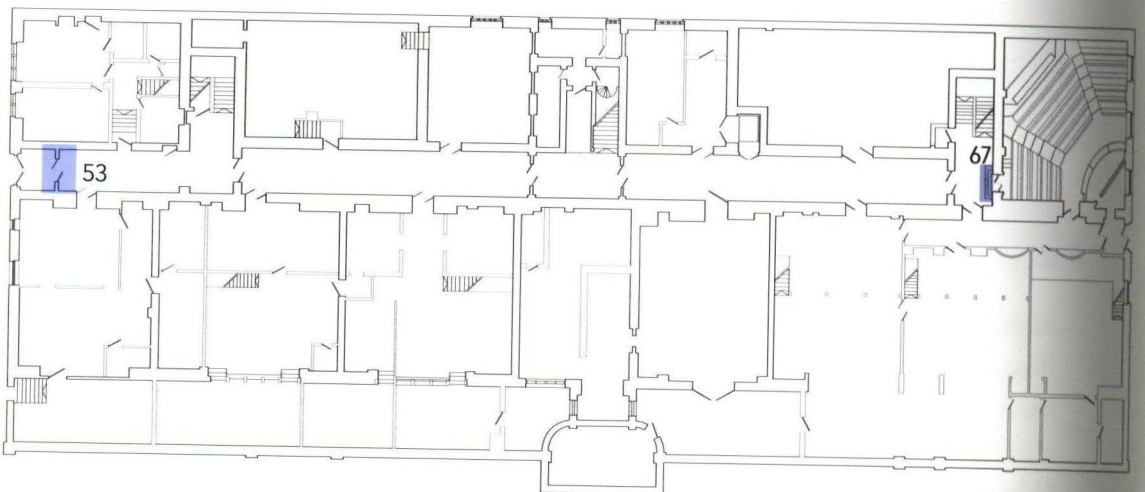
67

Scratches are most prevalent on timber surfaces even when painted over. They give the impression of use in a quiet, hidden manner. You have to look closely to notice all the scratches. These marks, unlike the peeling of paint, combine to form the individual fingerprint and personality of surfaces. Removal of these scratches is difficult and unnecessary.



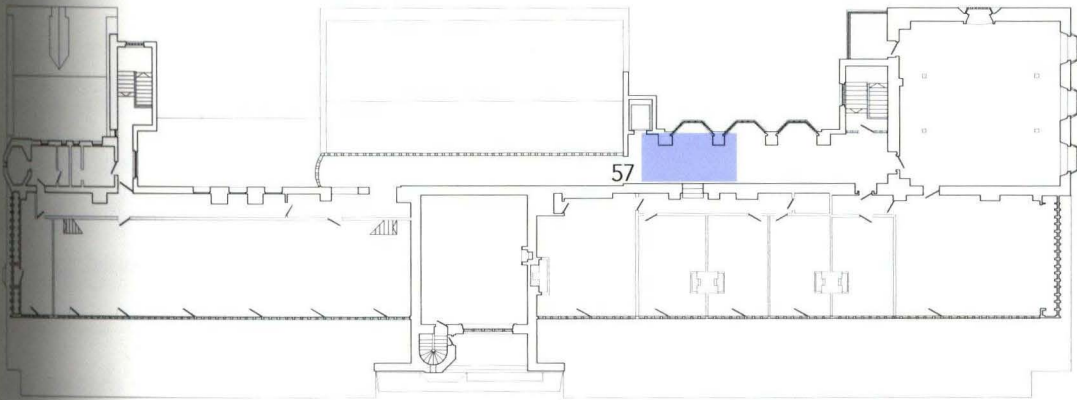
GROUND FLOOR

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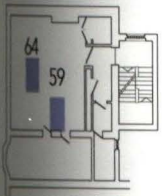
BASEMENT

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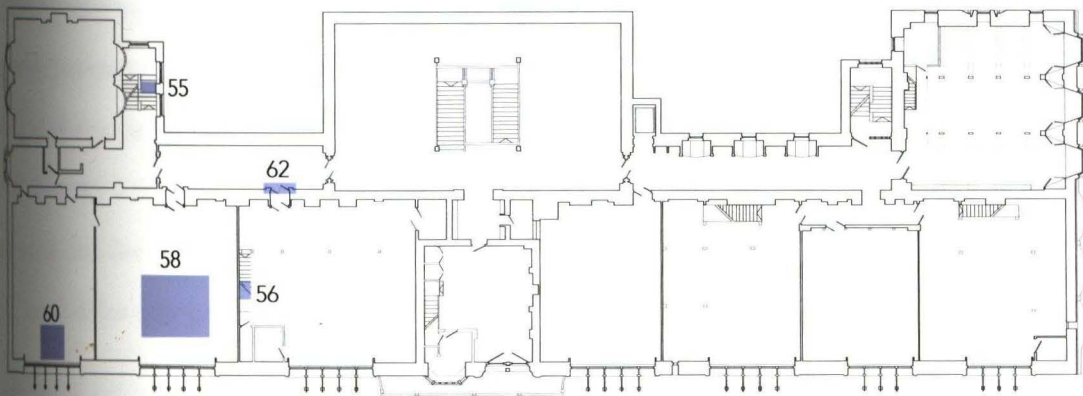


SECOND FLOOR

1 | 500



FIRST FLOOR
MEZZANINE



FIRST FLOOR

1 | 500

INTERVIEW WITH SARAH MACKINNON, PROJECT MANAGER: MACKINTOSH RESTORATION

RT How will the building look?

SMK It will be different, this is inevitable. The 1910 library is our precedent date, the finishes of the building have changed since opening and it was a lot more colourful then.

We generally describe the building as monochromatic however I believe there was more gradation in tone. The timber being a warmer brown as opposed to the black it is now. Certainly as it got repainted the colours got darker. I think when the Mac reopens the richness of finishes will surprise people.

RT Is the undamaged East side being renovated?

SMK The level of finish will be influenced by the library and applied evenly throughout the building. We need to decide how the existing patina compliments that. The doors, for example, need to be stripped and given an intumescent coating. Hopefully it won't take long for the paint stained handprints to reappear.

RT What about elements that are not structurally damaged?

SMK The brick of the loggia will be stripped back as that's how it was designed rather than as a memory to the fire. Almost all fire damage will be removed, so how do we record this? Well, for example, the doors into Studio 45 have charring, some lead damage and no glazing and could remain with minimal restoration. Decisions will hinge on the conservation philosophy.

RT What will the visual legacy of the fire be?

SMK The blackened plaster casts will be cleaned, however as it may not be possible to remove the colouration they will remain blackened. The level of damage fading as you move away from the Library. The process of the restoration will also serve as documentation, along with exhibitions.

RT Could excessive cleaning affect the atmosphere?

SMK Cleaning the soot was dictated by health and safety; fire soot can be carcinogenic. The intervention needed to

fully remove the smoke odour in the Mac would be unacceptable in terms of loss and damage to historic fabric. Some smell of smoke is inevitable; the building fabric responds to temperature and humidity changes, so smells of charring are stronger on certain days. I imagine people visiting the Mac will want to be able to smell some charred timber.

RT How do you restore the Glasgow marble?

SMK On the West, the lower floors are fine but upper floors have permanent staining caused by soot combining with water used to extinguish the fire. Various studies were performed and the most successful was a laser to agitate the molecules. However this altered the surface texture and would need finishes to be applied on top. It would be inauthentic. We are still working on an effective and practical cleaning

methodology. I'm afraid that leaving it could look like it has been overlooked. At the same time this could be nice to show how we fought to save the building.

I am certain that there will be a long term effect of soot on the GM, at least it will have stained it and so the colour is likely to change – the most successful tests thus far leave us a richer, warmer and darker finish to the render.

RT Finally, what will happen to the sinks?

SMK Some sinks were lost in the fire and new sinks will be installed where none were present before – so there will be cleaner sinks. The existing sinks have already been cleaned and your photographs reflect that state. They won't get any cleaner, maybe this will be a clue to new students to feel comfortable making a mess in the renewed Mac.

INTERVIEW WITH NATALIA BURAKOWSKA: PAGE/PARK

Natalia is part of the team working on conservation issues including the 'intangible assets' of The Mack, the Library and the reconstruction of the building as a whole.

RT What is the conservation philosophy?

NB Generally, one of minimal intervention. However, an entirely consistent approach is problematic, as it is such a big building with varying conditions in each space that a broad stroke approach is inappropriate.

RT Have you conducted a catalogue of the building?

NB We have a comprehensive atlas of the building; an evidence charter. It's separated into 'Building as a Whole', 'Room by Room' and 'Piece by Piece'.

RT What will the visual legacy of the fire be?

NB The project is continually evolving, and we are working with the client and the design team to establish how best to retain the legacy of the fire as part of the living memory of the building. This may be retention of some fire damaged material

within the building, but will be established through the on-going design process.

RT How do you retain the voice of the building if its fabric is replaced?

NB It is important to understand that a small percentage of the overall fabric is being reconstructed, with the majority of the building only undergoing refurbishment. Where fabric is replaced, we will not attempt to recreate patina that has been lost – that will come with time and surviving fabric, we will respect the existing patina where possible. Page/Park will not 'add' any character to the building; that is why the Library will go back as originally designed by Mackintosh. Ultimately, it's the students that will bring life back to the building and add the next layer of character. Tutors will need to encourage students to mess it up again. I do not think it will take long for the paint stains to return.

RT Is there a hierarchy of what is retained?

NB Things like scuffs and dents on the brass door plates will of course stay, however everything will have to be considered on a case by case basis. The building will be largely redecorated, so we cannot be precious about graffiti that would have been lost anyway through general building maintenance. As an example, graffiti etched into wooden window sills will stay but the graffiti on walls will be painted over.

RT Are we in danger of being overly sentimental?

NB We want to make this building work, not to put it on a pedestal and be too careful. It is important to be thorough in our historical research and measurement of the building to record its current condition and move forward confidently with the reconstruction. Knowing what is original

and what has changed helps us decide its 'value'.

RT Is there an aim to return it to its pure, original state or will there be ambiguity? What is the visual legacy of the occupants?

NB In terms of the reconstructed elements, such as the library, the aim is to return the building as closely to how it looked in 1910 as possible. However we do not plan to completely erase the last 100 years of patina that has built up across the undamaged parts of the building. We do not want to sanitise the building of its living character. The 'intangible heritage' and atmosphere is very important, things like the sounds of squeaking floorboards cannot be replicated and therefore should not be lost. However we want to minimise future disruption, so if elements are likely to need replaced in the near future, it is pragmatic to replace them now.

*"I think it's fairly tough for a building to have a voice without it being used for anything. It has to have a function. Buildings have to be a slave to some sort of function or activity."*⁴²

Creating a hierarchy of the internal weathering in the Art School becomes difficult the longer the building is unoccupied. Subsequently the issue of continuity of voice and atmosphere risks sentimentality attaching to everything. The photography separates patina, showing signs of use caused by human activity from dirt, degradation that occurs without human influence.

The atmosphere lies in the smell from the paint covered sinks, the wearing down of the steps, the small scratches in the timber that are only visible when light hits at a particular angle; the pieces that people have sculpted with their presence.

It is important that when the Art School reopens, it does not look like an abandoned scene of tragedy. Pieces of graffiti will reappear and be more relevant, the voice will re-emerge as it becomes a slave to future students. As Natalia points out if we are thorough in the historical research and measurement it is easier to decide the value of the internal weathering.⁴³

⁴² Littlefield, 'Architectural Voices', 2007, 182.

⁴³ Burakowska, Interview with Natalia Burakowska, Page/Park.

III

This chapter analyses the negative attitudes towards age and wear that gained momentum with Modernism. This part of architectural history is relevant for two reasons. The first is the aesthetic that modernism left behind, i.e. whiteness. The second is the legacy of seeing a building user as passive, predictable and obedient..⁴⁴

Between the two world wars, architecture was dominated by Modernism..⁴⁵ The various styles of the nineteenth century gave way to a uniform approach to design that sought for common ground. The term "Functionalism" is indicative of its aims to deal with the practicalities of dwelling and the urban environment..⁴⁶ It aimed to standardise and delineate buildings by function to secure "a polite and well-ordered society"..⁴⁷ Architect, Jonathan Hill describes functionalism as, "one of the most alarming aspects of the modernist agenda"..⁴⁸ due to its attempt to order social behaviour and limit the unpredictability of everyday life..⁴⁹

In *'White Walls, Designer Dresses,'* Mark Wigley addresses the most obvious but least discussed feature of Modernism, white walls. Observing that most texts merely identify the use of whiteness with machine age precision..⁵⁰ He argues that the reason for the oversight is intentional. He compares the removal of ornamentation to stripping off old clothes thus exposing the 'nakedness' of the structure, accentuated by its uniform whiteness. However not all clothing is removed, the lie is that modern architecture is naked. No matter how thin the coat of white paint is, it is still a coat..⁵¹

In 1925 Le Corbusier published, *'L'art decoratif d'aujourd'hui'*, which introduced his theory of the white wall..⁵² The chapter entitled *'A Coat of Whitewash: The Law of Ripolin'*, promotes replacing the decoration that lines buildings with a coat of whitewash.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (London: Routledge, 2003), 16.

⁴⁵ Christian Norberg-Schulz and Charles Hugh Alexander MacCallum, *Meaning in Western Architecture*, Rev. ed., 1980, 186.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴⁷ Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 27.

⁴⁸ Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵⁰ Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001), xvii.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2.

"His home is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners. Everything is shown as it is."⁵³

Le Corbusier further states: "The white of the whitewash is absolute, everything stands out from it and is recorded absolutely [...] it is honest and dependable."⁵⁴ White walls enhance the reading of forms and volumes in his architecture, making the composition clear, candid and sincere.⁵⁵ (Fig9)

The spatial qualities white surfaces provide are not all he approved of. Metaphorically, white is universal, pure and clean. Further implied is that a building is final upon completion of construction; inhabitation and weathering subtracting from the ideal condition.⁵⁶ Le Corbusier, among others, used unpopulated still photography to capture this moment of the complete project prior to its inevitable transformation under the elements and through use.⁵⁷ (Fig10-11)

The ephemeral nature of the white wall is poetically summarised by Lionel Brett:

*"[It] presented a surface which could neither be cleaned nor happily left to weather. The modern house arrived in a blaze of glory and after a brief summer of astonishing beauty faded like a flower in the frost."*⁵⁸

Whiteness became the uniform of the modern age but why did it linger on? Architecture continued to wear the white clothes because they symbolized a refusal of fashion in favour of rigorous function. Wigley suggests the hardest look to take off is the 'anti-fashion look' as this reveals it is just one look among many. The white wall was supposedly the look that terminated the turnover of looks, acting as the stable, neutral surface with which a building could test itself for "unwanted fashion infections."⁵⁹

⁵³ Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, 1st MIT Press ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987), 188.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵⁵ Jan De Heer, *The Architectonic Colour: Polychromy in the Purist Architecture of Le Corbusier* (Rotterdam: 010 Uitgeverij, 2008), 95 Quote from Le Corbusier in 'L'Architecture au Salon d'automne.' In *L'Esprit Nouveau* 19 Dec 1923.

⁵⁶ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 82.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Lionel Gordon Baliol Brett and Richard Guyatt, *The Things We See: Houses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1947), 37.

⁵⁹ Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses*, xxii.



Fig7 | Maison La Roche, Le Corbusier.



Fig10 | 'Frankfurt Kitchen', Grete Schütte-Lihotzky.

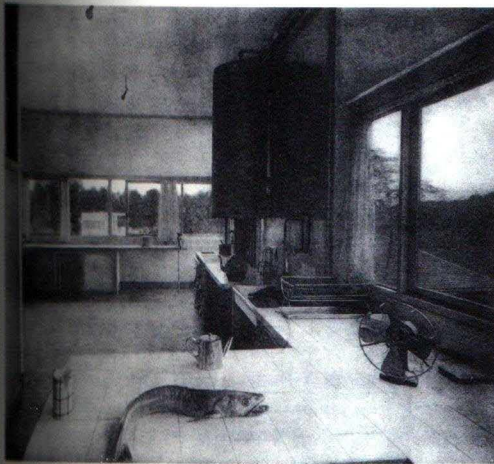


Fig8 | Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier.

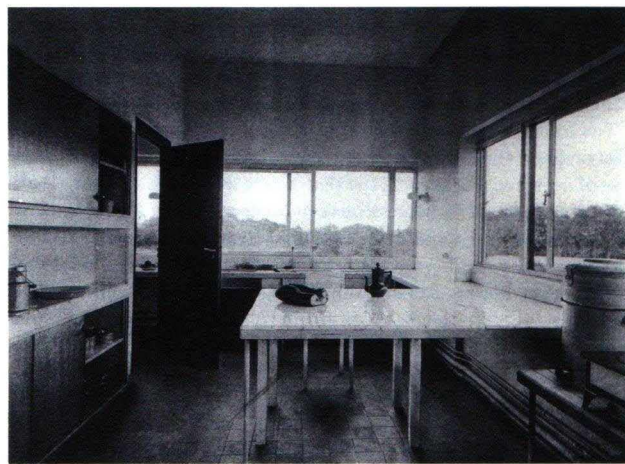


Fig9 | Villa Stein/de Monzie, Le Corbusier.

The second modernist legacy examined is the attitude towards 'the user' of architecture. The Frankfurt Kitchen (Fig12) shows belief in determinism, the idea that the actions of users are predictable and every event has a cause..⁶⁰

Anthony Dunne suspects the main purpose of machines is not to enslave us but to tie us to the norm. Using the camcorder, he explains how the warning light flashes when there is a risk of spoiling a picture, "*as if to remind the user that they are about to become creative and should immediately return to the norm.*"⁶¹

This theory can be extended to architecture if we consider, "the house is a machine for living in"⁶². It is understood that the human is a component of the machine, operating within the house the correct way..⁶³ Modernism in both instances attempts to suppress the unpredictability of individuals and control social behaviour.

The necessity for control is due to the aforementioned purity of the white wall. In order to maintain its perfection, the objects within it need to behave. Implied is the idea of architect as artist, promoting architecture as a piece for viewing and contemplation much like sculpture. Use somehow pollutes the purity of art..⁶⁴ In a painting, corrosion results from "harbouring alien life forms" on the surface, in a building this same reaction takes place between built form and its inhabitants..⁶⁵

Pallasmaa believes that our fear of the traces of wear and age is related to fear of death..⁶⁶ Given the arguments presented, it is not just death we fear but also disorder. Buildings that are intended to be sterile and ageless absorb patination in an unpleasing way (to expose it and encourage its removal) and those that manage to stay eternally pristine make time

⁶⁰ Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 13–14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶² Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (London: Architectural Press, 1970), 10.

⁶³ Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 16.

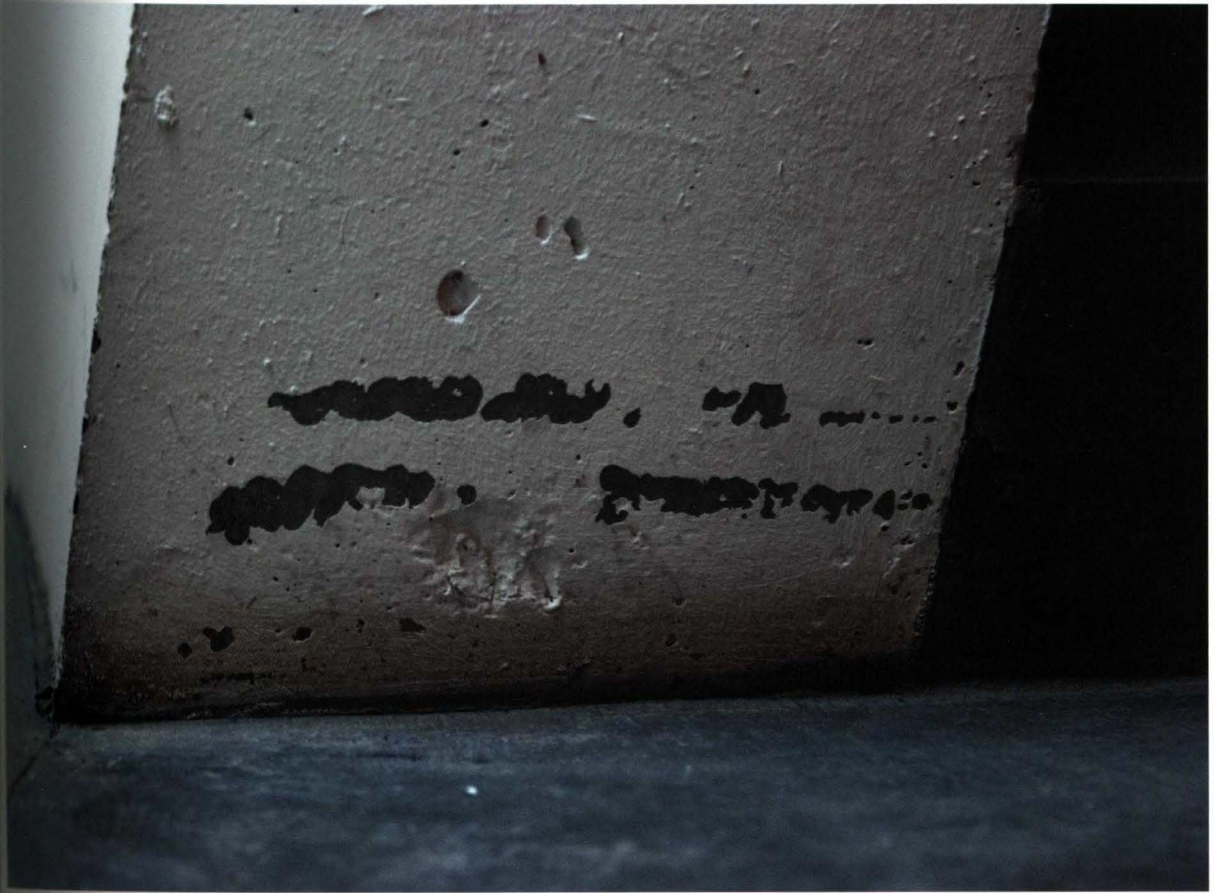
⁶⁴ Jonathan Hill, *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User* (London: Routledge, 1998), 80–81.

⁶⁵ Fred Scott, *On Altering Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2008), 8.

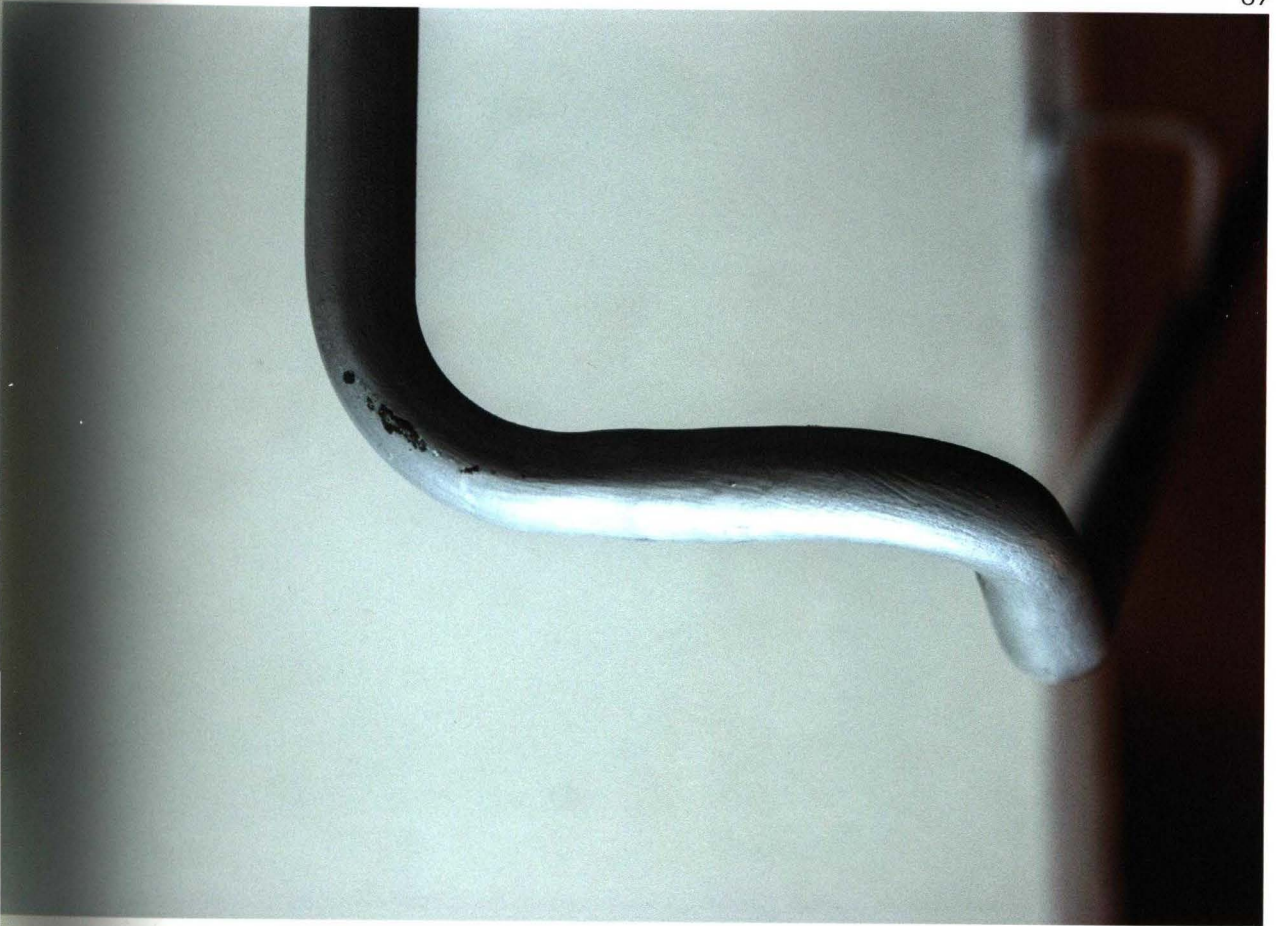
⁶⁶ Pallasmaa, MacKeith, and Holl, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 34.

seem endless. The images that follow present the white walls of Steven Holl's Reid Building.

White walls are employed here to create a uniform surface tying it to the rest of the white walls within the Art School, to bounce light in section and so students feel comfortable displaying work without 'ruining' the architecture.



68

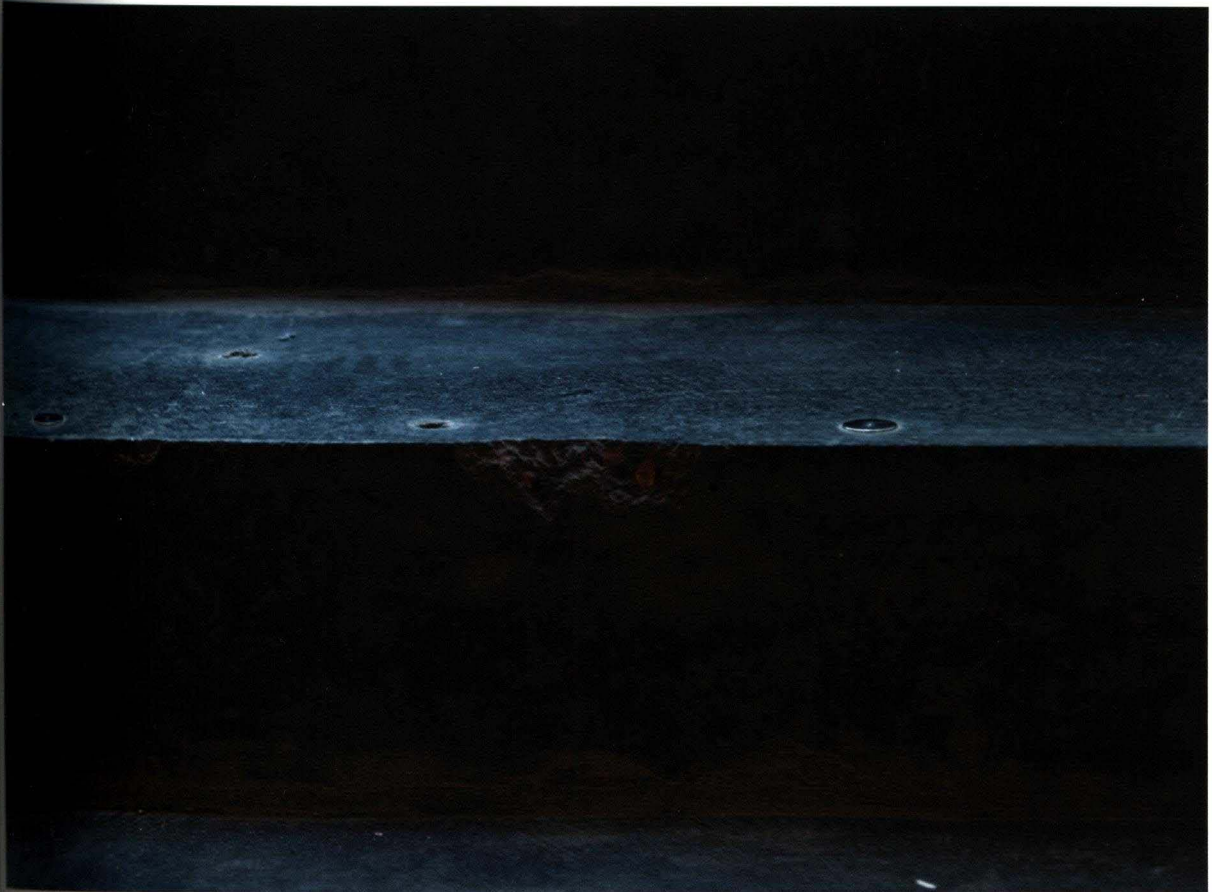




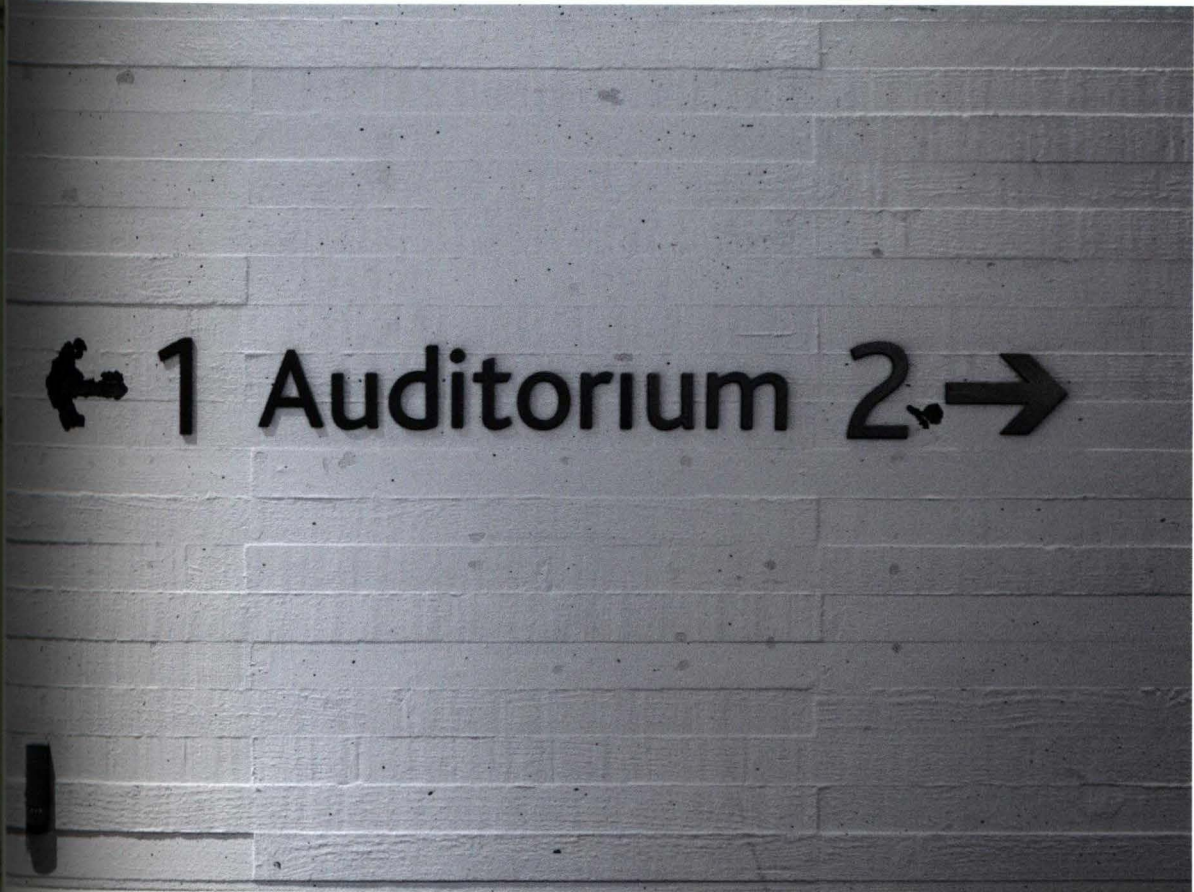
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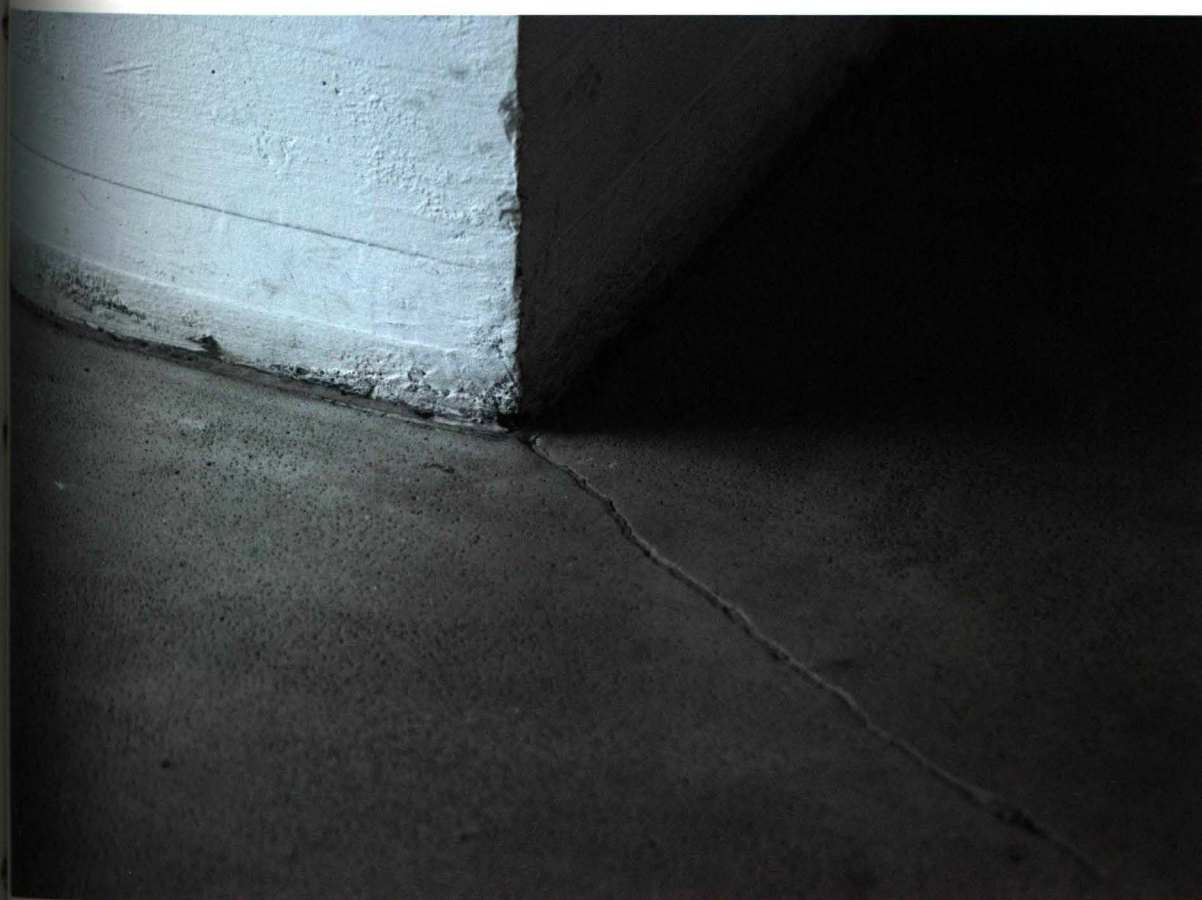
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80

"By lifting architecture out of time one lifts it out of the world."⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Till, *Architecture Depends*, 91.



81

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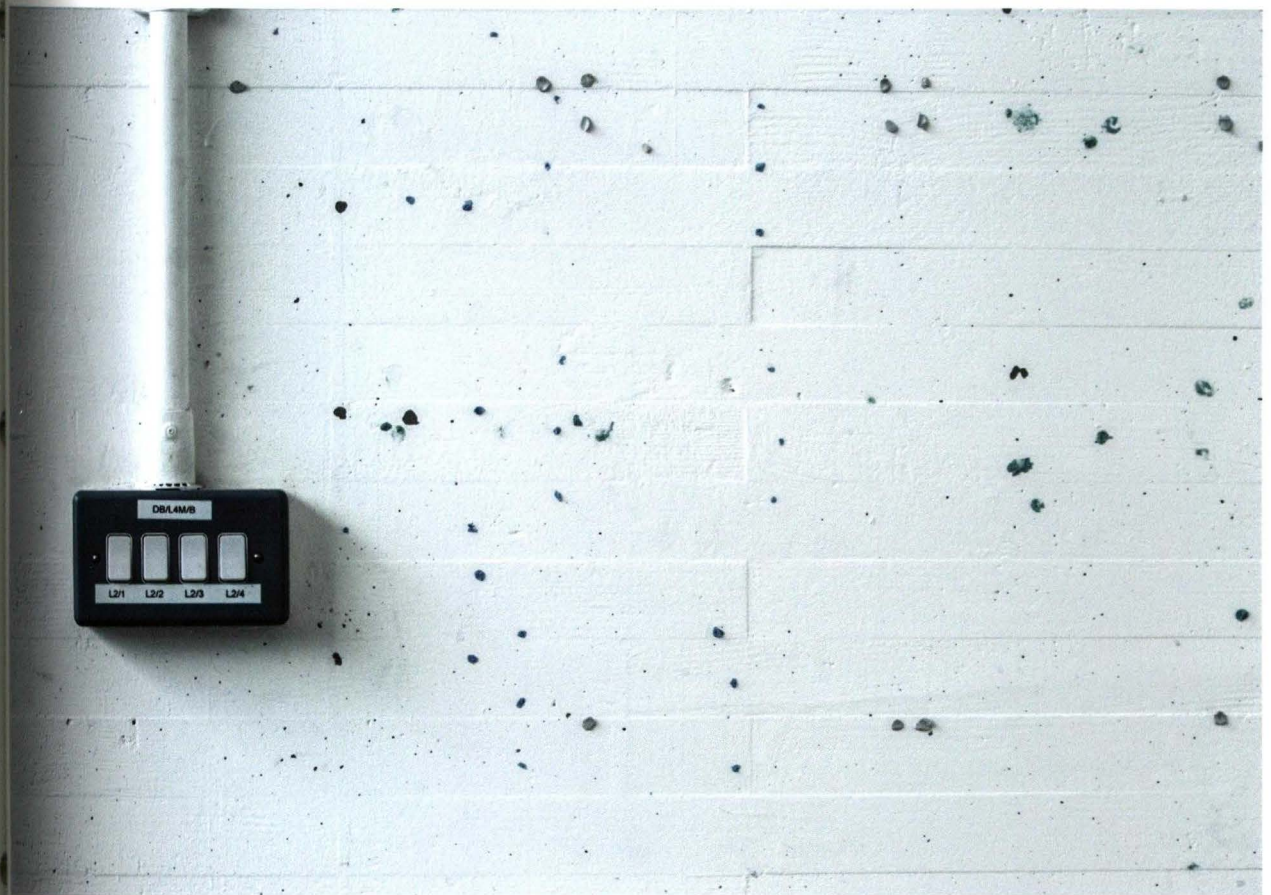
A Wellhearted Approach to Sleep
 Take Personal Action to Boost Energy
 Make energy use an ISSUE within your group and SSCG

PVC
 BB IT'S COLD OUTSIDE
FREAKY YAKAZA + ABC AZN NETWORK
 KEONAN





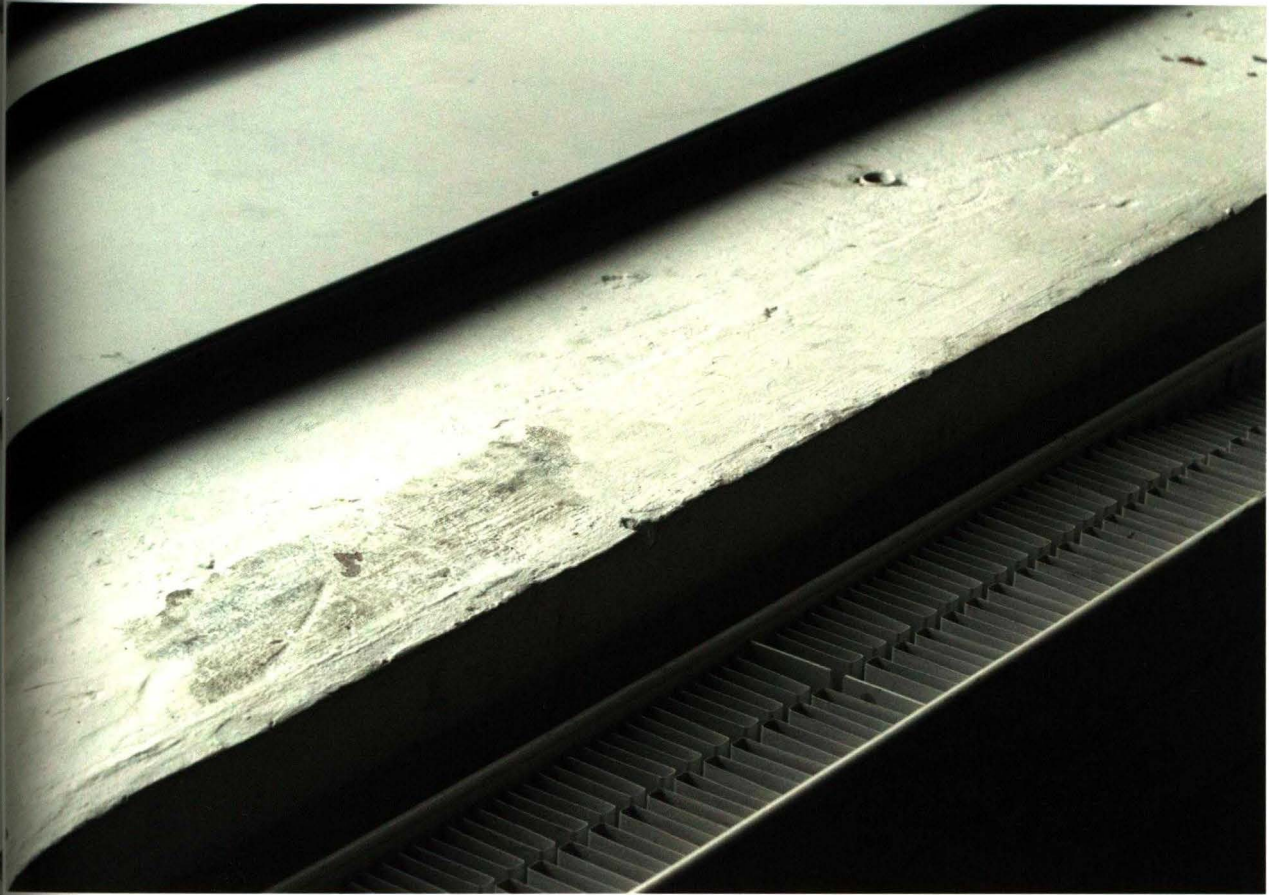

83



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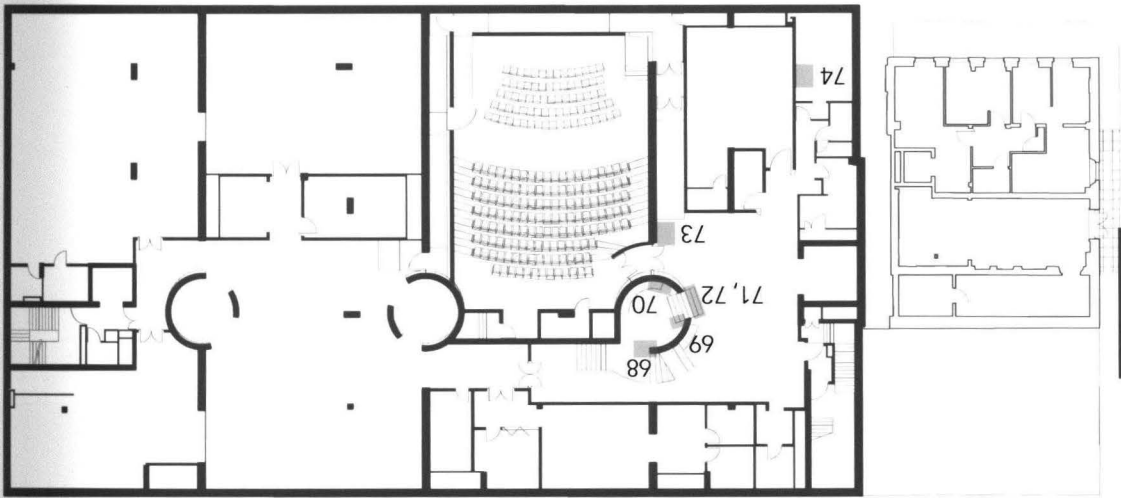
86



87

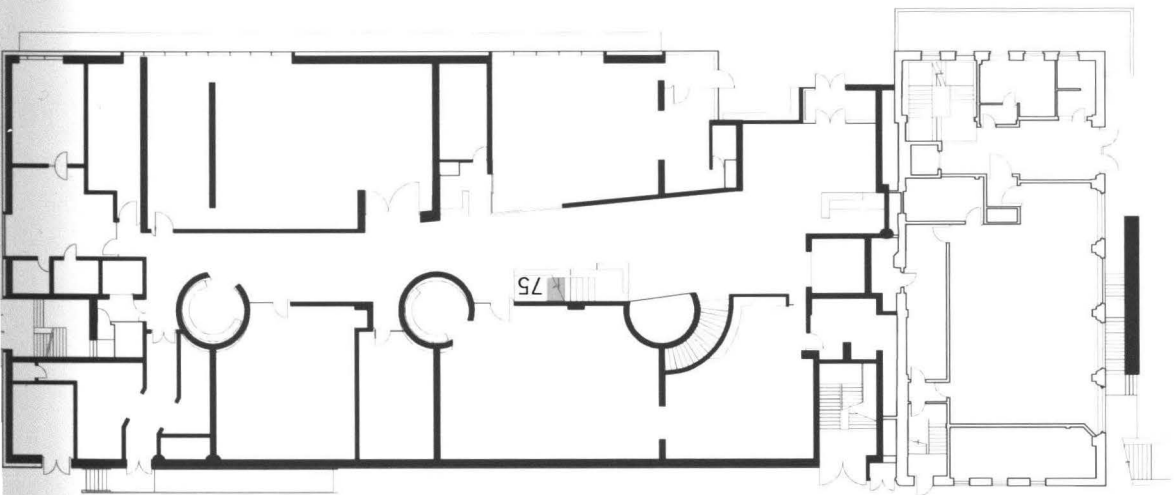
BASEMENT

1 | 500



GROUND FLOOR

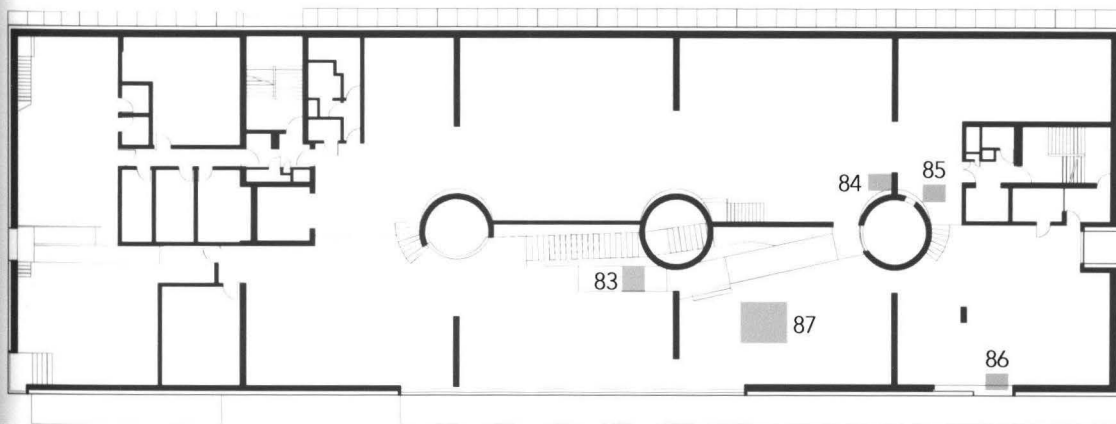
1 | 500



FIRST FLOOR

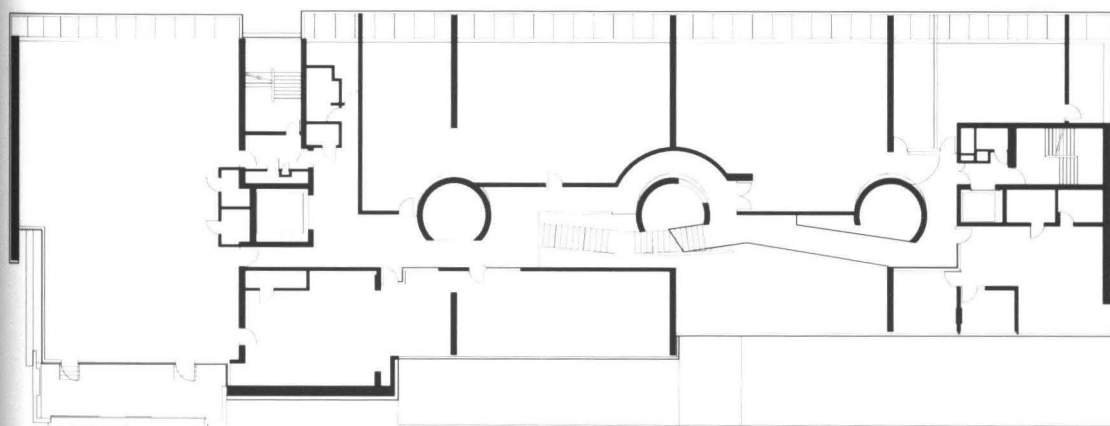
1 | 500





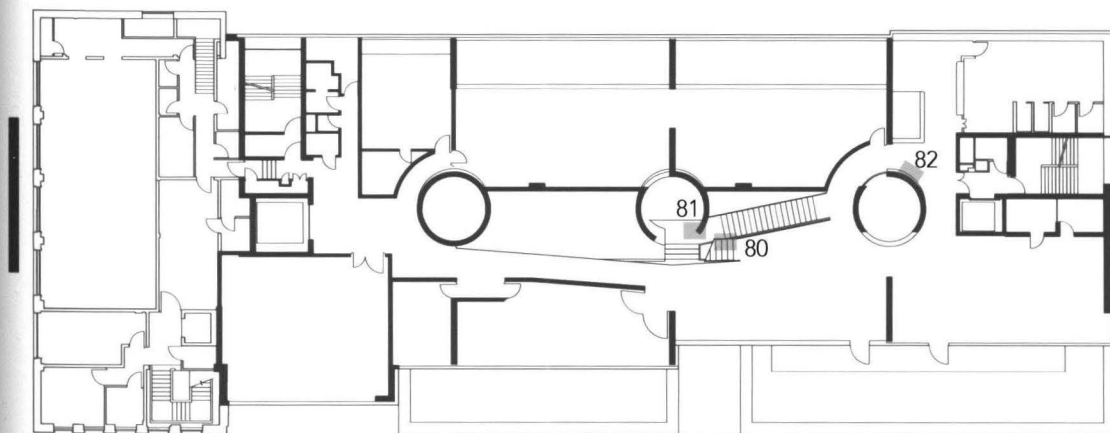
FOURTH FLOOR

1 | 500



THIRD FLOOR

1 | 500



SECOND FLOOR

1 | 500

*"Structure and Space are fused and provide robust surfaces that hold up to the wear and tear of an art school."*⁶⁷

It is clear that after only 22 months of occupation the purified ideal of robust surfaces has already been besmirched.

As the painted concrete degrades it appears as a mistake. The details of the building make it difficult to clean all dust and mould, neither indicating the presence of life in a meaningful way. The concrete surfaces lack the suppleness of the timber and 'Glasgow Marble' in the Art School. Man-made materials are designed to be immortal and overcome faults natural materials cannot. Timber reveals a richness when chipped, as natural materials hold within them the instinct to grow and age with dignity.

⁶⁷ Mark Baines et al., eds., *Form, Fabric, Detail* (Glasgow: Glasgow School of Art, 2014), 7.

IV

This chapter focuses on 'completeness' in architecture. Architecture is never complete as its role is to facilitate human beings and their daily lives. We should build structures to last hundreds of years to allow the beauty of time to accumulate on their surfaces. The Art School is proof of this beauty. This type of architecture is allographic, enhanced by its usage and adaptivity. It is architecture as verb rather than noun as it is active, not a static moment in time.

Frank Duffy questions what an architectural aesthetic based on "*the inevitability of transience*" would look like.⁶⁹ Reading Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows*, may give us some insight; describing the joy when the lustre of silver tableware has started to wear off and takes on "*a dark, smoky patina*".⁷⁰ Similarly how jade has a "*faintly muddy light, like the crystallised air of the centuries, melting dimly, dully back, deeper and deeper.*"⁷¹ Maybe the inevitability of transience allows a surface to 'crystallise the air of the centuries' and traces of all who move through it.

However, it is not the aesthetic of ageing that is of greatest importance. Rather, the ability to acknowledge it and allow for the unexpected, contingent transformation. If overthought, architecture could become too choreographed with problems similar to the white Ripolin walls. As Herman Hertzberger states, "*Architecture should offer an incentive to its users to influence it wherever possible, not merely to reinforce its identity, but more especially to enhance and affirm the identity of its users.*"⁷² In this sense buildings and cities like life itself can never be complete, instead they are forever being refinished.

*"The authentic building is one that continues to accommodate life."*⁷³

⁶⁹ Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, 71.

⁷⁰ Tanizaki, *In Praise Of Shadows*, 21.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Herman Hertzberger, *Lessons for Students in Architecture* (Rotterdam: Utgeverij 010, 1991), p.148

⁷³ Littlefield and Lewis, *Architectural Voices*, 15.

Sir Richard Rogers pursues architecture that is not finite upon completion but like music and poetry can be changed by the users, "an architecture of improvisation."⁷⁴ By comparing architecture to music and performance we begin to understand architecture as lived and not just physical space. Buildings are not ends in themselves, they are vessels within which life takes place. This means that they are used, entered, inhabited, walked around, gathered within, looked at...⁷⁵ Architecture is active not static.

*"New buildings should be judged not just for what they are, but for what they are capable of becoming."*⁷⁶

Good architecture should serve as a backdrop for human experiences, and more importantly it should be malleable. Understanding architecture begins in the everyday experiences of inhabitation.⁷⁷ Understanding and appreciating the full character of a building happens incrementally over time.⁷⁸ If these things take time then why should we banish the evidence of time from internal surfaces? The internal weathering; its subtraction and addition, is a testimony to the time of the building.⁷⁹

An honest testimony for the Art School requires careful thought. If we agree on the incomplete nature and verb essence of architecture, then attempting to return the building to a renewed state is challenging. We should not clean off too much fire soot but rather allow it to fade gently into the fabric of the building as it becomes re-inhabited. This may allow it to become a more genuine part of its story and voice and introduce a certain ambiguity between new and old. It is not appropriate to be overly precious with the building as the students who used it never were, but it is vitally important to be careful about what we clean. This is an attitude that is clearly shared by the restoration team.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Sir Richard Rogers, "The Artist and the Scientist," in *Bridging the Gap* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991), p. 146.

⁷⁵ Pallasmaa, MacKeith, and Holl, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 68.

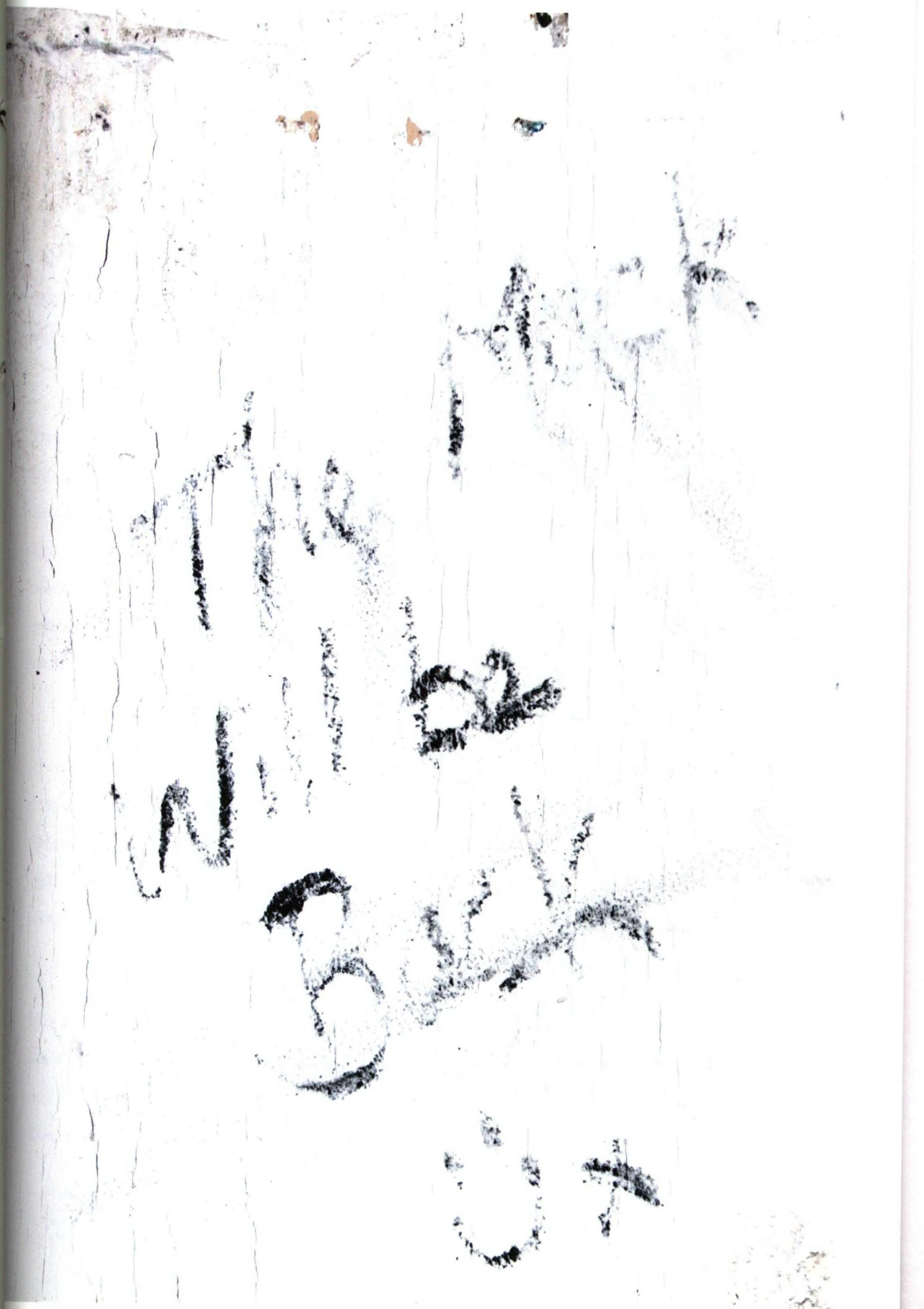
⁷⁶ Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, 71.

⁷⁷ Robert McCarter and Juhani Pallasmaa, *Understanding Architecture* (London: Phaidon, 2012), 5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 64.

⁸⁰ Burakowska, Interview with Natalia Burakowska, Page/Park.



CONCLUSION

It is the life and endurance of a building that gives it atmosphere and a voice; the traces of history and etchings of life. Adolf Loos describes this perfectly when referring to the interiors of his childhood home, *"it grew along with us and we grew within it."*⁸¹

What could be worse than an entire world that never ages? We can only empathise with that which reflects our humanity back at us. In the case of inanimate buildings this is surely the signs of use.

Had the fire not occurred, the Art School would have been cleaned and upgraded incrementally. Studio walls and floors would be painted annually, graffiti removed without much thought. However the cracks in the concrete steps, creaks of doors and fingerprints on brass are harder to remove. Unless the entirety of the interior was rebuilt dramatically it would be hard to remove the voice of this place. The voice is present not just in the visual patina, but in the memories that patination evokes, it is present in the sounds of the building and its smells.

The photographs that hold the greatest interest and beauty are the ones that signal movement and therefore imply life. It is a beautiful living thing.⁸² Although Mackintosh was referring to the work of the artist as a beautiful living thing, the Art School itself has become that. Not because it should be viewed as a piece of art but because it accommodates life within it, and therein lies the beauty.

It is well known that Le Corbusier arranged and composed the ordinary domestic objects of his interiors for photographic purposes, giving the appearance of a scene frozen in time – a still life.⁸³ As discussed, the idea that architecture can ever be perfect or complete contradicts its very purpose and encourages a controlling profession. Jonathan Hill reminds

⁸¹ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 80.

⁸² Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Seemliness', in *Mackintosh's Masterwork: The Glasgow School of Art*, ed. William Buchanan (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1990), 32.

⁸³ Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering*, 84.

us that the issue with utopian architecture is that it becomes tomorrow's dystopia. Accidents, dirt, and time all rush into besmirch the purified ideal. Perfection makes scarring inevitable.⁸⁴ Central to this whole argument as designers is that we must remember *"buildings are only new for a second but they are old for a very long time."* John Tuomey.

It is the witnessing and memory of events that affects the soul of a person and the atmosphere of a building. The Art School is not just a building it is the relation between an object and its occupants.⁸⁵ Minimal intervention will be taken during the restoration and as discussed in this dissertation, it is unlikely to take long for the next layer of patination to appear.

The Art School is in safe hands, they will rebuild and they will rebuild well.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Hill, *Occupying Architecture*, 65.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸⁶ Muriel Grey, Liz Davidson, "Re-Discovery and Re-Invention" (Friday Lecture Series, Glasgow, 30 January 2014).

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